

Margret Verwijk

# **Is peace not for everyone?**

Narratives on a struggle for peace, equality and development in Sudan

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# Is peace not for everyone?

Narratives on a struggle for peace, equality and development in Sudan

## Is vrede niet voor iedereen?

Verhalen over een strijd voor vrede, gelijkheid en ontwikkeling in Soedan  
(met een samenvatting in het Nederlands)

## أليس السلام للجميع؟

حكايات عن النضال من أجل السلام وإحترام حقوق المرأة والتنمية في السودان  
(ترجمة باللغة العربية)

### Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor aan de Universiteit Utrecht op gezag van de rector magnificus, prof.dr. G. J. van der Zwaan, ingevolge het besluit van het college voor promoties in het openbaar te verdedigen op dinsdag 1 mei 2012 des middags te 4.15 uur

door

**Margret Verwijk**

geboren op 8 augustus 1964  
te Den Haag

**Promotor:** Prof.dr.ir. G. E. Frerks

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## Abbreviations and Acronyms

AACC	All Africa Conference of Churches
ACCORD	African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes
ACHPR	African Commission on Human and People's Rights
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AU	African Union
AUW	Ahfad University for Women
AWA	Advocacy for Women in Africa
AWCPD	African Women's Committee on Peace and Development
AWID	Association for Women's Rights in Development
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BBSAWS	Babikr Badri Scientific Association for Women's Studies
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CRU	Conflict Research Unit
CSCW	Centre for the Study of Civil War
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DAWN	Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration
DOP	Declaration of Principles
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DUP	Democratic Unionist Party
EC	European Commission
ECHO	Humanitarian Aid department of the European Commission
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
FAS	Femmes Africa Solidarité
FOI	Friends of IGAD
GAD	Gender and Development
GDI	Gender-related Development Index
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEM	Gender Empowerment Measure
GNI	Gross National Income
GNP	Gross National Product
GONU	Government of National Unity
GOS	Government of Sudan
GOSS	Government of Southern Sudan (and following independence Government of the Republic of South Sudan)
HDI	Human Development Index
HDR	Human Development Report

## Abbreviations and Acronyms

HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HRW	Human Rights Watch
HSBA	Human Security Baseline Assessment
HSRP	Human Security Report Project
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICG	International Crisis Group
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IDP	Internally displaced person
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority for Development
IGADD	Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Development
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IPF	IGAD Partners Forum
JAM	Joint Assessment Mission
JEM	Justice and Equality Movement
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MDTF	Multi-Donor Trust Fund
MP	Member of Parliament
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCP	National Congress Party
NDA	National Democratic Alliance
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIF	National Islamic Front
NPA	Norwegian People's Aid
NSCC	New Sudan Council of Churches
NSRCC	National Salvation Revolutionary Command Council
NSWF	New Sudan Women's Federation
NUP	National Unionist Party
NUPI	Norwegian Institute of International Affairs
OUA	Organization of African Union
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OLS	Operation Lifeline Sudan
PAD	Postmodernism and Development
PCP	Popular Congress Party
PDF	Popular Defence Forces
PDP	People's Democratic Party
PRA	Participatory Rapid Appraisal
PRIO	Peace Research Institute Oslo
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
QDA	Qualitative Data Analysis



RNE	Royal Netherlands Embassy
SAD	Sudan Archive, Durham
SAF	Sudan Alliance Forces
SANU	Sudan African National Union
SC	Security Council
SCC	Sudan Council of Churches
SCP	Sudanese Communist Party
SCR	Security Council Resolution
SLM	Sudan Liberation Movement
SNCTP	Sudan National Committee on the eradication of harmful Traditional Practices
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
SPLM	Sudan People's Liberation Movement
SPLM/A	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army
SSDF	Southern Sudan Defence Force
SSIG	South Sudan Independence Group
SSIM	Southern Sudan Independence Movement
SSLM	Southern Sudan Liberation Movement
SSU	Sudan Socialist Union
SuWEP	Sudanese Women Empowerment for Peace
SSWAN	Southern Sudanese Women's Association in the Netherlands
SWAN	Sudanese Women Association in Nairobi
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
SWVP	Sudanese Women's Voice for Peace
UDSF	United Democratic Salvation Front
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund For Women
UP	Umma Party
US(A)	United States (of America)
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USAP	Union of Sudan African Parties
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VOND	Vrouwenorganisatie Nederland - Darfur, Women's Organization the Netherlands - Darfur
WDI	World Development Indicators
WAD	Women and Development
WAG	Women Action Group

## Abbreviations and Acronyms

WED	Women, Environment and Development
WID	Women in Development
WIIS	Women In International Security
WLUML	Women Living Under Muslim Law
WU	Women's Union
WWR	Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid, Scientific Council for Government Policy

## Note on Arabic Transliteration

The Arabic script is written from right to left and includes 28 basic characters. All twenty-eight characters represent consonants. In addition, there are vowel signs and various other orthographic signs. I have largely<sup>1</sup> adopted the Brill simple Arabic transliteration system<sup>2</sup> for general scholarly use:

Arabic	Transliteration	Arabic	Transliteration
ا	a, ā	ق	q
ب	b	ك	k
ت	t	ل	l
ث	ṭ	م	m
ج	ǧ	ن	n
ح	ḥ	ه	h
خ	ḫ	و	w, ū
د	d	ي	y, ī
ذ	ḏ	ء	ʾ
ر	r	ى	ā
ز	z	ي	ī
س	s	و	ū
ش	š	ـَ	a
ص	ṣ	ـِ	i
ض	ḍ	ـُ	u
ط	ṭ	ـِي	ai
ظ	ẓ	ـُو	au
ع	ʿ	ي	īy
غ	ǧ	و	ūw
ف	f	ة	a, ah, āh, at, āt

The transliteration system used does not pretend to represent all orthographic details of the original Arabic script and it is simple in the sense that one Arabic letter is transliterated with one letter from the Roman alphabet. When an Arabic term is used in this research, where no common translation is available, I have tried to make it as easy as possible to the reader. Some common words and certain geographical, tribal, and personal names are written in

1 With slight changes in the Arabic representation of long vowels and diphthongs: ai, au, iy and ūw.

2 Brill's simple Arabic transliteration system Version 1.0 (2010), which follows the Deutsch Morgenländische Gesellschaft Rules and was developed by Pim Rietbroek.

## Note on Arabic Transliteration

their popular Anglicized form. For personal names less well known, I have used the version used by the persons concerned. All other Arabic words will have an explanation in brackets and will be included in the glossary for easy reference.

## Glossary

<i>'aḥbār 'al yawm</i> al-Mahdi, <i>'al mahdī</i>	Sudanese newspaper: today's news. The chosen one. In Sudan it refers to Muhammad Ahmad Al-Mahdi, 19 <sup>th</sup> century religious political figure and his successors.
<i>'al mašrū' 'al ḥaḍārī</i> <i>'anṣār</i>	The project of civilization. Followers (Ansar) of the Mahdi, the chosen one. Partisans of Islam. Sufi Brotherhood or order.
<i>'aṣīdah</i> duḥān eid, <i>'īd</i>	Stiff millet porridge. Scented smoke bath. A Muslim holiday that marks the end of Ramadan, the Islamic holy month of fasting.
inghaz, <i>'inqād</i>	Salvation, rescue, recovery (used in Sudan to refer to the regime of Al-Bashir).
<i>ḡihād</i> <i>hazza</i>	Jihad, holy war, struggle, striving for God. Shock; tremor.
hadith, <i>ḥadīṭ</i>	Narrative relating deeds and utterances of the Prophet Muhammad and his Companions.
<i>ḥalās</i> intifada, <i>'intifāḍah</i>	To be finished, be done, be through (colloquial). Uprising, rebellion, in case of Sudan refers to 1985 overthrow of military regime.
janjaweed <i>katībat banāt</i>	Arab militias. Girls' battalion.
khawadjaat, <i>ḥawāḡḡāt</i> kujur	Title and form of address, especially for Westerners and Christians. Religious man or woman with magical powers in Nuba culture and traditions.
<i>mahr</i>	Dowry, bridal gift, from husband to wife as part of the marriage contract.
murahaleen ramadan, <i>ramaḍān</i> <i>ṣaḥīḥ 'al-buḥārī</i>	Arab militias. The Islamic month of fasting. Sunni Muslims view this as one of the three most trusted collections of hadith. The Arabic word <i>ṣaḥīḥ</i> translates as authentic or correct.
<i>ṣarī'ah</i> ṣaṭṭah	<i>Sharia</i> or Islamic Law. A variety of pepper, in Sudan a hot sauce made of red pepper and lime juice.
sunnah	Mainly used to denote the body of hadiths and the historical material of the companions of the Prophet Muhammad. It stands for Prophet Muhammad's words, actions and practices.
<i>sūq</i> <i>tamkīn 'al mar'ah</i> <i>tawb</i>	Market. Women's empowerment. Dress, in Sudan a full-length cotton wrap around gown: women's traditional/national dress.

## Glossary

<i>'urf</i>	Customary law, custom that is recognised by the sharia provided that the customary practice does not conflict with any basic tenet of Islam.
<i>yā ḡamā'a</i>	Oh folks.
<i>zād 'al-mujāhid</i>	Special food that would last for a week or ten days, or two weeks for fighters to take along.

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# Chapter 1

## **This Research**

**Introduction**

**Research strategy: theoretical framework and research questions**

**Research trail**

**Reflexivity and ethics**

**Findings and discussion**

**Structure of thesis**

# 1 This Research

### The researcher's story

Joanna Kerr (2001) hit the nail on the head when she wrote that “activists and practitioners rarely document the new ideas and trends” and that “these are subjects of animated corridor discussions or personal emails”<sup>3</sup>. This is exactly how I felt most of the time while living and working in Yemen (1988-1992), Sudan (1993-2000) and Bangladesh (2000-2004). Especially while thinking through, carrying out and living through a particular mediation and peacebuilding effort to encourage and facilitate the participation of Sudanese women in the peace process that started in 1997. When in the year 2000, Professor Gasim Badri, the President of Ahfad University for Women in Sudan, came to the Dutch Embassy in Khartoum over the weekend to inform me that the Academic Council had decided to bestow upon me the exceptional honour of the degree of doctor of gender and development (*honoris causa*) given for my efforts to support women's rights and the participation of Sudanese women in peacemaking, I was too busy to realise its true meaning. I realised its true meaning quick enough though, but it took years for me to link the words of Joanna Kerr and this dissertation.

With time, I was able to become a practitioner and policy maker operating in the domain of development cooperation, gender and conflict studies. Time allowed me to sharpen my questions about development and public policy, and dig deeper into research methodology and measurement. My work at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in The Hague allowed me to return every now and then to Sudan for both work and research. Consequently, the voices of Sudanese women that I hope can be heard through this research originate from the relationships that I cherish; they are women with whom I have shared happiness and sadness, weddings and funerals, trust and fear. Were it not for my knowledge of and experience in working and living in Sudan I would not have felt as passionate about completing this research. This involvement, however, does call for reflexivity since theoretical reflections and key findings will be affected by the numerous years I spent in the country and especially the relationships I built. Had Charles Darwin not left England in 1831 to accompany Captain Fitzroy as gentleman-naturalist on board of the H.M.S. Beagle, he would not have published “on the origin of species” in 1859. Had the UNICEF Sudan Country Office not recruited me in 1993, I would not have joined the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Khartoum two years later and would not be writing this dissertation today.

I am grateful for having lived this unique experience, and as with other researchers and writers, my research can be seen as being influenced by numerous observations and ideas.

## 1 Introduction

Do women count in building and making peace and do numbers tell the whole story? What do we know about women's participation in peacebuilding and peacemaking? Today, of the 101 individuals awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, only 15 are women. The peace prize was established in 1895 as per the will of Swedish chemist, engineer, innovator, and armaments

3 Kerr, Joanna. *International Trends in Gender Equality work*. AWID Occasional Paper 1, November 2001.

manufacturer, Alfred Nobel (1833-1896). Bertha von Suttner was the first woman awarded a Nobel Peace Prize in 1905, followed by Jane Adams in 1931. Notably, Alfred Nobel developed a special interest in the peace movement through his acquaintance with Bertha von Suttner and her efforts to promote peace as seen in the official website of the Nobel Prize<sup>4</sup>. The 2011 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to three women. It was awarded jointly to Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, peace activist Leymah Gbowee and a Yemeni human rights activist Tawakkul Karman “for their non-violent struggle for the safety of women and for women’s rights to full participation in peace-building work”<sup>5</sup>. In its announcement, the Nobel committee cited UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), according to which women have a vital role in conflict resolution and must be given an equal role to men in building and making peace. More than a decade after the adoption of this resolution, the Nobel Peace Prize 2011 neatly exposes an absent presence as well as a persistent exclusion of women from efforts to build and make peace.

What does women’s absence and exclusion from peace processes tell us about gender and power relations and what does it tell us about political leaders, policy makers and practitioners? John Darby and Roger Mac Ginty pointed out that not all peace processes or issues have received equal attention in the arena of policy and research (Darby and Mac Ginty 2008). They remarked that peace processes in, for example, Southern Sudan among others have received less attention, “with the highest volume of publications being written on Northern Ireland, the Israeli-Palestinian ‘Oslo process’, and South Africa’s transition” (Darby and Mac Ginty 2008, 4). In terms of issues, they added “the differing impacts of peace processes on men and women are under-researched” (Darby and Mac Ginty 2008, 4). This dissertation will focus on an under-researched peace process as well as equally under-researched issue, which is that of women’s participation in peace processes as expressed by the following central research question:

**In which way did Sudanese women participate in peace processes that culminated in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (2005)?**

The aim is to gain a deeper understanding of women’s and men’s experiences of armed conflict and peacebuilding in Sudan from the perspective of Sudanese women, with a particular focus on factors which increased women’s empowerment, when the latter implies an expansion in women’s ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them (Kabeer 2001). Central to this research is the study of a particular effort which started as ‘the Initiative to facilitate the participation of Sudanese women in the peace process (better known as the Initiative)’ and converted into a program of ‘Sudanese Women Empowerment for Peace (better known as SuWEP)’, which I will jointly refer to hereafter as ‘the peace practice’. This peace practice was undertaken to support the participation of Sudanese women in the Sudan IGAD peace process.

4 <http://www.nobelprize.org> (accessed November 13, 2011).

5 [http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/peace/laureates/2011](http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2011) (accessed November 17, 2011).



With a focus on Sudan, my research will describe the course of events over a period of 10 years (1997-2007). This particular time span was selected because it represents:

- a period of both conflict, peacebuilding and peacemaking culminating in the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (1997-2005);
- a period in which I led the development of the Initiative to promote the participation of Sudanese women in peacemaking with financial support from the Government of the Netherlands (1997-2000);
- a period during which the Initiative was converted to a programme for Sudanese Women's Empowerment for Peace (2001-2005) and when the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed;
- a period of implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, as well as peacebuilding and reconstruction efforts (2005-2007).

Following the creation of the South Sudan independent state on 9 July 2011, I will refer to South Sudan instead of Southern Sudan in this dissertation. I will use the latter, Southern Sudan, to refer to a region prior to its independence in mid-2011. Consequently, I will use (North) Sudan and Northern Sudan in a similar fashion and use Sudan when referring to both, prior to the creation of South Sudan.

This thesis is based on research that was carried out over the period 2008-2011, while working for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Netherlands. The relevant work experience is as a programme officer with the UNICEF Sudan Country Office (1993-1995) and as development expert at the Royal Netherlands Embassy (1995-2000) in Khartoum. This experience enabled me to spend time with Sudanese women and men from all walks of life, with considerable time being spent talking about what is and what is not relevant to support peace, equality and development in Sudan. Only the one who wears the shoe knows where it pinches. It is therefore from my own experience as both a development and humanitarian aid worker, as well as my experience as a diplomat and policy maker, that I felt the need to engage in scholarly research in order to find out in which way Sudanese women participated in efforts to make and build peace since 1997 following the modest international support to their peacebuilding efforts.

According to Anthony Giddens (1987), novel conceptual frameworks open up fields of action previously unperceived either by policy-makers or by practitioners involved. That is, fields of action do not merely depend on facts and figures and their replicability. My contribution in opening up fields of action will be to identify analytical gaps in the established discourses of conflict, development and feminism and contribute to new insights based on my research into the participation of Sudanese women in peace processes. The content of this dissertation and my findings will, I hope, provide a theoretical and empirical contribution to basic research in conflict studies and support advances in current discussions in the three discourses mentioned above. It is also hoped that my research opens new perspectives

in relation to peacebuilding, the transition from conflict to relative peace and the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security.

## **2 Research strategy: theoretical framework and research questions**

Since there are disagreements over the nature of knowledge or knowing, I wish to reflect on some of the philosophical arguments and orientations guiding this qualitative research. Living in a complex world of action and interaction, I am comfortable with the view that all knowledge is a matter of interpretation and would not rule out personal experience from inquiry as subjective knowledge versus objective knowledge. I also consider practice and inquiry as being interwoven and nurturing each other. Especially, “knowledge leads to useful action and action sets problems to be thought about, resolved and thus is converted into new knowledge” (Corbin and Strauss 2008, 4-5). Social reality is a social construct that grows from human experiences, perceptions and actions.

The following quotations clarify the starting point of my reasoning and consequently underpin my research strategy:

*Man lives in a world of Meaning* (Mead 1926, 382). *Our specious present as such is very short. We do, however, experience passing events; part of the process of the passage of events is directly there in our experience, including some of the past and some of the future* (Mead 1934, 176).

*The self is not something ready-made, but something in continuous formation through choice of action* (Dewey 1916, 408).

*Power is not an institution, and not a structure: neither is a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategic situation in a particular society* (Foucault 1990, 96).

To which I could add a quotation of Hélène Cixous, “[a]re you sure you put your sex on properly this morning?”<sup>6</sup>, with a wink and a smile. The work of Dr. John Ioannidis, who is known for his research into the credibility of medical research and statement that almost all medical research is flawed, is a good reminder of the limitations of each and every research strategy and method. Since there is no such thing as a perfect research, I find it important to document both design and interpretation of my research in a detailed manner. In addition to using multiple methods, I will include multiple viewpoints to discuss and demonstrate findings as well as support greater accuracy.

To inform, guide and structure my research I will explore, identify and question existing theoretical perspectives emanating from the academic field of studies of conflict, development and feminism. Theoretical threads include notions of conflict management, resolution and transformation, conflict and development, gender and development,

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6 <http://www.egs.edu/faculty/helene-cixous/quotes> (accessed November 13, 2011).

participatory development, feminist perspectives on war and peace, and efforts to bring feminist thoughts into the realm of peacebuilding, mediation and international relations. I will also shed light on Lederach's pyramid of approaches to peacebuilding as it had informed the peace practice in Sudan, and is central to this research. To give meaning to theoretical concepts described I will incorporate both local and personal knowledge relevant to this research and obtained through extended life history research and direct experience. The emerging theoretical framework will enable me to approach my research not only from the domain of conflict, but also from both the domains of development and of feminism. Consequently, an inclusive theoretical framework will be generated and presented in Chapter 3, adding value to my research by bringing theory and method together while promoting an improved and comprehensive theoretical understanding of not only war and peace as social processes but also building and making peace.

The aim of my research is to gain a deeper understanding of women and men's experiences of armed conflict and peacebuilding in Sudan, with a particular focus on factors that increased women's empowerment. The central research question is, to better understand how women have participated in efforts to make and build peace between Northern and Southern Sudan. Sub questions relate to:

- international support to efforts by Sudanese women to build and make peace;
- the empowerment of Sudanese women in the midst and aftermath of war;
- the role of diplomats, practitioners and policy makers in turning declarations on women's participation in building and making peace into action; and
- the interaction between diplomats and Sudanese women interested in building and making peace.

Based on these research questions, I present the following overview of relevant research components in response to each question as well as the research method applied on the next two pages.

**Table 1.2** Overview of research components

<b>In which way did Sudanese women participate in peace processes that culminated in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (2005)?</b>		
<b>Sub Questions</b>	<b>Research Components</b>	<b>Methods</b>
<p><b>1. International support:</b></p> <p>To what extent did international support to peacebuilding efforts of Sudanese women manage to promote an increase in the number of women participating in conflict resolution and peacemaking in the case of Sudan? How did international support to peacemaking efforts of Sudanese women affect men?</p>	<p>Review literature and major developments in the domains of conflict, development and gender/ feminism: inclusive theoretical framework.</p> <p>Identify approaches that can add value to theory.</p> <p>Reflect on discussions related to the issue of empowerment.</p> <p>Collect secondary data on Sudan: the conflict, conflict resolution, strategies for peace and reconstruction, the peace practice and the status of women.</p> <p>Review and reflect on the peace practice.</p> <p>Examine the role of Sudanese women and men in peacebuilding and post-recovery efforts and study issues of masculinity, femininity, and gender relations.</p> <p>Transcription (and translation) of interviews and life histories.</p> <p>MAX QDA qualitative analysis structured interviews incl. codes and memos for interpretation.</p> <p>MAX QDA narrative analysis life histories incl. codes and memos for interpretation.</p>	<p>Structured interviews with key informants and document analysis to link what people say to what they do (ethnography).</p> <p>Narrative inquiry and qualitative analysis of structured interviews on the basis of theoretical framework and compared with detailed narrative analysis life histories of Sudanese women.</p> <p>Narrative analysis of life histories Sudanese women participating in the peace practice.</p> <p>Participant observation during fieldwork.</p> <p>Cross-checking interim research findings (Chapter 7 and 8) with respondents.</p> <p>Secondary data including archival records, project files, reports and documents from development actors and agencies.</p>
<p><b>2. Empowerment of Sudanese women:</b></p> <p>How do individual empowerment and disempowerment in the midst of war translate into more durable gains at the intermediate or long-term levels after the conflict and what are the implications thereof in terms of social change? What type of losses did Sudanese men and women experience in terms of resources, agency and achievements? How does conflict alter the resources, agency and achievements of women?</p>	<p>Review literature and major developments in the domains of conflict, development and gender/ feminism: inclusive theoretical framework.</p> <p>Reflect on discussions related to the issue of empowerment.</p> <p>Collect secondary data on Sudan: the conflict, conflict resolution, strategies for peace and reconstruction, the peace practice and the status of women.</p> <p>Review and reflect on the peace practice.</p> <p>Examine the role of Sudanese women and men in peacebuilding and post-recovery efforts and study issues of masculinity, femininity, and gender relations.</p> <p>Transcription (and translation) of life histories.</p> <p>MAX QDA narrative analysis life histories incl. codes and memos to explore and interpret the meaning of empowerment and disempowerment of women and men as perceived by women in conflict and post-conflict situations.</p>	<p>Detailed narrative analysis of life histories to understand the meaning Sudanese women give to their lives and their experiences of participation in peacebuilding and peacemaking.</p> <p>Participant observation, interviews and discussions regarding the peace practice during fieldwork.</p> <p>Ensure that participants are comfortable with the presentation of life history work in this research.</p> <p>Secondary data including archival records, project files, reports and documents from development actors and agencies.</p>

<p><b>3. The role of diplomats, practitioners and policy makers, or outsiders:</b></p> <p>How do practitioners and policy makers turn declarations into action? What are practitioners and policy makers looking for to do justice to and make use of an improved understanding of women and men's experiences of armed conflict and peacebuilding?</p>	<p>Review literature and major developments in the domains of conflict, development and gender/ feminism: inclusive theoretical framework.</p> <p>Collect secondary data on Sudan: the conflict, conflict resolution, strategies for peace and reconstruction, the peace practice and the status of women.</p> <p>Review practices and mind-sets of practitioners and policy makers that relate to an understanding of women and men's experiences of armed conflict and peacebuilding.</p> <p>Examine the role of Sudanese women and men in peacebuilding and post-recovery efforts and study issues of masculinity, femininity, and gender relations.</p> <p>Reflect on discussions related to the issue of empowerment and ownership when building peace.</p> <p>Review and reflect on the peace practice.</p> <p>Examine the role of Sudanese women and men in peacebuilding and post-recovery efforts and study issues of masculinity, femininity, and gender relations.</p> <p>Transcription (and translation) of interviews and life histories.</p> <p>MAX QDA qualitative analysis structured interviews incl. codes and memos for interpretation.</p> <p>MAX QDA narrative analysis life histories incl. codes and memos for interpretation.</p>	<p>Structured interviews with key informants (1997-2007) and document analysis to link what people say to what they do (ethnography).</p> <p>Qualitative analysis of structured interviews based on theoretical framework and compared with detailed narrative analysis life histories of Sudanese women.</p> <p>Participant observation during fieldwork.</p> <p>Cross-checking interim research findings (Chapter 7 and 8) with respondents.</p> <p>Secondary data including archival records, project files, reports and documents from development actors and agencies.</p>
<p><b>4. The interaction between Sudanese women and outsiders:</b></p> <p>How to bridge the reputed gaps between (a) local women interested in building and making peace and (b) diplomats negotiating peace and practitioners providing support to peacebuilding?</p>	<p>Review literature and major developments in the domains of conflict, development and gender/ feminism: inclusive theoretical framework.</p> <p>Collect secondary data on Sudan: the conflict, conflict resolution, strategies for peace and reconstruction, the peace practice and the status of women.</p> <p>Review practices and mind-sets of practitioners and policy makers that relate to an understanding of women and men's experiences of armed conflict and their participation in building and making peace.</p> <p>Examine the role of Sudanese women and men in peacebuilding and post-recovery efforts and study issues of masculinity, femininity, and gender relations.</p> <p>Reflect on discussions related to the issue of participation, empowerment and ownership when building peace.</p> <p>Review and reflect on the peace practice.</p> <p>Transcription (and translation) of interviews and life histories.</p> <p>MAX QDA qualitative analysis structured interviews incl. codes and memos for interpretation.</p> <p>MAX QDA narrative analysis life histories incl. codes and memos for interpretation.</p>	<p>Structured interviews with key informants (1997-2007) and document analysis to link what people say to what they do (ethnography).</p> <p>Narrative inquiry and qualitative analysis of structured interviews based on theoretical framework and compared with detailed narrative analysis life histories of Sudanese women.</p> <p>Participant observation during fieldwork.</p> <p>Cross-checking interim research findings (Chapter 7 and 8) with respondents.</p> <p>Secondary data including archival records, project files, reports and documents from development actors and agencies.</p>

A series of in-depth life history interviews with Sudanese women were undertaken in the course of 2008, both in Juba and in Khartoum, to gain insight into the lives and agency of participants to the peace practice. With their permission, the session was digitally recorded and analysed for content. The ten life histories collected express what meaning these women give to what happened in the course of their lives as well as what happened when participating in efforts to build and make peace in Sudan. An effort was made to interview a cross-section of women representing women committees and groups participating in the peace practice. An additional life history was collected of Anis Hagggar, a Sudanese businessman and resource person to the peace practice.

Since storytelling remains vivid in Sudan, the collection of these life histories was a methodological fit. The experience was both rich and challenging. Most life histories collected consisted of the interviewees taking control of the interview and talking openly about their experiences of making war and building peace. This rich source of information resulted in intimate knowledge that will both describe and explain the processes that are the subject of this research. As readers will no doubt note for themselves, the knowledge and evidence that each story contains has contributed immensely to a qualitative understanding, analysis and synthesis. It also added an important historical dimension that I was less aware of prior to starting my research, that is, the history of the interviewees within the history of Sudanese society. Each and every life history stimulated my curiosity and my desire to learn more. I am confident that these intimate and grounded stories will capture the imagination of my fellow researchers, policy makers and practitioners much easier than data in the form of numbers and statistics.

Life histories that are part and parcel of this research have been presented in the words of the storyteller as spoken language, be it in English or translated from Arabic by myself into English. Through the life histories one can hear Sudanese women speak. The life histories presented in this thesis communicate meaning and represent a powerful tool in transferring knowledge about the participation of women in peace processes. Additional interviews and discussions while undertaking field research, as well as a detailed review of both embassy and Ministry files regarding the peace practice helped triangulate information obtained. The theoretical framework and reflections on measuring empowerment and disempowerment supported detailed theoretical coding and analysis. To integrate and analyse the human factor in peacebuilding efforts, I undertook a series of 14 structured interviews in the course of 2011 to gain insight into the thoughts and actions of policy makers and practitioners who had been concerned with the peace practice. Interviews were held with individual men and women who had been involved between 1997-2007 including former Minister for Development Cooperation Jan Pronk (1989-1998). An overview of respondents who contributed their knowledge of and experience with the peace practice in Sudan is presented in Chapter 8. Different opinions and interpretations were explicitly sought. The theoretical framework and narrative analysis of the life histories of Sudanese women supported detailed theoretical coding, comparison and analysis of these interviews.

The data that I was able to gather throughout my research encouraged my search for answers, which with the life histories and numerous quotations gave me a first look at the answers to my research questions posed in Chapters 2 to 6. By sharing with my life history participants the transcription of their interviews and with respondents my research findings (Chapter 7 and 8), the result contributed to my qualitative research strategy which was developed to explore, describe and analyse the participation of Sudanese women in peace processes, interpret important events in the history of Sudan and advance theory in the domains of conflict, development and feminism (Ragin 1994). While the sample size is adequate for qualitative studies, given the large amount of data generated and complexity of analysis, sample strategies are explained in Chapter 7 (life histories) and Chapter 8 (interviews policy makers and practitioners). It is important to be aware of the limits and the fallibility of human memory as human recollection fades over time. Last but not least, research findings are not generalizable to other times and places.

### 3 Research trail

The following outline presents a research trail to provide a better understanding of my exploration and this research during the course of time. It documents my research effort and provides insight into how this research effort came about and evolved.

**Table 1.3** Research trail

**Prior to this research: action and reflection**

living an experience	<b>Sudan: 1993-1997</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• activities: background documents, field visits, humanitarian assessments, surveys, interviews, advice, discussions, presentations, coordinating and networking, trouble shooting, generating reflections on nexus conflict, development and feminism, generating reflections on formal and informal efforts to build and make peace including the Sudan IGAD Peace Process, consultations</li> <li>• output: couple of notebooks, project files, large collection of papers, large network inside Sudan, non paper, a peace practice</li> </ul>	
living an experience	<b>Sudan: 1998-2000</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• activities: undertaking a peace practice, discussions, interviews, presentations, coordinating and networking, trouble shooting, training, SPLM Women's Conference, The Hague Appeal for Peace (1999), Maastricht conference (2000), generating reflections on nexus conflict, development and feminism</li> <li>• output: project files, leaflets, newsletters, newspaper articles, training materials, two cassette tapes The Hague Appeal for Peace, reports, statements, appeals, large collection of papers, large network inside and outside Sudan</li> </ul>	
reflection	<b>Bangladesh: 2000-2004</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• activities: e-mails, advice, reflections, moving piles of paper and cassette tapes</li> <li>• output: e-mail messages, 2,5 meter paper tower</li> </ul>	



**Phases of research: building a story**

generating and selecting data	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>the Netherlands 2004-2008</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• activities: fieldmissions (incl. Nyala, Khartoum, Juba), advice, presentations, literature research and reflection, thinking through research methodology, backstopping mission peace practice, archival research Khartoum and The Hague, develop, test and apply research procedures, reflexivity, interviews, focus group discussion, collection of 11 life histories including ten Sudanese women and one Sudanese businessman who supported the peace practice, analysis, working draft Chapter 1-2</li> <li>• output: numerous reports, memos, publication on gender and security reform, research questions and research proposal (2008), research outline, over 11 hours of recording and 111 pages of transcription, photographs</li> </ul>
construction and interpretation	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>the Netherlands 2009-2011</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• activities: presentation inaugural retreat Global Centre for Research on Gender, Crisis Prevention and Recovery on strengthening research to policy linkages (Santpoort), presentation <i>Bovenkamer</i>, discussion Sudan study group, research Sudan Archive Durham (UK), discussions PhD students at Center of Conflict Studies and <i>Academie Promotie Platform</i>, reflexivity, develop, explain and test code system life histories, narrative analysis, fine-grained coding and memos Max QDA life histories, 14 structured interviews with policy makers, diplomats, practitioners, develop and test code system based on theoretical framework, validation working draft Chapter 7 and 8 with interviewees, present publication life histories to respondents and 'do no harm', working draft Chapter 3-9</li> <li>• output: 16 pages of notes Sudan Archive, 547 codes life histories, over 16 hours of recording and 202 pages of transcription, 544 codes structured interviews, 570 MB: 20 files and 858 items, final manuscript thesis</li> </ul>

**4 Reflexivity and ethics**

On the basis of above research strategy and trail, reflexivity was used rigorously while trying to avoid self-study and self-glorification. Reflexivity is a complex term. The experience of undertaking this research while being the very same person who once upon a time also started the peace practice, is more complex, sensitive, difficult, situational, risky and confusing, than I could ever articulate. Thankfully, I quickly discovered that I was not the only one wrestling with this issue, as editors of an introduction on subjectivity and reflexivity suppose that “the topic of subjectivity and reflexivity is a pressing and challenging problem of the social sciences” (Breuer, Franz, Katja Mruck and Roth Wolff-Michael 2002, 2). Moreover, research in the domain of conflict, development and feminism is as challenging as research in the area of forced migration which, according to Anna Schmidt, can be described as taking place in what sociologists would call a situation of ‘heightened reflexivity’ where both the findings and terrains are strongly influenced by the presence of the researcher (Schmidt 2007).

According to Linda Finlay and Brendan Gough, reflexivity requires critical self-reflection of the ways in which researcher’s social background, assumptions, positioning and behaviour impact on the research process (Finlay and Gough 2003). Being familiar with Sudan, I had spent enough time becoming part of the local landscape. Ultimately, I was known by some as an Arabist and a feminist, but mostly as a person who spoke Arabic and lived in Sudan for numerous years. I was known as a person familiar with issues of conflict, gender and development in Sudan; an aid worker and diplomat who had both worked with UNICEF and the Dutch Embassy; and, a person working in The Hague with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Importantly, Myron Glazer described trust as a key ingredient in gaining acceptance of prospective respondents and informants whilst undertaking field work during a research adventure (Glazer 1972). I felt known and trusted, yet I continued to wonder if my special situation would help or hinder my research endeavour.



Finlay and Gough mention five types of reflexivity: (1) retrospection, (2) intersubjective reflection, (3) mutual collaboration, (4) social critique, and (5) ironic deconstruction (Finlay and Gough 2003). As the reader will note, each type carries meaning in the framework of this research since (a) a deep interest in Sudan and gender, peace and development issues stems from personal experience; (b) the relationship with numerous Sudanese men and women is special; (c) life histories are returned to participants and findings are shared with policymakers and practitioners; and in view of (d) an understanding that issues of power are part and parcel of the research and will also feature in the research relationship; while (e) making sure that the research does not become a personal platform for those engaged in this research. Life history interviewees were keen to contribute to my research. They were also keen to tell their story and have their story told. In general, policymakers and practitioners were eager to share their experiences.

In order to ground my qualitative research in terms of content and method, as “subjectivity in research can be transformed from problem to opportunity” (Finlay and Gough 2003, 5), I felt that the careful and conscious use of reflexivity throughout the research process was crucial. Being transparent and reflexive about this process, would allow the reader to draw his or her own conclusions about the validity, reliability and the integrity of this research effort. I came to appreciate that my research would be a joint product of the participants in my research, myself as a researcher and a combination of both through a special relationship (Finlay and Gough 2003). This can be showcased by the following quote by Heraclitus (ca. 535-475 BC), a pre-Socratic Greek philosopher known for his doctrine of change being central to the universe: “[y]ou could not step twice into the same river; for other waters are ever flowing on to you”<sup>7</sup>.

In addition to paying attention to reflexivity, I focused on ethical issues throughout my research and was especially sensitive to potentially ‘harming’ Sudanese women who entrusted me with their life histories. All participants provided informed consent prior to their interviews and agreed to have their interviews digitally recorded. Some participants did advise me ‘not to record’ certain observations during the interviews, which I respected. One participant said she was confident I would know what to mention, being a diplomat. Given my research setting and finding that peacebuilding is not without risk, I refused to rely on diplomacy and provided all Sudanese participants with an opportunity to have a say over my presentation of their life histories. As a result only one participant requested me to delete a certain section for security reasons, which I did. I also offered anonymity for the Sudanese participants, but all of them rejected the idea, wanting instead to have their story told. As mentioned in the above research strategy, I also cross-checked interim research findings (Chapter 7 and 8) with respondents following their interviews. All participants were extremely willing and interested to participate in and contribute to my research.

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7 <http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Heraclitus> (accessed January 1, 2012).

## **5 Findings and discussion**

My research will provide you with rare insight into the participation of Sudanese women in an informal peacebuilding process and their interaction with the formal peace process in Sudan that culminated into the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (2005). It gives evidence of how Sudanese women tried to promote positive change in the midst of war and sheds light on the difference their participation in peacebuilding made. In order to arouse the reader's interest in this research I will quickly touch upon my key findings.

My research argues that new conceptual approaches to peacebuilding can effectively support women as peacebuilding actors including their aspirations for peace, equality and development. Especially, when working in situations of (post-)conflict, researchers, practitioners and policy makers need to resist the inclination of approaching issues of interest from the perspective of one domain or discipline only. Transdisciplinary curiosity supports inclusive approaches to gathering and generating knowledge as well as meaningful and innovative country specific practices. This study of a peace practice in Sudan demonstrates that converting Security Council Resolutions on women, peace and security into action requires political will and support, deep insight into countries in conflict, leverage, leadership, long term horizons, creativity, the tough hide of a rhinoceros, and the application of transdisciplinary knowledge. Building peace may also be even more critical than making peace from the perspective of peace, equality and development, irrespective of the importance of sealing the deal.

My research shows that in the midst of war, Sudanese women and men experienced sudden and overwhelming losses of resources, agency and achievements. It also shows that disempowerment does not exclude empowerment. Disempowerment and empowerment of Sudanese women in the midst and aftermath of war, and when studied over a prolonged period of time, are concurrent and dual processes. Consequently, my analysis of the life histories of Sudanese women who participated in the peace practice displays changes in gender relations and levels of empowerment which transcend the individual level. Contrary to what Sudanese women themselves expressed through their life histories and my analysis thereof, my research illustrates that many outside actors did not think it possible for Sudanese women to benefit from their struggle for peace, development and equality in the aftermath of war. Thinking of women as a single and organized group, which they are not, also turned out to be as persistent as thinking of women as victims instead of actors in processes of peace and reconstruction. When Sudanese women participating in the peace practice were given credibility, they were expected to achieve miracles which their men, together with the international community, had not been able to perform. Notably, those wishing to invest in the implementation of UN SCR 1325 may be deterred from the unrealistic and high expectations combined with the potential for the loss of ground created as a result of wrongful perceptions that women could not achieve social change.

The dilemmas of peacebuilding and international assistance in the transition from war to peace are many. Program development and implementation, as well as funding modalities

apply mostly to long term development or short term humanitarian assistance. The effort it took to bring parties together also did not meet expectations for fast and concrete consults, including peace. Knowledge of and experience with conflict management and conflict resolution, as well as third-party intervention and process minded peacebuilding is hard to find. Knowledge and experience of the issues, actors and interests in countries in conflict are not strategically sought and developed and require in-depth country specific knowledge. Decisions as to how and whom to include in efforts to build peace are fundamental and part of a social process of third party intervention, including outsiders. Moreover, building trust and bringing opposing parties together to build peace and support cooperation in the midst of war is not an easy job likely to show rapid results. Findings illustrate that as international actors come and go, local staff working with outside agencies have the ability to strengthen peacebuilding efforts with a historical perspective to conflict, better insight into grassroots level processes, and local knowledge of who is who. On the other hand, security threats and risks to local staff are not to be taken lightly as they face risks and peer pressure that diplomats do not. Consequently, peacebuilding efforts are not as harmless as we may think and third party intervention needs to be handled with knowledge and care. Moreover, when working relations between international agencies and politicians in countries ravaged by civil war are troubled, government agencies were found to be better situated than United Nations (UN) agencies and International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOS) to support inclusive processes to build trust and peace between conflict parties.

Pending the stage and relative ease or difficulty of the peace negotiations, Sudanese women managed to support and participate in a lengthy and exclusive formal peace process in Sudan. They tried to see farther than a peace agreement and advocated for equality and development, as well as peace. Whatever Sudanese women gained following the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (2005) in terms of their participation in decision-making, consequently emanated from a long struggle, and gains were not realised overnight. Post-CPA changes in the status of women and Sudanese gender relations can be explained by a combination of internal and external pressures at different levels over a prolonged period of time. Evidently, this struggle is not over. Peace is a process and so is social change.

## **6 Structure of thesis**

This research is organised into nine chapters. In this Chapter, I have touched upon the persistent exclusion of women from efforts to build and make peace. With the presentation of my research questions, I outlined my research strategy and showed how this research came about. Chapter 2 will situate my research and provide the background on the conflict in Sudan in order to better understand the course of events between 1997 and 2007. This period reflects both conflict as well as post-conflict times and focuses on conflict between the northern and southern parts of the country. For quick and easy reference, this chapter will start with a Sudan timeline to highlight important events described. Readers acquainted with the history of Sudan who wish to skip this part should not miss the life history of Samira Hasan which conveys lived history.

## Chapter 1

Chapter 3 will provide an overview of the main theoretical debates in the three domains of conflict, development and feminism as they relate to my research and on the basis of existing literature. This chapter will also bring the three domains together by cutting through the debate for or against one domain over the other. It will present a clear case for examining the established discourse of conflict, development and feminism, and contribute to new insights. The life history of Priscilla Joseph Kuch conveys lived practices in relation to the domains of conflict, development and feminism.

A description of peacemaking efforts in Sudan will be featured in Chapter 4. I will review peace processes in Sudan and the role of external actors, especially the Intergovernmental Authority for Drought and Development (IGADD). The life history of Anis Hagggar conveys key thoughts about mediation, peacebuilding and the role of women in Sudan.

Chapter 5 is about the changing socio-economic status of women in Sudan, the role of women within political organizations and women's movements. It will focus on the struggles and conditions faced by respectively northern and southern women before the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (2005), and changes as well as challenges thereafter. The life history of Agnes Nyoka conveys some of these struggles and challenges, as well as changes. According to Agnes peace is a process.

In Chapter 6, I will provide a detailed overview of the approach I came to develop in 1997 to support Sudanese women in their efforts to participate in peace processes. The approach became known as 'the Initiative to facilitate the participation of Sudanese women in the peace process (the Initiative)' and later as 'Sudanese Women Empowerment for Peace (SuWEP)'. The life history of Esta Kuku conveys the determination of Sudanese women to partake in peace processes and gives evidence of their agency, courage and interests. In this chapter, I also explore the preliminary answers to my research questions to show insights gained but without jumping to any final conclusions.

Chapter 7 presents a micro-level and horizontal narrative analysis of the life histories of Sudanese women collected, from which a compelling story emerges about the expansion of women's ability to make strategic life choices. The life history of Jennifer Kujang conveys that disempowerment and empowerment of Sudanese women in the midst and aftermath of war, and when analysed over a prolonged period of time, go hand in hand.

In Chapter 8, I will explore the practices, policies and mind-sets of outsiders that include diplomats, practitioners and policymakers. The life history of Samia Ahmed conveys that diplomats and practitioners in countries like Sudan can act as catalysts for social change and building peace, including the participation of women in peace processes. Political support was indispensable for creating an environment that promotes relationships across political divides and supports the empowerment of women and their participation in peace processes. According to Samia, Sudanese men and women alike, have to take responsibility to pursue change and make peace.

Seven out of 11 life histories collected in total are largely incorporated and offer readers a chance to get an insight into original research materials. The final chapter closes the loop with the presentation of my findings and conclusions. I also reflect here on implications and applications as well as future directions.



# Chapter 2

## Understanding the Conflict in Sudan

### Introduction

Struggle for independence, democracy and peace

Power, politics and patronage

Understanding peacemaking in Sudan: friends and foes

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement

It is not easy. Peace.

### Conclusion

Map 2.0 Sudan prior to independence South Sudan (2011)



Source: Nations Online Project.

## Quick overview of events described in this chapter

**Table 2.0** Sudan timeline

1820 (-1821)	Sudan is invaded by Ottoman Egypt and conquered
1881 (-1898)	Mahdi rebellion in the north against Ottoman-Egyptian domination
1882	The British gained control over Egypt and work their way to Sudan
1885 (-1898)	Mahdist rule until defeated by British troops
1896 (-1898)	Anglo-Egyptian reconquest of Sudan
1899 (-1955)	Sudan is ruled as an Anglo-Egyptian Condominium and British officials introduce native administration and indirect rule. Christian missionaries pursue education and health services in Southern Sudan. Northern and southern regions placed under separate administrations till 1946
1922	Britain declared Egypt “independent” and established sovereignty over Sudan
1955 (-1972)	Mutiny and riots in Torit. Start of the first civil war led by the Anyanya movement in Southern Sudan
1956	Egyptian and British flags replaced by Sudanese flag: start of Sudan’s independence as a parliamentary democracy
1958	A military coup takes place in Sudan. An elected civilian government is removed by General Ibrahim Abboud
1964	Protests around the University of Khartoum. A general strike forced Abboud to step down and a civilian coalition government is formed
1969	A military coup placed Colonel Jaafar Muhammad Nimeiry at power
1972	Joseph Lagu had brought together Anyanya leaders and southern politicians and a peace agreement is signed in Addis Ababa between Nimeiry and Lagu ending the first civil war and granting autonomy to Southern Sudan
1978	Discovery of commercial quantities of oil in Upper Nile region, Southern Sudan
1983	Nimeiry revoked southern autonomy, and introduced Islamic Law throughout Sudan
1983 (-2005)	Second civil war between Government of Sudan (GOS) and Sudanese People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM)
1985	President Nimeiry is removed from power by a group of military officers after massive demonstrations and widespread unrest
1986	A civilian coalition government is established following general elections and headed by Sadiq al-Mahdi
1989	Brigadier General Omar Hassan Ahmad Al-Bashir took power in a military coup supported by the NIF (National Islamic Front) and appoints himself president in 1993
1991	SPLM infighting, splits and divisions



1993	Peace talks in Abuja break down, IGAD continued efforts
1995	Attempted assassination on the life of Egyptian President Mubarak. UN decided on sanctions against Sudan
1995 (-1996)	Operation Lifeline Sudan Agreement on ground rules
1997	GOS accepted Declaration of Principles (DOP, 1994) as a basis for further discussion
1997	Khartoum Peace Agreement
1998	USA missile attack on al-Shifa pharmaceutical factory in Khartoum following accusations of promoting state-sponsored terrorism and bomb attacks on American embassies in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi
2001	UN lifts on sanctions against Sudan to support on-going peace negotiations
2001	9/11, a series of coordinated suicide attacks upon the United States in New York City and the Washington, DC area on September 11, 2001. Al-Qaeda and bin Laden cited US support of Israel, the presence of US troops in Saudi Arabia, and sanctions against Iraq as motives for the attacks
2001	USA puts new sanctions on Sudan and Al-Bashir faces power struggle with Al-Turabi
2002 (-2005)	The GOS (Al-Bashir) and SPLM (John Garang) sign Machakos protocol under the auspices of the IGAD to end the civil war and continue negotiations (on state and religion, autonomy, security arrangements, power sharing, wealth sharing and economic issues) till Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA, also known as the Naivasha agreement) is signed ending the second civil war.
2003 (till date)	Rebellion in Darfur
2005	A Government of National Unity (Khartoum) and autonomous Government of Southern Sudan (Juba) are formed
2008	National census
2008	International arbitration after repeated violent clashes between SPLM and northern forces in Abyei (Abyei Roadmap Agreement)
2009	The International Criminal Court (ICC) issued an arrest warrant for al-Bashir on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity. The ruling of the Permanent Court of Arbitration on the Abyei border is endorsed. Candidate nominations and voter registration started for general elections
2010	General elections
2011	Declaration of an independent state called South Sudan with Salva Kiir Mayardit as its first president, following referendum on future status of Southern Sudan

## **2 Understanding the Conflict in Sudan**

## 1 Introduction

Sudan is a country with political differences which cannot be easily reconciled and that has not changed with the declaration of an independent state called South Sudan in July 2011. Sudan is a large and complex country and its history is disputed; there are wheels within wheels. According to Robert Collins who wrote a history of modern Sudan “any understanding of Sudan today is to be found in the events of the last 200 years” (Collins 2008, 1). The history of Sudan is marked by civil war and revolution. Even though it is not uncommon to find articles in Sudanese English language newspapers like the Sudan Tribune debating the British colonial policies as the root cause of conflict in Sudan (Heleta 2008 and Ali 2008), the conflict cannot be simply described as a war between Muslim northerners and Christian southerners in post-British times. At the heart of the conflict is an amalgam of religious and racial, political and economic tensions defying easy description (Minear 1991). Scholars offer different understandings of the conflict in Sudan by stressing one cause or the other. According to Jok Madut Jok, Arab-African, Muslim-non Muslim, center-periphery confrontations have torn at the fabric of the nation (Jok 2007). Some argue that these civil wars are rooted in exclusive governance and power sharing (Rogier 2005), while others focus on identity as a key factor in these conflicts where race, ethnicity, culture, language, and religion affect participation and distribution in the political, social, economic and cultural life of Sudan (Deng 1995). Frances Stewart speaks of the lack of human development in Sudan as an important cause of war and wars as a major threat to human development (Stewart 2001). The biggest divides are between Muslims and Christians, Arabs and Africans, farmers and non-sedentary livestock owners with an intensified struggle over natural resources and power that increased the duration and complexity of civil warfare.

The country became independent after the withdrawal of the British and Egyptian rulers on 1 January, 1956. Henderson, who worked in Sudan as a British political officer from 1926 to 1953, called Sudan “a historical accident” (Henderson ca. 1900-1981, SAD.661/6/16). Colonial borders were drawn arbitrarily compartmentalizing peoples of different languages, cultures and religions within the borders of the state of Sudan, and leaving others divided between Sudan and its neighbouring countries. Its size, 2,505,813 square kilometres is the equivalent of Western Europe, and its diversity is central to Sudan’s history and wars. Apart from political differences, religious, ethnic and socio-economic differences have carved up the largest country in Africa throughout its history. When the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (2005) was signed, using data from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), Sudan counted 5.8 million people displaced by force within its borders. As such, Sudan has the largest population of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the world. The most recent 2008 Sudan census released a population figure of 39,154,490 persons of which 8,260,490 (21.1%) were counted in Southern Sudan (Bennett, Pantuliano, Fenton, Vaux, Barnett and Brusset 2010). Population figures however remained disputed, as numbers and politics met in, for example, the implementation of the CPA.

Africa’s longest civil strife in which Southern Sudan struggled to win independence between 1955 and 1972 (first civil war), and again from 1983 until 2005 (second civil war), is deeply

rooted in the hearts and minds of all Sudanese men and women. The period till 1983, or up to the time of the second civil war, is described below as a struggle for independence, democracy and peace. Furthermore, the period covering the second civil war, which started in 1983 will be described up to the signing of a peace agreement in 2005 that led to the formal independence of the state of South Sudan in mid 2011. This chapter serves to set the scene for this research and aims to provide the historical backdrop by leaps and bounds to better understand the drivers of conflict between the north and the south in most recent times. It provides a short country profile and focuses on key events in chronological order without being exhaustive.

## **2 Struggle for independence, democracy and peace**

Collins describes how the arrival of the Turks and the British before and after the Mahdist revolution (1881-1898) brought with them the civilizations and cultures from the Ottoman Empire and the Arab world in the nineteenth century while the British, by means of the Anglo-Egyptian condominium, introduced imperialism, education and religion to Sudan in the twentieth century (Collins 2008). The Mahdi rebellion in the north was the result of popular unrest that was transformed into a successful revolt against foreign rulers. It brought a religious reformer Muhammad Ahmad ibn ‘Abdallah to power in 1885, who proclaimed to be the Expected Mahdi. Al-Mahdi literally means ‘the guided one’. However, as all guidance originates from God, it has come to mean the ‘divinely guided one’. His supporters were called partisans of Islam, *Ansar* (Arabic: الأنصار), followers of the Mahdi and continue to be part of the political landscape today under the leadership of Sadiq al-Mahdi (Arabic: الصادق المهدي) and the Umma Party. This is different from the tribal rule that continued in the south long after the British conquered Sudan in 1898.

Throughout the colonial period, Britain wanted to isolate Southern Sudan to protect it from Arab and Islamic influence and to potentially link it to its other east African colonies, Uganda and Kenya (Collins 2008). The English language was introduced and Christian missionaries provided education and health services in the south. In general, Southern Sudan was excluded from participation in education and governance except for “unsatisfactory education” provided by missionaries (Collins 2008, 48). Doubts over the viability of Southern Sudan as an independent state and pressure from Egypt, finally led Britain to unite the south with the north and negotiate independence with a growing predominantly northern Arab national movement. As a result British administrators in the south were replaced by northerners who took over political and commercial affairs. The education system inherited by the Government of Sudan (GOS) after independence was originally designed to meet the needs of the colonial administration and its civil servants instead of the needs of the country (Badri and Bedri 2008 and Mynors 1930-1982, SAD.777/8/12). In 1955 the growing number of northerners arriving in the south as new administrators such as teachers and army officers caused strong protest amongst southerners. It generated mutiny and riots in Torit when Khartoum tried to transfer the command over southern troops to northern officers, nourishing revolt and the development of a southern guerrilla movement (Brown ca. 1906-1982, SAD.533/9/5).

The guerrilla army was named Anyanya, a term that has become part of the vocabulary of all Southern Sudanese languages but whose etymologic origin remains a subject of disagreement as it includes the vernacular for snake venom (Jok 2007). Educated southern civilians joined this rebellion when they became a target of oppression. The British did not intervene and on 1 January 1956 the Egyptian and British flags were replaced by a Sudanese flag marking the start of Sudan's independence as a parliamentary democracy. The civilian governments before independence, the Government of the National Unionist Party (NUP) under Ismail al-Azhari (Arabic: إسماعيل الأزهرى) and after independence, the government of the Umma Party, did not last long and a military government of General Ibrahim Abboud (Arabic: إبراهيم عبود), seized power in 1958.

In October 1964, demonstrations and popular uprising in Khartoum over the incompetence of the military government to end the war in the south brought about the downfall of General Abboud. A civilian caretaker government was formed with Sirr al-Khatim al-Khalifa (Arabic: سرالختم الخليفة), as its prime minister and a cabinet included two southerners, and a representative from each of the following five political parties: the Umma Party (UP), the National Islamic Front (NIF) or Muslim Brothers, the National Unionist Party (NUP), the People's Democratic Party (PDP), and the Sudan Communist Party (SCP). The war not only intensified in the second half of the 1960s but also internationalized as numerous foreign powers supported either the government or the Anyanya troops (ICG 2002 and Collins 2008). The Anyanya received support from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Israel and Ethiopia while Khartoum received the support of the Soviet Union, Algeria, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

In May 1969, a group of communist and socialist officers in the Sudanese army led by Colonel Jaafar Muhammad Nimeiry (Arabic: جعفر محمد النميري) staged Sudan's second post-independence military coup. These officers were committed to social and economic reform and nationalized all companies. A plebiscite provided Nimeiry with a six year presidential term upon which the Sudan Socialist Union (SSU) became the sole political organisation. Joseph Lagu managed to bring together Anyanya leaders and southern politicians in the Southern Sudan Liberation Movement (SSLM) bolstering their armed resistance. Consequently, a dialogue was opened between the government of Nimeiry organised by a Southerner, Abel Alier, the then minister for supply and trade, and the SSLM to seek a political solution. Significant negotiations that precluded any discussion of secession resulted in the Addis Abeba Agreement of March 1972 ending the first civil war.

As a result of this peace agreement the southern region, as defined by the boundaries set at independence, would be governed by a People's Regional Assembly, with its own parliament, and a High Executive Council of ministers with authority over local government, health, education, natural resources and the police. The national government in Khartoum would continue to control defence, currency and foreign affairs, amongst others. Economic, political and administrative development were given priority in the south. English was to remain the principal language of the south and Arabic the official language of Sudan.

The composition of the national army was a contentious issue but was resolved in the end. Collins called it “a historic but flawed agreement, for many of its articles were dependent upon mutual trust when there was none” (Collins 2008, 112 ). At this time Nimeiry was perceived as a national leader for all Sudanese even though some separatists remained active and criticised southerners like, Lagu and Alier. Against all odds, the Regional Assembly was able to govern Southern Sudan.

Expropriated companies and banks were returned to their owners and private investment started to flourish. Arab-petroleum producing states portrayed Sudan as ‘the breadbasket’ of the Middle East. Political unrest did not prevent Nimeiry from being elected to a second six-year term. The northern opposition reorganised itself while in exile after a failed coup d’état. The discovery of commercial quantities of oil in the Upper Nile region of Southern Sudan by Chevron in 1978 affected relations between the north and the south. Oil was to be piped from the south to Port Sudan in the north to serve the international markets, causing frustration and protests in the south. In the end Nimeiry revoked southern autonomy in 1983, flouting the Addis Abeba Agreement of 1972 and setting the scene for the second civil war by pursuing Arabization and imposing Islamic Law or Sharia (Arabic: شريعة) throughout the country. Public discipline in the form of executions and amputations became rampant. The consumption of alcohol, including locally made beer, was strictly forbidden. The revolt in the south grew in force and Colonel John Garang de Mabior joined the rebellion in 1983. Together with other commanders, he contributed to the re-establishment of the Sudanese People’s Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A).

### **3 Power, politics and patronage**

Nimeiry’s rule that saw collaboration with extreme rivals, such as with Communists and Islamists, came to an end after 16 years in 1985. A transitional military government took power after massive demonstrations and widespread unrest. Popular pressure brought some parties together again for peace talks after which the Koka Dam Declaration was signed in 1986 without having resolved the divisive issue of Sharia but stating that the country would be free from racism, tribalism, sectarianism and all causes of discrimination and disparity (ICG 2002). Sadiq al-Mahdi and leader of the Umma party (and the great grandson of the Mahdi) was then elected President in a general election establishing a coalition government including the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and few smaller parties. The coalition was not able to proceed towards any action due to continued collective disagreements over political, social, economic and security matters.

Fighting between the SPLA and the GOS continued, with militias being included, with neither Garang nor Sadiq al-Mahdi being able to unify forces in the the south or the north. Sadiq al-Mahdi appointed Hassan Al-Turabi (Arabic: حسن الترابي), an Islamist fundamentalist of the Muslim Brothers and leader of the National Islamic Front (NIF), as his foreign minister. New Islamic laws caused commotion and undermined the alliance with the communists, leftist parties and the Union of Sudan African Parties (USAP). Relations with Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya and the US grew to be increasingly complex and difficult. Darfur became

a tribal battleground. The partnership between the Umma Party and the NIF caused the DUP leader Muhammad Othman Al-Mirghani (Arabic: محمد عثمان الميرغني), to open direct talks with the SPLM/A in Addis Abeba in 1988, returning to Khartoum as a peacemaker. Both parties had agreed to a cease-fire and the suspension of Islamic Law or the September 1983 laws. Thousands of Sudanese rushed into the streets of Khartoum to support a new opportunity for peace. Finally, the NIF refused to accept the agreement even though 48 political parties and the trade unions signed a 'National Declaration of Peace' in March 1989 embracing it. On the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 1989, Sadiq al-Mahdi was overthrown in a coup led by Brigadier General Omar Hassan Ahmad Al-Bashir (Arabic: عمر حسن أحمد البشير), supported by the NIF. All political parties were banned and opposing political leaders were arrested and imprisoned. The northern and southern opposition forces decided to unite under the banner of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), strengthening the SPLM/A and expanding the conflict beyond Southern Sudan. As a result fighting increased and the war intensified. The northern opposition parties that joined the NDA started to think differently of the question of state and religion.

Following the coup, a fifteen-member National Salvation Revolutionary Command Council (NSRCC) was established and Brigadier General Al-Bashir became chairman of the Council, prime minister, commander-in-chief of the armed forces and minister of defence. Slowly the NIF led by Al-Turabi took over politics in partnership with Al-Bashir, together with NIF member Ali Osman Mohammed Taha (Arabic: علي عثمان محمد طه) as minister of social affairs. They established an Islamic dictatorship and restructured the intelligence and security apparatus with more and more arbitrary powers. The war escalated and the rule of Islamic Law, Islamic dress and jihad or holy war were called for. Even though militant Islam had already raised its head before, it now took over the military, the executive, the judiciary and the economy. To dot the i's of the Islamic revolution, thousands of women were sent home from their jobs without rhyme or reason. There was no longer room for women in the market economy since according to the NIF or Muslim Brothers, the perfect Sudanese woman was a devout Muslim who took care of her reputation, husband, children, and household (Turabi 1991 and Collins 2008). Soon, public appearance by Sudanese women and their behaviour were strictly defined and restricted with numerous women being arbitrarily arrested and severely punished. A serious problem also arose among those Sudanese practising Christianity and traditional African religions throughout the country as they became subject to Islamic Law, be it in Khartoum, the Nuba Mountains or the south.

Al-Bashir and Al-Turabi in particular reached out to the global Islamist movement following the First Gulf War (1990-1991) and provided refuge to Osama bin Laden (Arabic: أسامة بن لادن), amongst others. Pan Islamic thinking and a powerful economic base were developed hand in hand. Khartoum enjoyed a military windfall after the overthrow of Ethiopian dictator Mengistu Haile Mariam (1991). Khartoum had supported the opponents of the Mengistu government, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), and was rewarded with the closure of all SPLA training camps and supply lines when the EPRDF got to power. In Sudan, the saying 'the enemy of my enemy is my friend' holds very true. When

ethnic conflict within the SPLM/A caused a split into two groups: the mainstream party led by Garang (a Dinka) and the SPLA Nasir, Al-Bashir supported the breakaway faction led by Riek Machar (a Nuer) and Lam Akol (a Shilluk). The latter broke up again into the South Sudan Independence Movement/Army (SSIM), renamed later yet again as the Southern Sudan Defence Force (SSDF), led by Machar and the SPLM/United remaining under Akol.

The New York Times (June 26, 1993) spoke of the Sudan as the “staging ground for Islamic extremists”<sup>8</sup> supporting various armed Islamic militant groups. Shortly after the US State Department added Sudan to its list of countries accused of promoting state-sponsored terrorism, Al-Bashir appointed himself President of the Islamic Republic of Sudan in October 1993. While the Addis Abeba Agreement (1972) clearly engaged regional and international actors the international community had started active mediation in the beginning of the nineties following an agreement between the UN, the GOS and the SPLM/A for the establishment of Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS), and a temporary cease fire to allow for the delivery and distribution of humanitarian assistance.

Initially member states of the Horn of Africa Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Desertification (IGADD), later IGAD (Intergovernmental Authority on Development), and a four-nation mediation committee that included the presidents of Kenya, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Uganda, brought together the SPLM and the SPLM/United in May 1994. The parties agreed on a Declaration of Principles (DOP) in which they accepted to endorse self-determination and a democratic secular Sudan for the Southern Sudanese. The Government of Sudan disagreed and continued to object during peace negotiation sessions. However, the DOP did produce the foundation for continued negotiations supported by the Western world as the ‘Friends of IGAD (FOI)’. Al-Bashir refused to accept the right of Southern Sudan to self-determination and, after numerous negotiation sessions, relations deteriorated between Khartoum and the leaders of Ethiopia, Eritrea and Uganda.

During 1994-1995, forced conscription for all males between the ages of 16 and 26 was pursued aggressively, collecting boys and men in the streets to join the Popular Defence Forces (PDF) to fight in the south. At the same time, the US provided economic and military support to Uganda, Ethiopia and Eritrea, for the benefit of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), in response to Sudanese support to militant Islam and aimed to undermine Al-Bashir’s government in Khartoum. Following the attempted assassination of Egyptian President Mubarak in 1995 and the growing isolation of Sudan, the GOS changed its policy of allowing Islamists to enter the country without a visa. A power struggle between Al-Bashir and Al-Turabi became apparent accompanied by mounting hostility from African and Arab leaders and pressure from the UN Security Council and the Western world. Sudan was also condemned by the UN Human Rights Commission for slavery, extra-judicial killings, and arbitrarily locking up political prisoners. Earlier reports spoke of torture, arbitrary detention and forced displacement of civilian populations in the south and the

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8 <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/06/26/nyregion/specter-terror> (accessed December 26, 2011).



Nuba Mountains. Osama bin Laden left the country quietly. The DUP and the Umma Party started to warm up to the idea of self-determination.

Machar of the SSDF signed another peace charter with Khartoum in 1996. Former Southern Sudanese SPLA commanders like William Nyuon Bany and Kerubino Kuanyin Bol William were also able to make deals with the government in Khartoum. Consequently, six rebel factions and the Sudanese government signed the Khartoum Peace Agreement in 1997 in which self-determination for the south was still not addressed. Their leaders, including Machar, consequently assumed government positions or were incorporated into the regular army. Breakaways often seemed motivated by ego and money rather than conflicting ideas. Garang was gaining both control of the SPLM/A, and regaining ground. During the 1999 dry season the government had launched an attack on the Nuba Mountains, destroying villages and displacing Nuba people. A military solution became most unlikely as government troops and the SPLA had fought to a stalemate. At the end of 1999, Al-Bashir and Al-Turabi finally clashed over political reforms and the distribution of power. Consequently, Al-Bashir declared a state of emergency, announced new elections to the National Assembly in December 2000 and won having received the majority of the votes. When Al-Turabi turned against Al-Bashir in the media and signed a memorandum of understanding with the SPLM/A, he was arrested and imprisoned.

Five days before Islamist suicide terrorists crashed two American airliners into the World Trade Center and one into the Pentagon on September the 11<sup>th</sup> in 2001, the then US President George W. Bush appointed Senator John Danforth as his special envoy for peace in Sudan. After the attacks on the US and the subsequent American focus on 'the war on terror', the Sudanese authorities quickly announced their cooperation with the US against terrorism. Hilde Frafjord Johnson called the attacks on the US "the most decisive factor" in making peace in Sudan with the IGAD peace process in place (Johnson 2011, 23). In return for its cooperation, Sudan requested to be removed from the list of states sponsoring terrorism, and hoped for both diplomatic and economic sanctions to be lifted. Sudan had become an oil producer at the end of the nineties and managed to obtain plenty of resources and a different status in the world. As government oil revenues increased, military expenditures also increased. By 2002 oil revenues amounted to approximately US\$ 805 million and accounted for nearly 45 percent of total government revenues (HRW 2003). With these revenues it became easier to buy weapons thereby fuelling the war but also playing a role in bringing warring parties together. The US and its diplomatic allies started to apply strong diplomatic and economic pressure on all parties. In 2002, Machar decided to join up again with Garang, signing the Nairobi declaration and in the same year the GOS and the SPLM/A signed the Machakos protocol, establishing a framework for final peace talks. Khartoum agreed to a referendum on secession for Southern Sudan, while the SPLM/A agreed to Islamic Law in the north.

Talks progressed with a face-to-face dialogue between Taha (holding the position of First Vice President of the GOS) and Garang (Chairman and Commander-in-Chief of the

SPLM) in 2003 along the shores of Lake Naivasha, while Darfur turned into a conflict zone and protracted crisis. Both peacemakers and the international community worried about the increase of violence and insecurity in problematical and tense Darfur following the insurgency of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) with Islamist roots and the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM). However, the international community put first priority on ending civil war in Southern Sudan based on its security and economic interests (Mingst and Karns 2007). Finally, Khartoum and the SPLM/A signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) on the 9<sup>th</sup> of January 2005 in Nairobi. The Agreement was based on protocols established by the Machakos agreement, setting arrangements for power and wealth-sharing, a referendum on southern autonomy, and a permanent ceasefire. Some thorny issues remained unresolved, including whether or not the oil-rich border territory of Abyei would become part of the north or the south. In July 2005 Garang was sworn in as First Vice President of Sudan but died in a helicopter crash a few weeks later. Salva Kiir Mayardit, the head of the SPLA's military wing, assumed leadership of the SPLM/A following violent street protests after Garang's death. Kiir formed a cabinet for the autonomous Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS) and signed a new constitution before the end of 2005.

In May 2006, the GOS and Minni Minnawi's faction of the SLM signed the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) but the JEM and Abdul Wahid Nur's faction of the SLM refused to sign, leaving Darfur insecure and violent. After 20 years of reign, Sudan's President Al-Bashir became the first head of state to be indicted by the International Criminal Court, on charges of crimes against humanity and war crimes for his role in organizing Sudan's abusive counterinsurgency campaign in Darfur. Till now the tragedy in Darfur continues. The road to CPA implementation became a long and bumpy journey to an independent new state called South Sudan in July 2011, and the journey continues.

#### **4 Understanding peacemaking in Sudan: friends and foes**

At all times Sudan's neighbours, Uganda, Libya, Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Egypt, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Chad and the Central African Republic, were interested in both the ramifications of Sudan's civil wars as well as the course peace negotiations and an eventual peace agreement would take. Proxy wars in the Horn of Africa were many and relationships between Sudan and its neighbours have not been good at all times (Healy 2008). Some of the neighbouring countries were simply regarded as Arab brethren including Egypt and Libya while others were regarded as African and Christian. Relations between Sudan and Egypt were strained at times, but Egypt generally supported the GOS given its colonial past and concerns over the free flow of the Nile River. As Emeric Rogier observed most neighbours were involved "directly or indirectly, on one side or the other and sometimes on both sides alternatively" (Rogier 2005, 30). Alex de Waal described Sudanese political life as 'a market place' in his lecture<sup>9</sup> to the Royal African Society (May 2008). Sudan and its regional outlook clearly fit this description as well. Ethiopia, Eritrea and Uganda were

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9 Lecture: Can Sudan survive? <http://www.royalafricansociety.org> (accessed December 26, 2011).

drawn into the conflict in the mid 1990s when they supported the SPLM/A together with the US in an effort to curb Khartoum's role in exporting militant Islam. When Ethiopia and Eritrea provided support to the SPLA and the NDA, the Government of Sudan supported extremist Islamic groups in these countries. When Uganda started to provide shelter to the SPLA, the Government of Sudan responded by providing the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) with arms and training sites in order to undermine the Ugandan Government. On the other hand Sudan did not hesitate to take advantage of the chaos created by the Congolese civil war by launching attacks against the SPLA from Congolese soil (Jok 2007).

In the 1990s, numerous initiatives to bring about peace in Sudan were launched. Nigerian President Ibrahim Babangida as the head of the Organization of African Union (OAU) organised a peace conference in Abuja in 1992. During this meeting, the only issue SPLA-factions managed to agree upon was self-determination, which the GOS rejected. A second meeting in Abuja in 1993 failed and motivated the heads of state from Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Uganda in their capacities as members of the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD) to become involved in peacemaking efforts in Sudan from 1994 onwards. IGADD, renamed IGAD or Intergovernmental Authority for Development in 1996, had been established in 1986 by Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda, Somalia, Djibouti, the Sudan and joined by Eritrea. Although, its original objective was drought control and development in the Horn of Africa, the Intergovernmental Authority soon expanded areas of regional cooperation to achieve the promotion and maintenance of peace and security and humanitarian affairs, as well as food security, environmental protection and economic cooperation. At the time Al-Bashir, Garang and Machar welcomed IGADD's involvement in peacemaking. The formation in 1994 of the 'Friends of IGADD' (FOI), a group of western donors later renamed IGAD Partners Forum (IPF), consequently marked international recognition of IGADD's new role. The first friends of IGADD included Australia, Canada, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States of America.

Consecutive peace talks led by Kenya in 1994 resulted in the acceptance of the Ethiopian draft of a 'Declaration of Principles' (DOP) sponsored by IGADD governments, the SPLM, and SPLM/United in which they agreed to endorse self-determination and a democratic secular Sudan for the Southern Sudanese. The DOP was rejected by the GOS and the process did not move forward until 1997 after intense regional pressure from IGAD states and their sponsors. In 1997 the GOS went back to the negotiation table and accepted, not without reservations, the DOP as a basis for further discussion. Evidently, the GOS preferred reconciliation efforts by its Arab neighbours with Egypt and Libya presenting a joint peace initiative in 1999. The Arab neighbours were concerned with the lack of participation by the northern parties opposing the GOS in the IGAD peace process and uneasy with African states taking the lead. They were upset with their formal exclusion from the IGAD peace process given, especially, Egypt's considerable interests in Sudan including access to water from the Nile. The Egyptian-Libyan peace proposal called for resuming the peace process in Sudan, forming an inclusive transitional cabinet representing all political parties, specifying

dates and arrangements of new general elections, and an immediate cessation of all forms of hostilities. The resulting nine-point memorandum (2001) was endorsed by the Government of Sudan and called for a transitional government with an interim body to review Sudan's constitution. It called primarily for the preservation of the unity of the Sudan, ignoring the issue of self-determination. The IGAD initiative was revitalised by President Moi of Kenya, following Arab reconciliation efforts and strong coordinated leadership and IGAD support by Norway, the UK and especially the United States of America. President Moi appointed Lieutenant-General Lazarus Sumbeiywo as Kenya's special envoy for the IGAD peace process.

Up until 1989, three key texts and agreements stood out: the Addis Abeba Agreement (1972), the Koka Dam Declaration (1986) between the SPLM/A and a coalition of northern professionals and civic activists including the Umma Party, and the November Accords (1988) between the SPLM/A and the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP). All were signed in Ethiopia. In the 1990s, at least fifteen agreements between a number of parties would emerge and help shape the upcoming Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), including:

- the Frankfurt Declaration by the GOS and the SPLM/A-Nasir (1992);
- the Agreement on Reconciliation of the divided SPLM/SPLA, between the SPLM/A-Torit and SPLM/A-Nasir in Abuja (1992);
- the Nairobi Communiqué of the National Democratic Alliance (1993);
- the Washington Declaration by the SPLM/A and SPLM/A-United (1993);
- the Declaration of Principles (IGADD) in Nairobi (1994, signed by GOS in 1997);
- the Chukudum Agreement between the SPLM/A and Umma party (1994);
- the Political Charter between the GOS and the SPLA/United (1995);
- the Asmara Declaration by the NDA (DUP, UP, SCP, USAP, SPLM/A, Trade Unions, Legitimate command, Beja Congress, Sudan Alliance Forces (SAF), Independents) (1995);
- the Operation Lifeline Sudan Agreement on Ground rules between the SPLM/A and UNICEF; between the SSIM/S and UNICEF; between the SPLM/A-United and UNICEF (1995-1996);
- the Political Charter between the GOS, the SSIM/A and SPLMA/A-Bahr al Ghazal group (1996);
- the Declaration of Principles for the Resolution of the Nuba Mountains' Problem between the GOS and the Nuba Mountains United SPLM/A in Nairobi (1996);
- the Sudan Peace Agreement (or Khartoum Peace Agreement) between the GOS, the SSDF, the SPLM/A Bahr al Ghazal, the South Sudan Independence Group (SSIG), the Union of Sudan African Parties (USAP) and the Bor Group in Khartoum (1997);
- the Fashoda Peace Agreement between the GOS and the SPLM/A-United (1997);
- the Wunlit Dinka-Nuer Covenant (1999); and,
- the Waat Lou-Nuer Covenant (1999).

It is not surprising that by April 2002, authors such as Katy Salmon from Inter Press Service wrote that Sudan was “facing a ‘traffic jam’ of peace initiatives” (Salmon 2002). An important distinction between peace efforts of the 1990s and efforts launched from mid 2001 onwards was a significant higher level of international involvement.

The Machakos Protocol (July 2002) between the GOS and the SPLM/A finally constituted a breakthrough in the Sudan IGAD peace process building on the plethora of agreements, charters and covenants. This Protocol further developed and reinforced the earlier Declaration of Principles of July 1994, by generating a basis for a common text and saw the parties agree on issues that had prevented previous talks from making any progress. The first breakthrough was that the two parties agreed on how to deal with the relationship between the Sudanese state and religion. This issue had been an important stumbling block in previous talks between the parties and had prevented progress on other issues. Khartoum agreed to abandon its imposition and application of Islamic Law in Southern Sudan while the SPLM/A renounced on its demand for secularism throughout Sudan accepting that Islamic Law would remain as the source of legislation for the north while the southern region would be ruled by secular administration. The second breakthrough was that the parties agreed on a set of general principles to govern a federal Sudan. Thirdly, the parties agreed on the right of Southern Sudan to hold an internationally monitored referendum on its continued union with Northern Sudan. The last two issues formed the basis of a trade-off between the GOS and the SPLM/A. In the Machakos Protocol, a middle ground was found between the two key conflicting parties, where both the SPLM/A and the GOS would give unity a chance.

By 2002, both the GOS and SPLM/A had more reason to be conciliatory than ever before. Sudan hoped to normalise international relations offering peace in Southern Sudan and cooperation against terrorism. The GOS was concerned with staying in power and the ability to derive benefits from increasing oil revenues instead of becoming a pariah. A military victory was not in sight and the country suffered an ever worsening socio-economic situation marked by unemployment and war fatigue. The SPLM, on the other hand, felt strong both militarily (after its attacks to disrupt oil exploration) and politically after its reconciliation with Machar (SSDF), but then realised that oil revenues flowing to Northern Sudan would turn the war in favour of Al-Bashir sooner or later.

A dynamic relationship developed between Khartoum and Washington resulting from the cumulative effects of the following important acts: the US had accused Khartoum of promoting state-sponsored terrorism; the US launched cruise missile attacks on al-Shifa pharmaceutical factory in Khartoum (1998), partly in retaliation for the truck bomb attacks on American embassies in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi; and last but not least 9/11, a series of four coordinated suicide attacks upon the United States in New York City and the Washington, D.C. area on September 11, 2001. The Government of Sudan became more responsive and started to cooperate with the US in tracking down suspects of terrorism. Washington started to play a more constructive role and the Sudan IGAD peace process

could count on greater international involvement and support including a strong mediation team. Yet, “the signing of the Machakos Protocol surprised both the parties and the international community”<sup>10</sup> according to Nicholas Haysom, who worked as a mediator under General Sumbeiywo on the IGAD peace process (Accord 2006).

Intense negotiations continued for two and a half years after the signing of the Machakos Protocol, involving matters related to security arrangements, sharing of wealth and power, as well as resolution of the conflict in Southern Kordofan, the Blue Nile and Abyei with Darfur that erupted in 2003. Immense killings, rape and destruction in Darfur made the headlines in 2004. Both GOS and the international community were predetermined to finalise IGAD negotiations and glad to conclude a Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the GOS and the SPLM/A (Collins 2008, Jok 2007 and Rogier 2005). The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed on 9 January 2005, formally ended Africa’s longest civil conflict.

## **5 The Comprehensive Peace Agreement**

The President of the Security Council called the 260-page Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), signed in Nairobi on January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2005 between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement, “a historic moment of great opportunity for the country” (UN Security Council 2005) in his press release following the 5120<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Security Council. The CPA includes the following agreements that had been successively concluded in the course of the IGAD Sudan peace process and include; the Machakos Protocol (20 July 2002); the Agreement on Security Arrangements (25 September 2003) involving for the first time both Garang (SPLM/A) and then first vice-president Taha (GOS); the Agreement on Wealth-Sharing (7 January 2004); the Protocol on the Resolution of the Conflict in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile States; the Protocol on the Resolution of the Conflict in Abyei Area; and, the Protocol on Power-Sharing (all signed on 26 May 2004). Implementation modalities and ceasefire arrangements were agreed upon in December 2004. Garang called the CPA “a truly Sudanese product facilitated through a regional effort by IGAD and the international community”<sup>11</sup> (UN Security Council 2005).

The GOS and the SPLM agreed on the following key issues:

- State and religion: Islamic Law to be applied in the north; parts of the Interim National Constitution to be drafted for Islamic Law not to apply to non-Muslims throughout the country recognizing that Sudan is multi-cultural, multi-racial, multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-lingual;
- Autonomy: Southern Sudan to enjoy an autonomous status for a period of six years after which a referendum in 2011 will determine the future status recognizing the right to self-determination;
- Security arrangements: The military mission and mandate of the armed forces before and after the interim period including joint integrated units besides disarmament,

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10 <http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/sudan/mediators-perspective.php> (accessed December 26, 2012).

11 <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2005/sc8306.doc.htm> (accessed December 26, 2011).

- demobilisation, reintegration and reconciliation to create an enabling environment supporting human security and national reconciliation;
- Power sharing: Asymmetric federalism with a Government of National Unity with a division of seats among the National Congress Party (52%), the SPLM (28%), other northern political forces (14%) and other southern political forces (6%) besides a Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS) and specific powers of the Government of National Unity, the GOSS and states. Principles of Administration included human rights and fundamental freedoms and articles on the equal rights of men and women, family and marriage as well as a population census, elections and representation;
  - Wealth sharing: Oil revenues to be shared equally between the GOS and the SPLM with at least 2% of the revenues to be allocated to the states producing the oil;
  - Economic issues: A dual banking system with an Islamic banking system in the north and a conventional banking system operating in the south including the design of a new currency during the interim period to reflect the cultural diversity of Sudan.

According to Simon Mason, an environmental scientist and mediator who researched the mediation experiences in Sudan, “the process was very inclusive in terms of topics, but less inclusive in terms of actors” (Mason 2008, 75). This means that when dealing with issues, stakeholders and experts were brought in for thematic discussions including consultations with traditional leaders and women. However, efforts to include other political actors were rejected by the GOS who refused to allow the northern opposition parties to join in, and the SPLM/A refused to grant any legitimacy to the pro-government southern militias. Despite the fact that the CPA was presented as inclusive in terms of subject matter and specific in terms of implementation, the agreement neither dealt with the conflict in Darfur, nor the Beja conflict in Eastern Sudan. Garang clarified shortly after the signing of the CPA that the agreement could be applied as a basis for resolving the conflicts in Darfur and Eastern Sudan and that “first parties had to commit themselves to the underlying principles and parameters” (UN Security Council 2005). Taha mentioned during the same meeting that the agreement and its provisions for power and wealth sharing had laid the grounds for resolving the conflict in Darfur and declared the year 2005 a year for peace for Sudan. The international community concurred given the statement of the Secretary General’s Special Representative for Sudan, Jan Pronk, that “the manner in which the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement would unfold would determine the future not only of Darfur and other areas in conflict within the Sudan, but also the future of the country as a whole” (UN Security Council 2005).

Building on the CPA, a Joint Assessment Mission’s report (2005) entitled “Framework for Sustained Peace, Development and Poverty Eradication”, described the historic underdevelopment of Southern Sudan and its lack of inclusion in decision-making as the two main causes of conflict in Sudan (UN Joint Assessment Report 2005). This mission was carried out jointly by the World Bank and the United Nations, together with the GOS and the SPLM. Its synthesis report was adopted by the UN agencies and development partners working in Sudan as a blueprint for Sudan’s reconstruction and development needs. It



was when Garang died on July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2005 in a helicopter crash that the SPLM lost its “chief ideologue and visionary” (International Crisis Group 2005a, 5) after he had been sworn in as Sudan’s first vice-president of the new transitional Government of National Unity.

The country managed to hold on to the CPA irrespective of numerous setbacks including heavy fighting between Sudanese armed forces and the SPLA in the town of Malakal in 2006, which was started by a clash between a northern militia taking in a Sudanese army garrison and the SPLA. Reconciliation amongst southerners was also pursued. In the beginning of 2006, a Juba Agreement was signed between the SPLM and southern commanders to safeguard their inclusion in the Government of Southern Sudan and its army irrespective of their previous alignment with the government in Khartoum. The SPLM decided to withdraw itself from the Government of National Unity on October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2007 because the National Congress Party (NCP) was not implementing key aspects of the CPA. However, they returned several weeks later after their leaders “resolved a string of grievances” (Sudan Tribune 2007). The following issues critical to the implementation of the CPA proved increasingly troublesome towards the end of 2007 (ICG 2008 and Mason 2008):

- the demarcation of the north-south border given its impact on wealth and power sharing;
- the status of Abyei including three oil fields;
- the redeployment of forces;
- the delays in the nationwide census which should have been conducted mid 2007;
- the NCP control over the oil sector and lack of transparency.

In early 2008, Northern Sudanese troops left Southern Sudan but issues of wealth and power translated into parties to the CPA exchanging blows that resulted in the destruction of Abyei’s main town. Oilfields are based in the south while refineries and pipeline infrastructure facilitating oil exports are based in the north. Oil production figures and the distribution of its revenues became a source of mistrust and discontent (Sudan Tribune 2011). Though Southern Sudan became more dependent on foreign assistance than Northern Sudan, oil revenues by far exceeded donor expenditures (Healy 2008 and Bennett, Pantuliano, Fenton, Vaux, Barnett and Brusset 2010). Donor pledges and peace dividend expectations were not met (Johnson 2011, interview Pronk and life history interview Agnes Nyoka). The nationwide census in preparation for the referendum was finally conducted in April 2008 and did not resolve issues of sharing wealth and power. Results were rejected by Southern Sudanese officials. However, the referendum that took place in January 2011 to determine if South Sudan should declare its independence from Sudan resulted in 98.83% of the population voting for independence.

Disputes over the region of Abyei and the demarcation of the north-south border continued and escalated since oil resources represent a lifeline to both Northern and Southern Sudan. Irrespective of the promise of separate referenda and popular consultations, the three regions consisting of Abyei, South Kordofan, and Blue Nile, remain conflict ridden. The idea of other regions exercising self-determination by referendum was known to meet resistance



(Johnson 2011). Even with the formal independence of the state of South Sudan declared on 9 July 2011, the relationship between North and South Sudan is anything but peaceful. Both states also face domestic problems and intrastate conflict. Knowing that the road to CPA implementation was long and laden with challenges, the road to peace remains to be travelled.

## **6 It is not easy. Peace.**

Life histories contribute to a better understanding of the conflict in Sudan. The history of Sudan described so far and put together with life histories can provide a better explanation of perceptions of an individual's roles, responsibilities and rights in decision-making, the capacity to make strategic life choices, respective contributions to warfare, reconciliation and peacemaking, and the perceived value of those contributions. The life history of Samira Hasan is presented below in her own words. Samira was born in Khartoum and lived through both wars. She was 12 years old when the first war started and 40 years old when the second civil war started.

Sudan's history through the eyes of Samira illustrates the actual struggle for independence, democracy and peace. Her stories bring history home and provide evidence of her personal struggle to work, to have financial independence and participate in politics in a predominantly Muslim Northern Sudanese society. Important to highlight is that educational opportunities existed in post-colonial Sudan and a trade union movement gained memberships and therefore influence but had to move underground after the 1971 rise of Islamism. In the beginning of her thirties and when working at the court of justice, Samira joined the trade union to fight discrimination against women. When the NIF came to power, she was imprisoned for three years.

Samira Hasan participated in the peace practice as a member of the NDA working group on behalf of the Democratic Unionist Party. According to her, it took a long time for political parties in Sudan to start taking the idea of women's participation seriously. Samira also sheds light on the role of women and men in conflict resolution. Gender roles may have changed during the conflict but as Samira's story demonstrates, the underlying ideas about values and economic and political participation do not necessarily change easily. In 2004 she was the first woman to become elected as member of the political office of the DUP. She is against warfare and aims for parliament.

