



Land in Gedarif State: Survival and Conflict

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An explorative research on the influence of group identity and the Sudanese state on the land conflicts in Gedarif State and the interaction of these factors on a local level.

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Keywords

East Sudan, Gedarif State, land conflict, group identity, poor governance, land tenure, state influence.

Executive Summary

Many African countries alike, Sudan has experienced a range of resource-based conflicts that often result in fierce competition between different clans or groups, in ethnic fighting or even in civil war. Although considerable research in the field of the Sudanese internal conflicts has concentrated on the conflict in Darfur and the Sudanese North-South conflict, rather less attention has been paid to the conflict in Eastern Sudan. Consequently this research aimed to explore the conflict in Eastern Sudan more in depth. More precisely, the focus of this research project has been narrowed down to Gedarif State and within the margins and the context of Gedarif State this research focused on land conflicts and the influence of group identity and the state.

The central aim of this research project, 'to explore how group identity and the Sudanese state influence the land conflicts in Gedarif State and how these factors interact on a local level', has been completed by carrying out a literature study. This study shows that the relation between land, group identity, the state and conflict is complex. In addition, it was found that the scarcity of land, created by the state and nature, combined with the unequal access and ownerships rights granted by the state threaten the survival and group identities of the Gedarif State people. As a result they clash in order to gain access to, and control over, land.

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Abbreviations

CBO	Community Based Organisation
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DPA	Darfur Peace Agreement
ESPA	East Sudan Peace Agreement
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GNU	Government of National Unity
GoS	Government of Sudan
GoSS	Government of South Sudan
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
INC	Interim National Constitution
JEM	Justice and Equality Movement
NCP	National Congress Party
NCRC	National Constitution Review Commission
NLC	National Land Commission
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
ON	Oxfam Novib
LC	Land Commission
RBC	Resource-Based Conflict
SECS	Sudanese Environment Conservation Society
SLA	Sudan Liberation Army
SLM	Sudan Liberation Movement
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
SPLM	Sudan People's Liberation Movement
SSLC	South Sudan Land Commission
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme

Glossary

Dar (s)	Homeland
Diar (p)	Homeland
Diya	Blood money
Hakura (s)	The land of a particular clan or tribal group
Hawakeer (p)	The land of a particular clan or tribal group
	Within each dar are a number of hawakeer
Nazir	The dominant tribal chief
Nazirate	The traditional administration
Sheikh	The head of the village

'The future vulnerability to climate change that dominated over the Sudanese public overshadowed the past and present vulnerabilities caused by the clumsy policies, the continuation of which will accumulate and complicate the vulnerability of the future. [...]

The Sudan, the country afflicted with natural and man- made disasters such as conflicts, wars, starvation, floods and torrents.

It is the Sudan, the country of reliefs and aids, the country afflicted with its rulers and their policies'

(Belal, 2008b, p.2).

Preface

On the 4th of March 2009 the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued a warrant for the arrest of Omar Hassan Ahmed Al-Bashir, the president of Sudan.

'He is suspected of being criminally responsible, as an indirect perpetrator, or as an indirect co-perpetrator for intentionally directing attacks against an important part of the civilian population of Darfur, Sudan, murdering, exterminating, raping, torturing and forcibly transferring large numbers of civilians, and pillaging their property. This is the first warrant of arrest ever issued for a sitting Head of State by the ICC' (ICC Press Release, 2009).

As a response to his arrest warrant Al-Bashir announced the expulsion of 13 international Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and the termination of three national NGOs.

In the beginning of March 2009 my field visit with Oxfam Novib to Gedarif State and the Sudanese Environmental Conservation Society (SECS) was initially planned to take place. Due to the developments following the indictment of Al-Bashir my ticket to Khartoum was cancelled for the beginning of March. It was rescheduled and yet again, cancelled. Consequently I was not able to visit the area of research, which brought along a change of plans. As it was no longer possible to supplement literature study with field observations I focused solely on literature. This shift was unforeseen, yet my contact with SECS and their extensive fieldwork, experience and reports proved a solid foundation for this master thesis research.

