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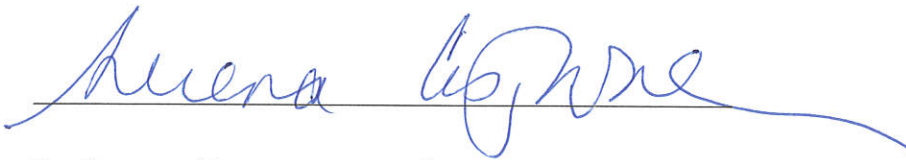
The Role of British Colonial Policy in the South Sudanese Civil War:
A Postcolonial Conflict Analysis

A Thesis Submitted to
The Faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences
In Candidacy of the Degree of
Departmental Honors in International Studies

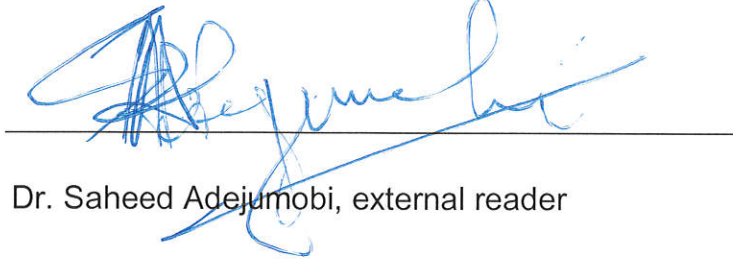
By
David Lin

June 2018

This honors thesis by David Lin is approved

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Serena Cosgrove", written over a horizontal line.

Dr. Serena Cosgrove, coordinator

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Saheed Adejumo", written over a horizontal line.

Dr. Saheed Adejumo, external reader

Abstract:

Between 1899 to 1956 the United Kingdom ruled Sudan through the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium. During this period of colonial rule, British administrators divided the country into two distinct regions, North and South Sudan. Through a process called the 'Southern Policy', South Sudan was administered separately from the more economically developed North. The policy was intended as a protectionist barrier to prevent the exploitation of the economically underdeveloped south by the north. However, due to Britain's laissez-faire economic policy in South Sudan, the southern regions were excluded from the government-sponsored economic development of the north, such as the Gezira Irrigation Scheme. The result of Britain's colonial policies was the hegemonic domination of the North over the South. Furthermore, the incorporation of Northern elites into the colonial administration ensured that this unjust and inequitable power structure would continue throughout the postcolonial era.

The economic, educational, and political benefits rendered upon the North, compared to the neglect and expropriation inflicted upon the South led to a vastly disproportionate balance of power in the independent Sudanese Government. This power disparity was the direct cause of the Sudanese Civil War, fought between 1956 and 2005.

When South Sudan gained full independence in 2011, it entered statehood as one of the poorest, least developed nations in the world. The century of neglect under the British and of violence and oppression under the North Sudanese left the fledgling country with an insecure future. Two years after gaining its independence, South Sudan was again thrust back into civil conflict. South Sudan's history of civil war is a result of

the oppression and underdevelopment inflicted by Britain's colonial administration and the Northern-dominated Sudanese Government.

Introduction

On April 15, 2014 a company of armed fighters captured the city of Bentiu, the capital of the South Sudanese state of Unity. The citizens of Bentiu may have had hope that the rebels, primarily of the Nuer ethnic group, would be liberators. However, their optimism was short-lived. As the city fell, rampaging gunmen perpetrated one of the deadliest massacres of the 21st century. Directed by commanders on local radio stations, rebel troops went door to door committing indiscriminate atrocities. After two days of bloodshed, hundreds lay dead. When United Nations observers and peacekeepers arrived on the scene, the rebels had vanished, leaving piles of bodies and shattered lives in their wake. One UN observer reported “A strong stench of decomposing remains filled the air, while vultures and dogs ate off limbs, scalps and abdomen flesh.”¹ The mutilated corpses conjure images of Nanking in 1938 or Rwanda in 1994. An official White House statement read, “Accounts of the attacks shock the conscience. It’s an abomination.”² Gut-wrenching experiences have become a facet of daily life in the war-ravaged nation of South Sudan.

The Bentiu massacre was not an isolated event, nor was it the first escalation of violence in South Sudan by belligerents in the nation’s five-year long civil war. South Sudan, the world’s youngest country, has been embroiled in civil conflict for the entirety of its independent history. The Council on Foreign Relations estimates that 50,000 people have been killed since 2013, with over four million being forced to flee their

¹ Fred Barbash, "An 'Abomination': Slaughter in The Mosques and Churches of Bentiu, South Sudan", Washington Post, 2014, accessed January 29, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2014/04/23/an-abomination-slaughter-in-the-mosques-and-churches-of-bentiu-south-sudan/?utm_term=.e99810971b93.