The following elements present an initial analytical perspective of Samira's life history:

- on value systems, traditions and beliefs: According to Islam, marriage is a religious duty and is consequently a moral safeguard as well as a social necessity. When arranged marriages fail and women seek economic independence, divorce and child custody, they face traditional restrictions and male-dominated social norms;
- on war: Wars need money and people pay the price. War affects livelihoods and poverty strikes. Some men never return home from war, while others return unable to care for their families as a result of severe war injuries causing disability;

## Chapter 2

- on peace: Peace should not only be seen as ending the war. Peace is about a roof over your head, enjoying education and health services. Peace is about democracy;
- on men and women building peace: Men focus on political statements and party politics; women bring both humanitarian issues and political issues to the table and engage in humanitarian assistance. Women are gaining ground in politics;
- on armed struggle: North Sudanese women, as opposed to South Sudanese women did not participate in active combat but participated in the war by preparing food for the troops and contributing funds. Young men and boys were picked up from the streets in Khartoum and forced to join the armed struggle without proper training.

The overall analysis of life histories collected as part of this research will be presented in Chapter 7.

### **Life history 2.6** Samira Hasan Mahdi Shura

#### **This one lost her uncle and that one lost her son**

My name is **Samira Hasan Mahdi Shura** and I am 65 years old. I completed Khartoum branch of Cairo University in 1982, Faculty of Trade, and the Department of General Management. I have four children, two sons and two daughters. My husband is still alive but I am divorced since a long time and I brought up the children on my own. My parents passed away. My father passed away early and my mother remarried another man, an engineer ... He was very good to us, we were able to participate in higher education, and received sort of aristocratic education. I went to the sisters' school. In those days it was a very expensive school that not any one could go to and I went there. My mother was educated and she went to the American school in *Bahri* (in Khartoum State). She is very organized and precise in her life; she brought us up in a military way. Appointment is appointment. It taught me later how to organize my life.

I was born in Khartoum. The war in the south, in all honesty, it is when you see the fighting or hear the stories of neighbours, family and friends. You hear this one lost her husband, this one lost her brother, this one lost her uncle and that one lost her son. Others returned and were hit by landmines, lost their hands, their legs; they became invalids who can no longer look after their families. That is a difficult situation which really affected me and made me experience the cruelty of war. The other thing I felt was in terms of living, because the government would spend all its money on warfare, it imposed heavy taxation and introduced high prices to finance its war. Especially those with little income would suffer in terms of food, nutrition and so many things, to the extent that the whole of Sudan, say 90-99% of Sudan, and especially children would suffer once again of malnutrition. Why, because people would experience scarcity and would economize on things like milk, children no longer drink milk, buy less meat such as liver but also eggs and cheese, which are nutritious. These things became luxury because of high prices. It would restrict people to buy only specific food items of less quality. That in itself shows in people's weight and people turned poorer and poorer. To the extent that people eat one meal a day. People eat only

one meal a day. For lunch there used to be a variety of dishes, right now because of the war people serve one dish and that is it.

### **They did not carry guns, but they would prepare food**

Frankly, from the north, from here women participated differently than in the south where they were part of the movement as fighters. In the north women participated, I called it participation, but in a different way. They did not carry guns, but they would prepare food, prepare lots of things for those who were waging war against the south. They would sacrifice gold and things. It is called *zād 'al-mujāhid* (in Arabic), special food that would last for a week or ten days, or two weeks for fighters to take along. That is a way of supporting the war, according to me that is definitely a kind of way to contribute to the war even though it is not by carrying guns. I am personally against warfare.

### **They would teach them how to shoot and drop them in the south**

[The men] would of course take up arms. Some of them are not to be blamed because the government up to 1997-1998 would pick up people by force from the streets and take them by trucks to special training camps. Give them a simple training of one month and a half that would not prepare them to be a soldier when compared to the training of the military. They would teach them how to shoot and drop them in the south. In such way thousands, hundreds of thousands people died and it was said they were not capable to fight but really I believe they themselves did not want to go to war or fight but they were forced to. They took them from the streets, they took students. They would get their high school certificate and ... were to join the army for compulsory military service. After 45 days of service they would send them to the south without anyone knowing. That happened a lot. So many young men died. Sudan lost so many youngsters, for the universities, thousands and thousands. The majority went by force.

### **Sudanese society is difficult**

I married when I was very young. I finished my secondary school and while in university, I was married, had given birth and was working. I was going to university and I was working. The Quran clearly indicates that marriage is sharing between two halves of society. I married early and in our religion marriage is a duty and social necessity. But our Sudanese society is difficult. If a woman reaches 30 years old they consider her 'finished'. The Quran states "there are those who marry, there are those that do not marry, there are those who bear children, and there are those who give birth to girls, there are those who give birth to boys and there are those who give birth to both. Then there are those who are barren". All of that is part of our religion but our society is difficult. Our society thinks that when a woman reaches 30 it is over and she cannot get married any more. So if you are 24 or 25 years old and you still did not marry, no one proposed to you, then the society treats you differently. They look at you differently. Much to my regret this attitude still prevails. By God, till now.

I was still very young. I was 15 years old, I did not even reach 15 at the time, I did not have a choice, and I did not know him. It was a traditional marriage that was arranged by the

families. Just like that. That is why when I grew older; there were many issues we did not agree upon. I gave birth to four children quickly. He was older than me by 16 years. He was a police officer. But there were so many things we disagreed about such as behavior and ways of dealing. He used to drink a lot, a lot, a lot. He did not care about marital life and his children and used to go out with his friends. Whenever we used to discuss things, his way of thinking would always be very different from mine. We did not agree. I matured, women started to enter into the workforce in Sudan somewhat late at the end of the fifties and the beginning of the sixties, and in order not to depend on him I started to look for a job. My first job was in the court of justice, I learned how to type in an institute. They did not have computers and needed a secretary. So I was taught how to type in Arabic and English on a typewriter and obtained a diploma. So I worked as a clerk in the court of justice, while I was there I registered at the university and they helped me by allowing me to attend lectures in between my work. That was good for me as I wanted to be economically independent. I used to read a lot; he was never there so I used to read a lot. I felt that if I do not become economically independent I cannot move. So the first step for women to liberate themselves from their husbands and the power of men over women is economic[al] independence. Why, because if you depend on men to provide for your food and clothing, there is no way you can reject them. For me that was the first step to free myself, find work.

### **I insisted that it was my life**

I looked for a job, and I worked. After that I decided on a divorce. I took the initiative. At that time my mother had already passed away, my father long before that. My uncle, the brother of my mother and my paternal uncle, the brother of my father, stood both against me when I wanted to have my divorce from this man, keep my children and be independent. I insisted that it was my life and nobody is providing for me or helping me. I went to complain that he did not provide anything for the children and me. When I went to court he said I was divorced and that he would not provide for the children. All I wanted was to have the children and get a divorce. My uncles said you are still young, I was 26 years old, under 30 that is. They told me to leave the children with my husband for me to remarry. They said if you want to divorce you leave the children behind. He was in court with me and said he wanted to take the children. My point of view was that he would neglect them completely. They were very smart and clever in school because I was monitoring them and looking after them. So I was of the opinion they should stay with me. They said why tie yourself down with four children. I told them that it is my choice, they are my children. They were saying your children will grow up and will leave you one day when you are old and you will stay behind all alone. I told them that is what I want: by the time I get old I will know exactly what to do. I do not need a man.

In the end I won, I took some big decisions in my life. I stood up against the men in my family. The house I was living in was a rented house in Omdurman and the house of my mother, the family house, was (located) in Khartoum 2, a big house with my brothers and sisters. I wanted my children to grow up according to what I think is good, according to what I believe. That is why I wanted my children to grow up in my house so they feel that it

is their home. I rented a house on my own whilst one of my uncles is very conservative and a fundamentalist. So it was really something for me, to live on my own together with my kids. I told him these are my two sons, they are small to you but they are big men to me. I will look after them and educate them the way I like in my own house and not the house of somebody else. It was quite a fight. In the end I told my uncle I know what is on your mind, you are worried about my reputation. I told him if you hear anything, you are welcome. Then you may slaughter me the way you like to protect your honor, fine but I will not change my decision, which I took irrespective of the wishes of my family. That is why I made sure to educate my children well, for them to have their own personalities and decide for themselves. They listen to me. I listen to what my children have on their minds. We decide on how to organize our lives together. Fortunately, I did well and the kids turned out very bright, they went to university and nobody bothers me anymore. They shut up but most of all for them it is an example to the others; see how Samira did it. Look how Samira's children went to Khartoum University, look how clever her children are etcetera. So I took some difficult decisions in my life, already during those days in Sudan.

**Peace is about how to create a democracy, peace is to have a house**

My first peacemaking efforts were with the [peace practice]. To me that was the beginning. That was in 1999, I think, or the end of 1998. That was work I did together with ... the (Royal Netherlands) Embassy. Honestly that attracted attention because how could we as women play a role in peacemaking. It turned everybody eyes to this. But because of the [peace practice], especially the beginning of it and the way it attracted every body's attention, I came in touch with so many different groups and organizations working on peace. I worked on so many issues. I traveled to the south, I traveled to the west recently, and I participated in the Oslo meeting with the donors. There were so many training opportunities I benefited of including conflict resolution, how to lobby, and gender and peace issues. In terms of the (Democratic Unionist) Party it served important purposes to the extent that the party in 2004, when it organized their conference, chose me to become part of its political bureau. Thanks to my experience as secretary of the women, and with my training on peace, negotiations, communications, and peace culture. I also took a lot of training on human rights. That was very useful and turned me into a peacemaker amongst the women. I show people their rights and tell them that peace is not just stopping the war.

First of all, peace is about how to create a democracy, peace is to have a house, clean water, to find education, medicines, health. Women are now better understood in many societies. To educate the women in the provinces [is important] because illiteracy and lack of awareness are higher among women than men. They are disadvantaged within their communities. All of that started with the [peace practice]. After I divorced I had an important role in peacemaking. I never stopped, and the women of other political parties continue to meet in groups. If there is a workshop or training we work and move around together. Our relationships are much broader then they were. We traveled together to Juba to participate in the conference on women. I visited all the displaced camps in Darfur, in the three [regions] north, west and south. We collected and distributed clothes in the camps. All the women are

involved, even more so because of the situation in Darfur. The displaced camps in Darfur are really awful.

### **Generally men focus on political statements and conferences**

They play a role in workshops and things like that. They work from a political angle, they want to discuss as parties, and they forward issues to the government. Issues by political statements but everything to do with human needs of and feelings for those who suffer [are areas] that women focused on. That is where women were really most active. We organized a lot of humanitarian assistance. I remember at the time of Ramadan (the Islamic month of fasting) and winter started, we collected tents and covers, with some assistance from the Gulf, we brought these items because of winter and because of the *Eid* (a Muslim holiday that marks the end of Ramadan). Generally men focus on political statements and conferences, their humanitarian efforts were not worth mentioning. Women were involved in humanitarian issues and would bring issues with memoranda, humanitarian and political, to the attention of the UN through our forum, also to the government or those responsible. We would write memoranda from a political perspective. Even demonstrate about the high prices of sugar and oil. We demonstrated and they hit us, women belonging to the forum, they arrested us and released us again. So many things happened.

Really, the way women are looked upon by the political parties, by the government over the last three or four years has changed. Women are on the move and that has attracted a lot of attention. Women suffer more in war time, if you visit the displaced camps it is women who suffer. Even here in the north, it is the women who take care of the household when men return disabled, lost a leg. The women are the ones working, also the uneducated ones: they prepare food to sell, tea or other things to earn an income with in support of their families. That is why men are finally conscious about the role of women and since the second part of the nineties, since 1997 the political parties started to put women in the political center instead of the corner. In the old days they would focus on women only during election time to gain votes, using women to reach out to other women because men cannot enter into the houses and bring out the women to vote. Of course nowadays there are many more women than men. The political participation of women was symbolic and for a limited period of time, and the women would take a backseat when elections were over. Now they are aware of the power of women, their effective role in civil society and that is why political parties started to absorb women in their political offices and councils.

In my party, the first time a woman, that was me, was elected for a political office was in 2004. Even in 1986, the third democratic period, the women's secretary (secretary of the women's wing in a party) was not a member of the political office. We only entered the political office in 2004. That was after all our efforts and action when they felt the power and value of women. At some stage I even said during a conference if need be we start a women's party, there is no law preventing us, or during elections we will make sure as women that women will not vote for you. There are 22 parties and if all the women make one big alliance ... that was before the quota, before things became law and we worked hard to obtain this

quota as part of the law on elections. Unfortunately we did not achieve what we wanted although we worked hard as women forum together with civil society. We worked as women on the constitution in 2005: we wanted one whole paragraph on women in the constitution. They did not allow us to meet with the drafting committee. After all this effort unfortunately if you look at the chapter on freedoms, looking at the constitution of 2005, all that is mentioned is that positive discrimination will be applied as far as women are concerned. They did not ratify CEDAW (the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women) but we decided to use those words, positive discrimination, as a point of entry to influence issues from a legal perspective. We have to get to the point where decisions are made. We exerted ourselves for a 25-30% quota, we demanded 30% but they embarrassed us. People said no, no and caused many problems. I told them no way we will give up and let go of our case, we will take at least 25% and we will get the other 5% percent later. We went and succeeded to get it into the law on elections without any debate. That shows our muscle and all the parties are obliged to nominate at least 25% women.

#### **I was very active and ended up in jail because of it**

I worked in the justice sector, in an office people turn to in order to obtain their rights. That put me in a hard spot where people seek but do not always find justice. That affected me a lot and caused me to work with the trade union. I discovered that women could not be employed equally in this sector and brought this to the attention of the trade union but of course the trade union was composed of all men. My first mission, in the time of Nimeiry, in the beginning of my thirties was to ensure democratic elections at the level of the trade union and I was the first woman to become elected as secretary to the trade union at that time. That was a first step to change things and start fighting discrimination against women. Why would men have better facilities in comparison to women? I was very active and ended up in jail because of it; oh ... I suffered quite a bit in my life. It was always a struggle but in the end I knew that when you are right you will win in the end. I always won because I was right. I used to be the only woman in the trade union and used to correct what was wrong and had a strong voice in the trade union.

#### **There are so many men making big mistakes**

The CPA (Comprehensive Peace Agreement) brought a lot of gains and a certain level of freedom. The discussion opened and there is more tolerance, both men and women benefit of that. However in terms of employment, and from an executive point of view, the government continues to discriminate, and women do not reach decision making positions. Even when there is a decision to put a woman in a high decision making position, when it comes to implementation they put a man in her place. That is something that needs to change. Between you and me, the timid way women were brought up within the family, and later in the workplace, also does not help them to become more confident. Women in decision making positions also need to learn to take decisions. I used to say if men proclaim that women do not have experience in taking decisions, okay ... all those men that are in decision-making positions were they born with decision-making abilities? Of course not, it is by experience. You live and learn, by making mistakes you learn. If you make a mistake



you correct it. There are so many men making big mistakes, till now they make mistakes. They are human beings and so are women who also need to get the opportunity to work, to make decisions, big decisions, to make mistakes, and correct mistakes.

I do not have a son or a husband that went to war and experienced the war from nearby. I personally did not engage in any warfare, I am against war. It personally affected me from an economic point of view but many women did lose their sons and husbands. Economically all of us were affected. Every house needs to eat, drink, pay the water, and pay the electricity. So stopping the war allows for spending money on services, like education and other necessities in life instead of warfare. That is a major gain besides ending the loss of lives, which is also important and a big psychological burden in the lives of people. We still hope for peace to reach Darfur so that these families can return to a normal life and for men also to live a normal life, return to their fields, their livestock and agriculture to participate in development and the economy in general. Darfur is one of the richest areas in terms of livestock, not just in Sudan maybe in the world. Sudan would benefit if peace prevails and they can raise their cattle again. These are the gains of peace from an economic, psychological and social perspective. It is not easy. Peace.

#### **I ended up in a martial court without a lawyer**

I want to join the elections and reach a decision-making position in the parliament. I want to participate in national politics and create laws that people benefit of in a democratic manner. That is what I am hoping for. And at least, if I do not reach parliament, I want to work at a provincial level, to work on issues of daily social service delivery, such as education, look at the schools, if teachers are of good quality, the school buildings, what about electricity, sewage and the environment, health? Are medicines available? Are there doctors that treat people to ensure service delivery to families? If the war stopped in Darfur and those in power are ready to move towards democracy and there are democratic and free elections, in which every body participates, I expect an excellent future. If this government insists to stay in place, a mere northern government and resists a move towards democracy and refuses to change the laws and hold elections and share power, I do not think that Sudan will advance.

Of course in the beginning of my life I was working at the court of justice, and I was active in the trade union. When the *Inghaz* government (Government of Salvation, used to refer to regime of Al-Bashir) took over power I ended up in a martial court without a lawyer, they put me in Omdurman jail for three years. It was really tough and difficult. I managed to do some reading and writing and produced four diaries. When I went to participate in a conference called “a women’s rights agenda for the future” in Kampala in 2003, with women joining from all over the world, I got arrested upon my return. They searched my house, took my computer and my diaries. Till now they did not return my diaries. I managed to get my computer back but security had cleaned everything. I had produced a lot of good documents on my computer. Right now they could be searching my house again or try to arrest me. They think I am more active than necessary. They know I am strong, have no fear, speak out and say whatever I want to. There are a lot of interviews with me in the newspapers. Once



there was an interview and I told the journalist about the time I was detained. When security wants to cause problems again I told them I would be happy to take them to court because everything I said was true and I would not mind putting this on paper together with my signature.

I was the only female political prisoner of the *Inghaz*. There were other women, but those were criminals, women who had killed people, were involved in drugs or had stolen things etcetera. They knew I was there for political reasons. I was given certain privileges like a television and newspapers. They used to tell the prisoners to reserve an area for me, like a small room. But in the evening I used to bring out my television and my bed and then I would let them watch television. Some of them wanted to learn how to read and write. I helped some and they respected me a lot. There was a special section for women. My sisters and my children used to visit. I entered the prison when I was 37 or 38 years old. The experience taught me not to be afraid of anything, not the prison, not security. They used to ask me who [was] asking the questions here, you or us? If they would ask me a question I would respond with a question. It gave me strength. If the court decided on the death penalty than that is it. No alternative. But they could not. If God decides that my day has come, my day has come...

## 7 Conclusion

Understanding the history of Sudan, its civil wars and knowing the key people involved is just as complex as reading and understanding 'war and peace' written by Leo Tolstoy with its many events and personalities or actors. Protracted conflicts, like the conflict between North and South Sudan, go through phases of intensity and include disagreements as well as agreements without addressing and transforming deep-rooted sources of conflict. Issues and parties may appear new or seem unprecedented but are oftentimes part of developments overtime. Knowing about the historical context helps to understand if developments are connected to what happened earlier or not. Knowing that Nimeiry imposed Islamic Law, Al-Turabi signed a memorandum of understanding with the SPLM/A, and that the Americans and the Government of Sudan decided to cooperate against terrorism, helps to understand conflict and conflict resolution in Sudan. Being aware of who is who, of past associations or animosities may help to also better understand both distrust as well as trust including, for example, expectations of parties in conflict.

Drawing from both historical knowledge as well as the knowledge gained through the life history of Samira Hasan, a critical understanding of Sudan emerges. Understanding conflict in Sudan is not limited to understanding its history, but not understanding its history is a serious limitation.

Map 2.7: Sudan and South Sudan



Map No. 4458 UNITED NATIONS October 2011 Department of Field Support Cartographic Section



Map No. 4450 Rev.1 UNITED NATIONS October 2011 Department of Field Support Cartographic Section

Source: United Nations October 2011

# Chapter 3

## **The Conflict, Development and Gender Nexus**

**Introduction**

**The conflict domain**

**Theoretical threads**

**Third party intervention**

**The development domain**

**Theoretical threads**

**The development scene: actors and agencies**

**The feminist domain**

**Theoretical threads**

**I am now in the parliament. I am a politician.**

**Conclusion**

### **3 The Conflict, Development and Gender Nexus**

## 1 Introduction

How inconvenient is it not to have one single theory? Conflict studies, development studies and gender studies, women's studies, or feminist studies each offer a variety of theoretical approaches that draw on a number of established scholarly traditions, and represent a host of multidisciplinary fields and themes. In the case of conflict studies, different disciplines such as international relations, (international) law, political science, psychology, social anthropology, economics as well as mathematics and biology give shape to a multidisciplinary community working together as equal stakeholders on conflict research. The study of development is a multidisciplinary branch of the social science disciplines with a special focus on developing countries. Gender is an important area of study in many disciplines, including sociology and anthropology, but also a discipline in itself that once again incorporates approaches from a wide variety of disciplines. That is, conflict studies, development studies and gender studies are, in essence, multidisciplinary.

Each of these study disciplines has a tendency of generating specific results within their specific areas of interest at the risk of failing to treat any subject of inquiry in its entirety. For example, political scientists may focus on ethnic conflict, while those interested in the economy will focus on economic and financial causes and consequences of war. This can be seen as a multidisciplinary trap that can easily turn into a situation that generates significant gaps in one's knowledge of one or another of these fields of study, making it harder to create bridges between them unless knowledge is created in an interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary way. Interestingly, this complexity has caused both researchers and policy makers to debate the relevance of complexity theory towards the understanding of development (Verkoren 2008). The complexity of understanding conflict, development and gender within a research context may actually have contributed to the high demand and popularity for checklists and tools amongst practitioners and policy makers. Yet the use of these checklists and tools has created another set of problems and potential biases whereby contradictory data may be discounted, and critical thinking and rethinking may be considered superfluous. Simply put, checklists and tools promoting more or less effective one size fits all solutions to complex issues, may actually replace knowledge. The recognition that various disciplines matter and complex issues need to be studied from a variety of perspectives is not new. A British political officer, Paul Philip Howell, who spent time in Sudan from 1938-1955, felt that "increasing recognition of social anthropology as a respectable discipline in the thirties had some impact on policies in the Colonial Empire" while inside Sudan this recognition was welcomed as it "might help to solve administrative problems" (Howell 1899-1987, SAD.769/6/53). He also noted however that "[f]ew professional anthropologists worked in the Sudan during the Condominium" (Howell 1899-1987, SAD.769/6/54), referring to the joint British-Egyptian government (1899-1955) in Sudan.

In this chapter, and for the purpose of this research, I will identify a number of differing theoretical perspectives, weaving them like threads into a theoretical tapestry or framework. The critical questions I raise about existing theoretical perspectives are based on my

personal experience living through the civil war in Sudan for more than seven years. These questions also build on the views of many Sudanese affected by the war who shared with me their personal experiences, allowing me to better understand not only the in-country drivers of a dominant and dynamic conflict, but also the architects of processes that brought about peace from a social and cultural perspective. Understanding the human and social dimension of conflict and peace is a prerequisite to explaining war, understanding violence and supporting positive peace that strives for substantive social change. This understanding is based on one of Galtung's major ideas of "positive peace" which is more than "the absence of war" and relates violence to society (Galtung 1964, 2). It includes concerns for social and economic justice, human rights, environmental integrity and development, establishing early links between the domains of conflict and development. Each of these concerns represents a process where the aim is conflict resolution; and, process is everything when the aim is conflict transformation. Efforts by third parties to support conflict resolution and transformation will be less effective and efficient without understanding and taking into account the purpose and relations of specific social and political actions, processes, and structures. To undertake research into a particular conflict situation as either an economist, a sociologist or a political scientist, is what I would call the old way of undertaking research in conflict areas. The new way, is to attack a subject of inquiry as a whole through the eyes of economists, sociologists and political scientists put together, in order to generate transdisciplinary knowledge of value across researchers, practitioners and policy makers.

I strongly believe in the necessity to approach my stated research questions explicitly from the domains of conflict, development and feminism instead of the domain of conflict alone. This chapter aims to illustrate that this approach is laborious but also valuable since an inclusive theoretical framework can promote an improved theoretical understanding. At the same time, both local and my personal knowledge of the research context will be incorporated, of which the latter I obtained through extended life history research and direct experience. This is meant to give actual meaning to a variety of theoretical concepts that will be described below.

## **2 The conflict domain**

A comprehensive and state-of-the-art overview of the academic field of conflict studies remains hard to find. Surprisingly, and quite inaccurately, conflict management nowadays often seems to be about how to do just about everything. Conflict studies emerged in the 1950s and 60s as "a defined field of study" (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall 2007, 3-4). Ever since, the number of research institutes labelling themselves as specialists in either peace or conflict, has mushroomed. Clearly "as more actors become involved, the definitional imprecision of core concepts increases" and "in most of the academic literature, the terms of conflict management, conflict resolution and conflict transformation are often used loosely and interchangeably" (Reimann 2004, 42-43).

For the purpose of this research, and for the sake of consistency, I will make use of the following definitions as employed by Oliver Ramsbotham, Tom Woodhouse and Hugh Miall:

**Conciliation** or **facilitation** is close in meaning to pure mediation, and refers to intermediary efforts to encourage the parties to move towards negotiations, as does the more minimalist role of providing good offices.

By **conflict** the pursuit of incompatible goals by different groups is meant. This suggests a broader span of time and a wider class of struggle than armed conflict. Here it applies to any political conflict, whether it is pursued by peaceful means or by the use of force.

**Armed conflict** is a narrower category denoting conflicts where parties on both sides resort to the use of force.

**Conflict management**, like the associated term 'conflict regulation' has been used as a generic term to cover the whole gamut of positive conflict handling. It may also be understood to refer in a more limited way to the settlement and containment of violent conflict.

**Conflict resolution** is a more comprehensive term which implies that the deep-rooted sources of conflict are addressed and transformed. This implies that behaviour is no longer violent, attitudes are no longer hostile, and the structure of the conflict has been changed. The term is used to refer both to the process (or the intention) to bringing about these changes, and to the completion of the process. The aim of conflict resolution is to transform actually or potentially violent conflict into peaceful (non-violent) processes of social and political change.

**Conflict settlement** means the reaching of an agreement between the parties to settle a political conflict. This suggests finality, but in practice conflicts that have reached settlements are often reopened later. Conflict attitudes and underlying structural contradictions may not have been addressed.

**Conflict transformation** is a term which for some analysts is a significant step beyond conflict resolution, and represents its deepest level. It implies a deep transformation in the institutions and discourses that reproduce violence, as well as in the conflict parties themselves and their relationships. It corresponds to the underlying tasks of structural and cultural peacebuilding.

**Mediation** involves the intervention of a third party; it is a voluntary process in which the parties retain control over the outcome (pure mediation), although it is sometimes combined with positive and negative inducements (mediation with muscle).

**Negotiation** is the process whereby the parties within the conflict seek to settle or resolve their conflicts.

**Peacebuilding** underpins the work of peacemaking and peacekeeping by addressing structural issues and the long-term relationship between conflictants.

**Peacemaking** is used in the sense of moving towards settlement of armed conflict.

**Reconciliation** is a longer term process of overcoming hostility and mistrust between divided peoples.

**Violent conflict** is similar to armed conflict, but also includes one-sided violence such as genocides against unarmed civilians (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall 2007, 27-30).

One can debate the maturity and development of conflict studies and turn to early literature on war within a variety of disciplines, but one can also debate the evolution of

old wars into new wars (Väyrynen 1991, Richards 2005, Frerks and Goldewijk 2007 and Kaldor 2007). One can debate the role of theory as well, including the need for one single conflict theory (Reimann 2004 and Demmers 2006) and the application of social theory. Theorizing, however, will always make a point of generalizing and becomes more difficult when areas of study are complex. In addition, the changes in the nature of conflict over time have contributed to renewed thinking about conflict management and, in particular, new directions in the area of conflict resolution and conflict transformation.

After World War II (1939-1945) a wide-ranging and dynamic state of political conflict, military tension, and economic competition developed between states, primarily the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.) and the US, manifesting itself in a nuclear arms race, military coalitions and proxy wars in Korea (1950-1953), Vietnam (1959-1975) and Afghanistan (1979-1989). This political conflict between the US and the U.S.S.R. ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 following growing economic, military and diplomatic pressure by the US against the U.S.S.R. in the 1980s, as well as the election of a new Russian President Mikhail Gorbachev (1985-1991) who introduced reforms and new policies, leaving a mark on western thinking about conflict. The history of colonialism, political frailty, conflict between the US and the U.S.S.R. and external interference certainly affected states differently. With the influence of transnational politics, improved means of communications, international moneymaking, and access to military technology and equipment, the face of conflict and politics changed resulting in an increase of non-state actors and political movements waging war around the world.

At the end of the 1990s, Mary Kaldor started to draw the line between 'old wars' and 'new wars' framing Bosnia-Herzegovina and later Iraq as 'new wars' (Kaldor 2007). This distinction, however, is disputed and I think it makes far more sense to think of conflict and changes over time as a continuously evolving process to which researchers like Michael Brown, Georg Frerks and Berma Klein Goldewijk, Stathis Kalyvas, and Paul Richards subscribe. As my previous chapter on the history of war in Sudan demonstrates, 'old' wars continue and live alongside 'new' wars, which may in themselves contain elements of 'old' wars, or the other way around. Kaldor's description of the evolution of 'old wars' in the early and late twentieth century also seems to largely ignore that most intrastate conflicts that arose since the 1960s occurred in Africa and Asia (Kaldor 2007, Centre for the Study of Civil War/PRIO 2009 and Kambudzi 1998). It is also not clear if Kaldor's generalized approach really changed "the prevailing perceptions of war, especially among policy-makers" (Kaldor 2007, 3).

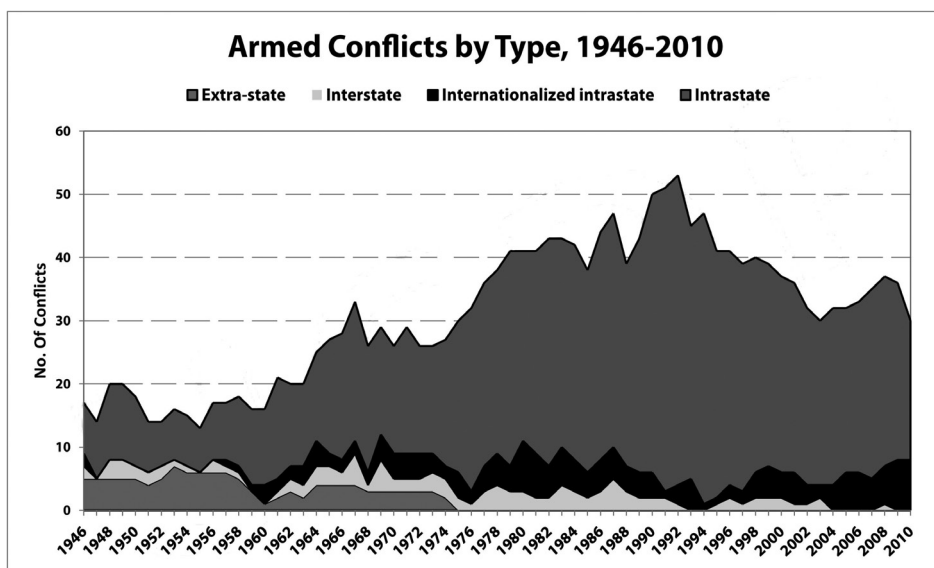
As a case in point, it is important to highlight that the policy focus of Dutch development cooperation changed from good governance, human rights and peacekeeping under Jan Pronk as Minister for Development Cooperation between 1989 and 1998, to macro-economics and sector wide approaches under Eveline Herfkens, Minister for Development-Cooperation between 1998 and 2002. This could be seen as indicating a loss instead of an increased interest in countries affected by war, and coincides with the publication of



Kaldor's book in 1998. Mark Duffield also finds that "throughout the 1990s, failed states ... generally ranked low on the international community's agenda of priorities" (Duffield 2007, 160). However this was not the case in the Netherlands until the late 1990s when Minister Herfkens took over the portfolio of development cooperation. At the end of the day it is more likely that 9/11 put global insecurity high on the West's agenda. This was illustrated by a Press Release of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) the next day stating that 9/11 would be regarded by allies in Europe and North America as "an attack against them all"<sup>12</sup> indicating a definite global shift in thinking about war, especially about those that followed in Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003). Unlike Kaldor, I feel that reactive policy planning based on threats instead of policy planning using strategic thinking is more often the rule than the exception.

The following graph demonstrates that the majority of conflicts since World War II actually took place within states (dark grey) and not between states (light grey).

**Figure 3.2** Number of armed conflicts worldwide by type (source: Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP)<sup>13</sup>)



(c) UCDP 2010

The landscape of conflict types between 1946 and 2010 had rapidly turned into a landscape dominated by intrastate conflicts reaching their peak in the early 1990s. Looking at the peak of intrastate conflict in the early 1990s added to research into civil war by economists, sociologists and political scientists, some scholars have stressed economic factors and the impact of natural resources or 'greed' as their main cause. Others have stressed political factors, identity and social justice or 'grievance'. The question is, is it possible

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.un.nato.int/docu/pro1-124e.htm> (accessed September 2, 2009).

<sup>13</sup> Conflict Encyclopedia: [www.ucdp.uu.se/database](http://www.ucdp.uu.se/database), Uppsala University (accessed February 3, 2012).

to really separate political causes of going to war from economic ones and social from cultural motivations, but also if economic power is the one and only driving force? Other approaches include highlighting the role of the state and state capacity, where one notes a shift from an emphasis on states to people and human security, as opposed to a focus on underdevelopment and linking conflict to poverty, social exclusion and inequality. With reference to the introduction section of this chapter it becomes obvious that the search for an answer to causes of conflict gives weight to the danger of failing to approach conflict from a synthesis of perspectives.

Researchers of the Human Security Report Project have argued that the change of landscape which is characterized by smaller wars is also accompanied by fewer deaths and less impact on nationwide mortality rates than often assumed (HRSP 2011). Notably, Sally Healy had pointed out earlier that in comparison to most African intrastate wars, conflicts in the Horn of Africa do not fall into the category of low intensity conflicts in which the use of military forces is applied selectively and with restraint by either armed forces or groups (Healy 2008). That is, intrastate conflict proved to be a rich but complex phenomenon to study, both attracting and holding the attention of a variety of researchers. Research also points to an increase in violent conflict involving rebels or warlords and communal groups that do not involve a state as a warring party (2007-2008), and rising political violence (2003-2008) including conflicts with Islamist roots (HRSP 2011). Combinations of meaningful disciplinary expertise and research with a deliberate and joint focus on fully understanding past and present drivers and forces of conflict however remain rare. This supports Raimo Väyrynen's comment that "no research questions have yet been fully answered and many have not yet been asked" as still holding true (Väyrynen 1991, 50).

"War, like peace is organised by social agents" (Richards 2005, 3). Together with others who studied conflict, I consider conflict part and parcel of social change and therefore an indispensable ingredient for change and a trigger for renewed thinking (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall 2007, Lederach 1995, Reimann 2004, Schellenberg 1996 and Deutsch, Coleman and Marcus 2006). With Paul Richards, I share a deep interest in "how people *make war and peace*" (Richards 2005, 13). He describes the views of Bruce Knauff and Igor Kopytoff that point to the importance of understanding social issues that are at stake. Thus, war only makes "sense as an aspect of social process" (Richards 2005, 11-13). According to Richards, Knauff concluded that the "best analytical approach to war as process is through the ethnography of the actual practices of war and peace" (Richards 2005, 12).

With Arturo Escobar, I share the interest in "local-level ethnographic studies that focus on development discourses and practices, - how they are introduced in community settings, their modes of operation, the ways in which they are transformed or utilized, their effects on community identity formation and structures, and so on" (Escobar 1995, 48). Both men and women participate in the construction of both war and peace shaping the lives of Sudanese men and women. At the same time it is also men and women who engage in third party intervention or efforts to support building and making peace. Social processes and

ethnography, as a particular school of thought and action, caught my interest as researchers can be both participant and observer. Ethnography has helped me to combine techniques to make visible the views, lived-experiences and knowledge from the inside out. This is based on Kenneth Pike's distinction between the emic viewpoint resulting from studying behaviour from inside a particular system and, descriptions or analyses from the etic standpoint, or external view (Denzin and Lincoln 1994). This mind-set also suggests building respectful relationships and trust. It suggests consideration for how people view themselves and how they themselves view things with a focus on their priorities and their values.

Evidently, an emic approach has the potential to go beyond the surface of a war and peace by capturing what is actually going on in the lives of the people who are affected by conflicts like the one in Sudan. One might ask: How do Sudanese actually deal with the complex processes and chaos created by civil war? How do they manage to achieve their objectives over time? Do they experience any individual empowerment after a peace agreement has been signed, or any increased control over decision-making? With social change being rapid in times of war, does war aid structural changes in society which influence how men and women live and behave in times of consecutive peace? Exploring and describing particular situations and actions through the eyes and experiences of Sudanese women can help piece together the building blocks of arriving at a desired solution to situations of conflict. It may also challenge other scholars to consider another viewpoint. It could contribute to an improved understanding of the underlying causes and the deeper social and cultural forces and drivers of conflict, its resolution and its transformation. While presenting conflict management, conflict resolution and conflict transformation as theoretical threads, I will provide some reflected-on experience.

### **3 Theoretical threads**

My theoretical orientation is demonstrated by a significant number of theoretical threads. When put together they provide a guiding approach to this research. Essentially, the framework will resemble a tapestry composed of two sets of interlaced threads, those running parallel to the length (called the warp) and those parallel to the width (called the weft). The warp threads are set up under tensions on a loom, and the weft thread is passed back and forth across part or all of the warps. Tapestry is weft-faced weaving, in which all the warp threads are hidden in the completed work. Conflict management, conflict resolution and conflict transformation will be presented as theoretical threads, which will be discussed in turn, followed by third party intervention and concepts of mediation, conciliation or facilitation and peacebuilding.

#### **The conflict management perspective**

The focus of conflict management is on how to deal with conflict in a constructive manner and how to bring about some level of cooperation between conflicting parties through the positive and constructive handling of differences and disagreements. Building dialogue, for example, is one way of dealing with conflict in a constructive way. When considering protracted conflicts and divided societies, it is not easy to bring constituencies from fighting

factions together to build confidence. It is a slow and time-consuming process demonstrated by my own reflected-on experience as a facilitator of the peace practice in Sudan in its early days:

*I was invited to the 'SPLM Women's Conference' held at New Cush, on 21-25 August 1998. The SPLM women asked me to participate and were eager to show that their leadership supported them and recognized the role of women in the movement. Salva Kiir Mayardit represented the SPLM leadership and opened the Women's Conference. I managed to join the SPLM participants in Nairobi from Khartoum and together we travelled onwards to Lokichokio and entered into the SPLM-held areas by car the day before the conference started. This conference meant a lot to them and they were in a celebrative mood and happy to see me. I remember Salva Kiir giving us all instructions to lie on the ground when an Antonov appeared in sight bombing villages in our vicinity. What I remember most however was that when the BBC broke the news by radio on August 20, 1998 of US cruise missiles hitting al-Shifa factory in Khartoum, and this the day before the conference started, everyone in the bus was cheering except me. I was thinking of everyone and everything I had left behind in Khartoum. Quickly the women realised my worries and they turned to me and said they were sorry for me because they realised I had no reason to be cheerful. They explained that normally they would celebrate when something bad would happen to their enemy in Khartoum but I had made them realise that there was also another side to what had happened (The Initiative, 1998c).*

Evidently, as this example shows, empathy for the worries of a fellow participant and peacebuilding facilitator is one thing, but empathy for the enemy side in highly divided societies is another. In a wider sense, levels of improved contact, enhanced understanding and frequent exchanges about interests and positions across conflicting parties can contribute to generating common ground or insight into shared concerns. That in itself may be considered a positive result of the constructive handling of differences and disagreements, or conflict management. In the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, literature on conflict management started to put emphasis on the importance of combining and balancing approaches. Using, for example, conflict settlement strategies may include mediation and negotiation put together with conflict resolution strategies such as facilitation and consultation. For the moment, current understanding and practices of conflict resolution include perspectives of local knowledge of conflict management and peacebuilding. Since war and peace are social processes and lack simple explanations, I find that there is no such thing as a golden bullet or a singular approach to conflict management or conflict resolution. Situations of war or peace are the result of numerous factors and actors coming together and interacting. Therefore, any approach to understand, explain and resolve conflict will have to be complex.

### **The conflict resolution perspective**

Conflict resolution is used in relation to all process-oriented efforts that focus on addressing the deep-rooted sources of violent conflict. It is important to keep in mind that not every conflict can be resolved. Also, conflict management as opposed to conflict resolution may at times be the best possible result, especially in the case of protracted civil conflict. The resolution of conflict can be seen in process terms: how conflict develops, changes and comes to an end. Conflict resolution puts emphasis on skilled but unofficial intervention by third parties to support alternative views and improved relations among parties in conflict. According to Peter Wallensteen, “conflict resolution involves the simultaneous process of resolving outstanding issues between the parties and changing the relations between them” (Wallensteen 1991, 31). The process itself is focused on reframing the conflict as a joint process for which effective cooperation is needed to resolve it. This process can be constructive or destructive and result in cooperation, a win-win situation or competition. The latter is frequently considered a loss for all parties in a conflict and a constraint to conflict resolution.

The following narrative by Anis Haggar who was invited to join the group of Sudanese women participating in The Hague Appeal for Peace describes an exceptional moment during which he felt “peace could happen”:

*And I believe there came a point where ... and I bore witness to a most moving thing, when the women from the south and the north ... met, I was there in Holland. I was startled by the way they took each other, and embraced each other and some of them had been to school together. One or two of the ladies just came from the battlefield and I think at the defining moments in my life I saw peace at that moment. The way they embraced each other and talked and talked and laughed. These were not people who were at war with each other. There were Christians, and there were pagans and there were Muslims and there were Islamists. You know the dividing lines were all there, there were Arabs and Africans and we had all the reasons ... all the diversity was there but they were hugging each other and talking to each other and I thought that's the Sudan... So these were of the bright moments. The moments where you knew that it could happen (life history Anis George Mikhail Haggar).*

As Peter Coleman concludes, “there are no simple solutions to intractability” (Coleman 2006, 557). Conflict resolution, as a field of study and practice has been able to make a difference in situations like South Africa and Northern Ireland but has failed badly in situations like the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The foregoing chapter on the history of war in Sudan reveals the complex reality of civil war that cannot be reduced to a plain military conflict between a government and their opposition competing for political power (Väyrynen 1991 and Schellenberg 1996). It also shows that the issues, actors and interests may change in the course of time. Together with other researchers and practitioners, I think that conflict resolution has an important role to play, even when wars rant and rave (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall 2007). Understanding and intervening in a specific conflict such as the one in Sudan, however, requires specific knowledge about the conflicting

parties, where they come from, their social positions, roles and norms, what they are fighting for, their principal conflict orientations and the like (Deutsch, Coleman and Marcus 2006). Group decision-making and problem-solving can make a difference as well as power, personalities and resourcefulness.

Cooperation and mutual trust do not come about easily when dealing with protracted civil conflict. According to Morton Deutsch “it takes repeated experience of successful, varied, mutually beneficial cooperation to develop a solid basis for mutual trust between former enemies” (Deutsch 2006, 65). As stated earlier, parties may be willing to trust a third party but may not be ready yet to trust one another. It is critical, therefore, that initiatives designed to bring about cooperation are successful especially when parties start to get to know one another. My own experience shows the difficulty and importance of successful cooperation between parties in conflict, as showcased below:

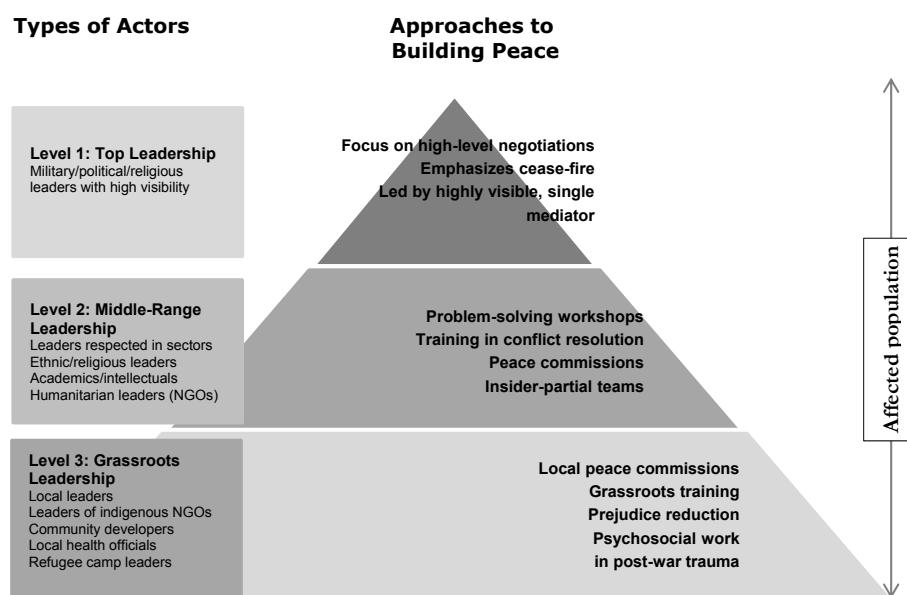
*During The Hague Appeal for Peace (11-15 May 1999, the Netherlands), representatives from all constituencies participated jointly in a side event called ‘peaceful settlement of the civil war in the Sudan’. The session was to be facilitated by Dr. Joyce Neu working at the Carter Center at the time. She lost her voice due to flu and after lengthy discussions and disagreement amongst the participants, I was asked to facilitate instead. It had not been easy for them to bring about a joint statement and the women were anxious not only about their attendance, but also about their first joint public appearance besides. Each of them also gave a five minute presentation: where they came from and, how the war affected their region and the people living there. While facilitating the session and sitting in the midst of mostly Sudanese women, I observed a front row of Sudanese men representing the diaspora, staring down at least one of the women. As a result, the late Regina Morris, who was representing the Sudanese People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM) and a key opponent to the Government of Sudan (GOS), left the line to sit with the men instead, while the others continued their stories. I could feel the tension rise among the women but interestingly, after a while Regina made up her mind and returned to the stage joining the other participants again. At that moment an absolute feeling of euphoria shook off their tension. They had been able to stand together in front of a divided audience which questioned their cooperation publicly. Moreover they were proud of their first joint statement: “We are here despite all our differences - social, political, and religious - because we want to put an end to this war” (The Hague Appeal for Peace 1999).*

Trust and distrust develop over time as people get to know each other and are negatively affected by conflict. Information about what conflicting parties want, and why, is not to be considered static or known to all. Last but not least it is not easy to convince conflicting parties to start talking to each other. Conflict resolution efforts are incredibly stressful to both conflicting parties as well as for third parties involved. Those who intervene need to be knowledgeable about the past and present political and social context since their actions will no doubt influence the existing balance of power and may influence existing inequalities either positively or negatively. Knowledge of cultural differences is also important, as awareness of this knowledge is likely to be influenced by our own personal experiences and

ideas. Culture, religion, ethnicity and gender all matter and require tailor-made approaches within each and every conflict setting as efforts to facilitate the participation of women in the Sudanese peace process will demonstrate in Chapter 6 of this dissertation. In essence, issues have to be clarified, tensions need to be reduced and enemies will have to start looking at each other differently. At the same time, at the other end of the spectrum, expectations about quick results or quick fixes should be tempered. Last but not least, “attempts to resolve conflicts do not always work; and when they do they can sometimes lead to undesirable consequences” (Schellenberg 1996, 10).

The following approach to building peace by John Paul Lederach was important to the development of thoughts and the peace practice in relation to both conflict resolution and conflict transformation in Sudan (Lederach 1995a). It puts emphasis on ‘bottom-up’ processes and suggests that the middle-range leadership can serve to link military, political and religious leaders to the local level and grassroots leadership.

**Figure 3.3** Approach to peacebuilding by John Paul Lederach



Based on Lederach 1997, 39.

In the model above, the affected population is described as a triangle or pyramid. At the top are key military and political leaders, those who generally participate in high-level peace negotiations. In the middle, or level two, are mid-level political leaders, intellectuals and religious leaders, and those who have power over important public sectors. Level three consists of the vast majority of war-affected people, including ordinary soldiers or guerrillas, their local leadership, as well as leaders of community based organizations and NGOs and



local officials. It is considered important for the longer-term success of conflict resolution that peacemaking strategies transverse all three corresponding levels. Importantly, Lederach puts emphasis on the key role played by mid-level leaders, bringing together grassroots and top leadership (Lederach 1997).

Lederach does not acknowledge in his approach the roles and relations of women and men; he merely speaks of grassroots and leadership. He does not identify women as individual members of the various constituencies and also neglects underlying power arrangements. His later work as a mediator made him reflect however on both multi-track diplomacy as well as the role of women, stating on the example of the war in Somalia, that “while much of it has gone unnoticed in the long history of the Somali conflict, women have played a far more innovative, constructive, and transformative role in peacebuilding than the sum total of the formal peace conferences of militia leaders” (Lederach 2002, 91-100).

Nowadays, the most evident peacemaking at the level of international diplomacy operates at level one of this triangle, known as Track I which targets conflict settlement. Level two is often associated with Track II conflict resolution and a process orientation aimed at improving communication and relationships. Level III corresponds with Track III approaches of conflict transformation. Multi-track diplomacy will be described in more detail in the section on third party intervention below.

### **The conflict transformation perspective**

Conflict transformation differs from conflict management, settlement and conflict resolution by aiming to develop and support capacity for structural and lasting peaceful change and social justice across society. As a result, conflict transformation is a process of transforming relationships, discourses and interests. It is based on a capacity to think about conflict as a springboard for growth and positive change. Conflict brings about changes at various levels: the personal, the relational, the structural and the cultural. Conflict changes relationships, social roles and positions within families, communities and between people themselves. Lederach also clarifies that the concept of transformation “encompasses a view that legitimizes conflict as an agent of change in relationships” (Lederach 1995, 18). He argues that:

*Transformation as a concept is descriptive of the conflict dynamics and prescriptive of the overall purpose that building peace pursues, both in terms of changing destructive relationship patterns and in seeking systemic change (Lederach 1995, 18).*

Lederach distinguishes between ‘prescriptive’ and ‘elicitive’ models warning against generic and universal practices and strategies (Lederach 1995). As a matter of fact he advocates space for potential modification or a mix of the two as neither model may present the ultimate solution in a given situation. According to him, outside mediators basically facilitate local gatherings between participants, while encouraging the use of participants’ knowledge and creativity to handle conflict. His principle of conflict ‘in situ’ in multicultural settings refers



to adopting flexible and investigative approaches to conflict resolution and transformation which suit a given situation and process of conflict. Lederach also suggests that such an approach could empower participants. The perception of conflict as a catalyst for social change and social justice is reflected in the thinking related to, respectively, conflict resolution and conflict transformation (Väyrynen 1991, Lederach 1995, Rupesingh 1995, Lederach 1997, Miall 2004 and Ropers 2004). Raimo Väyrynen added “a dynamic analysis of conflicts is indispensable (since) the study of their resolution in a static framework belies social reality” (Väyrynen 1991, 4). He distinguishes between actor, issue and rule transformation besides structural transformation, and clearly felt that:

*The bulk of conflict theory regards the issues, actors and interests as given and on that basis makes efforts to find a solution to mitigate or eliminate contradictions between them. Yet the issues, actors and interests change over time as a consequence of the social, economic and political dynamics of societies (Väyrynen 1991, 4).*

Hugh Miall expanded the thinking of Väyrynen by bringing personal transformations into the transformation equation illustrated by changes of heart and mind within individual leaders or small groups with decision power at critical moments in time (Miall 2004). It is Diana Francis who sets apart “the conscientization or awakening of those who currently take no power, so that they become active for constructive change” as an aspect of conflict transformation, and highlights the dilemma of gender equality (Francis 2004, 99-100). Consequently these efforts need focus beyond personal transformation and require translation into actions at the socio-political and institutional level in order to result in support and impact for peace at large. I do think that conflict presents opportunities for transformation, social change and human growth but would argue that no human being leaves the past behind, may be considered a blank slate or to be living in splendid isolation. On top of that, not all changes are for the better when analysing social relations and interactions. In general, social change refers to changes that are perceived as positive though one should not neglect the chance of achieving the opposite. “Social changes are the alterations of behaviour patterns, social relationships, institutions and social structure over time” as defined by John Farley and quoted by Piotr Sztompka (Sztompka 1993, 6).

Each and every conflict situation is unique. In situations of protracted conflicts, a great deal has changed radically for both women and men at a personal level. Christopher Mitchell argues: “conflicts are the worst environment for bringing about significant changes in goals, interests and underlying beliefs” (Mitchell 2005, 17). Stathis Kalyvas considers civil war “a deeply ‘endogenous’ process, meaning that behaviour, beliefs, preferences, and even identities can be altered as a result of the conflict and its violence” and stresses the importance of micro level study and in-depth engagement with cases producing fine-grained data based on foregoing theorization (Kalyvas 2008, 402). Gender roles change and war-affected populations continuously rethink and adjust to changing social expectations. Change can empower, disempower, and can be welcomed or resisted. The following sections

of the life history of Jennifer Kujang, a South Sudanese woman, clearly illustrate some of these dilemmas:

*Because in 1963 there was a war in Southern Sudan my parents went to Zaire and the war in Zaire broke out also... We started to run to Uganda ... We were all taken to camps. At that time my father ran also as he became sick with mental problems... When he lost his everything in the war of the sixties, he became sick with mental problems... From there also I start primary (schooling) but there was nobody there to pay school fees, I was too young at that time. I was 14 years old. I got married to somebody also. A Sudanese anyway in that camp... I never got far in school... When the peace was signed in 1973 we came back (to Sudan)... Again my husband decided, that time also with the condition like now, you see no jobs, no what, my husband decided that time to go back to Uganda. He went alone. I started working. I have two boys and one girl... When also this war broke out, I have brothers, even me I am the one who educated them. Because also my father when he became sick he could not bring them up. That time I sacrificed myself with my mother, and I started to support my followers. The one following me completed secondary school and also another one completed secondary school. The third one I sent to university, I am the one who is paying with all my embroidery and doing all this and paid him, until he completed university in India. The following one I also sent him. Then the war broke out, communications became a problem. Also my brother got a depression... with the little money I have sent them they started to come to Kenya so that they can get a refugee status. From there he became worse. When I heard like that I also went to Kenya. So one [child] was left behind with my mother ... so this one who was left in Sudan... (and) when my mother died, he started also falling into drinking. He became a young soldier, he joined these soldiers. When I reached our home (in 1999), I decided to look for the relatives of my husband. They told me that my husband died at the border of Zaire. So he died in 1993. He did not die with gun. He died with frustrations. Even he did not marry any women. He did not have any children except my children. My mother never got any education but she was very strong. Even now she has a plot here in Juba. Now I am the one following those plots. In Khartoum she bought one. She was a very bright woman, who can manage for herself... That time she was brewing. These local drinks ... we sell them in secret. I was taken to prison only because of beer ... about two months. That is what I experienced. Then also in Nairobi when I went there. Imagine you can see our young boys. They ran without their parents most of them... If something little you will cook for them. All the time they were caught. Until we, all of us, we can give. You have something little to get them out of jail... When Riek Machar and Garang separated (in 1997, see chapter on the history of Sudan), Riek came to Sudan. My son was with my mother. All those young boys, he (Riek Machar) came with a policy ... [and] ... he brought these boys to the south, here in Juba. So those boys were being trained ... [but] ... he (Machar) ran away. He left those children here. Up to now you can see many Equatorians drinking ... because of all of this, because they did not get chance... Riek Machar was supposed to come and graduate them with two stars. But he did not turn up and then people started to fight among themselves as southerners ... then also he (my son) blames me because the father was not there (life history Jennifer Kujang).*

In one way or another, scholars and practitioners working in the areas of conflict resolution and transformation, including Lederach and Miall, have not paid sufficient attention to how conflict transforms relations between men and women across society and at every level. Conflict transformation, as shown in the above life history, demands a strong link to a development agenda in an effort to mobilize aspirations for effective development. The perception of conflict as a catalyst for social change and social justice also remains inadequate when conflict resolution and conflict transformation do not attempt to understand the complex social construct of masculinity and femininity since “social change is mediated through individual actors” (Sztompka 1993, 7). I would argue that one needs to critically question scholars and practitioners who forget women in efforts to resolve or end conflict, and demonstrate a lack of interest in situated and context-specific discussions on gender equitable protection of social, civil, economic and political rights of both men and women. In the case of a protracted conflict, aspirations for social change run high, and challenge existing and troubled relationships among and between men and women. Ultimately, it is biased, unjust and probably costly to overlook women as a large reservoir of potential actors that both peacemakers and development agencies could invest in.

From my experience in Sudan I can safely say that efforts to settle and resolve protracted conflicts and models of conflict transformation need to be aware of the aspirations for social change including development expectations of both women and men. That is, specific conflict resolution and transformation work would benefit from an improved and context-specific understanding of the domains of development and gender. But that in and of itself is not enough. Efforts to resolve and transform conflict are potentially key building blocks for social change and development. The achievement of greater equity and equality within and between communities and among and between men and women deserve particular attention and translation into concrete goals, actions and achievements, which support both peace and development in the long run. A well-defined theory of change would make a transformational approach more practical and the goal of empowerment through third party intervention more realistic. As Norbert Ropers indicates “lasting peacemaking in divided societies and societies traumatized by war requires a broad range of measures aimed, on the one hand, at eliminating socio-economic inequalities and, on the other, at building up political and social capacities that will enable those involved to cope with (ethnic) plurality” (Ropers 2004, 8-9).

#### **4 Third party intervention**

The terms track I and track II diplomacy were first used in a Foreign Policy article entitled “Foreign Policy according to Freud”, written by William Davidson and Joseph Montville, the latter an employee of the US State Department (Davidson and Montville 1981-1982, 145-157). The authors described track II diplomacy as “unofficial, non-structured interaction” (Davidson and Montville 1981-1982, 155) and complementary to common formal government-to-government conflict resolution and negotiations conducted by diplomats:

*Track two contacts - from the most apolitical cultural exchanges to psychologically focused political problem solving meetings - can be a critical complement to the essential but often sterile official relations between adversaries. Furthermore, track two contact need not to be limited to enemies* (Davidson and Montville 1981-1982, 156).

Flexible and innovative track II, or citizen diplomacy activities, consisted of developing communication and personal relationships across conflicting parties and amongst people. Track II envisioned reducing tensions and creating some level of mutual understanding while supporting track I diplomacy, without taking its place. Consequently multi-track thinking arose from growing insight by diplomats like Montville, social scientists and others that formal government-to-government initiatives meant to reduce and resolve conflict were not “necessarily the most effective” (Diamond and McDonald 1996, 1). Track I diplomats did not immediately embrace the idea of two-track diplomacy and it took time for track I diplomats to recognize its benefits (McDonald 1993). Multi-track diplomacy enriched the two-track thinking and in the beginning of the nineties, Louise Diamond and John McDonald eventually expanded the number of tracks to nine, building on the inclusive notion that all sectors of society mattered in efforts to resolve or end conflict and build peace. They distinguished the following nine tracks (Diamond and McDonald 1996, 4-5):

- Track 1: Government, or peacemaking through diplomacy
- Track 2: Nongovernment/professional, or peacemaking through conflict resolution
- Track 3: Business, or peacemaking through commerce
- Track 4: Private citizen, or peacemaking through personal involvement
- Track 5: Research, training and education, or peacemaking through learning
- Track 6: Activism, or peacemaking through advocacy
- Track 7: Religion, or peacemaking through faith in action
- Track 8: Funding, or peacemaking through providing resources
- Track 9: Communications and the media, or peacemaking through information

When compared with the levels of Lederach’s model described earlier, his level 2 (mid-level leaders) and 3 (grassroots) could easily be equivalent to tracks two to nine depending on the focus of peacemaking and line of approach to conflict management. Nowadays track I activities consist of a wide variety of official and of both coercive and non-coercive measures such as, but not exclusively, facilitation, mediation, negotiation, fact-finding missions, peacekeeping, sanctions, peace enforcement and arbitration. Track II activities consist of facilitation or consultation and are non-official and non-coercive by nature. Track III activities strictly refer to grassroots work and focus on training, capacity building and empowerment (Reimann 2004). Kumar Rupesinghe made an interesting case for multi-track interventions, peace constituencies at the grassroots level and across constituencies at civil society level aside from all-inclusive approaches including media, business groups and the military (Rupesinghe 1995). After the work of Diamond and McDonald, the term ‘track one and a half’ was introduced for collaborative efforts involving both official and unofficial actors or “unofficial interventions with decision makers” (Chigas 2007, 555). In essence,

peace initiatives can take many shapes. The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) was the official intervening body to come to a resolution of conflict between Northern and Southern Sudan. Its track-one diplomacy included a wide range of efforts. I will elaborate on the IGAD-led peace process in Sudan in Chapter 4.

My own experience suggests that the distinction between both ‘theoretical approaches’ and ‘peace practices’ is quite complex while the collaboration between tracks is a key issue as well as a serious problem. That is, the distinction between different tracks at times defies the complexity of most peace processes. Moreover, actors involved in multi-track diplomacy that range from grassroots organizations to local and international development agencies, human rights organizations and humanitarian agencies, do not necessarily contribute to conflict transformation. They also have the capacity to fuel conflict or frustrate conflict transformation. An important critique of present-day peacemaking is that often times most men and nearly all women are mere spectators to peace agreements that are shaped by the international community and signed by the most powerful conflict forces that cannot but be reckoned with. I have also noted that most actors have a tendency to focus on top leadership and high-level negotiations and prefer to compete with each other over having a visible role in building peace (interviews Joyce Neu and Corina van der Laan, and life history Anis Haggar). A shift towards valuing and supporting long-term peacemaking at the level of middle-range and grassroots leadership remains the exception. I do think that multi-track diplomacy can make a difference and contribute to conflict transformation (Kriesberg 2007) but eventually conflict transformation is the potential outcome of what the parties in conflict will come to realize.

### **Mediation, conciliation or facilitation and peacebuilding**

Some say that “mediation is as old as history” (Zartman and Touval 2007, 437). Mediation and conciliation, or facilitation, are various types of third-party intervention in situations of conflict. Conciliation versus mediation is associated with a more minimalist approach to third party intervention. The practice and strategies of mediation are linked to theory and practice in international relations and involves diplomatic actors such as states but also international organizations including intergovernmental organizations and NGOs. Without any use of force, the political process of mediation aims to bring conflicting parties together to resolve their conflict. Mediators are stakeholders in this process and the interests of mediators vary and may be driven by power, profit or policies. In the case of Sudan, relatively small and medium-sized powers like Norway and the Netherlands tried to be humanitarian ‘do-gooders’, by investing in peace and at the same time increasing their international role and reputation by making or supporting mediation efforts; while neighbouring states like Egypt have a clear economic and political interest in the outcome of any peace agreement.

Non-state actors like the World Council of Churches and the All-Africa Conference of Churches also demonstrated a clear interest in mediating a solution to the conflict in Sudan in 1971 (Zartman and Touval 2007 and The Hague Appeal for Peace 1999). Similar to state actors, non-state actors may act out of conviction, promotion as well as frustration with

the failure of mediation efforts by others. Accepting offers for mediation largely depends on the economics and social psychology, which define the usefulness of a mediator to the conflicting parties. Desired outcomes by the parties involved, often define their willingness to accept mediators who are not required to be neutral. At all times, parties may also look at the mediator with distrust, as they may be partisan. Friendly relations between the mediator and an adversary could well be acceptable when it is of use to achieving a certain concession or compromise. Peter Carnevale describes strength in mediation as follows:

*Strategic strength in mediation is the aspect of social power that relate to the resources and relationships that the mediator brings to the conflict* (Carnevale 2002, 28).

Consequently, mediation power is set out as legitimate power, information power, expert power, referent power, coercive power, reward power and relational power. William Zartman and Saadia Touval distinguish three mediation techniques to bring parties in conflict to an agreement: communication, formulation and manipulation (Zartman and Touval 2007). Mediators may facilitate meetings between opponents by providing a setting where parties feel comfortable to meet; mediators build trust and improve communications between parties, and listen to parties voicing their worries and anger, and help to achieve constituency support for potential agreements being prepared. It is especially helpful to mediation efforts if parties feel a strong need to settle on-going conflict. Besides third-party bias and timing and ripeness in mediation, Ronald Fisher adds the following issues for third party intervention to take heed of: culture, power asymmetries, ethics involved and the effectiveness of third-party intervention (Fisher 2001).

The history of conflict in Sudan clearly demonstrates the difficulties of mediation, as mediation does not necessarily lead to successful conflict resolution and the implementation of peace agreements. As the number of potential mediators, peace initiatives or parties interested in multi-track diplomacy grows, the complications of dealing with misunderstandings, rivalry and wasting resources due to doubling of efforts become an additional challenge.

The term 'peacebuilding' was first coined by Johan Galtung in the seventies to describe progress towards building sustainable peace following a formal agreement. It was not until 1992 that the term 'post-conflict peace-building' was added to the policy vocabulary through the United Nations Agenda for Peace: Preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping, stating that preventive diplomacy was to avoid a crisis and post-conflict peace-building was to prevent a recurrence (UN 1992). In the meanwhile Lederach broadened the concept of peacebuilding to promoting 'constructive change processes' to manage conflict in all its phases and not simply post-accord. He also put emphasis on laying the foundation of a framework for conflict transformation and building peace (Lederach 1995). Thereafter definitions and approaches to peacebuilding expanded to post-conflict (or preventive) peace-building activities (UN 2005). It is still "broadly accepted that a sustainable peace process must be rooted in the grassroots or communal levels of Lederach's conflict pyramid"

though it is not to be considered a universal remedy (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall 2005, 229). Interplay between the various levels of the pyramid matters and is often lacking, as demonstrated by an Utstein study of 366 peacebuilding projects financed by Germany, Norway, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2004). It noted a “strategic deficit” and concluded that “... more than 55 percent of the projects do not show any link to the broader strategy for the country in which they are implemented” because no strategy existed or there was a disconnect between projects and strategy (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2004, 10). Until now the empirical analysis of peacebuilding strategies at various levels, including micro-level and macro-level evidence remains a challenge.

The most recent peacebuilding issues and debates center on framing a desired outcome of peacebuilding and the question of to what extent multiple peace initiatives add up. Is the objective of peacebuilding the absence of armed conflict (‘negative peace’) or lasting peaceful change and social justice across society (‘positive peace’)? Discussions about the underlying theories of change in relation to peacebuilding efforts have also raised the question if change should be an objective or not and if peacebuilding is to meet all development expectations. Reconciliation to conquer resentment and lack of trust between peoples in conflict, especially when living in protracted conflict situations, is a long-term process. The process of reconciliation might take generations or more. Third parties have the ability to assist parties in conflict by facilitating contact, building trust and confidence, drawing up plans, explaining problems and drafting agreements especially when face-to-face meetings are out of the question. States, international organizations, NGOs including international or national staff can all play an important role in this when they are willing to go the extra mile and understand the importance of coordination and long-term collaboration. The contribution that both national and international actors can make has to be assessed carefully within the context of a specific conflict situation (interview Esther Droppers and life histories Agnes Nyoka and Samia Ahmed). “Whether third party intervention should be biased or not, coercive or not, state-based or not, and carried out by outsiders or insiders have all triggered heated discussions”, and correctly so (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall 2007, 168).

Outsiders are not part of the conflict and yet opt for involvement, while insiders are in one way or another associated and affected by the conflict, especially in the case of a protracted civil war like the one in Sudan. The involvement of national or international practitioners, including their respective advantages and disadvantages, needs careful assessment. Advantages to the involvement of Sudanese nationals are the profound knowledge of the country, the conflict, its politics and its people. The disadvantage is that insiders are often part of, or considered part of, the conflict and laden with their own thoughts, experiences and biases. Balghis Badri<sup>14</sup> also raises the issue that NGOs are influenced by Sudanese

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14 Badri, Balghis. 2005. *Feminist Perspectives in the Sudan: An analytical overview*. Paper presented at workshop ‘Feminist Perspectives’. Free University Berlin.



politics just like Samia Ahmed in Chapter 8 (life history Samia Ahmed). Outsiders often add international leverage, resources and contacts with the ability to manage 'safe encounters'. The disadvantage of outsiders is their less intimate knowledge of, for example, the political dynamics of ongoing conflict. The relationship between insiders and outsiders deserves great care and to "emphasize support for groups within the society in conflict rather than for the mediation of outsiders" needs vigilance in situations of protracted conflict (Miall 2004, 70). In the case of Sudan I considered the exclusive involvement of national practitioners in mediation, conciliation and peacebuilding wildly optimistic and counterproductive because of its likelihood of increasing instead of decreasing tension (Anderson 1999). Unlike Mary Anderson and Lara Olson (2003) I would also not define members of the diaspora in a protracted conflict situation like Sudan as outsiders (The Hague Appeal for Peace 1999).

## 5 The development domain

Development is a concept subject to continuous debate. The meaning of development has been discussed since ancient Greece and ideas of both development and underdevelopment were part and parcel of philosophical, theological and political debates throughout the centuries. Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406), Georg W. F. Hegel (1770-1831), Auguste Comte (1798-1857), John Henri Newman (1801-1890), Karl Marx (1818-1883), Vladimir Ilyich Lenin (1870-1924) and Mao Zedong (1893-1976), to name just a few, all took part in this debate. Michael Cowen and Robert Shenton claim that "development defies definition" in their book on doctrines of development given the problem of matching planning and desire to develop with the way in which individuals experience development (Cowen and Shenton 1996, 438). At present, various notions about development co-exist, some stronger than others. Richard Peet and Elaine Hartwick in their book on theories of development describe development as follows:

*Development is optimistic and utopian. Development means changing the world for the better. Development means starting change at the bottom rather than the top (Peet and Hartwick 2009, 2).*

Development according to Mark Duffield "embodies an urge to protect and better others less fortunate than ourselves" (Duffield 2007, 227). Simply put, development is about change and creating a better life for all, be it in Europe or Africa, or be it the ultimate aim to which nowadays governments, societies, communities or individuals strive labelled progress, advancement, growth, betterment or a modest step forward in a process of change. Development is both "means and goal" (Cowen and Shenton 1995, 28). At the same time one can argue if development is real progress, and if so, according to whom? One step forward for some could imply two steps back for others. Like beauty, development, is in the eye of the beholder. Similar to the study of conflict, development as an area of study is complex and interdisciplinary.

Development thinking and development policies and practices have been affected by historical, cultural-social, economic and political processes over time. Development thought



and practice cannot be understood without reflecting on the character and significance of colonialism from the 15th to the 20th century when Europeans built colonies on other continents for reasons of profit, power or proselytism. This colonial experience differed worldwide and across the African continent depending on the colonial power, pre-existing social, cultural, economic and political conditions and structures of the time. The expansion of British influence in Sudan as described in the previous chapter had far-reaching and long-lasting consequences and helps explain differential development experiences in the Southern Sudan versus Northern Sudan following independence.

After the Second World War, development thought and practice was informed by the experience and effects of war in Western Europe, which changed the political landscape. Colonial powers like Britain faced economic difficulties and required assistance. A reconstruction plan consisting of economic and technical assistance was drafted and called the European Recovery Program (1948-1951), better known as the Marshall Plan. The U.S.S.R. and its allies declined any American assistance based on both political and commercial interests while Western Europe benefited. Following economic growth in Western Europe, the Marshall Plan inspired consecutive development thinking. There was a demand for decolonization and international agencies were established to support development. At the same time International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOS) broadened their activities and started to work in developing countries as well as countries in need of humanitarian assistance. According to Duffield, these changes “established the basis for the move away from the masculinity of colonialism to the more feminine subjectivity of aid” which is somewhat far-fetched when analyzing both theories and practices at the time (Duffield 2007, 61). Modernization theories dominated till the 1970s whereby development was defined in trickle-down economic terms based on a European model of development. This state focused model concentrated on economic growth, industrialization and the expansion of world trade in order to reduce poverty. Other theories argued that countries in the south were to promote national economic growth first or were to remain poverty stricken because of their exploitation by colonial powers in the north and unequal global power relations. Development practice in those days consisted of financial assistance and large technical projects to assist southern governments following a top-down approach. Social, cultural and political factors contributing to either development or underdevelopment remained largely unconsidered.

In the 1970s development thought and practice moved on when economic growth proved to be inadequate to end poverty and the effectiveness of assistance was criticized. The UN argued for an approach to secure basic needs, such as food, water, housing, health and education, for the world’s poorest people, which was embraced by the World Bank in the end. As a result, economic growth which promotes the redistribution of benefits to the poor, was given attention. Rich countries were called upon to increase aid and devote 0.7 percent of their gross national incomes (GNI) to international development by 1975. Development assistance increased, but the 1973 oil crisis and 1979 energy crisis affected its landscape. The Club of Rome and some theories at the time called for a need to control economic

and population growth as well as the use of natural resources. Nevertheless, aid modalities did not change and large infrastructure projects continued along-side integrated rural development projects. In the mid-seventies the feminist movement succeeded in drawing attention to the differential impacts of development on women and men and the exclusion of women from development benefits which resulted in 'women in development' policymaking.

The early 1980s were marked by global recession. Calls for an increase in development assistance continued but suffered from the recession and its impact on financial institutions, debt crises and the feeling that development assistance did not really succeed in reaching its goal. Commercial and political interests marked development assistance. State intervention was no longer encouraged and neo-liberal thinking encouraged a focus on the market economy and privatization. Environmental concerns and sustainable development were placed on the policymaking agenda as well as people-centered approaches including grassroots approaches, gender as well as the importance of local knowledge. Ethnodevelopment emerged in development thinking highlighting the importance of safeguarding ethnic diversity and the protection of rights and livelihoods of indigenous populations. In the late 1980s, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) published its first Human Development Report alongside sheer economic measures of development produced by the World Bank. Besides criticism of the motives of development assistance, Graham Hancock, a former British aid worker, sharply criticized the aid industry that had emerged over time, describing its proportions as immense, its programmes as corrupt and its failure to contribute to economic growth (Hancock 1989).

The 1990s presented new challenges with the end of the Cold War and increased intrastate conflict and political instability. Debt relief became part of the development agenda and aid started to flow increasingly through governments in support of democratic governance. Gender equality and empowerment received special interest following the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. Both the UN and the World Bank highlighted the importance of social development issues and the use of participatory approaches whilst putting increased emphasis on poverty reduction as a core development issue. Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) were introduced including provisions to involve civil society and the poor to push for responsible and accountable government. The groundwork was done for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) following the United Nations Millennium Declaration signed in 2000 by UN member states, resulting in eight shared goals based on earlier international development targets. Projects and direct service delivery were out; sector-wide approaches and a move towards budget support were pursued instead. Neo-liberalism continued while post-development theorists argued the need to take heed of the local, social and cultural actors and factors in the context of development practice.

The development battlefield continues into the 21<sup>st</sup> century adorned with a variety of development theories and approaches, critiques and counter-critiques and a continuing demand for results and reform. The economist Jeffrey Sachs for example, when describing myths and bullets to end poverty, refers to Napoleon's declaration that "[h]istory is a

fable often told” to dismiss “much of development thinking” (Sachs 2005, 309-310). Anti-developmentalism also thrust its head above the ground (Watts 2005). Following Hancock and as a particular category, numerous hair-raising publications on foreign aid were published including Dambisa Moyo’s ‘Dead Aid’ (Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid 2010). Neo-liberalist thinking includes intellectuals from developing countries such as Moyo and is fed by recession in the last decade. Neo-liberalist thinking has become mainstream while “critical theories of development emphasize well-conceived development rather than more growth” (Peet and Hartwick 2009, 141). At the same time, post-development and ideas related to grassroots approaches and sustainable development are here to stay. Hopefully, the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, unlike the 1980s, will not be referred to as another “*lost decade* in terms of development” (Groves and Hinton 2005, 30). Till now, most theories depend on the nation-state and, unlike critical theories, fail to put people at the heart of developmental thinking.

Besides diversified and evolving thought about the problem of development and its approaches, measurement is another issue. Measurement of development may be pursued for many reasons, ranging from defining and describing the need for development to assessing the impact of development assistance. Heated debates between development actors on what to measure, when and how are common. Indicators chosen are always met with criticism and reflect certain development thinking. International organizations such as the World Bank, as well as many national governments, tend to use economic measures to represent development. In the World Bank list of economies (2009), economies are divided among income groups according to their gross national income (GNI) per capita. Based on its GNI per capita, every economy is classified as low income (\$975 or less), middle income (subdivided into lower middle that is \$976-3,855 and upper middle that is \$3,856-11,905) or high income (\$11,906 or more). The use of a GNI or Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to represent development is quite common; as with economic growth and greater wealth, some development researchers, policy makers and practitioners assume that other needs such as better health and education are met. That assumption however is definitely not true in the case of Sudan and explains why, since the late 1980s the Gross National Product (GNP) and GNI per capita indicators have been increasingly used together with broader indicators of development.

When examining progress or development in a country like Sudan between the years 2000 and 2007 using the World Development Indicators database of September 2008 (World Bank 2009), the data provided demonstrates that economic growth can easily occur without addressing problems like inequality or poverty and that any increase might well benefit a few people (Sen 1999). Irrespective of high growth of Gross National Income per capita (\$310-960), Gross National Product (\$12,37-47,63 billion) and Official Development Assistance (\$220-2.058 million), the percentage of the population benefiting from improved access to water (69 to 70%), and life expectancy (56 to 58 years of age) have hardly improved. The income share of people by the lowest 20% remains unknown and the percentage of urban population with access to improved sanitation facilities actually fell from 51 to 50%.

The data also shows that economic growth can occur without addressing conflict as the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between Northern and Southern Sudan was signed in 2005. The impact of 'oil and human rights' are simply left out of accounts as well as the costs of both war and peace and who benefits (HRW 2003).

When comparing broader indicators of development provided by UNDP and its Human Development Report (2009) to the World Bank economic data, a picture of 'low human development' in Sudan emerges, feeding the crisis of development thought and practice and undermining domestic support for both development assistance and the understanding of foreign policies among taxpayers in ODA providing countries (Crush 1995, Dengbol - Martinussen and Engberg - Pedersen 2005, Duffield 2007, Groves and Hinton 2005, Moyo 2009, Peet and Hartwick 2009). The collection and analysis of data in war-affected countries is another worry and point to the relevance of close qualitative examination. An important question is to what extent both definitions and indicators of development meet the aspirations of individual Sudanese men and women following the CPA. The life histories by Sudanese women from the Nuba Mountains simply illustrate what exactly they would like to see in the future:

*I want all my brothers to be educated, have their degrees to be able to maintain themselves in order not to end up in the streets... For me to complete my PhD in communication and to get married (life history Inaam Haroun Mahmoud).*

*I want my girls to study, as much as possible. I am thinking about the next generation. For them to complete master degrees and PhDs. I am alright and too old now to take big strides forward. Women will also have more chances in the next elections (life history Esta Kuku Rahal).*

Compared to poor human development progress, MDG country-level progress data for Sudan offer some comfort and shed light on Esta Kuku Rahal's hope for more opportunities for women to participate in the elections. The percentage of seats in parliament held by Sudanese women increased from 5,3% in 1997 to 17,8% in 2007 (80 out of 400 seats) and 25,6 % (114 out of 446 seats) in 2011 showing a remarkable increase when comparing data prior and post-CPA<sup>15</sup>.

## **6 Theoretical threads**

To enhance the guiding approach to this research I will discuss the following theoretical threads originating from the domain of development studies i.e. conflict and development, gender and development and participatory development. They will feature in the completed theoretical framework and are followed by a short description of the development scene to link development theory to development practice.

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<sup>15</sup> <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/mdg/Data.aspx> accessed October 21, 2011.

## A perspective of conflict and development

Development thought and practice have primarily developed on a different track than theories of conflict. This changed when intrastate conflicts reached their peak in the early 1990s. Donors started to think about how humanitarian assistance interfaced with development as the concept of ‘complex political emergencies’ had emerged. A complex emergency was defined by the United Nations Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) as “a humanitarian crisis in a country, region, or society where there is a total or considerable breakdown of authority resulting from internal or external conflict and which requires an international response that goes beyond the mandate or capacity of any single agency and/or the ongoing UN country programme” (Oxford Pocket Dictionary 1992). Complex emergencies are said to come in handy as no one or nothing in particular is to be blamed for the situation (Duffield 2007). Both bilateral donors and INGOS used to conveniently label Sudan as a complex emergency. Irrespective of a signed Comprehensive Peace Agreement, conflict has erupted in Darfur and reignited in the Nuba Mountains while oil rich border areas remain heavily disputed following South Sudan’s separation from (North) Sudan in 2011.

The 1992 UN Agenda for Peace highlighted threats to the cohesion of states, the complexity of international security and challenges to social peace as a new dimension of insecurity that were not to push aside “the continuing and devastating problems of unchecked population growth, crushing debt burdens, barriers to trade, drugs and the growing disparity between rich and poor” and linked conflict to (lack of) development and vice versa (UN 1992, art 15). Five years later the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) published its guidelines on conflict, peace and development co-operation “for development co-operation to contribute more actively to conflict prevention and post-conflict rehabilitation and construction” (OECD 1997, 7). It stated that:

*Work in conflict-prone and war-torn countries has always been part of development co-operation activities. Helping strengthen the capacity of a society to manage tensions and disputes without violence is a vital part of development work. While it may sometimes be difficult to articulate and analyse, this “peacebuilding” objective must form the cornerstone of all development co-operation strategies and programmes. Development agencies can also be a catalyst for the broader inclusion of societal groups in discussion and negotiation processes. Women, and women’s groups specifically, should be encouraged to participate in efforts to prevent conflict and build peace. They can often exert considerable influence in bringing warring parties to the negotiating table, and lend another voice to the search for peaceful solutions (OECD 1997, 9).*

The guidelines recognized that peace and conflict may go hand in hand; that both humanitarian assistance and development co-operation may involve changes that could fuel or increase tensions as well as cause conflict. It also spoke of bridging relief and development that is often described as a ‘continuum’. The European Commission in Sudan, for example, started a programme called ‘Humanitarian Plus’ in 2002 emphasizing a longer-term

perspective with “programmes that sought to address immediate needs but through the rehabilitation of systems and services and through the enhancement of local institutional and implementation capacity” (EC 2010). However, transitions from war to peace are messy and unpredictable, unlike what the word ‘continuum’ might suggest. Actors in development cooperation providing assistance in conflict zones also became more aware of potential dangers linked to aid. This recognition of development and economic, social and political change as potential harm to some, and not just benefits to all, further prompted the notion of development as essentially conflict-ridden. Duffield found that NGOs in the south also “have gradually acknowledged that economic and social development for the poor often involve conflicts and struggles for political power” (Duffield 2007, 155). As a result, conflict prevention and peacebuilding became the answer.

Developmental approaches to conflict evolved into security approaches to development starting with the concept of human security, even though “human security rather places the security of people ahead of other security concerns” (Frerks and Goldewijk 2007, 15). Broadening the concept of security however involved a disconcerting obscurity for lack of a definition and agreed-upon measurement (King and Murray 2001-2, Paris 2001, Demmers 2006, Frerks and Goldewijk 2007, Tschirgi, Lund and Mancini 2010). Roland Paris speaks of a “hodgepodge of principles and objectives associated with the concept” and the “quicksilver concept” (Paris 2001, 93 and 97). Gary King and Christopher Murray argue that the political support and visibility of human security-based foreign policy was also reflected in the UN Security Council’s taking on AIDS in Africa, its first discussion of a public health issue (King and Murray 2001-2, 590). A few months later, gender was also put on the agenda with Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security (2000). Roger Mac Ginty and Andrew Williams argue that the “securitisation of development or the incorporation of development into security strategies” is evident in developmental and reconstruction efforts that took place in both Iraq and Afghanistan whereby the fruits of development are meant to win hearts and minds in the midst of conflict (Ginty and Williams 2009, 19).

The understanding that transitions from war to peace are messy, evolved into the recognition “that development, peace and security and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing” with the 2005 UN World Summit Outcome after the release of the UN report ‘In larger freedom’ (UN 2005a). This report conveys the idea that development, security and human rights go hand in hand:

*We will not enjoy development without security, we will not enjoy security without development, and we will not enjoy either without respect for human rights* (UN 2005a).

Not surprisingly, ‘no development without security and no security without development’ ended up as a phrase with vast political traction in the aftermath of the 2001, September 11 attacks in the US. It did create “a concern that underdevelopment is now dangerous” for all and a line of argument that when “poverty and underdevelopment encouraged conflict and instability, then sustainable development with its intention of eliminating these maladies can

also play a security role” (Duffield 2002, 89). More recently, this has been translated into 3-D (development, diplomacy, and defence) or 4-D (including democracy) approaches as well as ‘whole-of-government’ and integrated or hybrid approaches. Some consider the inclusion of politics a major amendment to the current security-development discourse (Tschirgi, Lund and Mancini 2010). An increased and situated understanding of the way, however, in which development and conflict is interwoven remains difficult to find, as the situation in countries like Afghanistan but also Sudan demonstrate. Although Mac Ginty and Williams suggest that “especially in the post 9/11 world ... the ‘security imperative’ is easier to justify among audiences than a development imperative”, I find that neither public support for development nor public support for security interventions should be taken for granted in times of global recession and criticism regarding past performance (Ginty and Williams 2009, 43).

Mac Ginty and Williams conclude in an effort to link the study of conflict and development that:

*Those who study conflict have, until quite recently, tended to ignore the problems of development. They have also tended to be stuck in the study of very small-scale examples and to take a ‘tourist’ interest in what is often abject horror and suffering. Very few analysts of conflict are, for example, prepared to spend more than a few months studying a conflict, visiting the area and developing a thorough understanding of its dynamics over many years. Understanding requires empathy, and empathy requires a lot of contact with the real world of conflict (Ginty and Williams 2009, 176).*

Some researchers easily confine themselves to a short survey of literature at hand, gazing through some files and interviewing a couple of individuals working at headquarters in order to comfortably conclude that “[f]ieldwork in Sudan has not been undertaken since it is extremely difficult to do research locally given the conflict situation” (Clingendael 2000a, 15). Notable exceptions are local-level ethnographic research efforts as described by Arturo Escobar (Escobar 1995).

### **The gender and development perspective**

Feminist theories have a long history and are multidisciplinary. They include numerous epistemological and methodological approaches such as liberal feminism and socialist feminism, and disciplines interested in women’s status, conditions and struggles globally. Feminist interests related to development include for example gendered division of labour, legal discrimination and the absence of women in decision-making which are generally being attributed to the subordination of women. Feminism is, and always has been, activist and political in its effort to understand gender inequality and explain women’s subordination. Both power and sexuality matter. Relevant feminist and gender theories will be elaborated upon later in this dissertation when entering into a third domain that will complete the theoretical framework that underpins this research.



In the 1970s both feminist theory and the women's movement started to contribute to development thought and practice, supported by changes over time in the status and role of women, resulting as mentioned above in women in development policy making and projects. At the same time both women's, men's and gender studies emerged as interdisciplinary fields of studies. This interplay resulted in five development approaches: women in development (WID), women and development (WAD), gender and development (GAD), Women, Environment and Development (WED) and Postmodernism and Development (PAD) (Peet and Hartwick 2009). At the same time a "...series of UN conferences, added to the four conferences on women: 1975 in Mexico, 1980 in Copenhagen, 1985 in Nairobi and 1995 in Beijing, also the Conference on Environment and Development in Rio 1992, the Conference on Human Rights in Vienna 1993, the Conference on Population and Development in Cairo 1994, and the Social Summit in Copenhagen 1995, ... have played a major role in the creation of a unified language with which to address women's issues on a global scale" (Sida studies 2001, 74). A common language on gender as a social construction upon biological differences emerged, popularizing feminist thought while adding masculinity and depoliticizing the study of women. At the same time it was no longer an agenda of Western women only.