Introduction

Clear, when analysing Sudan's internal wars is that 'one of the dominant features of the Sudanese conflict [...] is that it is enshrouded with complexities, and that the dynamics of its resolution would require complicated and multifaceted mechanisms' (Adar, Nyout Yoh & Maloka, 2004, p.1). The same requirements hold true for studying and analysing the internal conflict in Sudan. The sources of conflict in Sudan are manifold and entangled. Therefore, they cannot be studied in a vacuum. Collectively they have caused, aggravated, altered and prolonged the Sudanese conflict. The attributes of Sudan's civil wars have both shaped and been shaped by their combating contestants. Since the independence in 1956, both rebels and regimes have used and mobilised factors of conflict to proceed on their political and economic agendas. 'Examining the manner in which belligerents mobilise them (stakes) is no less important than how they were raised in the first place' (Maitre, 2009, p.65). Furthermore, 'the passage of time alters the reasons for which internal wars are fought, and what started a war may not be what sustains it' (Maitre, 2009, p.65). All the dynamics, briefly mentioned here, should be taken into account when studying the internal conflicts in Sudan.

Causal explanations of war are based on the belief that wars can be solved. This implies that all wars are problems and inherently wrong. There are two essential perspectives surrounding these causal explanations of conflict. The first is a general liberal presumption that wars are negative (Cramer, 2006a). These liberal interpretations tend to regard war as a product of the pathology of underdevelopment (Cramer, 2006b). The second perspective, the neoclassical economical perspective, sees violence as a set of independent variables, which lead to a dependent result, meaning war. Such a perspective does not take into account the diversity of violent conflict and can be overly simplifying. Furthermore, it overlooks the fact that internal wars are intrinsically contextual. 'Mono-causal explanations of internal wars are just as if not more likely to miss the mark, as they are to attain it' (Maitre, 2009, p.55).

The level of analysis used for any effort to explain internal wars is also subject to misapplication. 'Micro-level theories of war, or what could be called individualist, rational choice explanations of war, regard the poor as prone to violence simply as a function of cost-benefit decisions.' (Cramer, 2006a, p.75) At the macro level, a state-centric analysis defaults to defining states as monolithic actors. In this, countries' interactions with others make up a foreseeable set of perspectives and results. A holistic picture that both contains and mitigates systemic inclinations across various levels of analysis would be more appropriate (Maitre, 2009).

This research project seeks to take these dynamics into account and stride beyond causal explanations of war by adopting a holistic contextual view and by combining both a micro and a macro level of analysis. We hereby also take Tolstoy's (1982, p.1812) observation into consideration: 'the deeper we delve in search of (these) causes the more of them do we discover; and each separate cause or whole series of causes appears to us equally valid in itself and equally unsound by its insignificance in comparison with the size of the event'. Accordingly, this research project does not aspire to find 'the causes' of Sudan's internal conflicts but aims to explore factors that have possibly sustained, prolonged and altered the conflict.

Research Objective

Many African countries alike, Sudan has experienced a range of resource-based conflicts. These clashes often result in fierce competition between different clans or groups, in ethnic fighting or even in civil war. Many regions in Sudan, for example the South, Kordofan, Darfur, and the East, have been disturbed by these resource-based conflicts for years and years. According to the Sudanese Environment Conservation Society (SECS), 'for clear exposition of resource-based conflicts, it is very essential to understand the socio-economic context in which they occur' (Babiker, et.al., 2005, p.7). Resource-based conflicts, such as conflicts over land, comprise one of the main challenges and a serious threat that faces several Sudanese regions (Babiker, et.al., 2005) – see annex I for a map of Sudan -.

Although considerable research in the field of the Sudanese internal conflicts has concentrated on the conflict in Darfur and the Sudanese North-South conflict, rather less attention has been paid to the conflict in Eastern Sudan. Taking this niche into consideration and, in addition, deliberating on the importance of the conflict in the Eastern region for the stability of the Horn of Africa as the East shares its borders with Eritrea and Ethiopia. Furthermore, in view of the marginalised position that Eastern Sudan inhabits and bearing in mind the dramatic escalation of the conflict in Darfur, which is another Sudanese marginalised region, it is consequently of interest to explore the conflict in Eastern Sudan more in depth. To avoid the risk of over generalising and overseeing specific contextual nuances the focus of this research project is strategically narrowed down to Gedarif State – see annex II for a map of Gedarif State -.

Within the margins and the context of Gedarif State this research will focus on the land conflicts, as conflicts concerning land are often recurring conflicts in Gedarif State. Furthermore, considering the importance of land in Africa and noticing the increased and still increasing pressure on land due to climate change, population pressure and so forth. Above and beyond, taking into account the forecasts on future climate and resource wars it would

seem, as a result, that further analysis of these land conflicts is needed and utmost important.