² Barbash, “Abomination.”

homes, and an additional five million are at risk of starvation.³ The mounting atrocities committed by all sides in this complex conflict have garnered attention from media and academics. Since 2013, politicians and experts in foreign relations and international development have been trying to unravel this labyrinthine conflict. Many simplistically attribute the violence to ethnic tension or political inexperience. However, as I argue in this paper, South Sudan's history of internal strife did not begin in 2011 when it gained independence from the North, nor did it begin in 1956, when the united Sudan gained independence from Great Britain. The South Sudanese Civil War is the result of the neglect, underdevelopment, and mismanagement perpetrated by Britain's colonial administration and perpetuated by the Northern-dominated Sudanese government during the united era (1956-2011). This conflict must be reframed from a result of ethnic differences and political inexperience in a young country, to the postcolonial product of unstable political systems, pervasive underdevelopment and extreme competition for resources.

Literature Review:

South Sudan is not unique in its postcolonial history. The Sudanese postcolonial experience is mirrored in former colonial holdings throughout the Global South. The practice of artificially elevating specific sects of society through indirect rule creates unstable power dynamics that often lead the country into civil conflict. This phenomenon was seen in the Congo and Rwanda under Belgian rule, and French Mali and Chad. Regarding this phenomenon, Paul Collier wrote, societies that have one group that is large enough to form a majority of the population, but where other groups are still

³ "Global Conflict Tracker", Cfr.Org, last modified 2018, accessed February 14, 2018, <https://www.cfr.org/interactives/global-conflict-tracker#!/conflict/civil-war-in-south-sudan>.

significant— what we call “ethnic dominance”—are indeed more at risk.”⁴ The colonial model employed in these holdings focused on resource extraction, not settlement. In an attempt to combat the extensive financial and human demands of traditional colonialism, colonizers began shifting to indirect rule. This colonial framework relies on the subversion of existing power structures, rather than the creation of new ones. Indirect rule artificially sustains a hierarchy, often times religious or ethnic, and allows unstable power structures to survive. Furthermore, it positions those at the top of the hierarchy to succeed the colonial government in the postcolonial era. These dynamics are very much in play in postcolonial Sudan.

There is a substantial volume of literature regarding the Sudanese Civil War, and the genocide in Darfur, beginning in 2003, drew the attention of media outlets across the world. As one of the world’s deadliest conflict zones, the contemporary South Sudanese Civil War receives considerable media and scholarly attention. Clemence Pinaud theorizes that the development of wartime power structures stemming from the fifty-year civil war created deep divisions within South Sudanese society, leading to the current civil war. She wrote, “predation by armed groups during the second civil war (1983–2005) initiated a process of dominant class formation, and demonstrates how, through various strategies of resource capture and kinship networks, commanders from the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) and other factions formed a new aristocracy.”⁵ Pinaud’s analysis hinges upon the idea that divisions among ethnic

⁴ Paul Collier, *Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries are Failing and What Can Be Done About It*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 28.

⁵ Clemence Pinaud, "South Sudan: Civil War, Predation and the Making of a Military Aristocracy", *African Affairs* 113, no. 451 (2014): 192-211, accessed March 2, 2018, <http://web.b.ebscohost.com.proxy.seattleu.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=8f175f4e-2c13-4dbf-9901-fafe912d9676%40sessionmgr102>.

groups led to the fragmentation of the SPLA, and as the population became increasing militarized, the prospect of civil conflict became inevitable. Brosché and Höglund take a similar contemporary approach to their conflict analysis. They conclude that the South Sudanese Civil War stems from weak constitutional institutions within the transitional government, which led to inherent political instability in the fledgling country. This instability manifested itself in the political split between President Salva Kiir and Vice-President Riek Machar.⁶ The conclusions reached by Pinaud, Brosché, and Höglund, while cogent in their analysis, fail to consider the historical factors that contributed to the instability and civil war throughout Sudan's history, namely, the legacy of underdevelopment and oppression by Britain's colonial administration and the independent Sudanese government. There have been relatively few publications linking the current events in South Sudan to the colonial era. This paper will connect the colonial era (1889 -1956) with the united Sudanese era (1956-2011) to the contemporary civil conflict (2013-).

Pre-Colonial History and Geography

On the eve of Britain's formal colonization of Sudan in 1899, the country was far from homogenous, politically or ethnically. The geographic area of Sudan is diverse as it is vast, formerly comprising the largest country in Africa and home to hundreds of distinct ethnic groups.⁷ The most significant fissure is along the North-South axis, which

⁶ Johan Brosché and Kristine Höglund, "Crisis of Governance in South Sudan: Electoral Politics And Violence In The World's Newest Nation", *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 54, no. 01 (2016): 67-90, accessed March 11, 2018, <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.seattleu.edu/docview/1763352604/abstract/62B141EDD0BE4643PQ/1?accountid=28598>.

⁷ Robert O. Collins, *A History of Modern Sudan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 4.

divides the country not only geographically, but politically, religiously, and ethnically.