Profound critique by a development practitioner, Ester Boserup (1910-1999), of development theories governing the 1960s and their failure to emancipate women in the developing world, lead to successive discussions, development expertise and targeted policymaking to make sure that women were part and parcel of the development process, framed as the Women in Development (WID) approach. Interestingly while studying reports and memoirs related to the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium in the Sudan Archive at Durham, similar concerns were expressed already by women working abroad at the time. Ina M. Beasley, who arrived in Sudan in 1939 as a Superintendent Girls' Education and retired from Sudan service in 1949, commented that based on her experience the "general assumption that 'progress' automatically includes women" is "not true" (Beasley, ca. 1898-1985, SAD.204/12/1).

Following Boserup's critique however, any self-respecting development agency started an office or a desk in the 1970s to promote the economic and social development of women. The idea was to integrate women into the formulation, planning and implementation of development projects by taking care of what Caroline Moser, a social anthropologist, called practical gender needs and interests for which special women's projects were undertaken. These projects would not address issues to overcome the subordination of women but would deal with improving women's living conditions and, for example, focus on the provision of health and water. This approach met with some criticism during the late 1970s and 1980s when it became clear that the status of women in terms of their access to health, education and income had actually taken a turn for the worse irrespective of targeted WID programmes and a UN decade for women (1976-1985). It was said that "WID emphasized poverty and not oppression" (Peet and Hartwick 2009, 258).

Women from Africa, Asia and Latin America urged for renewed thinking for women not to be considered a constraint to development. UN conferences on women in Mexico



City (1975), Copenhagen (1980) and Nairobi (1985) stressed the agency and potential of women while putting more emphasis on the need for the empowerment of women. The Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era, or DAWN, described itself as a network of scholars and activists from the economic south that sprang from the NGO Forum at Nairobi, giving their own perspectives on development prominence. Consequently another paradigm emerged alongside the WID approach called Women and Development (WAD). The Women and Development approach aimed at the integration of women into social, political and economic development in the long run as opposed to merely improving their living conditions in the short-term. Strengthening the voice of women implied an empowerment approach. By 1995 the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing called for action. A worldwide agenda for women's empowerment emerged in areas such as decision-making, human rights, combating violence against women and poverty. Consequently both the UN and governments agreed to promote gender mainstreaming in policies and programmes.

The Women and Development perspective also had its critics. Progress was lagging behind and issues like ethnicity and class seemed overlooked. The Women, Environment and Development perspective was basically a WAD spin-off. WID and WAD were largely overtaken by a Gender and Development perspective arguing for the analysis of women's subordination from the perspective of gender relations between women and men. It considered states largely responsible for the advancement of women and highlighted ethnic, class and religious differences amongst women. GAD did not reject earlier perspectives. As a case in point I recall that the late Nasreen Pervin Huq (1958-2006), a prominent Bangladeshi women's activist and campaigner for women's rights and social justice said, for example, that the previous focus on women was still necessary in the new millennium in a country like Bangladesh. The consecutive Postmodernism and Development (PAD) views criticize GAD and explicitly focus on marginalization and differences while stressing the importance of local women's knowledge and dialogue. As Escobar has argued "although it originates in the egalitarian discourses of the West, it does not necessarily have to follow the West's experience" (Escobar 1995a, 226). WID, WAD and GAD have been most influential in development policies and programmes. The following table illustrates how both changes in development theories and gender and development perspective have informed policy formulation and practices over time.

**Table 3.6** How changes in development theories and gender and development perspectives inform aid policies and practices

Timetable	Changes in development theories	Changes in Gender and Development Perspective	Changes in aid policies, strategies and implementation
< 1970	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modernization theories</li> <li>• Structuralist theories</li> <li>• Dependency theories</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welfare</li> <li>• At best women targeted in their domestic and reproductive role</li> <li>• Projects address women's practical gender needs / interests, e.g. health, nutrition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on economic growth</li> <li>• Planning of manpower</li> <li>• Infrastructure projects</li> <li>• Technical assistance</li> <li>• One size fits all</li> </ul>
1970s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dependency theories continued</li> <li>• Basic needs approaches</li> <li>• <b>Women and development</b></li> <li>• Neo-Malthusian theories</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equity</li> <li>• Status of women low due to income poverty</li> <li>• Projects try and address income poverty by creating income-generating opportunities for women</li> <li>• Rise of focus on legislative change</li> <li>• <b>WID (women-only projects) and critique to WID: WAD</b></li> <li>• Strategic needs to advance the position of women are put on the agenda</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More focus on poverty and poor countries</li> <li>• WID discussions</li> <li>• UN establishes UNIFEM in 1975</li> <li>• UN Conference on women in 1975 (Mexico)</li> <li>• UN decade for women begins (1975-1985)</li> <li>• Few agencies adopt gender policy</li> <li>• Infrastructure projects continue</li> <li>• Integrated rural development projects</li> <li>• CEDAW 1979</li> </ul>
1980s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neo-liberalism</li> <li>• Grassroots approaches</li> <li>• Sustainable development</li> <li>• <b>Gender and development</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Efficiency</li> <li>• Third World women demand new development theories</li> <li>• Focus on women as channels of development</li> <li>• <b>WID/WAD continued: integration and focus on social relations women and men</b></li> <li>• Participation of women is considered key</li> <li>• Focus on strategic gender needs</li> <li>• Gender mainstreaming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conditionality and control</li> <li>• Tight supervision of projects for reasons of effectiveness (logical framework)</li> <li>• Some balance of payments support</li> <li>• Concerns over negative impact development projects</li> <li>• UN Conference on women in 1980 (Copenhagen) and 1985 (Nairobi)</li> <li>• Service delivery through NGO support</li> <li>• More agencies adopt gender policy</li> </ul>

<p>1990s</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neo-liberalism continued</li> <li>• Post-development</li> <li>• Sustainable development continued</li> <li>• Culture and development</li> <li>• Conflict and Development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Autonomy and empowerment approaches</li> <li>• <b>Focus on involvement men (GAD)</b></li> <li>• Grassroots organizing and women's need to transform laws and structures through a bottom-up approach</li> <li>• Integration of gender into new aid modalities: gender assessments</li> <li>• Gender mainstreaming and specific efforts to promote gender equality</li> <li>• Staffing and budgets for gender mainstreaming have reduced</li> <li>• <b>Gender and environment (WED)</b></li> <li>• Accountability</li> <li>• Gender matters before, during and after conflict</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poverty reduction strategies and decline projects</li> <li>• Sector-wide approaches</li> <li>• More contributions to multilateral development co-operation agencies</li> <li>• Country ownership</li> <li>• Mutual accountability</li> <li>• Harmonized approaches with other donors</li> <li>• Human security</li> <li>• UN Conference on women in 1995 (Beijing)</li> <li>• The HDReport 1995 introduced two new measures of human development that highlight the status of women</li> <li>• Stronger focus on aid in the process of conflict and conflict sensitive development</li> <li>• DAC study (OECD 2007) recommends agencies to step up efforts to promote gender equality and empower women</li> <li>• Efforts to untie aid</li> </ul>
<p>2000 &gt;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neo-liberalism continued</li> <li>• Sustainable development continued</li> <li>• Post-development continued</li> <li>• Grassroots approaches continued</li> <li>• Conflict and Development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women's rights and gender justice</li> <li>• Gender equality</li> <li>• Empowerment approaches continued</li> <li>• Women use democratic process to get at power</li> <li>• Knowledge and voice of women</li> <li>• Focus on gender and conflict and gender dimensions of post-conflict planning and financing</li> <li>• Securitization approaches: five women and peace and security resolutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MDGs</li> <li>• Paris Declaration</li> <li>• UN SCR 1325 (2000)</li> <li>• Responsibility to protect</li> <li>• More budget support</li> <li>• Economic growth key to poverty reduction</li> <li>• Redistribution income / opportunities</li> <li>• More focus on good governance</li> <li>• Following 9/11 in 2001 securitization of development assistance</li> <li>• Integrated approaches to peace, security and development (3D and whole-of-government)</li> <li>• UN reform and the establishment of UN-Women</li> <li>• Development is complex and country specific</li> <li>• One size does not fit all</li> <li>• UN SCR 1820 (2008), UN SCR 1888 and 1889 (2009) including a call for the development of global indicators to track the implementation of UN SCR 1325 and UN SCR 1960 (2010)</li> <li>• Linking aid to (self-)interest</li> </ul>

In essence, gender and development perspectives supported attempts to get development right and certainly helped to improve and transform development thought and practice. Numerous analytical frameworks (the Harvard Analytical Framework, People Oriented Planning, Gender Analysis Matrix, Capacities and Vulnerabilities Framework, Moser's Framework, Longwe Women's Empowerment Framework, Gender Assessment Studies) were developed over time to help development practitioners understand the issues at stake. Each and every framework had its use, its limitations and criticisms.

UNDP introduced two development measures in 1995 together with its gender and development themed Human Development Report to reflect the status of women: the Gender-related Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM). The greater the gender disparity in basic capabilities, the lower a country's GDI in comparison to its Human Development Index (HDI). The GDI reflects HDI inequality in achievement when comparing women to men. It is not a comprehensive measure of gender inequality and does not capture gender disparities in employment for example. The GEM is a measure of agency and conveys political participation and decision-making power as well as economic participation and control over resources. The GDI is about the expansion of capabilities while the GEM focuses on the ability to use those capabilities and to take advantage of the opportunities in life. Their use and meaning remain limited. This is illustrated by a publication of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development on gender equality and aid delivery which concludes that irrespective of an abundance of gender policies some of the failures to meet the commitments made at Beijing arise from weak structures, poor procedures, low levels of investment and, ultimately a failure of political will (OECD 2007). The changes in aid strategies and implementation have taken a toll. At the end of the 90s, changes in aid modalities clearly dominated the Dutch development co-operation debate. By 2003 a new policy was issued called 'mutual interests, mutual responsibilities' that was no longer informed by a distinct gender and development perspective (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2003). A gender and development perspective was no longer considered necessary and was therefore overruled by political correctness. Policymakers and practitioners would automatically support gender equality and Dutch financial support to UNIFEM was halted. It took five more years for a gender and development perspective to return in Dutch development practice with higher levels of investment and evident political will.

Interestingly, little of our knowledge on gender and development has been applied consciously and strategically when it comes to the subject of peace, conflict and security (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2007). Although the UN Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1325 on women, peace and security on October 31, 2000, it was a different but not necessarily more effective route to promote the active involvement of women in the field of peace and security as well as the importance of a gender perspective in actions aimed at conflict prevention, conflict resolution or peacebuilding. In 2009 the UN Secretary General issued a report on enhancing mediation stating that although in its resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008), the Security Council called for an increase in the participation of women at

decision-making levels in peace processes, most processes continue to involve only the male representatives of warring parties (UN Security Council 2009). The report stated that:

*The absence of women and the resultant failure of peace agreements to deal with women's issues leads, however, to perpetuation of discrimination against women, their continued marginalization in the post-conflict society, and de facto impunity for abuses such as sexual violence during conflict. Peace processes, therefore, need to ensure not only adequate representation of women as participants and observers but also gender expertise in agenda-setting, substantive talks and implementation, in order to redress past inequalities, so that new institutions can be built to provide greater social justice for all (UN Security Council 2009, 19).*

In 2011 and following five women and peace and security resolutions<sup>16</sup>, goals, outputs and targets by 2014 and 2020 were set to track the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325. Targets set for 2014 include that “50 per cent of all United Nations special envoys and mediators and mediation teams undertake regular consultations with women leaders and women’s civil society organizations” (UN Security Council 2011, 29).

### **The participatory development perspective**

Just like the concept of development, participatory development thought and practice are subject to continuous debate and dispute. At times participatory development is presented as an objective, and also as a means or a process of empowerment. It has taken a variety of shapes since the 1970s, aiming to involve local people in development efforts and is fed by doubts about the success of development approaches and evaluations of aid as well as demands from local organizations. Participatory development is usually employed with a variety of explanations and justifications ranging from cost-efficiency, effectiveness, and rights, tapping into local knowledge and building capacity towards sustainability to respect. Ray Jennings defines participatory development as follows:

*Participation is involvement by a local population and, at times additional stakeholders in the creation, content and conduct of a programme or policy designed to change their lives. Built on a belief that citizens can be trusted to shape their own future, participatory development uses local decision making and capacities to steer and define the nature of an intervention (Jennings 2000, 1).*

Participation however is more than involvement. Participation should be transformative and a chance to change lives. Critics of participatory development consider participation costly, time-consuming, not necessarily inclusive and egalitarian, reaching only the lucky few and at times counterproductive especially when used as a pretext or just words. To them, participation is either a mere token or nothing but another mantra in the world of development. This is illustrated by the fact that at the end of the nineties World Bank staff

<sup>16</sup> These resolutions are: Security Councils Resolution 1325 (2000); 1820 (2009); 1888 (2009); 1889 (2010) and 1960 (2011).

members were still found struggling with the use of participatory processes saying that “participation was widespread but thin” (Aycrigg 1998, 27). Managers were not convinced of the value of participation and that participation and efforts also ran “counter to the Bank’s expert culture and its emphasis on quick disbursement” (Aycrigg 1998, 27). On the other hand, research and case studies of development programmes and humanitarian interventions using participatory methodologies conducted by agencies continue to suggest that there are many benefits to be gained (Jennings 2000). The OECD considers participation essential and empowerment key to participatory development, recognizing that participation is neither easy nor the answer to all problems (OECD 1993).

Participatory development is about changing power and relationships and a different way of working (Cornwall and Brock 2005, Groves and Hinton 2005, Mohan 2001 and Nelson and Wright 1995). That participatory development is anything but politically neutral (Groves and Hinton 2005, Jennings 2000 and OECD 1993) is illustrated by the following cautionary OECD area for action:

*Fostering participatory development may require special attention to help prevent, contain or resolve ethnic and other kinds of conflict. DAC members should enhance the relevant skills available to aid agencies, and stand ready to help with mediation and conflict resolution (OECD 1993, 5).*

Leslie Groves and Rachel Hinton argue that understanding difference is key and that “understanding where the power lies, and how it may be used, is ... a prerequisite to bringing about change” where cultural, religious and political dynamics come into play (Groves and Hinton 2005, 10). Jules Pretty and Ian Scoones describe how “support for change can come in many ways” and argue that “the principle objective must ... be to foster change from within, not to threaten power but to put pressure on the system and to support innovative individuals” (Pretty and Scoones 1995, 163).

I agree with the critics of participatory development who declared participation as the new tyranny that this is not a matter of magic formulas. I personally witnessed how Participatory Rapid Appraisals (PRAs) meant to assess humanitarian needs in the Nuba Mountains turned into non-Participatory Rapid Appraisals lacking both the trust and respect from those in need. Moreover formula’s such as PRAs offer nothing but a snapshot and are unlikely to capture meaningful longer-term social change processes from a variety of angles. As a matter of fact participatory development is always problematical since it will affect existing power structures (Cooke and Kothari 2001). Participation is likely to benefit some and harm others. The complexity of participation and the way in which participation in efforts to build peace may be understood in times of war, is central to this research, as my experience in Sudan suggests that widespread inclusive change can be brought about by challenging existing systems, informed risk-taking, and supporting the abilities and capacity of individual agency and leadership. I find that Robert Chambers succinctly tells us that “participation which truly empowers implies a process which is unpredictable” (Chambers 1995, 41).

## **7 The development scene: actors and agencies**

In general, development assistance consists of emergency assistance or relief to meet short-term needs following natural disasters or armed conflict and long-term development assistance. Long-term aid may include financial contributions, debt cancellation, loans, but also technical assistance, be it advice or equipment depending on development thought and practice. The donor actors involved in development assistance are many. They range from private Dutch citizens supporting an orphanage in Bangladesh to the World Bank and UNICEF constructing schools in Yemen together with the state government and supported by Dutch Official Development Assistance (ODA). They range from local NGOs working with local government or communities to reduce maternal mortality in Ethiopia to private sector companies in Tanzania engaging in economic activity and generating growth, jobs and so on together with some social corporate responsibility.

There are moral and humanitarian reasons for providing development assistance as well as security, environmental and economic reasons (Degnbol - Martinussen and Engberg - Pederson 2005). The key motives for giving aid have changed over time and differ for each and every donor and country. There are often historic, political, commercial and other reasons influencing the actual distribution of aid by donors. As highlighted earlier, some development theories are more state-oriented than others. Bilateral aid in particular used to be an interstate affair in which political and commercial motives were more evident while multilateral assistance was channelled through international agencies. Another share of ODA is channelled through NGOs involved in mostly non-state development assistance. NGOs also receive other public voluntary contributions. The issue of comparative advantages of the various actors involved in development assistance has more recently turned into a serious subject of debate whereas agencies have evolved towards performing similar tasks at the risk of competing with each other instead of strengthening each others' efforts.

Development goals multiplied during the last five decades and the nature of development objectives became far more complex and compound. Often times objectives were simply accumulated and neither prioritized nor abolished (Degnbol - Martinussen and Engberg - Pederson 2005 and WRR 2010 ). Social development goals were added to economic development goals while emphasis on one or the other changed. As illustrated by the above table, with an overview of changes in aid policies, strategies and implementation from the 1970s up to and including the first decade of the new millennium, donor agencies came to realize the complexities of development assistance and moved away from 'one size fits all' approaches to the understanding that not one size fits all. This understanding was reflected in a change in aid modalities, but also reflected in the language used, as development aid turned into development assistance, then into development cooperation and consequently into partnership commitments and mutual accountability (OECD 2005). Transfer of goods and knowledge by means of time bound and fixed projects and services changed into programmes and sector programme support. The social development agenda merged with human security and aid was "securitized" (Duffield 2002, 89).

As development theories inform development practice, including the role and importance of different actors, it is ultimately individual men and women that play an important role in determining what development is needed and inform us as to whether development assistance has or has not achieved its goal. It is prevailing development thought which determines their actual involvement and participation in development.

## **8 The feminist domain**

“Gender has become the touchstone for feminist research and scholarship” for separating (biological) sex from (socially) constructed gender (Åsberg 2007, 27). Gender is a concept used within feminist thought and practice to clarify and demonstrate how roles of women and men are the product of social and cultural forces. Gender has become a key concern of gender studies which branched out into women’s studies focusing on women, feminism, gender and politics and men’s studies, replacing women and feminism for men and masculinity. Indeed, “[g]ender is not just about identity, or just about work, or just about power, or just about sexuality, but all of these things at once” (Connell 2009, 11). No matter where, being a man or a woman, will affect what you get (resources), what you can do (agency) and what you can become (achievements). The definitions of what is feminine and what is masculine are interrelated, and may change over time and across cultures, representing distinct and changing power relationships.

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, feminist theories represent a discipline in itself; drawing from a variety of disciplines including humanities, philosophy as well as the social and natural sciences. On the other hand, feminist thought has been applied to numerous disciplines including economics, geography, psychoanalysis, history, and philosophy. Interdisciplinarity is a built-in characteristic whether dealing with women’s studies, gender or feminist studies. Feminist theory focuses on the analysis of the subordination of women as well as aspects of gender inequality. It studies the social and economic roles and positions of men and women and ways to overcome any inequity, with political engagement being a crucial element besides activism to improve women’s rights and the status of women.

Western bearers of early feminist thought include Christine de Pizan (1365-1434), a poet born in Venice who stressed on the role of women in society and challenged existing stereotypes (Tickner 2001), and also women like Jeanne d’Arc (ca. 1412-1431). Women like Mary Astell (1666-1731) and Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) and men like John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895), argued for women’s right to education and equal opportunities. Over time, feminist movements were divided up into three distinct waves based on an article called “The Second Feminist Wave” by Martha Weinman Lear in the New York Times Magazine (Lear 1968). That is, the term ‘first wave feminism’ was then applied to the first movement of women in the Netherlands, Britain, other parts of Europe and the US which strived for women’s right to vote and their access to higher education starting in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Dutch first wave feminists include Aletta Jacobs (1854-1929) and Wilhemina Drucker (1847-1925) objecting to what they, upper-class women, considered



unjust. They succeeded in broadening educational and professional opportunities for women and tried to seize the women's vote. The first feminist wave was mainly focused on obtaining access for women to what was considered to be the domain of men at the time (Buikema and van der Tuin 2009).

The 'second wave' started in the 1960s drawing inspiration from Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986) and her 1949 essay "The Second Sex" where she argues for gender equality, followed by the African-American Civil Rights Movement, student activism and the anti-war movement (Beauvoir 2011). No longer the domain of upper-class women, feminism focused on the broadening of political, legal, social and economic opportunities for women between the 1960s and 1980s alongside other emancipatory movements such as the gay and anti-racist movements. Soon, women could vote and run for any office, join university and participate in decision-making. This period was marked by feminist efforts to promote political participation, paid labour, sharing of housework and childcare as well as economic independence for women. A range of strategies were applied including large scale protests, social activism as well as consciousness-raising groups openly discussing issues of sexuality and culture. At the same time activism involved a recognition and tribute to femininity. This period was marked by widely divergent feminist views and scholarly debates, to which I will turn later. The 'second wave' also stimulated a global struggle for women's rights. The 'third wave' started in the early 1990s and continues until now. This period is marked by efforts to obtain equal pay for equal work as well as a tireless struggle to break through the glass ceiling as well as a determination by women to resist victimhood. The joys of fatherhood were praised while employment opportunities increased choice amongst women. Last but not least, migrant women in Western Europe have adopted the struggle for women's rights and have started to protest discrimination on the basis of religion and culture.

Feminist theories are numerous, and range from liberal to Marxist and from radical to social and black, and from post-colonial to postmodern feminism. Similar to the domains of conflict and development, feminist thought is marked by critique and counter critique, counting many and at times contradictory opinions when trying not only to understand gender inequality, but also build knowledge and promote women's rights. Without trying to be exhaustive and just to point out a few, I will provide here a reflection on key feminist ideas, and accompanying critique and counter-critique. Liberal feminism, starting with Mary Wollstonecraft, was mostly concerned with gender equality from a political, legal and economic perspective and focused on individual women and men, their choices, opportunities and agency. At a later stage, liberal feminism added sexual and reproductive health and rights, the struggle against racism and violence against women, as well as gay and lesbian rights to its agenda. In the 1960s, and in particular the 1970s liberal feminism was criticized for placing emphasis on the role of the state to redress gender inequalities and end discrimination against women. Critics argued that discrimination against women simply continued. Knowledge was considered biased for lack of the inclusion of the knowledge of and about women and for being based on male values.

Radical feminism turned to the roots of women's oppression, power relations, the biological difference between women and men and dominant forms of social organizations, i.e. patriarchy. These theorists became strong advocates for reproductive rights, introducing public protest and networks to share knowledge and experiences, and turning feminism into a movement. Again critics pointed at issues of race and class and criticized radical feminist strategies. Radical feminism generated numerous offshoots and enjoyed a love-hate relationship with political movements at the time, including Marxism. At the same time Marxist feminist thought considered capitalism the root of all evil including women's oppression. That is, the oppression of women was looked at as an extension of class oppression. In response to both radical and Marxist feminist thought, social feminist theory in its analysis of women's oppression referred to economic, social and cultural causes while focusing on societal change instead of individual opportunities of importance to liberal feminism. As of the 1980s, feminist stance as an epistemology became part and parcel of social feminist thought claiming that the construction of knowledge about social groups not only reflects their particular interests but is also affected by history, politics, ideology and social structure and values. Women's experiences became a source of knowledge to promote social change and an inclusive society.

Black feminism stressed the importance of race, culture and class. Black feminists argued that both the first and second waves of feminism had been shaped by Western white upper or middle-class women disregarding the concerns of women of colour (Tickner 2001). This is when the concept of intersectionality emerged, which came to highlight that oppression of women not only stems from gender. The study of "the range of diversity and difference within the group" also mattered including race and ethnicity, class, sexuality and for example religion (McCall 2005, 1782). It was a feminist lawyer, Kimberlé Crenshaw, who first used the term 'intersectionality' (Crenshaw 2001). Together with black feminism, post-colonial feminism was critical of western forms of feminism on every continent. Post-colonial feminism argues that women's oppression in post-colonial societies came from the colonial experience and the imposition of western norms in particular. At the same time its theorists strongly objected to victimhood. Chandra Talpade Mohanty for example notes that given the assumption of women as an already constituted group producing the image of 'an average Third World woman', women are simply defined as "victims of male violence ... as universal dependents ... victims of the colonial process ... victims of the Arab familial system ... victims of the Islamic code ... and finally victims of the economic development process" (Mohanty 2003, 22-23). According to Mohanty and based on what she calls "secondary sociological and anthropological universals", women are being labelled as "powerless, exploited, sexually harassed, and so on, by feminist scientific, economic, legal and sociological discourses" (Mohanty 2003, 23). She challenges those scholars who use women as a category of analysis without any consideration for history, social class, culture, religion, ethnic identities and other ideological institutions. Consequently, as third-world feminism emerged, it questioned the term feminism as coming from the west, together with ideas of chicana feminism and Africana womanism. Amina Mama, for example, points at African roots of feminism, referring to early manuscripts from Egypt and Southern Africa, and also

highlights the increase and spread of gender and women's studies in African universities (Mama 2009).

Postmodernist feminism in the late 1980s and 1990s deemed generalizations across different cultures and across history around the world, problematic and faulty. It argues against approaches where one-size fits all and focuses on differences as a powerful tool to overcome patriarchy. Its critics point to the danger of encouraging cultural relativism given postmodern focus on differences. It is clear that contemporary paradigms cross borders and respect local knowledge while promoting emancipation and solidarity among women worldwide. Intersectionality has become part and parcel of contemporary feminist thought and has taken on a global perspective to both help understand any context of complex inequality as well as devise ways to overcome it.

## **9 Theoretical threads**

To further enhance the guiding approach to this research, I will elaborate on feminist perspectives on war and peace and bring feminist thought into the realm of peacebuilding, mediation and international relations. I will elaborate on these as theoretical threads emerging from the domain of feminism to provide a link with the scope of this research in order to complete the theoretical framework. Consequently I will provide a short description of various feminist movements to link feminist theory to feminist action.

### **Feminist perspectives on war and peace**

War scholars, policymakers and practitioners have argued about the presence and absence of women as either warmongers or peacemakers. A highly imaginative debate usually takes place featuring Florence Nightingale looking after wounded soldiers, women dressed up like men joining the battlefield next to men, and notions that women are peace-minded when compared to men. Francis Fukuyama finds that a "truly matriarchal world ... would be less prone to conflict and more conciliatory and cooperative than the one we inhabit now" (Fukuyama 1998, 33). Sara Ruddick, known for her theory of maternal thinking, does not make the claim that women and mothers in particular are peace loving but does suggest that motherhood supports the resolution of conflicts (Tickner 2001, Steans 2006 and Buikema and van der Tuin 2007). This thinking, based on women's reproductive role, is also known within second-wave feminism whereby feminism equals pacifism. Some peace movements have incorporated these claims and refer to women in Sudan, Palestine, the Balkans, Russia and Argentina as having resisted and protested against their husbands and sons being called to arms. As Judy El Bushra notes, feminist views of violence and conflict are many while there is a lot of confusion about men's and women's roles in war and peace in general (Bushra 2008).

Irrespective of the contribution of feminist thought to an improved understanding of the politics of peace and reconstruction, I would like to argue however that in order to better understand transitions from conflict to peace it is necessary to move beyond false and useless dichotomies that speak of men as violent and women as peaceful. By now the images

of American servicewomen in Iraq humiliating Iraqi men and female suicide bombers should at least change any previously held feminine images of peacefulness and masculine images of militancy. Moreover, evidence of women joining the armed forces as combatants and others providing targeted support to warfare is plenty, be it for political or socio-economic reasons (Longe ca. 1914-1979, Orlebar 1882-1986, Jacobs, Jacobson and Marchbank 2000, Meintjes, Pillay and Turshen 2001, Bouta and Frerks 2002, Nada Mustafa M. Ali 2005, Potter 2008, Steans 2006 and Anderlini 2007). The Sudanese religious and Islamist political leader of the National Islamist Front himself, Hasan Al-Turabi, referred to a selected number of the Prophet's traditions to make clear that nothing actually prohibits women from participating in warfare:

*[Women] too are expected to show solidarity with the community of believers and to forsake the comforts of their home and hearth to migrate to the state of the Muslims, to wage Jihad with them, and to promote the well-being of their society. In all these matters there is no distinction between Muslim men and women (Turabi 1993, 11).*

Al-Turabi refers to the days of the Prophet when Muslim women, including the Prophet's own wife, "used also to participate in military expeditions bringing water to the thirsty combatants, treating the wounded, and carrying them to safety, and sometimes engaging in active warfare", stating that the Quran refers to this (Turabi 1993, 14). While referring to the most trusted collection of hadith (or *hadīth*, the deeds and sayings of the prophet and his companions) called *ṣaḥīḥ al-buḥārī* (Arabic: صحيح البخاري), Al-Turabi continues that:

*Nusayba bint Ka'b is another lady who witnessed the Battle of Uhud. She intended to bring water to the wounded, but she in fact took an active part in the fighting, and on that day brought great havoc to the enemy and wounded twelve of them severely. When the Muslims pulled back and exposed the Prophet, she stood her ground firmly in his defence ... The Prophet (peace be upon him) appreciated her much and praised her. When she heard the news that her son Habib was killed in battle, she swore either she would die in front of Musailamah, or kill him. She participated in the battle of Al Yamammah along with Khalid in battle while she also lost one of her arms (Turabi 1993, 14-15).*

When Al-Turabi was in power, 80 camps were opened to train women as members of the Popular Defence Forces in the beginning of the nineties (Ahmadi 2003). These camps were named after female companions of the prophet including the above mentioned Nusayba. The following observation by Al-Turabi about sharing the spoils of war equally gives further evidence of potential incentives for women to participate in warfare as well as potential social transformation emanating from periods of conflict:

*Al Rabee bint Mua'weth, also known as Laila al-Ghifariah, used to accompany the Prophet (peace be upon him) in his military campaigns, treating the wounded and looking after the sick... Bukhari gives the following report from her: "We were with the Prophet (peace be upon him), giving water to the thirsty, treating the wounded and bringing the dead bodies of*

*the Muslims to Madina". Umm-Dhahhak bint Masoud also accompanied the Prophet in his military campaign of Khaiber. The Prophet gave her the same share of spoils there as he gave to a man (Turabi 1993, 14).*

The behaviour and activities of both men and women are more complex during armed conflict than often understood, without ignoring profoundly disempowering experiences of both men and women and a sense of victimhood. Throughout history, women in times of war are known as warriors, nurses, cooks, drivers, suppliers, spies, reporters, traders and supporters. Even though feminist social scientists and historians have contributed to a more carefully balanced appraisal, the lives of women who participate either in warfare or in building peace continue to be worthy of documentation and further research. This research also provides ample illustration of the various ways in which Sudanese women have contributed to the wars that have been fought in Sudan:

*The girls in our area also participated in the army... Yes of course they were under the arms together with their men. The daughter of one of my aunts is a guard to the state governor. Another one, from my mothers' side, is in Kawda together with her husband. Women were incorporated in both the armed forces of the Government of Sudan as well as the SPLM. ... Women participate, from the time of my grandmother, because at the time they did not have weapons like today but they had sticks. If the people from one area agreed to fight against people from another area, the women would fasten the sticks on their heads to take these there and they would sing to encourage the men to fight. When the fight was over they would collect the sticks again (life history by Esta Kuku).*

Similar to other studies (e.g. Barry 2005, Dolan 2003 and Wood 2008); my experience shows that responsibilities and work of women versus men increase in times of war. Changes in the responsibilities and division of labour between men and women may impact on the identities and minds of both women and men. The life histories collected also demonstrate that the role of women alters but also varies depending on where women live, what they believe, their ethnic background and social class. Vulnerabilities of men during conflict are likely to affect the scope of social change. Men and boys also face pressures to demonstrate their manhood, strength and courage in battle. A British political officer, John Longe, in Sudan recorded traditional tribal stories in Northern Sudan whereby a daughter was recorded singing lines to encourage her father to "[b]ring out the great war drum" (Longe ca. 1914-1979, SAD.641/6/13-14) while expressing admiration for a young brother participating in warfare, "we thought you a child not ready to fight" (Longe ca. 1914-1979, SAD.641/6/15). I understand that researchers like Chris Dolan and Judy El Bushra confront feminist perspectives on war and peace with their frequent forgetting of the vulnerabilities of men in times of war and consecutive peace. Whatever happens, life will never be the same for both women and men when wars come to an end.

The scope of, potential and limitations of social transformation in the aftermath of war remain under researched. I agree with Raewyn Connell (née Robert William "Bob" Connell,

widely known as R.W. Connell) that most discussions of why gender relations are changing seem to focus on external pressures such as modern technology and mass communications, to which I would add religious extremism and revolutionary struggles (Connell 2009). Notably, First World War British women gained the right to vote in 1918 and were often described as women benefiting of their (participation in) struggle while on the other hand military defeats in countries like Poland and Hungary allowed for a fresh start and stimulated aspirations for a more progressive image including the advancement of women's rights when compared to countries like France and Italy at the time of drafting a new constitution (Lloyd 1970 and Steans 2006). Another interesting case in point is provided by Roland C. Stevenson who worked as a teacher and linguistic research worker in the Nuba Mountains for the Catholic Mission Sudan from 1937 to 1959, and remarked that the external influences brought by for example Christian missions and education in the Nuba Mountains were very limited. He found that "the most effective non-radical changes came through the adoption of some elements of urban life, (e.g. cloths, values, names etc.) by labour migration" (Stevenson 1875-1990, SAD.796/1/28). Connell asserts however that "gender relations also have internal tendencies towards change" (Connell 2009, 89). Connell<sup>17</sup> argues that men and boys make their own assessments of changes in gender relations from the perspective of relational interests, personal wellbeing, collective interests and principle.

Consequently, a broader perspective to social change might help to understand why at times gender roles revert after a peace agreement has been signed, while making use of documented 'post-conflict backlashes' against women. Some find that the post-war period is too late for women to assert themselves, attain social justice and make their own choices (Meintjes, Pillay and Turshen 2001). According to them the seeds for change must be sown in times of conflict for women to be able to harvest the fruits post-conflict. Others find that other factors and particularly class may determine the degree to which women are able to realize relatively definite changes in terms of their individual resources, agency and achievements (Steans 2006). Recording and analysing women's perception of changes in their achievements, resources and agency before, during and after conflict and in the course of time may help to better understand changes in gender relations as well as social change.

### **Feminist perspectives on mediation and peacebuilding**

In line with a growing body of mostly feminist research on peace, development and security, numerous researchers, policy makers and practitioners have defined the lack of feminist perspectives as well as the absence of women in the arena of mediation and peacebuilding as problematic (Anderline 2007, Barry 2005, ICG 2006, Itto 2006, Francis 2004, Kaldor 2007, Kandiyoti 2004, Lindsay 2001, Machandra 2005, Pankhurst 2007, Potter 2005 and Rehn and Sirleaf 2002). More than 10 years after a promising UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security which calls for women's participation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding, little has changed. Women's agency and knowledge continues

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17 Connell, R.W. 2003. The role of Men and Boys in Achieving Gender Equality. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/men-boys2003/Connell-bp.pdf> (accessed June 12, 2010).

to be ignored and undervalued when it seems to matter the most, which is in times of transition, when social structures and relations are in flux and when peace agreements are signed.

A UNIFEM hand-out demonstrates that the participation of women in formal peace negotiations remains extremely low, also noting that women may have participated informally in one way or the other, that is, in track II or III processes, which “are even less clearly documented than formal mechanisms”<sup>18</sup>. The following UNIFEM overview demonstrates that the percentage of women in proportion to men in official roles in 24 peace processes (1992-2008) is low. What is more, documentation and official sources regarding the presence of women in each and every peace process proved incomplete (UNIFEM 2010a, 4).

**Table 3.9** Percentage of women in formal peace processes (1992-2008)

<b>Peace Agreements</b>	<b>(%) Women signatories</b>	<b>(%) Women Mediators</b>	<b>(%) Women Witnesses</b>	<b>(%) Women in Negotiation Teams</b>
<b>El Salvador (1992)</b> Chapultepec Agreement	12	0	-	13
<b>Croatia (1995)</b> The Erdut Agreement	0	0	0	11
<b>Bosnia (1995)</b> The Dayton Accords	0	0	0	0
<b>Guatemala (1996)</b> Agreement on a Firm and Lasting Peace	11	0	-	10
<b>Northern Ireland (1998)</b> Good Friday Agreement. Multi-Party Agreement	10	0	-	10
<b>Kosovo (1999)</b> Interim Agreement for Peace and Self-Government in Kosovo	0	0	0	3
<b>Sierra Leone (1999)</b> The Lomé Peace Agreement	0	0	20	0
<b>Burundi (2000)</b> Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement	0	0	-	2
<b>Papua New Guinea (2001)</b> Accord Papua New Guinea	7	0	-	4
<b>Macedonia (2001)</b> The Ohrid Peace Agreement	0	0	0	5
<b>Afghanistan (2001)</b> Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending the Re-establishment of Permanent Government Institutions	9	0	-	9
<b>Somalia (2002)</b> Declaration on Cessation of Hostilities and the Structures and Principles. Principles of the Somali National Reconciliation Process	0	0	0	-
<b>Cote d'Ivoire (2003)</b> Linas-Marcoussis Peace Accords	0	0	0	-

18 UNIFEM handout. 2009. *Women's Participation in Peace Negotiation: Connections between Presence and Influence*. New York: UNIFEM. [http://www.realizingrights.org/pdf/UNIFEM\\_handout\\_Women\\_in\\_peace\\_processes\\_Brief\\_April\\_20\\_2009.pfd](http://www.realizingrights.org/pdf/UNIFEM_handout_Women_in_peace_processes_Brief_April_20_2009.pfd) (accessed April 30, 2010).



<b>DRC (2003)</b> The Sun City Agreement ("The Final Act")	5	0	0	12
<b>Liberia (2003)</b> Peace Agreement between the Government of Liberia, the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy in Liberia and the political parties	0	0	17	-
<b>Sudan (2005)</b> The Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the GOS and the SPLM	0	0	9	-
<b>Darfur (2006)</b> Darfur Peace Agreement	0	0	7	8
<b>Nepal (2006)</b> Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the Government of Nepal and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)	0	-	0	0
<b>The Philippines (2007)</b> Communique on the Tripartite Meeting	0	0	-	-
<b>DRC (2008): North Kivu</b> Acte D'Engagement	5	20	0	-
<b>DRC (2008): South Kivu</b> Acte D'Engagement	0	20	0	-
<b>Uganda (2008)</b> Juba Peace Agreement	0	0	20	9
<b>Kenya (2008)</b> Agreement on the Principles of Partnership of the Coalition Government	0	33	0	25
<b>Central African Republic (2008)</b> Accord de Paix Global	0	0	0	-

Source: UNIFEM 2010a, 4.

UNIFEM also tried to analyse whether other than formal types of engagement brought economic, political and social rights for women to the negotiation table. Their review of the content of peace agreements demonstrates that “in some cases women’s engagement as informal observers has resulted in peace accords that address issues of significance to women” (UNIFEM handout 2009, 1). Rogaia Abusharaf confirmed that in the case of Sudan “many women’s organisations were registered observers with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and presented technical papers to negotiators in the Machakos talks” (Abusharaf 2005, 44), while challenging traditions, articulating demands and demanding inclusion:

*The GOS and the SPLM are using arms, and we carry UNSCR 1325 as our arms to promote inclusion* (Abusharaf 2005: 45 quoting Agnes Nyoka as coordinator of Sudanese Women’s Empowerment for Peace, SUWEP).

Nyaradzai Gumbonzwanda and Grace Okonji recalled that Sudanese women have been involved in community peacebuilding and advocacy as part of their inclusion in the formal peace negotiation for years but “were not admitted to the main negotiation table” (Gumbonzwanda and Okonji 2005, 48). Nada Mustafa M. Ali, for example, mentioned the efforts of Southern Sudanese women including Jemma Kumba, Anne Itto, Awut Deng, Agnes Lasuba, Christine Lino, Abuk Payit, Susan Jambo, Lona Loweilla and Cecilia Oba throughout the Machakos and Naivasha meetings to integrate the specific needs of women in the peace process (Nada Mustafa M. Ali 2005, 50). While referring to one



newspapers article in the Sudan Tribune only, some researchers spoke of formal or strong informal involvement of Sudanese women in peace processes while referring to both the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the Darfur Peace Agreement (Hewitt, Wilkenfield and Gurr 2010). The International Crisis Group found that many Sudanese women leaders and women's organizations have played important roles, both formal and informal, in several peace processes while consistently transcending conflict lines across the country (ICG 2006). Interestingly, the ICG noted that Sudanese women might have been invisible at the peace table but "have taken a greater role in implementing post-conflict projects" which highlighted their struggle for peace, equality and development (ICG 2006, 2).

As mentioned earlier, the UN Security Council, as the principle UN body charged with maintaining international peace and security, issued a report on enhancing mediation and its own support activities in April 2009. The report noted that demand for mediation has risen but resources and attention devoted to mediation have remained minimal (UN Security Council 2009). It also considers as fundamental decisions as whom to include and how in mediation processes. The report stresses the importance of inclusiveness but at the same time points out that this "presents a dilemma since mediation tends to become more complicated as the number of parties expands" while calling for innovative approaches (UN Security Council 2009, 8). When discussing inclusiveness, the report refers to leaders of women's and religious groups as well as elders and scholars, but fails to refer to women as members of parties at odds with each other, or political parties.

According to this report it is merely the absence of women, and not the signatories to a peace agreement, the leaders of warring parties or the international community, which is to be blamed for peace agreements that fail to deal with 'women's issues', but also continued discrimination against women and their marginalization in post-conflict society besides gender based crimes irrespective of the Rome Statute (2002), and international humanitarian law. Is it difficult to resolve dilemma's that deal with inclusiveness or much more a matter of impatience and short run political gains to sign a peace agreement no matter what kind of peace evolves and for who? Meredith Turshen points out that "[i]n most cases negotiators excluded women from high level parleys, which society considers male domains and which employ discourses and practices that are closer to men's reality than to women's" (Turshen 2001, 89). Or are the extremely low numbers of women involved in formal peace negotiations the result of the observation that the practice of mediation receives little attention or support in general? (UN SC report 2009).

Insight into and knowledge about the participation of women and men in informal mediation and peacebuilding processes may help to overcome exclusive and deficient Track I strategies. The UN Secretary General considers a more systematic sharing of lessons learned an important step forward and points at the role of Member States having acted as third-party intermediaries and more traditionally as Friends of peace processes (UN SC 2009). As illustrated above there is a danger that because informal peacebuilding takes place outside of the limelight, women's efforts are easily "disparaged as volunteer, charitable social,

even when they have a political impact” (Turshen 2001, 89) or considered less important, troublesome and disturbing (Kaldor 2007 and Howell 1938-1955<sup>19</sup>). In the course of my research on women and peacebuilding in Sudan, I came across a publication by the Conflict Research Unit of Clingendael stating that “it is difficult to see how discussions between informal women’s groups will put an end to the economic and power politics on behalf of heavily armed warlords” (Clingendael 2000a, 66) and a quotation by Oystein H. Rolandsen in his book on political changes in the Southern Sudan that the SPLM Women’s Conference held in August 1998 “was of little consequence beyond a symbolic recognition of women’s role in the Movement” (Rolandsen 2005, 143). Pointedly, Mathijs van Leeuwen remarks in his thesis on civil society peacebuilding that “[r]ightly or wrongly, in the eyes of many bystanders” the NGO Sudanese Women’s Voice for Peace (SWVP) “moved from an icon of hope for peace to a bunch of quarrelling women” (Leeuwen 2008, 107).

### **A feminist perspective to International Relations (IR)**

International relations as theory and practice generated interest in the west after the First World War, and focused on issues of war and conflict as well as the absence of states and governments. International relations as a field of study draws on political science as well as numerous other fields of study including economics, philosophy, sociology, anthropology, psychology and history. Late 1980s, feminist theory developed an interest in this academic and public policy, or traditionally male arena, dealing with foreign policy making and security. Feminist IR theorists apply gender as a useful category of analysis to better understand how systems of patronage are sustained or how democratic transitions and women’s rights can be promoted. The traditional image of foreign policy makers in the west dealing with economic development, global finance, terrorism and human rights has changed little irrespective of efforts to recruit more young women and to a more limited extent retain and promote women. As illustrated earlier, the low numbers of women in formal roles in mediation processes is reason for concern (UN Security Council 2009b). A study<sup>20</sup> by Jolynn Shoemaker and Jennifer Park on women in peace and security careers in the US Executive Branch found that although women participating in the study were optimistic about women’s growing participation in the sector, they “remained acutely aware of their minority status” (Shoemaker and Park 2010, 3). They quoted a female former US Under Secretary of State observing that “[w]omen are breaking new ground every day in every foreign policy institution” (Shoemaker and Park 2010, 12). This minority status in the arena of international relations and politics coincides with low percentages of women

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19 Papers by Paul P. Howell (Sudan Political Service 1938-55) caught my attention at the Sudan Archive (Durham) when his relative, Jean C. Buxton, who went to do some fieldwork among the Mandari of Southern Sudan was described, as at first an “enthusiastic amateur in the tradition of the 19<sup>th</sup> century lady travellers” (Howell 1899-1987, SAD.769/6/53). Howell added that she succeeded in her studies at Oxford as an anthropologist with great assistance only.

20 Jolynn Shoemaker and Jennifer Park. 2010. Progress report on Women in Peace & Security Careers: U.S. Executive Branch. Women in International Security (WIIS), Center for Peace and Security Studies, Georgetown University. <http://wiis.georgetown.edu/92624.html> (accessed May 1, 2010).

participating in peace processes. However, when the percentage is zero there is something wrong.

Barriers to formal political office have led women rights activists to initially avoid the state and instead join NGOs, including transnational organizations, in order to influence political, social and economic decision-making in African countries while waiting for changes in political space and culture (Tickner 2001). In order to support social change and advance women's rights, one cannot but also interact with states and state parties (Molyneux and Cornwall 2008). Rights are enshrined in constitutions and guaranteed by law. Constitutions in the making offer short windows of opportunity to codify women's rights and introduce quotas to compensate for the exclusion of women. Quotas are important but certainly no panacea as women are also known to support conservative and religious political agendas which stand at right angles to women's rights. Georgina Waylen points at South Africa and Brazil to illustrate that "[m]any scholars and policy makers are ... taking constitutional change more seriously as a potential strategy to enhance gender rights" (Waylen 2008, 35). With authors such as Antonia Potter speaking of a vicious circle, at the same time there is an interrelationship between the low or lacking participation of women in formal peace processes and their low political participation (Potter 2008). It requires women activists working on both the inside and outside of government institutions as well as political parties to take the rights and inclusion of women seriously.

Some researchers feel that in the aftermath of war the role of international agencies may be more significant than that of governments (Meintjes, Pillay and Turshen 2001, Barry 2005, Pankhurst 2007 and Elnager, Paulino, Earle and Waterhouse 2010) while others believe in a more modest approach that supports local drivers of change. Besides a need for the international community and politicians to understand the impact and potential of women's contribution to building peace (Anderlini 2007):

*It is ultimately a political question, which requires the total commitment of a full-fledged diplomatic apparatus that is willing to devote its diplomatic skills and instruments for the benefit of gender-responsive state-building (Clingendael CRU 2010).*

This lack of will was noted earlier by Potter (Potter 2005). Without any understanding, commitment and above all willingness no one will question the absence of women from peace processes, and the impact of UN SCR on women, peace and security will be limited especially in the arena of mediation and peacebuilding. Questioning the absence of women from peace processes should not be taken for granted even though women have a long history of organizing around issues of women, peace and security.

### **The feminist movement**

The history of international feminist political engagement goes back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which prepared the ground for an international women's peace movement emerging from the International Congress of Women at The Hague in 1915. The International Congress of

Women discussed proposals to bring a negotiated end to the First World War. As mentioned earlier, African women in social movements and NGOs emerged strongly in the 1980s and 1990s. Women's movements come in different shapes and similar to social movements may consist of a variety of organizations sharing goals and pursuing implementation thereof. Maxine Molyneux argues that when they are compared, women's movements differ in terms of "their timing, character, influence and effectiveness" pending cultural, social and political conditions as well as the space and leverage of civil society organization and levels of female solidarity (Molyneux 2001, 142). A movement requires numbers and an ability to bring about change. Their strength often lies in their flexibility and unity of purpose while their organizational structures may be weak.

When movements aim for gender equality and gender justice, feminist thought is translated to political action. "Historically the most important movement in gender politics has been feminism" (Connell 2009, 138). Global collaboration between women's organizations accelerated especially during the UN World Conference on Women held in Beijing. African women also have a long history of activism in support of social, economic and political changes on the African continent. They have participated in anti-colonial and national struggles as members of liberation movements, political parties and women's organizations (Radloff 1999). Many African women's organizations currently play an important role in not just raising awareness on women's rights but also in monitoring national ratification and implementation of regional and international instruments (Centre for Conflict Resolution and UNIFEM 2006). There is also an emerging body of knowledge based on studies by African women. African women are active in both regional organizations and networks and have created strong links with international women's movements. Until now, these movements or transnational solidarity networks actively mobilize around women rights (Steans 2006). For example, Women Living Under Muslim Law (WLUML) is active in Sudan and links individual women and organizations in more than 70 countries ranging from South Africa to Uzbekistan, Senegal to Indonesia and Brazil to France. The Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID), an international membership organization is a worldwide feminist network of women and men committed to achieving gender equality, sustainable development and women's human rights. AWID's members are male and female academics, students, educators, activists, business people, policy-makers, and development practitioners. These networks have some unity of purpose and continue to translate feminist thought into action.

In the aftermath of war, an increase in the number of women's organization is often observed. Explanations range from an increase in women's awareness and agency to the availability of international financial resources besides their exclusion from formal structures operating in post-conflict societies. Sudanese women like Samira Hasan, whose life history was presented in the foregoing chapter, worked in a trade union and joined a political party. Others worked in church groups or, for example, organised around legal issues and efforts to fight against female genital mutilation. Sudanese women have also organised themselves abroad while channelling their efforts towards Sudan. In the UK there are numerous Sudanese civil society organizations and political parties with women committees

as well as a women's rights group. The most well known Sudanese women's organizations in the Netherlands are Azza Foundation, Southern Sudanese Women's Association in the Netherlands (SSWAN) and VOND (*Vrouwenorganisatie Nederland-Darfur*).

### **10 I am now in the parliament. I am a politician.**

To better understand the nexus of conflict, development and gender the life history of Priscilla Joseph Kuch is presented below in her own words. Her stories provide evidence of her personal struggle for peace, equality and development. Priscilla explains her exceptional struggle for access to schooling, and that having the support from her family gave her confidence. During the conflict, she experienced loss and resistance. Her father and other family members were killed and her mother was arrested. She also struggled to get a job and tried to help a male relative who started drinking out of frustration following personal loss and disempowerment. Priscilla describes her marriages and divorces and what goes on between women and men in their private lives. She also sheds light on the role of women in warfare, the women's battalion of the SPLM and how these trained female officers were perceived. According to her, women were partners in warfare but maybe decided prior to men that the war in Sudan should end.

Drawing from both theories as well as the knowledge gained through the life history of Priscilla Joseph Kuch a critical understanding of conflict, development and feminism emerges. Priscilla negotiated services for internally displaced persons with the Government of Sudan for the Sudan Council of Churches. She also played a role in negotiating humanitarian access to SPLM areas, in preparation of Operation Lifeline Sudan, seeking to demobilise children from the army, support schooling and facilitate NGO relief. In the end she describes the role of women in peacemaking, their 'backstage influence' as well as their leadership. Her life history touches upon what the Clingendael Conflict Research Unit called "the most important external interventions"; the Sudan IGAD Peace process and Operation Lifeline Sudan (CRU 2000a, 8). As a former female SPLM parliamentarian and minister as of mid 2011, Priscilla believes she can bring a bit of transparency.

The following elements present an analytical perspective of her life history:

- on empowerment of women: Fending for oneself at a very young age and going through great pains to obtain both education and work had an impact. It also gave confidence. Collecting funds in support of the resistance movement and getting involved in school politics also showed agency and resistance;
- on disempowerment of women: The experience of loss when parents and relatives are killed or arrested is unimaginable; at the same time insecurity reigns;
- on disempowerment of men: Men who survive warfare have difficulty coping with the loss of family and networks. Feeling powerless, men turn to alcohol as a result of stress;
- on war: Women were partners in making war, acting as scouts or taking information or medicines to fighters in the bush. Both men and women took up arms. At some stage, unmarried women joined the armed struggle of the SPLM and their reputation was fierce. Women were not mere victims of war;

- on building and making peace: While women played an important role in building and making peace they remained invisible and their contributions remained unrecognized. The overall analysis of life histories is presented in Chapter 7.

**Life history 3.10** Priscilla Joseph Kuch

**That gave me the confidence that I could make it whatever happened**

I am a Dinka. I have also my Dinka name, which is **Nyannyang**. This is a nickname because all of us are supposed to have our Dinka names. I don't have a Dinka name because of what has happened in my family. My mother went to school, primary school. My father went also to school. Their marriage was the first church marriage in Akot. Therefore when I was born, I was christened in the church and I got the Christian name before my Dinka name. So that's how it is.

I went to school in Rumbek. It also has got some story because my grandmother who became the first Christian in her village was moved to become the matron in the school, in a girls' school, the first girl's school in Rumbek. So I attended classes and I remember I was not registered until I was in the final year, because the school children were only coming to school at eight or nine and I started at five (years old). So they could not register me. Then after that I went to an intermediate school, which was in Maridi, very far away from home. I remember going there for the first time; I was nine years old then. There was a post lorry, which they call 'posta', which was taking mail from one town to another. So they put me on this mail truck. I did not realize that I was handed over to the mail truck. My father was a police investigator. By the time we reached Maridi the mail truck went to the police station ... So I was handed over to the police who then took me to the administrator of Maridi town. Fortunately his wife was ... they are both northerners, teaching English at the intermediate school I was going to. So that is how I went to intermediate school. I did not know anybody. It was the first time out of our house. But I think that gave me the confidence that I could make it whatever happened. So I think that had an impact on me. There and then, I always had a feeling that there is always a way out of what is happening... Then of course the medical school was a struggle. In the second year I got involved in school politics. That also was real problems because like you have to attend all the classes, and you have to attend the meetings. Of course the war was on then, the first war was on and I lost my father. My father was killed after I came here and my mother was arrested. She almost lost her life.

It was normal in the south just to pick up anybody. Of course he was also involved in the resistance but he was still in town. He did not leave quickly like others. So they picked him up. They took him to the army and nobody has seen his body up to today. We had real problems in the family because there was no closure. And my mother looked for him and in the act she was also arrested... I was involved in collecting money to be sent to the resistance movement, the first Anyanya in the south. So early on I was involved in politics because while I make tea I would be allowed to come and sit and listen to what the men were discussing. So I got a lot of education. And then of course some of our family members got

killed. My four uncles and my father died. So that is how I have been, that is the type of life I went through.

### **We were partners in making the war**

I will tell you the role people played, the men and women played. Let's take our family. Like all the other families has been through all the resistance even when the Turkish and those came. So we take the first war. The first war, of course I was brought to Khartoum. My other sisters, my sister and my aunty, who were twelve years, were acting as scouts; they were taking information to those people in the bush, the Anyanya. My two uncles were holding guns, they were shooting and fighting. My father was in town gathering information and taking it. My mother was moving in between, taking some medicines to the bush and coming back. So everybody had a role to play. Of course she was caught; my father was caught and killed. She almost died, she survived it. One of my uncles in the bush survived it, one was killed, and another was killed. So, four of the family members were killed because of the war. Those are the immediate relatives; leave alone the others, my maternal uncles and everybody.

Our family is a family which is linked to the other families, like my mothers' cousin is Gordon Wot and he recently died and was given a state burial. My other maternal uncle is Samual Aro he is a politician. So we have all those connections as a family. The previous war, one of my aunts, a cousin of my mother, was an officer, she is called Ager Gum. She is famous, she is the first ever woman to take up arms. In '66-'68 when the peace came she was made a prison warden. She died before the peace was signed. In the bush, she was fighting. She was in the SPLA as a commander... In ... the war which just ended, there were women. Two things happened this time. This time young women went to the bush. In Rumbek, for instance, all the students in Rumbek senior secondary school went to the bush. The girls also left; there was massive movement of those girls, my niece also left. She was 12 when she left. [She] went into the bush. The previous (war) we wanted to go to the bush but we did not get the opportunity because we were then brought to... I was brought here (to Khartoum) so I could not go to the bush.

The current war, women physically fought. There was something called the women's brigade, purely women, trained officers, they had guns, some of them are still lieutenants, commanders, Mary Nyaulang is one of them, my niece is one of them. A lot of them they are still in the army. They were known as *katibat banāt* (Arabic: girls' battalion). They were unmarried women, they went only to fight. And the idea was to fight; they will only get married after the liberation is over. So women fought and men fought. In the process of fighting John Garang decided to disband *katibat banāt*. ... They were saying that these women when they go to war, they don't withdraw. When they are fighting, it means a lot of men will finish in the fight because they don't withdraw. There were possibilities that the armies were going to fight over them as women. So it was decided that they should get married. My niece told me how they get married. She said they would parade people; they would parade everybody, the girls and the whole brigade. In the parade they will announce



that so and so is marrying so and so. And they will ask you to move out from the parade. In front of everybody they would pronounce that you are married and that is it. Yeah, they got married, they decided to marry them off to ... because they were unmarried ... and they were afraid that some young men will develop interest in them and because they were fewer than men, there were going to be fight over them. They got married that way.

They remained as officers but now they were not in a separate brigade, they now were distributed all over. Some of them were demobilised; they started to work as protection officers for the refugees in the camps. As they have children now they became more responsible for their children. That is how most of them moved out. Few of them who were elderly remain in the army today. I think it was somewhere in 1986, 1987. Then they decided that they should not have a separate brigade. The women brigade should be dismantled.

Of course they were married to their friends. It was not like ... They were married to people they loved and then like that. It was like they would have registered that they are interested to get married. They would have their relatives, who were there, witnessing and they had a list that was signed and kept in the headquarters. Because these girls were unaccompanied minors so it was his responsibility, John Garang's, to keep the records. To tell the parents that your daughter is married to so and so and that they were going to make sure that the dowries and those things are done. And that is what kept happening as the war progressed and they took over some of the villages. If your village became part of their territory then your marriage can be formally completed and all that. So that is how it was. Especially in the last war, women were really involved. It was not like ... that we were victims. No. We were not victims of the war.

We were partners in making the war, yes maybe we decided earlier than the men that the war was not good. Even when we were working in Khartoum, we were working for the war. We were not working for the peace. All the information we were keeping it was about the war, the locations, [and] the weapons. Everything, it was about the war. When we were sitting here to prevent the IDPs not to be assimilated, it was about the war.

### **That was one of my fights**

I worked as a doctor ... and I was interested in teaching but then because of family problems. My uncle who then was the only surviving family member also had problems. He started drinking. So I had to abandon working in the medical school. I was transferred to work in Juba to make sure that I support him and help him. I think he got frustrated because while he has participated very much in the first liberation movement, he was sidelined by some of his colleagues. He was not able to fight back so he started doing bad things. I thought that I could help him overcome that. So I went to the south and I worked in the hospital for one year. The next year there was an advertisement in the Ministry of Health for a position for a programme in mother and child health. I applied for that position. There was real competition. And I got it but I did not get the position. Because the Director General... oh women do not work. So they gave it to another colleague. And I fought for it. This colleague



of mine, after six months he could not establish the department. So they had to give it back to me. And I did it, I established an office. After 12 months it was functioning [and] it was part of the health system. Then the Director General called me and he apologized to me and he said: "I am sorry". That he underrated me. It is because they do not have the experience of women doing things. They have never seen it. Now they have seen it. For him he is going to prefer women always because now he knows what they can do. So that was one of the fights.

I got married later on, very late, very late because there was no time to... I had a chance to get married in '83 to somebody. It did not work. We were married for how many ... two months. It broke down... It took three years after that before the whole thing got nullified. But it did not work. So *ḥalāṣ* (Arabic colloq.: finished). There was no way I was going to be like all the other women, sitting at home. He also found it difficult because I was very independent and not known as his wife [but] as Priscilla. I think he could not take it. ... I did not realise that he was not looking for a partner. He was looking for a wife. In 1991, I got married again. After, I was working in the Sudan Council of Churches.

### **I got involved in the negotiations for Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS)**

Even when I was in the churches I also got involved with ... the negotiations for the OLS. That was also one critical thing which really, apart from negotiating with the Government of Sudan to establish the services with the IDPs, which was very difficult. But negotiating with the rebels was, the SPLM/A was a very, very difficult one ... and I had to go to Ethiopia several times. They would make sure that my visa is in a separate paper, it is not in my passport. And we will discuss. Sometimes they would just allow me to sit in the hotel, two days, three days, and four days. Nobody is phoning, nobody is visiting and then suddenly somebody will come. And the most difficult thing was waiting for something you don't know. So finally after four or five months, one day there was a breakthrough. I went; I stayed for seven days this time, sitting in a hotel. I will not be talking to any of the residents in the hotel. I will just go to eat. Because also the hotels, like I would sit in Ethiopia, in an Ethiopian hotel. This is the government hotel; it had all the government security. I will eat, go to my room sit there, and read. No telephone calls, nothing, nothing. On the seventh day, I remember Deng Alor phones me and says: "well, we are going to have a meeting in the afternoon. Somebody will come for you".

Normally when I am with them I wear a very tight dress, so that it's like that they know I am not carrying anything. I leave my handbag in the first place where I sit. So they made me sit in one of the rooms. So when they ask me to go for the meeting I left my handbag there, just to tell them that I am not taping, I am not interested in the conversations, I have an issue [and] that is all that I am coming for. And when I went in there I found John Garang sitting in front of me. I greeted him and [he] said well... what is your mission? So I said okay, I have three things I want from you:

1. We want you to demobilise the children, this is the message from the church. We know there are 10,000 children who are in the red army. We want them out. We have agreed with some of our partners that there would be schools for them in the refugee camp;

2. If you are interested in building up a good south. We want you to demobilise all the university students in the movement who have not finished their education. There are some friends who are ready to give them a scholarship;

3. We want as churches, as NGOs to come and work in the south. It was only NPA (Norwegian People's Aid) working there ... The SPLA does not want anybody around and people were dying in their numbers. We could see there were famine in '84 and all those things. We were really worried. Even in '89 and '88. We were worried. There were churches there, they were working, but it was not open.

So he said okay: he talked, talked and talked. He told me okay. For the demobilisation of the children, yes... we are interested in them getting educated and some of them are the ones now who ended up as the lost boys. These were the ones we were discussing about. For those university students you are talking about, these are the best commanders. I cannot get them out. If I get them out there will be no war. But for the organizations coming to the south, yes we are ready to do that. We discussed what it means. Who would come, it took about four hours, because he talks a lot. Normally what I do in these meetings like I listen. When I come back to the hotel then I write down everything. Also because of the security issues which were involved in what I was doing I had to retain everything mentally until I am out and safe. So we made an appointment for Cole Dodge (UNICEF representative in Sudan) to come and see him.

Early '89 that was, when the OLS was agreed. We also had to talk to Sadiq (al-Mahdi) to accept it. Therefore there was no formal agreement because the SPLA and the government were not on talking terms. So it was some sort of gentlemen's agreement. Everybody was asking why I was coming to Khartoum. One because if you move out of Khartoum, you cannot follow up the government, we don't get the real information. Part of it was to make sure that our people are not assimilated. Make sure that we have the authentic information about government policies and movements which we use for advocacy and also we tell them what is happening. That was the reason really why I could not move out of Khartoum.

### **We want to own the programme**

I went to the university for teaching. That is when now we established the southern women group for peace. Of course when we established the southern women we brought Joy (Kwaje) along and some other women we know from our church work ... because I was also in the mother's union of the Episcopal Church of Sudan and I was part of the church women leadership which was supporting the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC). So even with all that had happened I still went and worked for the church. Because of what my mother had said that ... I should not let down the church with individual issues. In [the] southern women group for peace we were having two programmes. One programme was for the peace programme, which now also we linked up with the SPLM/A because of the relationship that was already existing between me and them. The other programme was development of women politicians. We had training and all those things which we also planned in our office for the young people. The southern women group for peace we started earlier in '92. It did

not work. Until then when we met you in the embassy and there was this women's support programme. Of course we participated as southern women in the development of the non-paper. We believed that it was an opportunity for us to link up with the women.

Of course as southern women also we were linked up with the WAG (Women Action Group) programme. This was another women programme initiated by Lilian Craig, who was the wife of the (British) Ambassador. This programme did not work very well because Lilian was quite keen to be in control of the programme. She wanted all the meetings in her house. We told her it can't be. We want to own the programme. We moved it out one day and we met in the Council. She was very uncomfortable. We went back to her house. We had very good thinking like having a library and moving, and we had access to resources. We thought it did not move forward because of her ... She did not want to let go of the programme. Therefore when we got the opportunity of getting involved in the Dutch initiative, then it became exciting because all of us, even the women from the north who came into the programme, were also involved in the work programme. I think that also helped all of us in terms of thinking that we should do things differently plus the fact that you were also thinking differently. You wanted a programme that was owned by us as Sudanese women. We were happy to take it over and run it the way we did it. It was an exciting programme; it gave us the profile we needed.

#### **There were also untold stories**

As southern women group for peace, we benefited from it, because there were also untold stories about what we were doing. Besides the workshops and the generation of information which was sent into the negotiations we participated in the development [of] the strategies for negotiations. Because what happened was this one day because of my involvement with the SPLM/A. If you remember, John Garang was always talking in the media about *'intifada* (uprising, rebellion, انتفاضة) in Khartoum. And that for them there was going to be an upris[ing] and they would come and take over the capital. So we sat here in my house with some people, some young people. I was the focal point for a lot of cells. So we sat here with the cells leaders and we look at the possibilities of us making an upris[ing]. We said yes, we had all the possibilities, to use it and the ability because we had done it. We saw (Norwegian Friends of IGAD chair, Hilde Frafjord) Johnson. But the question was what [would be] the political programme if the government again collapses? Who is going to take over the government with the experience of '84 and Sadiq (al-Mahdi's coalition government) and this ... so we had a long list of things. And then we should ask John Garang: what he was going to do ... we had two options, which ... ok we are going to die if we go to the streets but finally if the government is going to be, there are two things we want. Is the southern problem going to be solved automatically? Does he have a political agreement with some northerners on how they were going to run the government and this this this... If that is the case, then we will do it. We will go; some of us will die because we know we are paying for something that is good. The other option is if they were going to declare independence of the south. That one also we are ready to die. Although we know some of us will be like the people of Bangladesh who were left in Pakistan up to now. They

could not go back home. We said okay fine we will do that provided that our people will be independent.

So I went to him and I met him. We did analysis of the NCP (National Congress Party). The idea was to look at who had a say in the NCP. Because as women, based on our analysis we believe that the *Inghaz*, the Islamists, were straight forward. Yes, they had the wrong programme but they had the courage to say yes, this is our programme. We will do it. And we believe that by the same token if ... they are convinced about something, they will do it. Therefore it was possible to negotiate a peace settlement with them. Because they were honest about their intentions. So we said okay, this is a government that you can negotiate with... So when we look at them, the only person by then who had a say was Ali Osman (Mohammed Taha), he was the one running the show. So we said okay, if Ali Osman can be persuaded, it is possible. Ali had a strange relationship with one of our elders called Isaiah Kulang. This Isaiah Kulang, was in the past a politician. He was a wildlife protection officer in Khartoum, where there was the zoo and their headquarters. Ali's father was working with him, for some reason he has been very supportive of Ali and his father as a family. Ali respects him as a father, because I think he was involved in supporting him in school or some of those things. He does not talk about it but that is the story we know from others. I do not know if this is a true story or not. Ali respects this person very, very much. Up to today. So we asked this elderly, and tell him okay, you go and talk to Ali and tell him that as southerners we are interested in a peace negotiation. If they are serious we will let them to talk to John Garang. So he had several meetings and Ali had meetings with his colleagues and finally they said yes, they were interested.

#### **That was our role behind the scenes**

We had the Machakos ... So people were going and coming. And then there were a series of workshops which was done. Of course like now we got into the whole network, from the church, from our focal points, from the NSCC (New Sudan Council of Churches), which then involved the youth. So that is how as southern women, that was our role behind the scenes as to how to get things move. Plus the hosting of and bringing together of southern intellectuals to discuss about the issues and the protocols. And we accompanied the discussions all through. Besides our role in the SuWEP, which we also did in terms of engaging the northerners, and convincing our colleagues in the south that it was safe to deal with northerners. They were not so bad as individuals and all those things. That they were not cheating, they were serious and all those things. As part of our advocacy programme, as women, as the southern women group, we also involved the Americans and the UN. We wrote a letter, I remember, which was signed and we sent to Kofi Annan. Telling them why they should get involved.

So our argument as women ... were, well America should be interested because of our strategic location as a country, we are bordering nine countries, geopolitically we were important, we are linking the Middle East and Africa, we had an Islamic militant government in place and if you leave it, it will spread and we had a lot of information as to

how they were planning to go into the neighbouring countries. I took that information. So these are the reasons we think that the Americans should be interested in what is happening in Sudan. Besides the humanitarian thing, and what is happening to us as women as children and these are the statistics. The second thing was like, oh you know we have all the oil, Chevron was there, they have their rights, and we are ready to talk to the SPLM/A that Chevron will have access, if we become a government you will have access. So these are the reasons.

### **The US, the Europeans, and everybody ... got interested now**

So that was part of our role which we played into this thing. Later on as SuWEP of course with the Maastricht Declaration, Otunnu (the UN special representative for children and armed conflict) coming there, and the discussion about the child soldiers, and about the advocacy against the government, and the pressure on the government, we as southern women we also got involved with our colleagues in the south in a programme to bring the Security Council to Nairobi. Of course as SuWEP with the IGAD, there were the workshops and you remember in 2005, 2004, towards the end of the year, things were not moving quickly, we were tired [and] we thought things were not moving. The Nairobi women moved into Naivasha, they were going there in buses every day to create the pressure, the necessary pressure. We were sending faxes and those things; finally it was decided to take the women there. The women went. I did not go; Rhoda went on our behalf and invaded the place, with why we wanted women to be part of what was happening and that. They did their advocacy with the partners. Then we said, well it is not moving and the 'Women waging Peace'<sup>21</sup> had invited us to go to the (United) States in October for a meeting. They made all the arrangements, with the UN, with the State Department, the Congress. So we said okay, they were taking us for training, we said we are going to use the opportunity to say what ... we want. We want the Security Council in Nairobi. And so that we want a deadline for the peace and we said in December it must be completed. And that is what we are going to tell everybody. So we split up, those of us who were coming to Khartoum were not going to public meetings (for security reasons). Because we were coming back. So it was Awut Deng who went to the UN and said everything including that we were tired.

And that for women, we wanted to go to Naivasha, and these people should be locked-in. If they don't have a solution nobody was going to leave Naivasha. That was how it was. That for us December is the end of everything. Beyond that we cannot tolerate it. We are finished, we are angry. We are not going to school; the children are not going to school. That was the thing we said in the State Department, in the Congress. Of course the 'Women waging Peace', they are diplomats, they have access. They gave us access to the government and they said okay, this thing should be given to Condoleezza (Rice). Because you see her, you have seen the president. So they brought us one Congress woman, who also had the link because

21 The Women Waging Peace Network is a network of more than 1,000 women peacemakers from conflict areas around the world, ranging from Sudan to Sri Lanka, Colombia to Bosnia, the Middle East to Sierra Leone. The Network was launched in 1999 to connect these women with each other and with policy shapers.

Condoleezza was not in town. So we sat with her and told her what we want. Apparently it went into their system, so they also got interested. The US, the Europeans, and everybody ... got interested now. The Security Council now for the second time decided to come. Because in '72 they went to Addis [Ababa] to discuss about the southern peace and a peace was signed. So with that experience now they moved to Nairobi and they had a session in Nairobi and it was decided that the peace process should not go beyond the 31st of December.

Of course with that as southern women group for peace we had developed our relationships with our colleagues in the north. I think it was good. We had very close relationship; we had working relationships with them... Of course then also we had problems with my husband because my husband's uncle, his paternal uncle is working for the Sudan security. It is a militia. He knew part of what I was doing or what I was not doing. He did not like what I was doing. So that also created ... distrust in the house here. I think he also had pressure from his family and he decided to migrate to the (United) States. I was not in favour of migration. So he went.

### **I think it was a power issue**

We incited the men. We sang the songs. We encouraged them to leave and they went. Then as war went on we discovered that people were dying. We did not see an end to it. So we said wait a minute. Is it something that we need to support, maybe we should do something different? Then we decided to support peace. At first only women. I remember the first time we told the men that we were doing the peace process. When was that? In early nineties. They told us: you know peace is a political issue. And that we were not going to discuss about peace unless there were clearance from the (SPL)Movement. You can remember in Maastricht we had problems. We had to get on the phone with the SPLM to see with them whether the statements we were making were the correct statements. You have seen how the men came, both from the north and the south; because they thought as women we were not politically conscious. As women we were going to give away a lot of the liberation issues and that we were going to compromise. And therefore we were not capable of negotiating peace. Therefore when we talk there were things we were not allowed to talk about. One of them was the arms control. We could not agree on arms control because we had in the structures that we should never ever discuss about the arms control because if we talk about the arms ban it was going to affect them. They will not have access to arms. Also the northerners were told they could not. And we had put it in brackets and moved it down and said this is an issue. Because we wanted it there but there was no way to put it there. Except to say that this is a concern but not agreed on. That is how we agreed as women to deal with the arms.

So while we decided earlier as women to go for peace, we also had the responsibility to convince the men that there was something good in peace. And those ... [are the] things we did in terms of us taking the OLS, trying to convince John Garang that if they can make it they will make it as peace, and bringing the information, making the advocacy which we did, and also convincing the women who were fighting, those of us left with arms, that they should get out of the army to support the peace. If you remember those of Mary Nyaulang,

they were still very violent when we first met. Because they believed that they can get it by fighting. As we moved on and everybody became convinced that there were more gains in peace than in war, the men took over. And they side-lined the women, we were not any longer consulted. We were not visible. We were not there, we did not have a say, we were not in the negotiation teams, [and] some two women would be taken in as a decoration. They have these layers, they have the core, principal negotiators and we were on the last layer, sixteen or something. Those people were supposed to sit there and only take notes of what is happening. They only discuss when people come out and their opinions were not taken. Then we discovered that we could do it through the IGAD and the partners. So what we did was to take our information there, and it comes, and then we also had access to John Garang and he will take the information.

I think the role of men was, I don't know, I think it was more of a power issue. It was, yes, we have made it. We are the ones only who can provide the leadership. It was like the women were naïve. We did not know. Sometimes we do things, and as women you do a lot of things and when it is something positive it is the men who are visible. Yeah. It is something that we are struggling with; I do not know how long it will take before ... but I think in the SPLM we are making headway. We wanted a women league. So I went to that meeting before the agreement was signed. And there was a decision that we were going to participate politically. That we were going to be 25% of the participation as a mandatory thing. However, those of us who could compete could also compete. So once that decision was made, as we moved into the CPA, it became the key. When they were nominating people into the Assemblies and Government that was the formula that we used and this is the formula we are using now, 25%. In the current (SPLM) Convention, it was decided maybe in the next Convention, five years down the road we are going to look at the possibilities of 50/50. Therefore the issues of building the capacity of women to participate ... in the next five years, is going to be very crucial for us to at least to get rid of the power imbalance ... and that we can have a say. But I think as women in the SPLM we have say. I am sure if we do not believe in what is happening, it won't because we have the capacity of mobilizing opinion, among even the men. So that is where we are.

#### **I am now in the parliament, I am a politician**

I think I have become a politician. That is where I am going to get stuck in. As a politician, it will be how you get stuck into the hierarchy of the party and the positions that are there is the chair, the deputy chair, it is the secretary general. We have made it clear this time that the next Convention we are going to have women up there. We are not now, because of the situation and because we still have problems with the NCP. So that is where I am going to hang in plus this other thing in the Parliament or in the Executive. That is what I think will be happening until all the ... plus we will start developing some young people to take over from us what we have started now. To identify some people and pull them along.

I think it is exciting, we are at a crossroad. We have an opportunity of being a great country, if we can only think strategically. Sometimes I feel afraid that we might disintegrate. If we



do not play it right, especially in the south. So I think we have a future as a country, but also we have work to do, if we want to be one, if we want to be great, there is the issue of acknowledging that we have attitudes that we have to change. What kind of attitudes? The attitudes of that I am better than the others. That you know it all and you can use others to be where you are ... those type of things.

I am now in the Parliament. I am a politician. I am representing the SPLM. I am the chairperson for the women league in the SPLM, which is the women's wing of the SPLM. And I am chairing the human rights committee. It is a different kind of job. It is challenging. It is a place where you have to fight. A different type of fight, there are two wars you fight when you are a politician. There is a war which you fight with your adversaries, the other political organizations and ... there is an inner war in the party with your own adversaries also. Because everybody wants to be on top of it. Everybody wants to have a say. In the process there is a lot of undercutting, a lot of, sometimes, very strange things, people colluding to undercut others. So that is what it is. But I think we managed to bring a little bit of transparency.

## 11 Conclusion

### Piecing literature and research together

Alfonso Montuori stated in his foreword to Edgar Morin's work on complexity that "[l]ived experience simply cannot satisfactorily be reduced to the perspective of one discipline" (Morin 2008, xii). Yet, in my view, this is easily forgotten by researchers, practitioners and policy makers, particularly when working in situations of (post-)conflict:

*At first glance, complexity is a fabric (complexus: that which is woven together) of heterogeneous constituents that are inseparably associated ... Next, complexity is in fact the fabric of events, actions, interactions, retroactions, determinations, and chance that constitute our phenomenal world (Morin 2008, 5).*

The range of literature consulted and reflected upon in this chapter conveys the theories, concepts and approaches of relevance to this research. The exploration through the domains of conflict, development and feminism on the basis of my research questions brings together a variety of perspectives and clarifies a variety of approaches and theoretical threads. It also aims to challenge how knowledge is organized in different domains as a common practice. The noted multidisciplinary pitfall or trap is comparable to what Morin framed as the 'paradigm of simplicity'. To think within a single domain of knowledge and inquiry was simply considered reductive. In fact the peace practice, which is featured in this research drew from the domains of conflict, development and feminism and tried to move beyond interdisciplinarity. It actually progressed towards using the methods of one domain to inform another, representing a step towards what Morin called a transdisciplinary approach.



Joe Moran described the way in which knowledge is organized into disciplines in anthropological terms, as separate tribes with different cultures and languages promoting an exclusive approach to gathering and generating knowledge (Moran 2002). The theoretical tapestry presented in this chapter covers three domains and represents an attempt to think of inclusive approaches and combine thoughts from different domains while preventing hostile mergers. Food- and music lovers may think of this theoretical framework as sheer fusion. Fusion is often the logical consequence of mutual influence and the combination of different styles developed through our increased acquaintance with other cultures as well as increased travel. This conclusion summarizes my key thoughts derived from the domains of conflict, development and feminism.

### **Key thoughts**

The ever-changing face of war and peace in Sudan represents a rich, unique and complex underresearched phenomenon to study. Making war is just as much a human activity as making peace and the multi-million dollar question is how does it work?

In this chapter, I have noted that it is more appropriate to think of conflict and changes over time as a social process that evolves non-stop. Conflict changes relationships and changes social roles within families, communities and positions between people. Things rapidly change in times of war for both men and women individually, for men and women together as well as for men and women within their social context but which changes are lasting? This research explores in which way women have participated in efforts to make and build peace between the Northern and Southern Sudan. It describes particular situations and actions through the eyes and experiences of Sudanese women. The analysis of these experiences is to contribute to a better understanding of the underlying social processes and changes as well as their potential effects over time. At the same time I find it important to understand which problems are new and which opportunities are new when wars end. It is often said that conflict and social change may provide women with opportunities, if so what are these opportunities and do these opportunities bring about lasting changes and if so for whom? Are there winnings besides losses? What difference does it make if women participate in conflict resolution and peacebuilding? How can positive change be promoted even before wars come to an end? The perception of conflict as a catalyst for social change and social justice is especially reflected in the thinking related to both conflict resolution and conflict transformation. This research will focus on a particular track II peace practice in order to gain a deeper understanding of women's experiences of armed conflict and peacebuilding in Sudan. Participation of women in formal peace negotiations remains extremely low and there is insufficient knowledge of women participating informally in one way or the other in track II or III processes.

It is not easy to bring opposing parties together to build confidence and support cooperation in the midst of war. It is a slow and time-consuming process. Issues, actors and interests are not a given and require anything but superficial knowledge about conflicting parties or personalities and powers involved. In order to 'do no harm', efforts to resolve conflicts,

mediate between conflicting parties and support peacebuilding require in-depth and both historical and up-to-date knowledge of local actors and factors. Quick results or quick fixes in the resolution of protracted intrastate wars like the one in Sudan are not only out of the question but may also generate new sets of problems or conflicts. As described in this chapter actors involved in multi-track diplomacy are many. They may or may not contribute to conflict transformation, and at the end of the day, they may fuel conflict and frustrate conflict transformation. Mediators are stakeholders in this process and the interests of mediators vary. Evidently, the willingness of parties to accept mediators does not require that they be considered as neutral. The involvement of national or international practitioners, including their respective advantages and disadvantages, needs careful assessment. Researchers, policymakers and practitioners need to seek inclusive insight and knowledge, obtain deeper reflections on who calls the shot and consequently walk the talk. Decisions as to whom to include and how in mediation processes, are indeed fundamental. Timing also seems to be everything. What is the best time to resolve conflicts? What is the best time to support peacebuilding or development? What is the best time to sow the seeds for social change and the transformation of gender relations? What might be of lesser importance and troublesome in the short run might be essential and fair in the long run.

Arguably, situations of protracted conflict may be the best or the worst environment for social change. Aspirations for social change and social justice, post-conflict reconstruction and development run high but are not automatically met when a peace agreement is signed. Connell's claim that relations between men and women, and boys and girls also have a natural and internal drive for change is somewhat Machiavellian but may also hold a sobering truth to take heed of as it provides insight into how social change is perceived. Sharing the spoils of war might serve several purposes. That is both men and women, be it as agents or victims; continuously file their own interrelational judgment based on interests, wellbeing and principle in view of social changes inviting deeper reflections on power. Higher levels of interest of Sudanese women in post-war reconstruction versus their participation in official peace negotiations require further study on the basis of both external and internal drives for change. This is definitely an area where feminist thought meets thinking on human security, conflict transformation and development.

An important critique of present-day peacemaking is that often times most men and nearly all women are mere spectators to peace agreements that are shaped by the international community and signed by the most powerful conflicting forces to reckon with. The notion of intersectionality and how this affects an individual's life chances also becomes important here. Is the inclusive notion that all sectors of society matter in efforts to resolve or end conflict and build peace simply a myth? Clearly Lederach's pyramid of approaches to building peace is valuable as is his emphasis on the key role played by mid-level leaders, bringing together grassroots and top leadership. However, is there any interaction to speak of between the various levels? The suggestion that this approach could empower participants most certainly presented me with food for thought from both the perspectives of development and feminism.

Is it development and peace no matter what? The proof of the pudding is in the eating. As the situation in Sudan demonstrates, peace and conflict are merchantable but can also go together. This chapter shows that economic growth can occur without addressing conflict and highlights that aid may also provoke conflict. Moreover no matter how idealistic development may be, development and conflict go hand in hand. Consequently, the key question which surfaces time and again is how to get things right. Evidently participatory development and gender and development perspectives tend to respond to this question. However, no matter what development, it will always disturb social order in one way or the other. It is likely to benefit some and not all. Therefore I wish to reject any 'container' notion as far as Sudanese women and men are concerned since the echoes of history, social class, culture, religion and ethnic identities run through war and peace as well as peacemaking efforts.

Entering the world of Sudanese women, and viewing war and peace from their perspective, is to learn what they do and how they perceive changes in their achievements, resources and agency within their own social context. I will focus on their stories instead of snapshots. This may help to better understand changes in gender relations during and after conflict i.e. social transformation and contribute to empirical knowledge. The preceding chapter on Sudan as well as the following chapters on the Sudan IGAD peace process and women in Sudan puts the viewpoint of Sudanese women in context. After that I will describe a track II peace practice in which these women participated and to which I was privy.

The research questions will be approached from a mix of perspectives which stem from thoughts and practices within the domains of conflict, development and feminism. The thinking is reflected in my notions on conflict management, resolution and transformation, conflict and development, gender and development, participatory development, feminist perspectives on war and peace, and efforts to bring feminist thought into the realm of peacebuilding, mediation and international relations. Together, these theoretical threads give shape to an eclectic theoretical framework. Thinking is enriched with a reflection on relevant practices including third party intervention and concepts of mediation, conciliation or facilitation and peacebuilding, as well as the development scene and feminist movements.

The three-pronged approach between conflict, development and feminism described in this chapter provides:

- a theoretical framework to bring out in full the complexity of conflict and peace processes in Sudan (Chapter 3);
- an overview of relevant concepts and salient problems which constitute a peg to hang the peace practice, which set out to support the participation of Sudanese women in peace processes (Chapter 6); and
- the starting point to enhance further analysis and go deeper into seeking answers to the central research question 'in which way women have participated in efforts to make and build peace' and its sub questions to find out what happened and why (Chapter 1).

Some reflected-on-experience has been added to provide immediate illustration of the relevance of the concepts presented. In my view insights from the three domains not only contribute to a deeper understanding of war and peace as social processes but also help to rethink concepts and practices across all domains. Peace most clearly needs to be seen as related to, and not separate from, conflict, development and feminism. Possibly “[t]he tapestry is more than the sum of the threads that make it up” (Morin 2008, 60). If development, conflict, feminism could share goals and focus on a mutual impact, the threesome would not be looking for new recipes on their own all the time. Instead they would develop some interesting recipes together, combining different cuisines into a gastronomic eating experience. Instead they would develop some interrelated avenues and join to create a musical score worthy of a human symphony.

# Chapter 4

## Mediation and Conflict Resolution in Sudan

Peace and power parleys

There were no good guys in this war

Conclusion

## **4 Mediation and Conflict Resolution in Sudan**

## 1 Peace and power parleys

### The African IGAD scene

As described in Chapter 2, Member States of the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) lived with conflict most of the time, be it at national or regional levels, and were not averse to openly pursue their own interests at the cost of their neighbours. A relatively peaceful episode occurred at the beginning of the 1990s which, combined with UN calls, supported regional peacemaking and appealed strongly to African states and their sense of sovereignty. This gave the IGAD the opportunity to assume the role of regional peacemaker (Healy 2009). The UN Agenda for peace clearly promoted cooperation with regional organizations such as IGAD, stating that “[t]oday a new sense exists that they have contributions to make” (UN 1992). The Government of Sudan (GOS) also favoured a regional peace process in order to keep the UN and the US at bay and approached IGAD for a process which could generate political clout. The GOS also felt that IGAD might have some leverage over the SPLM/A given the support they received from or via IGAD members states (Young 2007 and Healy 2009). In comparison to all other efforts to resolve the continued conflict between the GOS and the SPLM, African IGAD peacemaking efforts (1993-2005) were sustained and given support over a long period of time. These efforts were supported by the international community and the US in particular.