In view of the changing character of wars, an analysis on the causes of the land conflicts in Gedarif State would be ineffective. Therefore, this research project aims to explore two large and interrelated factors that affect the land conflicts in Gedarif State. Namely the influence of group identity and the level of influence that the state has on these land conflicts, along with the interaction between these factors on a local level.

Identity and ethnicity have often been designated of being the primary source of conflict in Sudan. Furthermore, both rebels and government have used identity as a mobilising factor. Hence, the effect of group identity on the land conflicts in Gedarif State is an interesting centre of attention.

The level of state influence is another fascinating point of interest. Khartoum is challenged in extending its rule to its 25 states. In these states a regional representation of the Khartoum government (a regional government) exists. The interaction between these different levels of government and moreover their influence on the local laws, land tenure and land conflict asks for more research and clarification. Therefore, the direct and indirect influence of the Sudanese state on the land conflicts in the marginalised Eastern region of Sudan is the second factor of influence explored in this research project.

Consequently, the central aim of this research project is to explore how group identity and the Sudanese state influence the land conflicts in Gedarif State and how these factors interact on a local level. The main question derived from this aim is: **How do group identity and the Sudanese state influence the land conflicts in Gedarif State and how do these factors interact on a local level?** This question will be studied by analysing the following aspects: *What is the position of land in conflict? How does group identity influence land conflicts? How do state politics influence local land conflicts? How do land, group identity the state and conflict interact in Gedarif State?* The central aim of this research project is schematically shown in Figure 1, which depicts that the influence of group identity and the state on the Gedarif State land conflicts as well as the position of land within these conflicts, and the interaction of these three factors will be looked at.

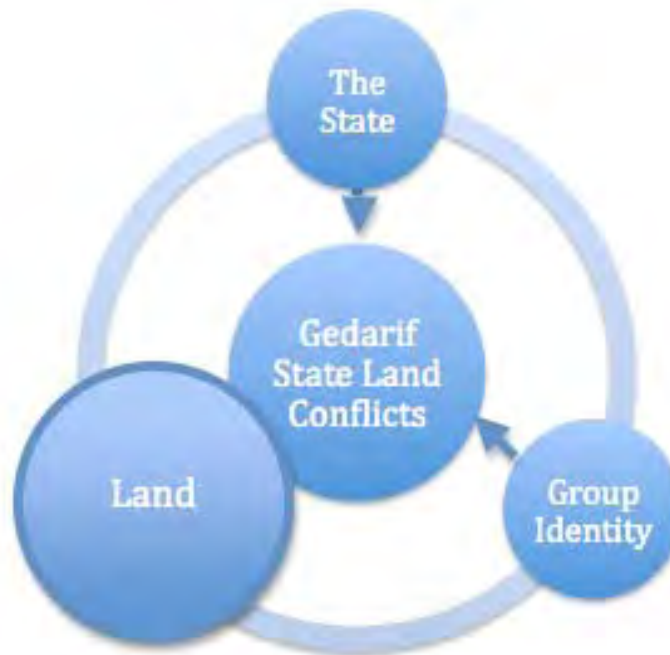


Figure 1a Conceptual Model

Methodology

Research Method

As this research does not involve a field period, it solely focuses on third parties' theories and research. As such, it is a 'theory-testing' project: views that exist are tested, checked on suitability for the case of Gedarif State and adjusted. This methodology is useful for studying the Gedarif State land conflicts via literature as it allows the researcher to test several theories for the empirical Gedarif State data; it allows bringing ground data and scientific theories together.

This research is predominantly carried out by comparison and analysis of numerous academic publications and theories on Sudan, Eastern Sudan, Gedarif State, resource-based conflicts, land conflicts, land tenure, identity, weak and fragile states. It is supplemented by the knowledge and experience, which the researcher gained while working with the Resource-Based Conflict Management Network in Nairobi for six weeks. During this six-week period the researcher worked on the analyses of resource-based conflicts in the Horn and East of Africa. This expanded the researchers' theoretical and field insights on resource-based conflicts and brought her in touch with several organisations that work on resource-based conflicts in the area of research, Sudan and Gedarif State. As this research does not involve a field period, these contacts proved to be indispensable for collecting

empirical data. The Sudanese Environmental Conservation Society (SECS), which is the Resource-Based Conflict Management Network's partner in Sudan, has carried out several quantitative field studies among specifically defined and targeted populations in Gedarif State and other Sudanese states.