Northern Sudanese derive their cultural identity from their religion, with an overwhelming majority adhering to Sunni Islam. Conversely, South Sudan is far more diverse from the North, both religiously and ethnically. However, South Sudan has traditionally been dominated by the two largest ethnic groups, the Nuer and the Dinka.

Sudan is as diverse geographically as it is culturally. The northern regions of Sudan suffer from a dearth of potable water due to its extremely hot and arid climate, as well as encroaching desertification. In contrast to the North, Southern Sudan experiences a tropical, equatorial climate, conducive to agriculture, which was the region's primary industry until the discovery of petroleum in the 1970s.

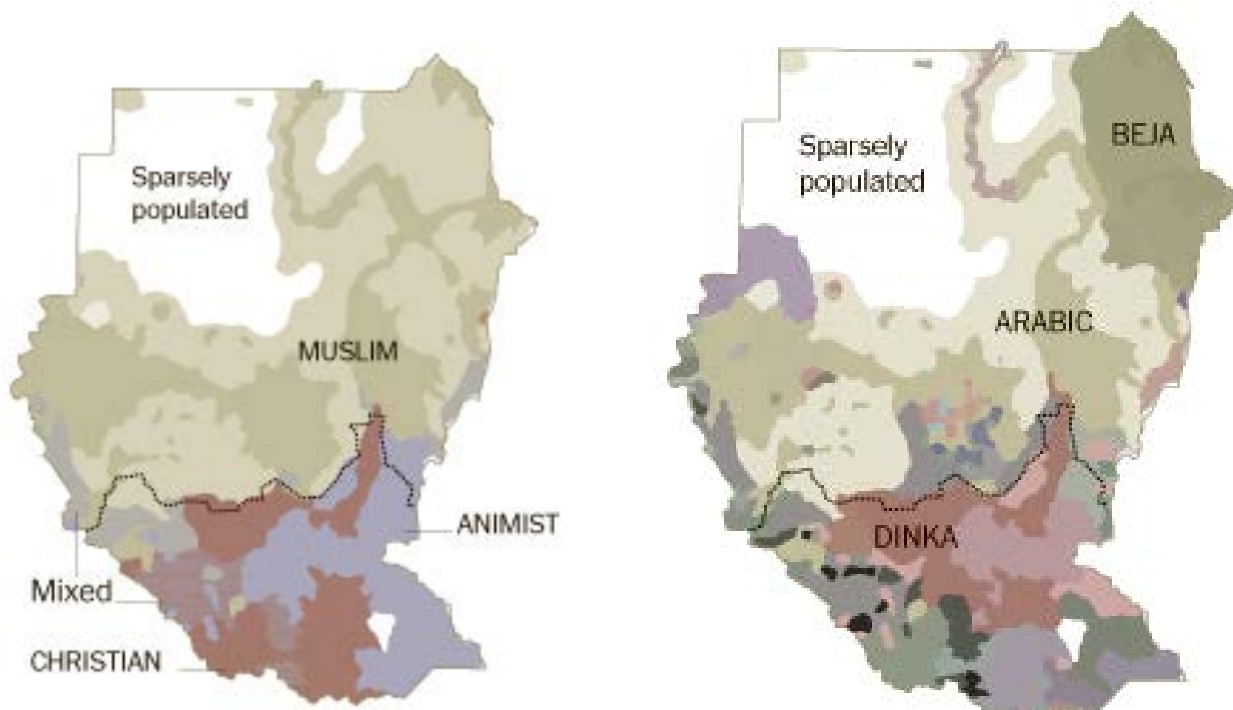


Figure 1: Religion and Language Breakdown of Sudan⁸

In 1821, the Northern regions of Sudan fell under the personal rule of Muhammad Ali, the Ottoman Viceroy of Egypt. Collins theorizes that a primary motivation for Ali's invasion of Sudan was the acquisition of slaves for his private army.⁹ Islamic law, or *Sharia* law, prohibits the capture of Muslims for the purpose of enslavement, leaving Ali with one logical source for slaves, the predominantly Christian and Animist South Sudan. At the height of this slave trade in 1860, an estimated 15,000 slaves were sent North every year.¹⁰ The North-South slave trade implemented by the Turko-Egyptian regime sowed the seeds of hegemony and Northern dominance that would persist for two centuries.

In 1881, a boat-builder named Muhammad Ahmed ibn Abdallah claimed to have received visions from the Prophet Muhammad, who declared him the Mahdi.¹¹ Abdallah amassed thousands of followers, primarily Orthodox Muslims throughout Northern and Central Sudan, by promoting his movement as a return to Islamic fundamentalism. In the same year, Abdallah declared a *jihad*, or holy war, against the Turko-Egyptian regime, who he claimed were heretics and infidels. By 1885, Abdallah's forces captured Khartoum, formally establishing the Mahdist Regime.