IGAD and its supporters constituted the most important peace and power parley in Sudan during the period (1997-2007) on which this research is focussed. Irrespective of intense regional conflicts between IGAD states over this time including the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, as well as some undercutting, underrating and valid criticism, the IGAD peace process did culminate into the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (2005). The IGAD profile on the worldwide web states that “the Sudan peace process ... brought IGAD into the limelight and revitalised the organisation”<sup>22</sup>. Its mandate was “to carry out continuous and sustained mediation efforts with a view to arriving at a peaceful resolution of the conflict” (IGAD profile). A permanent ‘Secretariat for the IGAD Peace Process on the Sudan’ was established in Nairobi in 1999 and led by Kenyan Special Envoy Ambassador Daniel Mboya who was succeeded by Lt. General Lazaro Sumbeiywo in May 2002. The Secretariat became the pivotal point of the Sudan peace process creating a connection between the GOS and the SPLM/A, IGAD states and international partners. It also engaged international representatives and experts of all sorts, but failed to include experts on Sudan, thereby limiting its conflict analysis capacity. Those who have studied war and peace in the Horn of Africa stress the importance of having country specific analysis of issues and historical awareness (Nyuoat Yoh 2003 and Healy 2008). For example, matters that must be taken into account are the location of economic resources such as oil and water in Sudan, the power bases of the opposition parties in the north and tribes in the south, and the military strength of tribes including the Nuer, as well as that of the SPLM and the GOS.

22 IGAD profile page 5: [http://www/africa-union.org/recs/IGAD\\_profile.pdf](http://www/africa-union.org/recs/IGAD_profile.pdf) (accessed June 30, 2010).

The IGAD secretariat focussed only on the conflict between Northern Sudan and Southern Sudan, ignoring the conflict amongst southerners and amongst northerners as well as tensions elsewhere in the country. This exclusive approach was therefore limited to two parties, meaning that its ability to bring about long-term peace and democratic transformation was criticized (Young 2007 and Affendi 2007). According to John Young who evaluated the Sudan IGAD peace process in 2007 at IGAD's request, "[j]ust as IGAD is by definition a state centric organisation, the peace process that it oversaw was elite-centric, restricting participation to a state elite in North Sudan and a would-be state elite in the south" (Young 2007, 26). Civil society and political parties other than the governing National Congress Party and the SPLM were largely ignored as the following section of a life history illustrates and at best their involvement was foreseen at a much later stage:

*On the CPA... on the side of the SPLA, they are accepting the CPA because they are signatories, it has brought an achievement, [and] it has brought peace to South Sudan. And they now sit as policy makers on the Government of National Unity. They go there and sit with them, and discuss issues, we want this, we want this, issues of Darfurians, issues of Abyei. All to be implemented. And also peace in Darfur. That is for the SPLA. The other parties are not happy with the CPA (life history Agnes Nyoka Retu).*

Notably, Kenyan Special Envoy Mboya did attend "a women's peace conference in Maastricht" which according to Young made him look more interested than General Sumbeiywo on engaging civil society in the peace process at large (Young 2007, 22). Chapter 6 of this dissertation will provide more details on this conference which took place in the year 2000 under the actual auspices of the IGAD Secretariat for the Sudan Peace Process. Besides Mboya, IGAD peace envoys from Djibouti, Uganda, Eritrea and Ethiopia were present. Moreover, the participating Sudanese women representatives included opposition parties from the northern and the southern parts of the country as well as a small segment of civil society (The Initiative 2000).

The formal Track I peace process however never went beyond inviting the GOS and the SPLM/A to the table. The GOS and the SPLM/A rejected the idea of inviting anyone else as it was not in their interest. The IGAD Secretariat and member states probably thought it difficult enough to bring two parties to the table and the international community, represented by the Friends of IGAD and later IPF (IGAD Partners Forum), wanted to see results sooner rather than later. Some regional and international 'friends' made sure that, pending progress of peace talks, the parties would face implications of political, economic and military nature. Put simply, one Northern Sudanese told Young that "the agreement was between big men and the *khawadjaat*" (Young 2007, 29). John Garang (SPLM) and Ali Osman Taha (GOS) represented these 'big men' and *khawadjaat* (Arabic for westerners and transcribed as *ḥawāğāt*) referring to foreigners or the international community. Consequently the approach taken did not generate trust between parties and between communities. Apparently, the IGAD Secretariat did propose to include reconciliation efforts and engage civil society as part of the CPA but that was waved aside by both the



GOS and the SPLM (Young 2008). Half-hearted attempts to include other parties by both parties were made when negotiations were almost completed. This was largely a matter of advocacy instead of inclusion or collaboration. At no point did either the SPLM/A or the GOS accept the principle that they were accountable to constituencies beyond their parties for the positions they took in the negotiations. Nor did they accept groups or others from the broader Sudanese society to participate directly in the peace process. There is also no indication that the Sudan Peace Secretariat mediators, the ambassadors from the IGAD countries that served as envoys in the peace process, and the representatives of the US, the UK, Norway and Italy who participated in the negotiations, considered the lack of broader participation as a critical obstacle to the peace process. Indeed, many clearly saw it as an advantage.

Last but not least, when the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (2005) was signed by the GOS and the SPLM, the Sudan IGAD Secretariat immediately closed its doors as if the conflict between the north and the south had been resolved following a signature in the name of both parties. IGAD paid little attention to problems arising during the CPA implementation itself, as the following life history indicates:

*We have an agreement but the agreement needs explanation. A lot of people do not know what this agreement is all about. The implementation of the agreement is not well organised. There is a good chance that the war returns. If the south decides to separate from the north we can expect a lot of problems. First of all in the south amongst them while getting organised, the north will hit on the south... If there is separation, you will suffer and the problems are many. For example you will not benefit of petrol given the pipeline is located in the north. So problems will continue. The role of Sudanese men is limited. The government plays an important role. They signed an agreement but ordinary people do not understand what it is about. We have organised ourselves to create more awareness about the CPA. It does not matter where we go for awareness raising, we get stopped. We announced a meeting in Khartoum University and two days later it was closed. So we just gave up on the idea (life history Esta Kuku Rahal).*

Interestingly, communicating CPA outcomes to communities was not looked upon as a contribution towards building peace and reconstruction efforts. As Esta Kuku Rahal's life history illustrates, it even faced opposition. The implementation of the CPA requires political will and efforts to improve the relation between those who rule and those who are ruled for violence to be able to end and for peace to spread and hold.

### **The international scene**

Following the end of the Cold War international attention turned increasingly to conflict prevention and conflict resolution, resulting in a "tenfold increase from 1991 to 2007 in the number of Friends of the Secretary-General, Contact Groups and other political arrangements that support peacemaking" (HSRP 2011, 6). In 1994 both the US and the Netherlands suggested western backing of the IGAD(D) peace process in an effort to push for peace in Sudan. Consequently the formation of the Friends of IGAD (FoI) in the

beginning of 1995 marked international recognition and support of IGAD's role as a regional and African peacemaker. Following a couple of diplomatic initiatives, the then Dutch Minister for Development Cooperation, Jan Pronk (1989-1998), became the chairman and secretary of the FoI which included the US, Canada, Italy and Norway whilst the UK joined later. The 'African solutions to African problems' did not just reflect the post-Cold War situation (Iyob and Khadiagala 2006) and political opportunism as argued by Clingendael (Clingendael 2000a), but also reflected actual changes in aid policies, strategies and aid implementation, as presented earlier. These changes which occurred in the nineties demonstrated a reduced belief in 'makeability' of both development and peace whilst attaching more importance to ownership, empowerment and harmonisation. This was also reflected in the UN agenda for peace (1992) as stated above. However, the concept of African solutions for African problems was not really practiced; it brought back a slogan that was used in the 1960s, and merely represented a lot of hot air as will be explained later.

The FoI provided both diplomatic and financial support for IGAD to mediate between the GOS and the SPLM. Besides diplomatic and financial support to the IGAD peace process in Sudan, the international friends agreed that the IGAD peace process was to become the one and only formal Track I peace process. They also agreed to act in political concert, not to favour secession and to engage in reconstruction efforts following a peace agreement. However IGAD talks were suspended in 1996, and the FoI expressed their disappointment while seeking more leverage (Clingendael 2000a). Consequently, IGAD reorganised itself and re-activated its focus on three priority areas of co-operation including conflict prevention, management and resolution, and humanitarian affairs. The FoI reorganised themselves into the IGAD Partners Forum (IPF) in 1997 with the Netherlands and Italy as co-chairs, and Norway eventually replacing the Netherlands in 1998. Following the signing of the Machakos protocol by the parties in the middle of 2002 on the broad principles of government including governance, many more donors looked to join the successful activities of the IGAD peace process, and therefore the group of friends or the IPF.

Relations between IPF members were anything but straightforward irrespective of their agreement to act in concert. Egypt, France and the Arab League were unable to take part in the closed-door IPF meetings. A foursome consisting of Norway, Italy, the US and the UK took the lead while observing the negotiations impatiently, as the following quotation will show:

*We needed to temper extreme pressures from the international community led by the Americans to sign a piece of paper. With the necessity to continue negotiations so that that piece of paper once signed would hold. We argued and argued against satisfying a Washington agenda, a Washington diary (life history Anis George Mikhail Haggar).*

"[T]he real power behind the peace process largely lay with the US" (Young 2006, 43). Political, economic, and above all national security interests made Sudan a priority for the US. Other important matters were: strained US relations with the Muslim world, Iraq,

the war on terror, Afghanistan, securing the exchange of intelligence information, and an interest in Sudanese oil. Also, constituencies back home were concerned with the fate of Christianity in Sudan, especially with an American President, George W. Bush, who although professed to be a Christian and went to church, enjoyed the image of a warmonger while soliciting the image of a peacemaker.

The consecutive obsessive fixation of the IPF on signing a piece of paper, on deadlines, or of the emphasis on technical and legal aspects of the agreement outweighed the need for reconciliation and building trust, reflects anything but African approaches to resolving conflict in Sudan. Building trust and addressing trauma are typically concerns of peacemaking approaches exerted by traditional leaders and local civil society organizations for which neither the parties, GOS and SPLM, nor the US had any interest in consulting or including. Not surprisingly, violent conflict continues to date irrespective of a 'comprehensive agreement', having achieved neither negative nor positive peace for Sudanese men and women in either the southern or northern parts of Sudan, as recognized in numerous reports by Human Rights Watch and the International Crisis Group (HRW 2006, HRW 2008, HRW 2009, ICG 2008a and ICG 2009). These reports clearly demonstrate that war and peace in Sudan do not just depend on 'the big men and the international community', but on people, trust and respectful relationships. Once the CPA was signed, the international community turned its attention to the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Darfur assuming that the work was done and that the civil war had ended (Healy 2008). The US also turned to other business and continued to pursue its political and security interests in the Middle East and Afghanistan.

### **The Dutch scene**

The Dutch played a key role in supporting the IGAD peace process in Sudan during the period from 1995 to 1998 and following a long history of development assistance to Sudan. The Netherlands gradually reduced its assistance after the military coup by Brigadier General Al-Bashir (1989) and the growing influence of the Islamists, while other donors halted their assistance. Unlike other countries such as the US which closed its embassy in Khartoum, or the UK with its colonial history and post-colonial relationship, the Netherlands enjoyed a different relationship with both the GOS and the SPLM and was not considered as self-serving as other countries. Before the coup, Dutch gross ODA to Sudan amounted to more than 130 million Dutch Guilders reaching its highest level ever since 1975. Early 1990s gross ODA was reduced from approximately 120 million to approximately 60 million Dutch Guilders (Clingendael 2000a, Annex VIII). At that time the Netherlands provided substantial humanitarian assistance channelled mainly through Operation Lifeline Sudan. It became the number one OECD donor country in terms of net ODA to Sudan between 1993 and 1997 (Clingendael 2000a, Annex VII). The Netherlands also provided support to the Carter Center which tried to negotiate cease-fires and facilitate the implementation of a health programme.

The Netherlands claimed not to take sides in the conflict, and its involvement as a facilitator to the IGAD peace process was both solicited and welcomed. As mentioned earlier, the then Dutch Minister for Development Cooperation, Jan Pronk, became the chairman and secretary of the Friends of IGAD and consequently the co-chair of IPF. According to Clingendael, the Dutch interest and involvement in the IGAD peace process largely stemmed from Pronk's personal commitment (Clingendael 2000a). At the end of 1998, when Pronk left the Dutch Ministry for Development Cooperation, Norway took over the IPF role played by the Netherlands. Minister Eveline Herfkens who succeeded Pronk as Minister for Dutch Development Co-operation was less interested in countries affected by war (SuWEP 2006, notes Dr. Joyce Neu 1999<sup>23</sup>, and interviews Maarten Brouwer, Anita Veldkamp and Rosien Herweijer). She instructed her officials "to take their cues from Norway" (Johnson 2011, 26). Dissatisfaction with great power politics, pace and progress of the IGAD peace process may also have contributed to a disinterest. Consequently, the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Khartoum housed the Norwegian IPF Sudan chairperson representative for lack of the presence of a Norwegian Embassy.

Similar to a temporary Dutch decline of interest in Sudan, British interest declined when Baroness Amos took over from Claire Short as Secretary of State for International Development in 2003 (Johnson 2011). Based on her own political experience, Hilde Johnson added that "[e]lectoral politicians' long-term commitments on their own, or their successors' behalf can be illusory" (Johnson 2011, 132). When Agnes van Ardenne became Minister for Development Cooperation (2002-2007) the Dutch political interest in Sudan returned. The Government of the Netherlands together with Norway, Sweden and the UK signed a Memorandum of Understanding to establish a Joint Donor Team for South Sudan, opening an office in Juba (South Sudan) in May 2006 immediately after the signing of the CPA (2005). Van Ardenne demonstrated a keen interest in the Darfur Peace Agreement (2006), taking leadership in donor coordination and premature reconstruction efforts in Darfur as the agreement was failing due to its exclusiveness even before the ink was dry. Consequently, Dutch political and humanitarian interest in Sudan was sustained over a long period of time.

### **The initiative**

Besides short-term financial support to mediation, conciliation and peacebuilding efforts by the Carter Center and conferences on war and peace organised by UNESCO, UNDP and the International Dialogues Foundation, the Netherlands provided long-term financial support to 'the Initiative to facilitate the participation of Sudanese women in the peace process'. This process, to which Minister Pronk agreed to allocate an amount of 500,000 Dutch Guilders, formally started in the beginning of 1998 and was developed by and facilitated through the Dutch Embassy in Khartoum. Importantly, Dutch support to the Initiative was announced at the third IPF Sudan meeting in 1998. This provided direct political support by the Dutch co-chair and Minister for Development Co-operation to the Initiative and a modest attempt at inclusive and informal peacebuilding at the time. Then and there a link was drawn between

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23 In the author's possession.

Track I efforts and an inclusive Track II effort, facilitating communication and collaboration with the permanent 'Secretariat for the IGAD Peace Process on the Sudan' in Nairobi and its Special Envoy Ambassador Daniel Mboya.

The Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael expressed its surprise of Dutch support to IGAD in general and the Initiative in particular, which rightly or wrongly stemmed from limited country specific knowledge and lack of in-country research:

*This project aims to support women's informal groups from both northern and southern Sudan, which are expected to reflect jointly on and discuss civil war. In such a way, it is hoped to democratise the peace process and to build public support for sustainable and lasting peace. The project caused great confusion among the GOS, but was carried through and is still running (Clingendael 2000a, 58-59).*

In view of the exclusive character of the formal peace process and evident interests of both the GOS and the SPLM, this confusion can easily be understood. Requests to join the IGAD peace process by political groups and civil society in both the north and the south, formally or as observers, were rejected. Consequently, the GOS and the SPLM as well as the parties to IPF and IGAD were informed by the Dutch IPF co-chair of an inclusive Track II initiative going beyond the two parties in conflict with female participants representing a broad range of political constituencies.

## **2 There were no good guys in this war**

To better understand the international politics of peacemaking and display the weaknesses of the IGAD peace process, the life history of Anis George Mikhail Hagggar is presented later in his own words. He makes clear that an agreement signed is no promise of success. Anis Hagggar is a Sudanese businessman who participated in the Initiative as a resource person. He accompanied the participants to The Hague Appeal for Peace (1999) and joined them in the Maastricht Conference (2000).

A few words on the situation at the time. Sudan witnessed the presence of a powerful middle-to-upper-class Christian population in the north, primarily of Armenian, Greek, Egyptian, and Lebanese and Syrian descent. Irrespective of the challenges they faced, these were the peoples who initially shaped commerce overtime. Those of Egyptian, Lebanese and Syrian descent consider themselves both Arab and Sudanese, and were able to build up economic relations with those in power. They rarely entered politics and did not gain any military importance. Anis was born in Southern Sudan as his father and mother, being of Arab Christian descent, settled for commercial reasons in Southern Sudan in the 1930s. They moved to Khartoum in 1964 when they were thrown out of their home by the army, leaving their business behind. Consequently, they faced expropriation by the Nimeiry government and, in 1970, lost their livelihoods. Businesses and properties were returned in a couple of years, allowing his family to return to the south, but at the end of the 1980s, the war between the SPLM and the GOS forced them to leave Southern Sudan, again.

At the age of 80 his father decided to work for peace later presenting Anis Haggar with a deeply emotional reason to follow in his fathers' footsteps, for his father asked that his ashes be scattered over his plantations in Southern Sudan once peace had been signed. Anis describes how he watched women harassing the leadership of the SPLM and how their role in peacemaking came to be acknowledged when the parties formed their government. According to him it was a matter of time and process after the DOP had been signed. He turned to the UK and finally to the US for international support and pressure cautioning against optimism when it came to foreign diplomacy and mediation. He came to realise that the transition from war to peace was underestimated irrespective of international support, pointing at issues of governance and corruption accompanied by increased levels of resources from oil exploitation. Anis Haggar also draws attention to the important question of how to maintain and broaden peace once a peace agreement has been signed.

The following elements present an initial analytical perspective of Anis's life history:

- on Southern Sudan: When growing up or doing business in Southern Sudan one is caught between a rock and a hard place. Southern Sudan has the image of underdevelopment and may look unsophisticated to some. Its living experience is one of loss and trauma;
- on doing business: Politics and business cross paths. A colonial power may suppress local business opportunities to defend its own interests. The private sector is on speaking terms with those in power and may avail opportunities to build peace. One is not only brought up as a businessman but also as a diplomat;
- on men and women: Women matter as the role of women in times of war is substantial but taken for granted. Men are heroes while women are losers. Parties have come to realise that women matter since it is in their interest to include them;
- on peace: Great strides towards reconciliation can be made or abrogated in no time. Shouting from the roof tops may not help parties to get together. Confidentiality and modesty matter;
- on small steps in a local context: Put war and peace into context since it is all about the country, its history, its men, its women and relationships. In Sudan old age brings leverage and respect. Inclusiveness matters from a national, regional and international perspective. It may help to mend fences one by one, even if it is between the GOS and the US, between the GOS and Sudanese opposition parties or the SPLM and major opposition parties. It certainly helps to agree that peace is better than war. Transitions from war to peace may be more difficult than anticipated. Local resources and capacities may disappoint but also corruption and feelings of superiority can cause problems. Do not think that what applies in the West, in terms of democracy for example, will also work in Sudan.

The overall analysis of life histories collected as part of this research will be presented in Chapter 7.

**Life history 4.2** Anis George Mikhail Haggar**I lost my home**

My name is **Anis George Mikhail Haggar**. George being my father and Mikhail my grandfather. I was born in 1947 ... in Southern Sudan; I was raised in Southern Sudan and then sent away to school in England. I did not go to university because I was the only son. My father and I felt that I should come back and help him. He introduced in Southern Sudan out-grow schemes, stakeholders participation with independent and individual farmers in coffee and tobacco. We could not do that with tea, because tea needs processing and so on. It worked very, very well. Mum was a nurse ... a young maiden who came from Egypt, from a wealthy family. Her family and friends said, but they are all wandering around naked. In Southern Sudan they eat people and all the stuff that goes with that. So she came in 1945-1946. We are Christians.

My great grandfather came from Syria with one suitcase. He was a merchant. And his son, my grandfather opened the routes, the trades' routes with the Southern Sudan. They lived in Omdurman and it was my father who settled in Southern Sudan in the thirties, there were no roads, there was no ... nothing really. He had a hard time with the British who did not want tea and coffee to be introduced to Sudan because they were protecting East Africa, what was called Ceylon at the time and India of course. They did not want new upstarts starting to grow tea and coffee outside of their control.

I think perhaps my first unhappy moment was that in 1964 the army moved into the plantation and forcefully removed my father from our home. He was summoned to Khartoum, accused of cooperating and helping the rebels. The evidence, Mr. Haggar, is that you are alive. So I lost my home, what I called home in 1964 and came to the strange city of Khartoum only speaking Juba Arabic and English. In 1970, the Nimeiry government, during its communistic period ... our properties were expropriated, our businesses, our home so we lost everything. In 1973 they de-confiscated us, reinstated us, and gave us back our business, our properties. That was a year after the Addis Ababa agreement. So we went back south also, resumed our operations. Started from the beginning, all over again. With the scars of war, with the damage that comes with war. Damage to people's minds, hearts and souls. It is not just material damage. You can replace material loss. Damage to the mind and body needs a very special kind of therapy. By the end of ... the second half of '86, it was '87 we got word from the SPLM that they could no longer guarantee the safety of our people on the plantations which was a gentle invitation for us to evacuate, which we did.

**Dad that is politics**

I was 28 years old and still in my training. I asked my father, what do you want me to do? He said three things. You get to work before anybody else, and you leave after you open and close. You do not hire or fire anybody; you leave that to other people in the organization. Number three, you read, you memorize... Kiplings 'IF' and you live by that. That was my bible. That was my code of conduct. The things that I remember: if you can meet with Triumph and Disaster. And treat those impostors just the same. Or walk with Kings, nor lose



the common touch. If you can make one heap of all your winnings. And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss. And it goes on like... I may have a copy here. You know. My father, every morning, and the final line: If you can fill the unforgiving minute ... with sixty seconds' worth of distance run. Yours is the earth .... And, which is more; you'll be a Man, my son. I live by that. It is my bible.

He was in his 80<sup>th</sup> year by then and he (my father) said we must work for peace. My immediate reaction was dad that is politics, we come from the *sūq* (Arabic: market, in other words 'we are businessmen'), and we have nothing to do with politics. And he said, this is not politics this is peacemaking. I do not have time to argue: are you with me or not? I said, dad, whichever way you look at it we are going to cross paths with politicians. But if this is your wish, let's do it. And so started a peace initiative in 1994. He was in direct touch with Al-Turabi; he was head of the party at the time, a very powerful man in the Sudan. He was in touch with Dr. John Garang, head of the SPLM. A meeting was arranged through President Moi to be at his farmhouse in Kenya, outside Nairobi. Both sides emphatically, most emphatically, insisted that this was to remain top secret. People were afraid of the Americans, people were afraid of this, and that and the other. They wanted it to remain absolutely secret. It just happened that 10 days before the meeting was to take place in Nairobi, ex-President Jimmy Carter was in Nairobi and had a meeting with Moi and at his press conference in Khartoum airport he said, I know of an initiative that is going on which may bring peace to the Sudan. Within 20 minutes we had a call from Al-Turabi saying, we are out of here. An hour or two later the SPLM said, we have nothing to do with this. My father spent the rest of his life, spent 80% of his time trying to get the two sides back together. The night before he died, I think he knew he was not going to make it, he entrusted me with three things: 1. to look after the family, 2. to look after all the employed people in the group, and ... the 3rd was an extraordinary request. He asked that his ashes be sprinkled over the plantations after the peace agreement was signed. I did not have a choice. So I gave him my promise. And that locked me into a continuing effort, attempt to make peace. Not that anybody really needs a motivation or an incentive to make peace but I had a very personal reason to bury my father. So that is how I got into it.

### **Come on boys behave yourselves**

I have disagreed with my father on the dimensions of this. My father regarded this as a family quarrel. All you needed to do was to get the people from this side and that side. He was an 80 year old man, he had a white beard. There is this leverage and respect that in our culture we have for older people. And he just thought that if he brought Al-Turabi and then Dr. John and everybody around the table and said come on boys behave yourselves... I saw a different dimension to this, I saw the international community, and I saw neighbours. I started by going to England to ask the British for a number of reasons. Historically, the British were tied to us, linguistically; all decision makers throughout the period of independence have a command of English. And Britain had played its role, in post Rhodesia and various parts of Africa there was this old colonial tie. Britain wanted a guaranteed solution. You know after 40 years of war I thought it would be factious to suggest that the



chances of peace were anything better than 50/50. So there came a moment, well, we go to America. That I knew very little about. But what I did know was it was during the very worst period of relations between Sudan and... The first thing was to work on the relationship between the Sudan and the United States. Once you mend the fences you can then begin to engage the Americans into the peace process. The Americans were highly supportive of the SPLM and on my many, many visits, over 17 visits to Washington on this business; I often asked the question is either side ever going to win. And if not why are we prolonging the war. And if America with all the power and might failed in Vietnam, what were the chances of either side winning the war here. If so, then we should start dedicating resources, energies to peace. The other thing is that there were no good guys in this war. This concept that the guys in Khartoum are bad guys and that the SPLM are all angels and knights in shining armour, needed to be addressed. Child soldiers, inhumane treatment of men, and women and children was rampant on both sides. So you know let's get away from the good and bad.

### **Accept that peace is better than war**

The first months of [the year] 2000, the Clinton Administration had gone, the first months of the Bush Administration ... my last trip to Washington, I received a call the night before I left, from one of the people I was working with within the Administration saying, at least you should feel gratified because every single recommendation that you have made has been adopted by the Administration. When I undertook this work it was on several very strict conditions. The first was that I would remain absolutely independent; nobody would pay for my tickets, my hotel bills, my expenses. The second thing is that I would not carry any messages from Khartoum to Washington or from Washington to Khartoum. They have their own channels. Political, diplomatic, I am not a messenger. I am not responsible. The third is that I would write no reports for anybody. I can brief people that I meet in Washington, and I can brief people that I meet here, but I will report to nobody.

I was asked by Dr. [Condoleezza] Rice, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs to submit my recommendations in writing. And I said, Dr. Rice, you know very well that I don't, we agreed that I would not write anything. The compromise was something they called the long paper, there was no name, no address, [and] no date. They were just bullet points. They were essentially to accept that peace is better than war [and] that any involvement of any of the parties should be dedicated to making peace, rather than trying to win the war. Trying to engage in the most inclusive process as many stakeholders as possible. And to work on neighbours and the international community with a particular focus on the Sudan. Oil was an issue, the environment was an issue. You know there were many other dimensions, you know. The National Congress Party was not an elected party; the SPLM was not an elected party. So you had two armed groups, and there were umpteenth other armed groups whose allegiances and loyalties were bought and sold between the north and the south. So people came to Khartoum leaving the SPLM, people went to the SPLM leaving Khartoum and so on.

### **Pressures from the international community**

It was a real mess. But there was a turning point. There came a point where things began to change and the Americans realised that they should be energizing, mobilizing for peace. I think it was really at the turn of the century. World's attention would later be turned to 9/11. Sudan kept coming on the screen, off the screen and so on. But of course it became very high profile when the Naivasha process started; they had been to Machakos before that, they had been to Nigeria. But the light could be seen at the end of the tunnel by the time the Declaration of Principles (DOP) was signed and by the time people got around the table in Navaisha you could see it became a matter of time and process. We needed to temper extreme pressures from the international community... Let's hold on another few days, another few months. Let's have a piece of paper that will not fall apart. It was a lesson ... because we were there, we would not allow it to happen, that they did not learn from it. Because they then did the Darfur Peace Agreement and the pressures and the deadlines and we need a signature, and we need a headline. And they signed a piece of paper that collapsed before the piece of paper's ink was dry.

### **The soldiers are the heroes**

There came a point during this conflict when I was invited to become involved in 'engendering the peace process' (the peace practice). It was such a good idea; I asked why I had not thought about it myself. My only concern was that I was of the wrong sex. [You] put my doubts aside. [I did not] have to be woman to become involved in the engendering of the process, and I asked, why me? And you said, well, to be frank with you, you are the only guy that neither side objected to. So I thought that was a good enough reason to become involved. And I thought about it a great deal. To me every soldier has a mother, a wife, a daughter, a girlfriend, a sister. They are very, very involved, whether they like it or not. Unfortunately it is the women that suffer the most in these circumstances. Everything is taken for granted. The top priority is to fight the war. The soldiers are the heroes and the women just sit in the back. And yet they can be mobilized, they can be energized because as stakeholders they are the biggest losers. If you take as proportions of the gender, you will find that in the case of women the number of officers, fighters, commanders, or whatever terminology you use, as a proportion, as a percentage of women, is substantially less, which begs the question in that case what were the women doing or what was expected from them? What is their role? On the battlefield their role is supportive. Somebody has to cook, somebody has to prepare the food, somebody has to pick the crops if there are crops, and somebody has to wash clothes, look after the children because children are also born in war. And of course there were women in the diaspora, in the fundraising. There were women in the management, in the public relations. I do not want to belittle the role but all too often, we take it for granted, if you are a woman just keep quiet woman and prepare the next meal.

I watched them harassing the leadership of the SPLM, I watched women talking, sometimes shouting at the chairman of the SPLM and other senior members, senior commanders of the SPLM. And I watched as a certain amount of dignity came into the process, hey we can't underestimate these women, we can't take them for granted anymore and this was

demonstrated when they formed their governments. In Southern Sudan and those that they sent to Khartoum to represent the SPLM in the Government of National Unity: it was not just a club for the boys. I think that that is part of the pay off. That suddenly these people realise, that you know what, it is not just that we cannot do without them but we can actually derive quite a lot of benefit. Then you get into the international political correctness and you know the world needs a National Assembly and a Parliament that has enough women in it and all this sort of stuff. I call it political correctness because a woman should be a Member of Parliament because of her credentials, not because of a percentage. Why 25% as in the constitution of Sudan, where do you get this number from. If it is percentage of population it is too low, if it is percentage of educated people, I guess it is about equal men and women. Now, maybe 20, 30 years, 50 years ago it was different. Where do you pull out of a hat 25%? But it is a start, you look at it negatively, you can look at it positively.

### **We underestimated a lot of things**

Some of the most powerful and fortunate people of the planet signed, witnessed the CPA, the signature of the CPA. The Americans, the Secretary of State, the British Foreign Minister, the Dutch, everybody was there on an agreement that was really unique in its way. At the benefit of hindsight we underestimated a lot of things. We underestimated the transition, the enormous challenges of the transition. We took for granted that once you have peace everything will be alright. We underestimated the magnitude of the responsibility of the Government of Southern Sudan. We overestimated, or our expectations, on the human resources side were much higher. Nobody expected the untimely death of the leader of the SPLM, a tragic loss. In my last conversation meeting with the late chairman, in the spring of 2005, so three months after the agreement was signed, we met in Nairobi and I expressed serious concerns. The advance party of the SPLM reached Khartoum, it was badly managed. It was chaotic; I expressed my concerns to the late chairman. He agreed with me. Stuff that I was telling him ... we don't need to go into details. But at the end of it he said you know you are too harsh on our people. Don't forget that yesterday they were in the bush. And I said, Dr. John I don't accept that, I am sorry, the management skills of maintaining a war for 20 years are probably greater than the management skills of government. You have to raise money. You have to fight a war where there are no desks, no telecoms. You have to feed your soldiers, you have to clothe them, [and] you have to move them. You are fighting a war, that is management and if you can do that sure as hell you can run a government.

With the goodwill of the international community, with funds that were pledged, enormous funds, three times the expectations of the JAM (*Joint Assessment Mission Sudan*). When they went to Oslo they were asking for 1.6-1.8 million dollars, they came away with almost 5 million [and] the goodwill of the international community, the support of the international community. It was all there. The goodwill that comes from peace was there. It all fell apart. They knew it all; they did not need capacity building because they are Ministers and Excellencies. Then you have a problem. It was partly that. Corruption. The great difference between the Addis Ababa Agreement of 1972 and the CPA of 2005 is that by 2005 Sudan had enormous funds, resources from oil. 1972 we did not have anything so we had to make

ends meet, through good governance and proper tax collection. This time the oil paid all our bills and some. I gave him the names of people who had served in government, in different periods, during the Abel Alier government, the Nimeiry government. Names of people in his hierarchy, in the top command of the SPLM, who were not bush fighters. These were former Ministers, former Administrators. So it was not a good enough excuse. And he said it is a harsh judgement. I said Dr. John, I don't want to become a Minister, I don't want any favours from you but you know for this peace to pay dividends you are going to have to do better than this. Then I asked him, why have you not come to Khartoum? This is April, March - April, early, it was the spring of 2005. He said I am coming; I am just waiting for my family. I am coming with all my family, children, my wife and everybody. We will be there soon, and I said, the sooner you do that the better. And the rest of course was history.

### **How do you spread the peace?**

And perhaps there is a hope that when democracy comes, if democracy comes, then the voice of the people in the villages will mean something because if you want my vote you will have to do something for me. Perhaps this is one of the advantages of democracy. Whatever democracy: the system of democracy maybe in the West, may not necessarily apply to this part of the world or the next part of the world. The assumption that if it is good enough for the United States, for England, [it] is good enough for Africa may not be a sound assumption. We need to look back and see how rural life was run. What [were] the role of the chief and the wife of the chief? What was the role of women in the tribe?

I sat in Juba, on my own, many, many nights. Many, many nights and I have asked myself, is the price for all the lives that we lost worth it? Did all these people lose their lives for this to happen? Fundamentally it has got to be worth it, peace has got to be worth a sacrifice. How do you maintain the peace, how do you spread the peace and at what point do you cash in the dividends of peace. Right now the answers from what we see in front of us are that the chaos is not being worth it. There are lots of reasons. There are a whole bunch of people who don't want peace, there are a whole bunch of people who do not want elections, and there are a whole bunch of people who signed a piece of paper, the CPA with no intention of honouring it. But we have enough momentum and the greatest justification of all which is that peace has got to be better than the alternative. How do you maintain the peace, and spread the peace, how do you bring people round to that?

Over the last six, eight months I will admit to you, I have lost a bit of motivation in dealing with politicians, in dealing with the Government, in dealing with the SPLM. Because three days ago they approached me ... the elders, southerners: Dinka from Bor. You have got to do something now, it is a mess. The south is a mess. The relationship with the north is a mess. Eh, you know. They will listen to you..., you have access to the President and the Vice-President, and to Salva Kiir and to Abel (Alier) and so on you know, they will listen to you. And they will listen to you because they know you are not coming to ask for anything. You do not want to become a Minister, or some special favour. My answer is but *yā ǧamā'a* (Arabic: oh, folks), nobody is listening. Nobody is listening. To which I am

told; were they listening before? And I said, well, have you forgotten being called by ... Martin [and] by Ali Osman [Taha] ... to this side of the Simba lodge and (they) told us: we are finished with the SPLM people, we can't meet with them, they don't listen to us. You go and talk to them or we are going home. And there were times that Dr. John [Garang] called us or Deng Alor or Nyial Deng or any of these people: *yā ḡamā'a*, these Arab friends of yours we really are going to leave this place we can't deal with them, maybe they listen to you. So they said have you forgotten those days? Look, I have not forgotten. Really our job converted when they signed the agreement. Our job became private enterprise, private sector. And that is it, a huge task, how to create jobs, how to create wealth, how to create stakeholders.

### 3 Conclusion

As noted by John Young, the IGAD peace process in Sudan has been widely debated but little researched (Young 2007). Arguably, this process which was sustained for years had its strengths. It singled out key issues such as self-determination and the issue of state and religion, and it continued to work with parties on the basis of the Declaration of Principles. It also generated both technical expertise and political support. Limiting access to the dialogue table increased confidentiality and made issues and parties easier to manage. Confidentiality mattered as illustrated by the life history of Anis Hagggar. Carter's slip of the tongue incurred discomfort to the extent that parties cancelled their meeting. The Achilles' heel of the IGAD peace process was its exclusive and elitist character. The peace table was controlled by the SPLM and the governing NCP sought a top-down agreement to suit their interests. No foundation was laid for building ownership, trust and peace amongst Sudanese at large. Efforts by women peace activists to disseminate the content of the 260-pages long CPA, including protocols and annexes, were suppressed.

Peace in Sudan was largely defined in western terms, including deadlines and legal requirements thereby reducing the search for African solutions, to use an old slogan. The IGAD peace process was not about identifying local approaches to conflict resolution, and reconciliation aimed at repairing the fabric of Sudanese society. Involving other issues and parties into the process was to be potentially dealt with at a later stage. In that case it is difficult to explain why the IGAD Secretariat in Nairobi closed its office and both regional and international attention wandered away in pursuit of their political, economic, security or humanitarian interests. Alarming footage on Darfur dominated western TV screens and African neighbours focused on Juba in search of new economic opportunities and profit while development partners turned their focus on reconstruction efforts facilitated by the UN family and the World Bank. The IGAD Secretariat and the IPF wanted to stop the violence in Northern and Southern Sudan without further delay and claimed success while incidents of violent conflict continue to occur. Maybe there was too much optimism in the art of diplomacy and too much pessimism in the art of mediation. Limited knowledge of local history including national, regional and international agendas driving conflict certainly did not help. Increased levels of violent conflict elsewhere in the country together with continued violence in post-independence South Sudan and areas like Abyei and Southern

Kordofan prompts the question of whether parties involved in the IGAD peace process actually may have complicated or contributed to conflict elsewhere in the country?

Ordinary Sudanese were not only kept in the dark about the content of the agreement, the CPA was also safeguarded against dissent during the elections. Only parties that adopted this agreement were allowed to participate in the elections. Issues of good governance were dealt with in the agreement but human rights were never put on the agenda. A peace process does not end when an agreement is signed especially when the actors are restricted to top level leadership and opportunities for multi-track diplomacy are rebuffed or simply not maximized. The status given and support extended to the Initiative as a peace practice will be further scrutinized in Chapter 6 of this dissertation. After 2005, few reconciliation efforts did take place involving various parties and civil society. These mainly focused on improving south-south relations while north-north and north-south relations remain weak. The life history of Anis Haggag also points at disenchantment with the new governing elite trying to take advantage of their position thanks to the increasing riches fuelled by oil. Apart from problems of sharing wealth and power, the issue of accountability and good governance across the public, civil society and private sector needs to be confronted urgently. With continued violence in Sudan in the face of peace, the concept and reality of a 'positive peace' still has a very long way to go.

# Chapter 5

## Women in Sudan

Different roads, separate ways

This gun is your mother; this gun is your wife

Conclusion

## **5 Women in Sudan**



## 1 Different roads, separate ways

This chapter is about the changing socio-economic status of women, the role of women within political organizations and women's movements in Sudan, over the course of time. It emphasizes that Sudanese women are not a homogeneous group sharing the same struggles and facing the same challenges. The reality is that Sudanese women differ according to class, ethnicity, religion, education, age, language and so forth. Following a short introduction, the first section of this chapter will focus on the struggles and the conditions faced by respectively northern and southern women before the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005, as the status of women in the north and south evolved differently as a result of the Anglo-Egyptian rule (1899-1955) over Sudan and two civil wars (1955-1972 and 1983-2005). The second section explores changes and challenges faced by respectively northern and southern women after the CPA. At the end of this chapter, the life history of Agnes Nyoka Retu, a Southern Sudanese woman, is presented. Her story provides a stark illustration of struggles and challenges faced by individual women including their responses and actions. When asked if Southern Sudanese women are in a better position than Northern Sudanese women following the CPA, she responded:

*You know ... ours is different ... new opportunities. Still you cannot compete with somebody who is well off since a long time. Then you are still starting. We look at it that ... these are professors, these are doctors. These are professionals. We are coming from the war, talking to a professor who is well respected and knows the politics of Sudan. We come from the politics of the guerrilla, defending my lot. It is still a struggle; if you are not strong you cannot succeed with them. Where they have reached, we have not yet reached. You have not even touched half of it (life history Agnes Nyoka Retu).*

As described earlier (in Chapter 2), the Southern Sudan largely remained a region cut off from developments elsewhere in Sudan throughout the colonial period. Except for attempts to end slave trade or tribal conflicts in the south, the British did not intervene much. In some pockets of the south, Christian missionaries, British officials, and Arab traders, were able to pursue their particular interests. British officials, for example, tried to intervene in marriage customs according to which Sudanese tribal Azande women could be married against their will and given as compensation, by introducing written laws. Hence rights, customs, traditions and religion as well as how these interact and impact on women and relations between women and men have always been politicized in Sudan (Beasley ca. 1898-1985, Beswick 2001, Ahmadi 2003, Badri 2006, Hale 2007 and Boddy 2008). Rights of women in general, as well as civil rights, were mostly left to religious communities in society and Islam in the north and customs and traditions in the south (Tønnessen 2007). Ina M. Beasley, who worked as a Superintendent and Controller of Girls' Education (1939-1949), considered "progress made in education as noteworthy as the first general election in the history of Sudan" (Beasley ca. 1898-1985, SAD.658/5/3). Colonial rule and prolonged civil conflict affected the identities and status of men and women, their relations and society at large. On the one hand, it feminized men's work and responsibilities with women taking over as breadwinners, and on the other hand the struggle for independence and continued

warfare masculinized and militarized Sudanese society and culture in which tribal, political and religious affiliations also mattered. At the same time, Sudanese women are depicted as “freedom fighters” and “custodians of life” (Sudan Tribune 2007).

Dr. John Garang, the Chairman of the SPLM, in his speech at the signing ceremony of the CPA, identified both women and men as “heroes and martyrs” whilst describing women as “the marginalized of the marginalized” (Sudan Tribune 2005). One could wonder why and for what purpose women decided to join the SPLM, the National Islamic Front (NIF) or the Sudan Communist Party (SCP)? Do women contribute to political processes or merely serve the interests and objectives of political parties run by men, be it the SPLM, the SCP or the NIF (Bakri 1995, Khalid 1995 and Hale 2007)? Women’s role as biological and cultural reproducers, bearers of the nation and ethnicity and guardians of norms and traditions, all come into play. Sondra Hale sees Sudanese women as “designated repositories of culture” (Hale 2007, 227) while Tomadur Ahmed Khalid (1995) and Zeinab Bashir El Bakri (1995) confirm that women may face political pitfalls whereby they become a limp ‘Greek chorus’ (Hale 2007). According to Hala Abdel Magid Mohamed Abdel Magid Al-Ahmadi (2003) however, Islamist women benefited from both external pressures as well as internal tendencies supporting changing gender relations. Women and men can embrace, undermine and resist change pending interests and both internal as well as external forces supporting change. Both women and men are social actors and nothing remains the same especially when armed struggles take a heavy toll of human life. The various struggles of Sudanese women, against oppression and discrimination, are a subtle reminder that “women are social actors, not just passive receptors of state or party actions” (Hale 1997, 3). Throughout the history of Sudan women have struggled for their rights, and today this challenge continues.

### **Struggles and strings from north to south**

Sudanese women in the north have a long history of protest. Ansar women participated in the Mahdi rebellion by looking after the wounded and preparing food for fighters (Badri 1983 and Ahmadi 2003). British officered armies were defeated by forces of the Mahdi (1884) including women who acted as water-carriers (Longe ca. 1914-1979). According to Longe, “it is said that ... they found that many were women, dressed as men and carrying arms” (Longe ca. 1914-1979, SAD.641/6/40). Women opposed British colonial rule and participated in nationalist politics. Under the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium Government Sudanese women did not enjoy equal pay, were restricted to a number of professions and had to resign from work upon marriage. In an effort to ‘civilise’ Sudanese women, British officials introduced midwifery training and opened a female teachers’ training college in Omdurman (Boddy 2007). They also tried to ban female genital mutilation and supported the establishment of a Society for the Abolition of Female Circumcision. In an article called “[d]rastic laws to kill Sudan customs” in *The Sudan Star* (November 7, 1945), Dr. Ali Badri argued with some sheikhs that comparing female genital mutilation to drinking alcohol was useless saying that “a better comparison would be the Islamic prohibition on the early custom of burying women alive” (Beasley ca. 1898-1985, SAD.658/5/11). In those days, going to school was considered shameful for girls. Access to education was limited to mostly urban

elites. Women belonging to the middle-to-upper class Christian population in particular became early role models as professional working women.

The Sudanese Communist Party (SCP) was the first political organization to put women's rights in Sudan on the agenda and one of its female members was ordered to establish an organization for women, 'the League of educated young women of Omdurman' in 1947 (Ahmadi 2003). Women of the Mahdi family and members of the Umma Party (UP) established a Society for Women's Advancement. Similar to first-wave feminism elsewhere, the League and Society catered for educated women and focused on improving access to schooling among women. Shortly thereafter, more women joined a variety of political organizations, including Islamist (initially the Muslim Brethren and later the NIF) and sectarian parties (the DUP and the UP). The British formed 'the Union of women who speak English', which later became the International Women's Union. In the meanwhile, the League evolved by 1952 into the first nation-wide Women's Union (WU) open to all Sudanese women. In a note to Ina M. Beasley on Sudanese Women's Associations in the Sudan, it was stated that the British considered the Women's Union the strongest considering other 'clubs', "more of a family affair" or "in their infancy" (Beasley ca. 1898-1985, SAD.657/3/104-108). The struggle of Sudanese women to obtain the right to vote coincided with the rise of trade unions. The WU pushed for political rights and in 1953 obtained the right to vote for female secondary school and university graduates. Sudanese women organised a protest demonstration against British colonial rule. However, the WU had become a new political battleground prior to Sudan's independence (1956). Sudanese Islamist women broke with the WU because it was run and dominated by SCP women. They started 'the Patriotic Women's Front' with support from the Sudanese Muslim Brotherhood, which had established itself as a political movement in 1954 after the Egyptian movement of Hassan al Banna (Stevenson 1875-1990, SAD.796/9/51). The WU continued and joined international women's movements such as the Feminist International Democratic Unions as well as regional Arab and African Feminist Unions.

Subsequently, Sudanese women participated in demonstrations against Abboud's military government (1958-1964) and in recognition of women's support and efforts to bring down the military regime of 1964; they were granted the indiscriminate right to vote and to seek election. In addition to examples provided in Chapter 3.9, this is another example of women taking advantage of their (participation in) struggle. Evidently, male politicians had also developed an interest in women's votes. Sondra Hale noted that "by 1965 Sudanese women, in terms of their legal and political status, were ahead of many women in the world" (Hale 2007, 136-137). A significant increase in the number of female students and teachers as well as girls' schools transformed Sudanese society from a state where girls and women were restricted to their homes to a state where they joined universities and the workforce. Nimeiry's rule (1969-1985) involved collaboration as well as repression of political rivals. Initially, Islamists faced repression and some were detained in prison including Wisal al-Mahdi, the wife of Islamist Al-Turabi and a sister to Sadiq al-Mahdi, the leader of the UP. Following the failure of a Communist coup against Nimeiry and the execution of its leaders

in 1971, the WU was banned because of its SCP stature. More protest marches followed demanding the release of political prisoners including women besides demonstrations against the high cost of living.

When the first civil war came to an end (1972) private and foreign investment started to flourish. Sudan became a recipient of development assistance and a donor darling as a result of cold war politics. The presence of foreign companies and development workers affected Sudanese society, gender relations and class structures. Local NGOs, such as the Babikr Badri Scientific Association for Women Studies (BBSAWS) and the Sudan National Committee on the eradication of harmful Traditional Practices (SNCTP), started efforts to combat harmful traditional practices including female genital mutilation. Many women's organizations mobilized and assisted in emergency responses to both famine and floods in the country. In the Arab world, Sudanese women became known as doctors, lawyers and teachers.

Sudan's third Permanent Constitution (1973) guaranteed equality of all citizens in rights, duties and employment opportunities without discrimination on the basis of sex, origin, language, locality and religion (Tire and Badri 2008). Ten years later however, Nimeiry introduced Islamic Law and turned a blind eye to the constitution including equal rights for men and women. Zeinab Abbas Badawi however, correctly points out that in spite of any guarantees regarding equal rights of men and women, all constitutions including the most recent national interim constitution (2005) contain provisions that Islamic Law and customs are the main source of legislation affecting the rights of women in daily life (Badawi 2008). To avoid being passed for atheists in view of their Communist ideals, members of the SCP also used to refer to Islam in defence of women's rights. The position of women in Sudanese society became an important point of rivalry, "[m]ale reformers whether nationalist or revolutionary encouraged the construction of such an image of 'sophisticated', 'educated' woman to enhance a good and civilised image of the country" (Ahmadi 2003, 146). As of 1985 the UP started to increasingly value the participation of women in politics and established a target of 10% for its General Assembly and Executive Office. The late Sara Al-Fadil, and wife of Sadiq al-Mahdi, used to take over political leadership when her husband was either in jail or in temporary exile. Without a doubt "[t]he most prominent achievement of the women's movement during the period 1986-1989 was the establishment of women's sectors in all political parties, representation of women in top positions in some political parties and in key ministries" (Badri 2005, 10).

Yet, thousands of women were fired from the civil service following the military coup with NIF support in 1989. Women working in the arena of international relations were especially targeted though opportunities were offered to Muslim Sisters. Women started to seek refuge outside of their country. Following the rise to power of the National Islamic Front a strong Islamist women's movement (renamed National Women's Front) emerged supported by Al-Turabi. Ahmadi suggests that had it not been for women in the NIF, "the Islamist movement could not have grown, expanded and eventually seized power" (Ahmadi

2003, 109). They launched several efforts to support civil war and government's military operations by collecting gold jewellery. Often times, Islamist women joined their husbands actively in the highest echelons of political power and pursued both political and economic interests jointly. Therefore, Ahmadi argues that unlike other women who joined political parties Sudanese Islamist women were successful in transforming culture (Ahmadi 2003). They established many organizations ranging from the Sudanese Women General Union, a Business and Professional Women's Club, the International Women Bond and a Southern Muslim Women organization. Their General Union encouraged women in the 90s to join the Popular Defence Forces, and prided itself on its outreach-grassroots membership and supported women who lost husbands and sons in war:

*Because here we lost husbands; we lost ... those were all in the army or even government officials. They just kill people you know just like that you see. So people with families they suffered you know. They lost their fathers, they lost their brothers, and they lost their sons... When you lose your father you lose your supporter, when you lose your husband you lose your supporter... At that time the membership (of the General Union) was about four million you see but now the membership is seven million...* (life history Boudour Osman Abu Affan).

Khartoum counts many influential female politicians as well as organizations which aim for advancing women's rights in Sudan. Till the signing of the CPA (2005), Sudanese women in leadership positions were overwhelmingly Muslim middle and upper class urban women from the north.

For most of their lives, Sudanese women in the south have been living under the stress of war. According to Jane Kani Edward, "some Southern Sudanese women were able to struggle against all odds for their basic human rights ... including the right to education, the right to work, and the right to participate in politics" (Sudan Tribune 2006). Access to education in Southern Sudan was negligible during the first civil war (1955-1972). Prior to that schooling opportunities had been few and Ina M. Beasley related in 1946 that:

*Dinka girls were very much afraid of everything while they had been in school, as stories of slave raiding are not forgotten. The sisters said the children regarded pins and scissors as lethal weapons to do them harm and were generally very difficult to make contact with* (Beasley ca. 1898-1985, SAD.204/11/18).

Few women during the first civil war participated in armed struggle. One of the first well-known female Southern Sudanese army officers was Ager Gum, mentioned in the life history by Priscilla Joseph Kuch. By joining the army, women like Ager Gum acquired a different status in society and moved beyond their traditional domestic, reproductive and socio-economic roles. A subsequent period of relative peace following the first civil war allowed some boys and girls to enrol in primary education of which a small number were able to continue their education. Few Southern Sudanese women enjoyed the opportunity to complete their studies in the north at for example the University of Khartoum or the Ahfad

University for Women in Omdurman. Although few, others managed to join universities and colleges in Cairo or elsewhere. Opportunities for higher education closer to home increased when Juba University was founded with donor support in 1977 following the Addis Ababa Agreement, and a decree by Nimeiry. At the time, a handful of Southern Sudanese women were able to participate in politics and decision-making irrespective of constraints faced by customs and traditions. They joined as Members of Parliament and Ministers in central and regional governments. Twenty to twenty-five women were elected democratically to a Southern Parliament (Beswick 2001 and Aldehaib 2010). Another handful of southern women joined universities as lecturers. Similar to women in the north they managed to find jobs. However, customary and tribal leadership remained largely in the hands of men.

During the second civil war (1983-2005) access to education deteriorated once more. Some women fled the country and managed to get an education, though under difficult circumstances, while others sought refuge in the displaced camps surrounding Khartoum. According to a report by the Small Arms Survey (HSBA 2008) numerous women and girls made a significant contribution to the armed struggle during the first and second civil war. However, their military participation increased during the second civil war. The SPLM established itself in 1983 and formulated a Manifesto calling for a struggle against oppression as well as socialist transformation, religious freedom, equality and justice for all. Many women joined for reasons of equality and empowerment and so joined the struggle for more than one freedom (Fitzgerald 2002, Isis-WICCE 2007 and HSBA 2008). Women fought alongside with men as active combatants on the front lines. Others contributed to the armed struggle by supporting their men in the fighting, carrying supplies, smuggling weapons, preparing food, providing medical care and domestic services, and bearing children. Mary Anne Fitzgerald quoted one female combatant who had been fighting three times on the frontlines stating proudly “my gun is my husband” (Fitzgerald 2002, 72). Besides a matter of revolt and free will, it was also a matter of survival and abuse. Numerous women enlisted in the SPLA when a battalion for girls (*katibat banāt* in Arabic), was formed in 1984 (Ali 2005). The SPLM consequently appointed a director of Women’s Affairs and the New Sudan Women’s Federation (NSWF) was formed to mobilize women’s support to the armed struggle. Soon the NSWF turned to meeting humanitarian needs of women and children in refuge with donor support.

The first SPLM Convention in April 1994 was considered an important milestone in which military and civilian functions were made separate (SPLM 2008). According to Salva Kiir Mayardit the vision of the New Sudan inspired the marginalised people of Sudan, “making tens of thousands of their sons and daughters join the SPLA gallant forces” (SPLM 2008, 4). Numerous women were also appointed to the SPLM’s National Liberation Council. During this period the UN conference on women in Beijing (1995) in particular attracted the attention of Southern Sudanese women living in exile after which collective activism was triggered and efforts were made to mobilize women and connect to international women’s movements. Southern Sudanese women living in Khartoum also demonstrated growing activism, while making ends meet. The SPLM organised various conferences including the

New Sudan Civil Society Conference, a Women's Conference, the Chiefs Conference and the Economic Governance Conference. The first SPLM's women's conference (1998) was opened by Salva Kiir Mayardit and attracted over 700 Sudanese women and included discussions on the status of women and girls in Southern Sudan.

Following changes in aid policies, strategies and their implementation during the 1990s (as discussed in Chapter 3.6), whereby gender mattered before, during and after conflict, Southern Sudanese women managed to establish women's organizations and a women's movement in partnership with Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) agencies based in Nairobi and targeting their communities in both Nairobi and SPLM-held areas. In those days, a couple of women were also able to reach high positions in the SPLM. According to Nada Mustafa M. Ali, two women joined formal peace negotiations on behalf of the SPLM in 1997 (Ali 2005). As mentioned in Chapter 3.9 numerous southern women exerted themselves to incorporate the aspirations of Sudanese women in the peace process throughout the Machakos and Naivasha meetings. The first time the SPLM set foot in Khartoum in December 2003, its high-level SPLM delegation consisted of six men and three women including Anne Itto, Awut Deng and Grace Datiero (Johnson 2011 and interview Anne Itto). Following the signing of the CPA, the Norwegian Minister for International Development noted in one of her speeches that she was the only woman invited to sign the CPA (UNIFEM, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs 2005). True in itself, it deserves mention that two SPLM women were part and parcel of the formal peace process, though they were acting more often as observers than negotiators (Aldehaib 2010). Publicly, the 'big men' involved in the IGAD peace process, the First Vice President of Sudan, Mr Ali Osman Taha, and the Chairman of the SPLM, Dr John Garang de Mabior, "stressed their support for the involvement of women in the peace process" but only after the peace agreement had been signed (UNIFEM, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs 2005, 20).

In summary, gender relations in Sudan were strongly affected by civil warfare and the exposure to and influence of different cultures, be it colonial or the development scene. Southern Sudanese women played an active role in changing their status and restructuring relations between men and women. At the same time, old habits die hard especially among those working in international relations and development agencies. Whereas women needed protection against forced marriage in colonial times, again women were mostly framed as victims in need of protection following the CPA (UNIFEM, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs 2005 and Eldehaib 2010). Women's agency, their participation and representation continue to present a challenge.

### **Changes and challenges from north to south**

Following the CPA, both northern and southern women successfully pushed for gender equality and the inclusion of their rights in their respective interim constitutions, including affirmative action which had never been mentioned before. The interim constitution in



the north states that “[t]he State shall guarantee equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all civil, political, social, cultural and economic rights, including the right to equal pay for equal work and other related benefits”, followed by “affirmative action” (GOS 2005, article 32). The interim constitution in the south specifies a quota of at least 25% as an affirmative action to promote the participation of women in decision-making (GOSS 2005). As mentioned earlier, all Sudanese constitutions speak of equality but in practice both family and customary law form a major barrier to gender equality and reproduce “massive inequalities” (Badawi 2008, 214). This section explores changes and challenges faced by respectively Northern and Southern Sudanese women following the CPA.

A recent country study speaks of evidence that there are gender champions or potential champions (men and women) in the government (Elnager, Paulino, Earle and Waterhouse 2010) based in the north, while others speak of a very high “level of consciousness around women’s issues” (Tønnessen and Kjøstvedt 2010, 38). Arguably, women’s activism during the 10 last years of the second civil war culminated in numerous formal gains apparent in the interim national constitution (2005), the amendment of the nationality law (2005), the ministerial and presidential decrees on violence against women (2005 and 2006), the national civil society law (2006), the law on political parties (2007) as well as the election law (2008), which established a 25% quota for women. The election law, for example, is considered a “milestone and an important victory for Sudanese women” (Tønnessen and Kjøstvedt 2010, 13). The resulting political participation of women in terms of numbers seems to suggest an important head-start for Sudanese women holding the highest percentage of seats in parliament ever. It certainly does not give the impression of the beginning of an all-embracing post-conflict backlash. Nevertheless gains may be accompanied by losses and once again numbers do not present the whole story. The polls were dominated in the north by the NCP and in the south by the SPLM and of the 112 quota seats; every seat in the south went to the SPLM while in the north every seat went to the NCP but a handful. Substantive representation and political change for women in Sudan is part of an ongoing struggle for peace, equality and development.

The formal gains described suggest that women in the north in one way or another took advantage of their struggle under the banner of women’s empowerment (*tamkīn al mar’ah* in Arabic). Empowerment can count on more support and approval than often misinterpreted English words such as feminism and gender equality. Some respected Sudanese female politicians belonging to both sectarian as well as secular political parties in the north have been quoted to believe that “‘being a feminist’ means wanting to be a man” (Ahmadi 2003, 125) and that “feminists are either lesbians . . . , or women who endorse pornography” (Ahmadi 2003, 164). Notably, Balghis Badri speaks of “a vibrant change . . . on the individual level” of women differing “by political or ideological affiliation, class, ethnic group, age group or marital status” (Badri 2005, 14). At both individual and community level, Badri highlights changes of Sudanese women organising themselves, starting businesses, heading households, migrating for education and work and adopting new and independent life styles all together previously unheard of, caused by the absence of men, the renegotiation of gender relations



and societies in flux. These are changes which are in sharp contrast to the observation of Ina M. Beasley in 1939 about the “complete absence of women” in the streets of Omdurman upon her arrival (Beasley ca. 1898-1985, SAD.204/12/1). Women’s activism post-CPA also manifests itself in many organizations and associations promoting the advancement of women. From north to south, new policies to improve the status of women have been announced respectively in 2007 and 2008.

The interim constitution governing the south refers extensively to the rights of women in article 20 and also states that “all levels of government in Southern Sudan shall: enact laws to combat harmful customs and traditions which undermine the dignity and status of women” (GOSS 2005, article 20:4b). It also explains the quota of at least 25% set to “redress imbalances created by history, customs and traditions” (GOSS 2005, article 20:4a). Post-CPA, gender inequality is thereby clearly recognized, and redress is given the go-ahead whilst anticipating that laws will need to be enacted to improve the status of women in Southern Sudan. The level of political participation of women in Southern Sudan as presidential advisors, ministers, undersecretaries, state governors, speakers of state assemblies, chairpersons of independent commissions, surpasses any previous level of political participation. According to Beswick (2001), the experiences of Southern Sudanese women parallel those of women during and after the civil war in Nicaragua. Thus during the second civil war and prior to the signing of the CPA, it is suggested that “women gained more through the revolutionary process than their male counterparts, politically, socially and economically” (Beswick 2001, 12).

Post-conflict changes however do meet a number of important challenges including culture comprising value systems, traditions and beliefs, as well as religion. Views about the role of men or women vary and views about values and customs in relation to gender equality also vary. The Women Empowerment Policy prepared in Khartoum, states that it is guided by “good values and customs”, leaving a lot of room for interpretation (GOS 2007, 3). Whilst Mary Kiden Kimbo, Minister of Gender, Social Welfare and Religious Affairs argues that the Gender Policy adopted for Southern Sudan is needed to overturn past discrimination against women, particularly by cultural and customary norms of life that “dehumanize and subordinate” women in public and family life (Sudan Tribune 2008). What is considered masculine or feminine in society is shaped by culture and influenced by Sudan’s social, political and economic history including its civil wars. In general, Sudanese women in their role as wives and mothers are viewed as the carriers and guardians of Sudanese culture (Hall 1997, Fitzgerald 2002, Ahmadi 2003, Nageeb 2004 and Africa Peace Forum and Project Ploughshares 2007). At the same time cultural values are not static as above changes and the life histories presented thus far clearly demonstrate.

An article in the Sudan Tribune (2007) with a report on local celebrations related to international women’s day gives insight into differing and post-conflict views about women and men in Southern Sudan:

*To start with the reporter Isaac Vuni states that Sabina Darios, the chairlady of a women's organization in Eastern Equatoria state, expresses the view that "women of Southern Sudan have become freedom fighters for the coming generation to enjoy peace, freedom and justice". The reporter mentions that she also voices her concerns about domestic violence as a negative practice which has to be stopped for it "makes some women lose confidence in their men", quoting Ms. Darios. Then the reporter moves on to the local commissioner, Col. Massimino Alam, who expresses the view that women should be content with local African traditions in which women "assist their men in all matter[s] of family concerns". The reporter quotes the commissioner when he assures the public that "women are not beaten by men at will, especially in front of their children" and explains that according to Otuho tradition, women have to be beaten by their husbands when they impose certain behaviours upon their husbands. Commissioner Alam continues by explaining that according to the same traditions women used to be regarded as "custodian of life" and could stop men from fighting by coming in between. In the end the commissioner tells women not to expect men to give them their rights but to simply demand it at any cost.*

*Reportedly, Governor Otejuk said that men must change their attitude towards women and treat them as partners in all matters of family decision-making. Both the commissioner and governor are Southern Sudanese men (Sudan Tribune 2007).*

The legal status of women is the outcome of Sudan's history and presents a major challenge. As a case in point civil rights of women in Sudan differ and depend on the convictions, customs and traditions of their community. Muslim women, primarily situated in the north are governed by Islamic Law and personal status laws. In the south multiple tribal systems reign and southern women are at the mercy of customary law applied at will by tribal chiefs and elders (Howell 1899-1987, Beswick 2001, USAID 2004, Elnager, Lisok Paulino, Earle and Waterhouse 2010 and Leonardi, Nelson Moro, Santschi and Isser 2010). Paul Howell, who spent time in Upper Nile (Southern Sudan) as part of his Sudan Political Service, already wrote in 1949 from the town of Malakal that "[a]ll sorts of extraordinary things are going on in the courts and there is evolving a most extraordinary mixture of European and Nilotic legal concepts" (Howell 1899-1987, SAD.767/6/14). A southern state legal system is still in its infancy. Studies reveal that customary laws implemented by local communities in Southern Sudan provide less legal protection and fewer formal rights to women when compared to Islamic Law (Tønnessen 2007, Tønnessen and Kjøstvedt 2010). The rights of Southern Sudanese women vary according to their tribe and their denomination and they may lack child custody rights altogether as well as grounds for divorce in comparison to Muslim women. At the same time organizations like Women Living Under Muslim Law frequently point at discriminatory laws violating the rights of Sudanese women and girls in the north.

Southern Sudanese women knit families and communities together through marriage, a system of bridewealth and their offspring (Howell 1899-1987 and Winder ca. 1936-1984). Bridewealth, called dowry in the life history below, is a payment in the form of valuable assets, property or money that is paid by or on behalf of the prospective husband to the family of the bride. Other customs which many Southern Sudanese women consider a

restraint on their lives include the practices of polygyny, a marriage in which a man is married to two or more wives at the same time, and levirate marriage. The latter type of marriage implies that when a woman's husband dies, his parents select a brother to continue procreating with her in the name of her dead husband. As the Sudan Tribune article above shows there is both acceptance of and resistance to changing customs and traditions. At the same time relationships and systems of kinship are renegotiated following the CPA under the pressure of socio-economic, political and military changes. The practices of bridewealth and levirate marriage are widespread among the Dinka and the Nuer in Sudan "since Nilotic men in particular aspire to owning many cattle, wives and children" (Fitzgerald 2002, 14). Daughters or girls are valuable as they return wealth to their families upon marriage and levirate marriage generally means more daughters and therefore more wealth and cattle. Mary Anne Fitzgerald indicated on the basis of her research that in the context of civil war these practices were distorted and abused at times whereby men in search of money abducted female family members for the sake of bridewealth to make up for assets and cattle lost (Fitzgerald 2002).

As a result of intense and prolonged civil warfare both men and women are likely to have experienced a chronic sense of disempowerment including the loss of family members, loss of property and livestock, displacement and mistreatment, especially in Southern Sudan. Men in Southern Sudanese society used to be "the undisputed head of the family" (Jok and Leitch 2004, 32-33) but findings suggest that war not only challenged but also changed power relationships between women and men and their respective roles in society in the midst of war. Women were found to carry out tasks traditionally undertaken by men such as crushing stones, selling grass and fuel wood, while men instead of women would fetch water pending the security situation (Isis-Women's International Cross Cultural Exchange 2007). Some married men were no longer able to maintain and protect their families; some young unmarried men were left without any prospect of success in their future. Women and girls had to fend for themselves and risked their lives while supporting one warring group or the other and were at an increased risk of being a target for violence. Many more men and women joined the armed struggle in times of war as compared to the situation post-CPA. Insecurity and violence reined the lives of both men and women in different ways including torture, rape and forced prostitution. Related mental and physical health problems are common but not easily talked about or addressed in the post-CPA period.

It is also suggested that prior to the CPA women increasingly engaged in civil society representation adopting leadership roles as well (Africa Peace Forum and Project Ploughshares 2008). Following the CPA many of these women leaders moved into influential government positions instead, supported by the 25% quota and SPLM leadership as the following statement by the GOSS president, Lt. Gen. Salva Kiir, regarding the national gender policy for Southern Sudan, demonstrates:

*This policy is now a cornerstone in the program of action of our government as regards the empowerment of women. All the ministries have already demonstrated an enthusiastic*

*commitment to this policy in the recruitment of their civil servants. Some ministers have even gone the extra mile by leaving some positions in the super scale bracket vacant while they try to find suitable qualified women to occupy them. I am aware that in some states, women seats have been allocated to men. And now that a comprehensive report about this matter has been compiled, I wish to assure you that I shall initiate appropriate measures to redress this digression (Sudan Tribune 2006a).*

As opposed to evident gains in government structures and public administration post-CPA in both Northern and Southern Sudan (Appendix 5.1), traditional structures survived two civil wars and remain a challenge to the empowerment of women.

## **2 This gun is your mother; this gun is your wife**

To better understand the struggles, strings, changes and challenges which Southern Sudanese women encountered before and after the CPA, the life history of Agnes Nyoka Retu is presented later in her own words. Her story clearly illustrates that Sudanese women are not a homogenous group sharing the same struggles and facing the same challenges. Her parents never had the opportunity to go to school and came from the rural area. Agnes finds that when one is born in poverty one remains poor. Against all odds, she managed to get an education and find work. As a Fujulu, she represents one of the smaller tribes of Southern Sudan. She feels that her life remains a struggle. Agnes expresses feelings of frustrations following trauma and loss. She speaks of rape and bridewealth from the perspective of culture and beliefs. She also describes the activism of women in the midst of warfare and discusses their achievements. She was a civil society activist prior to the CPA and became a politician aiming for the presidency following the CPA. Agnes Nyoka Retu participated in the peace practice on behalf of the SPLM.

Bridewealth continues to haunt families and communities in Southern Sudan. In this particular case described below, bridewealth separated the mother from her children as well as their father for a period of 30 years for lack of payment. When Agnes Nyoka Retu got married during the second civil war her husband did not pay any bridewealth either, but following the CPA he went to the village to abide by the custom. This in turn also facilitated the release of the mother. Thus on top of displacement by war and separation caused by insecurity, families were separated because of customs. Trauma and loss dominated the lives of both men and women. Agnes gave birth to 10 children while losing eight of them, some of her brothers and sisters died of HIV/aids, while others turned to alcohol to escape or handle stress and frustration. Health and mental problems are many especially for survivors of rape and sexual abuse as Anges Nyoka explains.

For men there was nothing to do but to live their lives by the gun according to Agnes. Women activists were also trained to defend themselves. Long-lasting civil wars masculinized and militarized Sudanese society. Rape in the context of guerrilla warfare, in the presence of leadership, through the barrel of the gun and by the enemy, poses a particular challenge to men, women, relationships and communities in Sudan. Agnes Nyoka

Retu provides a rich account of the agency, activism and achievements of women in the course of time. She believes that women are gaining ground, getting stronger and becoming more present, that peace is a process but also that the future of Sudan is not clear.

The following elements present an initial analytical perspective of the life history of Agnes:

- on Southern Sudan: Life is a struggle especially for poor families affected by war. War disrupted communities, family relations and relationships between men and women. Women have hopes for democracy, stability and gender equality. Making peace attractive is not easy though and the future is uncertain. Tribal tensions remain. Abyei is a thorn in the side of the CPA whilst the situation in Darfur also gives rise to doubts. Southern Sudanese may vote for separation instead of unity. Peace is a process;
- on the masculinization of society: Most men become soldiers and both men and women put their trust in arms. Men, women, girls and boys are left to fend for themselves. Protection and safety are a major concern. Women heading households and girls may be specially targeted for violence and abuse;
- on disempowerment: Continued warfare affected the access of men to education, they find it hard to make a living, marry and be successful in life. Men have lost their old-established position as heads of families. Women have experienced lack of access to education, excessive economic hardship and also insecurity, besides flight, displacement, miscarriages, rape. Trauma, loss and violence dominate the lives of both men and women;
- on empowerment: In the midst of war women were often times left to fend for themselves and their children while taking over men's work and responsibilities in the family. Their struggle has also taken a political character. Women played an active role in changing their status through women's organizations and political movements. Sudanese women joined the SPLM, supported the armed struggle and worked in the area of community development and peacebuilding. They organised themselves and established women's organizations in Nairobi which lobbied with UN organizations and oil companies operating in Southern Sudan. A definite push in support of women's rights has been nurtured prior to the CPA and is being pursued post-CPA whereby the support and commitment from SPLM leadership is expressed through efforts to pursue the implementation of quotas. Quotas however also need clarification;
- on value systems, traditions and beliefs: Values, customs and beliefs prevail and affect social change. Traditional power structures remain strong. Southern Sudan has a strong bridewealth culture. There is also a belief that mishaps run through family. Rape is a taboo subject and within families, communities and societies rape stigma is problematic.

The overall analysis of life histories collected as part of this research will be presented in Chapter 7.

**Life history 5.2** Agnes Nyoka Retu

**I am proud to be a Southern Sudanese**

My name is **Agnes Nyoka Retu**. I am from Southern Sudan. I am from Central Equatoria State. My county was Lanya, my boma is Nureda. I am Fujulu by tribe. My mother is from Fujulu and my father is from Fujulu tribe. I am also married to a Fujulu man. I have two sons. I gave birth to 10 children. Eight died, now I remain with only two boys, the elder one is 10 years, the second one is eight years. They are with me; my husband is working in the south. I am working in the north as a Member of Parliament. I have been an activist since I finished my secondary school in 1983. I am proud to be a Southern Sudanese. I went; I joined the movement of the SPLA by then in 1985 as an activist. I started working in the ministries as a clerk here in the south, in the meanwhile talking about the rights of women and the rights of Southern Sudanese and talking about self-determination. I grew up and was born in Sudan. My parents went to Uganda ... I was taken as a young girl to Uganda. I started my primary school in Uganda and I joined senior secondary school in Uganda. Then I came back in 1978 to Sudan that was in Juba, from there I continued with my education. So I joined Juba girl's secondary school. From there I sat for Sudan school certificate and my marks could not take me to university. So I started working as I mentioned earlier as a clerk. From there life became very difficult; I could not get any support. I started working getting little money. And also I was an activist in the church, a member of church, started working with the communities: doing mobilization and advocacy.

In '89 that is when I got married. I fell in love with my husband that was in 1984 and we could not get married since then we are far away from each other. In 1989 that is when we came together and when I started giving birth that is when my first child died. Then I was so ... frustrated that I requested that I have to go for a training, because SCC (Sudan Council of Churches) were giving women training, so they took me to Nairobi and ... I did a short course on business administration in the university and they gave me a certificate and I went back to Sudan. From there I also applied again to Baxter University and they gave me a scholarship to come and do two weeks training on communication and change management, and when I came I also after finishing ... applied to the university on a probation because my results were not good enough to take me direct to the university. They said we cannot take you so I came back to Sudan. I went to women leadership training. From there I came up with a diploma for one year then I decided not to come back to Sudan. Then I went straight to the movement, the SPLM. I was registered officially because in the north I could not make it openly because of the insecurity there. So from there now I was in the liberation areas, working with the women.

**We were also now networking with other women internationally**

I decided also now with that diploma to apply to Baxter University again. And they accepted me in 1993. So I joined the university in 1993. And I was there as a mature student. I stayed for four years. Doing community development, a mayor in community development, and a minor was bible because it was a Christian university. When I finished the four years in Baxter University then I now came and started working, like not working with

an international, I just concentrate on Sudanese women local organizations. Then I came and joined Sudanese Women Association in Nairobi (SWAN). I started to work with the communities going inside the liberation areas: talk to the people on issues of violence against women, peacebuilding and until 1997, when now the Initiative for engendering ... women ... with the Netherlands Embassy came. [You] started this initiative in Nairobi meeting the women from the south who were still in the exile. So I became one of them.

We started the Initiative. It went on well. We were having our own programmes, meeting the women in the north and women in the south. We had a joint meeting ... we worked together with them in different countries where we also learned the experiences of women who were in war. Countries like Rwanda, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Uganda and also Kenya and Egypt. So we learned so many experiences. We were also now networking with other women internationally. We attended conferences throughout the world ... since 1997 up to 2002 where we now named this organization Sudanese Women Empowerment [for] Peace, SuWEP, and I continued and then I was the coordinator for SuWEP. From there women waging peace invited SuWEP and they invited me to the US, to Washington to attend their training and they trained us on how to meet with the policy makers in the Government of US and we were taken to meet with the headquarters, the person responsible in the World Bank, and then USAID and then the State House in America. We met with the Congress, the women in Congress. We met with so many people in the [United] States. They were telling us how we can speak to these people, using four words or 20 words within four minutes or five minutes. This was by Ambassador Suad. Where she really taught us when [and] how if we go [and] talk to policy makers: how can we pass our message, how can we communicate to these people ...

### **They think this is just a witchcraft**

My parents are from poor rural families. My mother is not educated. My father was not educated till he died. Even now my mother is not educated. Now my sister got lost. We don't know whether she is alive or if she just got lost like that. It has taken 10 years and we do not know where she is. And then I had my elder sister who died recently. She died of HIV/aids. They were married; two women to one husband. And now the first wife died and then my sister died. My brother in law is also dying because they are all sick. They stay in the village. They do not think that this is something bad; they think this is just a witchcraft which came to the family; killing them. My follower is a boy; he also died of HIV/aids. The wife also died and left a child, the child is also positive. The child is with the mother of the girl, the grandmother is taking care of the baby. My mother is here in Juba and I have one boy, one brother who is here in Juba. He went to work when he was very young because of poverty and nobody was taking care of him, he went to Khartoum. He was taken by those Arabs in Khartoum. I do not know what happened to him. So when peace came, we went to Khartoum and started looking for him. When we brought him back to the south he was totally destroyed. So he is just there in the family, but he is not in even good condition. Then I also have another brother. Who was with me also during the war but also this one, he went and got into *alcohol*, how do you call it, alcohol? He is addicted to alcohol. Now he cannot do



anything. My mother even we do not have a land here in Juba, only in the country side. That is where we can put a house but here in Juba it is very difficult. We don't have anything. We are renting a house, a small house which is one room and it takes everybody inside there.

### **In our culture dowry ... they pay it even if you are dead**

My mother was the only wife. But then my mother came to Sudan. When we were still in Uganda she left me there with my parents ... with my father. And when we came back to Sudan, we found the brothers took her. She stayed with them for 30 years in the village. So when we came we had to stay with the relatives of my father because now my mother was having a problem with my father. So we could not do anything. They took my mother because my father did not pay dowry ... so my mother they keep my mother there. My mother is now under us. If there is anything, if she died today, then we will be the one responsible, not the brothers. When I got married, even my husband did not pay dowry. But when peace ... when we came now to Southern Sudan, my husband now went to the village and paid dowry. So the brothers of my father took this part of the dowry to pay to the brothers of, to my uncles, to the brothers of my mother so they can release my mother now to come to the house. But most of the time we have been staying separately, not with my mother. You see that gap in between. My mother did even not see where my father is buried. My father died in Uganda. I was the only one who went to my father. By the time I reach there I found that my father had a concubine. So they were staying together. He had another woman. So from there I went with my husband to meet my father. When we went there we stayed with him and we were happy. And then we left him and went back to Nairobi. By the time we reach Nairobi we were called, your father is dead, so we had to come back again to bury my father.

The dowry is that ... in our culture dowry ... they pay it even if you are dead. Still if it is not finished, it is not clear; they have to pay it before they bury him. No it is not fixed, it depends on the family. How much they pay, want. Yes, the family of the man pays the family of the wife. But if my father's family do not have the money, and like I am working now. I will give them the money; you go and pay to my mothers' side, so they will go in the name of my father while I am the one giving them the money. [My father] paid, but it was not enough. They also see how, what development you have on your side. If you are well off, they say okay we want this. This was not paid. Even if it was one dollar, they will now add more, maybe 10, maybe 100 dollars. Before, you know that marriage was in the 1950s. They will say I want one dollar, but if you do not pay one dollar and you pay 50 cents, by the time they come and ask for the other 50 they want double.

### **Where is the love I got?**

Most of the time I look at my parents. I personally was not happy. Why I'm not happy? Because my mother and my father did not stay for that. So that when we grew, we grew in front of them. I grew in a life that's ... through struggle. And most of the time I was not staying with my mother. By then when we were growing up ... my mother left my father. We did not have that love of the mother. We did not have that uprising from the mother.



Even when I left my father then I came to Sudan we were just staying with relatives. We did not stay with my mother, so that we can say that this is mom, this is what ... no. It is only that when I was married now that is when my mother now came in as a mother. But still I personally, I feel where is the love I got? You know some of the things. A mother is the mother. But now I feel isolated and the other issue is that if you do not grow up in front of your parents. That is when I see that the family is not stable. Most of my brothers are just like that. There is no education, nothing. I am the only person whom I think that is educated. And I have another brother, who is also in Khartoum, he is married and he has five children, at least that one he is also educated up to senior secondary school and he is working, that one. But the others, all, did not succeed in their life, because if they continue like this, they are not married and they did succeed in their future.

Most of the men in the other side were all soldiers. Most of them are all soldiers. Because there was nothing you could do only to carry a gun and defend your land. That was it. And most of the time all of us are trained as soldiers ... because you cannot move in that liberation area when you are not a soldier because you need to defend yourself. What we did, most of the civil society women organizations when you stay there, they advise us to be trained. They trained us for two weeks. And then they teach you how you can get a gun and then defend yourself. As soon as you leave the border of Sudan, maybe in Uganda, or Kenya, you just take your gun and then you move, just to defend yourself. Anything can happen anytime. By then there is nothing that we can do. All the men and the women we only believe in the gun because that was the only thing that will defend us. We have to defend our life with it. Slowly, slowly with now that peace is near people are withdrawing slowly, slowly from their guns.

### **There were so many frustrations there**

We support the war. Of course we have to. Our role was that, as I told you that we have women soldiers, who were there also helping, going to the frontlines. We women also we managed to go to the frontlines, because by then we were talking about peace. And then when we were at the frontline we spoke to the men, to the commanders. We talked to them, we meet with them. What do they want? How can we continue like this? How can we continue like this? People are bleeding in Southern Sudan. Children are dying, women are dying. Now what is the end, where is the end? What are we going to do? So you see give them the message like this. And related, negotiation table and negotiating. Are we going to be part of the negotiations? Such issues we were discussing with them, talking to them. When we go to the side of the northern sector, they also like to say that they want peace. But the same day you hear them bombarding that area, people are dying, children are dying. Now which type of peace is that? That is ... the role which we played and we will be playing ... as far as talking to individuals is concerned, like now you are wife of a commander, talk to your husband that we need peace. You should bring your voice, and I bring my voice then when they meet together as one voice.

The impact on men ... those brothers of mine were not in the war as I told you. They just got their own frustration. I do not know whether it is because my parents were not staying together and they were just growing up like that. I am also confused. Also we have a belief, that maybe when you have problems in the family, for example with my parents not staying together; it also goes to your children. Also in our culture we believe that when you come together, [and] then people sit, people talk, people slaughter goats, then they also give you blessings ... That is what we believe in it. Most of these things are done. Especially when my elder sister died of HIV/aids, and then my follower also died of HIV/aids. So these are the things that you can believe is happening to this family. The family is not in order, things are scattered. Our men, most of our men, during the war, as I told you there was nothing that you could do but to defend your land. And if you want to defend your land, you have to carry a gun. There were so many frustrations there. There were so many of ... you know some of these ... artileries, when you walk to another place. They make sounds, destroy your mind. Some of them were frustrated. There were those who lost their legs, lost their hands, lost their families.

### **She was raped, she was raped**

The other issue is most of our women, we are victim of rape (voice becomes emotional). You see, all this time. But the person who raped you is within the committee and even some of them were part of the leadership but [you] cannot point a finger to that. You raped me. Who will now know? They will ask who admits that you were raped. This is one of the things that ... we had wanted ... at least we have a center for counselling, and trauma. How do you feel ... like one time we met also with the women from Kosovo. From Kosovo, one of the women came one day and she was a victim of rape, when she was raped, now this is the story one other woman told us, and she was pregnant and she gave birth to the same man, the child resembled the man who raped her. So from that time when she looked at this baby she sees the picture of that man. She killed the baby, from there she became mad and then she died. These are the trauma which we have it here in Sudan. But we have difficulties telling ... Here in Southern Sudan, if you say that I am raped, nobody is going to sympathize with you. They will point fingers at you. Look at this woman. She was raped. She was raped. So you are no longer a girl. You can be part of the community but people will be pointing at you. You see. That is disturbing us.

But the men. When it is the war, when you go for the war the first thing they say is, this is a guerrilla war. You are fighting to defend our lives. This gun is your mother; this gun is your wife you can rape through the gun, this gun can feed you, [and] you can loot to get food through the gun. Aha, this gun you can do so many things with this gun. That is what is happening when you are going to the guerrilla because there are no folks, no wives there. But if you have this gun you can control everybody with the gun. And this is eh ... people there, when these men when they are there, they do not think I am doing the right thing or doing a bad thing. What do you do? This is a guerrilla war. They want to defend our lives. There is no way out. I want to rape you, I want to rape you. You cannot say no. And the leadership is there. And the commanders are there. They will not say anything. They know.

These are our own people. They rape. The army of the GOS they rape, the army of the SPLA they rape. You cannot deny that, because they are human beings and it was in the process of war. You cannot control this... We were only fighting. But now when the peace comes, we are now trying to see what [to] do. Some of these men realise now that we did bad. Some of them tell their stories. This is what we do. This is what we did during the war. We even have some. Even if it is your mother, if she is not agreeing with you, you kill here ... So these are the things we are looking at it. These are the things that traumatized us much. But we are now coming out of it slowly, by slowly. It will take long. And then this is a history. And history repeats itself. What we did. Maybe I am now thinking, and then maybe if I talk to my children they will also start ... during the SPLA or during the GOS when they were bombing Southern Sudan. They were doing this and this. People were doing this and this.

### **Because peace is a process**

The role of men in peacemaking is that ... most of them accepted that we are tired. We are tired of this bleeding which is happening in ... Southern Sudan. We are tired of conflict from 1955 back to this time. This is long war, we cannot. And now even they are the ones who say that: we do not want to ... directly. So they also played a major role by contributing that we need peace. Saying with their mouth that they want peace, we are tired. So when some of them interfered ... especially with the issue of cessation of hostilities. We all agree they put down their guns. But just if anything happens they get ready to carry their gun. We looked at it. That now we accept peace. It is a beginning because peace is a process. It is a process which continues. So that is why we have peace through the support of the women coming together, talking to them.

### **We do all this advocacy and lobby**

The first thing what we did ... when we hear that there is a bombardment. Like they bombed Juba, we all go to the streets, we wear black clothes. We make a box. It is a coffin, we all cry, we cry, we do not talk. When we hear that the GOS is bombing Southern Sudan. We go to the embassy with all our banners. We write what we want to write there. Then we call the media. Then the media wants to interview us. We do not talk. We do not open our mouths. We have passed our message. The next time we hear that Kofi Annan is going to Nairobi. We go with our coffin. We put it on the road where he is going to pass. So the security is tight. We cry. We wear black clothes. We sleep on the main road. The media comes. They ask us. We do not say anything. We have our paper. We want to give it to Kofi Annan. So we managed to take at least two people to go to the UN... so that our message is passed to Kofi Annan. When we learned they were starting this oil in Sudan ... oil drilling ... we called the companies which are coming to take oil from Southern Sudan. We ask them to meet with us. They come and meet with us. We talk to them what we feel. You take this money from the oil, but people are dying. We are suffering, how do you feel about that? Somebody is enjoying but the owners are suffering. So we do all this advocacy and lobby. That was fairly successful. That is why some of us now we are... The men came to realise later this was the achievement that women brought. These women have worked very hard.