In addition, during this six-week period the researcher attended a weeklong conference on Resource-Based Conflicts (RBCs) with attendees from Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) of several countries of the Horn and East of Africa where field studies on resource-based conflicts have been discussed and analysed as well as strategies to manage RBCs. This conference made a valuable contribution to the insights of the researcher due to the intensive knowledge sharing that took place.

Furthermore, the researcher was able to gain more knowledge and insights on RBCs during her six-month internship at the Oxfam Novib (ON) Humanitarian Unit, the Hague where she attended several meetings on natural resources, conflict, livelihood security and interrelated topics. In addition, the researcher was able to benefit from the extended knowledge and field experience of her colleagues.

Procedure of Data Collection

The numerous academic publications and theories that have been used for this research have been located via diverse paths. First and foremost, the curricula-literature that was discussed in the Master 'Conflict, Territories and Identities' courses, has been checked for suitability and employed when relevant. Secondly, relevant literature was found by making use of the available information in the library of the Radboud University Nijmegen and the Dutch Central Catalogue. In addition, online information sites such as 'Web of Science', 'Google Scholar' and 'Human Security Gateway'. With all the above data sites, libraries and search engines different search topics -alone and in combination with other search topics- have been used. All conceivable search topics and all conceivable search engines that seemed appropriate for this research have been employed in order to gather a multiplicity on literature and select books and articles from this literature. This selection took place via two processes: relevant literature was picked out on the basis of the given summary and secondly, by selecting authors regularly referred to in other texts, the so-called 'snowball method'.

Very important concerning the empirical Gedarif State field data that were employed for this study, is that the Sudanese Environmental Conservation Society (SECS), which is involved in projects concerning land conflicts in Sudan and who are momentarily working on a pilot project in Gedarif State, was very helpful to the cause of this research. They shared

academic research, field reports, field studies, conflict maps and unpublished information on the region. In addition, they were willing to answer questions and clarify situations whenever necessary. As this study does not involve a period of field research in Gedarif State the assistance that SECS offered was crucial. SECS' fieldwork included extensive participatory consultations, focus groups and interviews with various group representatives and community members, as well as with Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and other organizations and institutions. Also officials of the Government of Sudan (GoS) at the state and local levels; the native authorities; representatives of pastoralists and farmers; organizations, institutions and groups engaged in resource management and local-level peace building as well as key informants such as political, community and religious leadership, were consulted and interviewed. In addition, the generation of primary qualitative data was supported by SECS researchers' field observation.

Additional empirical data has been compiled of secondary data by reviewing field reports and relevant data from international organisations and NGOs working in Sudan and Gedarif State such as the UN, FAO and Oxfam.

Biases and Limitations

As a result of selecting land, group identity and the state other factors will stay unaddressed. This does not mean, however, that they are not relevant. Nor does it mean that they are completely left out of the analyses. It does mean though, that they are not on the forefront of this explorative research. Yet, bearing in mind that the Sudanese conflict is enshrouded with complexities and that not only the factors analysed in this research project but several, entangled factors play a role in the internal conflicts. Accordingly, this research project does not aspire to find 'the cause' of the land conflicts in Gedarif State but wants to explore these three factors of influence that have possibly sustained, prolonged and altered the conflict.

By choosing to focus this research on only one state in Sudan and in addition selecting three factors of influence to be analysed the outcome of this research will be context specific what refrains it of taking a broad view on land conflicts. However, by narrowing the focus, this research gets to go into the specifics of the land conflicts in Gedarif State. Thereby, this research will be able to give a detailed and holistic overview that other academics can use to extrapolate knowledge from. Hence, this research can make a contribution to this academic field and theory.

The Horn and East of Africa region is a fragile and politically unstable region. As the events following the indictment of Al-Bashir show, it is hard for NGOs, CBOs, CSOs and other

organizations, to work and function within this politically unstable context. Therefore, some of the empirical field data could be coloured by the political context that has shaped Sudan's recent history and the organizations working in.

In addition, as the researcher was not able to personally visit the area and as she does not originate from Sudan, the analyses of the literature could be tinted by the researchers' own ethno-contextual framework. Furthermore, the researcher tested the theories and empirical field data on paper and was not able to test the theories in the field. Therefore, in some cases the theory-testing is submitted to the researchers' interpretation and assumptions. When this is the case, it is indicated in the text that it concerns the researcher' assumption and not actual field data.