⁸ Sergio Pecanha, "The Tough Task of Defining Sudan's North-South Border - Map - Nytimes.Com", Nytimes.Com, last modified 2018, accessed March 1, 2018, <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/01/16/world/africa/sudan-graphic.html>.

⁹ Collins, *A History of Modern Sudan*, 12.

¹⁰ Collins, *A History of Modern Sudan*, 16.

¹¹ Mahdi translates to 'guided one' or 'messiah'. In Sunni Islam the Mahdi is a companion of Isa (Jesus) and will bring justice to the world.

In 1898, the Mahdist forces were decisively defeated at the Battle of Omdurman by an Anglo-Egyptian army. Mahdist casualties numbered 26,000, compared to 430 for the Anglo-Egyptian side. Regarding the battle, a young Winston Churchill wrote, "it is the most signal triumph ever gained by the arms of science over barbarians. Within the space of five hours the strongest and best-armed savage army yet arrayed against a modern European Power had been destroyed and dispersed, with hardly any difficulty."¹² This racist and condescending summation was emblematic of senior British officials the colonial era and would manifest itself during Britain's administration of Sudan. In 1899, the British Empire, in a joint venture with Egypt, established the Anglo-Egyptian condominium of Sudan, formalizing their control of the country.

Patterns of Colonization

Britain's interest in Sudan must be contextualized within the larger 'Scramble for Africa' movement in the latter half of the 19th century. For the wealthy and industrialized European powers, Africa offered secondary markets for manufactured goods and a seemingly endless source of raw materials, principally rubber, cotton, ivory, and gold. At the Berlin Conference of 1884, Britain's claim to Sudan was formalized among European powers. It should be noted that no African representatives participated in or were invited to this conference.

Similar to Britain's colonial project in India, the colonial administration in Sudan took the form of indirect rule. Traditionally, indirect rule refers to the use of indigenous leaders govern under the supervision of colonial administrators. However, Collin Newbury would have us revise this definition to include a clientelist model that imposes

¹² Winston S. Churchill, *The River War: An Account of the Reconquest of The Sudan* (New York, NY: Carroll and Graf Publishers, 2000), 300.

an ethnic hierarchy. Newbury also states that there is a notion of *modus vivendi*, or complicity by those at the top of the hierarchy.¹³ In Sudan, this theory is supported by the British elevation of Northern Muslim elites into the colonial administration. In return for this patronage, client classes (Northern, Arab, Muslim, elites) lent legitimacy and a degree of stability to the colonial administration.

Colonial Policy in Practice

Through a process called the 'Southern Policy', South Sudan was administered separately from the more economically developed north. The Southern Policy delineated race by religion. The stated aim of the Southern Policy was "keep the Southern Sudan as free as possible of Mohammedan influence."¹⁴ The British administration devoted significantly more resources to development in the North than in the South, particularly in the fields of education and industry. This unequal distribution of resources and capital contributed to the Northern domination over the South in the independent era and established a hegemony that pervaded Sudanese political and economic society until 2011, when the South gained independence. The result was the severe underdevelopment of South Sudan.

British mismanagement of Sudan stemmed from a disastrous failure in long-term planning. Officials within the British administration had not intended for the North and South to become a single state in the independent era. Instead, many within the Sudanese colonial administration intended for South Sudan to gain official emancipation

¹³ Colin Walter Newbury, "Patrons, Clients, And Empire: The Subordination of Indigenous Hierarchies In Asia And Africa", *Journal of World History* 11, no. 2 (2000): 227-263, accessed March 9, 2018, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20078850>.

¹⁴ M. Abdel Rahim, "The Development of British Policy in The Southern Sudan 1899–1947", *Middle Eastern Studies* 2, no. 3 (1966): 227-249, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4282161>, 230.

from the North and join British East Africa (Kenya and Uganda). Harold MacMichael, a senior British civil secretary announced that “the administration of the South was to be developed along ‘African’, rather than ‘Arab’ lines, and that the future of southern Sudan might ultimately lie with the countries of British East Africa, rather than with the Middle East.¹⁵ An official memorandum to the Milner Mission stated, “The possibility of the Southern (black) portion of the Sudan being eventually cut off from the Northern (Arab) area and linked up with some Central African system is borne in mind.”¹⁶ Under this system, Southern regional governors were not invited to attend the annual conferences of governors in Khartoum, and were instead encouraged to collaborate with British administrators in Uganda and Kenya.

The Southern Policy manifested itself in the form of the Closed District Order and the Permits to Trade Order. Traders and travelers required special permits from the British government to cross regional borders in the South. As a result, the southern regions remained largely pastoral while the North experience economic advancements, particularly in the petroleum industry. Wealth and industry was contained in the northern regions as a result of these British policies.

British Education Policy

In 1902, Britain founded Gordon College in Khartoum.¹⁷ Sharkey claims that British administrators had hoped Gordon College would become the “Eton of the Sudan” or the “Winchester by the Nile”, plainly, a school for well-born young men to receive the necessary training to enter into the British colonial administration. She writes, “Above

¹⁵ Douglas H. Johnson, *The Root Causes of Sudan's Civil Wars*, 2nd ed. (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2004), 11.