Dr. John Garang gave us 25%, by then it was the Chukudum declaration of the SPLM. It was written there. It was written that we should be given 25%. From there also in a book 'peace through development' by the SPLM it is written there that women should be given 25%. Now if you come to the Constitution of Southern Sudan, article 20: you see that women are given 25%. But when you go [to] the interim constitution of the GOS: it is written 'the state shall give women affirmative action.' Nothing is mentioned there about 25%. So this is where I am a bit ... the women from the north ... when they see us I tell them for us it is different ... what is written in the constitution is confirmed. Now our president of Southern Sudan, Salva Kiir is standing with the women, he is ready to make sure that 25% is exercised at all levels. This has given us an opportunity, this has empowered us, this has given us a chance to stand out to contest, even his position as the President. Next time during the elections, we have the right to stand up if you are a man or a woman. Now election is election. We look for democracy. If I succeed I become the President of Southern Sudan. If I do not succeed: then still I can start with the vice and compete for the seat of the vice [President].

For the CPA for the women. You know women always, solutions have to come from women, [and] awareness has to come from women themselves to their women. But at least part of it women have achieved, and women are coming up. And the issue of the 25% they are picking it now. They know that we have to be there. Even the women who are at the grassroots level will say. Most of them are thinking this 25%, in the village; they are saying maybe this is money that the president Salva Kiir is giving to the women. So where is my percentage of the 25%? So you have to explain to them that it is not money. It is the percentage that you have to be in the position. You have to be part of the decision-making, at all levels. This thing is now coming up slowly, slowly. That is why we want workshops to be also supported. And local NGOS to be supported at state level so that everyone is aware.

### **I still have struggle**

Well my own future is that... It is only through struggle. I still have struggle. I have not reached the level that I am happy. I have my own house. My children are going to a good school. My children are still young. By the time they reach 15 years, life will be very expensive. I want them to get married, to take their university, even to do so many things. My future also, I am looking at this Southern Sudan, in the future to be a state alone [so] that you can implement so many things. I also look at my future, on the issue of how do we work, how will I succeed on this issue of the tribal thing. Which I look at is affecting us so much. If you don't have a person behind you, you will not succeed. You will remain poor. If you are from a poor family like me you will remain poor. You will not go up. But if you are from a rich family and you have so many people behind you. You can go up. Although you are right, you are doing the right thing. You are successful; you know what you are doing. But if you do not have somebody who knows you, you cannot go up. So this is what I am seeing. My future will also spoil in the middle there when we continue with this issue of tribalism and nepotism.

My husband is staying in Yei, he works in Yei, [and] his office is in Yei. He has his local NGO. Where he ... during the war he was repairing the boreholes. He started by repairing the old boreholes. He was supported by CRS (Catholic Relief Services) and they bought for him a rig. So that now he can go to the village and put water for the people in the village. This is what he is doing. Me I am with the Government, I am a politician, before I was with civil society. I am doing both now. Why I say that I am a politician, because I did not know that I am politician. I was thinking that I would still continue as civil society person working. But I find myself that I am now talking politics of Southern Sudan, and Sudan at large. And I am also civil society because when you are a civil society person you can correct. When you are in politics you correct things which are not going on well. You can talk and defend that this is not working well. Even if I am the SPLM and the SPLM is not doing something good, I have the right to tell them this is not the right way. Even if it is the Government of National Unity, you tell them this is not what we want.

Sudan, as ... southerners we are heading for separation, this is my own opinion. Because Sudan, there are also other people that say if they make this peace attractive, then we can stay together. But now if it is not attractive then, I cannot stay in a place where I am not happy. Then we say ok. Now it is not attractive. What is happening in Darfur, what is happening in Abyei? So peace is not attractive. Because if the Abyei people are dying, if the Darfur people are dying... how can we say that now it is attractive and we stay together. Implementation of the protocols, it is not done. So then the peace is not attractive. If the peace is attractive we stay together, if not ... we have to decide. Until that year comes. Then let's hope that it is attractive. But meanwhile we are for one Sudan.

### 3 Conclusion

The status of women in Sudan has been the subject of fierce debate throughout history. Efforts to 'civilise' women were not restricted to British officials as Sudanese political parties vented their own views regarding the image and behaviour of Sudanese women. The role of educated Islamist women and their success in business and governance, for example, was highlighted by the NIF as an indicator of Islamic civilisation. Women were to play a key role in the Islamist project of civilization (*'al mašrū' 'al ḥaḍārī* in Arabic) by contributing to the transformation of society (Ahmadi 2003 and Nageeb 2004). With reference to chapter 3.5 of this research, development agencies operating in Sudan added their perspectives to this debate by promoting the participation of women. Strategies for social change vary, be it among British officials, Sudanese political actors or development agencies. Strategies for social change vary amongst Sudanese women and men, and between them. As evident from Sudan's history as well as the history of women's movements, Sudanese hold multiple identities (religious, culture, class, ethnic, gender). Sudanese women therefore do not share the same struggles nor face the same challenges. Nonetheless, Sudanese women increased their social and political power overtime and changed their social, political and economic status as well as the relations between women and men, similar to and sometimes ahead of women elsewhere around the world.

War runs through the lives of Sudanese men, women, their children and their communities like a continuous thread. War politicizes and polarizes. Family background, socio-cultural and political conditions, identities, experiences and life planning in the face of war all matter. The status of men and women in Sudan bears the imprint of violence and war. Years of war affected the relationships between women and men. Traditional barriers between the responsibilities and domains of men and women in Sudan changed under the pressures of war. Following the armed struggle of men and their absence from their homes, women ended up with the entire responsibility for their households and children. The number of female headed households increased and women managed their homes without their husbands. A number of women chose to become part of the SPLA or were recruited while others voluntarily or strategically joined the Popular Defence Forces simply to retain their employment or social and political position. War time needs challenged traditional relationships between women and men. On the one hand, these needs posed a threat to masculinity as more women became breadwinners with women no longer being able to depend on men as providers. On the other hand, needs produced a shift in women's identities towards increased autonomy. Moreover as Janice Boddy eloquently phrased it, "[s]tories by women are never only about women" (Boddy 2008, 14). Through the eyes of women presenting their life histories, situations of both disempowerment of men and women and empowerment of women in countries at war emerge. Their stories provide insight into the social and psychological distress of both Sudanese men and women caused by both militarization and masculinization of society. Accompanying sexualized violence is a particular flashpoint for gender identities and societies recovering from warfare. As illustrated in this life history, arms were identified with gendered interests and roles, whereby guns were identified with the protection offered by men and the care, love and support offered by mothers and wives.

A number of women seem to have joined armed struggles or political parties for more than one freedom or political reason. While some men and women are supportive of the empowerment of women, others may instead promote conservative values, traditions and beliefs, or not consider it a priority. The same goes for men and women working in international agencies operating in situations of conflict and post-conflict. Besides a favourable political climate post-CPA, empowerment and constitutional change need women activists who are either promoting change from the inside or the outside. Political parties are key players in these efforts since empowerment requires their political support. Irrespective of the question if political parties or movements could support true empowerment of women, it helps if parties are willing to support women's empowerment and incorporate women activists. Fierce debates about women's rights, among and between Sudanese women and men, are normal. Both men and women have a tendency to deploy religion and culture to pursue the social change, if any, they want or find supported.

Support for the empowerment of women post-CPA is put into words to which both policies of the GOS (2007) and GOSS (2008) attest. There seems to be a breakthrough in socio-political power which is not matched as yet by legal power. Traditional structures

of male domination persist. The gender policy covering Southern Sudan, for example, recognizes that “traditional authority does not recognize women’s decision making roles” and that affirmative action is no panacea (GOSS 2008, 6 and 25). Recent reports (Isis-Women’s International Cross Cultural Exchange 2007 and Africa Peace Forum and Project Ploughshares 2008) question the extent to which the agency of Sudanese women managed to reshape the status of women and the relationships between women and men following the CPA. True from the perspective of traditional structures, this is not true from the perspective of civil structures. Women’s activism prior and post-CPA, their post-CPA gains in civil structures and public administration besides their increased political participation indicate on-going social change and should not be dismissed. To conclude that women simply ‘return or are sent back to the kitchen’ when wars end does not do justice to the activism of women and their achievements over time, and does not recognize women as social agents. The reshaping of the relationships between men and women and their identities post-CPA, is part and parcel of a continuous process of social change. As noted by Rogaia Mustafa Abusharaf “[a]ny static notion of identity is entirely inappropriate to the Sudanese context” (Abusharaf 2009, 109). Some men and women adapt, adjust and are willing to embrace a change in their status and their relationships whilst others cling to customs and traditions and resist change. The post-CPA situation irrespective of its various shortcomings has provided a new stimulus given women’s activism.

Peace is a process, as Agnes Nyoka remarks, and so is social change. Besides evident struggles and changes including important steps forward in terms of women’s political participation; challenges and setbacks are part of social transformation.





# Chapter 6

## **The Story of a Peace Practice in Sudan**

**Introduction**

**The beginning of a peace practice (1997)**

**The first years (1998-2000)**

**The next years (2001-2004)**

**The last years (2005-2007) and beyond**

**The role of an outsider: turning a peace practice inside out**

**You do not hear men talk about the problems of Sudan**

**Conclusion**

## **6 The Story of a Peace Practice in Sudan**

## 1 Introduction

This chapter will provide an ethnographic account of the development and evolution of a peace practice amongst Sudanese women, which is central to this research. The aim is to provide detailed insight into how this peace practice began, how it worked and how it evolved. It is not an evaluative essay but a personal analytical account, which documents a range of strategic actions exerted by Sudanese women reflecting their participation and stake in the process of peacebuilding and conflict resolution. This chapter will also describe in which way and to what extent women have participated in efforts to build and make peace, and what happened and why from an emic and etic perspective. It will also throw light on the actions of politicians, policy makers, diplomats and aid practitioners. The story will touch upon some of the power dynamics involved as well as the achievements and struggles of Sudanese women. The life histories of Sudanese women as well as their formal peace appeals and agendas reveal what 'kind of peace' these women have been fighting for during more than a decade of involvement in this peace practice. This chapter will feature the life history of Esta Kuku Rahal, a woman from the Nuba Mountains, who participated in the peace practice and who talks about the challenges she faced both as a participant in this peace practice and in her life in general. She describes the impact of war on women, their interest in peace, while highlighting the achievements of Sudanese women in building peace from her own perspective as an insider.

Norman K. Denzin identified in the 1970s four basic types of triangulation including data, investigator, theory and methodological triangulation; to which a fifth type was added later called interdisciplinary triangulation (Denzin and Lincoln 1994). The story of this peace practice involving Sudanese women will be largely reconstructed on the basis of evidence ranging from archival records to documents including memoranda, letters, agendas, written reports covering events and evaluations, as well as articles which appeared in Sudanese mass media, lists of names, personal records and other communiqués. In addition to these documents and archival records, I will make use of interviews with policy makers and practitioners tasked with the peace practice, as well as life histories I have collected, physical materials produced including leaflets and newsletters as well as participant observation. One should note that while pursuing data and methodological triangulation, evaluations and progress reports present opportunities for limited investigator triangulation. The latter is limited since the purpose and object of evaluations and reports differ from this research but valuable, because these reports provide potential counter-views and interpretations. To recall, the basis for interdisciplinary triangulation was laid in Chapter 3 with the theoretical framework presented, covering the nexus conflict, development and feminism.

My analysis will focus on process and, as aptly described by Juliet Corbin and Anselm Strauss:

*Process demonstrates an individual's, organization's and group's ability to give meaning to and respond to problems and/or shape the situations that they find themselves to be in through sequences of action/interaction, taking into account their readings of the situations and*

*emotional responses to them. In addition, process illustrates how groups can align or misalign their inter/actions/emotional responses and in doing so maintain social order, put on a play, have a party, do work, create chaos, or fight a war (Corbin and Strauss 2008, 98).*

I will first describe the process which shaped this peace practice, and that started as ‘the Initiative to facilitate the participation of women in the Sudanese peace process’. This part consists of both research and lived experience from 1997 to 2000, followed by a description of what happened next in the years 2001 to 2004 when the Initiative was transformed into a programme called ‘Sudanese Women Empowerment for Peace (SuWEP)’. This period is also significant due to the fact that the IGAD peace process made important strides. I will conclude with a description of the process that transformed into a project prior to and following the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (2005) supporting a decade of concerted efforts by women in support of peacebuilding and development in Sudan. The story presented will illustrate the actions and reactions of the various stakeholders involved, including both insiders and outsiders. In the course of my field research undertaken in 2008, I also enjoyed numerous interviews and informal discussions with many Sudanese women who participated in the peace practice since its inception. In my endeavour to contribute to new insights, the story is described against the background of my key thoughts and reflections on the discourses of conflict, development and feminism, which will be tied together in the conclusion of this chapter.

## **2 The beginning of a peace practice (1997)**

While working at the UN and prior to joining the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Khartoum, I was asked on various occasions by the embassy to act as an interpreter of Arabic during official visits of the then Dutch Minister for Development Cooperation, Jan Pronk. When I joined the Dutch Embassy in Khartoum in the course of 1995, I joined at a time of high diplomatic interest in Sudan, as described in Chapter 4. The Netherlands played a key role in supporting the IGAD peace process in Sudan, provided substantial humanitarian assistance via Operations Lifeline Sudan and topped the list of OECD donors to Sudan. The visits of Pronk offered me unique insight into the IGAD peace process in Sudan as well as access to key players and Sudanese political, military and religious leaders.

Policy ideas on how to support the participation of women in peace processes started to circulate at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Hague following the United Nations Fourth World Conference on women in Beijing (The Initiative 2000c). Beijing and its follow up raised the profile of “equal access and full participation of women in power structures and their full involvement in all efforts for the prevention and resolution of conflicts” (UN Fourth World Women Conference 1995, article 131) as vital to promoting and maintaining peace and security. In line with development thinking of the 90s and changes in aid policies, strategies and implementation as described in Chapter 3, a lasting peace would require thinking about conflict and development, the application of both empowerment and bottom-up approaches, while gender issues mattered before, during and after conflict.

Sudanese women used to express to me, and to whomever was listening, their deep frustration with the effects of war upon their lives, the number of broken peace agreements and the slow pace of the IGAD peace process in the Sudan. During a national conference entitled ‘women: agents of development & peace’ (June 1997), women representing the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC) listed peace and human security as their first priority (Sudan Council of Churches 1997a). Women representing the National Democratic Alliance<sup>24</sup> (NDA), opponents to the ruling parties in Sudan, published a statement<sup>25</sup> on the 30<sup>th</sup> of September, 1997 expressing their anger at forced recruitment of students into military operations in Southern Sudan, stating that “the sons of the National Islamic Front leaders are studying in the universities of Western Europe and America while the sons of ordinary Sudanese citizens are used as cannon fodder” (translated from Arabic), and ending their statement with “[I]ong live the Sudanese women’s struggle”. Tired of the impact of war upon their lives, Sudanese women also marched to the National Assembly in Khartoum (October 1997) protesting further bloodshed and requesting its members and speaker to make use of IGAD peacemaking efforts to establish peace in Sudan<sup>26</sup>.

Dutch development cooperation policies, high diplomatic interest in Sudan and the Ministry’s efforts among Israeli-Palestinian women to ‘engender peace processes’ offered a window of opportunity including some experience (PeaceWomen Across the Globe 2005), to support Sudanese women interested in peacebuilding and conflict resolution in Sudan. In 1997, I remarked to Pronk that he discussed peace with (few) men only and Sudanese women were not privy to the IGAD Peace Process in Sudan. In response, he challenged me to come up with a proposal. This triggered me to explore ways to draw on theories and practices emerging from the domains of conflict, development and feminism while benefiting from an elaborate network of local Sudanese contacts and in-depth country knowledge. The knowledge of local networks and local experts working at the Dutch Embassy in Khartoum in an effort to crosscheck relationships over time was invaluable in assessing ‘who is who’ in the political marketplace and minefield of Sudanese political relations, and involved both family relationships and shifting political alliances, as described in Chapter 2.

The idea of an inclusive facilitation process to support Sudanese women in their efforts to promote peace and participate in the IGAD peace process was extensively discussed in private conversations with Sudanese men and women representing parties in conflict in both Khartoum and Nairobi. To me, supporting conflict resolution and inclusiveness was not only a matter of including women along men, but also a matter of including key political forces banned from the formal peace process between the GOS and the SPLM/A. Marginalisation of men and women speaking on behalf of people living in the Nuba Mountains, was also a concern. In a country in which “the simple act of meeting to discuss common problems

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24 The NDA consisted of a number of opposition parties allied to the SPLM/A and including the CP, Umma Party and DUP.

25 The Initiative. 1997. Statement (in Arabic) by NDA women. In the author’s possession.

26 The Initiative. 1997. Appeal to the National Assembly. In the author’s possession.

is subversive” (Abusharaf 2009, 112), the idea of an inclusive facilitation process to support Sudanese women in peacebuilding and peacemaking was sensitive and had to be managed with utmost care.

Unending discussions were started with midlevel leaders, both men and women, representing the complex geo-political playing field in the Sudan: the Government of Sudan (National Congress Party/National Islamic Front), the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army, the SPLM/United (Shilluk faction), the United Democratic Salvation Front (Nuer faction), the Umma Party (UP), the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), the Communist Party (CP), the Union of Sudan African Party (USAP) and civil society organizations interested in women and peacebuilding. Informal meetings were also held with the political, military and religious leaders of the various parties to seek their understanding, support and cooperation including, for example, Abel Alier, Sid Ahmad al-Husayn, Sadiq al-Mahdi, Riek Machar, and Lam Akol besides the late Samson Kwaje, Deng Alor, Salva Kiir, and Mohamed Al Amin Khalifa of the Higher Council for Peace, as well as key GOS officials in the Ministry of External Relations and a number of appointed members of the National Assembly (The Initiative 1998a). The peace practice also offered opportunities to deal with potential spoilers in the peace process constructively. Hilde Johnson listed the Umma Party, the DUP and Communist Party as potential spoilers to the formal IGAD peace process (Johnson 2011).

The first small steps of the peace practice consisted of:

- identifying constraints to the participation of Sudanese women in peacemaking and making a list of what exactly frustrated their peacebuilding activities and participation in peace processes;
- verifying if women from different sides of the conflict would feel comfortable participating in groups reflecting geo-political parties and views while offering room for representation by civil society organizations and marginalised groups;
- drafting and debating an inclusive non-paper (The Initiative 1998a), with no identified source, to frame the basic idea behind Dutch support and facilitation of a peace practice promoting the participation of Sudanese women in peace processes in Sudan;
- making sure that all participants would feel comfortable with my role as a facilitator, being a female Arabic speaking Dutch diplomat based in Khartoum and former UN staff member; and
- involving colleagues at the Dutch Embassy in Nairobi, the Department of Women and Development as well as the Africa Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in The Hague.

Sudanese men and women identified the following difficulties and dilemma’s preventing Sudanese women from participating in peace processes and conflict resolution (The Initiative 1998a, 4):

- men play the most important roles in both political and military affairs in Sudan and there is a lack of political organization to voice women’s concerns;

- women carry too many responsibilities, are usually overworked, have limited access to information regarding the IGAD peace process and often lack relevant training and education;
- erosion of traditional and familiar mechanisms to prevent and resolve conflicts;
- limited mobility and security, as travel within Southern Sudan and the Nuba Mountains can only take place under extremely difficult circumstances and may be dangerous, not to speak of difficulties and expenses associated with crossing lines of conflict, travel between Northern and Southern Sudan, operating from outside Sudan (i.e. Nairobi) or having to work underground (i.e. opposition parties in Khartoum); and
- a lack of donor and international support and recognition of women's peacemaking efforts.

Consequently, a non-paper was drafted describing the roles of women in conflict as both peacemakers and warmongers while listing numerous efforts by existing Sudanese organizations and actors in the area of peacebuilding and conflict resolution (The Initiative 1998a). For example, a training course on conflict resolution had been organised at Ahfad University for Women (AUW), while the Women Action Group (WAG) started to facilitate dialogue between Christian Southern Sudanese women and Muslim Northern Sudanese women living in Khartoum (Women Action Group 1997 and Abusharaf 2009). Organizations like Sudanese Women Association Nairobi (SWAN) had already included the strengthening of the role of women in peace and security into their objectives. In addition, Sudanese women were seeking the status of observer to the IGAD peace process in Sudan by means of the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC).

The non-paper started off a process and was instrumental in clarifying the objectives of the peace practice and ensuring that all parties to the conflict supported it. The stated aim was not only "to give support to the efforts and contribution of Sudanese women and men in bringing about a culture of peace whilst promoting non-violent forms of conflict resolution, but also to increase (1) the actual participation of Sudanese women in the peace process and (2) the influence of Sudanese women on this process" (The Initiative 1998a, 4). The model of approaches to building peace by John Paul Lederach (1995a), which I described in Chapter 3.3, struck the right note and influenced the thinking behind the non-paper (The Initiative 2000a and Mansour and Eltayeb 2001). Its imbedded perception of conflict as a catalyst for social change and social justice including notions of empowerment which also featured in the discussions at the UN World Women Conference in Beijing allowed for combining and mixing relevant ideas stemming from the domains of conflict, development and feminism (the Initiative 2000a). This model was transformed to suit the geo-political situation in Sudan as reflected in Appendix 6.1 and support the role and agency of Sudanese women in peacebuilding and conflict resolution. It was also supposed to encourage women to look beyond war and draft their own agenda for peace and development.

Thus, the approach consisted of supporting and building the awareness and capacity of middle-range Sudanese women leaders (level 2 of the pyramid) within the various

geo-political constituencies to encourage their participation in peacebuilding and conflict resolution and for them to connect vertically with both:

- their respective military/political/religious leaders (level 1) with high visibility by focusing on the Sudan IGAD peace process, and emphasizing an interest to participate and contribute their perspectives regarding just and sustainable peaceful resolution to the conflict; and
- their respective grassroots leadership (level 3) including local leaders, leaders among internally displaced communities but also ordinary Sudanese men and women to identify issues at stake and voice the urgency for non-violent conflict resolution ('bottom-up') by means of hearings, to raise the awareness about the negative impact of the war and to support peacebuilding at the local community level.

Lederach considered a bottom-up process indispensable to singling out and managing difficult questions. The voices of ordinary Sudanese men and women were to be heard by those in charge of peacemaking and development (level 1) in the long run.

In addition, it was envisaged to support communication and dialogue (horizontally) between the various constituencies along the geo-political divides (Appendix 6.1) to promote building trust and peace, starting with the middle-range women leaders (level 2) themselves, and between and amongst constituencies operating from Khartoum and Nairobi as much as possible. Chester Crocker, Fens Osler Hampson and Pamela Aall speak of a "role for 'smart power'" in international relations that "involves the strategic use of diplomacy, persuasion, capacity building and the projection of power and influence in ways that are cost-effective and have political and social legitimacy" (Crocker, Hampson and Aall 2007, 13). Even though the time felt right nationally and internationally, it was clear that efforts to encourage relationships both horizontally and vertically in the case of Sudan would need tremendous resourcefulness and diplomacy.

### **3 The first years (1998-2000)**

The non-paper was elaborated upon to serve as a proposal to be presented to the Dutch Minister for Development Cooperation in January 1998, and received approval for an initial period of 12-13 months. Given the nature of the proposal, political support as well as direct staff support and involvement were important and financial support. Political backing was forthcoming when Pronk openly announced his support at the third IPF Sudan meeting (1998), as was mentioned in Chapter 4. The issue of ownership was stressed by various members of the Dutch Embassies in Khartoum and in Nairobi, with the initiative receiving coordinated support from headquarters. Noses were pointing in the same direction. At a get-together of civil society representatives, the Dutch Chargé d'Affaires said:

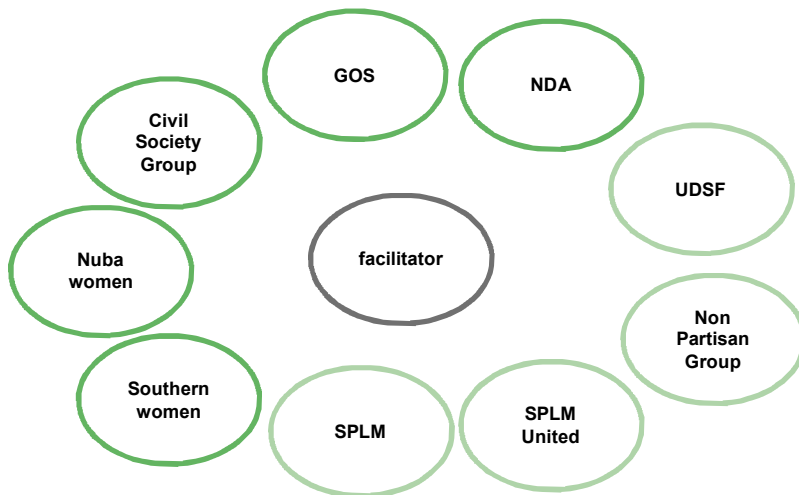
*I would like to emphasize here that the ownership of the initiative is in your hands, the hands of Sudanese women. The Dutch Government can only do its utmost best to facilitate the process, to create space for women to prepare themselves for participation in peacemaking (Speech December 13, 1998 at civil society group meeting, Hilton Hotel Khartoum).*



The former Kenyan diplomat and government official, Ambassador Bethuel Kiplagat, was closely associated with the IGAD Sudan peace process and enjoyed good relations with former Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi, a key player in the African IGAD scene. Kiplagat was briefed about the Initiative and shared a keen interest in multi-track diplomacy. In the course of 1998 he became a voluntary resource person to the Initiative. At the end of 1998, Kiplagat found that a thorough basis for cooperation with all stakeholders had been established, which he considered an important achievement in itself at the time (The Initiative 1999c). Twelve months of non-stop third party intervention generated nine working committees or groups in total following political mergers and splits as shown below. The civil society group in the southern sector and based in Nairobi, renamed itself a non-partisan group, the civil society group in the northern sector and based in Khartoum, struggled with political affiliations while the members of National Democratic Alliance (including DUP, Umma Party and CP) felt comfortable working together within one single working committee.

The structure supporting mediation as of the beginning of 1999 looked as follows (the Initiative 2000).

**Figure 6.3** The structure of mediation



Relations and issues were sensitive at all times and both participants and facilitators got their share of daily stress working in the midst of conflict in a polarized and highly sensitive political context (The Initiative 1998b and Women Action Group 1997). Facilitation was subject to the voluntary agreement of all participating parties. It also involved building bridges between Sudanese women involved in the peace practice and national and international individuals and organizations, expanding the network of contacts and encouraging opportunities for collaboration. Such collaboration involved diplomats including Bethuel Kiplagat and Ambassador Daniel Mboya of the Secretariat for the IGAD Peace Process on

the Sudan, politicians including Abel Alier, business men including Anis Hagggar (whose life history featured in Chapter 4), and members of the Sudanese diaspora or representatives of UN organizations including UNDP, UNHCR, UNIFEM, UNICEF and INGOS.

Political and military leaders were encouraged to include women in the peace process. Initially some Sudanese political leaders expressed the opinion that women should understand the issues at stake and talk politics first. Dr. Riek Machar (UDSF), for example, felt that Sudanese women could easily become involved in conflict resolution if only they were prepared to discuss the 'hard' issues (The Initiative 1998e). In the same encounter Machar urged for Sudanese women to arrange for a meeting between Dr. John Garang and himself, demonstrating an immediate personal and political interest. Others like Deng Alor (SPLM) supported the idea of women participating in peace negotiations but simply felt there were not enough women with the necessary skills and competencies to participate (The Initiative 1999c). Displays of superiority and the use of potentially self-serving arguments when discussing the participation of Sudanese women in the peace process, constituted a common response among political and military leaders at all sides of the conflict. As discussed in Chapter 3, glass ceiling barriers exist and persist in politics and international relations worldwide.

While the approach of the peace practice was not to shy away from the complexities and politics of war in Sudan, representatives of UN agencies made it clear that bilateral donors such as the Netherlands were in a better position to undertake third party intervention and pursue conflict resolution since their own organizations preferred to stay away from politics (The Initiative 1998e). When comparing a bilateral donor to UN organizations, Sudanese women considered the UN less able to pursue the role of a catalyst in view of slow and cumbersome administrative procedures within UN organizations. They also felt that diplomatic immunity mattered and helped to promote an inclusive peace practice. However, diplomatic immunity did not imply that members of the Dutch Embassies in Khartoum and Nairobi, including staff working at headquarters, were not under GOS and SPLM pressure for their support to an inclusive peace practice.

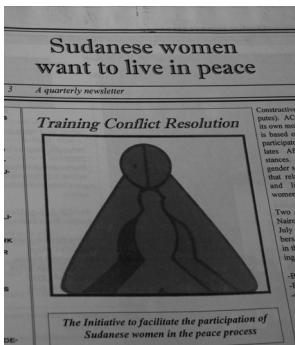
Representatives of the GOS and SPLM frequently communicated mixed messages while trying to seek control over the peace practice. At times, efforts were praised and at times criticised. The late Samson Kwaje, then SPLM secretary for Women and Youth, for example, stressed that the peace practice enjoyed "the blessing of the whole SPLM leadership" (The Initiative 1998b) following meetings held in December 1998 by the New Sudan parliament and cabinet, during which the SPLM leadership was briefed by the movement's (then) second man, Commander Salva Kiir on the peace practice. On the other hand SPLM participation in the peace practice was at times subject to negotiations in order to press for more immediate political and humanitarian SPLM demands. GOS officials working for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs would welcome the peace practice while at the very same time, Wisal al- Mahdi, the wife of the former NIF leader Hassan Al-Turabi, would call for the closure of the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Khartoum for its interference

in internal policies threatening the security of the country. She clearly positioned herself strongly behind her husband indicating that political differences between Sudanese women should not be swept under the carpet. To the National Congress Party<sup>27</sup>, the inclusion of the National Democratic Alliance or northern opposition parties, was a thorn in the eye.



At all times the peace practice generated heated debates common to the highly sensitive nature of third party intervention. An article (on the left) in the Sudanese newspaper *'ahbār al yawm* (on Saturday, the 6<sup>th</sup> of March 1999, in Arabic and depicting the researcher) attests to this debate with the following headlines, “The first secretary responds to accusations of ‘friends of Garang’ and ‘enemies of Islam’. What are the characteristics of the Dutch Initiative? Does it include the views of those who govern and those who oppose?”.

In the course of 1999, support ranged from an information package containing basic documentation on the Sudanese peace process that included past agreements between parties, and developing a logo jointly. The participating Sudanese women considered training in the area of decision-making, negotiation and conflict resolution a top priority (The Initiative 1999). Thus, tailor-made training courses, covering basic conflict resolution, facilitation and collaborative decision-making were organised, with the assistance of trainers of ACCORD (the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes, South Africa) in both Nairobi (for women representing the various constituencies based in Nairobi: southern sector) and Cairo (for women representing the various constituencies based in Khartoum: northern sector) as the necessary visas for organising a training in Khartoum were not forthcoming.



An information leaflet, a website and quarterly newsletters (on the left) were produced (SuWEP 2004). A process that involved hearings was facilitated and entirely driven by Sudanese women over a period of six months, during which they sat down with ordinary men and women in both urban and rural areas, prisons and IDP camps, to discuss issues of war and peace. While they gained an understanding of the war experiences and problems of women and men at grassroots level, as well as the way in which local people resolved problems and coped with loss, the encounters at the

27 The National Congress Party was established in 1998 (with Omar Al-Bashir as President) and the sole legally recognized political party in Sudan. It was based on the ideology of its predecessors the National Islamic Front (NIF, headed by Hassan Al-Turabi) and the Revolutionary Command Council for National Salvation (headed by Omar Al-Bashir).

grassroots level also presented an opportunity to share what was happening in the echelons of political leadership and the IGAD peace process (SuWEP 2006).

Preparations also began for the participation of Sudanese women in the international conference entitled 'The Hague Appeal for Peace' (11-15 May 1999, the Netherlands). The conference put emphasis on the role of civil society in building a culture of peace and the role of women along men. Each of the nine working committees was to delegate one representative to participate in the conference in The Hague, supported and accompanied by a number of independent high level advisors, professional mediators and observers as well as representatives of the Dutch Embassies in Nairobi and Khartoum. Dr. Joyce Neu, then working at the Carter Center, joined the conference following an offer of support by Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter based on efforts of the Southern women's group to gain their support for the peace practice (The Initiative 1999). It was the first time representatives of all working committees were to join in one location. The national working committee representing the GOS failed to organise itself in time to send its representation. However, a Sudanese male diplomat working in The Hague asked to participate instead and was accepted by the other participating women leaders, all in an effort to maintain inclusiveness.

The objective of the Sudanese delegation was to draw attention to the conflict in Sudan as conflicts around the world seemed to compete for attention and resolution. At the same time the delegation aimed to draw attention to the consequences of war on the lives of Sudanese women and the deadlock in the Sudanese peace process. After many hours of deliberation including external facilitation, the participants produced a 'Sudanese Women's Appeal for Peace in the Sudan' (appendix 6.2) in which they appealed to the international community to assure women's participation in the peace negotiations and make peace in Sudan both sustainable and just (The Initiative 1999). A press conference, including a session on the conflict in Sudan, was held in which the Sudanese participants managed to jointly present their efforts to a wider audience including members of the Sudanese diaspora, for the first time (The Hague Appeal for Peace 1999 and The Initiative 1999c). This was a difficult task as, although they stood together, their collaboration was questioned by the audience:

*We need peace based on justice that includes all of Sudan. What are those that signed partial agreements doing at this table?, asked a man from the Nuba Mountains.  
Are you aware that you have representatives of the Khartoum government at your table, and that this government has been condemned by the UN twice? asked Fatima Ahmad Ibrahim, a veteran Sudanese Communist leader and women's activist living in the UK (The Initiative 1999c).*

Eight thousand men and women from all over the world gathered "to analyse the successes and failures of peace and justice initiatives of the 20<sup>th</sup> century" (The Initiative 1999). The 'Hague Appeal' offered opportunities to meet representatives of international NGOs as well as other women living in countries affected by conflict. In parallel meetings were organised with the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations on Children

and Armed Conflict, Mr. Olara Otunnu, as well as the Director General of UNIFEM. In these meetings, the Sudanese participants stressed that:

- it was not easy to come together, as participants do not think alike;
- women have not been given the opportunity to participate in the peace process;
- women need resources, support and recognition; and
- the war in Sudan has to end.

As illustrated above, the highly sensitive nature of the peace practice affected facilitators and participants, but differently. Staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also faced critical remarks from the departing Sudanese Ambassador to the Netherlands about Sudanese participation in The Hague Appeal and the Dutch facilitation provided. When the Sudanese women evaluated their participation in The Hague Appeal for Peace they spoke of getting to know each other and building trust. Some were concerned about negative press coverage in the Sudanese newspapers and others about potential confrontations with high ranking SPLM officials. In addition, they felt they had to turn their attention to the grassroots (level 1), to not only create an environment more conducive to lasting peace but also to plan how to meet the basic needs of men and women living in war-affected areas.

Thereafter, with The Hague Appeal in hand, Sudanese women met with Norwegian diplomats and envoys to get in touch with Hilde Johnson (Norway's Minister for International Development) who had succeeded Pronk in the IGAD Partners Forum. They also wrote to the Secretary General of the United Nations about the role of women in conflict resolution in Sudan and received an open invitation from his Assistant Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women. Facilitation continued and separate training sessions on past and present political forces and peace processes in Sudan were organised. When IGAD talks on the peace process in Sudan continued (July 1999), Sudanese women formulated a joint letter in which they requested a ceasefire between the GOS and the SPLM, as well as an opportunity to participate in the IGAD peace process. The preparations for a Sudan specific international conference in support of the participation of Sudanese women in Sudanese peace efforts in Maastricht had started (The Initiative 2000). Moreover, the IGAD Envoy for Peace in the Sudan, Daniel Mboya, had agreed to put the conference under the auspices of the IGAD secretariat. Financial contributions to the conference were solicited and received from a number of IPF member countries, including Norway, Canada and the United Kingdom.

In the beginning of 2000, the very first workshop of representatives from all nine working committees took place in Kenya. Mboya of the IGAD Secretariat stated on this occasion that for women to participate in the IGAD peace process they would have to seek representation to the GOS and SPLM delegations. His words highlighted the importance of political party processes and increased pressure on the two formal parties in the peace process to invite women into their delegation. As a result the participants formulated a joint draft women's minimum agenda for peace in which "the participation of women in all peace initiatives by at least 30%" (Appendix 6.3) featured for the first time. Sudanese women considered Mboya's

participation an opportunity “to push their agenda to a higher level” (The Initiative 2000b) on the other hand they were disappointed by the lack of inclusiveness (interview Dr. Joyce Neu). They decided to discuss their minimum agenda for peace at the levels of both political leadership and grassroots in preparation of the international conference scheduled to take place in Maastricht, the Netherlands.

Prior to Maastricht, another joined training was facilitated in mediation, lobbying and preventive diplomacy at ACCORD in South Africa with numerous opportunities for Sudanese women to engage with South African media. Evidently the number of (horizontal) encounters had increased but continued to require mediation power. One month ahead of the international conference (April 2000), the SPLM representation was no longer secured. There was disagreement amongst members within the SPLM working committee, which the SPLM had been requested, but was slow to resolve. After the conference it became clear that there was more to the SPLM withdrawal from the conference, as the SPLM put a range of political (including past advocacy for ceasefires and the unity of Sudan, besides a request for the SPLM leader to visit the Netherlands) and humanitarian matters (including the performance of MSF-Holland and the discontinuation of aid by the Humanitarian Aid department of the European Commission, ECHO) against the Government of the Netherlands on the table. At the same time, high level international participation had been secured at the level of IPF member countries including Hilde Johnson, as well as representatives of IGAD member countries, the IGAD secretariat, the IGAD gender desk besides numerous concerned UN organizations and INGOS (The Initiative 2000c).

At the international conference in Maastricht, Sudanese women called on both the leadership of the conflicting parties as well as the international community to actively support their peacemaking efforts. Their ‘Maastricht declaration’ (Appendix 6.4) was based on agenda setting efforts which had started during The Hague Appeal for Peace (1999) and had continued with the women’s minimum agenda for peace (2000); besides numerous training sessions, workshops and meetings. The declaration was presented by Priscilla Joseph, whose life history is featured in Chapter 3. She spoke of “further developing the Sudanese Women’s Minimum Agenda for Peace” and “developing a plan for its implementation” (The Initiative 2000c, 20). Ground-breaking proposals were put forward for “restructuring IGAD to include women’s voices” (The Initiative 2000c, 9):

*Gertrude Mongella (President, Advocacy for Women in Africa) “encouraged Sudanese women to create a small committee of nine women to hold IGAD accountable to the Maastricht declaration. With this committee, she argued, the women of Sudan would be able to claim a place at the negotiation table along with the warring factions and the GOS” (The Initiative 2000c, 10).*

*“Hilde Johnson agreed, adding that she thought the IGAD process would be stronger if it included representation from a broader spectrum of the warring groups in Sudan, calling on IGAD to be all-inclusive, both in representing various views and parties, and by including all parts of society, especially women” (The Initiative 2000c, 10).*

Rogaia Mustafa Abusharaf called it “one of the most notable formal peace forums” (Abu Sharaf 2009, 127). Following the conference, the National Peace Foundation in Washington, D.C., presented two Peacemaker awards to both the women of the peace practice themselves, and to Dr. Joyce Neu for their Sudanese peace efforts which were sponsored by the Dutch Government. Men had exercised a monopoly on the peace process for at least three decades resulting in little success. Sudanese women had started to acquire new skills in dealing with conflict, negotiation and mediation, and combined with their political awareness, had obtained a much stronger voice. Sudanese men started to state publicly that they had gained confidence in the competence of Sudanese women and in their capacity to make a difference in the peace process. The international community produced a statement of commitment (Appendix 6.5) listing numerous commitments or promises to Sudanese women. To what effect, will be discussed later.

Did Sudanese women really manage to open doors previously closed to them, and were promises kept? Before the end of 2000, UN Security Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security was adopted recognizing the underrated and forgotten contributions women make to conflict resolution and peacebuilding while stressing the importance of their equal and full participation.

#### **4 The next years (2001-2004)**

Following Maastricht, efforts were put in drafting a new project document by Dutch Embassy staff called ‘Support to Sudanese Women’s Empowerment for Peace’ (SuWEP) as a follow-up programme to the Initiative for a period of three years. In view of the sensitive nature of the peace practice and strained relations between the SPLM and the Netherlands, it was decided to continue direct support as opposed to subcontracting a specialised agency to undertake facilitation and peacebuilding. A logical framework was part of the project document and stated ‘Sudanese women effectively contribute, participate and benefit from their society in peace’ as the overall objective, including the two following specific objectives:

- Sudanese women have contributed effectively to a just and sustainable peace; and
- Women’s role in public decision-making enhanced at all levels with special emphasis to the community (grassroots) (SuWEP 2001).

Ten results were listed and accompanied by 24 indicators for a period of two years whereby the last year would be utilised to implement an exit strategy for other donors to continue funding. Thus the process, which started in 1997, had evolved into a results-based project by 2001.

In the beginning of 2001, staff members of the Dutch Embassies (in Khartoum and Nairobi) arranged for a joint meeting with Sudanese participants of the peace practice. They presented a project document as a basis for continued financial support to Sudanese women’s organizations making a contribution to the peace process (SuWEP 2006 and interview Anita Veldkamp). At the meeting women were also challenged by the participating IGAD representative, to consider the relationship between peace and development and “[a]ssist other women in the area of health and nutrition at grassroots level whenever opportunities



arose” (SuWEP 2006, 42). Arguably and irrespective of its value and importance, the meaning of ‘grassroots’ was thereby interpreted as helping men and women to meet their basic needs in the midst of war; i.e. offer humanitarian assistance. In an assessment of the project, and according to a report by TAABCO Research and Development Consultants, “the logical framework facilitated SuWEP members to engage in a wide range of activities” (SuWEP 2006, 68) beyond conflict resolution and the peace process.

At the same time and in a consecutive workshop, the follow-up of the ‘Minimum Agenda for Peace’ and ‘Maastricht Declaration’ were discussed. The various working committees had organised sessions on the importance of eliminating discrimination against women. They noted that women’s participation in politics and governance had increased but remained below 30%. As far as the Maastricht Declaration was concerned they expressed a need for:

- strengthening the commitment among SuWEP members towards peacebuilding;
- continued lobby with the IGAD secretariat for the inclusion of women; and
- networking and communication across constituencies (horizontally).

The four southern sector working committees (including the SPLM, UDSF, Non-Partisan Group and SPLM/United) tried to form one coalition from then on.

SuWEP women continued to meet in Uganda (2002) to share lessons, update their information on IGAD efforts towards Sudan and learn about the appointment of a new envoy, as Lt. General Sumbeiywo had replaced Daniel Mboya, for the Sudan IGAD Peace Process. Reconciliation between the leaders of the SPLM (Dr. John Garang) and the UDSF (Riek Machar) was also discussed. Training opportunities were facilitated in communication and networking besides trauma counselling skills. Staff members of the embassies in both Khartoum and Nairobi, together with staff members working at headquarters conveyed their expectation that Sudanese women would convene future meetings by themselves to demonstrate full ownership of SuWEP (SuWEP 2006). However, “as was the case with SuWEP members before, the women attending this meeting were initially full of mistrust and suspicion” (SuWEP 2006, 47). Arguably, the expectation that Sudanese women would convene SuWEP meetings by themselves was more driven by thoughts regarding exit strategies and project implementation modalities than thinking through the meaning of ownership in the context of processes of building trust and peace. Let alone knowledge of the local situation in Sudan. Not surprisingly, facilitation of joint meetings across sectors continued.

When SuWEP women met again in Eritrea (2002) they “cited their participation in the preparation of the meetings that led to Machakos talks” (SuWEP 2006, 50). SuWEP women in both Khartoum and Nairobi had formulated position papers and their plan was to meet and discuss these. When Sudanese authorities prevented (as an example of harassment of women participating in the peace practice) the women from departing Khartoum by plane, they still managed to communicate and finalize their joint position paper electronically. Their joint position paper managed to reach Machakos with the help of the UN. Thereafter, SuWEP women reviewed the Machakos protocol and formulated their demands for further



dissemination and lobby among the warring parties, members of the IGAD secretariat, representatives from IPF and IGAD countries as well as their respective constituencies.

Ten demands were formulated including women's representation in commissions on power sharing and commissions dealing with wealth sharing, human rights, the judiciary and the rule of law. They also demanded for women to be included in the independent Assessment and Evaluation Commission. Last but not least, the women insisted on the involvement of Sudanese women in the negotiation team and requested for "all political forces in the Sudan to be fully presented as stakeholders at the negotiation table in order to ensure and guarantee optimum protection to the Machakos Protocol" (SuWEP 2006 and Salmmah Women's Resource Center 2006). Besides Machakos, SuWEP women participated in an IGAD meeting (in Khartoum), and consultations between SuWEP women and male advisors to the IGAD peace process in Sudan.

As Agnes Nyoka, whose life history featured in Chapter 5, recalls:

*SuWEP has connected us internationally. Especially, what I was going to say all the women who have come up are the persons from SuWEP. We have learned a lot. We moved a lot. SuWEP has moved a lot. But by then when people were doing these things, most of us did not recognize that SuWEP was doing something* (words of Agnes Nyoka on SuWEP in 2008).

SuWEP women ended up discussing their joint mission and vision for SuWEP frequently. They discussed their structure, working relationships between northern and southern sectors, the sustainability of their efforts and the programme, besides the potential replication of efforts in other war-affected countries.

Following progress in the IGAD peace process a more hopeful feeling in terms of potential success in resolving the conflict in Sudan prevailed. That did not imply, however, that SuWEP women were no longer harassed and intimidated. On January the 29th, 2003, the Sudanese Human Rights Group issued a Human Rights Violations Alert (no. 1/2003) concerning SuWEP participants departing by air from Khartoum to participate in a workshop organised by the Africa Peace Forum. The report stated that:

*[E]ight SuWEP women had tried to depart Khartoum in vain. Two women, Joy Kwaje and Hayat Eltoom, boarded to the plane normally, but were taken out by Security shortly after, taken to the Security Forces Office at the airport and questioned. Three women, Roda Joseph Kush, Saida Abu Algasim Ahmed and Amna Salih Dirar, were withheld from boarding and taken to the Security Office for questioning. Another three women, Esta Kuku (whose life history features in this Chapter), Enaam Haroom Mohamed and Zainab Badr El Din, being late, were not allowed to enter the airport and were questioned by Security Officers outside. The coordinator of the group, Rajaa Ali Hussein, not travelling but present, was also questioned. The Alert added that the approach of the Sudanese Security Forces had been intimidating and unpleasant while all were allowed to go home in the end without any further explanation* (Human Rights Violations Alert no. 1/2003).

Still, it was felt that irrespective of all their efforts whoever managed the negotiations did not bother to listen to the voices of Sudanese women. In addition, the political and military leaders of the GOS and the SPLM/A also did not include women at senior levels within their negotiation teams (The Ploughshares Monitor<sup>28</sup> 2003). In preparation of an agreement on security however, the leader of the SPLM started to bring in stakeholders, including “women’s groups, military commanders, local leaders, [and] chiefs from Abyei” (Johnson 2011, 102). Sudanese women continued to meet in Addis Ababa (2003) and Cairo (2003). They discussed the protection of women’s rights with Ethiopian women as well as the role of women in politics and in the media. The discussions in Cairo focussed on the upcoming negotiations in Naivasha. Ten women representing the five working committees based in Khartoum joined the Naivasha meeting of December 2003. Together with women from Nairobi they announced their demands as Sudanese women and disseminated their ideas on a sustainable and just peace. Their lobby focused on the introduction of a quota to ensure women’s participation in all decision-making positions by a minimum of 30%.

With the project end date of the second phase in sight, Sudanese women turned their attention to returning subjects such as how to improve their work at grassroots level and how to establish effective communication amongst themselves, as well as the need to seek funding from other donors (in both Addis Ababa and Nairobi, 2004). They deliberated a standpoint towards the upcoming UN Joint Assessment Mission and the MDGs, besides the need for constitutional reforms and the situation in Darfur. They were invited to contribute to the Joint Assessment Mission (JAM), the blueprint for Sudan’s reconstruction and development needs immediately following an agreement between the parties. One leading member was appointed as a gender specialist in the JAM (SWRC 2006). Sudanese and Somali women also exchanged experiences on their respective roles in peace processes and lobbied in vain for the support of a network linking women in post-conflict countries (SuWEP 2006).

At the same time and irrespective of any encounters across lines of conflict, Sudanese women were organizing a broad range of activities independently and on a voluntary basis. They organized dialogue sessions and training workshops on UNSCR 1325, conflict resolution and conflict transformation and engaged in advocacy with UN agencies in support of the development of pro-poor policies and the political participation of women. They visited schools, universities and displaced persons’ camps and with their leadership they advocated for the participation of women and civil society in the drafting and implementation of peace agreements. In 2004 the following strengths were reported upon in an embassy document outlining support for a potential third phase (SuWEP 2004, 4-6): SuWEP groups enjoyed distinctive identities, represented a broad and diverse range of political parties and were a stakeholder to reckon with by both the GOS and the SPLM. Its members demonstrated commitment and were able to act as intermediaries. Volunteerism was considered both a strength and a weakness. Other weaknesses listed included donor dependency, poor

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28 The Ploughshares Monitor. 2003. Sudan: Moving towards transition by Ernie Regehr. vol 24. no 3. <http://www.ploughshares.ca/libraries/monitor/monso3e.htm> (accessed January 27, 2011).

documentation, weak public relations, and complex decision-making processes. Arguably, SuWEP's potential to become a united national women's movement was listed as a great opportunity.

## 5 The last years (2005-2007) and beyond

*SuWEP to us as a Southern Women Group was very vital because it helped in our growth. We started as an underground movement working for peace under very difficult circumstances in Khartoum. We did not have financial support, so when we actually you know got the support from SuWEP first as 'the Initiative to engender the Sudanese peace process' and then as SuWEP, I look at it more as something that had come to boost us. To give us, you know, particularly the training sessions, training in counselling, training in peacebuilding and the bringing us as Southern women and Northern women together. That helped really in forth carrying a different way for the conflict. I believe that that coming together of the women, the joined positions that women took, contributed a lot to the processes that we saw in the peace process later on. So when peace was signed, in fact some of us said now we need to sit down with SuWEP and see how SuWEP now can help us transform (words of Joy Kwaje on SuWEP in 2008).*

The signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in January 2005 was a turning point and described to me by Sudanese women as a *hazza* (Arabic: shock, tremor). In the same year SuWEP women were nominated for the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize following an initiative to name 1000 active and effective women peacemakers, drawing attention to their under recognized role in peacemaking, stating that since its establishment in 1997 and “[d]espite the inauspicious climate, SuWEP’s achievements have paved the way for peace initiatives” (PeaceWomen Across the Globe 2005, 592-593).

**Sudanese Women's Priorities and Recommendations  
to the Oslo Donors' Conference on Sudan**



The Government of Norway, as one of the key IPF players, convened the Oslo donors' conference in April 2005 to demonstrate international support to the CPA. Sudanese women lobbied with both the Governments of Norway and the Netherlands for their participation in the conference. As a result they were invited to contribute to both a civil society meeting and gender symposium preceding

the donor conference. Under the auspices of the Government of Norway, the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs and UNIFEM, a symposium on 'Women's Rights and Leadership in Post-Conflict Sudan' was held for Sudanese women to define their priorities in advocating for donor support to gender equality and women's rights in post-conflict Sudan.

Their recommendations (Appendix 6.7) focused on governance and the rule of law, gender-based violence, capacity building and institutional development, economic policy and management, livelihoods and productive sectors, and basic social services. In concluding they called upon the donor conference to commit to principles of gender, of resource allocation, requesting that at least 80% of the resources to Sudan's reconstruction meet

at least three of the following four criteria (Brochure Sudanese Women's Priorities and Recommendations 2005):

- directly benefiting women, contributing directly to women's empowerment and increasing women's capacities, opportunities and access to resources;
- reducing gender inequalities in law, policy and practice;
- directly benefiting young people, especially girls, in disadvantaged communities;
- targeting rural areas.

They called upon the donor community to provide financial support to hosting an all-inclusive Sudanese Women's Conference requesting IGAD, the African Union (AU), the UN and especially UNIFEM to host such a conference. They provided suggestions on how to bring priorities from grassroots communities to the proposed conference and advocated for the participation of the private sector, civil society, diaspora, returnees, refugees and IDPs besides professionals and international personalities. The women requested specific funding to support an independent watchdog mechanism to increase national and international accountability to women by monitoring the implementation of their recommendations. They also asked the UN to ensure interaction between the UN Peacekeeping mission and women's organizations. At the same time they took the opportunity to express their frustration at their marginalisation in the formal peace talks and stressed the importance of ensuring women's full participation in the Darfur peace process in compliance with UNSCR 1325 and the AU Protocol on women's human rights.

The UN Joint Assessment Mission report was used as the road map for both recovery and reconstruction needs of Sudan including priority recovery activities estimated at \$ 7.9 billion in total for two years. Donors were requested to cover an amount of \$ 4.1 billion for both humanitarian needs and priority recovery activities. National resources would cover the remainder. As stated by Anis Haggar in Chapter 4 of this dissertation, donor pledges exceeded the request by pledging \$ 4.5 billion. Still specific funding to support an independent watchdog mechanism to increase national and international accountability to women by monitoring the implementation of their recommendations was not forthcoming. The Oslo priorities identified by Sudanese women were soon lost and not followed through in the major peace and development trust funds.

As of 2005 SuWEP women were in flux and on the move. Organizations based in Nairobi moved to Juba, Southern Sudan. Southern women from both Khartoum and Nairobi as well as women from the Nuba Mountains, were absorbed into high political and governmental decision-making positions:

*The strength of that group is in its commitment and networking. We have been weakened a great deal because a lot of us ... you know you could see once you have strong leadership and leadership just goes... The weakness is that the leadership now is not as strong as it used to be. It is not clear who is doing what. I asked them to hold an assembly to put people in place...*

*Asked them to just call in the general assembly, let them elect people. I did send them some little money to just put a meeting in place and organise the structures. They have not met yet. Veronica was very busy because she is also in parliament. Priscilla is in parliament. It needs new leadership. Here in the south we have a branch, but the branch cannot operate if the main is weak... I still think SuWEP is important. At this time now, if there is real peace and we hope that we do not go back to war. We will need a different kind of empowerment. We are going for transformation and democratic transformation (words of Joy Kwaje on SuWEP in 2008).*

It was said that their contributions to peace talks had earned them positions in parliament (SuWEP 2006, Salmmah Women's Resource Center/SuWEP 2006a). The list of SuWEP women (appendix 6.6) is not exhaustive but testifies to a large number of Sudanese women breaking glass ceiling barriers following the signing of the CPA (2005). Women like Agnes Nyoka and Dr. Priscilla Joseph Kuch joined the National Assembly; women like Joy Kwaje and Dr. Pauline Riak took charge of the human rights commission and the anti-corruption commission, respectively. These were not the easiest jobs in the aftermath of war.

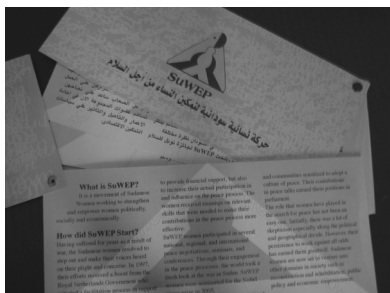
In 2005 and 2006, financial support to SuWEP decreased and simply lingered. The duration of the previous project was extended following underutilisation of funding committed. In the course of 2006, Salmmah Women's Resource Center (SWRC) hereafter called Salmmah, registered as a company in Khartoum but operating like a Sudanese civil society organization, was requested by the embassy to assess "the existing environment of SuWEP subgroups in order to formulate concrete recommendations regarding the future commitment of the embassy towards these groups" (SWRC 2006, 25). Interviews with SuWEP women highlighted that the role of the embassy had been crucial, providing not only financial support but acting as a facilitator and planner, especially in the early stages (SWRC 2006). It was recorded that in the early days "there was almost no interaction between women activists in the north and the south. Even within the north... interaction between some groups ... was impossible without the type of facilitation provided" (SWRC 2006, 17).

In 2006 most of the SuWEP groups faced difficulties in terms of employing dedicated human resources and retaining their offices. Volunteerism had supported SuWEP throughout but all groups had managed to obtain office space with embassy grants during the second phase except for the NDA group. The sustainability of SuWEP as a project was becoming an issue. While SuWEP Nairobi was struggling to get their office moved to Juba, many SuWEP groups tried to apply for financial assistance with other donors, but in vain and funds were running low. The embassy in Khartoum, stating capacity problems as a reason, wanted to hand the management of SuWEP over to whomever. Following Salmmah's assessment, it was requested to develop a program for the next two years (2006-2008). The decision to handover Salmmah to SuWEP had been taken by the embassy in splendid isolation:

*I do not know how the other part was working. But the way we were working in the northern sector, I think was good for me because we always sat together and we set the agenda together. So we actually owned the process as we moved on. We did not see it as something that, you*

*know, as a foreign assistance or something. I think up to there, it was good. I was now out of Khartoum. I do not know what processes were taken when Salmmah had to take over. I remember when they phoned me I said oh no, did they do a proper study? Besides we still need it you know. For us in the north it was a little bit better because somehow we had developed some trust between the Southern Sudanese and the northern civil society groups. There was a need to have a little bit more time to build the trust with the women in the south. I felt the change was too sudden, it was not discussed well. Therefore on the part of the women they did not know what to expect from Salmmah you know. And I think that is where the main problem is (words of Joy Kwaje on SuWEP).*

At the end of 2006 Salmmah announced that “the Netherlands Minister for Development Cooperation have appointed Salmmah Women’s Resource Center as the new management support body for SuWEP” introducing the former national gender and development advisor of the embassy as the new programme coordinator on behalf of Salmmah. Post-CPA expectations ran high and it was assumed that the changing political environment and interim constitution would provide for multiparty-systems, freedom of press and respect for human rights (SWRC 2006a, 9). The potential contribution of SuWEP to a Sudanese women’s movement for peace was highlighted while downplaying Sudanese politics and stressing a new post-CPA political context.



SuWEP as a project aspired to continue as “a movement of Sudanese Women working to strengthen and empower women politically, socially and economically” as stated in the SWRC brochure on the left. Irrespective of SuWEP’s history, past performance, utilization of funds and changed project implementation modalities, the scope of SuWEP further increased as of 2007 with a budget amounting to € 1,845,073 for 2.5 years.

Strategic program areas ranged from primary health care to civic education and income generating activities (SuWEP 2007). SuWEP aimed to “be a service provider and also a long term institution builder” (SuWEP 2007, 4). Its mission touched upon peace, justice, democracy and development while its objectives were “to advocate, facilitate and implement the programs in the following critical areas of concern: research analysis and documentation, health, peace, education, economic political and equal representation for women, division of labour, communications and women in development” (SuWEP 2007, 5).

SuWEP tried to be everything to everyone. Moreover, the critical assumption “that the women’s groups that form SuWEP shall continue to be united and support the organization throughout the reconstruction phase and further” (SuWEP 2007, 9) exposed a mistaken belief:



*The only thing is that now SuWEP is coming down, here in the south. But now it was given to the northern people to take care of it. And when it was given to them, now the SuWEP here, they are saying, the women from the south we still have that conflict... Why do you give it to these people to come and rule us? You understand... but to take us to Khartoum. We just stay in Khartoum because of the Government of National Unity. Just to keep our budget move... We also find problems because we have that hatred. We see that these people come here. We still have security people monitoring us. (They ask) what are you doing with these people. Still the southerners have not welcomed the northerners to come and do things here. But because it is SuWEP we just, we have been working with them ... we say okay let's work together. But to tell you the truth we are not happy by being connected to Salmmah. Because...we feel like that why do they give these people to control us? ... I am telling this from my heart. Because I know what is happening. This is why we became weak and weak and weak. Before we were not like this, we worked hard. We worked very hard... but now when we are put together with these people to control us. Now everybody is just reluctant. Everybody is reluctant. We don't show up like, it feels as if we are forcing ourselves ... This is one of the things that brought us paralyzed (words of Agnes Nyoka on SuWEP in 2008).*

Programme implementation faced serious problems (SuWEP 2008a). The relocation of the SuWEP office from Nairobi to Juba had taken a lot of time and effort while facing budgetary constraints. As illustrated earlier, some SuWEP members joined the government while others took the lead within the arena of civil society. The fact that there was a Comprehensive Peace Agreement did not imply that peace had been built and trust existed among Sudanese women and in particular between:

- members/organizations based in Juba and members/organizations based in Khartoum;
- members representing government and members representing civil society;
- members who identified with the SPLM and those who identified with the SPLM-United;
- members/organizations based in Khartoum (along political and geographical lines).

The Northern Sudanese and secular or communist image of Salmmah (Ahmadi 2003, 216-217) did not go down well with SuWEP members based in Khartoum either. Salmmah, as a contracted partner by the embassy, did not enjoy all the trust needed amidst the SuWEP groups while also facing reporting difficulties with the embassy. Yet, SuWEP members did appreciate Salmmah's staff commitment, its lobby with the embassy in Khartoum as well as its advocacy role. The programme and its complexities turned out to be overwhelming to a small local organization consisting of a few committed Sudanese development practitioners that had managed till then a yearly budget not exceeding \$ 200,000. Not surprisingly the remaining balance for programme implementation was substantial following almost 1.5 years of programme implementation. On the other hand and as explained in the previous chapter, Sudanese women's activism continued in both Northern and Southern Sudan irrespective of funding and projects. A number of formal gains were realised in terms of ministerial and presidential decrees on violence against women, new policies, affirmative action and the

election law. As aptly put by Joy Kwaye, women were going for transformation, social and democratic transformation.

In 2008 a number of scenarios were discussed: (a) to re-formulate the grants component of phase III of SuWEP, (b) to establish an independent and separate multi-donor funding mechanism to facilitate a longer term transformation of women's participation in peacebuilding and conflict resolution in response to Sudanese women's Oslo priorities and, (c) to simply continue the programme with Salmmah no matter what. The programme continued no matter what.

## **6 The role of an outsider: turning a peace practice inside out**

In the beginning, the overall management of the peace practice rested with the Dutch Embassy in Khartoum, undertaking the role of catalyst and facilitator. As stated before, financial support (amounting to € 226,890) had been provided initially for a 12 to 13 month period but was utilised and increased in a flexible manner in the course of the following years. Timing, ripeness, and ownership were ceaseless concerns. Professional mediators and resource persons were engaged when representatives from both northern and southern sector would meet. The management structure involving staff members of two embassies and several departments did not seem to require immediate attention from the perspective of facilitation efforts undertaken. As stated earlier, all were of the same mind and political support was forthcoming. Four departments at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in The Hague received regular updates on efforts while most of the activities were coordinated by the embassy in Khartoum in consultation with colleagues in Nairobi and The Hague. A bilateral associate expert was drawn into the process in the course of 1998 to support efforts logistically, provide for regular communication including updates and act as a focal point and go-between for all nine working committees. The associate expert was guided and supervised by staff members of the embassies in Khartoum and Nairobi.

When compared to the original plan, the dissemination of information about the Initiative and the promotion of a gender approach to conflict resolution and peace processes were undertaken. Activities facilitated also included the provision of training opportunities in conflict resolution and mediation to build capacity and strengthen skills among Sudanese middle-range women leaders in support of their participation in Sudanese peace efforts. Engaging grassroots level women and men into the process by means of hearings was not only difficult, as indicated earlier, but also problematic. Hearings promoted self-awareness among participating Sudanese women leaders as well as public participation. However, simply conveying or discussing the needs and problems of communities living in war-affected areas at grassroots level repeatedly, and over a longer period of time with no immediate positive peace in sight, gave little hope or comfort. Participating women felt increasingly inadequate for not being able to meet the needs and resolve problems at grassroots level. Leaders at grassroots level lost faith in being 'heard' as nothing changed.



As described in Chapter 4, Pronk left the Dutch Ministry for Development Cooperation at the end of 1998 and Norway took over the IPF role played by the Netherlands thus far. His departure ushered in a declining Dutch political interest in Sudan. The international conference which was staged in 2000, with a particular focus on the peace process in Sudan and the role of Sudanese women, was implemented but also presented an opportunity for stocktaking, attracting support from other donor agencies and potential completion of Dutch activities. Forthcoming transfers of Dutch staff associated with the Initiative at both embassies and headquarters presented another challenge. After the international conference in Maastricht (2000), management became an issue and diverging ideas on how to move the process forward, especially between staff at the embassies, surfaced following staff changes (interviews Esther Droppers, Jos Hoenen and Anita Veldkamp). The process approach of small steps, little straightforward planning and hardly any conceptual paperwork was becoming a pitfall. Facilitation became as complex as the conflict in Sudan itself.

Consultations regarding the management of the peace practice started following the international conference in Maastricht (2000), including efforts to formalize the division of tasks and responsibilities. The Dutch Embassy in Nairobi wanted more clarity in terms of schedule and budgets of the peace practice and also requested additional human and financial resources for Nairobi to take charge of. It was also proposed to request more financial resources from headquarters to boost the programme assuming that a larger result-driven programme would generate broader financial and political support. Following my personal transfer to Bangladesh not long after Maastricht, the contract of the bilateral associate expert operating from Khartoum also expired. My successor had been introduced to the peace practice during the international conference in Maastricht. As part of the handover, I produced a short note on key approaches and suggestions regarding the management of the peace practice while adding Lederach's article 'Justpeace: The Challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century' (Lederach 1999). The associate expert produced a report documenting the Initiative, presenting strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats while suggesting an exit strategy by 2003.

Following several staff changes at the Dutch Embassy in Khartoum, the subsequent bilateral associate expert was to be based in Nairobi. An amount of € 1,656,296 was allocated in total to SuWEP, a results-based three-year follow-up project to the Initiative. The managerial as well as the financial support of SuWEP was divvied up among the Dutch Embassies in Khartoum and Nairobi as shown in Appendix 6.8. During this phase of the peace practice, emphasis was put on the provision of financial support to Sudanese women and included reduced diplomatic and logistical support. Political interest in Sudan was on the decline following policy changes, and few staff members at headquarters continued to demonstrate an interest in SuWEP (interview Rosien Herweijer). Underutilization of financial support committed to SuWEP was a concern, especially in the first six months. Both SuWEP women and embassy staff were left frustrated after having secured a generous financial contribution for a new programme as of the 1<sup>st</sup> of May 2001. In response, training courses on accounting

and financial management were provided to members of the various working committees in both northern and southern sectors.

Each and every management meeting between members of the embassies in Nairobi and Khartoum regarding SuWEP featured discussions on financial and human resources. Staff capacity and time available were discussed whilst the type of assistance offered was much less of an issue. Headquarters considered the project a good investment in the future of women but much less of a force to be reckoned with in terms of the peace process. The Department of Women and Development at the Ministry noted as a lesson learned from engendering peace processes in Sudan that “[s]ystems and procedures in the Ministry are not always well suited to such intense collaboration. Responsibilities need to be clearly established and (adjustments of) administrative procedures have to be explicitly agreed upon<sup>29</sup>”. Arguably, systems and procedures have a tendency to divert attention from the social and political processes which are part and parcel of the implementation of a project in the midst of conflict. This is especially the case when even-handedness becomes an issue amongst embassy staff operating either from Sudan or Kenya while being responsible for guiding and implementing a joint programme across conflict zones and together with parties in conflict (analysis interviews policy makers and practitioners).

When the contract of the Dutch associate expert based in Nairobi was about to end in 2002 an extension was agreed upon as locally engaged replacement was not considered desirable. The southern sector working committees gave preference to a non-Sudanese programme officer. Moreover, the responsibility to act as a point of contact for northern sector working committees was to be resolved differently, as shuttling between Nairobi and Khartoum was considered too expensive. By 2003 all key embassy staff members in both Khartoum and Nairobi dealing with the peace practice, had left. Evidently, few diplomats opt for duty stations situated in countries in conflict and when matching the right person to the right job becomes more difficult due to lack of interest, less and less attention is paid to finding the right person for the job in terms of interests, knowledge and skills. Following staff cuts at the embassy in Khartoum programme responsibilities were handed over to a locally employed Dutch advisor.

Working committees operating from Nairobi had been officially registered following the inception of SuWEP, with the Sudan Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Commission and the Kenyan NGO board. Following registration there were no legal constraints to receiving financial contributions from donor agencies to implement project activities. Pursuing registration of any non-government organization, let alone political organizations, inside Sudan however was quite a different matter and may have been overlooked in the project design. The Southern Sudanese and Nuba women working committees were the first to complete their official registration with the Humanitarian Aid Commission following the Machakos protocol in 2002. The Civil Society Group managed their registration as a network

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29 Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 2002. Poverty and Gender. The Hague: DSI/VR.

in 2003 and became the Women Empowerment for Peace and Development network excluding earlier members registered separately as charitable companies but including approximately 63 community based organizations and NGOs. Evidently the GOS working committee, representing the Government of Sudan, never faced any difficulty, but the NDA working committee never even tried to complete their registration given their political signature.

The meaning of inclusiveness started to change from including all parties to the conflict and respecting each other's differences into seeking togetherness and shaping a women's movement for peace (SuWEP 2006, 79). In mid-2004, an effort was undertaken to prepare support for the continuation of SuWEP up to and including 2007. The project document provided an updated SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis and logical framework and suggested a continuation of the set-up of the previous phase while exploring potential outsourcing to other organizations. Instead the programme was extended in a budget-neutral way and the peace practice came to an end in 2006 following the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (2005). Total expenditures amounted to € 1,247,679.07 indicating that approximately 75% of the budget allocated had been utilized. Once again staff changes were many and following the CPA a joint donor team was established in Juba. Development partners struggled to move away from humanitarian assistance, turning to the implementation of the CPA as well as the UN and the World Bank for much needed quick wins in the area of reconstruction. The potential contribution of NGOs and women's organizations in the area of reconstruction was neglected. The situation in Darfur deteriorated.

The expectations of Sudanese women towards the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Khartoum remained high in terms of staff showing interest, building trust, and understanding complex political relationships, and so on. A newly recruited Sudanese local advisor for gender and development had joined the embassy and guided an assessment of SuWEP, paving the way for the embassy to withdraw from lending direct support to SuWEP. The urgent had driven out the important in the embassy's decisions about post-CPA priorities. SuWEP women did not enjoy the attention of embassy staff, irrespective of their contacts with and access to the political leadership and networks (analysis interviews and life histories). Thus, the scope of SuWEP, subcontracted to a local organization Salmmah, further increased since 2007 with a budget amounting to € 1,845,073 for 2.5 years. Strategic program areas ranged from primary health care to civic education and income generating activities (SuWEP 2007). SuWEP aimed to "be a service provider and also a long term institution builder" (SuWEP 2007, 4).

A process that started in 1997 as a peace practice and supported Sudanese women in taking them forward towards the goal of building and making peace was turned into a project and came to an end by the end of 2011. Moreover, the goals of the peace practice described were moulded and changed by both insiders and outsiders in the course of time, involving not only complex issues but also affecting the degree to which Sudanese women could possibly meet their goals.

## **7 You do not hear men talk about the problems of Sudan**

To better understand the story of this peace practice and the role and contribution of women in peacebuilding and peacemaking, the life history of Esta Kuku Rahal is presented below in her own words, which I translated to English from Arabic. Esta participated in the peace practice from the very beginning and was born in the Nuba Mountains of Sudan. The Nuba Mountains is a marginalized and neglected area located in Southern Kordofan. It was deeply affected by the north-south conflict and its men and women participated in making both war and peace. The area is also known for its demands for self-determination besides clashes between Baggara pastoralists and Nuba farmers. As mentioned in Chapter 2.5, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement includes a Protocol on the Resolution of the Conflict in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile States (2004). Following troublesome implementation of the CPA, the security situation deteriorated in the Nuba Mountains prior to and following the referendum (2011). As a result of the referendum, the Nuba Mountains became part of North Sudan.

Esta Kuku explains how her access to schooling was limited because of the war and as a result of increased family responsibilities. Her father preferred daughters over sons following the death of all his brothers. She was the first Christian Nuba woman to marry a man from Southern Sudan irrespective of the disapproval and fears of her family. Esta describes that some of her family members are Christian and others are Muslim or adhering to traditional beliefs. In the past, different faiths used to live together in harmony in the Nuba Mountains but according to Esta Kuku that is no longer the case. She discovered that not many people abroad have actually heard about the Nuba Mountains. Esta feels that the peace practice helped the world to know about the Nuba Mountains and helped Nuba women to know about the world. While participating in The Hague Appeal for Peace she described the Nuba Mountains to an international participant as a remote area, which is locked behind a curtain.

According to Esta, Nuba women not only encourage their men to fight but have been as warlike as their men from the time of her grandmother. She speaks of loss, death, trauma and survival among women and men in detail. She also discusses the changing roles of women and how this affects men. The deprived situation of women and children in the Nuba Mountains and the lack of water and food continued to motivate her to work for peace. Esta Kuku recalls her participation in the peace practice and tells what she did. The many letters she wrote, the experience she gained and the way in which she became the leader of the Nuba women's group participating in the peace practice. She also mentions the harassment and intimidation that she experienced as a result of her participation in the peace practice and the courage it took for Sudanese women to participate in peacebuilding. People paid a price to work on peace in Sudan and she does not only refer to Sudanese women. As she reiterated, there were many problems but women persisted and seized the opportunity.

Esta Kuku Rahal is of the opinion that you cannot hear men talk about the problems in Sudan. She recalls how men attempted to influence the discussions amongst women at the conference in Maastricht but were told to leave the room. While men always have all the

opportunities she is convinced that women will stand a better chance in the elections. She was a member of the council for peace in Southern Kordofan.

The following elements present an initial analytical perspective of Esta's life history:

- on the peace practice: What does peace mean to women and what does peace mean to men? Women mention the loss of life, the lack of water and food as reasons to engage in peace processes. Do men talk about the problems in Sudan? Throughout the peace practice women expressed concern over the problems of men and women at grassroots level. At the pledging conference in Oslo women stressed the role of women in sustaining families and communities amidst the ravages of war, poverty and HIV/aids. They would also discuss issues of religion and state besides governance. Women who participated in the peace practice consider their achievements many;
- on risks: Sudanese women faced serious risks while engaging themselves in building and making peace. While doing their work in the midst of war, their movements and communications were monitored and restricted. Their determination to partake in this peace practice gives evidence of their agency, courage and interests. Peace practices are not low-risk interventions per definition. Outsiders come and go, but insiders remain;
- on empowerment: Women have been able to resolve problems and carry many responsibilities while facing up to the war in Sudan. They looked after the children of family members who died, some took up arms and others were able to find jobs in order to survive. Women seek ways to advance their status and rights and do not let anyone stop them from speaking. They are also keen to communicate the outcome of peace negotiations and peace agreements to a wider public and into their communities;
- on disempowerment: War runs deep and disempowers in many ways. It affects the mind of men and women while sowing death and fear. Men risk their lives but also run off and leave women and children behind to survive. Men in the Nuba Mountains used to be farmers who were able to look after their families but after running away for their lives, they find themselves without a job in the city of Khartoum. Women work in order to survive and provide for their children and husbands instead. Violence against women is a major problem;
- on women and men: Roles and relations change. Men were told to leave the conference room by Sudanese women. International agencies were given a list of urgent priorities and actions for reconstruction. Sudanese women seek peace with justice including social justice.

The overall analysis of life histories collected as part of this research will be presented in the next chapter.

#### **Life history 6.7** Esta Kuku Rahal

##### **In the beginning my education was little**

My name is **Esta Kuku Rahal**, my age is something like 47 or 48. In the beginning my education was little, up to 4<sup>th</sup> grade primary school in the (Nuba) Mountains. Then I finished here in Omdurman and went to the Episcopal Church school for girls. Instead of going to

school, I was responsible for looking after the animals and tried to visit school. When I first entered school [my father] told me to stay at home, to look after the youngest girl and since my mother had just given birth I should do the farming as well. He said I should not go to school because no one was sending young girls to school. My mother gave birth to five girls and two boys and then two more girls and two more boys. We all managed to grow up, but one died in a tribal incident. Sister number five was shot during the war. I looked after her young ones till they were grown up. My brother was killed in Kadugli and left two children, boys behind. Another sister of mine died when she was in fourth grade. So we are left with few only. Especially my education was affected because of the war and the fact that I had to look after so many children who lost their mothers and fathers. On top of that I was responsible for bringing up my own brothers and sisters because I came to Khartoum while my mother and father stayed behind. So I was responsible for looking after them and making sure that they would go to school here in Khartoum. My father and mother are of age now and continue farming back home. I also send them money for them to make ends meet.

#### **May God give me lots of girls?**

My father used to say may God give me lots of girls because all his brothers had died and he was the only remaining son. So he gave preference to girls and that is why our Lord brought us lots of girls. My father married seven women. My mother was the first wife but work and agricultural activities, a lot of sorghum and a lot of livestock were too much and that is why my father married often, to provide for assistance. Especially when my mum was pregnant she could not handle all the work and he would bring other women to help out. Each and every woman he brought used to chat a lot and he would divorce them in the end. Right now in terms of children belonging to my father there is those that belong to my mum, the relatives of my mother, and every other woman would add two or three children. A lot of work and my mother raised all these children, 32 children in total, all of them belonging to my father.

#### **There are so many religions in the Nuba Mountains**

I am Christian since I was a child. My father was working inside the church and he wanted all his children to go to church. When I was young there was a foreigner teaching us. There are Muslims, Christians and *Kujur* (religious man or woman with magical powers in Nuba culture and traditions) in my family. There are so many religions in the Nuba Mountains. We even used to participate in Ramadan and even observe the fast together. Prepare *'ašīdah* (Arabic: a stiff millet porridge) together etc. We did not have any problem, celebrating Christmas together. In the Nuba Mountains all these religions used to go together but not any longer. They say that Christians are non-believers and as Muslims you should not eat together with Christians. Since the current Islamic Government this is the case. I got married when I was 15 years old. I married a man from the south, not from the Nuba Mountains. I have seven girls and one boy. The boy finished university; he became 21 years old but was electrified and died. Seven girls were left. I really encouraged these girls to study for them to complete their education and enter university even though I did not study. My husband is alive and we are living together. I am his only wife. We got married in church that is why. Then you are not allowed to marry more than one.

### **I am the first Nuba woman to marry a southerner**

Traditionally the father and mother of the bride go to see the father of the groom and agree. They prepare a contract for marriage without any consultation and that is it. In the course of time women themselves decided on their husband. I chose my husband myself. My family refused him completely, completely. They said southerners eat human beings with *šattah* (Arabic: a variety of pepper, in Sudan a hot sauce made of red pepper and lime juice). Make sure that they do not eat your daughter. I told them no problem, let them eat me. Then we see why they ate me. I insisted and my father stood strong beside me. Four uncles came immediately to our house to fight over my words with my father. He told them come on, this is none of your business. They said this is not going to happen, this is not going to happen. You cannot give your daughter to a southerner who eats people. I am the first Nuba woman to marry a southerner. It was a big problem but I love my husband and my husband loves me. That is what I rely on.

### **Nuba women encourage men to fight**

All of (my brothers) including the sons of my uncles were part of the SPLM. They are carrying arms and are part of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). The girls in our area also participated in the army. I did not take up arms but participated in negotiations to stop the war in Sudan and in the Nuba Mountains in particular. The daughter of one of my aunts is a guard to the state governor. Another one, from my mothers' side, is in Kawda together with her husband. Women were incorporated in both the armed forces of the Government of Sudan as well as the SPLM. When the SPLA was defeated in the Nuba Mountains by the army from Khartoum, they would gather all the women, and they would blow the whistle for the soldiers to gather and come along. One woman said do you not want women to join the army of Omar Al-Bashir? (They said), [y]ou know what: it is better for you to stay in your homes for every soldier to return to his wife... You stay home, prepare a hole, and use scented smoke (*duḥān*, Arabic: scented smoke bath) to welcome them when they return home from the war. Nuba women encourage men to fight.

Women participate, from the time of my grandmother, because at the time they did not have weapons like today but they had sticks. If the people from one area agreed to fight against people from another area, the women would fasten the sticks on their heads to take it there and they would sing to encourage the men to fight. When the fight was over they would collect the sticks again. Those days the people from the Nuba Mountains were fighting against the people from Kadugli. Women participate in domestic decision-making and local administration, slowly, slowly. Women talk in front of people about the role of women. They also carry economic responsibilities and deal with money. Women even fight with men, using sticks.

### **Women look for their own survival**

Right now there are a lot of men marrying more than one wife. The husband would say, do not go to that place and she goes there. He gets tired and marries another one. Women want to work, she wants to meet other women, do farming. Many men died because of the



war. Lots of women just sit and wait. Many men marry four or three women but there are still many unmarried women. Women look for their own survival, even here in Khartoum. When I sit with them, all of them tell me that they are working. Men sit at home because there is no work. Women work in the houses, wash, clean, and look after the children. By the way there is even one tribe in the Nuba Mountains, the Moro, where men usually do not work at all. It is only women who work.

Before the war... the war brought lots of men to Khartoum. But before in our area men used to work as farmers but they cannot do any farming in Khartoum. That is why. From early morning women go out to work, they are the ones bringing in money that he wants to have, and when she buys something along the way for the house she gets beaten up. There is a lot of violence against women. It became really bad. They say they allow women to work to bring the money home and not spend it along the way. Our role as Nuba women's organization is to sit with the men and make them understand that a woman works to bring home money to feed her children and to feed you. She has the right and freedom to spend her money along the way, buying bananas and what not. You have no right to beat her. She works. Then men say but we gave women the right to work so why ... Well it is up to her and she even buys you a cold drink. We want to change this situation. Women are to spend their money the way they like. Men would do the same.

**If you do not take care of your mind, you will go crazy**

It creates emptiness, the neighbours get killed in front of you, [and] your own daughter gets killed in front of you. Men are affected by the war, so many died of thirst and hunger, the elderly in particular. In war time there is no food and a lot of fighting. So many people die of hunger, especially in the area that is targeted by the Government, productive areas. Women are especially affected, because if men hear that there are movements in a certain area they run off and leave the women on their own to die with their children. Amira for example who came yesterday came to Khartoum with two children. Her husband ran off to the SPLA. Her husband got shot. She did not know that her husband had died but after the signing of the (Comprehensive Peace) Agreement. People came to tell her that her husband had died eight years ago. He was carrying salt for them when they shot him. He threw the salt on the ground and he was throwing up blood and the SPLA shot him right away. He could not do anything. She was thinking of going to the SPLA with his name to get compensation to support the children. She is alright since she has a job. She cleans houses and washes clothes. She put her girl in university and her son is due for his exams this year. If you do not take care of your mind, you will go crazy.

**I am really affected by this war**

I lost a lot of people. I lost my (maternal) uncle. They caught my uncle bringing soap for the house at night and they killed him in some place together with his brother. They took their bodies and left them out in the sun. The son of his brother was associated with the SPLA; he used to visit them quite often. He decided to switch sides. The women told him that this uncle went to bring soap yesterday and did not return home. He went to investigate and talk



to the people and they simply said we killed him. So he said show me where you killed him. They took him straight and he had to dig a hole to bury the body on his own. Just like that. That affected his mind.

One of my own sisters (Nafisa) was killed in the house while carrying a small child in her arms. There were lots of soldiers in Kadugli. There was a dog barking out loud and there was some shooting. Her husband was scared and hid himself in a large container to prepare his gun. She opened the door to silence the dog, while the soldiers thought someone was opening the door in order to return fire, and they hit her in her stomach while she was holding her little girl. The girl was hit in her foot. The husband came to their rescue and was caught by the soldiers. He screamed out loud and the soldiers told him to back off and leave the area. He said how am I supposed to retreat after what you did to my family? My sister was screaming. The neighbours came running, tied some cloth around her stomach. When the neighbours came the husband ran off. They took her to the hospital where she got stitched after an operation that took very long, all night. She got out of the hospital the next day. She became alright but vomits a lot because of her stomach. I was here in Khartoum with my mother. People came to inform us that Nafisa was hit. They brought her daughter to Khartoum ... [t]he girl is alright now and able to walk with a stick. That is, I am really affected by this war. Especially those back home all of them died. With the exception of my father who was in SPLA territory. But his family all died. The brothers of my mother all died. I hardly have any family left in the Nuba Mountains.

### **I just want this war to stop**

I was interested and as of 1997, I participated in the Initiative (to engender the Sudanese Peace Process). That was a good opportunity to meet those outside to encourage people to lay down their guns. So many people died in the Nuba Mountains. Fighting between the SPLA and the Government was fierce in the Nuba Mountains. I wrote a letter to Kofi Annan when he was still Secretary General to the United Nations together with other participants to the Initiative. I benefited a lot of the program that was started by the Dutch Embassy, irrespective of problems with the security forces. It created a lot of opportunities, especially when I came back from the conference in the Netherlands (The Hague Appeal for Peace). The day after I came back, I was picked up by security. But I am not afraid of them and I just told them, I went to speak about women in the Nuba Mountains and I did not say a thing about the Government of Sudan. I just want this war to stop. They said you should not talk as much as you do. So I replied you cannot restrict me. They put me in a small room with one bed. One of the others came in and interrogated me. I gave each and every person the same response. Then they said we want all the papers of the conference and I told them these are at my home and in case you want to read, all these papers are in English. So they said bring all your files and we will see if there is anything said on the government or the security forces. I brought them the file, and then they said to me we cannot understand a thing. I responded, what am I to do about that? That was my first problem really in terms of the Initiative or SuWEP.

### **I am involved in a Nuba women's group**

I was a member in the council, the council for peace in Southern Kordofan. I am retired since one year... One time I went, the Government opened an area and I went to see how the women were doing. Along the way, I met a woman with three children and one of them died due to lack of water and lack of food. She was seated under a tree and tried to figure out how to bury the child. I arrived at the scene and stopped the car and we tried to bury the child using leaves to cover the body and stones. I asked her what you give those children to drink. She said there is no water, no food. That is why the other one died, out of thirst. I managed to give her some water and she said that will keep us going for a while. It made me so angry. That is why we need peace in the Nuba Mountains for women to be content. I wrote so many letters to IGAD... and via SuWEP. I also wrote lots of secret letters.

### **I became the elected leader of the group**

Of course the idea came from the embassy and we embraced it. But organizing our group was difficult. To the extent that the embassy invited me for lunch and told me, bring your constituency. So I contacted Nuba women all over the place, and Nuba girls at the university. I did not know there were going to be elections. But when we had elections and the explanation of the purpose (to identify women group leadership), the women and girls said we elect Mama Esta to talk on our behalf. So those that supported Sakina were not happy and it was messy. But you solved it and ensured a secret ballot. You disseminated and collected the votes and I became the elected leader of the group. I got 36 or 32 votes, I cannot remember. Sakina got three votes, another one two and there was a girl that got six votes. I won. I had so many ideas. I was thinking how does Margret do this type of work and stand in front of so many people? For me it was the first time in my life to engage in something like that. I was thinking a lot but did not speak. I accepted the responsibility but it was a somewhat difficult responsibility. We needed to organise ourselves and have a chairperson, a secretary, a treasurer besides members. So we should have a meeting to decide upon that. That was difficult and Sakina went around at night to lobby and made sure that her daughter would become the secretary.