In the previous section the relevance of this research and the choice of Gedarif State have been explained. Furthermore, the central aim of this research has been indicated. In the following chapters the findings of this research and an exploration the Gedarif State land conflicts will be discussed. Very first, in chapter one the background and context of Sudan, the Sudanese conflicts, the Eastern region, Gedarif State and land and conflict will be looked at. In chapter two the first question, concerning the position of land in conflict, will be explored by drawing on several theories on resource-based conflicts and analysing the situation in Gedarif State by looking at the relation between natural resources and (violent) conflict, economic and social inequality and lastly, environmental scarcity and climate change. To explore the share of group identity in conflict, in chapter three, identity in Gedarif State and the ethnic dimension and importance of land for identity will be looked at. Furthermore, the relation between group identity and (violent) conflict in Gedarif State will be surveyed. In chapter four the Sudanese state and its land policies will be analyzed. Theories on weak and poor states will be brought into the equation. Furthermore, legal pluralism, land tenure, the Sudanese peace agreements and local versus national land laws will be analysed. To answer the fourth question concerning the interaction between land conflicts, state influence and group identity in Gedarif State, previous questions will be combined and analysed in chapter five. Finally, in the conclusion, this research will be brought to a close by answering the main question, 'How do group identity and the Sudanese state influence the land conflicts in Gedarif State and how do these factors interact on a local level?'.

I Background and Context

The Sudan, anno 2009, is the largest country on the African continent. It is a member of both the Arab League and the African Union and it borders Libya, Egypt, Chad, Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea and the Red Sea. Sudan has numerous and plentiful natural resources. The one million square miles that Sudan covers is made up out of 'different climatic zones, extensive productive soils, generally flat topography and perennial and seasonal sources of surface water and underground water aquifers' (el-Din el-Tayeb, 2006, p.9).

The Sudanese are largely rural in their social structures, culture and economy (el-Din el-Tayeb, 2006). The southern Sudanese people are mainly African Christian and animist, while the majority Arab population of northern and central Sudan is Muslim, and a predominantly African Muslim population lives in Darfur. Religious affiliations are further divided into ethnic divisions, which makes it hard to achieve a consensus within Sudan concerning a Sudanese national identity (Lesch, 1998).

Over the last few decades, Sudan has come across several grave difficulties, which have had a negative impact on all aspects of life; economic, social and environmental. These difficulties involve problems such as 'food security, famine out-break, displacement, increasing poverty, general transformation in livelihood conditions, environmental degradation, drought, rapid population growth, civil war and over-exploitation of natural resources' (Babiker, et.al., 2005, p. 7). Yet, according to a study by the Sudanese Environmental Conservation Society (SECS), Oxfam Novib (ON) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), conflicts over natural resources are the most critical of the problems that Sudan is facing because they have a direct negative impact on many Sudanese regions. Above all, they affect the rural regions where the people depend on natural resources, especially land and water, for their livelihoods (Babiker, et.al., 2005).

North-South Conflict

Sudan has been entangled in almost constant internal conflict since it became independent in January 1956. For all but ten years since its independence Sudan has been embroiled in internal strife. Not one, but several conflicts persist within Sudan's boundaries. The scale of conflict in Sudan is massive and seemingly irresolvable. Conflict has a life shattering impact on the Sudanese people. Since independence, three democratic trials have failed. In these nearly fifty years of independence both democratic politicians and military dictators were

equally inept at resolving Sudan's problems. Although Sudan appeared to be willing to self-rule, independence produced several democratic governments, all of which have been overthrown by military coups (Hamdok, 2004). The last coup put Omar Hassan Ahmed Al-Bashir into power. By far the most significant conflict in Sudan has been that between the economically, politically and socially dominant north and the marginalized south. The first civil war lasted from 1955-1972 and the second from 1983-2005.

The Government of National Unity of Sudan, sworn in on September 22, 2005, was the result of the January 9, 2005, Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) that brought to an end the bitter and brutal twenty-one-year war between the Sudanese government, dominated by the National Congress Party (NCP), and the southern-based rebels, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A). The CPA's exclusion of other parties made it much less inclusive than its "comprehensive" title promised. The CPA granted the Southern rebels autonomy for six years under the Government of South Sudan (GoSS) and a self-determination referendum after this six-year interim period, while Islamic Sharia law remains in the North (CIA, 2009). In 2005 an interim constitution was developed, approved and the Government of National Unity (GNU) was put in place (Willemsen, 2008).