¹⁶ Rahim, *"The Development of British Policy in The Southern Sudan."*

¹⁷ In 1956, Gordon College was renamed as the University of Khartoum. Today it is the largest university in Sudan.

all, they enrolled students from Arabic-speaking, Muslim families that claimed Arab genealogies and hailed from the riverain North.”¹⁸ Furthermore, Southern students were prohibited from traveling North in pursuit of education as a result of the aforementioned Closed District Order. Graduates of Gordon college would form the core of Sudanese political society, both during the British colonial administration and during the early years of the independent era. Sharkey details the effect that Britain’s favoring of the already elevated social classes had on Sudanese society, writing, “Educated Northerners imagined a nation that took its territorial shape from the colony but its cultural shape from themselves. In writings and speeches, they affirmed Arabic and Islam as the pillars of the nation.” Ironically, though Northern Sudanese expressed their desire to shape the independent Sudan in their own image, free from colonial influence, when independence came, they maintained the British system of Northern hegemony over the South. Sharkey also addresses the structural inequality instituted by the British. “Rather than reshuffling this social hierarchy [Northern hegemony], British authorities reinforced it by setting policies for school enrollment according to gender, region of origin, social status and religion, Admissions policies for Gordon College for example, privileged those who were male, Muslim, Arabic-speaking, ‘Arab’, and of high status.” This method of administration is known as indirect rule i.e. manipulating local institutions to maintain control and influence. This system of favoring Northern Muslim students over Southerners created a system that excluded Southerners from the colonial administration and from the Sudanese government once the nation gained independence in 1956.

¹⁸ Heather J. Sharkey, *Living with Colonialism: Nationalism and Culture in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 7-8.

British education policy in the South was far more informal than in the North. By its own admission, the British colonial administration made few attempts at organizing state-sponsored educational institutions in the South, such as the North's prestigious Gordon College. The administration delegated responsibility for education development in South to Christian missionary groups, whose primary goal was proselytization. Regarding the education disparity between the North and South, the British Governor-General of Sudan in 1921 wrote, "As regards education, in the Northern Sudan, of course, the Government schools have always been the main recruiting grounds for clerical and junior technical staff. In the [South] it has not been possible to do very much."¹⁹ This refusal or inability to devote resources to education programs in the South set the region on the path to failure. When Sudan gained independence, the overwhelming majority of government officials were supplied from the North, allowing the government to continue its neglectful and abusive policies towards the South.

State Economic Policy in British Sudan

During its administration, Britain heavily invested in economic development schemes in Northern Sudan. The administration's economic policy in the South during the same period can best be described as laissez-faire, or non-interventionist. This policy is exemplified by the Gezira Irrigation Scheme. A massive capital investment by the British, the Gezira scheme consisted of 2,700 miles of irrigation ditches and canals in Northern Sudan. Douglas claims that the scheme "enabled the Sudan to enter the international cotton trade. No similar schemes were attempted in the South until after

¹⁹ H. W. Jackson, Report on The Finances, Administration and Condition of The Soudan in 1921 (Khartoum: Governor-General of the Soudan, 1921).

the war, and then very hurriedly and with unsatisfactory results.”²⁰ That no mass-cultivation projects were attempted in the South despite the region’s suitable climate is telling of Britain’s overall economic objectives in Sudan. The lack of capital investment in the South, combined with the Closed Districts and Permit to Trade orders, ensured that the southern regions of Sudan would enter independence at a severe economic disadvantage to the North.

British Social and Economic Policy

Britain’s method of rule also had the effect of creating horizontal inequalities and fostering historical grievances among ethnic groups that would later play a significant role in the current civil conflict in South Sudan. Cosgrove states that horizontal inequality isn’t just about income inequality between groups, but also inequality across capabilities – political participation, access to health, education and other public services, and cultural entitlements – as well.²¹ Indirect rule exacerbates these dynamics by artificially elevating certain ethnic groups. These structures are particularly prevalent within the Dinka and Nuer ethnic groups. South Sudan’s geography and the pastoral nature of its population meant that the British ‘pacification’ of the South was slow and uneven. In an effort to hasten their efforts and bolster their tax revenue, Britain employed soldiers from the Dinka ethnic group as an irregular militia. Thomas writes, “Dinka individuals who had formerly allied themselves to slavers were used in violent campaigns to pacify and tax Nuer communities.”²² This system created deep fractures within South Sudan’s already diverse ethnic communities. The hostility between Dinka

²⁰ Johnson, *The Root Causes of Sudan's Civil Wars*, 17.

²¹ Serena Cosgrove, "Conflict and Poverty", in *Understanding Global Poverty: Causes, Capabilities, And Human Development*, 1st ed. (London: Routledge Press, 2017) 176.