### **We played a very big role in the Netherlands**

Women play a very important role in peacemaking as you witnessed during the conference in the Netherlands. Those women that came from Nairobi, may she rest in peace; what is her name? I mean Regina (Regina Morris representing the SPLM in The Hague Appeal for Peace). We spent three days in Holland before the start of the conference for Regina to agree with the other Sudanese women and I remember that Joyce (Dr. Joyce Neu, the Carter Center) would come in between when we were disagreeing till we managed to agree and choose from amongst ourselves someone who would speak out on our behalf. We chose Pauline (Dr. Pauline Riak) to represent us. Then Alakier (Malwal) came and said how those of SPLM can choose someone like that? Pauline is not Sudanese but in the end Alakier agreed. We played a very big role in the Netherlands.

### **Nothing stopped us**

There were many results and of course many problems. Nothing stopped us. We were very attentive to that. I remember we wanted to prepare a letter for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Sudan, something to do with the declaration and the conference in Maastricht. We encountered problems when a girl of the NDA (National Democratic Alliance) could not join. There were many problems, but we persisted. You yourself stood strong. I remember when there was a problem with security and therefore you invited us to your residence. We came to your house in Khartoum 2, but the security forces of course would be waiting for us. At the time, you made clear that there was no need to register as groups since the Initiative was registered with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. But later on we decided to register since we are working in a particular area, in order not to have problems with security forces, when we work with women at the outskirts of Khartoum.

### **We told the men to leave the room**

As women working on peace we achieved results. Take for example the conference in Maastricht, there were many problems of course, I remember that the NDA threatened to withdraw from the conference after writing a letter to the chair of the conference. The chair stopped the conference and told the Sudanese to go back into a negotiating room and come out with a result, something in writing. So we went back into the room and there were many men present, who wanted to influence the discussions. Then as Sudanese women we told the men to leave the room. Let us see if we as women can come up with our own statement. Those of Mutrif Siddiq (the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) ... Mutrif said but I am a member and we told him you are neither wearing a *tawb* (Arabic: dress, also a traditional North Sudanese dress that women traditionally wear) nor a skirt so you have to leave the room as well. He left the room, all the men left and we closed the door.

Our problem focussed on the militarization and child soldiers (children below the age of 15), and separation of powers within the Government of Sudan. Of course there was discussion and opposition. But when we were about to finalise our statement Badriya Suleiman (probably refers to the leader of the national working committee, late Prof Bodour Osman Abu Affan) opposed and said let us vote. Then again she said, voting is fine but you are the majority so you will win. Anyhow we voted. Then we said we want the international military industry of weapons and bombs to stop the entry of weapons into Sudan and stop selling arms. That was a big problem. [She] made clear that these are issues that divide. As women from the Nuba Mountains we said come on let us talk with one voice as Sudanese women, the international community is waiting to hear our voice. If we stopped the arms flow, arms will return and continue to influence the situation. Arms are alright as long as they are not used to kill each other. What do we do if other states attack us and we do not have arms? So everybody could agree to the latter and we agreed on two discourses: religion and state, and for children not to join armed forces. The age of children has to be in reason.

### **You do not hear men talk about the problems of Sudan**

Men do not play any role in peacemaking. Men do not play a role. All these men who are part of the government; you do not hear men talk about the problems of Sudan. They did not have any opportunity. But as women we got the opportunity and managed to play a role by means of SuWEP. Thanks to the Dutch Embassy that stood strong with us. That was a noble and just decision irrespective of all the problems. You remember the day that Kiplagat (Ambassador Bethuel Kiplagat) came for a workshop with all the groups and a problem arose in the hotel because of the presence of the NDA and we had to move to the embassy? People really paid a price while working on peace in Sudan. Kiplagat, the NDA, the embassy. As far as we were concerned there was no problem. We enjoyed a full day workshop with Kiplagat.

There are women; judges, lawyers. In our last meeting we said that women have a right to participation. The new constitution affirms the women's rights but there are only four women, they have little opportunity because they are few when compared to men. The men always have all the opportunities. Women will also have more chances in the next elections. We will participate in the correct way. Women can beat men. So we have to organise ourselves to become the voice of women. If there is a common fund for female participants we will make use of that.

### **One more thing**

There is one more thing I want to say in terms of peacemaking: our work as Nuba women is much appreciated. I did a questionnaire and Nuba women really appreciate SuWEP. We continued to Oslo. We are grateful. If it were not for SuWEP, we would not know the world and the world would not have heard of the Nuba Mountains. When we were in the Netherlands for a conference, there was one foreigner who asked me, where are the Nuba Mountains? I explained him that the Nuba Mountains are part of Sudan but an area that is remote and locked behind a curtain. I am happy to sit with you and talk to you after all these years. May God return you to Sudan. May you live long. Bring your husband here too for you to work again at the Dutch Embassy in Sudan.

## **8 Conclusion**

### **Picking up the pieces of a peace practice**

When returning to the description of process by Corbin and Strauss mentioned in my introduction, it is process that shaped and transformed this peace practice over more than a decade. The story presented in this chapter illustrates how both insiders and outsiders gave meaning to peacebuilding efforts and responded to problems along the way. Together they created the situations that they found themselves to be in through sequences of action and interaction pending their interpretations of conflict in Sudan, development and the role of women in building and making peace. The story illustrates how both insiders and outsiders reacted to processes and events at national, regional and international levels, be it a peace agreement, the IGAD peace process, a change of development policies or an international

donor conference following the signing of the CPA (2005). It not only reveals the interaction between insiders and outsiders but also the interaction amongst insiders and amongst outsiders. Ultimately a peace practice was created by their agency and ability. Arguably, it was also created by their inaction and inability, and fed by their interests and emotional responses to peacebuilding efforts of Sudanese women overtime.

In an effort to gain a deeper understanding of women's experiences of armed conflict and peacebuilding as well as women's contributions to social change, I will present my theoretical reflections based on a process perspective. Peacebuilding is about changes in relationships, behaviours and actions which when documented over the course of ten years from various perspectives sheds light on processes which normally do not see the light. The process perspective will be supported by empirical records drawn from the historical threads of this peace practice as well as the wealth of data provided by its participants and the life histories of Sudanese women. In doing so, I will start exploring the answers to my research questions as formulated in Chapter 1 without jumping to any final conclusions.

### **Theoretical reflections: a search for answers**

Do we know in which way and to what extent women have participated in efforts to make and build peace between Northern and Southern Sudan? The story of this peace practice provides insight into the participation of Sudanese women in formal and informal peace processes. It describes and analyzes how the evolving process of building and making peace worked or did not work from the perspective of both insiders and outsiders (Crocker, Hampson and Aall 2007). Most of it took place behind closed doors.

UN SCR 1325 is not just about formal peace processes but also about informal peace processes. The near-exclusive focus on political and military leadership is one thing, but another thing is the notion that also other men, as expressed by Esta Kuku, lacked the opportunity to participate in efforts to build and make peace. This notion was not expressed in order to question or deny targeted support to women. It highlighted that men at different levels of society are oftentimes excluded from peace processes. Would the potential exclusion of men at other levels of society impact on levels of social change and transformation? With power being exercised at all levels of society, is there an invisible division of labour in the arena of building and making peace and will efforts of women below the level of the top leadership always remain invisible, like household work?

### **Research question 1: To what extent did international support to peacemaking efforts of Sudanese women manage to promote an increase in the number of women participating in conflict resolution and peacebuilding in the case of Sudan? How did international support to peacemaking efforts of women affect Sudanese men?**

Irrespective of their training and experience resulting from their participation in the peace practice described, Sudanese women were not part and parcel of the negotiation teams nor were they invited as mediators. Irrespective of their contributions to both warfare and peacebuilding over a prolonged period of time, Sudanese women representing the SPLM

and the GOS, did not become signatories of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (2005) signed by the SPLM and the GOS. As shown in Chapter 3.9, Sudanese women were only recorded as witnesses to the CPA. Their political and military leaders did not ensure their inclusion in the negotiation teams and they were never questioned about their exclusion, and neither were the national, regional and international leaders. They all turned a deaf ear to the numerous calls and demands made by Sudanese women, including representation in commissions on power sharing and human rights; for example, in the post-CPA era, irrespective of their promises and commitments (Appendix 6.5). Civil society organizations, women's organizations as well as men and women representing political parties other than the SPLM and the GOS also remained excluded from the IGAD peace process in Sudan. As discussed in Chapter 2, the CPA included a number of agreements and all are framed in gender-neutral language.

The statements (Appendices 6.2-6.7) which, Sudanese women drafted and circulated in the course of the peace practice were acts that put pressure on Sudan's warring parties to end war. Sudanese women were said to engage their men in peacebuilding while their efforts to reach their leadership were labelled as "even more aggressive" (SuWEP 2006, 65). Based on the life histories of Sudanese women, I would rather speak of their growing confidence, courage and political assertiveness. The content of their statements were also indicators of emergent social change. Sudanese women also established and maintained informal relationships with those in power nationally, regionally and internationally and across lines of conflict. Sources refer to Sudanese women as delegation members during the Machakos talks (2002), as being added to delegations at the last minute and presenting technical papers to negotiators while some women's organizations were registered as observers with the IGAD (Abusharaf 2005, Abusharaf 2009 and HSBA 2008). It was also said that the peace practice contributed to forging collaboration and alliances between various groups, for example, the SPLM and the UDSF (SuWEP 2006). My findings suggest, that especially when the urgent drives out the important, this contribution and mediating power is grossly undervalued in the arena of international relations and often neglected amongst outsiders who speak of or act in the name of 'smart power'.

Now, one might ask if there was any interaction to speak of between the various levels of Lederach's pyramid in this particular peace practice? The peace practice succeeded in acting as a bridge and venue for women leaders representing various constituencies, until its handover to a local organization. The peace practice also managed to act as a vertical lift-bridge in support of their dialogue with and organised action towards their respective political and military leadership. Findings suggest that the participation of Sudanese women in this peace practice contributed to their political consciousness and interests, evolving into organised action and activism, and their consecutive and successful demands for participation in decision-making and politics following the CPA (life histories presented). Sudanese women leaders took the lead in drafting their appeals and declarations while making an effort to voice the concerns of men and women within their respective communities. Their visibility also attracted criticisms, including a focus on their own

interests and their status as compared to the status of Sudanese women at the grassroots level.

Irrespective of the availability of more funding, efforts of women leaders participating in the peace practice, towards women and men at grassroots level, appeared to be haphazard and ranged from dialogue in the beginning to humanitarian assistance and political campaigns at a later stage. Moreover, gaps between the grassroots and the elite levels of society in Sudan are not easily bridged while political priorities are likely to set the agenda at the potential cost of seeking grassroots level involvement (Badri 2005). While some members may have been looking for additional resources to make ends meet, others simply sacrificed time, energy and also money while participating in this peace practice. As explained in this chapter not all working groups were able to access funding, nor were their women leaders able to travel freely at all times, and into war-affected areas in particular. Evidently, their political and military leadership encouraged them to build relationships with men and women at grassroots level since these activities would serve their political agendas without posing any threat to the established order.

My research findings suggest that it is important to highlight the strong will and determination of Sudanese women to participate in building and maintaining peace. Similar to the contributions of women making an effort to contribute to peace processes elsewhere, and as was the case, in for example, in Guatemala (Potter 2008 a), the contributions of and demands made by Sudanese women soon started to reflect longer term interests. They called for the ratification and implementation of CEDAW (Appendix 6.3), requested the leadership of the conflicting parties to provide access to basic services throughout Sudan, such as health and basic education (Appendix 6.4), and highlighted shortly after the CPA their reconstruction priorities in, for example, the area of governance, rule of law, security sector reform, but also food security, this while listing the need to address sexual and gender-based violence (appendix 6.7). Post-CPA policies in support of the empowerment of women identified conflict transformation also as crucial. At the same time, Sudanese women did not lose sight of their political identities and the opportunities that followed the CPA. For example, Joy Kwaje spoke of 'going for transformation and democratic transformation' as 'a different kind of empowerment'. Arguably, Sudanese women across the various constituencies were able to organise around and strife for the implementation of their women-specific demands with success. The support by some men in top level leadership was helpful as was the growing awareness amongst both men and women. Therefore historical excuses such as 'let's have peace or liberation first' did not last long after the CPA had been signed.

The participation of Sudanese women in international conferences and events was said to open many doors previously closed, after which "the visibility of Sudanese women's efforts to participate in peacebuilding increased significantly, thus bringing them onto the world map" (SuWEP 2006, 67). However, neither statements of commitments by the international community (Appendix 6.4) nor visibility of Sudanese women lead to significant



international support prior to and following the CPA. Sudanese women activists also criticised the largest funding mechanism post-CPA, or the Sudan Multi-Donor Trust Funds (MDTF) administered by the World Bank, for being 'gender blind' (Tønnessen and Kjøstvedt 2010). Whatever they achieved in the aftermath of war in terms of their participation in decision-making and new policies to improve the status of women from north to south as described in Chapter 5, was largely achieved under their own steam.

**Research question 2: How do individual empowerment and disempowerment in the midst of war translate to more durable gains at the intermediate or long term level post-conflict and what are the implications thereof in terms of social change? What type of losses did Sudanese men and women experience in terms of resources, agency and achievements? How does conflict alter the resources, agency and achievements of women?**

Josephine Odera, a Kenyan consultant, who had been involved in the peace practice over a continued period of time, described the story of SuWEP as "long, winding, difficult, painful and full of tears, and yet a success story in its own right" (SuWEP 2006, 5). The impact of what Sudanese women involved in this peace practice achieved in terms of their actual participation and influence on the peace process in Sudan, that is their success, is difficult to measure as the goal-posts of the peace practice shifted in the course of time. Outsiders also started to consider it as a project which presented an opportunity to invest in 'the future of Sudanese women', as opposed to an effort that could make a difference in terms of women's participation in formal peace negotiations (SuWEP 2002). Findings do confirm the notion that "although the idea to support the Sudanese women in the Sudan peace process originated with RNE [the Royal Netherlands Embassy], it did not take long for the Sudanese women to embrace and run with it once they discovered its benefits" (SuWEP 2006, 63). Owning a peace practice does not imply, however, that outside facilitation or mediation is no longer necessary.

Sudanese women representing numerous political parties which included the National Congress Party, the Umma Party and the SPLM used the media to complain that irrespective of progress and quota, "[s]udanese political parties are not democratic" (Sudan Tribune 2007), explaining that traditions, customs and attitudes of men towards women continue to hinder their political participation. A coalition of women leaders in Sudan prepared a call to action in 2008 to ensure the inclusion of Sudanese women in view of the elections (2010). Stating that without their full participation, elections would not be just and fair. They recommended, for example, educating and mobilizing women voters and recruiting and training women candidates. They also recommended a minimum of 30% women's participation in all candidate training and party strengthening programs by insisting that when proposing candidates for training, political parties' leaders include at least 30% women. Their joint statements did not imply that they did not represent different political parties with potentially competing political strategies for change.



The political leadership responded and, for example, President Al-Bashir (GOS) urged to increase the number of women seats in legislative assemblies to 25% in 2008 while President Mayardit (GOSS) appointed seven women to a new cabinet (of 32 members) as ministers in 2010. Whatever Sudanese women gained following the signing of the CPA in terms of their participation in decision-making emanated from a relentless and long struggle for power inside Sudan in the midst and aftermath of civil war in Sudan. The role of international agencies was limited and did not go beyond supporting or hosting a 'gender justice workshop' in Juba<sup>30</sup>. Though not insignificant their role could have been more significant, with the Oslo donor conference in mind.

My findings suggest that gains in status in the aftermath of war demand a lot of hard, organised and focused work, a willingness to take risks and, a bit of support. Research findings indicate that numerous Sudanese women managed to obtain high positions in decision-making post-CPA, that men started to acknowledge the value of women's participation in peacebuilding, and that women established a level of cooperation across political divides. At the same time Sudanese women experienced interference from their political leadership and competition by both men and women. When Sudanese women speak of peace they tend to speak of 'positive peace' and not the mere absence of violence. They appealed to the international community to assure women's participation in the peace negotiations and make peace in Sudan both sustainable and just (The Initiative 1999). Sudanese women like Agnes Nyoka in the previous chapter, make attempts to draw attention to sexual and gender based violence. That type of violence undermines relationships between and amongst women and men at the level of communities and families. Their priorities clearly demonstrate what peace means to women. They speak of governance and rule of law, the need to reduce gender inequalities in law, policy and practice, women's economic empowerment, basic social services (Appendix 6.7) and accountability. Their Oslo priorities, which emanated from their efforts to build and make peace, strive to enhance women's rights in Sudan but also touch upon Sudanese society as a whole.

The life histories presented suggest that losses experienced by both men and women while facing up to the war in Sudan are many. The disempowering experience of young men and boys who are picked up from the streets and forced to join the armed struggle without proper training was described and in general men find it more difficult to succeed in life. Several life histories point to insecurity, death, fear and violence affecting the minds of both men and women. Women and girls are forced to fend for themselves and struggle for an opportunity to go to school and gain income. They take over responsibilities from men and participate in armed struggle. Against all odds, women gained confidence while struggling and changes in gender relations become apparent.

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30 GOSS, UNIFEM, SIDA and Embassies of Sweden and Norway. 1997. Gender Justice: Moving the Comprehensive Peace Agreement forward to achieve Justice, Equality and Development in Southern Sudan. Juba outcomes and undertakings.

**Research question 3: How do practitioners and policy makers turn declarations into action? What are practitioners and policy makers looking for to do justice to and make use of an improved understanding of women's and men's experiences of armed conflict and peacebuilding?**

Extensive knowledge and experience in managing and resolving conflicts, including third-party intervention amongst international development actors and agencies, are rare. While this peace practice in its evolution reflects changes in development theories, policies, strategies and implementation, it appears that knowledge of process-minded peacebuilding is limited and not actively pursued by policy makers and practitioners. Thus, while little of our knowledge on gender and development may be applied consciously and strategically when it comes to conflict, it also needs recognition that mediation, facilitation and peacebuilding represent a different kind of sport. The latter does not lend itself well to a standard approach of results-based project management commonly applied in development settings with little room for learning and reflection. At the same time, outsiders' knowledge of actors and factors in Sudan may not only appear to be shallow at times but also suffers from short memory. It tends to exclude women as actors and sources of information whereby social and political processes are at best half understood.

The story of this peace practice confirms that it is not easy to bring opposing parties together and to build confidence and work collaboratively. This chapter offers evidence to suggest that contrary to what researchers like Antonia Potter found, sensitising peace processes to gender is not without risk or a low-risk investment (Potter 2008). Supporting a 'Sudanese women's movement for peace' generated discomfort and conflict, for example, between Northern and Southern Sudanese women but also amongst Northern Sudanese women. Moreover a number of Sudanese women faced intimidation and harassment while potential detention and physical abuse as a result of their participation was very possible. In the midst of war, both their movements and their communications were not as easy as they may have seemed to outsiders. As Esta Kuku Rahal relates in her life story, there were many problems and people paid a high price for working on peace in Sudan, even though nothing could stop them.

Last but not least the involvement of a local Sudanese organization in the management of follow-up activities of an inclusive peace practice proved to be counterproductive. There is no such thing as a women's movement for peace in Sudan. Interventions in the name of peace, development and gender equality may all have counterproductive effects.

**Research question 4: How to bridge the reputed gaps between (a) local women interested in peace negotiations and diplomats negotiating peace and (b) women seeking support from post-recovery programming and aid practitioners?**

While stating, in Chapter 3, that it is more appropriate to think of conflict and changes over time as a social process that constantly evolves, this research suggests that political processes and changes also affect the actions and responses of both insiders and outsiders. The interests and political support of regional and international political leaders matter besides

political party processes at national level and, for example, constitution-making in the aftermath of war. The representatives of UN agencies in Sudan indicated that they preferred to keep away from politics. International actors and multilateral agencies in particular, may be conflict-sensitive to the extent that they prefer to avoid any attempt at mediation or peacebuilding, as intervening in situations of conflict may look like venturing into a hornets' nest at both the level of organizations as well as at a personal level. As described, third party intervention is not an easy job. Evidently, this in itself discourages inclusive peacebuilding and also explains why the implementation of UN SCR 1325 may be problematic. Moreover, depoliticizing third party interventions may benefit both outsiders and insiders in the short run but does not resolve conflicts in a sustainable manner in the long run. This also applies to the participation of a critical mass of women in building and making peace.

The international community in Sudan was mostly preoccupied with the provision of humanitarian assistance and formal peace negotiations prior to the CPA, followed by large scale reconstruction efforts post-CPA. Findings suggest that outsiders continue to pay more attention to what women may need or lack in the midst, or immediately after war, than to what women and especially women leaders, do or could do politically, economically and socially. Arguably, when women's agency and activism is taken seriously in the midst of conflict, and their aspirations for social change are given little support, these women are not going to give up control over their own future. Any financial support required seems modest indeed when comparing it to the yearly average expenditures over a decade (1997-2007) of building peace. The amount expended of € 210,000, which exclude the involvement of Dutch staff and their travel costs, is small as compared to that spent from the multi-million dollar funds such as the MDTFs (Multi-Donor Trust Funds). Another issue which requires creative thinking is the fact that women and men may need to work through informal as opposed to registered associations in situations of conflict when the political climate of a country does not allow political parties and NGOs to operate freely and safely.

The above figures demonstrate that facilitating innovative ways and processes in support of peacebuilding cost 'a pittance'. An obvious difference is the level of international staff involvement to build and sustain a responsive and meaningful process. The high turnover of staff in countries in conflict, their training, country level knowledge, interest, expertise and skills define the success of the efforts of their agencies besides political directions and policy guidance. The Oslo conference, on the one hand revealed the generosity of donor countries to countries emerging from conflict, and on the other revealed the inability to respond to the priorities of Sudanese women. My reflections on the role of outsiders is that it demonstrates the importance of turning to ethnographic research amongst people who work in organizations and who are responsible for the delivery of development efforts.

Another aspect affecting both men and women in Sudan, has been the presence of outsiders, be it British colonial rule, be it the development industry or regional and international actors involved in both warfare and peace processes. Esta Kuku Rahal, for example, indicated in her

story that my actions made her think and have a sense of wonder as to how I did what I did in front of so many people and giving her the courage to do the same.

### **The search for answers continues**

Peace processes are about people and involve both insiders and outsiders. However, acts of social change, relational transformation and conflict transformation should start with insiders. The following two chapters will provide a deeper reflection on the assumption of empowerment among Sudanese women (Chapter 7) and the actions and perceptions of outsiders (Chapter 8). In order to complete my search for answers I will further analyse the life histories collected amongst insiders and complete an analysis of views expressed by outsiders and key informants regarding this peace practice.

# Chapter 7

## **On the Assumption of Empowerment**

**Introduction**

**Reflections on measuring empowerment and disempowerment**

**A horizontal analysis: what life histories of Sudanese women reveal**

**I have never been in peace as a woman**

**Conclusion**

## **7 On the Assumption of Empowerment**

## 1 Introduction

Social change and the capacity of men and women to act both personally and collectively have captivated the minds of researchers, practitioners and policy makers within the domains of conflict, development and feminism as well as beyond. The term empowerment originates from social and emancipatory movements that have been described earlier. Empowerment implies a process of change, i.e. the processes by which those who have been denied the ability to make choices acquire such an ability. There is a tendency not to define empowerment (Kabeer 2001, Cleaver 2001 and Bigdon and Korf 2002). It is used by policymakers, practitioners and scholars alike but can mean different things to different people. Conceptually empowerment, like development, could refer to an end but also to a means or strategy towards achieving objectives.

The OECD/DAC sourcebook (1998) links empowerment to the domains of conflict, development and feminism, and refers to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995), from which I quote:

*Women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace (paragraph 13).*

Addressing differences in power between parties in conflict is also called empowerment. In the conflict transformation discourse, Christine Bigdon and Benedikte Korf refer to the following interpretation of empowerment by Barach Bush and Folger (1994):

*A party is empowered by gaining new awareness and understanding of (1) its goals (including underlying values, norms, fears), (2) its options, (3) its skills, (4) its resources, and (5) its decision-making, and is able to utilise these new insights in mediation and negotiation (Bigdon and Korf 2002, 351).*

I refer to empowerment as defined by Naila Kabeer, “the expansion in people’s ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them” (Kabeer 2001, 19).

Kalyvas refers to “a deeply ‘endogenous’ process, meaning that behaviour, beliefs, preferences, and even identities can be altered as a result of the conflict and its violence” (Kalyvas 2008, 402). In order to gain a deeper understanding of women’s and men’s experiences of conflict and peacebuilding in Sudan, this chapter will present what life histories reveal about the empowerment of Sudanese women who participated in the peace practice I discussed in the previous chapter. The stories collected reflect lived experience of Sudanese women and demonstrate how life’s problems in times of war are handled. The stories told also show how these women regain a sense of value, purpose and control following hardship and loss, especially when peace agreements are signed. In addition, I will reveal what these stories tell us about disempowerment and losses experienced by

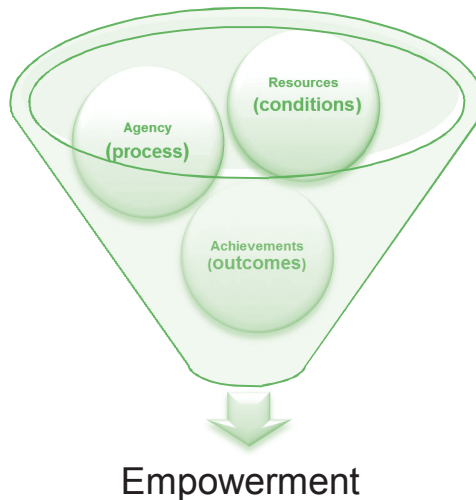
both women and men. Quantitative data most certainly tend to fall short in capturing empowerment as a never ending process of social change or in capturing disempowerment. Qualitative data and as featured in this research, life histories, may provide evidence of how behaviour and beliefs change over time and in the face of conflict.

Empowerment and disempowerment are hard to measure. For this reason, I will first go over reflections on the measurement of women’s empowerment as conceptualized by Naila Kabeer, and consequently provide a micro-level and horizontal analysis of the life histories collected. Though qualitative analysis “is not a process that can be rigidly codified” (Corbin and Strauss 2008, 16), my analysis is supported by the use of MaxQDA (qualitative data analysis) software. Following the life history of Jennifer Kujang, the conclusion to this chapter will illustrate that a compelling story emerges from the data collected about the expansion of women’s ability to make strategic life choices.

## 2 Reflections on measuring empowerment and disempowerment

Kabeer conceptualizes empowerment from the perspective of resources, agency and achievements (Kabeer 2001). Changes in the ability to exercise choice can be thought of in terms of changes in three inter-related dimensions which make up choice: resources (which form the conditions under which choices are made); agency (which is at the heart of the process by which choices are made); and, achievements (which are the outcomes of choices).

Figure 7.2 Dimensions of empowerment



Based on Figure 1 (Kabeer 2001, 20).

Kabeer finds that resources can be either material, social or human and include land, equipment, finance as well as knowledge, skills, creativity, networks and relationships which enable people to improve their situation and life (Kabeer 2001). She describes the second dimension of empowerment as agency and the ability to define and achieve one’s goals.



Agency involves a faculty of bargaining, negotiation and resistance including the ability to take decisions independently irrespective of what others think. Achievements, the third dimension of empowerment, represent what Kabeer calls more complex achievements of social value such as education and political representation which go way beyond basic survival. Disempowerment, therefore, implies a process of change whereby those who were able to make choices lose that ability and experience a loss of resources, achievements and agency.

From an empirical perspective, the measurement of empowerment is problematic as resources, agency and achievements may be valued differently by, for example, Sudanese women themselves and a non-Sudanese researcher, like myself. However, the life histories collected provide a wealth of subjective qualitative data resulting from individual opinions of Sudanese women and not from external measures. Individual empowerment, though important, remains without force if it does not translate to more durable gains at the intermediate or long term level in the public arena. In order to further assess the effect of an increase in resources, agency and achievements Kabeer suggests analysing the implications thereof in terms of social change. The life histories featured in this research will be analysed accordingly.

**Figure 7.2** Levels of empowerment

Levels of empowerment during and after conflict	
Immediate	Individual resources, agency and achievements
Intermediate	Institutional rules and resources
Long term	Structural relations of gender, class, etc.

Based on figure 2 (Kabeer 2001, 27).

### **3 A horizontal analysis: what life histories of Sudanese women reveal**

A series of in-depth life history interviews were undertaken both in Juba and Khartoum to gain insight into the lives of Sudanese women participants to the peace practice. With their permission, the session was digitally recorded (seven in the English language and three in Arabic), transcribed (in English) and analysed for content as explained above in 547 coded segments (appendix 7.1). I have analysed the life histories of Sudanese women like Samira Hasan Mahdi Shura who was featured in Chapter 2 as well as those of Priscilla Joseph Kuch (Chapter 3), Agnes Nyoka Retu (Chapter 5) and Esta Kuku Rahal (Chapter 6), together with the life histories of Jennifer Kujang Abe (further in this Chapter) and of Medelena Philip Ladu Gomat, Joy Kwaje, Inaam Haroon Mahmoud, Boudour Osman Abu Affan and Samia Ahmed.

A directed effort was made to interview Sudanese women who represent a cross-section of women committees and groups participating in the peace practice as described in Chapter 6, while reflecting changes over time. As a matter of fact, the membership of groups based in Khartoum had changed. A number of southern women originally based in Khartoum

had joined the Government of Southern Sudan/SPLM following the CPA and women representing the Umma Party no longer felt comfortable with the group representing northern opposition parties. Women who used to identify with the GOS, the Nuba women's group and the civil society group continued to identify themselves with their respective groups at the time of my field research. As explained in Chapter 6, Sudanese women operating from Nairobi, as SPLM, Non-Partisan Group, SPLM/United and UDSF had made attempts to work as one group prior to the CPA and moved to Juba as one group following the CPA. It was observed that some women who had previously identified themselves with the Non-Partisan Group had joined the SPLM, while political tensions between the SPLM and the SPLM-United in particular, remained unresolved.

To frame my findings, the following table gives an overview of the Sudanese women featured in this research written in alphabetical order, and includes their area of origin, year of birth, level of education and marital status. This overview will help put findings in perspective.

**Table 7.3** Women featured in this research

Name	Area of origin	Year of birth	Level of education	Marital status
Agnes Nyoka	South Sudan	1968	Secondary level	married
Bodour Osman Abu Affan	North Sudan	1949	University	married
Esta Kuku Rahal	Nuba Mountains	1960	Primary level	married
Inaam Haroun Mahmoud	Nuba Mountains	1968	University	unmarried
Jennifer Kujang	South Sudan	1959	Primary level (incomplete)	widow
Joy Kwaje Elusay	South Sudan	1956	University	widow
Medelena Philip Ladu Gomat	South Sudan	1961	Secondary level	married
Priscilla Joseph Kuch	South Sudan	1953	University	divorced
Samia Ahmed	North Sudan	1972	University	unmarried
Samira Hasan Mahdi Shura	North Sudan	1943	University	divorced

Numerous headnotes were made reflecting on ways to discover and create meaning to the life history interviews recorded. Alongside or upon completion of the life history interviews, field notes were prepared to describe the setting, to record emotions, recount interactions and triangulate information. Whenever life histories would point to intermediate or long-term levels of empowerment, this was triangulated through interviews with numerous other Sudanese women which include Rose Paulino, Pauline Riak, Anne Ito, Sara Nugdallah, Mary Nyaulang and Buthaina Hamid Khorasani and cross-referenced with recent studies. Discussions were also held with the director of Salmmah, Fahima Hashim and Zaynab Elsawi; the latter being the Salmmah SuWEP programme coordinator and former local staff member of the Dutch Embassy.

### What life histories reveal

The life histories collected provide empirical evidence that Sudanese women were not silent spectators to either a situation of protracted conflict or to the process that led to the signing of a peace agreement. Sudanese women were key actors and players, be it behind-the-scenes on occasions. Their stories and experiences speak volumes. Women from the Nuba Mountains and from Southern Sudan describe women who encouraged their men to fight by singing their songs, helped to feed soldiers, carried “their things up to some few miles to help them and they come back” (life history Medelena Philip Ladu Gomat) and contributed to the war with the little money they would make from drying okra or making peanut butter. In addition, they speak of women soldiers joining the armed struggle and driving tanks. Women also acted as key informants about on-going warfare and the location of stocks of arms and ammunition. Women were not victims of war but partners in making war. All life histories collected, except for one (life history of Samia Ahmed) refer to women as agents of war and not mere supporters.

It is important to know that Priscilla Joseph Kuch, Agnes Nyoka and Jennifer Kujang Abe felt that Sudanese women wanted to give peace a chance before men did. Moreover, Agnes Nyoka considered ‘peace in Sudan’ the achievement of Sudanese women. According to her it was their struggle for peace that consequently gained women the recognition of men resulting in their sharing of power with women. However, Medelena Philip Ladu explained post-CPA gains for women differently. According to her it was women’s participation in armed struggle and their active struggle for power by which women obtained decision-making positions. Women had been killed while fighting side by side with men. They had also fought for the 25% quota, “We are not given. We fight for it. We have right to that 25%. But also we have right to 75%. We have right. It is not for men alone” (life history Medelena Philip Ladu). Evidence suggests that women also experienced internal struggles for power while participating in efforts to build peace (life histories Esta Kuku Rahal, Samia Ahmed and Samira Hasan Mahdi Shura).

War and peace are described as parts of an evolving social process, two sides of the same coin. Agnes Nyoka explained that having a peace agreement was a mere beginning. Peace is a process which started with Sudanese women and continues. She described life in Juba, just after the agreement, as difficult and depending upon market supplies from either Khartoum or East Africa. Only as of late she found that when people see “practical implementation, like they see, the tarmac road, you see the buildings, they see the electricity. They see the ministries coming up. Now we have ... all those things. There is enough food. People are eating, people can work, [and] people can socialize. Now people are starting to recognise the Comprehensive Peace Agreement” (life history Agnes Nyoka). Joy Kwaje, for example, was able to reconnect with her family, friends and relatives when the roads started to open and life improved from both an economic and social perspective. The road to recovery is long in Sudan as “the period of war was long, and destroyed all opportunities for development” (life history Inaam Haroun Mahmoud).

A key thought which emerged when creating my theoretical framework is that conflict changes relationships and changes social roles within families, communities and positions between people. Things rapidly change in times of war for both men and women individually, and for men and women together. The life histories analysed contain many references to interaction between Sudanese women and their respective male military and political top leadership. These references demonstrate the complexity of gender identities including socially constructed values and beliefs which guide the actions and behaviours of both women and men, and influence their relationship.

The following story by Priscilla Joseph is an interesting example that illustrates that dominant social norms in Sudan used to qualify women as politically unaware and naïve:

*... the first time we told the men that we were doing the peace process... they told us: you know peace is a political issue. And that we were not going to discuss about peace unless there were clearance from the movement. You can remember in Maastricht we had problems. We had to get on the phone with the SPLM to see with them whether the statements we were making were the correct statements. You have seen how the men came, both from the north and the south; because they thought as women we were not politically conscious. As women we were going to give away a lot of the liberation issues and that we were going to compromise. And therefore we were not capable of negotiating peace. Therefore when we talk there were things we were not allowed to talk about. One of them was the arms control. You remember? We could not agree on arms control because we had in the structures that we should never ever discuss about the arms control because if we talk about the arms ban it was going to affect them. They will not have access to arms. Also the northerners were told they could not. And we had put it in brackets and moved it down and said this is an issue. Because we wanted it there but there was no way to put it there. Except to say that this is a concern but not agreed on. That is how we agreed as women to deal with the arms. So while we decided earlier as women to go for peace, we also had the responsibility to convince the men that there was something good in peace (life history Priscilla Joseph).*

Whereas above, the agency of Sudanese women may have been interpreted as women becoming mere agents or mouthpieces of male dominated parties in conflict, Priscilla points to the critical role Sudanese women played in convincing their men that peace was better than war. Thus, Sudanese women worked purposely behind the scenes. Boudour Osman expressed regrets that the actions and behaviour of men excluded women from formal negotiations. According to her “it was a no win situation you know for any of them and eventually they found out that peace is the best thing you know. But unfortunately when they made these negotiations they did not involve women... Because you see just male chauvinism perhaps they think... There were some women behind the scenes but they were not around the negotiation table” (life history Boudour Osman Abu Affan).

Joy Kwaje stressed that it takes strength and courage for men, and especially war leaders, to make peace:

*Well, we had men at the negotiating table, I think mostly by pressures. Definitely, there were other organizations, organizations by some men, I know of the peace forum for example in Nairobi. I know that there were some individual men who felt that the war was going on too much. But I am not sure whether they would have had the strength alone to come out and say let's have a peace forum for men. I do not think ... apart from the fact that of course that when it came to negotiating they were the ones at the negotiation table, not the women. Particularly because they actually were the ones who were leading the war, so the war leaders became the peace leaders at the same time. But also if they were not committed to actually coming down to the negotiating table probably they would not have, I mean no body would have forced them. Maybe some condition later on, maybe defeat or maybe what. But yeah, we should actually acknowledge, appreciate also, that despite the fact that they were in the war front just yesterday they were able to turn around and say you know for the sake of peace let us sit down and negotiate (life history Joy Kwaje).*

According to Samira Hasan, her political party chose her to become part of its political bureau following her experience and training in the area of peacebuilding and negotiation (life history Samira Hasan Mahdi Shura). The constitutional provisions following the CPA have also pointed to changing gender relations and clear steps to increase the number of female ministers as well as the number of women in the Legislative Assembly by at least 25% in Southern Sudan. Conflict in Sudan, however, cannot be simply described as a catalyst for social change and social justice. My findings suggest that there are benefits and drawbacks, since gender inequality in times of war may also manifest itself in sexual coercion and reduced negotiation power, “the person who raped you is within the committee and even some of them were part of the leadership but [you] cannot point a finger to that” (life history Agnes Nyoka).

In general, the life histories collected point to a difficult balancing act by which women became prominent, if not dominant, behind-the-scenes players in efforts to build peace in Sudan. Sudanese women entered into dialogue with parties to the conflict in an inclusive fashion, advocated for peace and social change, sought both national and international support for their views creatively, protested against continued warfare, and continued efforts to convince their political and military leadership that peace is better than war while acting in close political concert with their leaders.

The references to interaction between Sudanese women and grassroots' level leadership as well as men and women at community level are of a different nature and evolved over time. During the initial phase of the peace practice, the interaction was inspired by Lederach's pyramid and the idea of strengthening women's voices including their ability and capacity to speak on behalf of other women and men for whom the formal peace negotiations were far away from home. Medelena Philip Ladu, who was part of the Non-Partisan Group operating from Nairobi, described the interaction with the grassroots in the beginning of the peace practice as follows:

*... we went to hear about peace from the women, what is their role, what is their idea. We went to Kakuma camp (in Northern Kenya). We talked with the women for two weeks. At that time we find there is a problem in Kakuma camp: the Dinka group and the Equatorian there are fighting. They already fight and there is a killing. The UN involved us to enter into that problem to create peace between these two groups. You know at that time the SPLA is very strong and there is that hatred without any resolve. ... you know in a situation like that you cannot support the other group you should be neutral and you try to bring them together. We tried to bring them together and we stayed there longer (life history Medelena Philip Ladu).*

Later on women like Medelena started to engage in resolving conflicts at the local level. She explained talking to chiefs in order to solve problems where one tribe would attack another tribe and take their goats.

Trauma counselling was another area in which participants to the peace practice became active:

*First we started calling the women from inside Sudan. We bring them to Lokichokio (base Operation Lifeline Sudan in Kenya). We started with our women, then we brought the Nuba women, we brought the Blue Nile women and we bring the women from Bahr Al Ghazal and from Upper Nile also. As a group we called them. You, we are women; we know that we are suffering. Before we started our workshops sometimes we did not know that we are counselling them. If somebody wants to talk and you know the hunger is there. We told them please speak your mind about the war. And everybody can talk, and cry and talk and talk. Later on everything is settled and we talk ... to create peace in our villages first. We Sudanese women, because if you start with your own house and your neighbours and you go and then... Sometimes we bring people from outside to help us how to talk to them (life history Medelena Philip Ladu).*

The delivery of humanitarian assistance was also pursued:

*We organized a lot of humanitarian assistance. I remember at the time of Ramadan and winter started, we collected tents and covers, with some assistance from the Gulf; we brought these items because of winter and because of the Eid. Generally men focus on political statements and conferences; their humanitarian efforts were not worth mentioning (life history Samira Hasan).*

The participants to the peace practice indicated their ability to reach out to many men and women at the grassroots level and stressed the importance of communication and awareness across different levels. Samia Ahmed turned her attention to trying to bring youth from different sides of the conflict together. She remained critical of the meaning of the grassroots as it did not generate actual participation by women in the rural areas or internally displaced women:

*I hate the word grass root ... I don't think we managed to communicate it very well. And I think it is because most of our advocacy work was on issues and on things that were not involving*

*everybody in the formation of or even the articulation of these issues. Maybe there are new people who should be part of it, maybe [the peace practice] should move from Khartoum to the rural areas* (life history Samia Ahmed).

As described in Chapter 6, the objectives of interaction with the grassroots' level were not clear and changed from 'grassroots support to participation by leading women in formal peace negotiations through advocacy, consultation and constituency building', to meeting immediate needs, peacebuilding, trauma counselling and capacity building of especially women at the grassroots level.

The issue of Abyei started to worry many Sudanese women as did the situation in Darfur. When reflecting on unity or separation in the year 2008, Agnes Nyoka referred to both Darfur and Abyei to indicate that a united Sudan was anything but attractive. Inaam Haroun Mahmoud opined that "[i]f they would have included Darfur in the Naivasha talks, things could have been resolved. Things would not have developed in this way and for such a long time in Darfur, if people would have put all the issues on the table" (life history Inaam Haroun Mahmoud). Many expressed the fear of a return to war, be it inside Southern Sudan or between Northern and Southern Sudan, questioning the extent to which life changed following the CPA. A move towards democracy, changing the laws and sharing power was felt to be important. Importantly, the acceptance of the CPA had broadened amongst northern opposition parties and individual politicians (life history Inaam Haroun Mahmoud). What Samia Ahmed learned is that "if you really want to change things ... you have to be with people, you have to share your ideas with them, you have to discuss with them" (life history Samia Ahmed).

There are many references to trust, the absence thereof and the difficulties of building trust. As mentioned in Chapter 3, trust and distrust develop over time as people get to know each other, "...at the time when we met all the women, actually we did not know the women there in the south. So the fact that you gathered them and us under one roof, and gave us a start to talk I think ... this is the thing that helped. ... Before that, there was nothing like this. No contact, no much contact. I think that [was] the beginning, you know, of having given people the chance of coming together. To understand each other" (life history Boudour Osman Abu Affan). "First the time we went there is hatred. ... After Maastricht really, Maastricht helped us, particularly there was a time, and I am really happy about that, we went to a small room. And the Government of Sudan also, we went with our men, and also those ones came with some big people of the Government. Those ones they want to look if the women are talking and they give them some information. And we decided to chase them away from the room. That one gave us chance to know each other better" (life history Medelena Philip Ladu).

Trust is negatively affected by conflict as illustrated by the following words of Agnes Nyoka "[t]hey also like to say that they want peace. But the same day you hear them bombarding that area, people are dying, children are dying. Now which type of peace is that" (life history Agnes Nyoka). Trust is also negatively affected by donor agencies when they



provide financial support to programmes in the aftermath of war and fail to understand the actors and factors which undermine trust and promote conflict: “I think three years ago that brought women from the south, women from the north. I think it was the end of a workshop or something and I couldn’t really believe it because most of these women like ... I personally have nice relationship with them. And I was not part of that workshop. But when I came in it was like you could feel that the air was very thick. And I was like what is going on? Did we go back?” (life history Samia Ahmed).

The life histories contain many references to particular risks, including intimidation and harassment that women faced following their participation in the peace practice. As indicated by Esta Kuku Rahal in the previous chapter, “people really paid a price while working on peace in Sudan” (life history Esta Kuku Rahal). Women were picked up by security, prevented from meeting or travelling and arrested. Offices were searched and computers were cleaned. Even meetings to create awareness about the content of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement were discouraged and undermined.

The word empowerment is not used in the life histories recorded and when it is used it refers to the peace practice as a means of empowerment and not to empowerment as a goal.

### **On disempowerment of men and women**

To better understand changes in gender relations in the aftermath of war, I have analysed the life histories for changes in the achievements, resources and agency of both men and women as described by Sudanese women who participated in the peace practice. My research demonstrates that the situation of protracted civil warfare in Sudan has deeply affected the self-esteem and social value of men within their respective families. Their inability to make a living, financially support their families and protect their families from violence in the midst of conflict, left deep traces. War tampers with notions of masculinity and femininity, and changes the relations between men and women. Affected by the loss of his own brothers, the father of Esta Kuku Rahal notably started to give preference to daughters instead of sons (life history Esta Kuku Rahal). Life histories also show that opportunities for marriage and having children, thus the sexuality of both men and women, are affected.

The loss of resources among men is most frequently mentioned in the life histories researched, when compared to the loss of agency and achievements (life histories Agnes Nyoka, Esta Kuku Rahal, Joy Kwaje, Priscilla Joseph, Inaam Haroun Mahmoud, Jennifer Kujang, Medelena Philip Ladu and Bodour Osman Abu Affan). Sudanese women describe how men and boys have been affected by continued warfare in Sudan. The stories indicate that feelings of loss and frustration among men run high. Men and boys lose whatever possessions they have, run for their lives and are surrounded by poverty and death. Men find themselves in a helpless and hopeless situation in which carrying a gun is the best way to survive (life history Agnes Nyoka). They experience: loss of material resources like land and opportunities for work; social resources like opportunities for education as schools close; but also lose their social networks and relationships which could have enabled them



to improve their lives in situations of stability and security. Productive areas are targeted in times of war and opportunities for men to work change or disappear and force them to leave their families behind (life history Esta Kuku Rahal). Moreover social networks are stretched as “one person would have to maintain the lot” (life history Inaam Haroun), especially in situations of displacement.

Mental health problems including depression among men frequently feature in the life histories of women from both Southern Sudan and the Nuba mountains. Men “just got their own frustration” and “there were so many frustrations ... There were those who lost their legs, lost their hands. Lost their families” (life history Agnes Nyoka). Men cannot find employment and find it difficult to maintain their families. Displacement and trauma are also said to affect their educational performance (life history Inaam Haroun). Especially elderly and disabled men lose out, become a burden and are rejected by society. Men drink away their sorrows and pains (life histories Inaam Haroun, Agnes Nyoka and Priscilla Joseph). Agnes Nyoka relates that although her brothers were “not in the war” they “just got their own frustration”, working young in order to survive, with no opportunity to go to school and no one looking after them as families are scattered (life history Agnes Nyoka). She stressed the importance of social networks and relationships in Sudanese life while concluding that “the family is not in order” (life history Agnes Nyoka). The scars of war run deep, men fear for their lives and lose their offspring; some men have to be smuggled out of the country to avoid getting killed (life histories Jennifer Kujang, Medelena Philip and Joy Kwaje).

My findings also suggest that boys and men experience a serious loss of agency. Situations are described in which Sudanese men are unable to exercise any power or influence, cannot take decisions independently, and are not in a position to struggle or oppose. The event of being kidnapped as a young male is one of those disempowering experiences (life history Agnes Nyoka). Jennifer Kujang whose life history is part of this chapter describes circumstances in which young male refugees from Sudan get caught by police in the streets of Nairobi without reason. Not being able to join universities in Khartoum without joining the army first for compulsory military service affects their opportunities to enlarge their knowledge and skills but also puts young men in life-threatening situations (life histories Jennifer Kujang and Samira Hasan, interview Maarten Brouwer). Life histories explain how young male students could be picked up from the streets in Khartoum by force, taken by trucks to military training camps and end up in Southern Sudan as cannon fodder. Experiences of searching for family members lost, having to witness the shooting and killing of loved ones in silence and fear, and having to bury their bodies affected the mind of many boys and men (life history Esta Kuku). Last but not least, outstanding demands for bridewealth managed to break-up Southern Sudanese households while leaving men without their wives and children without their mothers, unable to “do anything” about their loss of relationships and networks (life history Agnes Nyoka).

Chances of success and achievement in life among boys and men are affected. Men get side-lined, become frustrated and are unable to fight back in times of war or in times of political turmoil (life histories Priscilla Joseph and Boudour Osman Abu Affan). Jennifer Kujang narrated how her son's hope for training, graduation and employment got smothered following empty promises by military leaders and their struggles for power. Moreover, Agnes Nyoka explained that in the aftermath of war, HIV/aids also caused problems in Southern Sudan, describing that "it is very difficult ... to come and stand out that I am affected. Because if you say you are affected nobody will come and say I want to love you, I want to have sex with you" (life history Agnes Nyoka). Thus keeping silent about HIV/aids allows one to continue and enjoy one's life.

When turning to an analysis of the life histories for changes in the achievements, resources and agency of women, my findings uncover that war in Sudan has inflicted heavy losses upon women from both Southern Sudan and the Nuba Mountains from the perspective of their resources (life histories Agnes Nyoka, Esta Kuku Rahal, Joy Kwaje, Priscilla Joseph, Inaam Haroun Mahmoud, Jennifer Kujang and Medelena Philip Ladu). The loss of resources among women is most frequently mentioned in the life histories when compared to the loss of agency and achievements. While the frequency with which the loss of agency and achievements are described amongst men and women across the life histories are much the same, the loss of resources experienced by women surpasses their description of the loss of resources among men.

Life histories describe the loss of resources from the perspective of growing up in scattered families (life histories Agnes Nyoka, Esta Kuku, Jennifer Kujang, Joy Kwaje, Medelena Philip Ladu and Priscilla Joseph). According to Esta Kuku Rahal "[w]omen are especially affected, because if men hear that there are movements in a certain area they run off and leave the women on their own to die with their children" (life history Esta Kuku Rahal). Some of them have hardly any family left, lost their parents and also started looking after the children of brothers and sisters having been shot and got killed. Men left their homes in search of work and money (life history Jennifer Kujang). Consequently, men and women get separated and oftentimes do not know each other's whereabouts and if their missing husband or family members are dead or alive. The war-induced loss of networks and relationships, which under normal circumstances would have enabled women to improve their situation and lives, is accompanied by an increase in social and economic responsibilities.

The loss of family members and the social and economic implications thereof are felt throughout the country (life history Samira Hasan). Besides a lack of financial and social support, access to schooling and completing one's education becomes problematic in times of war (life histories Agnes Noyka, Esta Kuku, Inaam Haroun Mahmoud, Jennifer Kujang, Medelena Philip Ladu, and Priscilla Joseph). In some areas "[s]chooling stopped all together" (life history Inaam Haroun Mahmoud). For some the only way to survive following their flight from war zones is:

*...to work illegally, brew alcohol, start a teashop, or sell food in the streets ... That was a big problem for women. They would work, without knowing that what they were doing is illegal, and end up in jail whilst having four or five children. The youngest children would end up in jail with their mother and the older ones would end up in the streets without parents. The husbands of these women would have died, are still fighting, or nobody knows where they are..., she ended up as head of the household, being both a father and a mother at the same time with no money in hand (life history Inaam Haroun Mahmoud).*

Rape and sexual assault were also recorded as affecting social networks and relationships between women and men (life histories Agnes Nyoka and Medelena Philip Ladu). A lack of togetherness besides the loss of children following birth frequently featured in the life histories researched.

Rape also produces a definite loss of agency and ability amongst women to resist as “[t]here is no way out .... [y]ou cannot say no” (life history Agnes Nyoka). According to Agnes Nyoka, the ability to bargain, negotiate and take decisions independently in Sudanese life are also affected by one’s relationships which enable one to improve one’s life or not, “if you don’t have a person behind you, you will not succeed”, while referring to one’s human resources, networks and relationships and issues of tribalism and nepotism (life history Agnes Nyoka). Sudden displacement affects the agency of women negatively as one leaves everything behind in fear without knowing “where you will end up” and if you can be accommodated or will have to move again (life history Inaam Haroun Mahmoud).

Jennifer Kujang described the loss of agency in terms of early marriage which prevents girls and women from making their own decisions. Her experiences of being taken to camps after walking from Zaire up to Uganda and being put in jail in Khartoum for about two months also represent traumatic and disempowering experiences from the perspective of agency (life history Jennifer Kujang). Also Medelena Philip Ladu describes seeing “young girls getting married in a small age, maybe 12 or 18 years old, with a big man like her father. And you cannot talk, you cannot talk” (life history Medelena Philip Ladu). At one point Medelena also described selling her things and returning to her kin “because you know in our tradition I am not free to decide anything” (life history Medelena Philip Ladu). When facing a problem at the Sudan Council of Churches, Priscilla Joseph was told by her mother not to go to court.

Chances of success and achievement in life among girls and women were also affected by years of civil war in Sudan and traditions. Women faced poverty, HIV/aids and stressful marriage situations including miscarriages and polygamy:

*The excuse was that, you know, it was an accident. The girl got pregnant. Of course it was not. He intended to marry. He bought her a home, we had different houses. For some reason she did not stay more than two years ... The time preceding the marriage up to the time their marriage broke was a very difficult time in the family. The only thing that probably kept us going, or kept*

*me going particularly, is that you know we were married in church. The church has always maintained there is no divorce (life history Joy Kwaje).*

### **On women's empowerment**

The life histories provide for fine-grained descriptions and my findings demonstrate that disempowerment and empowerment go hand in hand. Empowerment and disempowerment of Sudanese women in the midst and aftermath of war, and when analysed over a prolonged period of time, are concurrent and dual processes. The analysis of the life histories collected suggests that the stories of women's individual disempowerment are outnumbered by individual and remarkable experiences of women's empowerment as expressed through their agency, resources and achievements. Thus, irrespective of the unimaginable losses, disempowerment does not exclude empowerment.

First I will reflect on findings which demonstrate women's agency in terms of their faculty for bargaining and negotiation; or in other words, evidence found in the life histories of women demonstrates their exercise of influence and power. Consequently I will reflect on women's resistance including opposition, activism and struggle. I will also analyse their ability to take decisions independently in order to capture their agency. Consequently, I will analyse the life histories from the perspective of an increase in women's resources and achievements.

### **and agency**

The life histories attest to the active agency of women including a variety of ways in which women bargained and negotiated or exercised influence (life histories Agnes Nyoka, Esta Kuku Rahal, Inaam Haroun, Jennifer Kujang, Joy Kwaje, Medelena Philip Ladu, Priscilla Joseph, Bodour Abu Affan and Samira Hasan). Agnes Nyoka described her relentless efforts for training and education as well as her continuous efforts to climb the social ladder. She did not sit down under it when her first child died and managed to join university later as a mature student. Agnes Nyoka also presented her advocacy and lobby work, directed at companies drilling for oil in Sudan, as "fairly successful" (life history Agnes Nyoka). She also managed to settle all pending dowry matters, involving herself and including her mother's release, following the CPA.

According to Jennifer Kujang, "women can make peace really", explaining how women used to stop an argument between families or influence what their sons may have been up to (life history Jennifer Kujang). Inaam Haroun used to enjoy reconciling people even as a child and joined local social organizations for this purpose. In the course of their participation in the peace practice, Medelena Philip Ladu lobbied with chiefs to end war in Sudan while Esta Kuku Rahal exerted herself in contacting military and political leaders across conflict lines and in writing letters. Esta turned her anger with the impact of war on women's lives into action for peace concluding that "[a]s women working on peace we achieved results" (life history Esta Kuku Rahal). Priscilla Joseph demonstrated will power during her personal struggle to fight against prejudice towards women at work and was successful in doing so.

She also managed to negotiate humanitarian matters with the SPLM leadership on behalf of the UN, the NGOs and the churches. Interestingly, her first marriage was a “mathematical calculation” in response to social pressures (life history Priscilla Joseph). Getting a divorce afterwards was an ordeal given church structures but she succeeded.

Women showed political bravery. According to Priscilla, women “managed to bring a little bit of transparency” into political processes (life history Priscilla Joseph). Agnes Nyoka added that “[e]ven if I am the SPLM and the SPLM is not doing something good, I have the right to tell them this is not the right way. Even if it is the Government of National Unity, you tell them this is not what we want” (life history Agnes Nyoka). Samira Hasan even told her political party members of the opposite sex that women’s political participation was overdue and if need be women would start their own political party and make sure that women would no longer vote for men during elections (life history Samira Hasan). She added that women “worked hard to obtain” the quota as part of the law on elections in 2008 (life history Samira Hasan). These are clear examples of ways in which Sudanese women spoke their mind and exercised influence and power.

The agency of Sudanese women is also reflected in their resistance including struggle, opposition, and activism. Agnes Nyoka stated that she joined the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement as an activist and used to talk about self-determination and women’s rights while working as a clerk in Southern Sudan (life history Agnes Nyoka). She also identified herself with civil society, “[b]ecause when you are a civil society person you can correct” (life history Agnes Nyoka). A visit by the Secretary General of the UN to Nairobi was actively used to pass messages to the UN and mobilise resistance to continued warfare:

*We go with our coffin. We put it on the road where he is going to pass. So the security is tight. We cry. We wear black clothes. We sleep on the main road. The media comes. They ask us. We do not say anything. We have our paper. We want to give it to Kofi Annan. So we managed to take at least two people to go to the UN... so that our message is passed to Kofi Annan* (life history Agnes Nyoka).

Sudanese women rallied against continued warfare and mobilized themselves to present their views, protest and demand their rights, be it on the occasion of a visit of the Secretary General or during peace talks in Machakos and Naivasha while participating in the peace practice researched (life histories Jennifer Kujang, Medelena Philip Ladu, Bodour Abu Affan and Priscilla Joseph). Oftentimes they contributed the little money they could spare to support their actions. Bodour Osman Abu Affan recalled that on several occasions in the history of Sudan, “[w]omen wanted peace you see. What they did. They went into demonstrations” (life history Bodour Osman Abu Affan). As explained earlier, women’s agency also implied contributing actively to armed struggle in support of their cause (life histories Joy Kwaje and Priscilla Joseph). Samira Hasan’s struggle revealed itself both at home and in the office. She “stood up against the men” in her family and was the first

woman to become elected as secretary to the trade union, wondering “[w]hy ... men [would] have better facilities in comparison to women?” (life history Samira Hasan).

In a variety of ways the life histories also provide evidence of the ability of Sudanese women to take decisions independently irrespective of what others thought. Samira Hasan took the initiative to get a divorce after first securing a job. Esta Kuku Rahal insisted on marrying a man of her choice irrespective of her family’s refusal, and Medelena Philip Ladu went back to school after marriage to the surprise of her parents. Their faculty of bargaining and negotiation together with their resistance and activism featured more prominently in their life histories than their ability to take decisions independently when analysing their agency (Appendix 7.1). As Samia Ahmed put it succinctly, “my family were supportive and we discuss things, we talk about things, but I also know that they are from a different generation, so we don’t agree on so many things, ... but it’s not like you know a 100% democratic family but again ... you sometimes create your own opportunities and your own programme” (life history Samia Ahmed).

### and resources

I have analysed the life histories in terms of a recorded increase in material resources such as land, social resources including knowledge and skills beside human resources, i.e. networks and relationships which enable women to improve their lives. It is mostly social and human resources which feature in the life histories of Sudanese women. Agnes Nyoka mentioned having her own house, while Priscilla Joseph stated that she was building one. Medelena Philip Ladu described having land, managing plots and building houses in more detail and as a means to support herself:

*My mother never got any education but she was very strong. Even now she has a plot here in Juba. Now I am the one following those plots. In Khartoum she bought one. She was a very bright woman, who can manage for herself. She managed. That time she was brewing. These local drinks... I have land. My fathers’ land is in Yei. Because we are many now we have not yet settled how. You have seen Sudanese tradition, it is always boys. But now that is what we are fighting for. We need also women to be there. I have right also to get that small land. But before it is all men, all the time we talk about boys. Even in my own house I built, I will put boys there although they are not the ones who built it. That is what happens in our society sometimes. ... The house from Khartoum. Then also I have a house here [in Juba], it is my mothers’ plot, but I built this one. These are the ones supporting* (life history Medelena Philip Ladu).

Her story indicates that traditionally women have limited access to and control over land and material resources in Southern Sudan. This is no longer acceptable for women like Medelena though.

In terms of social resources and an increase in knowledge and skills, I noted the struggle for education by Agnes Nyoka earlier. Women originating from the Nuba Mountains experienced a struggle for education similar to women from Southern Sudan (life histories

Joy Kwaje, Priscilla Joseph, Jennifer Kujang, Esta Kuku and Inaam Haroun). The life histories suggest that Sudanese women increased their knowledge and skills by means of their participation in the peace practice and in the course of their peacebuilding efforts. They took lessons from their encounters with other women with war experiences and their participation in conferences outside of Sudan. They also learned how to best communicate with policy makers “using four words or twenty words within four minutes or five minutes” (life history Agnes Nyoka). Women like Jennifer Kujang received most of their education through the peace practice explaining that all participants benefited irrespective of their formal training (life history Jennifer Kujang).

Joy Kwaje described their increase in knowledge and skills in addition to networks and relationships which enable women to improve their situation, and states:

*So the Dutch initiative helped particularly in giving us access to funds, and because now we had the access to funds we were able to translate those ideas into programmes. We were able to send women out for training in peacebuilding, in management skills, in trauma counselling, even in report writing you know. We send women for English courses because we now have the resources. And that now was able to empower the women. Without the Dutch initiative, I do not know how far we would have gone. But really it was a, you know, timely energizer for us. When we were almost giving up, this Initiative came and not only did it make us strong, not only did it enable us to train other women, we were now able to do networking, networking with our sisters in the south who for a long time thought that you know women in the north were not having the same thinking like them. So we were able to come together and understand ourselves as you know having one cause working for peace in Sudan. It also helped us to have a network with women from the northern sector who were like minded, you know working for peace. I think we went to greater heights, meeting in Africa, we met in Egypt, in Addis [Abeba], in Asmara, in Kampala several times, in Nairobi several times. And when we went to Maastricht for that big conference, I think that was the height of it. And eh ... the Initiative to me was really a very important factor in the growth of the women's movement in this very difficult time (life history Joy Kwaje).*

Participants enjoyed many training opportunities by means of the peace practice, but also other agencies including Save the Children Fund and International Rescue Committee noted these women peacebuilders and amongst others, invested in their training (life history Inaam Haroun). Samira Hasan added that the peace practice “attracted everybody’s attention” and facilitated her connections to “so many different groups and organizations working on peace”, enabling her to work on many issues and travel within the country as well as to the Oslo donors meeting following the CPA (life history Samira Hasan). A notable increase in networks and relationships also featured in the life histories of Agnes Nyoka, Inaam Haroun, Esta Kuku Rahal, Jennifer Kujang, Medelena Philip Ladu, Samia Ahmed and Priscilla Joseph. As Agnes Nyoka eloquently put it, “SuWEP ... has connected us internationally. Especially, what I was going to say all the women who have come up are the persons from SuWEP. We have learned a lot. We moved a lot. SuWEP has moved a lot. But by then when people were



doing these things, most of us did not recognize that SuWEP was doing something” (life history Agnes Nyoka).

### **and achievements**

The achievements recorded through the life histories of Sudanese women who participated in the peace practice are many. They describe positive and more complex outcomes of social value including participation in decision-making processes and political participation. Agnes Nyoka, Esta Kuku, Priscilla Joseph, Joy Kwaje, Bodour Abu Affan and Samira Hasan described themselves as politicians. Agnes said she would not hesitate to take a chance at becoming the president of Southern Sudan, defining herself as a politician:

*Why I say that I am a politician, because I did not know that I am politician. I was thinking that I would still continue as civil society person working. But I find myself that I am now talking politics of Southern Sudan, and Sudan at large (life history Agnes Nyoka).*

Inaam Haroun managed to complete her master’s degree and is employed in the public relations department at the Popular Council for strategic planning. Her ambition is to complete her PhD in communications and get married. Jennifer expressed pride for being elected by more than 100 women as chairperson of the women’s union covering one state and 36 counties in Southern Sudan. Joy Kwaje became the chairperson of the Southern Sudan Human Rights Commission and following the April 2010 elections she was nominated chairperson for information and culture by the Juba-based regional parliament, the Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly. Priscilla left her work as a doctor and teacher, moved into parliament, headed the parliamentary committee on human rights, devoted herself to the South Sudan Darfur Taskforce and was appointed Minister of the GOSS in 2010.

Boudour Abu Affan completed her PhD in 1984 and was the first woman to become the vice-president of the African Development Bank in Abidjan. Bodour played a leadership role within the National Union of Sudanese Women based in Khartoum, and campaigned to secure 25% of the seats for women in parliament. In her life history she expressed her ambition to become a politician and had plans to run as a candidate. She unfortunately died of cancer in April 2010 while presidential and parliamentary elections were being held in Sudan. Samira Hasan expressed the ambition to join the elections and reach a decision-making position in parliament. She remarked that “[t]he political participation of women” had been symbolic for a long time but indicated that this had changed given an awareness “of the power of women, [and their] effective role in civil society” (life history Samira Hasan).

### **At different levels**

As mentioned earlier war in Sudan changed relationships, including socially constructed values and beliefs, and the nature of both masculinity and femininity. Conditions of war demand resilience, flexibility and reflexivity among men and women irrespective of social realities and social structures. How men and women act and or interact in times of war



affects their status in society and changes their relationships. It is Sudanese men and women themselves who are the engines and engineers of changes in the aftermath of war. Life histories of Sudanese women reveal that everything is subject to change.

I will analyse processes of change from a gender perspective over time and touch upon both individual as well as collective levels referred to in the life histories. As discussed in Chapter 3.9, my findings suggest that gender relations in Sudan changed due to both external pressures and in particular continued civil warfare besides internal pressures including relational and collective interests of both men and women.

### **at the individual level**

The life histories provide plenty of examples of steps towards social change and changing gender relations at the level of individual men and women (life histories Medelena Philip Ladu, Esta Kuku Rahal and Joy Kwaje). Boudour Osman Abu Affan explained that when she went to school at the age of four or five, “not every girl went to school” (life history Bodour Osman Abu Affan). The husband of Medelena supported her to finish her education and become a teacher irrespective of the fact that her parents were “not happy, you know we in Sudan, how come somebody is already got married and going back to school” (life history Medelena Philip Ladu). Joy Kwaje was assisted by a Southern Sudanese man at work who agreed to sponsor and accommodate her struggle to continue her education as a married woman. Even though Esta Kuku Rahal herself did not complete her studies, she encouraged her seven girls to complete their education and enter university. The husband of Esta encouraged Esta to continue her personal development.

Inaam Haroun Mahmoud called her father a ‘gender man’ as he did not put any restrictions on her and her sisters. He encouraged them to be strong and become independent. Inaam also found that he did not give preference to boys over girls. Travelling and returning home late after meetings was never a problem and she mentioned inviting her father and brothers along to workshops at times to change their thinking and influence their minds. On the other hand, the change benefited the family. If it were not for Inaam and her elder sister helping their father with some income, the younger brothers and sisters would not have been able to complete their schooling. Her family situation and their need for her financial support also implied thinking of marriage at a later stage:

*If I got married I would not be able to assist except when I marry a rich person, a very rich person, who does not need my money that is my salary. So we are able to cover our expenditures, the house etcetera and I can help my father with my salary. It is among relatives that you find a husband, and we are not rich. All of us are below average financially. So that is a problem. When I marry and my husband is poor, I am not able to look after two houses. It is either my fathers’ home or my own home. If I am to have my own children, I cannot look after my brothers and my father. The other thing we have is culture, a patriarchal culture, whereby a husband would not allow me to earn money and then spend it on my father’s house. Even money earned with my work I would not be allowed to spend on my brothers and sisters... We*

*are still not accustomed to saying no to a man but occasionally* (life history Inaam Haroun Mahmoud).

Agnes Nyoka indicated that she gave money to her father's family to pay them the outstanding bridewealth regarding her mother, "so they will go in the name of my father while I am the one giving them the money" (Life history Agnes Nyoka). Traditionally it is the family of the man paying the family of the wife bridewealth in Southern Sudan. Medelena Philip Ladu stated that her mother was forced to get married and reflecting on her own situation, she highlighted change by saying "[m]en can force to marry ... but for me no, I have rights" (life history Medelena Philip Ladu).

Samira Hasan explained that she married early stating that marriage according to Islam is "a duty and social necessity" (life history Samira Hasan). According to her, society "thinks that when a woman reaches 30 it is over and she cannot get married any more" stating that Sudanese society is "difficult" (life history Samira Hasan). On the other hand she "took some big decisions" in her life and stood up against the men in her family, obtaining a divorce, renting a house and raising her children on her own (life history Samira Hasan). Women like Samia Ahmed, representing a younger generation of women in Northern Sudan, seem to live with some of the changes taking place in Sudan already stating "it is not like I am living my life to get married", while recognizing that marriage is a big issue (life history Samia Ahmed). She considered her father an important advocate for girls' education and enjoyed the support from her family when travelling to Southern Sudan and war-affected areas for work.

### **at the collective level**

The life histories also suggest changes in gender relations which transcend the individual level. In the aftermath of war Sudanese women also refer to social change and a change of gender relations at a collective level. Samira Hasan found that both the Government of Sudan and the political parties have changed the way they look at women:

*My first peacemaking efforts were with the Initiative. To me that was the beginning. Honestly that attracted attention because how could we as women play a role in peacemaking. It turned everybody eyes to this. Well, men think women are more effective from a humanitarian perspective than they are. They consider us very active and successful. It also changed the way women are generally looked upon. Really, the way women are looked upon by the political parties, by the Government over the last three or four years has changed. Women are on the move and that has attracted a lot of attention* (life history Samira Hasan).

Consequently, Agnes Nyoka referred to key political and military leaders supporting and advocating a change in gender relations at the collective level, finding that "[n]ow our president of Southern Sudan, Salva Kiir is standing with the women, he is ready to make sure that 25% is exercised at all levels. This has given us an opportunity, this has empowered us" (life history Agnes Nyoka). This change was also noted by Anis Hagggar.

Esta Kuku Rahal believes that many men agree on educating their women and women themselves started to “decide on their husband”, “participate in domestic decision-making and local administration ... slowly, slowly” and “talk in front of people about the role of women” (life history Esta Kuku Rahal). According to Esta, women “carry economic responsibilities and deal with money”, “have become judges and lawyers” and “want to work” (life history Esta Kuku Rahal). Samia Ahmed is somewhat more sceptical explaining that politicians “have to talk about women’s role and women in peace” since it is an international trend (life history Samia Ahmed). According to her, some may do so out of conviction while “most of them do not believe in it” (life history Samia Ahmed). Medelena Philip Ladu argues that men support women after wars because women supported men during the war, while Jennifer Kujang stressed that women organizations in particular volunteered a lot “for the sake of the women” (life history Jennifer Kujang).

### **In the course of time**

How did the empowerment of individual women like Agnes Nyoka, Esta Kuku Rahal, Samira Hasan and others, translate to more lasting gains for Sudanese women over time? Do the life histories suggest changes in laws, procedures, regulations and values to advance the status of women in Sudan and address unequal institutional relations? What about informal restrictions placed on Sudanese women as referred to above by Medelena Philip Ladu in terms of inheriting property? Moreover, do the life histories suggest a process of structural transformation which affected gender relations post-CPA?

Going back to Chapter 5, the life histories give evidence of the activism and efforts of Sudanese women which started prior to the CPA and continued post-CPA, to change the rules of the game and achieve some success in advancing the status of Sudanese women. Southern Sudanese women like Agnes Nyoka, Medelena Philip Ladu and Priscilla Joseph point to the interim constitution covering Southern Sudan which specifies a quota of at least 25% as an affirmative action to promote the participation of women in decision-making. Prior to the formalisation of this quota, Agnes mentioned that the idea featured in the Chukudum declaration of the SPLM as well as the SPLM peace through development programme. Importantly, Priscilla also referred to their capacity as women to mobilize opinion among men in support of women’s participation in decision-making. She explained how women strategized and participated in key meetings prior to the CPA to support a decision on a quota for women. According to Agnes Nyoka, “women are coming up” (life history Agnes Nyoka), and increasingly at the grassroots level too.

Life histories also referred to the translation of gains for women in the case of Northern Sudan (life histories Bodour Osman Abu Affan, Esta Kuku Rahal and Samira Hasan). Esta and Samira refer to the mention of women’s rights and affirmative action in the interim constitution in the north which came about following the CPA. They are critical of actual progress made, but Samira Hasan added that consequently Sudanese women “went and succeeded to get it into the law on elections without any debate”, showing their “muscle and all the parties are obliged to nominate at least 25% women” (life history Samira Hasan).

Bodour Osman Abu Affan concluded three years after the peace agreement was signed that “[n]ow a lot of southern women are in the parliament in the south. There are so many here in the north, in the unity government. They are contributing a lot, they are contributing” (life history Bodour Osman Abu Affan). Moreover, she felt that when men “see all these women around them ... they will feel shy and stop thinking of war” (life history Bodour Osman Abu Affan).

To what extent these gains are precursors to a process of structural transformation affecting gender relations post-CPA is less evident. Anis Hagggar flagged the more lasting gains for Sudanese women as follows:

*I watched as a certain amount of dignity came into the process ... we can't underestimate these women, we can't take them for granted anymore and this was demonstrated when they formed their governments* (life history Anis Hagggar).

Samira Hasan also noted that for long, “[t]he political participation of women was symbolic and ... women would take a backseat when elections were over” (life history Samira Hasan). According to her this has changed, as men now became “aware of the power of women, [and] her effective role in civil society” for which reason “political parties started to absorb women in their political offices and councils” (life history Samira Hasan). Samira opined that as both educated and uneducated women increasingly contributed to the survival of their families financially, men generally became more conscious and appreciative of the role of women. However, Esta Kuku Rahal pointed out that when men allow their wives to work that does not imply that women are free to spend “their money the way they like” (life history Esta Kuku Rahal). As explained in Chapter 5, traditional structures survived two civil wars and life histories suggest that overcoming informal restrictions and rules placed on Sudanese women may be a necessity for structural transformation towards gender equality in the long term.

My research suggests that changes in gender relations and social change are inevitable and gradual. Changes in Sudanese gender relations post-CPA originate from a combination of internal and external pressures at different levels over a prolonged period of time. One cannot expect sudden and sweeping changes in the aftermath of war.

#### **4 I have never been in peace as a woman**

To better understand the meaning of empowerment and disempowerment of both men and women, the life history of Jennifer Kujang is presented in her own words. Her story is a story of disempowerment but it is also a story of empowerment. Prior to the war, her father was well off. He had a coffee plantation in Yei, a small shop and had six wives. As a result of the war he lost everything and became mentally ill. Jennifer fled from the war in Sudan to Uganda. She was unable to complete her primary education and was married. She calls herself a victim of early marriage and also describes the scars of war.

When Jennifer became pregnant, her husband left in search of employment and income. The family was scattered and communications became difficult. She stayed with her mother and started training in sewing and embroidery to be able to make a living. Her mother managed well from brewing alcohol and obtained plots of land in both Juba and Khartoum. Together with her mother she sustained her family with her embroidery. She also assisted numerous brothers with the completion of their education, though some also experienced psychological problems. Feelings of loss and frustration among men were prominent. She describes how her son started drinking due to social and economic difficulties. According to Jennifer, her husband died never having gotten rid of his frustrations. At the time of the second war, Jennifer Kujang found herself in Khartoum. She ended up two months in jail after being caught selling beer.

Women contributed to warfare according to Jennifer. Women were at the frontline helping their men and preparing their food. According to her, Sudanese women are the peacemakers, not men. Men are greedy and want power. She joined the peace practice as a member of a civil society organization based in Nairobi, Sudanese Women Association Nairobi (SWAN). She took English language classes at SWAN and enjoyed many training opportunities by means of the peace practice, making her feel empowered. She used to volunteer a lot and contribute even by cleaning the office. Jennifer is proud that she was elected chairperson of the women's union from five counties. SuWEP can make Sudan according to her.

The following elements present an analytical perspective of the life history of Jennifer:

- on disempowerment of men: In times of war, fathers, husbands, brothers and sons may lose their assets; find it hard to make a living; and, experience difficulties in getting married. Grief, trauma and mental health problems are common;
- on disempowerment of women: Women and girls run for their lives, walk for days and may end up in harsh refugee situations across the border in times of war. They are given an axe upon arrival and girls end up married instead of educated. Families become scattered;
- on empowerment of women: Women and girls have to fend for themselves when families break up due to continued warfare. They have to struggle for education, and with the little money they make under difficult circumstances, they have to maintain the lot;
- on war and peace: Sudanese women were helping men in making war but that is easily forgotten. Women can make peace, and have tried hard;
- have women ever felt at peace: The peace practice supplied a variety of training opportunities to many and empowered women like Jennifer Kujang. Women volunteered work and acted from a need experienced to improve the status of women and promote women's rights in Sudan.

The overall analysis of life histories collected has been presented in this chapter.

**Life history 7.4** Jennifer Kujang Abe

**In terms of my education and schooling I never got far**

My name is **Jennifer Kujang Abe**... In terms of my education and schooling I never got far. I am the victim of early marriages. Because in 1963 there was a war in Southern Sudan. My parents went to Zaire, I was too young at that time because I was born in 1959. So I was too young and we were in exile in Zaire and then when the war of Zaire broke out also, it was called Simba (rebellion) or something like that, we started to run to Uganda. We stayed in Uganda; I started my primary in Arua. In the time of Oboto (Ugandan leader Milton Oboto) also they started to bring refugees at that time to go back to the south. We were all taken to the camps. At that time my father ran also as he became sick. When he lost his everything in the war of the sixties he became sick with mental problems. It was a depression or something like that... My mother has 10 children but three died, I am the first born. Again we started to move from Arua to the West of Uganda that was called Kasese, that Kilembe mine where the mine was. From there also I start primary but there was nobody there to pay school fees, I was too young at that time, I was 14 years old. I got married to somebody also, a Sudanese any way, in that camp. So I have two kids.

I never got far in school. I studied up to primary five. At that time I got married I stayed there with my husband. When the peace was signed in '73 we came back ... we came back to Sudan. Again my husband decided, that time also with the condition like now, you see no jobs ... my husband decided to go back to Uganda. So that time my mother was young also at that time. She said how can you go, do not go back to Uganda. We have just come from Uganda. You just stay in Sudan but he said no, he is going. So he went and left me. That time I am also pregnant. He went alone. Communications ... became difficult with him. Problems. I stayed home with my mother, no education. I started to go back to centers, social welfare had a center, I started going to a center to train myself in sewing, embroidery and all this. That time my English also, even up to now, it is not good. I try what to do next. After that I started also going back to evening classes. So from there I got a job in Social Welfare because I know practical things. Up to now I can make clothes, I can knit, I can do all this. So they employed me with little money. I started working.

**You become stressed and then you get depressed**

I have two boys and one girl. One is really, up to now I became sick because of him. When also this war broke out, I have brothers, even me I am the one who educated them. Because also my father when he became sick he could not bring them up. That time I sacrificed myself with my mother, and I started to support my followers. The one following me completed secondary school and also another one completed secondary school. The third one I sent to university, I am the one who is paying with all my embroidery and doing all this and paid him, until he completed university in India. It was private at that time because the Sudanese were getting scholarships from India but we also paid some. The following one also I sent him. Then the war broke out, communications became a problem. I think we have a blood of this. When you get sick quickly. Unless with counseling, I do not know what it is called. You become stressed and then you get depressed. Also my brother got a depression.

When I heard like that we tried our best. I said okay. So from India there is no way, with the little money I have sent them they started to come to Kenya so that they can get a refugee status. From there he became worse. When I heard like that I also went to Kenya. I find him really ... so I tried to take him to counseling, and what all, until they left to Canada. Me I said ah, I cannot go to Canada as a refugee. But now there are four, including my first born in Canada. So one was left behind with my mother, with my mum, in Sudan. So this one who was left in Sudan now is the one also getting, when my mother died, he started also falling into drinking. He became a young soldier, he joined these soldiers. So he become... so our communication was a problem.

### **I am now empowered through this SuWEP**

That time we had an association called SWAN, Sudanese Women Association [Nairobi]... We were taught English from A, B, C, D under the trees in the center. So that is how we started; start writing, all those like Medelena. From there this SuWEP also, you have heard yesterday when we were talking, the SPDF, SPLM-United, SPLM itself and then two civil society organizations Voice for Change/Christian Mission and SWAN; so that time we have the people come together to become SuWEP... They sent us according to our education. If it is Netherlands, it is those who also have a proper education. But some of us also go there even if you are not educated. All members went. From there we started now why even me I am proud I am now empowered through this SuWEP. I was cleaning the office of SuWEP. The SuWEP, I was cleaning it, because we see like that if you bring somebody from outside you cannot get anything. At least we ourselves do work. Me I used to clean SuWEP office. Even if there [are] courses we go, they sent us for trauma counseling courses, for gender courses. That is why I got all this experience of mine. I never go to university; I never go to intermediate, except primary. The one I told you before. I just got this education through SuWEP.

### **He died with frustrations and what all**

After that was 1999 my mother died from Egypt. Those brothers of mine when they see that my mother died they ran to me in Nairobi and said mama died what are we going to do now. I said we have money, if you have money you just send the money, and then send the body, I will receive it in Kampala and take it to our village, to Yei. That time there was the war in '99. So they did that. So I went and I took the body and buried it in Yei. It was sent through Entebbe airport, I received it and then I take it there. When I reached our home that is when I decided to look for the relatives of my husband. They told me that my husband died at the border of Zaire. All those years I never even, my children do not know that he has died. So he died from that time. He died in 1993. So I do not know that he had died but I heard in 1999... He died with frustrations and what all. Even he did not marry any woman. He did not have any children except my children.

My father has six wives. That time he was well off. He had a coffee plantation in Yei and then also he had a small shop. You know Southern Sudan, when they have small money always they marry. We are many. We are 25 kids from my father. From my mother we are 10, three



died. You remember seven, seven are all alive. Two in the [United] States, three in Canada, my follower she is in Egypt with her kids. [I] now remain in Sudan, I alone. This is from my mother, but from other mothers they are there... We are scattered. My mother never got any education but she was very strong. Even now she has a plot here in Juba. Now I am the one following those plots. In Khartoum she bought one. She was a very bright woman, who can manage for herself. She managed. That time she was brewing. These local drinks. Most of us southerners go through this brew. This brew.

### **I have been elected from five counties**

You know I have SuWEP as I told you, we have been moving too long all this. My own community is the one that brought me up to the town as a chairperson of the women's union. I have been elected from five counties. From 120 women, I got 100-something, 110 or... I cannot remember. Only one county did not vote for me but five counties all voted for me. That is why I am here. I am a chairperson for this state of the women's union, 36 counties. We have been elected, we are all 15. With the executive, I am the chairperson, then the deputy, some for foreign affairs, some for what all this.

### **The worse thing is footing**

Women have played an important role. I have experience when I was too young. That was in the 60s. That of 60s, it was worse because we don't know, even our father don't know the rights. Even as a refugee. There was no proper education. Then the worse thing is footing. Up to now I can remember when we are footing, I was very young, footing from, it always stuck in my mind, from Zaire up to Uganda... Walking. The moment you reach, you find Southern Sudanese who are in this place, and then they have run away. Children have died. You can see the graves. We spend the night there, then again tomorrow in the morning you get up and then you walk. It was really. I cannot forget about that. Young children, it is not, it is dying I think because of disease or some other things. That is now what I think. Before I do not know. Why? One house you have about six or three graves. Always those of my mother tell me because of no food, ... no medicines, ... that is why all these children are dying. The worse thing also, when we are all in Arua and then Government of Uganda says let us bring all the refugees together. Everybody goes searching them from houses to houses. Collecting. Children are crying. We are just taken to the camps. There are only trees and you are only given axes to cut the trees. And you then just start to put something while it is raining. I cannot forget. That is the worst part of it. You do not know your rights, even as a refugee, you do not know your rights. That was the first war.

### **I was taken to prison only because of beer**

Then I also experienced when the second one started, in Khartoum, I experienced a very bad situation. I was trying to sell this beer with Ethiopians. The Ethiopian brings the beer and then they deliver to us southerners. We sell them in secret. Later on I think mine was being discovered, somebody accused me. I was hiding them somewhere. It was not in the house. Because already they have, so somebody has told them the place and they just came to the house and they started taking me with all my money with what in the house. Then I was



taken to the prison only because of beer. That was in 1993, before I ran also away. So I was in jail because of the beer. In '93. It was worse. When I went there in the jail, about two months, I find all blacks. Except those northerners if they are caught also, they are caught because of adultery. But all of we blacks only drinks. You got Nuba drinks, Darfurians drinks, we southerners drinks. Then we are jailed for no reason. So it was worse. And then the place where the food is in. It was worse at that time.

### **Those boys cannot move**

Only the good thing in Khartoum because there is no rains. Rains come about once a month, or how many times a year. That is good. If there would be rain I do not know how people will sleep in that jail, that Omdurman jail. This is what I experienced also. Then also in Nairobi when I went there. Imagine you can see our young boys. They ran without their parents most of them. Then we as a mother there, we see them, they are all our children. When you will find them, they will come and eat. If something little you will cook for them. But the worse thing is also those boys cannot move. All the time they are caught. Until we, all of us, we can give. You have something very little to get them out from the jail. Without any reason. Without any reason. The police just ... Yeah, they are caught for 10,000 (Kenyan shilling) imagine 150 Dollars already so all the family come together until they can give something to support.

### **You can see so many Equatorians now drinking ... because they did not get chances**

Yeah, my son, yeah, when Riek Machar and Garang separated. Riek came to Sudan. My son was with my mother. All those young boys, he comes with a policy. Then ... he brought these boys to the south, here in Juba. So those boys were being trained. After that he decided also he ran away. He left those children here. Up to now you can see so many Equatorians now drinking, what. Because of all this, because they did not now get chances. Even they did not bother for that. This now what happened.

Women also, they were in the frontline, they were there. They were there because they were helping the men. Even food. They will come to the house like in Yei, where. They will come we need food. You will look for something and cook for them and they will eat. Because also they do not have where to eat, the soldiers themselves. They will find a small chicken. You should cook for them. So all these women have been experienced. But now they do not consider that. That is the bad thing. The worse thing of the Government. They forgot about that.

### **We make the crochet, we do peanut butter, we dry okra**

Even when Kofi Annan came to Nairobi, women really mobilized themselves. They went up to Girigiri, the United Nations. They went to see Kofi Annan. They did all this because of the petrol, the oil... They stood on the road until they passed him a message. The same thing when the peace was started in Machakos. Women did the same thing. They say now those Arabs know how to play. They also did the same. Before those people go there when early in the morning they were already there. They were taken by bus. We organized ourselves.

Women contribute their own money. Men are not giving women money. They just ... the little they make crochet, we sell them, we sent to America. Those children, like me I sent to my sisters. That is how I was paying my rent over the house. Nobody was paying for the rental of my house. Even as I said we are refugees and we know that we can claim for rights but nobody pays for us this. We make the crochet, we do peanut butter, we dry okra. And then we did that. So we all, our own money, we contribute for that. We make okra and then we sell them. For ourselves also. Those who can get will buy from me. That is how we survived in Nairobi. So this was there, working, and then the men now forgetting ourselves. They are renovating others, but they are not renovating our center. Can't you see? I just struggle by myself. Small, small rent and then I just paint one room, two rooms, can't you see.