Darfur

The people of West and East Sudan have also taken up arms to fight for just rights in their country. Darfur (West Sudan) became the latest incident in Sudan's civil wars when the Sudan Liberation Army/Movement (SLA/M) and Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) rebels took up arms against the government in February 2003 (Willemsen, 2008).

Darfur is a conflict-inflicted region. Violent conflicts between herders and farmers over resources are very common. These conflicts have a far-reaching impact on the economy, society and politics (Tohami, 2007). However, the Darfur conflict is much more complex than solely the conflicts between herders and farmers as there are several competing claims for both the wealth and the power over the central government. Many of the rich areas that once were the Fur and Massaleit homelands are now under the control of other groups. Furthermore, it has become clear that whether the conflicts evolve around resources above or below the ground, land in Darfur dominates Sudanese politics and is a key issue to questions of both power and wealth (Ayoub, 2006).

In addition, the civil war in Darfur has damaged the bordering southern regions and aggravated the political instability in the border regions with neighbouring Chad, especially during the early 1990s. The conflicts in this region have been increasingly gaining both an ethnic and a cultural scope accompanied by a heavy militia presence (Tohami, 2007).

Eastern Sudan

Eastern Sudan, which has long assumed a key role in Khartoum's relations with Eritrea and Ethiopia and in relations between these two countries, has frequently not been under the effective control of the government in Khartoum, which has strenuously pursued efforts at centralisation (Young, 2007a). Eastern Sudan consists of three states, Kassala, Red Sea State and Gedarif State. The main groups living in the Eastern Region are the Rashaida, the Shukriya and the Beja. All these groups identify themselves as Arabs. There are also smaller groups (e.g. Northern Arabs, West Sudanese, South Sudanese and West Africans) present in this region with varying ethnic identities and origins. All these groups have their own language, culture and traditions (Martin, 2005). Eastern Sudan is one of the most marginalized regions in Sudan (Young, 2007b). The population suffers from terrible economic and social conditions and political marginalization (Bekoe & Kiplagat, 2006).

For nine years, there has been a conflict in East Sudan between the Government of Sudan (GOS) and the Eastern Front, consisting of 'the Beja Congress', 'the Rashaida Free Lions' and other small groups. In October 2006 the East Sudan Peace Agreement (ESPA) was signed (Bekoe, 2007). However, the implementation of the ESPA has created new ethnic tensions in the region as groups compete for political power (Bekoe, 2007). The conflict in Eastern Sudan matches the general pattern of local conflict in the Horn of Africa, implying that it assumes a threat to the inter-state relations and security (Young, 2007a). Although it is not as violent and massive as the conflicts in the South and the West, 'the tragedy of the East lies in its lack of development, poverty, and the loss of human potential [...] this region may well be suffering the most in Sudan from marginalisation' (Young, 2007a, p.1). In 2006 peace agreements for both the West and the East of Sudan, the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) and Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement (ESPA) were signed. However, peace in Southern Sudan as well as in West and Eastern Sudan remains very fragile (Willemsen, 2008).

Post War Sudan

Since 2005, there has been a democratic government in Sudan. However, according to Marta Reynal-Querol, a democratic government like Sudan's, with a political system of exclusion, has a higher probability to relapse into civil war (Reynal-Querol, 2004). This means that the CPA is a very conflict prone agreement. Many other critics of the CPA cite its failure to include other parties and armed groups, and the fact that the government would only negotiate with the SPLM/A after two decades of armed rebellion. This caused marginalized people elsewhere in Sudan to take up arms as a means towards power sharing

otherwise denied them by what, under the NCP, had effectively been a one-party state (Human Rights Watch, 2006).

So far, the CPA has not been successful in transforming Sudan's political landscape. The NCP has proven its will and skill at defying and circumventing the CPA. The intention of the NCP government to truly, once and for all, end its armed conflicts with its own citizens and live in a shared peace has not yet been demonstrated (Human Rights Watch, 2006). In addition, the institutions and political parties within this Sudanese state are weak. Sudan lacks an established and rooted democratic culture and tradition (Hamdok, 2004) and its centralised regime in Khartoum is physically and geographically challenged in extending its rule within a marginal, neglected and dire infrastructure that administratively segments the country into 25 states (Maitre, 2009).