²² Edward Thomas, *South Sudan: A Slow Liberation* (London: Zed, 2015) 74.

and Nuer groups is a dominant facet of the current civil war in South Sudan. The British colonial policy in Sudan developed unsustainable power structures between the North and the South, and between ethnic groups in the South. The result of this mismanagement, underdevelopment, and neglect was the Northern dominance and hegemony within the independent Sudanese government.

It was not until the Juba Conference of 1947 that the decision was made to unite North and South Sudan into a single nation. Regarding this abrupt change in policy, Governor-General Sir Hubert Huddleston wrote:

The policy of the Sudan Government regarding the Southern Sudan is to act upon the facts that the peoples of the Sudan are distinctively African and Negroid, but the geography and economics combine (so far as can be seen at the present time) to render them inextricably bound for future development to the Middle Eastern and Arabicized Northern Sudan; and therefore to ensure that they should by educational and economic development, be equipped to stand up for themselves in the future as socially and economically the equals of their partners in the Sudan of the future.²³

Ironically, the exploitation of the less developed South by the more developed North was a point of concern for British administrators; however, unification was deemed to be the most equitable solution. One regional governor believed that unification would be the least problematic future for the country, writing:

The best future we [the British] can give the South is federation with the North on equal footing and that we should not cloud the issue now by vague promises of self-determination in the South which would antagonise Northern opinion and raise false hopes in the South. We took over the trusteeship of one united Sudan and as one united Sudan we should hand back the trusteeship to a Government of Northern and Southern Sudanese.²⁴

²³ Mohamed Omar Beshir, *The Southern Sudan: Background in Conflict* (London: Praeger, 1968), 62-63.

²⁴ Omar Beshir, *The Southern Sudan: Background in Conflict*, 64.

British administrators showed little foresight in their belief that a nominal state would negate the half-century of hegemony that the North enjoyed under colonial rule. Furthermore, to describe colonialism as 'trusteeship' is indicative of the arrogant, Kiplingesque attitude with which Britain approached their colonial project. Mohamed Abdel Rahim describes the effect of Britain's failure, "Southern Policy was by far the greatest failure of that Administration and there can be no doubt that by implementing it the Condominium regime has landed the independent Sudan with its most intractable problem and the present generation of Sudanese people, with the greatest challenge in their post-independence history."²⁵ Britain's long-term planning failures led to South Sudan being ill-prepared to join the independent nation of Sudan. The result of this failure was the primacy of the North Sudanese government, which allowed the failed British policies regarding South Sudan to remain in place.

Northern Domination in Independent Sudan

On January 1st, 1956 Sudan gained its independence from Britain. The Sudanese government, based in the Northern city of Khartoum, was dominated by elite, Northern, Arab, Muslim men. The result was the general continuation of Britain's negligent policy regarding the country's Southern regions. Regarding the power dynamics in independent Sudan, Rahim wrote, "The southern Sudanese lagged far behind many of the northern Sudanese in education, economic development, and involvement in the government and administration of the country. In consequence, they lacked any real or potential voice in the direction of the country's affairs."²⁶ This precarious situation is a direct result of the British colonial policies. In London, Sudanese

²⁵ Rahim, *"The Development of British Policy in The Southern Sudan."*

²⁶ Johnson, *The Root Causes of Sudan's Civil Wars*, 16.

independence may have appeared to be a successful devolutionary transfer of power to native populations. However, in South Sudan, independence was preempted by an army mutiny that would place the new nation on the path to civil war. The Sudanese Civil War would cause the deaths of three million people between 1955 to 2005.²⁷

A leading cause of the first outbreak of civil war was Southern fears of Northern exploitation in the united era. Johnson wrote, "The rapid increase of Northerners in the South as administrators, senior officers in the army and police, teachers in government schools. And as merchants, increased Southern fears of Northern domination and colonization."²⁸ South Sudanese leaders advocated for a federalist government model, which was explicitly rejected by the Northern government officials who sought to centralize political power in Khartoum and enforce Islamic religious and cultural values in the South. The 1955 Mutiny was desultory in its aims and had limited success. However, in retaliation for the mutiny, Northern soldiers burned villages, arrested Southern leaders, and tortured civilians.²⁹ The result was the further mobilization of South Sudanese civilians and the birth of the Southern Sudan Liberation Movement (SSLM), the military and political force of South Sudan the initial stage of the civil war.

It would be a mistake to assume that mutual persecution by the Northern government fostered unity among the disparate ethnic groups in the South. The nature of the war prevented large-scale cooperation between bands of Southern fighters. Johnson characterizes the Southerners as divided and isolated. He writes, "By modern standards, the first years of the war were very modestly conducted. The guerrillas were

²⁷ In 1972 the Addis Ababa Agreement led to an 11-year ceasefire. However, due to the informal and multi-factional nature of the war, raiding and border clashes would occur until war was again declared in 1983.