### **He is drinking**

[My son] is here now. ...But he is drinking. I am trying but I could not really. ...He did not get a job. Still I said, I am trying to find a counselor but we do not have good counselors in Juba ... I think because of ... they were training. What he was telling that they had been training here. Then Riek Machar was supposed to come and graduate them with two stars. But he did not turn up and then people started to fight among themselves as southerners. They split themselves also. It is good enough, sometimes he tells me, because he is from Juba. That is why they have got ways until they come to the town. If it were not like that maybe they would have been killed. When they were there in the frontline also. [H]e did not. Because Riek did not come, they do not have good records. They do not have good records. Me I am trying, I say if he still wants the army but let him calm down. Because they are only two kids. The other one is in Canada. That one the bigger one is in Canada. Far away also. He always blames me, this one, that you know mum because you love that child of yours that is why you were in Nairobi and me I was being left in Sudan. I say not like that, it was condition. Not like that. Something he blames me like that. Then also he blames, because the father was not there also. So he became a problem too.

The one in Canada got married to a white lady. So because I was not there ... only they communicate with me on telephone. Sometimes they tell me that one day we are going to invite you to come and see us there. Or they will come when they get their own money, they will come and visit me here, this is what he was always telling me. But I did not attend their wedding there. Except my sister, a young sister of mine who has attended with my brother, they are the ones who attended the wedding. The young one is just drinking. He did not have any girlfriend up to now. I think he is ambitious also. That is why all those things happened to him. He was ambitious and nobody was guiding him at that time.

### **You could you not make you own decisions**

No. Because I was been affected you know, early marriages. Until when I was in Nairobi that is when I start to say I can make my own decisions now. But before no, completely. Even it has already weakened me. Always I hear, people always become soft, I do not like to make

somebody annoyed. I do not like to, because of the way I was married very young. You cannot make your own decisions. That affects, it is already in me. I am widow now.

### **Women are real peacemakers**

In peacemaking, women can make peace really. Women are real peacemakers. Because for us in the south women are real peacemakers. Traditionally. Why I say traditionally, because before if somebody wants to fight or people are fighting. Two families. And then a woman will say you know if you fight I will torn my clothes off, it will make me naked. People will stop this war. People will stop. Also if somebody says please my son, don't do that if you do it I'd better die. I, your mother. Straight away this boy will not do that. He will say that because of my mum I will not do that. So it means we women, we are really the peacemakers. And then these men of us, if not because of women, I think we did not get this peace of us. Because all men are greedy. Even with the (*SPLM*) convention. If women would not have said no, no, no this is too much for us. You always greedy men, you always want power. If you people spoil this one. That is why you see they also calm down. Then they see really what is the vision in the country. We really are peacemakers.

Men only when they see they are tired. They were tired that is why they said just let us make peace. You know because they were tired. It did not come from their heart. From both, whether from north or from south. It did not come from their heart. But we women have tried. We have tried but men, no.

### **Let it be a movement of the women**

The future of SuWEP, me as Jennifer, let it be a movement of the women. All of Sudan. It is a movement for women in political agendas. Really for my eyes, Jennifer. This is what I am thinking for SuWEP. We can bring good cabinets; we can know who is representing us as women whether nationally or locally. Because really if we, SuWEP can make Sudan, if this organization becomes big until we also have schools, hospitals, even lawyers for ourselves to defend women's problems. If we can have all this it will be good. That is why we have been volunteering ourselves to SuWEP without salary. Up to now we never, me Jennifer, even here I do not have salary but I volunteer because of what women have been going through since my childhood. I have never been in peace as a woman.

### **Most of the women organizations they do not have salaries**

Really, in Kenya that as I told you I was sewing those things. But in Sudan it is good because you have a land there. Like now I am going without salary but I am happy because I am here. Here I will get sometimes annoyed and say why should I ... only the organizations, those who are supporting let them support me even with small salaries in their organization. This is what I feel because we are volunteering ourselves. We don't have salaries. Most of the women organizations they do not have salaries they just volunteer for the sake of the women.

Yeah, yeah, I used to work. I used to work. I was the one who was supporting them with my small salary. The bad thing of Sudanese also, like me now I say that but still I support

myself. We do not see those small things like work (Jennifer laughs) we think that when you are earning money, money now you are working. But really we are working; this is what we are contributing in the community. That is what we are contributing. Women are contributing but we do not look for money women, like men who want money all the time. All those years we have volunteered up to now. Most of the women are volunteers. We are just volunteers.

### **I have right also**

I have land. My father's land is in Yei. Because we are many now we have not yet settled how. You have seen Sudanese tradition, it is always boys. But now that is what we are fighting for. We need also women to be there. I have right also to get that small land. But before it is all men, all the time we talk about boys. Even in my own house I built, I will put boys there although they are not the ones who built it. That is what happens in our society sometimes. The house from Khartoum. Then also I have a house here, it is my mother's plot, but I built this one. These are the ones supporting.

The cause [of war] is human rights and then the resources. Some people are not getting. That is why even in the south now people start complaining amongst themselves. Still they say some people are the ones that enjoy and others do not enjoy the fruits. Like, for example, if the services are there I think people will feel happy but services are not there yet. Even because we are still coming from the war. You know what, people will always be happy when hospitals are there, schools are there. So they do not think of talking big, big things. They will not fight. But if those things are not there that is why the same thing, people fight because there are no schools in Southern Sudan. There is no hospitals in Southern Sudan, there is no jobs. Factories are not there. This is now what people say that because we are still coming there are so many things. Our hope was big. I do not know what we call it in English. We have high ambitions, we need, we need, we need. Because we have been all this time, we do not see things. But now we say that okay, peace has come why all is not happening. But you know also it needs money, it cannot happen just like that, and a lot of work.

## **5 Conclusion**

This chapter ties together the various analytical perspectives which introduced the life histories presented in this research. Social change is a process. Individual Sudanese men and women have taken numerous steps in the course of time towards changing their relationship and social change. My findings suggest that gender relations in Sudan changed due to both external pressures and internal pressures. External pressures faced include Sudan's civil wars in particular while internal pressures faced include the relational and collective interests of both men and women. My analysis presents evidence of how behaviour and beliefs change over time as well as in the face of conflict. Pending family needs and benefits, women work, delay marriage, pay for schooling of brothers and daughters and even pay bridewealth. Conflict and its violence changes behaviour and beliefs (Kalyas 2008).

My findings confirm that in the midst of conflict Sudanese men and women have experienced an often unexpected and overwhelming loss of resources, agency and achievements. As explained in this chapter, war tampers with notions of masculinity and femininity. This does not imply, however, that “conflicts are the worst environment for bringing about significant changes in goals, interests and underlying beliefs” as well as in relations between men and women (Mitchell 2005, 17). This research demonstrates that disempowerment and empowerment of Sudanese women in the midst and aftermath of war, and when analysed over a prolonged period of time, are concurrent and dual processes.

Sudanese women were no mere observers to conflict or peace in Sudan. They were part of the game and my findings reveal that they walked a fine line between advocating for peace and social change. Following the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (2005), Sudanese women refer to changes in gender relations which transcend the individual level as a result of their earlier activism and efforts. It is not that “women are increasingly seen, by men as well as women, as active agents of change: the dynamic promoters of social transformations that can alter the lives of *both* women and men” in Sudan but evidence suggests that women are looked upon differently (Sen 1999, 189). I am not talking of sweeping changes.

To what extent gains described in this chapter are precursors to a process of structural transformation affecting gender relations post-CPA is less evident. Traditional structures survived two civil wars and life histories suggest that overcoming informal restrictions and rules placed on Sudanese women may be necessary for structural transformation towards gender equality to occur. Any change, including gains, may be accompanied by unintended drawbacks, but in the course of this research, the Sudanese women featured in this research started to look like butterflies to me. I found the butterfly effect which is based in chaos theory helpful as a metaphor to describe a small change, one butterfly, at one place, resulting in bigger changes later, i.e. social change. Again, one swallow does not make a summer but one butterfly can make a difference.



# Chapter 8

## **Actors and Agencies in Conflict**

**Introduction**

**Reflections on turning a peace practice from inside out to outside in**

**Turning declarations into action**

**A comparison of mind-sets: different perspectives, different mind-sets**

**We also pushed to give support**

**Conclusion**

## **8      Actors and Agencies in Conflict**



## 1 Introduction

When thinking of conflict resolution in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, scholars and practitioners are said to agree that mediators should be endowed with intelligence, know how to draft formal proposals, be tactful, and have a good sense of humour besides conflict specific knowledge (Bercovitch and Jackson 2009). For conflict resolution to qualify as 21<sup>st</sup> century thinking however, I suggest that mediators should be creative when thinking of conflict resolution and ensuring the participation of women. Preliminary evidence suggests that efforts to involve women in peace processes improve the sustainability of peace and governance (Caprioli, Nielsen and Hudson 2011). Yet, as of the year 2000, “[w]omen’s participation in peace processes remains one of the least well-implemented elements of the women, peace and security agenda outlined in Security Council Resolutions 1325 (2000) and related resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1889 (2009)” (UNIFEM 2011, 1).

To begin with, efforts to support peace, equality and development require the interest of actors and agencies. Next, what actors actually do or can do to support the participation of women in peace processes may be linked to who they are and which agency they represent, as well as what skills and (human and financial) resources these agencies are able or willing to offer. For this reason, this chapter will try and integrate as well as analyse the human factor in peacebuilding efforts and focus on the external actors including diplomats, policy makers and practitioners responsible for interventions that shaped the peace practice described (in Chapter 6) over a period of 10 years (1997-2007). Actors and agencies, knowingly or not, bring along their knowledge, experiences, networks, skills, agendas and resources. Actors may also have their own ideas and understanding of conflict between Northern and Southern Sudan and its resolution. They are likely to have thoughts about the status of women in the country and opportunities for social change, which I think deserve closer examination against the backdrop of theoretical threads presented in Chapter 3. Last but not least, their thoughts about the empowerment of women may be different from the thoughts expressed by Sudanese women who participated in the peace practice, their life histories and my narrative analysis thereof (Chapter 7).

This chapter will feature the life history of Samia Ahmed, a Northern Sudanese woman, who participated in the peace practice while working for a diplomatic mission as a consular and political officer. She was a volunteer with a Non-Governmental Organization based in Khartoum. Irrespective of many frustrating moments, she feels that these are good times for Sudanese women. Apart from informing her close and extended family and her friends of what was going on in war-affected areas, which she visited while on duty, she also pushed for her agency’s support to peacebuilding efforts by Sudanese women saying that she had “two wonderful bosses who really supported SuWEP” (life history Samia Ahmed).

## 2 Reflections on turning a peace practice from inside out to outside in

One might ask how do actors who were involved in the peace practice perceive the efforts of Sudanese women to participate in making and building peace? Is it any different from the way in which Sudanese women themselves perceived their efforts? What did outsiders

think of the interaction between Sudanese women and their military and political leaders, and what did they think of the interaction between Sudanese women and men and women at grassroots level? Again, are outsiders and Sudanese women of the same opinion? Instead of turning my career in the Foreign Office into a problem as a researcher, I decided to consider it an opportunity instead.

To integrate and analyse the human factor in peacebuilding efforts, I undertook a series of structured interviews to gain insight into the thoughts and actions of policy makers and practitioners who had been concerned with the peace practice. An attempt was made to interview actors who were involved from the very start of a process that was managed directly by a government agency, to its transition into a project that was managed by a Sudanese NGO throughout a period of 10 years. Individual men and women including former Minister for Development Cooperation Jan Pronk (1989-1998), policymakers and practitioners responded favourably to my request for their participation in my research. Fourteen respondents contributed their knowledge of and experience with the peace practice in Sudan. Though the interviews were structured, respondents were encouraged to narrate and explain their personal perspectives and experiences of their involvement and role in the peace practice. Since actors bring their own luggage and bias, different opinions and interpretations were explicitly sought and collected.

Interpretations of any aspect of experiences in the framework of a peace practice that lasted over 10 years are likely to be unique to the person experiencing them and context-specific. At the same time, these interpretations provide meaning, depth and richness and offer insight into the perspectives of someone on the outside. Respondents talked about their educational and professional background; explained the conflict between Northern and Southern Sudan; and, elaborated on their role within the peace practice. They described the status of Sudanese women from north to south and were asked about how they felt about efforts to increase the participation of women in the IGAD Peace Process and improve the status of Sudanese women. Respondents reflected on the meaning of concepts like ownership and inclusiveness and were asked if they had faced any issues or challenges regarding the design and implementation of the peace practice. They were also asked if, according to them, there were any risks involved in efforts to build and make peace either for Sudanese women or for themselves. They described the interaction and collaboration between Sudanese women and diplomats, and consequently described and compared these with the interaction and collaboration between diplomats and Sudanese men.

Respondents were asked to provide their thoughts on the peace practice and in particular the interaction between Sudanese women, their leadership and grassroots communities and provided their personal views on the characteristics and quality of this interaction. In addition to questions about technical and financial support from headquarters and the managerial support and interest from their heads of missions, diplomats were also asked to reflect on the role of agencies and identify which agency would be best suited to support the participation of women in peace processes based on their experiences. Respondents

talked about the most significant thing they had learned during the course of this peace practice and, in their eyes, what it had brought to Sudanese women. Last but not least, they were asked if Sudanese women would benefit from their struggle for equality, peace and development following the CPA (2005).

To frame my findings the following table presents an overview of actors, in chronological order, who contributed to this part of my research following their involvement with the peace practice.

**Table 8.2** Actors featured in this research

Actors	1997 <sup>31</sup>	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Jan Pronk											
Margret Verwijk <sup>32</sup>											
Ruta Denyangos											
Rita Tesselaar											
Sylva van Rosse											
Joyce Neu											
Jos Hoenen											
Maarten Brouwer											
Anita Veldkamp											
Esther Droppers											
Rosien Herweijer											
Bea ten Tusscher											
Nicolien Wassenaar											
Tamadur Khalid											
Corina van der Laan											

A directed effort was made to interview actors who represent a cross-section in the peace practice. The actors listed above include Dutch policy makers at the headquarters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, diplomats and practitioners based in Khartoum and/or Nairobi, two local experts, Dutch bilateral associate experts and consultants. Jan Pronk was the Dutch Minister for Development Cooperation at the time. The two local experts are Sudanese gender experts who represent insiders working on the outside, tasked with supporting and managing the peace practice.

31 The timeline provides a broad indication of the involvement of the various actors and is not meant to run from January to December as summer time is a core time for staff transfers at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

32 I have added my name to illustrate my position as a diplomat and practitioner in the course of this peace practice instead of a researcher.

With the permission of respondents, the interviews were digitally recorded (eleven in Dutch and three in English), transcribed and analyzed for content in 544 coded segments (appendix 8.1). Similar to my analysis of the life histories of Sudanese women, the analysis of data collected from interviews was supported by text analysis software. Transcribed interviews were analysed following theoretical threads presented in Chapter 3, and include conflict analysis, third party intervention, conflict-sensitivity, actors and agencies, policies and practices as well as approaches to empowerment and peacebuilding. Findings were triangulated through documents and archival records, as well as secondary data. Also, room was created to allow for a broad unit of analysis to reflect the experiences and insights of respondents, in addition to in-vivo coding. Findings were also compared with the narrative analysis of life histories that I presented in the previous chapter. My qualitative inquiry relies on a mix of perspectives from a number of theoretical traditions including ethnography, phenomenology, narratology and heuristic inquiry.

This chapter will help to form a more complete picture of the peace practice and aims to shed light on why women continue to be excluded from building and making peace. It may help to better understand how programmes supporting women's participation in peace processes, peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery are shaped and consequently support efforts to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), and meet calls dating back to 1995 and the Beijing Platform for Action (Chapter 3).

### **3 Turning declarations into action**

*I was thinking that it is quite amazing that something like this simply happened and a Ministry grasped the bull by the horns. Because it is really something. It has been a big, ambitious plan, a long term story (interview Sylva van Rosse, translated from Dutch).*

Governments that participated in the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing (1995), expressed their determination “to advance the goals of equality, development and peace for all women everywhere” in their declaration<sup>33</sup>. They adopted and committed themselves to ensure that a gender perspective be reflected in all their policies and programmes. They urged the UN system, regional and international financial institutions, other relevant regional and international institutions, as well as non-governmental organizations, in cooperation with Governments, to fully commit themselves and contribute to the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. My findings demonstrate that turning declarations into actions can be sensitive, controversial, conflict-ridden and difficult to deal with.

No other program, according to Maarten Brouwer and Head of Aid at the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Khartoum as of mid-1997, raised as much commotion as this peace practice did (interview Maarten Brouwer). Issues of security and access when dealing with humanitarian programs were standard but the sensitivities associated with peacebuilding were beating

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33 [www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/declar.htm](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/declar.htm).

everything. Esther Droppers added that it was better not to mention the word peace at the time, as it was a sensitive political issue (interview Esther Droppers). Many respondents considered the peace practice and its objective of supporting Sudanese women to participate in formal peacemaking ambitious, though none of them suggested lowering these ambitions (interviews Maarten Brouwer, Esther Droppers, Rosien Herweijer, Sylva van Rosse, Rita Tesselaar and Joyce Neu).

At the time, an increase in the participation of women in making peace was considered important. Women were not to simply hear what Sudanese men were cooking up (interview Jan Pronk). Knowing exactly who says what to whom and what goes around was as important as their outlook upon war and peace. Women were thought of as key stakeholders entitled to participation. Joining formal peace processes required political savvy women (interviews Joyce Neu and Rita Tesselaar). Many respondents appreciated the long-term process approach of the peace practice (interviews Maarten Brouwer, Ruta Denyangos, Esther Droppers, Rosien Herweijer, Joyce Neu, Sylva van Rosse and Rita Tesselaar). Agencies oftentimes bring conflicting parties together just once or twice (interviews Joyce Neu and Rosien Herweijer). The long-term involvement also implied that many more Sudanese women had the opportunity to develop and thrive:

*It made them special and I think that that also is an incredibly important thing to do. It is to raise their own level of confidence in what they are capable of doing. And the fact that others viewed the potential to effect change (interview Joyce Neu).*

While the fundamental goal of all policies and programmes dealing with peace, equality and development is change, change is challenging but also empowering, as Joyce Neu indicated. Moreover, efforts that aim to build trust and peace are unlikely to produce visible and concrete results fast, and easily morph into very complex and convoluted processes full of difficulties, dilemmas, disagreements, disputes and doubts.

#### **4 A comparison of mind-sets: different perspectives, different mind-sets**

*You are an outsider ... westerners are rarely prepared to consider themselves guests. They think that they are better, they earn more money, they often think that because they earn more money, they are better. It is the myth of the market economy ... and it is not the case. You actually you know less ... we know less (interview Jan Pronk, translated from Dutch).*

While discussing my findings below, the reader will be fascinated by the varying perspectives that will result from the analysis of various interviews with actors working on the outside of a peace practice.

#### **On conflict analysis**

In Chapter 2, I characterized the conflict between Northern and Southern Sudan and Africa's longest civil war as complex while highlighting, see Chapter 3, the danger of failing to approach the conflict from a synthesis of perspectives while attempting to spell out the

causes of conflict. Ruta Denyangos explained that Sudanese themselves have difficulty spelling out the causes of conflict between Northern and Southern Sudan, as the conflict “has shifted so much that if you ask a regular Sudanese in the street, a lot of people will say: I don’t know” (interview Ruta Denyangos). Half of the respondents stressed the high complexity of conflict in Sudan and approached the conflict from a synthesis of perspectives.

When asked about the causes of conflict in Sudan, ‘greed’ featured high among respondents. Most respondents mentioned economic causes and economic power as key causes of conflict, listing Sudan’s precious natural resources including oil and water. Respondents also referred to strategic economic interests in Sudan, as well as tensions over limited resources between farmers and non-sedentary livestock owners. Greed was followed by ‘grievance’ as the second most important cause of conflict. Conflict between Northern and Southern Sudan was linked to grievances over injustice, inequality, inferiority, marginalization and underdevelopment among Southern Sudanese. Exclusive governance was added to a long list of grievances besides issues of slavery, ethnic tensions and identity. Political factors were many and varied from feelings of betrayal to the existence of political agendas and manipulation. Surprisingly few respondents alluded to the existence of intra-north and intra-south conflicts.

Some respondents reflected on the potential of donor monies fuelling conflict while relatively few actors referred to the history of Sudan and the impact of British colonization in Sudan. It was Sudanese actors in particular, who referred to, for example, Nimeiry’s rule, the imposition of Islamic Law throughout the country, the introduction of holy war and Pan-Islamic pressures. Religion as such did feature as another factor in a long list of causes of conflict. Findings show that different perspectives, and in particular the perspectives of Sudanese experts, are valuable to improve insight into the dynamics of conflict. As mentioned in Chapter 3, issues, actors and interests are not a given and require anything but superficial knowledge about conflicting parties, or personalities and powers involved. Evidently, the history of colonization is a key ingredient to an improved understanding of conflict and development in Sudan. Moreover, the existence of intra-north and intra-south conflict is not to be overlooked in efforts to build and make peace in Sudan. As discussed in Chapter 3 however, there is more to conflict than mere conflict analysis.

### **On taking risks**

Most of the respondents were aware of the fact that Sudanese women participating in the peace practice were taking risks:

*Yes, there is always a risk when women participate in these kinds of initiatives. As soon as women speak out, and do not simply side with men but also express different opinions, they run a risk. Therefore, it is easier for them to take such risks when outside support is being provided, but it should not be provided in secret. We never did anything without being fully transparent, as it does not make any sense if you want to be a catalyst for change. You have to say what you are doing and contributing. At the same time, you try to become a friend, to be impartial to*

*the various parties. Friend is perhaps a big word. One has to give your support, impartially, to both parties in order to earn the trust of all. You also have to tell them openly what else you are doing. That is, that you are providing them with support to speak out, without any bias, and openly for all to know. That helps reduce risks (interview Jan Pronk, translated from Dutch).*

Some of the respondents described deliberate efforts to minimize and reduce those risks (interviews Maarten Brouwer, Esther Droppers, Rosien Herweijer, Anita Veldkamp, and Tamadur Khalid). This included having various meetings in private instead of in public places. Being open and transparent about activities, discussing issues openly across the various divides and seeking solutions jointly was considered more constructive and helpful.

Several respondents mentioned that women who were identified especially with the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) were harassed in Khartoum. At least one NDA woman was known to move from one place to another just to circumvent the security officers in an effort to participate in the peace practice. Travel abroad for Sudanese women living in Khartoum could also involve interrogations by GOS security officers. However, risks were not restricted to Khartoum only. It was also explained to me that Sudanese women based in Nairobi could not by-pass the SPLM. Women who ended up out of favour with the SPLM were no longer rendered any assistance and for many Sudanese women to survive in Nairobi, support from the SPLM was needed. Participating women also faced jealousy, gossip and espionage. In a secret service state, it is especially Sudanese nationals who suffer including local staff members of agencies including embassies, UN organizations and NGOS.

As discussed in Chapter 3 the involvement of national practitioners and local organizations requires great care in situations of protracted conflict. What local experts or organizations can or cannot do in situations of protracted conflict however, remains less well understood:

*Being Sudanese also is a tricky thing... As I said, sometimes, being part of a society and doing something for them ... there is always higher expectations from your own people to do things... they expect you to be on their side, without any objectivity ... if you do not do it, if you do not comply with their interests, then they will see you like an enemy... Some of them they start investigating you know like, who is she... is she going to help, or is she willing to side, you know, to take sides... So there was a kind of alarm, you know, a kind of a tension before. Later I learned all these kind of things (interview Tamadur Khalid).*

Ruta Denyangos, a local expert, saw the peace practice as “having its difficulties”, explaining that she was denied a visa twice, upon which the Royal Netherlands Embassy intervened on her behalf. She was told, “you are the girl who works with these foreigners and disseminates their messages, right now they are involved in peacemaking, peace ... but what kind of peace, you are travelling and passing messages to people of the SPLA” (interview Ruta Denyangos, translated from Arabic).

Findings confirm that the risks that Sudanese nationals run cannot be compared to those of expatriates who are there to facilitate and support peacebuilding efforts. People on the outside only mentioned inconveniences such as attempts to inspect suitcases, tapping and closure of private telephone lines, as well as efforts to follow their comings and goings in both Khartoum and Nairobi. Jan Pronk eloquently stated that outsiders or expatriates are “ships passing by at night” (interview Jan Pronk). He considered the involvement of diplomats in the peace practice his political responsibility (interview Jan Pronk). Diplomatic relationships and the implementation of bilateral programmes may have been a concern at times. It is hard to be against peace though. A woman working with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Khartoum had once suggested that the government could stop the peace practice adding that this was not going to happen because everybody wants peace and thereto “let women try what men were not able to do” (interview Ruta Denyangos).

Third party intervention and peacebuilding efforts may change or stop altogether when ministers and policies change (Johnson 2011, interviews Anita Veldkamp, Rosien Herweijer, Nicolien Wassenaar and Maarten Brouwer). On the other hand, the peace practice stood the test of time and continued irrespective of funding, changes of policies, policymakers, practitioners, diplomats and ministers (interviews Jos Hoenen and Tamadur Khalid).

### **On bias in third party intervention**

Peacebuilding efforts aim to bring conflicting parties together for talks and dialogue to strengthen peacemaking. This begs the question, how do actors gain trust and work with parties in conflict, and in particular those parties that carry the swords and participate in formal peacemaking? What is it like to sympathize with the causes of one party or the other, but remain even-handed and nonpartisan? How do conflicting parties deal with actors involved in third party intervention? As explained in Chapter 3, some scholars argue that mediator bias promotes success in mediation while others argue the opposite by claiming that mediator bias is a dilemma to third party acceptance. Irrespective of arguments in favour of or against third party bias and the difficulties associated with gaining trust, third party intervention should contribute to preventing and reducing mistrust amongst parties in conflict.

Half of the respondents provided examples and evidence of how actors and at times agencies grappled with sympathies versus impartiality (interviews Rosien Herweijer, Ruta Denyangos, Maarten Brouwer, Esther Droppers, Sylva van Rosse, Anita Veldkamp and Jos Hoenen). Esther Droppers explained that a lack of understanding for one side or the other was potentially nurtured by the side one lives on (interview Esther Droppers). Proximity would encourage listening to one side of the story only, as diplomats and practitioners living in Nairobi would engage more with the SPLM, while diplomats and practitioners living in Khartoum would engage more with the GOS. More importantly, Esther also pointed out that not all actors in the course of the peace practice were able to engage with all participants to the peace practice and all political parties represented on a regular basis. Even though other respondents confirmed working mostly on one side of the conflict and either in Khartoum



or in Nairobi (interviews Anita Veldkamp, Nicolien Wassenaar, Tamadur Khalid and Corina van der Laan), it should be noted that modalities of programme implementation and the character of programme activities, as described in Chapter 6, also defined the level and type of interaction between individual actors and parties in conflict.

Some actors felt more at ease among Africans while others felt more comfortable among Arabs from a social and cultural point of view (interviews Jos Hoenen and Sylva van Rosse). Some spoke or learned the Arabic language, while others did not. Some respondents considered knowing the language an advantage (interviews Ruta Denyangos and Anita Veldkamp). On the other hand, Esther Droppers explained that her efforts to learn Arabic when in Khartoum were looked upon suspiciously and were not necessarily regarded as an asset by Southern Sudanese women when she returned to Nairobi. They were quick to point out that their Southern Sudanese Arabic was different from what she had been taught in the north (interview Esther Droppers). Gaining trust among conflicting parties was considered not only time-consuming but also difficult.

At some stage, conflict in Sudan was reflected in working relations among actors responsible for providing support to the peace practice (interviews Anita Veldkamp, Esther Droppers and Jos Hoenen). Esther Droppers, who shuttled between Nairobi and Khartoum, experienced the conflict in relationships amongst external actors most profoundly, explaining that on-going conflict in Sudan was not just reflected in the programme itself but also took a turn on relations among external actors and their offices based in either Khartoum or Nairobi (interview Esther Droppers). The issues of third party bias, gaining trust and interacting with all parties to the conflict, also affected Sudanese experts and Sudanese women participating in the peace practice, but differently:

*[B]eing a Sudanese, there are certain things because of security issues and political issues I can't go there, I can't say those things and I can't, I have to be neutral. Being a Sudanese you cannot deal with certain groups* (interview Ruta Denyangos).

Findings suggest that third party intervention has to be understood as a dynamic and complex social process. Expressed concerns run from a sense of relief that one party in particular never managed to get organized enough to become eligible for financial support, to worries about one party or the other attracting all the attention. Fears were also expressed over diplomats siding with parties, i.e. those in Nairobi with the SPLM and those in Khartoum with the GOS. Third party intervention, therefore, is as much a social process as that of creating war or making peace.

### **On participation: inclusiveness and ownership**

There is both a need for collaboration and participation amongst conflicting parties for peacebuilding to be a success. When supporting efforts to build and make peace, participation is anything but a small intervention. Participation is more than taking part and, as discussed in Chapter 3, affects existing power structures. Participation may be what

parties fight over, and can be interpreted in many different ways. That also applies to notions of inclusiveness and ownership among policymakers and practitioners.

For the Oxford English Dictionary, one way of explaining inclusiveness is, “not excluding any section of society or any party involved in something”. The definition also says that “only an inclusive peace process will end the conflict”. However, words were not always put into practice. Findings suggest that inclusiveness meant different things to different people overtime while some respondents never gave ‘inclusiveness’ much thought. Inclusiveness in the context of this peace practice was mostly interpreted as leaving the door open for participation to all Sudanese women representing political parties and civil society organizations from both Northern and Southern Sudan (interviews Ruta Denyangos, Tamadur Khalid, Joyce Neu, Sylva van Rosse, Esther Droppers and Nicolien Wassenaar). However, inclusiveness did not come easy as “some of the women ... thought that certain groups should be excluded” (interview Tamadur Khalid). In addition, inclusiveness was explained as including different levels of education, experience and social status (interviews Joyce Neu, Rosien Herweijer and Nicolien Wassenaar). Men were involved but support was provided to women (interviews Joyce Neu and Rosien Herweijer). Challenges to inclusiveness were many and included both power play and efforts to marginalize opposing political groups (interviews Tamadur Khalid, Corina van der Laan, Jos Hoenen and Esther Droppers).

As discussed in Chapter 6, the notion of ownership also meant different things to different actors when discussing the peace practice overtime. Policymakers and practitioners clearly grappled with the issue of ownership and the role that participating women could or should play in the peace practice. This was also reflected in a change of name from the (Dutch) Initiative to SuWEP. In the initial stages ownership was explained as Sudanese women owning and shaping the agenda (interviews Ruta Denyangos and Sylva van Rosse). Joyce Neu clearly felt that the process was not owned by Sudanese women nor understood to be leading to women owning the process:

*Ownership, I don't think the women owned the process. I didn't get the sense at any point that this was intended to be owned by the women. I didn't get the sense that ... part of the objective of the process was that they would own the process. It was very much owned by the Dutch, by the Embassy in Khartoum and Nairobi with the support of course of the Foreign Ministry in The Hague. Which I did not think was a bad thing by the way... I think the women at that point were very appreciative of having an important outside convenor that was not imposing solutions or prejudiced toward any particular outcome. And I think they appreciated the safe space that that gave them. I think that if you all had wanted that the process be owned by the women, it would have looked very different ... And I am not sure at that point ... I am not sure to what extent ownership with that type of group would have been possible at that time ... It is very hard to have the women really running and maintaining this work. I think it takes a very long time, especially in the midst of a conflict where anyone who seems to be taken a leadership role is going to be viewed, I think, quite suspiciously (interview Joyce Neu).*

At a later stage, and as described in Chapter 6, the notion of ownership meant that participants were expected to actually take charge of programme activities as responsible and accountable organizations of women (interviews Esther Droppers, Nicolien Wassenaar and Jos Hoenen). It was also pointed out that ownership cannot be given but has to be taken (interviews Rosien Herweijer and Maarten Brouwer). Moreover ownership was considered collaborative and not exclusive (interviews Tamadur Khalid, Maarten Brouwer, Rosien Herweijer and Rita Tesselaar). As Tamadur Khalid explained, other parties who were part of the process had to be acknowledged indicating that “ownership is shared, it is not exclusive ... they can own the process but it is not only exclusively their own process” (interview Tamadur Khalid). Moreover, Jos Hoenen and Tamadur Khalid felt that ownership can only be established when activities and programmes stand the test of time and continue irrespective of funding (interviews Jos Hoenen and Tamadur Khalid). Corina van der Laan noted that the notion of ownership will always have critics no matter what (interview Corina van der Laan).

Findings illustrate changing notions of inclusiveness and ownership in the course of time. These changing notions have been reflected in the modalities of program implementation. The use of concepts without clear definition will not only invite criticism but also generate different understandings among actors and participants alike, and therefore needs careful assessment. Ownership, as in parties owning the process, may be hard to come by when building trust and peace. Irrespective of good intentions, ownership can be interpreted as a process or project owned by parties in conflict, and opens up processes which are meant to be inclusive to a conflict-ridden paradigm of parties trying to exert power-over others. This is where ownership and inclusiveness get in each other's way and leads me to think that the notion of ownership is often misused, or at best misunderstood.

### **On leadership versus grassroots**

As discussed in Chapter 3 and explained in Chapter 6, the initial approach of the peace practice encouraged the participation of Sudanese women in peacebuilding and conflict resolution including their interaction with their respective military, political and religious leaders as well as their leaders at grassroots level. It was clearly said that the interaction with leaders at grassroots level changed in the course of the peace practice into working with men and women at grassroots level, in an effort to mobilize people to build peace but also meet local needs. Chapter 7 revealed what life histories tell about the interaction between Sudanese women and their political and military leadership besides interaction with the grassroots. The question now is, what do the interviews with outsiders reveal about this interaction and how did policy makers and practitioners perceive the interaction between Sudanese women and their leaders and grassroots?

The peace practice was said to have captured the attention and curiosity of political leaders who had to listen to these women in order to find out what was going on (interviews Ruta Denyangos and Joyce Neu and life history Samira Hasan). Since it was a programme involving women, male leaders could not but rely on information from women. On many

occasions however, political, military and religious leaders tried to exert control over the women who were participating in the peace practice (interviews Ruta Denyangos, Nicolien Wassenaar and Esther Droppers). For instance, when the collaboration of political parties within the NDA was under pressure, their collaboration as women within the peace practice was also under pressure. Women also frequently uttered that they “had to go back to their leadership” (interview Esther Droppers). That is, whenever discussions went political, women would consult their political leadership and seek approval. On occasions, this also meant that women decided to organize themselves differently (life history Priscilla Joseph and interview Ruta Denyangos). Creative solutions were found to ensure the participation of parties involved in formal peacemaking. For example, to include GOS participation in The Hague Appeal a Sudanese male diplomat was invited to join a delegation of women. To ensure communication with the SPLM, when the leadership did not approve the participation of SPLM women in the Maastricht conference, their leaders were briefed by telephone on a daily basis by other participating women.

Initially, “a lot of men but also political leadership viewed it as women group activities but in time they realized there is something bigger than the usual women’s activities” (interview Ruta Denyangos). Men started to look at women differently when women started travelling, becoming more articulate in terms of the IGAD Peace Process and participated in training (interviews Ruta Denyangos, Jos Hoenen and Esther Droppers). Sudanese men like Abel Alier, a Southern Sudanese politician, who initially provided introductions on the IGAD Peace Process and politics in Sudan for women participating in the peace practice, commented at some stage that he might as well retire from politics now that women not only had something to say and contribute, but that they were also able to produce excellent political papers (interview Esther Droppers). On the other hand, Sudanese men were also said to have commented that they considered the participation of women in peace talks troublesome, dismissing women as difficult and emotional (interview Esther Droppers). Respondents also expressed doubts whether Sudanese men earnestly valued the contribution of women in making and building peace (interviews Sylva van Rosse, Corina van der Laan and Maarten Brouwer). However, the quota introduced to promote the participation of women in decision making were looked upon as signs that at least Sudanese men in top leadership positions seemed willing to support the participation of women in government following the CPA (interviews Ruta Denyangos and Jos Hoenen). At the same time, doubts were expressed about potential gains for women following their struggle for peace and gender equality in a post-conflict era (interviews Maarten Brouwer, Rita Tesselaar, and Corina van der Laan).

The interviews with outsiders suggest that not all outsiders were equally aware of the role Sudanese women managed to play in building and making peace throughout the years whilst life histories analysed clearly point to Sudanese women entering into dialogue with parties to the conflict, and advocating for both peace and social change. As discussed in Chapter 7, the life histories provide evidence that women played a key role behind-the-scenes in efforts to build peace in Sudan. Anis Hagggar mentioned watching women harassing the

SPLM leadership and shouting at the SPLM chairman, late Dr. John Garang and other senior members and commanders of the SPLM (Chapter 4). Anis also mentioned that the interaction between Sudanese women and their leadership changed drastically, a change he felt was reflected in the composition of a new government in the aftermath of the war that included Sudanese women. The life history of Samira Hasan, for example, also demonstrated increased access to positions of power and decision-making in the case of Northern Sudanese women. On the contrary, outside actors expressed doubts whether women would actually benefit from their struggle for peace, equality and development. Findings suggest that chances for social change appear slim to outsiders.

The interaction between Sudanese women participating in the peace practice and their respective grassroots and grassroots' leaders fell mostly outside the visual field of Dutch policy makers, diplomats and practitioners (interviews Jos Hoenen, Maarten Brouwer, Sylva van Rosse, Anita Veldkamp, Corina van der Laan, Esther Droppers, Maarten Brouwer and Nicolien Wassenaar). It was considered especially difficult for Sudanese women living in Nairobi to re-establish their contacts and networks back home given their long absence. They also faced great difficulty talking about peace and the role of women in conflict resolution and decision-making in Southern Sudan while being confronted by men and women at the village level saying, "we cannot eat peace" (interview Esther Droppers). For obvious reasons, women and men at grassroots level were far more concerned with daily survival than talking about peace. Consequently, women participating in the peace practice exerted efforts to respond to the interests and needs of grassroots women within the framework of SuWEP (interview Esther Droppers). The political and military leadership was said to appreciate those efforts (interview Jos Hoenen).

Sudanese women participating in the peace practice also shared their newly acquired knowledge about conflict resolution and peacebuilding at universities instead of focusing solely on grassroots (interview Nicolien Wassenaar). Since the interaction between Sudanese women and their respective grassroots took place out of sight, their efforts and interaction were also questioned:

*They were given funding to develop their organizations and build their capacity. We funded their office in Nairobi and helped them to move to Juba. What for and for whose benefit? ... It is not only about their interaction and the contacts that they have. It is much more about helping women in the villages and supporting illiterate women to formulate their needs for incorporation into political party programmes or the plans of ministries. I did not see any of that (interview Corina van der Laan, translated from Dutch).*

In sum, the Sudanese women participating in the peace practice faced high expectations from outsiders. They were expected to participate in high-level decision-making processes, support the implementation of the CPA, and promote peacebuilding and reconstruction, while they were also expected "to improve the lives of poor women" (interview Corina van der Laan). When failing to meet these expectations they were considered elitist and selfish,

and suffering of an entitlement attitude. Irrespective of the question if Sudanese men faced similar expectations, donors tried to improve access to basic services after the signature of the CPA without much success (Bennett, Pantuliano, Fenton, Vaux, Barnett and Brusset 2010).

Sudanese practitioners showed a different understanding of the interaction between Sudanese women and grassroots. Ruta Denyangos, a Sudanese practitioner, stated that initially Sudanese women representing the various groups including Southern Sudanese women, as well as women representing the Government of Sudan and the NDA, “were all competing for attention of the same grassroots” (interview Ruta Denyangos):

*The southern women thought [that] they have the right to [work with] the displaced women [as their grassroots and supporters] because they [themselves] are from the south and ... displaced. But the Government women ... also believed that [since] the Government is offering services to all those people, it is the right of the Government to have access to the displaced people (interview Ruta Denyangos).*

Women living in the IDP camps would ask “what kind of peace are you talking about?” and criticize the participants to the peace practice by saying “if you want a political peace whereby a politician will come and we all go there waving our slogans, we don’t want that because that has happened” (interview Ruta Denyangos). IDP women would also explain that other groups had visited them, playing one group against the other when comparing potential support.

Southern Sudanese women living in Khartoum were mostly active in the IDP camps while Nuba women would travel to the Nuba Mountains to raise awareness about the IGAD Peace Process, taking along bags of sugar for distribution. Tamadur Khalid noted that in the period 2003-2005, the number of women involved in the peace practice had increased significantly:

*[E]ven the civil society organization, for example, in the north became an umbrella in itself, accommodating many other smaller groups; not only within Khartoum, but expanded to other states...they had their own branches. The CSOs [civil society organizations], they ... started having representatives from Darfur, from Kordofan, from the East, from the Nuba Mountains. You know there were so many. And also, the Nuba mountains started to have its own organizations, you know with representatives from within the Nuba Mountains. For me, it was you know ... like a baby growing every day ... and the number of new organizations grew every time... we have more and more membership within our constituencies and we need to expand. We need to take our activities beyond Khartoum. We have to increase our activities. And then you can see it from the yearly plans submitted to the embassy. The same thing happened with the southerners. When I ... visited them in 2003 in Kenya for example there was limited number. The time they moved to the south, you would not believe it, the number ... expanded. So membership and the number of the women increased, and they benefited from the activities,*

*the plans and the allocations of money to the smaller groups. The capacity building to the members that has been enormous (interview Tamadur Khalid).*

Analyses of the interviews demonstrate that Sudanese practitioners were better informed than their Dutch colleagues of what was going on between participants to the peace practice and men and women at grassroots level. Findings also suggest that Dutch diplomats and practitioners may have overlooked and undervalued capacity building efforts while establishing unrealistic expectations for Sudanese participants to the peace practice, to improve the lives of poor women after the signature of the CPA (2005).

### **On empowerment**

When asked about the empowerment of Sudanese women, respondents reflected on empowerment from the perspective of their full participation in society and their participation in decision-making. Many respondents felt that irrespective of some differences in the status of Sudanese women, the words of Sudanese women carried no weight (interviews Rosien Herweijer, Sylva van Rosse, Anita Veldkamp, Esther Droppers, Corina van der Laan and Maarten Brouwer). Their ability to make strategic life choices or exert political influence was considered limited. On the other hand Sudanese women were framed as ‘strong women’, able to fend for themselves while husbands seek better lives elsewhere, or survive in highly insecure squatter settlements, while few of them managed to compete with men for decision-making positions. Though some women won their spurs in making war and were able to exert political influence, Southern Sudanese women themselves would say that within their culture a woman is worth less than a cow (interview Esther Droppers). The majority of Dutch respondents were of the opinion that Sudanese women would not really benefit from their struggle for peace and equality following the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

Some respondents were aware of potential prejudices when outsiders compared the status of Southern Sudanese women to Northern Sudanese women. Others demonstrated awareness of the existence of differential opportunities between them in terms of education and governance structures and the impact of religion on society (interviews Jan Pronk, Nicolien Wassenaar, Rita Tesselaar, Maarten Brouwer). Few respondents felt that positive change towards women’s full participation in society and decision-making was evident, either in Southern or Northern Sudan:

*I think that in Southern Sudan there are many more opportunities than in Northern Sudan ... what I have observed in the south ... is that many of the women we worked with have become ‘big shots’ in Southern Sudan. I have counted 49 ladies who all became Members of Parliament, Chairpersons of human rights, anti-corruption, budget parliamentary Commissions or Deputies of Disarmament Demobilisation and Reintegration programs, you name it. Apparently there are hundreds or more trained by us in one way or the other who have taken up jobs at the regional level (interview Jos Hoenen, translated from Dutch).*



Sudanese practitioners were positive about an increase in women's ability to make strategic life choices or exert political influence in Sudan in the aftermath of war (interviews Ruta Denyangos and Tamadur Khalid). Ruta Denyangos described the influence of Sudanese women who participated in the peace practice as follows:

*If you look for example Rebecca Okwaci ... in the Ministry of Manpower, where all the employment decisions go through, she is screening people there and she is making sure the women are in key positions and the men who are not qualified, she is taking them out of those positions. Men are getting fired. These are women who worked with the politicians where gender involvement wasn't an issue for them. [The peace practice] opened their eyes to look at things from a different angle. That happened through the training we had through the Initiative. We learned conflict resolution, then conflict resolution and negotiation, skills, facilitation skills. All of this equipped women to be able to get to the negotiation table but also now with the south having independence they will be able to say hey we want a department of gender which we have now in South, Southern Sudan. And to say, okay we are looking at the ratio of women, we have 25% which is already given, but we have to fight for more women in this ministry or this department. It is an eye-opener; it played a very significant role (interview Ruta Denyangos).*

Tamadur Khalid acknowledged the leap ahead experienced by Southern Sudanese women following the CPA, including political gains, saying that "they managed to reach the quota ahead of their women counterparts in the north" and continued to work together in parliament (interview Tamadur Khalid). She was amazed to see the changes when visiting Southern Sudan explaining that "southerners ... could be even worse than the northern men" and now seem to value and respect women, saying "I think they are just impressed by how [many] of these women have been really good fighters, good wives, good sisters and good colleagues" (interview Tamadur Khalid). According to Tamadur, Northern Sudanese women had always been privileged in terms of their opportunities for education and in the course of time had managed to achieve "some sort of social, political recognition by the different political parties, by the government" (interview Tamadur Khalid). She said:

*I think the situation, the war situation, made people think and change their views on the traditional role of women and how they think that women can become very active in the society, changing their situations and changing the whole community situation (interview Tamadur Khalid).*

Sudanese practitioners interviewed as well as two Dutch respondents linked the increase in numbers of women participating in politics, power structures and decision-making following the CPA, to women's participation in the peace practice (interviews Esther Droppers, Jos Hoenen, Ruta Denyangos and Tamadur Khalid).

The establishment of a united Sudanese women's movement for peace was not considered by many as realistic in the context of Sudan (interviews Ruta Denyangos, Rosien Herweijer, Sylva van Rosse, Ether Droppers, Jos Hoenen and Nicolien Wassenaar). Peace meant



different things to different women and multiple identities of women would undermine a women's movement for peace in Sudan. In view of past pain and trauma, such movement was said to mean very little to Southern Sudanese women. Some respondents though were willing to give such movement the benefit of the doubt (interviews Joyce Neu and Maarten Brouwer). Sudanese practitioners noted that the experience of the peace practice between Northern and Southern Sudanese women had also inspired women of Darfur to participate in conflict resolution (interviews Tamadur Khalid and Ruta Denyangos).

Contrary to my analysis of life histories, expatriates seem to undervalue the activism and efforts of Sudanese women to change the rules of the game and achieve success in advancing the status of women and changing gender relations. As explained in Chapter 7, life histories point to changes in gender relations that transcend the individual. While Sudanese women, including Sudanese practitioners, refer to social change and a change of gender relations at a collective level in the aftermath of war, interviews with Dutch policy makers, practitioners and diplomats suggest that the majority do not think it possible for Sudanese women to really benefit from their struggle for peace and equality. Findings suggest that the actions, efforts and achievements of Sudanese women to bring about social change remain invisible and undervalued. Thinking of women as victims instead of actors may have contributed to undervaluing the activism and efforts of Sudanese women (interview Corina van der Laan). This implies that processes of social change, when wars are fought and peace agreements are signed, remain little understood and may consequently receive little support and attention.

### **On Sudanese women and the IGAD Peace Process**

The peace process that led to the signing of the CPA was a long and convoluted process. Findings from the interviews demonstrate that information on the participation of women in peace negotiations is haphazard. As shown in Chapter 3, UNIFEM merely reported women witnesses to the CPA while other researchers considered the involvement of Sudanese women in the CPA as strong based on news published in the Sudan Tribune in 2008 (Caprioli, Nielsen and Hudson 2011, 99). Respondents, however, provided more insight into the participation of Sudanese women in the formal IGAD Sudan Peace Process:

*Women managed to be there during the Naivaisha peace talks. There was a limited group of people participating in the talks but at a particular moment this group was enlarged with women and lawyers... However, when the negotiations turned difficult, the size of the groups was reduced again and the women and lawyers were the first to drop out. It was considered too complicated to include them (interview Esther Droppers, translated from Dutch).*

Consequently, Sudanese women would discuss whose brothers and husbands were participating in the Sudan Peace Process, who would be meeting whom, and who would be able to exercise influence on these men at the formal peace table in a tactful manner. Women would also just go to the site of negotiations to lobby on their issues during the breaks with official delegation members, or whenever delegation members stepped out of the meeting room (interview Esther Droppers). Susan Jambo, a lawyer by profession, was

said to have played a more prominent role in the long process of formal peace negotiations (interview Esther Droppers). Nicolien Wassenaar also confirmed the participation of women in working groups supporting the IGAD peace negotiations in Nairobi including their joint effort to put agreed upon issues on the negotiation table (interview Nicolien Wassenaar).

Tamadur Khalid succeeded Nicolien Wassenaar in the office adding the following:

*I think when the peace negotiations started the southern women groups were more present than the northern women groups at the early stage of the negotiations. But at some point, with Naivasha, the northern groups pushed so far to the extent that they came to the embassy one time asking for representation and financial support to go to Naivasha. I remember we managed to support six of them representing the different groups in the north as well as women from the south. They had a very successful meeting with different leaders from the government of the north and from the southern sector. They had met with international diplomatic missions; they have met with people from the IGAD... I remember they drafted a joint statement that had been signed by the different groups of women in the north and in the south. It is true they were not part and parcel, like attending all the sessions; they were not allowed to do that. But to some extent, meeting with leaders, even outside the formal meeting, in the corridors, in the hotel, they managed to lobby their cause. They managed to put forward their gender issues; they managed to put clearly what they wanted and what they demanded and how can peace be seen through a gender lens (interview Tamadur Khalid).*

That is, respondents who consecutively provided Dutch support to the management of the peace practice, reported continued interaction between the Sudanese women and the IGAD Peace Process as of 2002 up to the signing of the CPA in 2005. Life histories confirm this interaction.

### **On third parties and women's participation in peace processes**

I noted in Chapter 3 that actors involved in multi-track diplomacy are numerous, when discussing third party intervention. On the other hand "women's participation in peace processes remains one of the least well-implemented elements of the women, peace and security agenda" (UNIFEM 2010). Instead of concluding that 'women's participation in peace processes' is a job that never gets done and referring to the challenges described in Chapter 6 of this research, I asked respondents which donor agencies would be best suited to support women's participation in peace processes.

Government agencies that follow a country and engage in peacebuilding were considered crucial (interview Esther Droppers, Sylva van Rosse, Bea ten Tusscher, Maarten Brouwer, Jan Pronk, Joyce Neu, Nicolien Wassenaar and Rita Tesselaar). Governments that can avail capacity and funding included Norway, the United Kingdom, Denmark, Sweden, Canada, the USA, besides the Netherlands. On the other hand, the knowledge and experience of regional organizations or governments in the region were also considered valuable when supporting peace processes. As mentioned in Chapter 4, the Dutch Government provided substantial humanitarian assistance that translated into some leverage with the parties in

conflict (interview Esther Droppers). Government agencies were thought to have longer-term horizons (interview Tamadur Khalid) and without a diplomatic passport, it would also have been difficult if not impossible to travel back and forth between conflicting parties. Both Sylva van Rosse and Esther Droppers suggested that what is needed is an outspoken government agency “which is not afraid of getting its fingers burned” (interview Esther Droppers).

Some respondents felt that UN agencies like UNDP and UNIFEM apply efforts with short-term horizons in countries affected by conflict, while providing support to peace processes generally requires a long-term horizon. Moreover, UN agencies were not always thought to enjoy the trust and political will necessary, while potentially suffering intimidation and harassment from governments in countries where their offices reside. As a result, it was considered difficult for UN agencies to create an environment in which politically opposing forces and conflicting parties easily meet. Criticism was also directed at UN agencies for repeatedly bringing the same group of women together without understanding the country, its conflict, or knowing who was who. On the other hand, it was noted that UN agencies are non-partisan by definition and may be the best we have. The UN was considered a powerful advocate, but when it came to women’s participation in peace processes, its knowledge and experience in doing ‘this kind of work’ was considered limited.

When turning to (I)NGOS as potential partners in supporting the participation of women in peace processes, many concerns were expressed. Local organizations and their Sudanese members may find it difficult to embrace all political colours in Sudan and deal with the politics of conflict in an even-handed manner. Local organizations may also not be accepted by parties in conflict and may even fuel conflict. The number and diversity of (I)NGOS was also debated, ranging from development, to humanitarian, human rights advocacy and, of late, democracy and conflict management. Once again, knowledge and experience to do this kind of work in practice was not necessarily considered available, and when it was available their capacity in terms of diplomacy was considered low. Their reputation and ability or capacities to scale up were also matters of concern. It was noted that some INGOS only managed to work in either Northern or Southern Sudan, and could easily be stopped from working anytime. Experience also suggests that women are often simply overlooked (interview Joyce Neu). This may not be the case for INGOS only.

### **On international support to the peace practice**

Joyce Neu described Dutch peacebuilding efforts as ‘a snowball effect’, in the sense that “[her] perception was that the Dutch were the first to really focus on the role of Sudanese women within peace processes and that following that it became something that others got interested in” (interview Joyce Neu). Universities in Sudan, including Ahfad University for Women and Juba University introduced courses on conflict resolution and peacebuilding. The peace practice aroused the interest from other actors, as well as support (interviews Ruta Denyangos, Tamadur Khalid, Esther Droppers, Sylva van Rosse, Corina van der Laan, Joyce

Neu, Jos Hoenen, Bea ten Tusscher, Rita Tesselaar and Nicolien Wassenaar). Prior to the CPA, “[the Canadians] told me they were interested to help with funding ... everyone noted this had something to do with peacebuilding and of course everybody wanted to support that” (interview Esther Droppers). Financial contributions to the peace practice were offered, but although money was not considered a problem (interview Nicolien Wassenaar), it required further consultation with participants (interview Esther Droppers), and some donor agency efforts demonstrated rivalry or duplication (interviews Tamadur Khalid and Corina van der Laan).

Embassy staff members involved in the peace practice were contacted a couple of times to facilitate meetings between Sudanese women participating in the peace practice, and for example, Canadian officials (interviews Esther Droppers and Tamadur Khalid). Besides government agencies, including diplomats from Norway, the UK, Switzerland and Canada as ‘early adopters’ of UN SCR 1325 thinking, over time Sudanese women gained the interest and support from INGOS and UN agencies. Post-CPA, support seemed to be forthcoming with American, Norwegian and UN efforts supporting the participation of women in politics and reconstruction.

In comparison to Sudanese men, diplomats found it difficult to locate and interact with Sudanese women. On the one hand everybody wanted to meet with Sudanese women participating in the peace practice, which required preparation (interviews Joyce Neu and Esther Droppers). Sudanese women were advised to articulate their ideas, present themselves appropriately without antagonizing interested visitors and diplomats. They were told to submit CVs, and think of what diplomats would want to hear without simply communicating sad and pitiful stories. On the other hand, women were less visible than men were. If diplomats, for example, wanted to interact with the SPLM, they were simply provided with a list of the top ten SPLM men. Not all parties could count on the attention from diplomats. For example, no diplomat consciously asked about Sudanese women belonging to the NDA or the SPLM/United.

Knowing how to articulate issues and how to get ideas across was also considered problematic. Sometimes women were either found to have nothing to say, and on other occasions were expected to have plans and proposals to improve the lot of each and every Sudanese, but often were felt to lack a vision. It makes you wonder if any person living in a country affected by protracted conflict would be able to meet such expectations. Respect increased as the women gained prominence; their self-confidence increased and others viewed them to have the potential to make a difference and bring about change (interviews Ruta Denyangos and Joyce Neu). Once the women got into the picture, diplomats got interested:

*So once they were there, the diplomats now took interest in the women... The Canadian Government supported a lot of women who had training workshops on conflict resolution. There was a girl Samia ...she used to be on the civil society group and she was hired by [a*

*government agency] and she was doing maybe what I was doing. So through her there was a lot of networking with the women. The diplomats definitely had collaboration with women. With men, it was more at a political level but with women to me it was like more of these women have some issues. We need to listen to them and we need to support them (interview Ruta Denyangos).*

Samia Ahmed was a young Sudanese woman participating in the peace practice and working as local staff member with one of the diplomatic missions. The following life history shows her experience in the area of peacebuilding and the way in which she created awareness about the issues that women in conflict face.

## **5 We also pushed to give support**

To better understand the role of outsiders, including diplomats, policymakers and local and international practitioners, the life history of Samia Ahmed is presented in her own words. Samia participated in the peace practice but also worked at a diplomatic mission in Khartoum. She joined the peace practice as a member of the Civil Society Group while she was a volunteer with an NGO. At the time, she was one of the youngest participants. Her family promoted both volunteerism and girls' education. Her father worked in Saudi Arabia at a time when many Sudanese migrated in search of better salaries to maintain their families and support a better future for their children.

Samia is critical of politicians but also of civil society organizations in her country. Through her work and by participating in the peace practice she gained access to war-affected areas, to rape victims. Information which she then shared with family and friends as media sources were few. Her involvement in civil society organizations does not mean that she was not critical of how NGOs operate in Sudan. She explains that there are NGOs that take on political responsibilities and that at the same time political parties establish NGOs. Samia feels that Sudan needs good politicians and that good politicians is what the Sudanese deserve.

Similar to other Sudanese women who participated in the peace practice, Samia described the process as difficult. At a personal level, the peace practice had a great impact giving her a sense that change was possible. She describes meeting women from the other side of the conflict as one of the greatest moments in her life. She convinced her employer to support women interested in building peace as well. Irrespective of the capacity and confidence built, and the exposure created, Samia Ahmed noted that Sudanese women on their own were not able to take peacebuilding to the next level, as personal and political agendas got in the way. For the very same reason, she was not in favour of a local NGO pursuing the management of the peace practice. Though politicians may just talk about the participation of women in building and making peace, she thinks that post-CPA times are particularly good times for women. Samia remarks that you do not have to be a politician to be involved in change and stresses the importance of social and democratic transformation.

The following elements present an initial analytical perspective of Samia's life history:

- on the international community: Diplomats and practitioners in countries like Sudan can act as catalysts for social change and building peace including the participation of women in peace processes. Political support was indispensable for creating a conducive environment that promotes relationships across political divides and supports the empowerment of women and their participation in peace processes. It is Sudanese men and women themselves, who have to take responsibility to pursue change and make peace;
- on civil society and politicians: The relationship between civil society organizations and politicians in Sudan is marked by high levels of politicization. The suppression of political parties and institutions has contributed to the politicization of NGOs, and a situation in which political parties have NGOs and members of NGOs becoming politicians;
- on volunteerism and the dissemination of information: Values of volunteerism and making a public difference are passed on from one generation to another. Volunteerism is common in Sudan. Given the suppression of news and information, one has to rely on interpersonal relationships and marketplace conversations to understand what is going on in the country;
- on the peace practice: It was not an easy process and participation had an effect on the lives of participants. It also created a sense of confidence among Sudanese women to make things happen;
- on social change: Space and opportunities for women post-CPA (2005) seem to present themselves following both national and international recognition of their role in building peace and the consecutive formulation of new constitutions and policies. It may be the best time for women in Sudan.

The narrative analysis of life histories collected as part of this research was presented in the previous chapter.

#### **Life history 8.5** Samia Ahmed

##### **It is not like I'm living my life to get married**

My name is **Samia Ahmed** ... I have my degree in business studies from Sudan University for Science and Technology and I [took] ... non-academic programmes on political science, peacebuilding, and all this kind of stuff... I used to work for [one of the diplomatic missions]... I resigned when I was in the US on a visit with a program called international tolerance. The National Center for Tolerance Education and Tolerance Building.

[I]t is not like I'm living my life to get married. I'm busy, but it might happen one day... I know in my country it is important, even in my family, because I have two younger sisters who got married. And it's a big thing, it's a big issue, but I think I am lucky enough because I have a very supportive family. I don't think that if you marry ... you have to quit what you are doing; I think that you have to do both. We are a very big family... Yes, in my big family it is not very common that a man would marry more than once. That would be strange.

Everybody will know when somebody is married more than once... I come originally from the rural parts of Sudan; and where I come from ... there are a few cases [and] is not a common thing, polygamy.

I am still ... in the process of exploring what I want to do next... [I]t will be within the same area of what I have been doing ... working on women issues, on peace issues, and I developed also a passion to learn more about the links between security and communication and what is really happening in the region. So, it would probably be something in the same field. So I just started recently to apply seriously, but I was doing lots of reading because my job was very stressful, and very demanding... I was involved at the same time with the engendering [of] the peace process. We started a youth initiative we called it the Nile youth peace initiative ... we were active across conflict lines, trying to bring youth from Sudan across the different divides together.

### **I think I was lucky**

My mother was a teacher and my father was also a teacher but he was not in a school ... he is an engineer so he used to teach ... technical kind of stuff. And my family lived in Saudi Arabia for a long time; I think it started with Sudan that is very conservative. But I think because my mum was a teacher, and ... teachers are like very wonderful people in the sense [that] ... they got to be exposed to many parts of Sudan and my dad was well travelled in many countries. So..., I think I was lucky. Though it was ... a restricted kind of upbringing but still ... my father always believed in girl's education. And he believed that more effort should be done towards educating girls more than boys because the society here with all its good boys' facilities not like girls. So ... I think it was one of the most important issues that we get educated.

I think it was in the eighties when ... Live Aid started, all these programs and I realized like I'm so involved in ... doing ... public work ... I used to come to my village every year for vacation and I used to see my dad like volunteering and doing lots of work, it is just part of the culture of life in Sudan like working together. It's a very small village but we always have like public awareness ... celebrating ... the day for education or celebrating this or that. I mean it's not [that] ... we were having lots of resources but it was one of the things. I think it's because also there was a good level of educated people among the people in the village. And so ... I was involved in doing ... public works since I think I was in junior high or something like this, and I ... feel that it is ... part of who you are and continued doing it.

### **Some of my uncles and my aunties will be like wow**

I left my family when I was in high school ... and I studied in Shendi high school, I was in the boarding section of the school. This doesn't mean it is a fancy school but because it is a school where many girls in the villages around Shendi come ... I was exposed to the politics of Sudan... when the [National] Islamic Front started. When I came to university I was again involved in doing things in my area... I studied at Sudan University, Science and Technology, but we used to do work here, then go back in the summer to do work in our village. And,



I became volunteer with a local NGO, and then I got to know [the] Woman Action Group ... [I]f I wanted to go to the south, during the war my family wouldn't mind. They would help me to go, support me to go. I wanted to do different things and my family was ... backing me up even before I had my job so they are great. I know [that] ... some of my uncles and my aunties will be like wow... because I was in Juba ... for my work, when the late Dr. John Garang died. I was there ... in Juba for two days. Everybody from my family and friends knew that I would be there so it was quite interesting. So I had ... the initiatives, but my family were supportive and we discuss things, we talk about things, but I also know that they are from a different generation, so we don't agree on so many things, ... it's not like you know a 100% democratic family, but again ... you sometimes create your own opportunities and your own program.

### **People wanted better lives for their children**

I told you ... about the background of my family that they lived part, a big part of their lives like 20 years in Saudi Arabia, and ... I think during the sixties or, no, the seventies probably..., there was a great eh, kind of migration of the technical people from Sudan to the Gulf countries, to Europe, to the US and I think that is ... the beginning of the collapse ... because you had many qualified people who were badly needed for the country ... When I talked to my father it was more like about, what each Government of Sudan would do, they would put their loyal people in a position, in a technical position they cannot fulfil but they would just put them. So that really made many people leave Sudan. Unfortunately most of these things happen during democratic governments ... as well as many people found themselves ... being bossed by people who don't understand the work... and my dad's work was technical work. And then ... the Gulf countries were ... starting to flourish and so they came and they looked for technical people and my father was there. And I think it's, I wouldn't say it's worries or [for] any political reason but I would say it was more economic reasons. Many people wanted better lives for their children so they just went there.

### **I talk to people about ... what has been going on in Darfur**

So I think I am probably the one who is bringing a lot about the war to my family life, what has been going on in Sudan. Because I worked in IDP (Internally Displaced Person) camps in Khartoum. I worked with youth issues, youth in conflict, and then I was part of the engendering of the peace process and I got to visit ... the war areas in many parts of Sudan. And then later on with my work at one of the diplomatic missions, I have even been to ... places where like the war was going on. And eh, so like my brothers are younger than me, they were not, I don't think they were exposed, apart from what you see on TV and what I tell them ... But ... I think it generally affects many people in Sudan, but it is nothing that you can compare it with what you see when you go to the war ... affected areas. We lost some members of our family like cousins... one of them was a pilot in the army ... my cousin's husband. They were part of the army. ... [W]e have some of the young people who were part of the PDF (Popular Defence Forces). So it's like, it's just like the general effect. It's not like if you are living in a conflict area.



Unlike other people ... I don't think Sudanese people would [bear] political responsibility towards what is going on in the Sudan. ... Because it's a big country, it's a huge country. ... I am saying that in case of the different political regimes because most of them are right here in the center [in Khartoum]. There is no like real news communication of what's going on in the country. And I, I don't come from the center; I don't consider myself coming from Khartoum. So I really know what I am talking about, because when I go to my village, when I talk to people about what is going on in war affected areas and I don't ... deliberately [do so] every time I go there. Every time I am sitting with ... friends [for example] ..., I just try to bring some of these issues. Because I think that is totally unfair that people are being judged on things that they really don't know.

So they tell me like they are Murahaleen or Janjaweed (Arab militias) or things like this. No way you can believe that somebody would be on their horses, kidnap women and rape them. I tell them I met the rape victims ... it's not something I have been told about. So ... being in war all the time is not good. ... I don't think we have been responsible politicians for years in the government or in the opposition or even in some of our civil society organizations or trade unions because everything is being done here... I don't think it was what we needed like, who would not want everybody in Sudan to understand what's going on, what's happening.

#### **Deciding for other people and thinking for other people**

All is connected with the center and then, now we are more accountable to ... the donor's countries, to people outside. We're not freely working with people in Sudan, we're not trying to disseminate. So I think with the international interests, a little bit you know the space is becoming bigger. But I don't think it is as big as it should be, I think there is great space in more involvement and expansion and I don't think we're doing it because we're focusing more on what's going on here in Khartoum, or in the center. I think ... we're following more on, on what like people outside want to hear from us, we're not working on issues even issues like labour law or issues like decision-making. We're not trying to build the structures ... we are more looking at ... advocacy at very high level, or lobbying at very high level. But we're not doing our homework too.

Even we had a meeting ... and I brought the issue for women like this coalition are we going to have any kind of statement? ... This coalition is supposed to be born from different kind of groups, different kind of affiliations and I said like there is more to talk about than Oslo and post-Oslo, some people are being targeted here. Rose (Paulino) brought the issue of Abyei. And I said like this is going on, it is affecting women here, it is affecting people here and eh...I was so surprised that we are in a kind ... like we didn't even say like the... the... incident that involved the Justice and Equality Movement. But people would say like the events of Omdurman, you know like, nobody was willing to recognize this though they were ... part of the peace process for Darfur. So it's eh... it's all about how the public memory is being formed in this country and eh it makes me sometimes very frustrated. Especially when I see people who could ... have good influence.

### **Political parties have NGOS and the NGOS like want to be politicians**

I hate the labels but I think it is for me the best label I can get you know. But even I have options with civil society ... I don't belong to a political party... I think some people make their choices to be politicians, it is okay. We need good politicians, we need to support them. But we should never mix up the rules you know. And the roles as well ... you know. If you are part of a political group and ... if you want to get people [to] support [you], you should work hard for it. But what's going on is like it's been very chaotic here like you know political parties have NGOS and the NGOS like want to be politicians.

I supported like after the signing of the CPA because when I was like reading all these documents and I was like my goodness where will they get all these people to fulfil all these structures. So it was okay that the structures absorbed some of the real activists of the civil society. And I said like we need to support these because we want to end this war and everything. But now it's like very bad you know. You could be in a meeting that is supposed to be a civil society meeting and you will never get agreement on a technical issue because people's political affiliations are like guiding them or they want to get approval from their [political leaders]. The same things we had when SuWEP was starting but at least when SuWEP started, like this is the group that is considering themselves you know as politicians you know. And this is the group that ... So I decided like I don't want to be part of a political group you know. I want to work with everybody and I would see myself more in a technical area than in a political area, but I think like we need to have good politicians and we deserve them. We need to work with them to be good politicians.

### **It was not an easy process**

I joined [the peace practice] at the very beginning... and the first meetings were taking place at Ahfad [University] and I was asked by the Sudanese. They sent us to go there to attend the meetings and I started from there. And eh.., I was ...part of the working committee... I personally believe that there is a very, very personal, individual level and at that personal, individual level I think it had a real great impact on me. I am the kind of person who is struggling to... you know ... and I think I found a sort of, part of the liberation that I am looking for. Because it gave me access and it has made me like ... continue to dialogue with myself like about this whole thing about the war in Sudan and then about ... peace. And I realize that you have to start with yourself first and certainly you know like when it's not like ... one group of people, but it's many people with different interests and different things. And it was not an easy process, it was very challenging.

I was one of the very youngest people in the Initiative. And I didn't have all these great credentials ... I had just like the energy and the belief that things could be better in Sudan if we work together. And even this concept to get to people was not easy. And then lots of struggles, lots of things. But like you really meet amazing wonderful people along the way and ... one of the things that I will always remember for SuWEP is meeting women from the other side. That was like one of the greatest moments in my life. And I will never, never you know forget because again it was another kind of realization for me. So at a personal level I

think it's amazing and I give it credit for many things and it is still going on in my life. And I need to be strong since things are not going on like the way I thought they would be or the way I wish. But I still have that strong believe and faith that is really you know like helping me to think of... I can do so many things and even this peace of Sudan could be done. For me it allowed this great communication you know across the divides. And that's ... the key thing and I still have very good and nice relationships with women from Southern Sudan or from other parts of Sudan. And I think in a general way it has affected people who were part of it.

#### **You can do something if you want to do it**

I think at a certain time we were trying to expand but I don't think we were able to develop the proper tools. I never felt like this is the responsibility of the Dutch Government. When I was with a diplomatic mission we also ... pushed to give support and I had two wonderful bosses who really supported SuWEP but there was lots of work that should have been done by us and we didn't do it. And like I think any other thing it faced lots of challenges. But what makes me really excited is not like the thing about destiny or faith ... but the thing that we were able to do, we could do it. And we pushed for it to be done but ... again the political affiliations, the personal issues. There are lots of personal issues among women in Sudan which is driving me crazy most of the time you know it's ... I really can't understand it ... because if you see like what could be achieved beyond your fights, I mean, it's great things. So it... it really brought you know a sense [that] ... you can do something if you want to do it, a sense of like humanizing people, there is a great deal of dehumanizing that is going on in Sudan. And you know [that] ... if you work hard you can achieve lots of things.

And I think I told you about the youth initiative we had, we managed to organize the first ever meeting that brought youth from the government areas and the SPLM areas and we had it in Nairobi. It coincided with the signing of the three protocols. So we went to Naivasha and we were ... the only group there without a political affiliation but we were there. It was very nice to see the recognition of women over there. Because I remember there were many people coming and talking to me like you were with SuWEP and so it was, it was really nice. Like a great opportunity was availed to people, but did we take it seriously?

#### **Did we go back?**

I am one of the people who did not like the idea of the Initiative being you know given to an NGO. I thought after ... ten years of all this capacity building, of all this confidence building, of all these trainings, of all this great exposure ... people should really own it, and people should ... be responsible about it and see how they can develop it. But as I said ... I think it is our responsibility that we did not take it to the next level. Because I don't think we went for the next level and they are keeping things here in the center... I don't think they mean real participation of, [for example] ... IDP women or women in the rural areas or anything ... I mean like people were given the tools and I still believe it could be really, really better. I remember I was invited by the embassy to a workshop, I think [in 2005]... that brought women from the south, women from the north. I think it was the end of a workshop or

something and I couldn't really believe it because most of these women like Pauline Riak and other women like... I personally have [a] nice relationship with them. And I was not part of that workshop. But when I came in it was like you could feel that the air was very thick. And I was like what is going on? Did we go back? What happened because we should build on all the great, you know like, progress that has been going on. But what has really happened? So as I said I think there are lots of individual personal issues. Big fights between the old women's union and the new union, I mean all these, these crazy...

**Politicians will be like politically correct**

If you talk about the politicians, I think like they have to be always politically correct in today's world. Whether they believe ... this is real or not I don't know. But if you talk to most of the politicians it is like a big international trend now. You have to talk about women's role and women in peace and I think some of them believed in it but I think most of them do not believe in it. ...So I think politicians will be like politically correct. Very nice, but as I said it couldn't get real backup and support from, I hate the word grass root[s], but grass root[s], and men. I don't think we managed to communicate it very well.

For people who have access to information and knowledge like people like us here, they know there is a great window of opportunity. For the majority of people I don't think so. And when I say this, I mean like for example I will just go back again to what happened in Khartoum on the 10th of May (2008)<sup>34</sup>. I have a big mouth and I talk to people and I usually do not really care so much about what will be the consequences. But it has really terrified me because ... I used to work for an embassy so I know all about the CPA (Comprehensive Peace Agreement) and the DPA (Darfur Peace Agreement) and I read the documents and everything. So I read the constitution, and I get access to politicians and to women here. So you know what are the openings that the CPA is providing. But when you talk about people, like I talked to some people, like the taxi driver. And then they have this idea of like those Chadians who came to Khartoum. But these are Sudanese and the guy said: "No, no, these are Chadians". No they are Sudanese; they are from the JEM (Justice and Equality Movement). So like people want to believe what they hear. I think there is great fear. I think if you were an ordinary person who will be caught up by the police. You will not be treated [as] if you were a famous person eh ... a politician or something like this.

So I think we failed as Sudanese because I think we were expecting the international community to do this, to communicate this whole CPA to the people of Sudan. There are very few people of the Sudan who know what the CPA is and what ... it mean[s] in terms of personal freedoms, freedom of expression, all these kind of things. ... Is it really affecting them or is it just affecting people in the war zones?

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34 On May 10, 2008, Sudanese government troops and a large group of rebels from Darfur clashed in the city of Omdurman (Khartoum State) bringing the war in Darfur to Khartoum's doorstep. More than 220 people were reported to be killed.

### **I think this is the best time for women in Sudan**

I think this is one of the, theoretically, it is all theoretical because I think we are not taking the challenges, it is one of the greatest times for Sudanese women. SuWEP had a history. It is known, it is recognized by all ... the biggest parties of the Government. So I think it is a great time because there are great openings, there is great opportunities. ... But again are we seeing this, are we taking it, are we considering it? Do we look at how we get more people involved? Involvement does not have to mean participating in meetings in The Hague, or anything, but even understanding what is called the Initiative. It means you are updating it, modifying it to be representative to what the majority of women want. There is a great opportunity but are we taking it, yes there are problems in the Nuba Mountains... everybody know[s] this, is this reflected upon in SuWEP in this big coalition of women? If this is one of the biggest issues, we could have taken it, we could have challenged the Government of National Unity at different levels.

So this is like the time when everybody wants to help Sudan, everybody wants to support Sudan, not just financially but everybody is willing to provide their experiences, many things. This is the time we have a constitution. The first time we have bills of rights. It is just there, but are we taking it. I don't have great experience like many other women in Sudan ... I am still in my thirties. From my readings I think this is the best time for women in Sudan. There is great potential but now it is not for the donor countries to do things. For us, we have to challenge what is going on. We have to do it, if not, nobody is going to do it. We have to really agree on this common agenda. If we do not really agree on it, I feel sometimes we have it but not necessarily. If the Umma Party said something different, all their women will say something differently. I believe this is a great time. It is challenging, it has many obstacles but this is the time to set things right. This is the time where we could really organize. But it really requires ... lots of work and devoting time and energy and you know to do lots of work.

### **Are we responsible or are we not responsible**

I do not think that the embassy should play a father or a mother to the Initiative... I think it should be, are we responsible, or are we not responsible. Maybe there are new people who should be part of it, maybe it should move from Khartoum to the rural areas. I do not know but ... the embassy should not continue like parenting it forever. I would not even use the word parenting, I was part of the discussions and the challenges and all these things. It was clear that if people want to own the initiative they own it, it is theirs. The political support that was provided by the embassy was great and the recognition from the other Embassies. It availed an environment otherwise it would not have worked (politically speaking). The next step was like are we really together, are we coming together, do we really have a minimum agenda, do we want to pursue it... More consultation and people should think of something else ... than having again the same idea. Again it is the same idea. Even like with the new

Inclusive Security<sup>35</sup> approach and also I am involved in this. But I have learned ... if you really want to change things for the better, maybe you think your idea is good, but if you are not involved with people nothing will change. You have to be with people, you have to share your ideas with them, you have to discuss with them.

**You do not have to be a politician to be involved in change**

These are very frustrating days. But there is always hope. I believe that there is always hope and I believe that you have to be consistent. You have to start with yourself, you cannot go preach things and you do not do it with yourself. You do not do it in your house. I think I will be more involved with these issues as they will continue for a long time. As I told you my faith and my belief is that things will be better if you want them to be better. If you work to make them better. So I do not think I will stop my work in all these areas, in different ways. I never stopped being involved in these issues when I had a job. Even through my job I tried to make some difference, some change. I will continue doing this ... I believe that everything can be better if you want them to be better. I would have loved to be in a country like in Europe or something ..., where I do not have to think about all these things. Where you have good infrastructure, a government, where you have good access. But I do not think if we do not go through ... social and democratic transformation and structures. Nothing will change.

We have to encourage more people to be involved in these issues. It is one of the sad things because of the political situation in Sudan many people just do not want to do it. One of my very best friends, who was a human rights activist, a great person just emigrated to Australia. And he is a young person. He could have done a lot here in Sudan. This is the kind of environment that is making many people choose to stay at home and do nothing. We just have to encourage people that you do not have to be a politician to be involved in politics. You do not have to be a politician to be involved in change. It is who we are, how we define our country. We should not ... adopt what is being told to us. We should work more with people in Sudan. Work together. We have to move from Khartoum. A lot of work has been done in Khartoum. If we do not expand the participation base in all the issues, of human rights and social justice, nothing will change. The people of Sudan's priorities will never be represented ... but we deserve better things. I think I will stick around for a while.

**6 Conclusion**

Michael Quinn Patton so appropriately wrote, “[r]esearch, like diplomacy, is the art of the possible” (Patton 2002, 12). Every day diplomats, policy makers and practitioners make decisions about what to do or what not to do, and which strategy or intervention to pursue or not to pursue. Similar to researchers making methods decisions, the decisions of actors and agencies are likely to reflect some “imperfect interplay of resources, capabilities,

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35 The Institute for Inclusive Security uses research, training, and advocacy to promote the inclusion of all stakeholders, particularly women, in peace processes. [http://www.huntalternatives.org/pages/8140\\_our\\_mission.cfm](http://www.huntalternatives.org/pages/8140_our_mission.cfm) (accessed December 25, 2011).

purposes, possibilities, creativity and personal judgments by the people involved” (Patton 2002, 12). The human factor in research, diplomacy and third party intervention is ever-present. Political backing to set up efforts to build peace beyond parties participating in formal conflict resolution and across so many dividing lines was crucial to start the peace practice, while creative minds of diplomats, policy makers and practitioners, and the determination of Sudanese women themselves to partake in conflict resolution in Sudan, helped to develop a process and sustain efforts.

Findings demonstrate that outside actors, be it national or international, held different perspectives regarding the causes of conflict, and judged parties in conflict differently. Clashing views and ideas were part of a fascinating and ‘imperfect interplay’ or social process of third party intervention. Both international and local actors brought their own goals, insights, skills, values and views regarding prospects for peace in Sudan and the opportunities for women’s participation in peace processes. Evidence from interviews also suggests that as international actors come and go, local staff working with outside agencies have the ability to strengthen peacebuilding efforts with a historical perspective to conflict, better insight into grassroots level processes and strategies as well as local knowledge of who is who. On the other hand, security threats and risks to local staff should not be taken lightly as they faced risks and pressures that diplomats and international practitioners did not face. Being open and transparent to parties in conflict about efforts to build and make peace helped to mitigate risks. Participating women representing parties close to security forces also proved able to build bridges between participants and members of the security forces.

The peace practice raised quite a stir initially for its focus on peacebuilding across constituencies and the participation of women in the IGAD peace process. The consecutive focus on capacity building and a large variety of activities within constituencies as opposed to across constituencies was politically less sensitive; though building trust across parties remained a challenge. Contracting a local organization to pursue project activities amongst parties in conflict in an inclusive manner following the signing of the CPA (2005) negatively affected trust and collaboration which had taken great pains and years to develop (interviews Jos Hoenen, Nicolien Groenendijk and Tamadur Ahmed, life histories Samia Ahmed and Agnes Nyoka, and interview Pauline Riak). Everything in Sudan was and is political. Although it is difficult to be against peace, building and making peace in Sudan is nothing but a long-winded process of a truly sensitive nature. The onus was then on external actors to help reduce mistrust and build peace amongst conflicting parties, which would then be supported by certain funding modalities and work. Regular communication with all parties required actors to trust one another, work together in close concert, give a little and take a little while going the extra mile.

As opposed to what Sudanese women themselves expressed through their life histories and my analysis thereof, the majority of outside actors did not think it possible for Sudanese women to really benefit from their struggle for peace, development and equality in the aftermath of war. This in itself is not surprising, given the wealth of case studies that

demonstrate increasing levels of violence against women, in countries emerging from conflict and the slow speed with which gender relations are thought to change. However, chances for social change, which seem slow or slim, have the potential to scare off potential investors and may become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Why invest in the implementation of UN SCR 1325 when women are confronted with backlashes, derive no benefits and continue to be victimized? Such self-fulfilling prophecy can become another source of disempowerment. Evidence from interviews confirms that women who strive for peace, equality and development, face high expectations and are expected to perform miracles that even the international community is unable to perform. When women do not meet these expectations, they are easily dismissed as selfish and elitist. At the same time, the priorities and recommendations of Sudanese women to the Oslo Donor's Conference on Sudan (2005) did not lead to decisions or allocations of national and international money being made available for aiding peace with equality and development.

Findings show that government agencies that monitor a country and engage in building and making peace are crucial to support the participation of women in peace processes. To start with, the political will and belief that women can bring about change were essential. Consequently, their long over short horizons emerged as helpful. The role of diplomacy, the status of diplomatic missions and their staff also helped, but did not eliminate the need to go beyond orthodox ways of working. The interviews provide empirical evidence that it does not only require creative minds to ensure the participation of women in peace process but also politicians, diplomats and mediators to be creative and go that extra mile. Findings show that relatively few agencies may be in a position to support the participation of women in peace processes effectively, even though the experience of the peace practice shows that many agencies wanted to do something to help; and that includes UN agencies and INGOS. When discussing the implementation of UN SCR 1325, and in particular the participation of women in peace processes, organizational and institutional knowledge matters as well as insight into the comparative advantages and disadvantages of various agencies.

Interviews with outsiders provided valuable insight into the interaction between Sudanese women and parties negotiating peace over a period of 2,5 years. Evidence demonstrates that there is much more to be known about the participation of women in peace processes than what gets recorded including potential long-term gains. Without longitudinal research, processes of change when wars are fought and peace agreements signed will remain little understood. My research findings demonstrate that gender relations in Sudan change and did not remain unaffected by war and efforts to build peace.



# Chapter 9

## Conclusion

Introduction

A recap of chapters

Discussion and conclusion

Interaction between Sudanese women and outsiders

Implications and applications

Future directions

## 9 Conclusion

## 1 Introduction

As tapestries are woven from the bottom to the top, this final chapter aims to tie everything together. I will return to the beginning and make an effort to ensure that all the warp has been knotted before removing the finished tapestry, this research, from the loom. This final chapter is structured in five sections that will cover the following points. The first part will briefly recapitulate the content of the individual chapters and highlight the thread of findings and arguments put forward in this thesis. Consequently, I will discuss the importance of transdisciplinary curiosity in the development of new conceptual approaches to peacebuilding that contribute to the implementation of UN SCR 1325 and turn the nexus conflict, feminism and development into meaningful practice. This is followed by my conclusion which builds on my search for answers presented in chapter 6 and is enriched with insights from empirical research presented in chapter 7 and 8. Then I will reflect on the implications and applications of my research findings which bring out the practitioner-scholar's view. Finally, I will end by making suggestions for further research which emanate from my research experiences and findings.

My dissertation began with a short story illustrating that policy makers and practitioners, like myself, live and learn without taking the time to reflect on experience gained; document what happened; and, carry out research to gain deeper insights that contribute to knowledge and inform policies and practices. The flip-side of the same coin is that practitioners and policymakers such as myself are likely to bring their own baggage from past experiences and transpose them into a new experience, which is this research. As a matter of fact, my own baggage could be compared to a trunk with many compartments, all of which are of significance to this research. I had lived and worked in conflict-ridden Sudan for more than seven years as a humanitarian aid worker, diplomat and development practitioner, working with men, women and children affected by violent conflict, both directly and indirectly, throughout the country. I had also been part of the donor community supporting Operation Lifeline Sudan and the IGAD Peace Process, including a humanitarian and political dialogue in the midst of war.

One compartment of my heavy trunk was dedicated to the development and start of an inclusive peace practice in support of the participation of Sudanese women in peace processes. Other compartments included my studies of the Arabic language, feminist thinking, and access to a large network of practitioners, policy makers, and researchers both at home and abroad including in Sudan. Being acutely aware of my own position and baggage, taking time to reflect also required the careful, conscious and continuous use of reflexivity having joined the Ministry's foreign policy side at headquarters as well as undertaking this research. In the beginning of my research I continued to wonder if my ever present baggage would help or hinder my research, and if it would influence my research findings positively or negatively. At the end of my research I can confidently say that my baggage or position in this research opened many research doors which would have remained closed otherwise. Consequently, critical self-reflection contributed to a careful and detailed qualitative research approach, in support of the quality of my empirical findings.

It was the peace practice (1997-2007) that had aroused my interest in this investigation and helped define the core question that guided my research, which was to find out in which way Sudanese women had participated in peace processes that culminated in the CPA (2005). Key parts in the exploration of this central research question focused on answering four additional questions related to: 1) international support; 2) the empowerment of Sudanese women; 3) the role of practitioners and policy makers, or those on the outside; and, 4) the interaction between Sudanese women and those on the outside including practitioners, diplomats and visiting high officials and policy makers. Hereafter, I will not repeat each and every research question again but use key headings instead. This is in accordance with Chapter 1 in which I introduced my research and research questions.

In order to situate my research, Chapter 2, provided contemporary and historical knowledge about Sudan. This chapter put war and peace in Sudan into context and also demonstrated that its history of war is long and complex. I explained that different scholars offer different readings of the conflict in Sudan by stressing one cause of conflict over the other, ranging from British colonial policies, identity, religion, to struggles over power and natural resources. Besides the growing revolt in Southern Sudan against Northern Sudan, parties in the north disagreed over almost everything while relations among military and political leaders in the south also turned increasingly difficult. Peacemaking in Sudan included many agreements as well as continuing disagreements including both friends and foes. Moreover, relationships between Sudan and neighbouring countries, and the US over time, were anything but smooth. Two lengthy civil wars left deep marks on the minds of Sudanese men and women.