The effect of the Sudanese civil wars on the civilians has been devastating. The losses that were, and still are, suffered are tremendous. Civilians became the main military targets (Prendergast, 1995). Although, when it comes to security concerns after civil wars, most attention is devoted to the security of the warring parties rather than to the security and well being of the general population (Call & Stanley, 2002). This is also the case in post-war Sudan. Due to the protracted conflicts and crises, previously more than 80 percent of Sudan's donor funds were assigned to crises and emergency relief, which left only 20 percent for long-term development. However, the many years of conflict left the country in a poor state of affairs. Sudan's public institutions, civil society, the government's governing capacity, the policy and legal frameworks are all in depleted state (FAO, 2007).

According to the Sudan Land Programme of the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) 'secure access to land is essential to establishing an enabling environment for sustained development' (FAO, 2007, p.2). Sudan is momentarily going through a transformative phase in which all the marginalized communities and regions are striving for equality and an honest allocation of natural resources. This endeavour has exposed itself in different forms of struggle, which include armed and violent conflicts. A vast majority of these conflicts are sparked off by rivalry over scarce natural resources such as land (SECS, 2005).

Gedarif State

Gedarif State is one of the three Eastern states and one of the 25 states that together form Sudan. As in the other Sudanese states, Sudan's centralised regime in Khartoum is both physically and geographically challenged to extend its rule to Gedarif State. Gedarif State has international borders with Eritrea and Ethiopia. It covers an area of 71.000 km² and consists of five localities, being Gedarif, Gallabat, Rahad, Fashaga and Fao Locality. The

state capital is Gedarif town. The geography of the Gedarif State encompasses a variety of flat, vast, fertile clay lands interrupted by numerous hills. It is one of the most agriculturally active areas of Sudan (Babiker, et.al., 2005).

Gedarif State is composed of several ethnic groups. Some of which are dominant in the area. All these groups have their different origins since some of them come from Arab-speaking backgrounds and others from non-Arab origins. Ethnic identity is also linked to the ways in which the different groups secure their livelihoods. Some are pastoralists, some farmers and others semi-nomadic. Identity is also linked to land (SECS, 2009a), which is strongly related to providing livelihood security (SECS, 2005).

The majority of groups in Gedarif State, including the semi-nomadic groups such as the Shukriya and the Lehawin, are essentially livestock owners, but they also cultivate crops. Minority groups include the Kawahla, Fur, Hamar, Massalit, Beni Amer, Fallata, Kenana and as well many other groups originating from the North and the West of Sudan (SECS, 2005).

The traditional administration (*nazirate*) in Gedarif State goes back to the 19th century. The *nazirate* remains from the Turkish colonization of Sudan. It shapes and is shaped by the social and cultural environment in the State (Babiker, et.al., 2005).

Land Conflicts

Of all natural resources, land is of the most vital importance to the rural communities in Sudan. It is much more than merely a physical resource, which supports their physical survival. Land holds significant tribal symbols and meanings and is an embodiment of ethnicity and social relations. When land becomes inaccessible, this whole ensemble is lost. For a long time, land has been perceived as accessible to all local communities. They have made use of the land according to their customs, their laws and their traditions (el-Din, el-Tayeb, 2006). The symbolic and traditional dimensions of land tend to lend themselves to struggles, or even manipulation, on an ideological, social and political level (Egemi, 2006). Therefore it is necessary to see land in Sudan as a natural resource with socio-economic, judicial, institutional and political keystones and to place it within a broader discussion of these processes (SECS, 2008a).

The ongoing processes of active capitalist transformations have made big steps in changing and altering the traditions that have been in place for centuries. There have been changes in social production relations, traditional structures, values and livelihood systems and especially in land tenure. Nowadays land has turned into a commodity, a mechanism of socio-economic differentiation and a crucial source of both poverty and conflict (el-Din, el-Tayeb, 2006). The continued struggle for land rights, land control, and access to resources are the most important sources of conflict and social injustice in Sudan. At the same time,

this conflict leads to poverty, insecurity and injustice for all rural Sudanese communities (SECS, 2008a).