²⁸ Johnson, *The Root Causes of Sudan's Civil Wars*, 27.

²⁹ Johnson, *The Root Causes of Sudan's Civil Wars*, 31.

knit together very loosely and had no external military support, arming themselves mainly by theft from police outposts, the occasional ambush of army patrols, or through the defection of Southern police or soldiers.”³⁰ Rather than direct confrontation, much of the conflict took the form of raiding of civilian population centers. As many as 500,000 people were killed in the initial phase of the civil war, many of whom were non-combatants.

The Addis Ababa Agreement of 1972 brought a temporary halt to violence and eleven years of relative peace to Sudan, despite ongoing engagements by guerilla and irregular military forces. The agreement provided for limited autonomy in the South, particularly in cultural and religious matters. A tentative coexistence lasted until 1978, with the discovery of oil in South Sudan. After five years of increasing encroachments by the Northern government into the oil-rich regions of South Sudan, President Gaafar Nimeiry declared Shari’a in the South, dissolved the Southern Sudan Autonomous Region, and abrogated the Addis Ababa Agreement in 1983.

In July of 1983, the Sudanese People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM) and the Sudanese People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) published a manifesto detailing the reasons for their revolution. Regarding this manifesto, Johnson states, “Underdevelopment was identified as characterizing most of Sudan outside of the Central Region, the site of most colonial and postcolonial investment. This pattern of unequal development continued after independence because the majority of post-independence governments, it was claimed, had been in the hands of people from the most developed areas.”³¹ The factors the led to the renewed outbreak of civil war (underdevelopment, competition for

³⁰ Johnson, *The Root Causes of Sudan’s Civil Wars*, 31.

³¹ Johnson, *The Root Causes of Sudan’s Civil Wars*, 32.

resources, and Northern hegemony), are directly attributable to the political and economic systems developed by the British during their colonial rule. The second outbreak of civil war in 1983 is characterized by its high civilian death toll, human rights violations, and war crimes. It is estimated that as many as 2 million people died in the conflict, many being non-combatants.

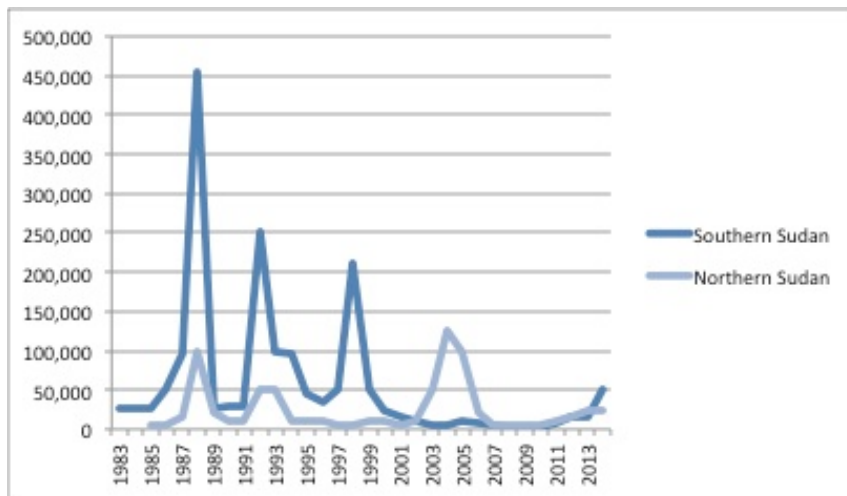


Figure 2: War-related deaths in Sudan 1983-2005.³⁰

Similarly, to the first instance of civil war, Southern forces in 1983 became fragmented as competing factions vied for leadership within the movement. In 1991, Riek Machar, the future vice-president and rebel leader, and other Nuer leaders split from the official Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). This ethnic factionalism set the stage for the later fragmenting of South Sudan's post-independence government.

Effects of Civil War on Independent South Sudan

³² "Sudan: 1985 – 2005 | Mass Atrocity Endings", Tufts.Edu, last modified 2018, accessed March 1, 2018, <https://sites.tufts.edu/atrocityendings/2015/08/07/sudan-2nd-civil-war-darfur/>.

The Second Sudanese Civil War consumed nearly two million lives in addition to untold human and physical capital.³³ The decades of strife left 51 percent of children without any formal education. Furthermore, over 16,000 children were used as child soldiers. The staggering loss of human, physical, and financial capital was the legacy of the Sudanese Civil War. South Sudan entered independence as one of the poorest, least developed countries in the world. It consistently ranks at or near the bottom of every development index (see Table 1). This pervasive poverty has directly contributed to South Sudan's current civil conflict. As a result, competition for resources led to raiding and increased ethnic violence. Serena Cosgrove and Ben Curtis claim, "reifflict occurs."³⁴ South Sudan exemplifies this relationship between economic growth, societal stability and conflict. Paul Collier wrote, "low income, slow growth, and primary commodity dependence make a country prone to civil war."³⁵ A century of oppressive colonial and Northern policies left South Sudan primed for yet another civil war.