As explained, understanding conflict in Sudan is not limited to understanding its history but not understanding its history including key actors (from Nimeiry to Al-Mahdi, Al-Mighani, Al-Turabi and Al-Bashir and from Ladu, Alier and Garang to Machar and Lam Akol), and factors (from colonization, Islam, the Nile, and oil to 9/11) certainly poses a problem. John Ryle and Justin Willis wrote in the introduction to their handbook on Sudan that there are “[m]any Sudans” (Ryle, Willis, Baldo and Jok 2011, 7). The life history of Samira Hasan, which was featured in Chapter 2, clearly demonstrated that there is more to be known about Sudan and the Sudanese than history as a series of conflicts and a chronology of events. Samira’s story brought home a struggle for independence, democracy and peace and lived history. She joined the trade union movement to fight discrimination against women and ended up in prison for three years when the National Islamic Front (NIF) came to power. Consequently a deeper understanding of a country emanates from life histories collected on location. Importantly, other life histories than Samira’s clearly show there is more to Sudan than a single history.

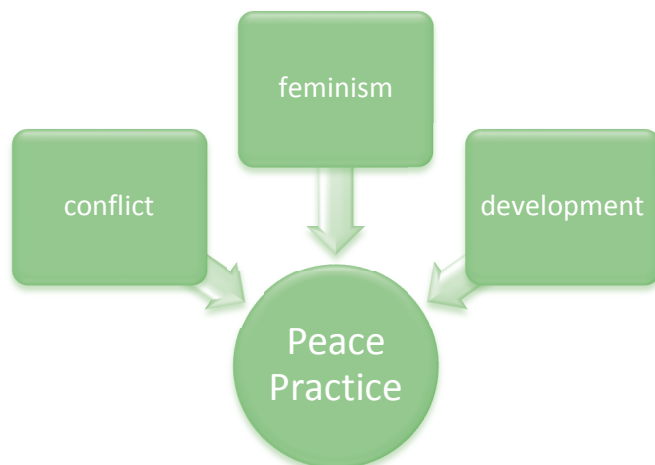
In Chapter 3, I showcased my key thoughts emanating from the domains of conflict, development and feminism and argued for transdisciplinary curiosity including the use of the methods of one domain to inform another. In my view, insights from the three domains not only contribute to a deeper understanding of war and peace as social processes but

also help to rethink concepts and practices across all domains. My exploration through the various domains of conflict, development and feminism on the basis of my research questions brought together a variety of perspectives and clarified a variety of approaches and theoretical threads. These theoretical threads included notions of conflict management, resolution and transformation, conflict and development, gender and development, participatory development, feminist perspectives on war and peace, and efforts to bring feminist thoughts into the realm of peacebuilding, mediation and international relations.

I showed that the participation of women in formal peace negotiations remains extremely low in proportion to men, irrespective of changes in development theories and practices and Security Council resolutions supporting the participation of women in peace processes. I highlighted that little is known about the participation of women in informal peace and mediation processes. Thinking of women as victims of war and as groups instead of individual political, economic and social actors remains common. I found that existing approaches in building and making peace never gave any thought to the absence of women, and thereby tend to reinforce the existing power imbalance between men and women even though the perception of conflict as a catalyst for social change and social justice is clearly reflected in thinking related to both conflict resolution and conflict transformation.

The peace practice featuring in this research, however, was inspired by a variety of insights from thoughts and methods springing from the domains of conflict, development and feminism:

**Figure 9.2** The peace practice and the nexus conflict, feminism and development



Lederach's pyramid of approaches to building peace had aroused my curiosity, including his emphasis on the key role played by mid-level leaders, bringing together grassroots and top leadership. The suggestion that this approach could empower participants had presented me with food for thought from the perspectives of feminism and development which now

begged for further research. The life history of Priscilla Joseph Kuch, which was featured in Chapter 3, brought home another struggle for peace, equality and development. Her story indicated that disempowerment and empowerment of women go hand in hand but also demonstrated that Sudanese women were partners in making war. Priscilla negotiated services for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) with the Government of Sudan (GOS) for the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC) but also played a role in negotiating humanitarian access to areas under control of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), in preparation of Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS). She described the 'backstage influence' of women as well as their leadership in making peace indicating that there is more to be known about conflict, development and feminism than what gets recorded.

Chapter 4 placed the focus on the formal Sudan IGAD peace process and its supporters as the most important formal peace process to date. In comparison to all other efforts to resolve conflict between Northern and Southern Sudan, the Sudan IGAD peace process was sustained and given diplomatic and financial support by the international community throughout the years (1993-2005). The US played a critical role according to Hilde Johnson, the chairperson of the IGAD Partners Forum and successor of Jan Pronk, as the US "had the broadest and most powerful set of carrots and sticks at their disposal" and felt a necessity to engage following 9/11 (Johnson 2011, 27). Civil society and political parties other than the governing National Congress Party (NCP) and the SPLM were largely ignored and at best their involvement was foreseen at a later stage. I demonstrated how Sudanese women managed to get a foot in the door, assisted by Dutch humanitarian and political interest in Sudan as of 1998. The life history of Anis Haggar, a Sudanese businessman who gave his support to the peace practice, described how he watched Sudanese women harassing their leadership and how their role in building peace came to be acknowledged when the parties formed their government.

When peace agreements are signed the most important question is how to maintain and broaden peace, beyond the expectations of the west and all the loud voices of the GOS and the SPLM. Inclusiveness matters and all broken fences need mending. For now, broken fences have yet to be mended and the CPA has yet to be fully implemented. The IGAD peace process culminated in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005. The Sudan IGAD Secretariat concluded its activities immediately after, leaving the implementation of the CPA to its fate. Members of the international community were torn, amongst others, between the crisis in Darfur and supporting continued reconciliation and collaboration between Northern and Southern Sudan, including the implementation of the CPA and making unity attractive. Violence and instability continue to reign, and while South Sudan has declared independence the status of Abyei has yet to be resolved; as stipulated in the CPA by means of a separate referendum. Similarly, the people living in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states await a process of popular consultation. These oil rich border areas between North and South Sudan are no longer flashpoints or places where violence might be expected to begin, as these regions already suffer increased violence and political instability.

Chapter 5 provided a description of the changes in the social, political and economic status of Sudanese women overtime. The chapter emphasized that Sudanese women are not a homogeneous group sharing the same struggles and facing the same challenges. There is no single cohesive Sudanese women's movement to speak of but many women's organizations have exerted efforts to improve the status of women in Sudan overtime. The status of women in Northern and Southern Sudan evolved differently as a result of Anglo-Egyptian rule over Sudan and two civil wars. Northern Sudanese women have a long history of protest, participating in the Mahdi rebellion, opposing colonial rule and demonstrating against Abboud's military government. They were granted the indiscriminate right to vote and to seek elected positions in 1965. Consequently, they joined universities, the workforce and political parties. Similar to and sometimes ahead of women elsewhere around the world, Sudanese women struggled for their rights successfully irrespective of setbacks; such as when thousands of women were fired from the civil service following the military coup led by the National Islamic Front in 1989.

Southern Sudanese women lived with war for long periods and faced a different struggle. They also have a long history of protest, contributing to and participating in armed struggle. While schooling opportunities in Southern Sudan were few when compared to Northern Sudan, war made access to education extremely difficult. Women joined the SPLM's National Liberation Council and established women's organizations both in Southern Sudan and amongst the diaspora. Under the pressures of war, the responsibilities and roles of men and women in Sudan changed and many women became breadwinners. Trauma, loss and violence dominated the lives of both men and women as the life history of Agnes Nyoka in the chapter evidenced. In Southern Sudan arms were identified with gendered interests and roles, whereby guns were identified with the protection offered by men and the care, love and support offered by mothers and wives.

The signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (2005) provided a new stimulus. Both Northern and Southern Sudanese women pushed successfully for increased gender equality and the inclusion of their rights in their respective interim constitutions, including affirmative action which had never been applied before. Although political participation has increased significantly, the legal status of women presents a major challenge. Values, customs and beliefs remain strong and explain why the status of women in Sudan has been the subject of fierce debate throughout history. Agnes Nyoka remarked that peace is a process, as is social change.

Chapter 6 presented a detailed description of the development and evolution of a peace practice amongst Sudanese women that has been central to this research. The process which started as 'the Initiative to facilitate the participation of women in the Sudanese peace process' (1997-2000) was transformed into a project entitled the 'Sudanese Women Empowerment for Peace' (SuWEP) as of 2001, coming to an end in 2006, following the signing of the CPA. Consequently SuWEP was subcontracted in 2006 to a local organization based in Khartoum which set out to convert SuWEP, amongst others, into a movement

of Sudanese women working to strengthen and empower women politically, socially and economically over the next five years. The story which emerged provided unique insight into how the evolving process of building and making peace worked or did not work from the perspective of both insiders and outsiders. At the same time the chapter provided information on the nature of the involvement of Sudanese women in building and making peace. The life history of Esta Kuku Rahal featured in the chapter clearly communicated the price people paid to work on peace and showcased the courage it took for Sudanese women to participate in building and making peace. In the chapter, I also presented my preliminary insights and reflections in response to my research questions which would guide the on-going processes of analysis and interpretation as well reflection.

Consequently, my search for answers continued and was enriched with findings based on the detailed analysis of life histories collected (Chapter 7) and the analysis of structured interviews with outsiders (Chapter 8). The life histories collected provided empirical evidence that Sudanese women were not silent spectators to either a situation of protracted conflict or to the process that led to the signing of a peace agreement. Sudanese women entered into dialogue with parties to the conflict in an inclusive fashion and advocated as well for peace and social change. They creatively sought both national and international support for their views, while protesting against continued warfare, continuing efforts to convince their political and military leadership that peace is better than war; while acting in close concert with their leaders. My analysis also presented evidence of how behaviour and beliefs changed over time as well as in the face of conflict. In order to meet family needs, women would work, delay marriage, and pay for schooling of brothers and daughters and even pay bridewealth. Gender relations in Sudan changed as a result of civil war but also relational and collective interests of both men and women. Irrespective of the often overwhelming and unexpected losses experienced, in terms of resources, agency and achievements amongst women and men, my findings reveal that disempowerment and empowerment of Sudanese women, when analysed over a prolonged period of time, are concurrent and dual processes. The life history of Jennifer Kujang featured in Chapter 7 attested to that. I also analysed processes of change from a gender perspective over time and touched upon both individual as well as collective levels based on the life histories collected.

Structured interviews with diplomats, policymakers and practitioners showed that political backing to set up efforts to build peace, beyond parties participating in formal conflict resolution and across so many dividing lines, was crucial to start the peace practice, while the creative minds of diplomats, policy makers and practitioners, and the determination of Sudanese women themselves to partake in conflict resolution in Sudan, helped to develop a process and sustain efforts to build and make peace. These interviews also provided valuable and rare insight into the interaction between Sudanese women and parties in their negotiation for peace over the years. While the life histories of Sudanese women and my analysis thereof demonstrate important gains for women at various levels, many outsiders did not think it possible for Sudanese women to really gain from their struggle for peace, development and equality in the aftermath of war. This raises the question, for



example, of why one should invest in the implementation of UN SCR 1325? If investing in peace, development and equality is all about taking risk, it might be worthwhile to take into consideration that, in general, higher risk investments have a greater potential for gain. The life history of Samia Ahmed revealed that she was able to convince other government agencies to invest in peace, development and equality.

## **2 Discussion and conclusion**

Efforts to build peace most clearly need to be seen as related to, and not separate from the domains of conflict, development and feminism. Insights from various domains not only contribute to a deeper understanding of war and peace as social processes but also help to rethink concepts and practices across all domains. This research argues that new conceptual approaches to peacebuilding can effectively support women as peacebuilding actors including their aspirations for peace, equality and development. Especially when working in situations of (post-)conflict, researchers, practitioners and policy makers need to resist the inclination of approaching issues of interest from the perspective of one domain or discipline only. Transdisciplinary curiosity supports inclusive approaches to gathering and generating knowledge as well as meaningful and innovative practices and policies.

This research explored in which way and to what extent Sudanese women have participated in efforts to make and build peace between the Northern and Southern parts of Sudan. It described particular situations and actions through their eyes and experiences. My analysis of these experiences contributes to a better understanding of the underlying social processes and changes as well as their potential effects over time. Recorded participation of women in formal peace negotiations is extremely low while their participation in informal processes remains largely unknown. My research provides insight into the participation of Sudanese women in a track II peacebuilding process and their consecutive interaction with the formal track I, IGAD peace process in Sudan. Findings show how Sudanese women themselves tried to promote positive change in the midst of war and shed light on the difference their participation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding made. Sudanese women stated that they played a critical role in convincing their men that peace was better than war. They entered into dialogue with parties to the conflict in an inclusive fashion and beyond the two parties, the GOS and the SPLM, seated at the formal negotiation table, advocating for peace and social change while seeking international support for their views. They also engaged in resolving conflicts at the local level, trauma counselling as well as the delivery of humanitarian assistance. As many of their ideas were linked to positive peace, and not merely the absence of war, they became 'positive peacebuilding actors'. Post-CPA changes in the status of Sudanese women and Sudanese gender relations can be explained by a combination of internal and external pressures at different levels over a prolonged period of time.

As peacebuilding efforts aim to bring conflicting parties together for talks and dialogue to strengthen peacemaking, I found that irrespective of the importance of sealing the deal, building peace may be even more critical than making peace from the perspective of peace, equality and development.

### **Participation of Sudanese women in peace processes**

As discussed, the available information on the participation of women in both formal and informal peace processes around the world is either non-existent or haphazard and incomplete. At the beginning of my research, I revealed that irrespective of their training and experience resulting from their participation in the peace practice described, Sudanese women were not part of the negotiation teams, they were not invited as mediators, nor did they become signatories of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (2005) signed by the SPLM and the GOS. My investigations have illustrated that the numbers of women participating in formal peace negotiations do not provide the whole truth.

The IGAD peace process that led to the signing of the CPA was a long and convoluted process. My research provides empirical evidence that Sudanese women were not silent spectators to either a situation of protracted conflict or to the process that led to the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (2005). Sudanese women established and maintained informal relationships with whoever was in power nationally, regionally and internationally and across the lines of conflict, while remaining invisible peacebuilding actors. Evidence from life histories, interviews and a variety of other sources consulted shows diverse but continued interaction between Sudanese women and the IGAD Peace Process up to the signing of the CPA in 2005. Sudanese women prepared joint statements, lobbied and found ways to exercise influence directly and indirectly. Pending the stage and relative ease or difficulty of the negotiation processes, female participants to the informal track II process were found to support and participate in the formal and track I, the IGAD peace process in Sudan.

Hilde Frafjord Johnson, who played a key role (1998-2005) in the formal IGAD Sudan peace process as Minister for International Development of Norway, recognized the contribution of Sudanese women and the importance of linkages between the peace practice and the Sudan Peace Process:

*Together with other donors, we ensured that women's groups were brought into the process. The Dutch had supported consultative conferences in the [n]orth and in the [s]outh of women's groups, and a joint meeting of both before the Donor's Conferences. These political processes were essential for the peacebuilding process to succeed (Johnson 2011, 178).*

Notably, the contributions of and demands made by Sudanese women clearly reflected longer term interests, i.e. reducing gender inequality in law, policy and practice and improving women's economic situation, and did not stop at the signing of a peace agreement.

### **International support**

The exclusion of women as actors and sources of information is common place. When discussing the implementation of UN SCR 1325, and in particular the participation of women in peace processes, organizational and institutional knowledge matter; as well as insight into the comparative advantages and disadvantages of agencies. Research findings reveal that

converting Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security into action requires political will and support, leverage, transdisciplinary knowledge, creativity, long term horizons, leadership, deep insight into the conflict; and, let us not forget the tough hide of a rhinoceros.

When the relationship between international agencies and politicians in countries ravaged by civil war is affected by high levels of politicization, government agencies were found to be better situated than UN agencies and (I)NGOs, to support inclusive processes to build trust and peace across the various dividing lines. Though political support was essential at the start of the peace practice, individual practitioners and policy makers managed to continue to support women's peacebuilding efforts, irrespective of a lack of political support and interest. Over the years, management and knowledge turned out to be more of an issue than funding, as peacebuilding efforts only require modest financial support. Moreover, if one agency succeeds, others will follow suit. As time progressed, Sudanese women gained both interest and support from a number of government agencies, INGOs and UN agencies. Support further increased when the formal IGAD peace process made tangible progress. At this stage, rivalry and competition amongst donor agencies reared its ugly head in view of increased probability of success.

One can conclude that war politicizes and polarizes. Knowledge and experience in managing and resolving conflicts, including third-party intervention amongst international development actors and agencies, remain sparse. My research into the origins and development of the peace practice reflects changes in development theories, policies, strategies and implementation, and it became clear however that knowledge of process-minded peacebuilding is limited and not actively pursued by policy makers and practitioners. Thus, while little of our knowledge on gender and development may be applied consciously and strategically when it comes to conflict, one must also recognize that mediation, facilitation and peacebuilding play a minor part. Moreover, these do not easily fit into standard approaches of results-based project management, nor appeals for humanitarian assistance.

However, the political support and interest of regional and international leaders do matter. At the same time, efforts to build peace are not, by definition, without risk, as life histories and interviews have amply demonstrated. Sudanese women put up a stout resistance to intimidation and harassment by security forces. Findings illustrate that there is a tendency to depoliticise conflict, equality and development while Sudanese women do not share the same struggles nor run the same risks. Access to, for example, education differed between Northern and Southern Sudanese women, as well as their legal status. The contribution of Southern Sudanese women to the armed struggle of the SPLM was unmatched, while women representing northern opposition parties as well as women from the Nuba Mountains suffered intimidation and harassment that women representing the GOS did not.

What struck me during my research was that women are not only looked upon as victims instead of actors, but are also considered as an informal organized group, which is not the case. Family background, socio-cultural and political conditions, identities, and experiences in the face of war matter in efforts to build peace. Thinking of women as a single and organized group turned out to be as persistent as thinking of women as victims. At the same time, the newly established governments in North and South Sudan and donor agencies have not been released from an obligation to take heed of post-CPA priorities and recommendations put forward by Sudanese women.

### **Empowerment of Sudanese women**

Disempowerment and empowerment of Sudanese women in the midst and aftermath of war, and when analysed over a prolonged period of time, are shown to be concurrent and dual processes. Men and women were actors in war and both men and women experienced unimaginable loss and trauma. Men's experiences of disempowerment, as seen through the eyes of women, are extremely stressful and disempowering. Findings confirm that in the midst of conflict, Sudanese men and women experienced sudden and overwhelming losses of resources, agency and achievements. Men and women were left to fend for themselves and fight for their survival. However, disempowerment did not exclude empowerment. In times of war, everything is subject to change and that includes notions of masculinity and femininity. On the basis of my findings, times of war should not automatically be dismissed as the worst environment for bringing about significant changes; instead they should be taken as a window of opportunity to support steps towards peace, equality and development.

My research revealed that conflict in Sudan meant rapid change for both men and women individually and overtime it brought about changes in the empowerment of women at immediate, intermediate and long-term levels. Relationships between women and men in Sudan changed due to both external pressures including protracted conflict and internal pressures, including relational and collective interests. That is, both men and women at all times made their own interrelational judgments based on interests, wellbeing and personal principles in view of social changes. Findings attested to the active agency of women and brought to light a variety of ways by which women struggled, bargained and negotiated or exercised influence. The way in which men and women acted and or interacted in times of war clearly affected their status in society and changed relationships between them. The reshaping of the relationships between men and women and their identities post-CPA was part and parcel of a continuous process of social change. The post-CPA situation, irrespective of its shortcomings, has provided a new stimulus on the basis of women's earlier activism. The achievements recorded through the shared life histories of Sudanese women are many. Sudanese women described positive and more complex outcomes of social value, including participation in decision-making processes and political participation.

Whatever Sudanese women gained following the signing of the CPA in terms of their participation in decision-making, emanated from a relentless and long struggle for

power inside Sudan in the midst and aftermath of civil war in Sudan. Their activism and peacebuilding efforts generated a strong impetus to advance women's rights while gaining recognition and political ground. Parties came to realise that women matter and that it is in their interest to include women. The determination of women to participate in peacebuilding is also proof of their courage, interest and agency. In return it created a sense of confidence among Sudanese women that they could make a difference. The life histories provided plenty of examples of steps towards social change and changing gender relations at the level of individual men and women. The life histories also indicated changes in gender relations which transcended the individual level. In the aftermath of war, Sudanese women refer to social change and a change of gender relations at a collective level. To what extent these gains are precursors to a process of structural transformation affecting gender relations post-CPA is less evident. Traditional structures survived two civil wars. Life histories reveal that overcoming informal restrictions and rules placed on Sudanese women may be a necessity for structural transformation towards gender equality in the long term. Following the CPA (2005), the number of women in leadership positions increased significantly in both Sudans. Besides, evident struggles and changes including important steps forward in terms of women's political participation, challenges and setbacks are part of social transformation. It is Sudanese men and women themselves who are the engines and engineers of change in the aftermath of war, but social change was and is inevitable.

### **Outsiders: the role of practitioners and policy makers**

Every day diplomats, policy makers and practitioners make decisions about what to do or what not to do, and which strategy or intervention to pursue or not to pursue on the basis of political directions and policy guidance. Similar to local actors, they also bring to the table their training, insights, skills, goals, values and views, regarding prospects for peace in Sudan and the opportunities for women's participation in peace processes; but only for the duration of their stay. Building trust and bringing opposing parties together to build peace and support cooperation in the midst of war is a slow and time-consuming process. Considering conflicting opinions or consulting other sources is essential in situations of protracted conflict since issues, actors and interests are not a given and require country specific knowledge. Decisions as to whom to include and how in peacebuilding processes, are fundamental. Outsiders are stakeholders in this process and their interests may vary.

Findings show that outside actors, be they national or international, held different perspectives regarding the causes of conflict, and they judged parties in conflict differently. Clashing views and ideas were part of what I called a fascinating and 'imperfect interplay' or social process of third party intervention. Evidence from interviews also shows that as international actors come and go, local staff working with outside agencies have the ability to strengthen peacebuilding efforts with a historical perspective to conflict, better insight into grassroots level processes and strategies as well as local knowledge of who is who. On the other hand, security threats and risks to local staff are not to be taken lightly, as they faced risks and pressures that diplomats and international practitioners did not. Being open and transparent to parties in conflict about efforts to build and make peace helped to mitigate

risks. Participating women representing parties close to security forces also proved able to build bridges between participants and members of the security forces.

Contracting a local Sudanese organization such as Salmmah to pursue project activities amongst parties in conflict following the signing of the CPA (2005) negatively affected trust and collaboration which had taken great pains and many years to develop. It was a mistake to assume that peace agreements come along with trust and peaceful relations. Moreover the CPA may have settled some matters between the SPLM and the GOS, but did not settle intra-north and intra-south conflicts. The dilemmas of peacebuilding and foreign assistance in transitions from war to relative peace are many. Program development and implementation, as well as funding modalities apply mostly to long-term development or short-term humanitarian assistance. Irrespective of a change of focus overtime, from building peace to building capacity, building trust across parties such as the SPLM and the GOS, but also the GOS and northern opposition parties as well as the SPLM and the SPLM/United, remained a challenge that needed external focused diplomatic engagement across parties and flexible assistance. Contrary to either humanitarian assistance or long-term development programmes, an option to simply contract out efforts to build peace and support long-winded political processes proved hard to find. As a result, the peace practice demanded high levels of staff involvement and continuous engagement at all times, as well as modest financial support. Evidently, the effort it took to bring parties together did not meet expectations for fast and concrete results, including peace.

Skepticism amongst outsiders about potential gains for Sudanese women in the long run also proved to be widespread and persistent. Consequently, outsiders continued to pay more attention to what women may have needed or lacked in the midst of war or immediately afterwards than to what women and especially women leaders did or could do politically, economically and socially. My research<sup>36</sup> gives evidence of an unmistakable increase of Sudanese women in power and decision-making when comparing data prior and post-CPA and may drive doubts away. Doubts about the possibilities of social change and gains for women in the aftermath of war may also become a self-fulfilling prophecy and yet another source of disempowerment.

### **Interaction between Sudanese women and outsiders**

Though a number of high level foreign officials visiting Sudan or Kenya wanted to meet and greet Sudanese women participating in building and making peace, diplomats found it difficult to politically situate Sudanese women and interact with them as actors in building and making peace. Women did not feature on any list of parties in the conflict to be consulted and required additional efforts as well as facilitation to engage. Meeting expectations were extraordinary as outsiders expected Sudanese women not only to submit CVs, but also have plans and proposals to improve the lot of each and every Sudanese.

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36 Including life histories and my analysis thereof, the UN Statistics Division with its percentage of seats in parliament held by Sudanese women, Appendix 5.1, Appendix 6.1 and literature review.

Knowing how to articulate issues and how to get ideas across mattered, as well as identifying oneself with visiting officials. Once women were let into the picture they were expected to perform miracles which their men, together with the international community, had not been able to achieve. Their visibility also attracted criticisms of having acted in accordance with their self-interest instead of common interests.

### **3 Implications and applications**

In this research I have given my transdisciplinary thoughts free reign. I have always been fascinated by the near-exclusive focus on political and military leadership in peace processes, the lack of inclusive peacebuilding and the way in which both conflicts as well as UN Security Council Resolutions are forgotten. Paulo Freire wrote that “[w]ashing one’s hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral” (Freire 1985, 122). In undertaking this research my intention was to find out in which way and to what extent Sudanese women participated in efforts to make and build peace since 1997 following modest international support provided to their peacebuilding efforts. I also hoped that my research would open new perspectives and provide for different ideas in relation to peacebuilding, the transition from conflict to relative peace, and the implementation of UN SCR 1325 on women, peace and security. I reflected on numerous theoretical threads and studied the participation of women in peace processes from a variety of perspectives. However, given the available statistics on the participation of women in formal peace negotiations and the documented backlash women faced in the aftermath of war, my research findings came as a mild surprise.

My narrative analysis of the life histories of Sudanese women who participated in the peace practice also proved to be far more important than I had imagined given the findings that chances for social change appear few and far between to outsiders. The participation of Sudanese women in peacebuilding contributed to their political consciousness and interests, and evolved into organised action and activism, as well as their consecutive and successful demands for participation in decision-making and politics following the CPA. Gender relations in Sudan changed and did not remain unaffected by war and efforts to build peace. I also came to realise that the interaction between Sudanese women and their efforts to bring together grassroots and leadership turned into a collection of riddles and puzzles: engaging women in the delivery of humanitarian assistance, women broadening political support for political and military leaders, and women torn between the formal IGAD peace process and the needs of war affected populations. My unravelling of this peace practice, which originated from Lederach’s pyramid of approaches to building peace, contributed insight into the participation of women in a track II peacebuilding process and their consecutive interaction with the formal track I, the IGAD peace process in Sudan. My findings also contribute to a different understanding of changes in gender relations during and after conflict; i.e. social transformation and the role of donor agencies in situations of protracted conflict and political processes of building and making peace. Time has wrought many changes and Dutch support to this peace practice has come to an end in 2011 while Sudanese women continue their struggle for peace, equality and development.



Research validity is to be found in the design of my research and the way in which I gradually answer my research questions. I have also attempted to show the reader how the data pushed my search for answers to my research questions, by carefully weaving into it life histories and numerous quotations. The interpretation of data is grounded in the precise and detailed narrative analysis emanating from my theoretical framework and consecutive coding decisions. Last but not least, I have explicitly positioned myself in this research, revealing conflicting voices and returning to those interviewed, as a springboard for improved insight.

In terms of reliability, I have made an effort to incorporate updates regarding changes in the political participation of Sudanese women following the separation of Sudan's south from the north in 2011. Should one question as to whether it is possible to draw more general inferences from my data, from a researcher's point of view, my research findings are time and context specific. When I allow myself as a practitioner and policy maker to hypothesize, imagine and philosophize, I take note of the fact that Sudanese practitioners remarked that the peace practice inspired women of Darfur to seek participation in conflict resolution. As a practitioner and policy maker I also think that lessons learned from studying outside actors and agencies do not only apply to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its staff, but may apply to other agencies and actors as well. It is likely that Dutch diplomats are not the only ones to undervalue the activism and efforts of Sudanese women to change the rules of the game and achieve success in advancing the status of women and changing gender relations. The inability to respond to the priorities of Sudanese women following the Oslo conference (2005) was widespread. Besides, the thoughts regarding conflict, feminism and development which I discussed in my theoretical framework may be well known but are seldom put together and are not specific to either Sudan or the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

That said, this research provides knowledge on how to support the participation of women in peace processes and the implementation of UN SCR 1325. It may also help to support innovation and open up avenues for longer term programming and the utilization of process approaches versus results-based project approaches. Knowledge in itself is not an elixir but may help to keep one's eye on the ball when engaging in complex social and political processes that recognize and support women as peacebuilding actors. Clearly, the participation of women in peace processes is a question that cannot but ignore the boundaries of various disciplines. At the same time, transdisciplinary curiosity should pay heed to the potential risk of knowing too little about too much, that even gifted generalists may suffer from.

This does lead me to think of what I consider limitations to this research. Narrowing my research to Sudanese women and to those who participated in the peace practice evidently had its advantages but also has disadvantages. My study would have benefited from in-depth personal interviews with a range of Sudanese men. Even though I provided in my research some anecdotal evidence from archival records and continuously met with Sudanese men in leadership positions while negotiating the peace practice (1997- 2000), studying men



would have added greater insight into men's thoughts and opinions about the participation of women in peace processes. It could also have added insight into men's experiences of women's empowerment as well as men's disempowerment as seen through their own eyes versus the eyes of women.

#### **4 Future directions**

My research highlights the significant role that Sudanese women played in building and making peace. It demonstrates that there is much more to be known about the participation of women in peace processes than what gets recorded, including the potential for long term gains. The evidence presented by means of longitudinal research makes a compelling case for more documentation of and research into the participation of women in both formal and informal peace processes around the world. As explained above it would be interesting also to research into men's thoughts and opinions. Further conceptualisation, study and comparison of how both formal and informal peace processes meet would be valuable. Another research challenge is to be found in the study of organizations in which practitioners and policy makers alike operate, including their response to opening processes of making and building peace to greater participation by women. Research into the transition from war to relative peace from an organizational and people's perspective is equally important.

I find that the role of grassroots peacebuilding in a larger and multi-layered process of building and making peace remains little understood and analysed. Evidence suggests that there is much more to learn about peacebuilding at the level of communities and villages when resting on the development of a more robust understanding. War-affected populations 'cannot eat peace' and the trickledown effect in building and making peace is anything but guaranteed. I also wonder what the inclusion of men other than top military and political leaders could hold in store for peace, equality and development in Sudan. This would be a whole other research thread to follow. Last but not least, in line with preliminary evidence which suggests that efforts to involve women in peace processes improve the sustainability of peace and governance, it would be interesting to research if that suggestion holds true in the case of North and South Sudan (Caprioli, Nielsen and Hundson 2011).

As suggested by Joanna Kerr, I have shared my experience and shared with you a rich tapestry of findings. It is now time to cut the finished tapestry off the loom and celebrate the participation of Sudanese women in peace processes.



## Appendices

### Appendix 5.1: Sudanese women in power and decision-making<sup>37</sup>

Timetable	Name	Position
1970s	Nafisah Ahmad al-Amin Fatima Abdel Mahmoud <sup>38</sup>	Deputy Minister of Social Welfare, Youth and Sport Deputy Minister of Social Welfare, Youth and Sport Minister of State of Social Welfare Minister of Social Welfare
1980s	Nekanura Manok Fatma Abdulmahmud	Regional Minister of Health and Social Welfare (Southern region) Deputy Minister of Social Welfare, Youth and Sport
1990s	Fatma Abdulmahmud Nekanura Manok  Agnes Poni Lokudu  Maryam Osman Sir al-Khatim  Ihsan Abdalla el-Ghabshawi Saida Bashan	Minister of State of the Interior Commissioner for Refugees Advisor for Women and Childrens Affairs (Coordinating Council Southern Sudan) Governor of Bahr al Jabal Minister of Public Service and Manpower Deputy Minister of Social Welfare Secretary of State of Social Planning Minister of Health Secretary of State of Social Planning
2000>	Saida Bashan Badriya Suleiman  Samia Ahmed Mohammed Ichraqa As-Sayyid Mahmoud Saleh Abda Yahiya El Mahdi	Secretary of State of Social Planning Minister of Cabinet Affairs Presidential Advisor with rank of Minister on Legal Affairs Minister of Social Welfare Minister of State of International Cooperation Minister of State of Finance and National Economy
2005>	Samia Ahmed Mohammed  Tabita Sokaya Boutros Amna Dirar Farida Ibrahim Ahmed Hussein Angelina Tany Rebecca Nyandeng de Mabior  Mary Kiden Kimbo Agnes Poni Lokudu Agnes Lasuba Anne Itto Jema Nunu Kumba Teresa Sericio Iro Amira Al-Fadil Mohamed Halima Hassaballa Al-Naeem Sana Hamad Al-Awad Sua'ad Abdil Razig	Minister of Welfare, Women, Children Affairs and Social Development Minister of Health Presidential Advisor with rank of Minister Presidential Advisor with rank of Minister Minister of State for Energy and Mines Minister for Transport and Roads Presidential Advisor for Human Rights Minister of Gender, Social Welfare and Religious Affairs Minister of Environment, Wildlife and Tourism Minister of Gender, Social Welfare and Religious Affairs Minister of State for Agriculture and Forestry Governor of Western Equatoria Minister of State for Environment Minister of Welfare and Social Security Minister of Parliamentary Affairs Minister of State of Information Minister of State of General Education

37 <http://www.sudantribune.com> article 39962 accessed August 27, 2011 based on decree number 29/2011, <http://www.sudan.gov.sd> accessed August 28, 2011 and <http://guide3womenleaders.com> accessed September 9, 2011.

38 She was one of the first women to hold political office, leader of the Sudanese Socialist Democratic Union as of 2007 and she contested the April 2010 general election as the country's first female presidential candidate.

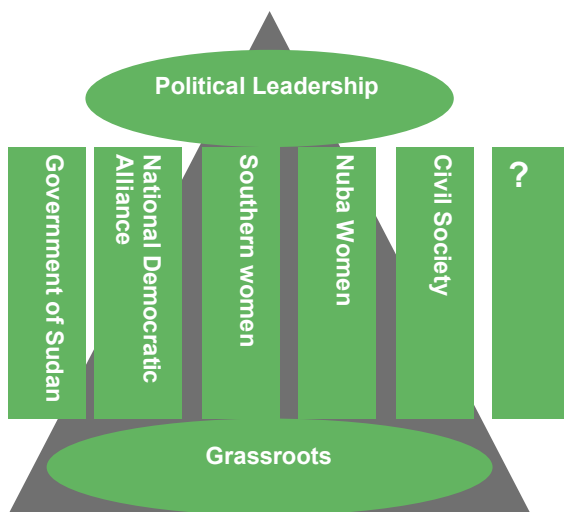
<p>2010&gt;</p>	<p>Amira Al-Fadil Mohamed Halima Hassaballa Al-Naeem Tabita Sokaya Boutros Sana Hamad Al-Awad Sua'ad Abdil Razig Fadwa Shwai Deng</p> <p>Amna Salih Dirar Teresa Sericio Iro</p> <p>Grace Datio Awut Deng</p> <p>Anne Itto</p> <p>Agnes Poni Lokudu Agnes Lasuba</p> <p>Betty Achan Ogwaro Jema Nunu Kumba Mary Jervas Yak Rebecca Joshua Okwaci Mary Nyawulang Bettrice Khamisa Wani</p> <p>Elizabeth James Bol Rhoda David Alak Priscilla Nyanyang Joseph</p> <p>Sabino Dario Okolong</p> <p>Nadia Arop Dudi</p>	<p>Minister of Welfare and Social Security Minister of Parliamentary Affairs Minister of Health Minister of State of Information Minister of State of General Education Minister of State of Environment, Forests and Urban Development Minister of State of Labour Minister of State of Communications and Information Technology Minister of State of Foreign Affairs Minister of Labour and Public Service and Human Resource Development Minister of Agriculture and Forestry SPLM Deputy Secretary Minister of Transport Minister of Gender, Children and Social Welfare Minister of Agriculture and Forestry Minister of Housing and Physical Planning Minister of Human Resources Development Deputy Minister of Finance Deputy Minister of General Education and Instruction Deputy Minister of Housing and Physical Planning Deputy Minister of Telecommunication and Postal Services Deputy Minister of Petroleum and Mining Deputy Minister of Electricity and Dams Deputy Minister of Gender, Children and Social Welfare Deputy Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management Deputy Minister of Animal Resources and Fisheries</p>
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### **Appendix 6.1: The pyramid of Lederach converted into a process to facilitate the participation of Sudanese women into the peace process**

The facilitation process involved the participation of mid-level female leaders based in Khartoum (referred to as northern sector also) and Nairobi (referred to as southern sector also) representing a broad spectrum of parties in the conflict. Their constituencies, or rank and file, had been identified, forming the centre-piece of the pyramid. In order to promote inclusiveness and avoid rebuffing any party, a question mark or additional boxes, were added (see figures below) to allow for other potential political players or meaningful constituencies to join the process (The Initiative 1998a, annex I). Consequently, mid-level female leaders were envisaged to connect to both grassroots and political leadership within their respective constituencies whilst building trust across them (within and across sectors) whenever possible. The figures below represent the structure which was established in 1997 and used as a model for cooperation in Khartoum and Nairobi respectively:

#### **Khartoum (northern sector):**

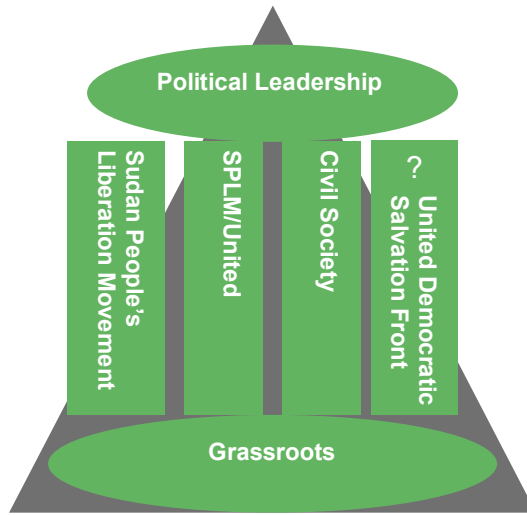
The constituencies (also called groups or working committees) depicted in the center supported the participation of mid-level female leaders representing the Government of Sudan (GOS), the National Democratic Alliance (or NDA including the Umma party, the Democratic Unionist Party and the Communist Party), Southern women, Nuba women besides civil society organizations (including the Babikr Badri Scientific Association of Ahfad University for Women (BBSAWS), the Women Action Group (WAG) and many other organizations).



#### **Nairobi (southern sector):**

The constituencies (also called groups or working committees) depicted in the center supported the participation of mid-level female leaders representing the Sudanese People's

Liberation Movement/Army, the SPLM/United and civil society organizations; the latter renamed itself the Non-Partisan Group including organizations like Sudanese Women Association Nairobi (SWAN), Sudanese Women’s Voice for Peace (SWVP) and New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC). When the United Democratic Salvation Front (UDSF) did not feel truly represented by means of the National Working Committee of the Government of Sudan, it established itself as a separate constituency in the southern sector irrespective of their Khartoum peace agreement (1997). As a result, the UDSF replaced the question mark and continued to participate in the process as a separate constituency.



## **Appendix 6.2: The Hague Appeal for Peace**

### **THE HAGUE PEACE APPEAL SUDANESE WOMEN'S APPEAL FOR PEACE IN THE SUDAN**

May 13, 1999

We, the women representing all sides of the conflict in the Sudan, have come together to participate in The Hague Appeal for Peace conference,

- Aware that the war in the Sudan is one of the longest-running wars in the world and often forgotten by the international community;
- Conscious that the war has caused untold suffering to the Sudanese people, particularly to women, children, and other vulnerable groups;
- Considering the magnitude of death, destruction, and displacement;
- Noting the deadlock in the peace process;

We are here despite all our differences -- social, political, and religious -- because we want to put an end to this war.

We call on our leaders to declare, and our people to abide by, an immediate, comprehensive ceasefire, cessation of all hostilities, and to respect the human rights of all Sudanese, and this to be followed by an immediate, sustained peace dialogue.

For the benefit of all Sudanese, we encourage our leaders to allow humanitarian assistance unhindered access to the needy.

Sudan is a potentially rich country with many natural resources, which are currently not being utilized for national development, but instead to fuel a war which has claimed over 3.2 million lives -- many more than in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Rwanda, and Kosovo put together.

It is our belief that in this war, there can be no winner. We urge our political leaders to facilitate the participation of the civilian population in the peace process to determine their own fate through democratic processes, based on their rights and interests.

We appeal to the international community and all peace loving peoples to:

- Strengthen existing mechanisms (IGAD - Inter-Governmental Authority on Development) in the Sudanese peace negotiations, support internal peace agreements, and other peace efforts;
- Assure women's participation in the peace negotiations to voice their concerns and enable them to reach a sustainable peace with justice;
- Create a conducive environment for warring parties to have a constructive dialogue;
- Clear landmines, cease arms sales to warring groups in the Sudan;
- Bring pressure to bear on the warring parties to reach a peaceful settlement to the conflict.

If we, the women of Sudan, having witnessed so much suffering, can work together for peace, it is incumbent on our leaders to commit themselves to ending this war.



Signed by

The Participants in the Initiative to Facilitate the Participation of Sudanese Women in the  
Peace Process

### **Appendix 6.3: The Draft Women's Minimum Agenda for Peace**

#### Preamble

The Sudanese Women Agenda for Peace reflects the vision and aspirations of Sudanese women in the peace process. Nine different women's group[s] from the Northern and Southern sectors represented by 25 women met in Nairobi between 26<sup>th</sup> - 29<sup>th</sup> January, 2000, and reached a consensus on a unified women's agenda for peace. The groups promoted engendering the peace process initiative, facilitated by the Netherlands Government, [including]:

- Ensure the participation of women in all peace initiatives by at least 30%.
- Women's concerns should be mainstreamed in all peace negotiations/initiatives and agenda.
- Women should choose their own female representatives in the peace initiative.
- All the parties to the conflict must restrain from shelling and bombardment of civilian targets.
- The abduction of women and children must stop, and the violence against women in the war zones by all warring parties [must] come to an end.
- The parties to the conflict must stop recruitment of children under 18 years of age into the war.
- Cultural, ethnic and religious diversity must be respected.
- The abduction<sup>39</sup> and implementation of CEDAW.
- Freedom of movement for all Sudanese must be guaranteed and the restrictions on the women mobility going out of Sudan must be lifted.
- Principles of inclusiveness (participation of women) must be adopted.

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<sup>39</sup> Ratification is what is meant.

## **Appendix 6.4: The Maastricht Declaration**

### **Maastricht Declaration of the Sudanese Women's Peace Initiative**

**April 13, 2000**

#### **1. Preamble**

Our Sudanese women's initiative for engendering the peace process in Sudan was conceived in late 1997. It was officially launched in Khartoum and Nairobi in 1998 when the Committees were formed from the different parties to the conflict and other women's interest groups.

The main objective agreed upon by the committees included the process of consciousness-raising among Sudanese women on their roles and responsibilities in the peace process, at all levels of society and in particular within the conflicting parties. It was also decided that these committees would take on the responsibility of raising awareness of the leadership of the conflicting parties on the aspirations and potential roles of Sudanese women in the peace process.

To prepare ourselves for this important role, a series of workshops, training sessions, and meetings were organized. These include The Hague Appeal for Peace, May 1999; Cairo, 1999; Nairobi, March and November 1999; Nairobi, January 2000 and South Africa, 2000.

We are very pleased that the IGAD Sudan Peace Process by the end of 1999 officially supported and continues to support our initiative, and that IGAD has made substantial contributions to the Initiative by convening this International Conference in Maastricht, the Netherlands, from 11 to 13 April 2000.

The purpose of our gathering here in Maastricht has been to advocate for our increased participation in the Sudanese peace process. To this extent, we have called on IGAD members, women leaders from IGAD countries, global women leaders, representatives of the international donor community, the European Union, IPF members, the OAU, the Arab League, and the United Nations to actively support our efforts for peace in Sudan. On the basis of extensive dialogue emanating from the Sudanese women's Minimum Agenda for Peace, we have mutually agreed on the following:

#### **2. Acknowledging**

- 2.1** That Sudanese women are overburdened by the devastating effects of war which have caused enormous suffering, loss of lives, homes, and possessions since 1955, except 1972 to 1983 when there was relative peace;
- 2.2** That the costly war is destructive to humanity, to community life, to basic social needs such as health, education, and human security, thus destroying the prospect for future generations;
- 2.3** Our ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity;
- 2.4** That the war is against ethical principles of all religions in Sudan;
- 2.5** The international call for active women's participation in peacemaking, as clearly stated in Beijing at the fourth World Women's Conference, and followed by the EU meeting organized by the Government of Finland, and the Security Council statement of 8 March 2000, as well as numerous attempts by international donors;

- 2.6 The long strife and efforts of Sudanese women to attain peace and the vital role of women in traditional conflict resolution;
  - 2.7 The need for a broader and increased representation of Sudanese women at the peace negotiation table and other peace initiatives to mainstream women's concerns in negotiations;
  - 2.8 That women will continue to work at all levels in the peace process, specifically bringing together community women of conflicting parties across the country, and convincing leaderships and communities of the urgency for peace.
3. **Appreciating**
    - 3.1 The Initiative to facilitate the participation of Sudanese women in the peace process;
    - 3.2 The acceptance of the Declaration of Principles by all parties;
    - 3.3 The on-going mediation efforts of the IGAD Sudan peace process in support of a peaceful solution to the conflict;
    - 3.4 All national peacemaking efforts;
    - 3.5 The efforts of the conflicting parties in search of a solution to the conflict;
    - 3.6 The international support offered by the IPF;
    - 3.7 The willingness of the parties who promote women's participation in the peace process;
    - 3.8 The willingness to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women by all parties;
    - 3.9 The establishment of a gender desk at the level of IGAD in Djibouti.
  4. **We, the Sudanese women, decide to immediately undertake the following actions**
    - 4.1 Develop a broad culture of peace at all levels;
    - 4.2 Empower women to contribute to a just and sustainable peaceful resolution to the conflict;
    - 4.3 Further develop the Sudanese Women's Minimum Agenda for Peace in relation to the Declaration of Principles; develop a plan for its implementation and communicate its contents to all parties;
    - 4.4 Educate women in mediation and negotiation to enable effective participation of women in non-violent conflict resolution;
    - 4.5 Establish links and networks with relevant international organizations and the media, to support and advocate for a just and sustainable peace;
    - 4.6 Establish regular meetings with IGAD leaders and Secretariat for the Sudan peace process to ensure a women's perspective to human security, conflict resolution and development in Sudan.
  5. **We, Sudanese women, call upon the leadership of the conflicting parties**
    - 5.1 To end the war by means of peaceful negotiation to stop further suffering of civilian population, particularly women and children;
    - 5.2 To actively support our peacemaking efforts;
    - 5.3 To permit women to work unhindered and safely at the community level to establish a culture of peace;

- 5.4 To establish regular meetings with us to integrate women's perspective in peacemaking and good governance;
  - 5.5 To provide and protect access to basic services, such as health and basic education, throughout the country in particular in war-affected areas;
  - 5.6 To incorporate peace education into the school curriculum and Sudanese mass media;
  - 5.7 To forbid and stop the admission and recruitment of children below the age of eighteen as child soldiers;
  - 5.8 To keep war away from civilian population, to stop using landmines and other small arms, and to protect the environment and wildlife;
  - 5.9 To value and respect diversity (culture, ethnicity, religion, and language) as an empowering resource for the Sudanese society as a whole.
- 6. We, Sudanese women, call upon the IGAD leaders and representatives of the IGAD Secretariat for the Sudan peace process**
- 6.1 To establish regular meetings with women to include women's aspirations and concerns in the peacemaking process;
  - 6.2 To actively search for creative ways to speed up the peaceful resolution of the conflict in Sudan;
  - 6.3 To allow for a special envoy for Sudanese women in IGAD.
- 7. We, Sudanese women, call upon leading women in IGAD countries**
- 7.1 To share information and engage in advocacy with their respective governments in support of the Sudanese women's peace initiative;
  - 7.2 To promote empowerment and training of Sudanese women on human security, peacemaking, development and leadership.
- 8. We, Sudanese women, call upon members of the OAU, IPF, the EU, Arab League, and UN agencies**
- 8.1 To further consolidate and support the non-violent conflict resolution efforts in the Sudan, such as the IGAD peace process:
  - 8.2 To facilitate training, exchange of experiences, and the development of strategic plans and programs in support of peacemaking;
  - 8.3 To provide active moral and material support to Sudanese women's efforts in peacemaking;
  - 8.4 To accelerate the efforts to promote non-violent conflict resolution by the specialized UN agencies, such as UNIFEM, UNESCO, UNDP, UNICEF;
  - 8.5 To coordinate their efforts in the search for peace in Sudan and provide an audience for women's perspectives in the peace process in Sudan.
- 9. We, Sudanese women, call upon the bilateral donors**
- 9.1 To raise the awareness of their citizens about the negative impact of the war in Sudan, and of the urgency for non-violent conflict resolution;
  - 9.2 To provide financial and technical assistance to the peace efforts of Sudanese women;

- 9.3 To facilitate training in mediation, negotiation, and preventive diplomacy for all parties, including women;
  - 9.4 To support inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue among women at a community level in support of non-violent conflict resolution.
- 10. We, Sudanese women, call upon the Global Women Leadership**
- 10.1 To use their access to top level decision-making institutions to bring attention to the Sudanese women's peace initiatives;
  - 10.2 To demand the active involvement of the global community in a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Sudan;
  - 10.3 To put the conflict in Sudan on the agenda by visiting our areas and by meeting with us as well as the leaders of the conflicting parties;
  - 10.4 To utilize their access to the media for statements in support of women's peace initiatives.
- 11. We, Sudanese women, will continue to work to seek agreement on the issue of arms flow.**
- 

Civil Society Working Committee  
The National Democratic Alliance  
National Working Committee  
The Non Partisan Working Committee  
Nuba Women Working Committee  
Southern Women Working Committee  
SPDF Working Committee  
SPLM-United Working Committee

**Note:** We regret that our sisters from SPLM were unable to join us at this meeting of which their contribution in the preparation has been of significance. The ideas contained in this document reflect the thinking of all the committees including the SPLM. Their name may not appear in this document but we are convinced that together we shall use the document as a platform for an even greater inclusive process towards finding a just and peaceful solution to the conflict that has ravaged our great and beautiful country.

## **Appendix 6.5: The International Community's Statement of Commitment to the Maastricht Declaration**

Noting the call for support by the Sudanese women in the Maastricht Declaration of 13 April, 2000, this gathering of leaders and representatives of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Secretariat for the Sudan Peace Process, women leaders of IGAD countries, African women leaders from countries outside the IGAD region, representatives of the IGAD Partners Forum (IPF), representatives of United Nations (UN) agencies, International and National NGOS, the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), and participants in the Maastricht Conference held in support of the Initiative for the participation of Sudanese women in the peace process, convened under the auspices of the IGAD Secretariat, held 11-13 April, 2000 do hereby place on record our support for the initiatives of Sudanese women in their effort to bring peace to Sudan. Our coordinated and individual support is hereby articulated;

1. The IGAD Secretariat, coordinated by IGAD Gender Desk, commits to establish a FORUM of member countries to coordinate efforts in support of the Sudanese women by July 2000.
2. Under the auspices of the IGAD Sudan Peace Process and the Africa Peace Forum, the Kenyan Women's Political Caucus and Kenyan Participants at this conference commit to meeting with Sudanese women living in Kenya for further dialogue and to determine supportive action within one month of the Maastricht Conference.
3. Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS) and Advocacy for Women in Africa (AWA) will bring to the attention of the Board of the African Women's Committee on Peace and Development (AWCPD) of the OAU, this plan of action by June 2000. The Board will advocate strongly for its discussion and adoption at the Organization of African Unity (OAU) meeting in Togo in July 2000.
4. All participants as identified above, request the AWCPD to take up the issue of the protection of women in the conflict in Sudan.
5. All participants as identified above, urge the African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR) and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the UN on Children and Armed Conflict to take up the issue of child soldiers and the protection of children in the Sudan with OAU, IGAD, and the parties to the conflict in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This includes the Protocol under the Convention to be adopted by the UN General Assembly later this year, prohibiting participation in war for children under the age of 18 years.

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6. The African National Congress Women's League commits to raising a snap debate in the South African Parliament on the conflict in Sudan, and offers to facilitate sharing of experience between South African and Sudanese women.
7. Independent women in the Netherlands commit themselves to form a loosely knit working group to formulate ways and means to create a better understanding in the Netherlands of the conflict in Sudan, and to inform the Dutch Parliament, Government, and the Dutch public about the importance, developments and results of the Initiative.
8. The All Africa Conference of Churches commits itself to supporting the women of Sudan in this initiative.

### Further:

1. The Netherlands, Norway, Canada, Great Britain, [t]he UN and its agencies, and NGOS will continue to search for appropriate support for the Sudanese Women's Peace Initiative and the IGAD Sudan Peace Process.



### **Appendix 6.6: SuWEP women reaching high political and governmental decision-making positions immediately following the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (2005)**

<b>Name</b>	<b>SuWEP working committee/group</b>	<b>Position in 2006</b>
Dr Priscilla Joseph	Southern women (Northern sector)	Member Parliament, Head of Human Rights Committee, National Assembly
Veronica Louise Renzi	Southern women (Northern sector)	Member Parliament, National Assembly
Margaret Arapal	Southern women (Northern sector)	Member Parliament, National Assembly
Agnes Nyoka	Non Partisan Group (Southern Sector)	Member Parliament, National Assembly
Abuk Payiti Ayik	SuWEP Director gender desk (Southern Sector)	Member Parliament, Chairperson for Gender, Social Welfare, Youth and Sports, GOSS
Joy Kwaye	Southern women (Northern sector)	Member Parliament, Commissioner Human Rights Commission, GOSS
Bonguot Amom	Southern sector	Member Parliament, GOSS
Mary Nyaulang Ret	Southern sector	Member Parliament, Chairperson for Peace and Reconciliation, GOSS
June Malek	Non Partisan Group (Southern Sector)	Member Parliament, Controller GOSS
Monica Ayan Amagguat	Non Partisan Group (Southern sector)	Member Parliament, GOSS
Rashel Nyadok	Non Partisan Group (Southern sector)	Minister for Gender, Social Welfare, Youth and Sports - Jongolei state
Awut Deng Acuil	Non Partisan Group (Southern sector)	Advisor to the President of South Sudan on Gender and Human Rights
Late Amal El Tahir	SPLM (Southern sector)	Member Parliament, Warrab state, passed away May 2005 in car accident
Mary Danial Kodi	SPLM (Southern sector)	Member Parliament, Nuba Mountains
Amna Mamoun	SPLM (Southern sector)	Member Parliament, Damazin Regional Coordinator for Blue Nile
Shadia Ibrahim	Southern women (Northern sector)	Member Parliament, Damazin South Blue Nile
Awel Mawein	Southern women (Northern sector)	Member Parliament, National Assembly
Roda Joseph	Southern women (Northern sector)	Director of Training Programme at Ministry of Housing, GOSS
Marsa Ahmed	Northern sector	MP Damazin South Blue Nile
Christina Gabriel Ali	Southern women (Northern sector)	MP National Assembly
Grace Datiero	Southern sector	Minister of Education, West Equatoria State, GOSS
Mary Apai	Southern sector	Advisor to the Governor of Central Equatoria, GOSS
Rebecca Akwaci	SPLM/United (Southern sector)	Chairperson of Sudan Radio Service, GOSS

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Ann Kemo	Non Partisan Group (Southern sector)	Deputy Chairperson, Commission DDR South, GOSS
Howida Shabo	GOS/National Working Committee (Northern sector)	Member Parliament, National Assembly
Afaf Ahmed Abdarrahan	GOS/National Working Committee (Northern sector)	Member on the Advisory Council of Human Rights
Mary Hillary	Southern women (Northern sector)	Member in the Directorate of Finance, Ministry of Finance, GOSS

Modified on the basis of data Salmah Women's Resource Center (2006, 26).

## **Appendix 6.7: Sudanese Women's Priorities and Recommendations to the Oslo Donors' Conference on Sudan (11-12 April 2005)**

We, the Sudanese women delegates from all regions, comprising representatives from the Government of Sudan, the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), civil society and academic institutions, met in Oslo on 10 April 2005 with the objectives of defining our priorities in advocating for donor support for gender equality and women's rights in post-conflict Sudan. We met under the auspices of the Government of Norway, the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). This effort was also supported by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the African Union, South African Women in Dialogue, the UNIFEM Goodwill Ambassador for Africa and other United Nations agencies<sup>40</sup>.

*Guided* by UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), the Beijing Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals, the African Union Protocol on Women's Human Rights, the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, the IGAD Gender Policy, as well as other existing commitments, principles, goals and actions set out in the various national, regional, continental and international instruments on women's human rights;

*Cognizant* of the huge impact of war on women and women's human rights, the erosion of capacities of women and the fundamental divisions that war creates;

*Deeply concerned* by the continued existence of conflict in some parts of Sudan, especially the Darfurs, and its impact on women and children;

*Recognizing* women's role in peace-building, peacemaking, reconstruction and sustaining families and communities amidst the ravages of war, poverty and HIV/AIDS and women's fundamental human right to be full and equal partners in all sectors and at all levels, from local through national, but *bearing in mind* the different status of women in the different areas of Sudan;

And *lauding* the effort made to mainstream gender throughout the JAM, while *underlining* the importance of women-specific programmes and projects;

We the women delegates do recommend the following minimum urgent priorities and actions for reconstruction during the interim period:

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40 Mrs. Zanele Mbeki from South African Women in Dialogue; Hon Phoebe Asiyo, UNIFEM Goodwill Ambassador for Africa; and Atsede Zerfu, Programme Manager Gender Affairs/IGAD; the JAM team; DPKO; UNFPA; UNICEF; UNHCR; and UNDP.

## **I. GOVERNANCE AND RULE OF LAW**

- Adhere to equal citizenship rights and obligations for women and men.
- Recognizing the principle of 50% equal representation for women and men as enshrined in the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality and the IGAD Gender Policy, but cognizant of the context, situation and issues at stake, we recommend 30% as a minimum threshold for women's representation at all levels and in all sectors. This includes:
- Immediate inclusion of at least 30% representation by women in the Constitution-making and review processes.
- A minimum representation of 30% for women in decision-making positions at all levels, including transitional institutions and all commissions established under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).
- Support urgent legislative reform in the area of political, economic and family rights.
- Support urgent programmes for addressing negative customs and practices which continue to foster women's marginalization and exclusion in all spheres of life.
- Support and enhance women's effective political participation and leadership at all levels, including within political parties with a strong and urgent support to capacity building for women's leadership.
- Ensure the representation of women in the monitoring mechanisms of the CPA and all peace missions.
- Ensure women's full participation in the Darfur peace process in compliance with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and the African Union Protocol on Women's Human Rights.

## **II. GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

- Ensure the protection of women and girls in terms of safety from sexual and gender-based violence, especially in war-affected areas.
- Create and strengthen institutional mechanisms so that women and girls can report acts of violence against them in a safe and confidential environment.
- Enact legislation to protect women from sexual and gender-based violence and to end impunity for perpetrators thereof.
- Increase ease of access to support services for survivors, including psychosocial counselling and ready availability of post-exposure prophylaxis kits.
- Recognize the importance of HIV/AIDS in relation to human security as outlined in Security Council resolution 1308 (2000) and ensure adequate education and awareness-raising, prevention and treatment on HIV/AIDS, specifically in connection with gender-based violence.
- Collect and consolidate research and data on the impact of gender-based violence on women and girls, including as a result of armed conflict.

## **III. CAPACITY BUILDING AND INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- Establish a Ministry of Women and Gender Equality with full resources, as provided for in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, and create gender divisions in all other sectors.

- Establish a women's fund within the Multi-donor Trust Fund (MDTF) for women-specific programmes, and ensure a formal role for women's organizations in the management and disbursement of funds.
- Enhance capacity of women and women's organizations to provide support services, engage in policy and be fully involved in the reconstruction effort.
- Strengthen capacity of all national institutions of gender equality/equity (at all levels of development).
- Establish women's resource centres for refugees, internally displaced women and returnees at state, provincial and district level.
- Build capacity for gender planning, gender analysis and gender-responsive resource allocation in all institutions at all levels.

#### **IV. ECONOMIC POLICY AND MANAGEMENT**

- Formulate pro-poor economic policies and poverty eradication and wealth creation strategies that adequately address the needs and rights of women and girls.
- Ensure women's economic empowerment through access to entrepreneurship and loan programmes, economic opportunities and marketing, and by facilitating access of women-owned small and micro-enterprises to advisory services, appropriate technology and micro-finance.
- Support women's associations in the various economic sectors, with a special focus on agriculture and pastoralism.
- Formulate and implement laws for meeting women's ownership and access to property, especially land income and employment opportunities.
- Provide access to information on business opportunities in the reconstruction period, including by enhancing the capacity of women's organizations to implement donor contracts and by giving them priority as contractors.
- Cancel debt and ensure that the benefits of such cancellation benefit women, children and communities.

#### **V. LIVELIHOODS AND PRODUCTIVE SECTORS**

- Provide appropriate knowledge, technology and support in women's efforts for food security and economic empowerment.
- Provide alternative financial farm credit to women and men (farming implements/materials: fertilizers, seeds, hoes, wheel-barrows, ox-ploughs, and tractors, among others), and give priority to women farmers in view of the fact that they have a key responsibility of providing for their families.
- Supporting women's business and farmers' associations.
- Involve and grant full access to women combatants in Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) processes, in line with Security Council resolution 1590 (2005).
- Prioritize allocation of targeted programmes to support the reintegration of (women associated with the war within the framework of DDR.

- Within the context of security sector reform, and particularly the police services, increase recruitment of women and establish special police units to deal with gender-based violence crimes and crimes against children.

## **VI. BASIC SOCIAL SERVICES**

### **Health**

- Provide access to safe drinking water.
- Support programmes to halt the spread of communicable diseases and other public health issues, including the impact of environmental degradation on health.
- Enforce and/or enact laws to eradicate all harmful traditional practices that have an impact on the health of women and girls.
- Provide free comprehensive reproductive health services in every state, with at least one maternity hospital, well equipped with facilities and at least one ambulance for emergency cases.
- Support and facilitate the introduction of mobile outreach clinics and establish community-based pharmacies, to be managed and owned by the communities.
- Strengthen gender-responsive HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and access to antiretroviral drugs, including by establishing voluntary counselling and testing (VCT) centers at the community level and strengthening HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns throughout the country.

### **Education**

- Provide free and compulsory primary education to all girls and boys.
- Support reform of the education system, including curricula (gender mainstreaming), training, feeding programmes and improved school environment.
- Reduce gender disparities in education enrolment and drop-out rates for primary, secondary, tertiary and post-graduate levels, with priority given to war-affected and marginalized areas.
- Provide education and training for adolescent girls.
- Establish a special scholarship and bursary fund for the education of girls, especially those from families with limited resources, widows and war orphans.
- Establish special education programmes and schools for children with disabilities.
- Promote and support accelerated adult education, adult literacy programmes and functional literacy that directly target women, particularly in South Sudan.
- Introduce and support vocational training opportunities for adult learners, targeting women in particular.
- Support multi-media information and communication strategies, especially radio services, for communities with high levels of illiteracy and limited access to communication infrastructure.

## IN CONCLUSION

We call upon this donor conference to commit to principles of gender responsive resource allocation so that at least 80% of budgetary allocations and resource support to Sudan's reconstruction meet at least three of the following criteria:

- Directly benefiting women, contributing directly to women's empowerment and increasing women's capacities, opportunities and access to resources;
- Reducing gender inequalities in law, policy and practice;
- Directly benefiting young people, especially girls, in disadvantaged communities;
- Targeting rural areas.

We also call on the donor community to provide financial support towards the hosting of an all-inclusive Sudanese Women's Conference that would define a coherent, long-term agenda and strategy for accelerating women's empowerment and gender equality/equity. We call on the support of IGAD, the African Union, the United Nations and especially UNIFEM to facilitate the hosting of such a conference. Such a conference should prioritize inputs from grassroots communities through Regional Preparatory Conferences, and must include the private sector, civil society, non-governmental organizations, diaspora, returnees, refugees and IDPs, professionals and international personalities.

We call on the United Nations to engage women's organizations in support of the newly established UN Peace Keeping mission in Sudan, particularly with regards to awareness-raising and education about the role and mandate of the peacekeeping mission, UN codes of conduct, including disciplinary measures that govern behaviour of peacekeepers and about community strategies and safeguards to prevent any possible incidences of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers.

We call for dedicated funding to support an independent women's watchdog mechanism that will monitor implementation of the above recommendations.

And finally, we do appreciate the support provided by the Government of Norway and its institutions, the United Nations and especially UNIFEM in mainstreaming our participation and our concerns in this process and call for the recognition of institutions such as UNIFEM and IGAD in their capacities and mandates towards women.

**Appendix 6.8: Table demonstrating the utilization of funds in support of the peace practice in Euros (1997-2011)**

Year	Name	Expenditures			
1997	The Initiative	-			
1998	The Initiative	18.240,35			
1999	The Initiative	273.131,44			
2000	The Initiative	405.361,44			
			Expenditures	Expenditures	Expenditures
2001	SuWEP	-	Khartoum	Nairobi	Joint
2002	SuWEP		150.262,62	310.933,33	131.210,90
2003	SuWEP		61.447,84	148.842,34	142.987,76
2004	SuWEP		55.141,37	95.138,24	47.558,51
2005	SuWEP		54.462,47	64.915,44	77.042,61
2006	SuWEP		-	51.892,43	6.105,83
2007	SuWEP network	160.000,78	Remaining budget € 781.266,81 up to and incl. 31/12/2011		
2008	SuWEP network	221.679,06			
2009	SuWEP network	257.676,12			
2010	SuWEP network	246.669,23			
2011	SuWEP network	*			

Source: MIS Ministry of Foreign Affairs (January 2010)



**Appendix 7.1: Code system used (life histories)**

<b>Code System</b>				547	
	Free coding			21	new to allow for the inclusion of text passages of interest to researcher
	In-vivo coding			26	words or terms used by interviewees so remarkable that they should be taken as codes
	Disempowerment (immediate & personal level)			0	description (no coding): be denied choice: loss resources, achievements, agency
		women		0	description (no coding): gender
			loss achievements	15	negative outcomes choices more complex, of social value, social failures
			loss agency	17	loss faculty of bargaining, negotiation, resistance, ability to make decisions independently
			loss resources	45	loss of land and equipment (material) loss of knowledge and skills (social) loss of networks and relationships which enable people to improve their situation/life (human)
		men		0	description (no coding): gender
			loss achievements	12	negative outcomes choices more complex, of social value, social failures
			loss agency	18	loss faculty of bargaining, negotiation, resistance, ability to make decisions independently
			loss resources	22	loss of land and equipment (material) loss of knowledge and skills (social) loss of networks and relationships which enable people to improve their situation/life (human)

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	Women's empowerment (immediate & personal)			0	description (no coding): evidence how women regain sense of value, purpose, control  women's ability to make choices  coding in terms of achievements, agency and resources
		Achievements		35	positive outcomes choices  more complex, of social value, such as political representation
		Agency		0	description (no coding): heart of the process, by which choices are made and evidence how life's problems are handled
			faculty of bargaining, negotiation	32	exercising influence, power
			resistance	33	including opposition, struggle, activism, fighting
			ability to take decisions independently	9	irrespective of what others think
		Resources		0	description (no coding): conditions under which choices are made  coding in terms of material, social and human
			material	6	land and equipment
			social	21	knowledge, skills
			human	19	networks and relationships which enable people to improve their situation/life
	Women's empowerment in the course of time			0	description (no coding): collectively as opposed to individually and immediately  coding in terms of intermediate and long term
		intermediate		11	institutional rules and resources
		long term		6	structural relations, gender, class etc.
	Empowerment: means/strategy development			4	means/strategy to achieve development objectives

	Peace practice			0	re pyramid Lederach (grassroots, leadership)
		interaction with grassroots level		14	as indicated and defined by interviewees
		interaction with top leadership level		22	political and military leadership
	Reference to conflict, peace, change			43	by interviewees: as social process that evolves non stop
		Reference to building trust		35	
	Reference to risks, intimidation, harassment			13	by interviewees
	Reference to women as warmongers and spoilers			21	by interviewees
	Reference to social change			0	description (no coding)  coding at individual level and collectively
		personally		26	as perceived/indicated by interviewees
		collectively		21	as perceived/indicated by interviewees

**Appendix 8.1: Code system used (interviews)**

Code System				544	
	Free coding			11	new to allow for the inclusion of text passages of interest to researcher
	In-vivo coding			44	words or terms used by respondents interviewed so remarkable that they should be taken as codes
	Conflict analysis			0	description (no coding): perceptions and understanding of north-south conflict in Sudan (Chapter 2 and 3 of this research)
		Grievance		0	description (no coding): grievances over social justice and identity (social and cultural motivations) and political power  coding in terms of grievances over role of the state, underdevelopment, identity and other
			state	8	role of the state and state capacity versus people and human security
			underdevelopment	10	linking conflict to poverty, social exclusion and inequality
			identity	5	social and cultural motivations
			other	16	than state, identity and underdevelopment
		Greed		17	greed for natural resources and economic power
		Religion		8	religion refers to Islam, Christianity and indigenous faiths
		Colonization		4	colonization refers to impact British colonisation in Sudan (Chapter 2 of this research)
		Synthesis of perspectives		8	reference to complexity and difficulty of separating, for example, political causes of going to war from economic, and social from cultural motivations
	Third party intervention			0	description (no coding): mediation and conciliation, or facilitation, are various types of third-party intervention in situations of conflict

		Assessment of the involvement of actors / agencies		0	description (no coding): assessment by respondents of the potential involvement of national or international practitioners in third party intervention, including their respective advantages and disadvantages
			bilateral development agencies	15	national agencies of industrialized nations providing both development assistance and humanitarian assistance
			multilateral agencies	14	established by intergovernmental agreement and independent of the interests of any single country member or recipient government: the European Commission, the World Bank and the United Nations
			NGOS	4	Non-Governmental Organizations (national), civil society organizations
			INGOS	11	International Non-Governmental Organizations
			IFIs	4	International Financial Institutions, the best known are the World Bank, IMF and the regional banks
		Evidence of third-party bias		16	towards either the Government of Sudan (GoS) or the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM)
	Do no harm			0	description (no coding): refers to designing and implementing assistance in a conflict-sensitive manner (Chapter 3 of this research)
		Risks for participants peace practice		16	as perceived/indicated by respondents
		Risks for facilitators peace practice		18	as perceived/indicated by respondents
	Reflection of aid policies, strategies and implementation			0	description (no coding)
		Actors and agencies		89	reflection on organizing effective agencies for building peace and supporting the empowerment of women in Sudan

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		An empowerment approach		0	description (no coding)
			empowerment of Sudanese women	28	before, during and after conflict as perceived by respondents
			women's organizations in Sudan	15	on the character, influence and effectiveness of women's organizations as perceived by interviewees
		A participatory development perspective		0	description (no coding)
			inclusiveness	15	meaning of inclusiveness as perceived by respondents
			ownership	14	meaning of ownership as perceived by respondents
	An approach to peacebuilding			0	description (no coding)
		Interaction with top leadership		26	refers to peacebuilding approach by Lederach and describes interaction between Sudanese participants to peace practices and their political and military leadership as perceived by interviewees
		Interaction with grassroots leadership		10	refers to peacebuilding approach Lederach and describes interaction between Sudanese participants to peace practice and their grassroots leadership as perceived by respondents
	Reflection on peace practice			98	by respondents in terms of experiences, insights and lessons learned (nexus conflict, development, feminism)
	Reference to display of international support SCR1325			20	evidence of international support to the implementation of UN SCR 1325 in Sudan by respondents

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## Summary

Once again, the award of the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize focused our attention on the vital role women play in conflict resolution. However, what do we really know about their role in peace processes? Do women count, as declared by the Security Council in Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security? Moreover, does the small number of women participating in peace processes tell the whole story behind a peace process? This research 'Is peace not for everyone?' seeks to provide some answers to these questions in the context of building and making peace in Sudan; a country that suffered protracted war between the north and the south since 1955.

The reader will note that Sudanese women emerge from this research as important actors in building and making peace. Following the signing of a peace agreement, they managed to benefit from their long struggle for peace, equality and development. Despite unimaginable losses, violence and disempowerment experienced by both men and women in the midst of war, positive change for women was and is possible.

Central to this research is the study of a Dutch peacebuilding programme (1997-2007) that was created to support the participation of Sudanese women in the Sudan IGAD (Intergovernmental Authority for Development) Peace Process. IGAD mediation culminated in a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (2005) between Northern and Southern Sudan and led to the declaration of the independent state of South Sudan in 2011. Despite that, the Sudans still have a long way to go on peace.

It also examines: 1) international support to efforts by Sudanese women to participate in peace processes; 2) social change and the empowerment of women in the midst and aftermath of war; 3) the role of policymakers and practitioners in turning declarations on women's participation in peace processes into action; and 4) the interaction between diplomats and women interested in building and making peace.

To inform, guide and structure this research, relevant theoretical perspectives emanating from the academic fields of studies of conflict, development and feminism are reviewed and discussed. Consequently, a qualitative research approach is taken based on life history research among Sudanese women and peace practice participants as well as structured interviews with concerned diplomats, policymakers and practitioners. Research objectives are met by narrative inquiry and detailed analyses and the comparison of research findings including triangulation.

Clearly, the percentage of women participating as witnesses only in formal peace processes in the case of Sudan do not tell the whole truth about their participation. 'Is peace not for everyone?' provides a rare insight into the participation of Sudanese women in an informal

## Summary

process of peacebuilding and makes the invisible, including women's interaction with and participation in the Sudan IGAD peace process, visible.

Building on this research, one notes that in the context of building peace in the midst and aftermath of war, giving support to peacebuilding is not easy and requires careful thought. Efforts to build peace may sound harmless at first, but could actually result in harm for those participating in peacebuilding processes. Situated knowledge of, and experience with, conflict management, conflict resolution, as well as process-minded peacebuilding do matter. Some actors and agencies are better equipped to support inclusive peacebuilding processes than others.

Thinking of women as a single and organized group, which they are not, is an issue which turned out to be as persistent as thinking of Sudanese women as victims instead of as actors. Though a number of high-level officials wanted to meet and greet Sudanese women participating in building and making peace, diplomats found it difficult to politically situate them and interact with them as actors. Once women entered into the picture, they were expected to perform miracles. What is more, many diplomats did not think it possible for Sudanese women to really benefit from their struggle for peace, equality and development. Doubts about the possibilities of social change and gains for women in the aftermath of war may also become a self-fulfilling prophecy and yet another source of disempowerment.

'Is peace for everyone?' demonstrates that peacebuilding is more critical than making peace from the perspective of peace, equality and development and requires transdisciplinary curiosity. Peace is a process, and so are peacebuilding and social change.

## Samenvatting in het Nederlands (Summary in Dutch)

De toekenning van de Nobelprijs voor Vrede van 2011 vestigde nog eens de aandacht op de vitale rol van vrouwen in het oplossen van conflicten. Maar wat weten we eigenlijk over de rol van vrouwen in vredesprocessen? Tellen vrouwen mee zoals VN Veiligheidsraad resolutie 1325 (2000) over vrouwen, vrede en veiligheid beweert? En vertelt het geringe aantal vrouwen dat deelneemt aan formele vredesprocessen wel het hele verhaal? Het onderzoek 'Is vrede niet voor iedereen?' wil op deze vragen een antwoord geven in de context van vredesopbouw en conflictoplossing in Soedan. Dat land kampte met lange burgeroorlogen tussen het noorden en het zuiden sinds 1955.

Uit het onderzoek komen Soedanese vrouwen tevoorschijn als belangrijke spelers bij het bouwen en maken van vrede. Na de vredesovereenkomst van 2005 slaagden zij erin hun lange strijd voor vrede, gelijkheid en ontwikkeling te verzilveren. Ondanks onvoorstelbare verliezen en geweldservaringen onder mannen en vrouwen tijdens de oorlog waren en zijn er dus voor Soedanese vrouwen ook positieve veranderingen mogelijk.

Het is een onderzoek dat een Nederlands vredesopbouwprogramma (1997-2007), gericht op deelname van Soedanese vrouwen aan het formele IGAD (*Intergovernmental Authority for Development*) vredesproces in Soedan, grondig onder de loep neemt. IGAD vredesonderhandelingen leidden tot een vredesakkoord tussen het noorden en het zuiden van het land en vervolgens afscheiding van Zuid Soedan. Dat is in 2011 uitgeroepen tot een onafhankelijke staat. Evenwel is voor vrede in beide Soedans nog een lange weg te gaan.

Naast de rol van Soedanese vrouwen in het bouwen en maken van vrede besteedt het onderzoek aandacht aan: 1. de internationale steun voor deze rol; 2. sociale verandering en versterking van de positie van vrouwen tijdens en na de oorlog; 3. de rol van beleidsmakers en praktijkmensen bij de uitvoering van VN resoluties gericht op de deelname van vrouwen aan vredesprocessen; en 4. het samenspel tussen diplomaten en vrouwen die bij vredesprocessen een actieve rol willen spelen.

Het theoretische kader omvat een bespreking en discussie van voor het onderzoek relevante theoretische perspectieven afkomstig uit verschillende disciplines (conflict studiën, ontwikkelingsstudies en feminisme). Voor het onderzoek is gekozen voor een kwalitatieve benadering. Daarbij vormt narratief- en levensverhalen onderzoek onder vrouwen die deelnamen aan het vredesopbouwprogramma de kern. Daarnaast zijn vraaggesprekken gevoerd met betrokken regeringsfunctionarissen, beleidsmakers en praktijkmensen. Het antwoord op de onderzoeksvragen volgt uit een gedetailleerde analyse en vergelijking van onderzoeksbevindingen en triangulatie.

Het onderzoek laat zien dat in het geval van Soedan, het percentage vrouwen dat alleen maar deelneemt als getuigen van formele vredesbesprekingen niet het hele verhaal vertelt.

‘Is vrede niet voor iedereen?’ geeft juist ook inzicht in de deelname van vrouwen in informele vredesprocessen van vredesopbouw en in de interactie daarvan met het formele vredesproces.

Het onderzoek toont de complexiteit van de ondersteuning van vredesopbouw tijdens en na afloop van een oorlog, alsmede het essentiële belang van kennis van de lokale situatie. Inspanningen gericht op vredesopbouw kunnen deelnemers in de problemen brengen. Daarom zijn kennis van de lokale situatie en ervaring met het managen en oplossen van conflicten alsook vredesopbouwprocessen cruciaal. Verder blijken sommige spelers en organisaties beter uitgerust om inclusieve vredesopbouwprocessen te ondersteunen dan andere.

Het beschouwen van vrouwen als één enkele georganiseerde groep is een hardnekkige misvatting. Ook zijn Soedanese vrouwen in de ogen van buitenstaanders in plaats van spelers vooral slachtoffers. Hoewel een aantal regeringsfunctionarissen wilde kennismaken met Soedanese deelnemers aan vredesopbouw en vredesprocessen, vonden diplomaten het lastig om hen binnen de politiek te plaatsen en samen te werken. Ook moesten Soedanese vrouwen wonderen verrichten op het moment dat ze wel in beeld kwamen. Veel diplomaten hielden het niet voor mogelijk dat Soedanese vrouwen hun strijd voor vrede, gelijkheid en ontwikkeling zouden kunnen verzilveren. Twijfels over de kansen op sociale verandering en vooruitgang van vrouwen na afloop van oorlogen en het uitsluiten van vrouwen bij formele vredesprocessen doen denken aan een voorspelling die vanzelf uitkomt. Verandering is niet gebaat bij twijfels.

‘Is vrede niet voor iedereen?’ toont aan dat vanuit het perspectief van vrede, gelijkheid en ontwikkeling vredesopbouw kritieker is dan vrede sluiten en transdisciplinaire nieuwsgierigheid vereist. Vrede is een proces, en dat geldt ook voor vredesopbouw en maatschappelijke verandering.

## خلاصة باللغة العربية

وضع منح جائزة نوبل للسلام من جديد التركيز على الدور الهام للمرأة في حل الصراعات وفي بناء السلام. ولكن ماذا نعرف عن دور المرأة وإسهامها في عمليات إحلال السلام بالفعل؟ هل دخلت المرأة حقيقة في الحساب كما جاء في قرار مجلس الأمن ١٣٢٥ عن المرأة والسلام والأمن؟ إضافة لذلك هل يحكى العدد القليل من النساء المساهمات في عمليات إحلال السلام القصة الكاملة وراء عملية إحلال السلام؟ يحاول أن يرد هذا البحث «أليس السلام للجميع» على هذه الأسئلة في إطار منع الصراعات وحلها وفي بناء السلام في السودان وقد ظل هذا البلد يعاني من الصراعات بين الشمال والجنوب منذ العام ١٩٥٥.

سوف يلاحظ القارئ من هذا البحث إن النساء السودانيات ظهرن كشخصيات هامة في حل الصراعات وفي بناء السلام. وبعد توقيع إتفاقية السلام إستطعن الإستفادة من مقاومتهن الطويلة من أجل السلام وإحترام حقوق المرأة والتنمية. ورغمما عن المعاناة الغير معقولة للرجال والنساء من عنف وإضعاف في وسط هذه الحرب إلا أن التغيير الإيجابي للمرأة كان وما يزال ممكناً.

ركز هذا البحث على دراسة برنامج بناء السلام الهولندي (١٩٩٧-٢٠٠٧) الذى إستهدف إشراك المرأة السودانية في عملية إحلال السلام عن طريق الIGAD، أفرزت وساطة IGAD إتفاقية السلام الشامل بين شمال وجنوب السودان (٢٠٠٥) والتي نتج عنها إعلان إستقلال جنوب السودان في العام ٢٠١١، إلا إنه بصرف النظر عن هذه الإتفاقية ما يزال الطريق للسلام طويلاً.

تبحث هذه الدراسة أيضاً (١) الدعم العالمى لمجهودات المرأة السودانية للمشاركة في عملية صنع السلام (٢) التغيير الإجتماعى وتمكين المرأة خلال وبعد الحرب (٣) دور صانعى وممارسى السياسات في تنفيذ قرارات مشاركة في عملية إحلال السلام (٤) التفاعل بين الدبلوماسيين والنساء المهتمات ببناء وصنع السلام.

لبناء هذا البحث تمت مراجعة ودراسة جميع الدراسات الأكاديمية المتعلقة بدراسة النزاع والتنمية والدراسات النسوية. وبالتالي إتخذت الدراسة منهج البحث النوعى بناءً على قصص حياة النساء السودانيات المساهمات في برنامج السلام كما تمت مقابلات منظمة مع دبلوماسيين وصانعى وممارسى السياسه وحققت أهداف البحث عن طريق بحث الحكايات النوعية والتحليل التفصيلى والمقارنة بنتائج البحث وضمونها للتليث.

من الواضح أن النسبة المئوية للنساء الشاهدات على عملية السلام في السودان لاتحكى القصة الكاملة عن مساهمتهن ويوفر «أليس السلام للجميع» وجهة نظر خاصة لمساهمة المرأة السودانية في عملية بناء السلام غير الرسمى ويظهر ماكان مخفياً بما في ذلك مساهمة المرأة في عملية السلام IGAD في السودان.

بناء على هذا البحث يمكن ملاحظة أن دعم بناء السلام في خلال وبعد الحرب ليس سهلاً ويحتاج لتفكير دقيق ومجهودات بناء السلام قد تبدو غير مؤذية ولكن في حقيقة الأمر قد تسبى لمن إشتراك في برامج السلام. المعرفة المحلية والخبرة لإدارة وتحليل الصراعات وبناء السلام عملية منهجية ومهمة. بعض الشخصيات والمؤسسات لهم القدرة على دعم بناء السلام الشامل أكثر من غيرهم.

التفكير في أن النساء مجموعة واحدة ومنظمة وهو غير صحيح أصبح طريقة تفكير مستمر كما التفكير في النساء السودانيات كضحايا بدلا عن كونهن فاعلات. بالرغم من أن عدد من كبار المسئولين الحكوميين قد يرغب في مقابلة والترحيب بالنساء السودانيات المشاركات في بناء وصناعة السلام كان من الصعب للدبلوماسيين أن يتفاعلوا معهن في إطار مفهوم سياسى. ما أن دخلت المرأة في الصورة كان من المتوقع أنها ستصنع معجزات. علاوة على ذلك لايعتقد كثير من الدبلوماسيين أن المرأة السودانية يمكنها أن تستفيد من نضالها من أجل السلام وإحترام حقوق المرأة والتنمية. الشكوك حول إمكانية التغيير الإجتماعى ومكتسبات المرأة بعد نهاية الحرب قد تصبح أيضا نبوءة ومصدر لعدم تمكينها.

يوضح «أليس السلام للجميع» أن بناء السلام أصعب من صنع السلام من مفهوم السلام وإحترام حقوق المرأة والتنمية ويتطلب الإهتمام لمختلف التخصصات وقبل كل شئ السلام عملية منهجية وبناء السلام والتغيير الإجتماعى كذلك.



Photo by Angelika Honsbeek



## About the Researcher

Margret Verwijk (1964) studied the Arabic language in Leiden and Cairo. In 1987 she graduated with an M.A. degree in Arabic Language and Literature, including studies of Islamic Law, economy of the Middle East and development co-operation from Leiden University in the Netherlands. She is certified as a sworn translator/interpreter of the Arabic language and teacher (first grade). She pursued training and education in the areas of project management, marketing management and general management (Business School Netherlands). In addition she took courses in gender and development, humanitarian relief, emergency aid and rehabilitation, organizational and institutional analysis, theory and practice of conflict management, mediation and preventive diplomacy at ACCORD in South Africa, as well as development evaluation at Carlton University in Canada. In the year 2000 she was the first foreigner and diplomat to receive a doctorate of Gender and Development (honoris causa) for her work on women's rights and the participation of women in peace processes from Ahfad University for Women in Sudan.

Her work with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs since 1997, the UN (1994-1997) and numerous consultancy firms including BMB Management Consulting for Development, HVA, Independent Press (1987-1994) was mostly field based. She spent a considerable number of years working in Yemen, Sudan and Bangladesh and was the team-leader of a joint donor mission (2006) to Democratic Republic of Congo to assess the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (MONUC). Her '1325' interest and expertise stems from direct experiences in Sudan, Afghanistan, Iraq and the DRC. When she was working with the Department of Institutional and Social Development at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in The Hague (2004-2008) she published a policy note on gender and security sector reform entitled *Developing the security sector: security for whom, by whom? Security sector reform and gender* (2007), and supported the formulation of a Dutch National Action Plan to implement UN SCR 1325. She was elected co-chair of the global Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition from 2006 to 2008. From 2008 to the present time she is working as a senior policy advisor with the Financial and Economic Affairs Department in The Hague supporting both policy formulation and evaluation. She has a special interest in multi-track diplomacy, dialogue processes and building bridges between researchers, policy makers and practitioners.