³³ Lauren Blanchard, *Conflict in South Sudan And the Challenges Ahead* (Washington D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 2016).

³⁴ Serena Cosgrove, "Conflict and Poverty", 180.

³⁵ Paul Collier, *Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries are Failing and What Can Be Done About It*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 22.

HDI rank	Country	Human Development Index (HDI)	Life expectancy at birth	Expected years of schooling	Mean years of schooling	Gross national income (GNI) per capita
		Value	(years)	(years)	(years)	(2011 PPP \$)
		2015	2015	2015	2015	2015
1	Norway	0.949	81.7	17.7	12.7	67,614
10	United States	0.920	79.2	16.5	13.2	53,245
105	Maldives	0.701	77.0	12.7	6.2	10,383
148	Swaziland	0.541	48.9	11.4	6.8	7,522
165	Sudan	0.490	63.7	7.2	3.5	3,846
181	South Sudan	0.418	56.1	4.9	4.8	1,882

Table 1: Human Development Index Rankings of Selected Countries³⁶

In a predictable, vicious cycle of violence, the resulting poverty was a significant factor in the outbreak of violence in 2013. The immediate cause of the South Sudanese Civil War was a power struggle between President Salva Kiir and his former Vice-President, Riek Machar. However, the strife was exacerbated by ethnic tension compounded by competition for resources. Despite South Sudan's abundant natural resources (75% of Sudan's Oil Fields are in the South), economic opportunity remains scarce due to a lack of education and infrastructure. As a result, competition for resources led to raiding and increased ethnic violence. In an attempt at a transitional government, the two most powerful men in the cabinet came from the two largest ethnic tribes, the Dinka and the Nur. When the two men split, they were supported by their respective ethnic groups. President Kiir accused Vice President Machar and his Nur allies of attempting a coup d'état. Kiir and other Dinka leaders retaliated. The political

³⁶ "2016 Human Development Reports", *Hdr.Undp.Org*, last modified 2016, accessed March 15, 2018, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/HDI>.

strife was the match that ignited the kindling of poverty, economic desperation, and postcolonial devastation.

Conclusion and Ramifications

South Sudan is not unique in its postcolonial history. The Sudanese postcolonial experience is mirrored in former colonial holdings throughout the Global South. The practice of artificially elevating specific sects of society through indirect rule creates unstable power dynamics that often lead the country into civil conflict. This phenomenon was seen other countries that have experienced postcolonial civil conflict; Congo and Rwanda under Belgian rule, and French Mali and Chad. The colonial model employed in these holdings focused on resource extraction, not settlement. In an attempt to combat the extensive financial and human demands of traditional colonialism, colonizers began shifting to indirect rule. This colonial framework relies on the subversion of existing power structures, rather than the creation of new ones. Indirect rule artificially sustains a hierarchy, often times religious or ethnic, and allows unstable power structures to survive. Furthermore, it positions those at the top of the hierarchy to succeed the colonial government in the postcolonial era. These dynamics were very much in play in postcolonial Sudan.

Britain's colonial policy in Sudan during the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium has directly contributed to the current South Sudanese Civil War. Britain's colonial administration favored the economic, political, and human investment of the North, while largely neglecting the South. In doing so, North Sudan developed at an incommensurate rate compared to the South. This disparity allowed the North to implement a hegemonic regime in the postcolonial era. The Northern-dominated

Sudanese government effectively continued the oppressive policies in regard to South Sudan, leading to a half-century of civil war. As a result of decades of violence, underdevelopment, and oppression, South Sudan entered nationhood primed for civil conflict.

Attempts by the United Nations and the African Union to negotiate an end to the conflict have been fruitless. A 2014 peace agreement, which aimed to deescalate the conflict and allow civilians to return to their homes, was broken by both sides less than 24-hours after its signing.³⁷ In April 2015, Riek Machar was again sworn in as vice-president as part of a second comprehensive peace agreement. However, less than two months later, he fled the capital in the wake violent clashes, sparking the renewal of open conflict.³⁸ These peace agreements have attempted to address grievances since war broke out in 2013, without addressing the historical roots and context of the conflict. Any attempt at long-term stability in South Sudan must derive from bottom-up approaches to state-building. A pro forma return to the pre-war status quo will only result in the continued outbreak of violence. Meaningful and long-term peace must stem from a restorative justice approach to state building. In lieu of strong institutions, it is critical that South Sudan's government be truly representative, with voices from all ethnic groups and social divisions incorporated.

³⁷ BBC, "South Sudan Ceasefire Violated, Rebels and Government Say", 2018, accessed March 14, 2018, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-27362508>.

³⁸ Al Jazeera, "South Sudan Opposition Replaces Missing Leader Machar", 2018, accessed March 14, 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/07/south-sudan-opposition-replaces-missing-leader-machar-160723144856580.html>.

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