The use of large-scale mechanized farming has led to many problems in Eastern Sudan. Large-scale mechanized farming emerged in the 1960s and has led to traditional small-scale farmers being evicted from their inherited lands, some of which were in their family for generations. Moreover, due to large-scale mechanized farming, pastoralists have been cut off from their migration corridors. Consequently, disputes between farmers and pastoralists have been aggravated; the situation has caused feelings of mistrust in dealings with the many displaced people that came to the eastern region and it has put added pressure on governments, public administrations and institutions (FAO, 2007).

Land conflicts in Gedarif State

Every year in Gedarif State, there are many disputes and conflicts. Not many people are killed during these conflicts, not compared to the scale of conflicts in other areas of Sudan, like Darfur. However, regardless of the intensity of these conflicts, they result in loss of life, trauma, destruction of property and damage to natural resources (SECS, 2005). In Gedarif State four types of Resource-Based Conflicts (RBCs) are found: conflicts between nomads and farmers over land; conflicts between different nomadic groups over land; conflicts over Dinder park and conflicts over water points (Babiker, et.al., 2005). – See Annex III for the Table of Aspects on the four types of RBCs in Gedarif State -.

The conflicts between nomads and farmers over land usually arise when animals trespass cultivated land and damage crops. This trespassing happens when the animals are not watched closely enough or when they are deliberately allowed to trespass. The herders spend approximately two months in the North of Gedarif State and nine to ten months in the South. Most of these conflicts arise at migration corridors. There are seven corridors from the North to the South that the pastoralists make use of (the eighth corridor is closed). These routes are very narrow and due to improper design and have few resting grounds. Opening up new routes or widening existing corridors tends to encounter stronger farmer opposition, even though previously the opening of routes had been essential in easing tension between farmers and pastoralists. The conflicts between nomads and farmers have increased in recent years. The number of conflicts is highest in Gallabat (see table 1) because the farmers have been illegally grabbing land and the state has been allocating land to farmers for large-scale mechanized farming (Babiker, et.al., 2005).

The conflicts between different nomadic groups over pasture usually occur in the Southern parts of the state. During the two rainfall months the pastoralists stay in the North. When they return to their dry season lands in the South, these are often overtaken or burned

by farmers. This creates a critical and tense situation, as the pastoralists usually stay based in the South for about ten months. Very often this situation leads to conflicts between and amongst nomadic groups. These conflicts are currently isolated and not very frequent, but under the current land use planning that favours farmers, they are in real danger of escalating (Babiker, et.al., 2005).

British colonizers founded the Dinder national park in 1935 (Dingil, 2006). In the 1980s the Dinder park boundaries were expanded. As a result, ten villages were included into the territory of the park (Babiker, et.al., 2005). This has led to conflicts ever since. Local people are afraid they might lose their right to cultivate and use the land. Pastoralists trespass into the park and often damage the parkland. The penalties on trespassing are heavy but often the pastoralists have no other choice of route as their herd might die of hunger and thirst if they take another route. Therefore, in and around Dinder park, there are conflicts between the park and herders as well as between the park and farmers (Babiker, et.al., 2005).

The last type of conflict over natural resources within the boundaries of Gedarif State is the conflict over water points. This dispute is similar to the disputes between farmers and nomads. It revolves around the use and ownership of water points. The conflicts usually occur between groups of pastoralists and between pastoralists and farmers, scheme-owners and the government, who refuse to let the pastoralists use water points. Pastoralists believe these points are communal (Babiker, et.al., 2005).

Locality	Conflict Intensity	Major Groups Involved
Fao	Low	Farmers - Herders
Fashaga	Medium (Low+ High)	Farmers - Herders
Gedarif	Medium (Low+ High)	Farmers - Herders
Rahad	High	Farmers - Herders Dinder Park - Farmers
Gallabat	High	Farmers - Herders Dinder Park - Herders Herders - Herders

Table 1 Conflict in Gedarif State per Locality (Babiker et.al., 2005, p. 34).

II Land and Conflict

The position of land in the Gedarif State conflicts

'Land is a basic resource from which human beings and almost all other living creatures depend on for their living' (RBC, 2008, p.45).

Land is a vital part of human life. It is owned, traded, leased and perhaps more significantly, it is bound up with the identities and ways of life of the communities that have lived there for generations. But land is subject to change; population growth increases pressure on land and on traditional systems, rapid economic growth and social change are opening up new possibilities raising the value of land and consequently promoting sales and investment, and in some areas the effects of climate change are making themselves felt (RBC, 2008).

Competition over natural resources, such as land, is a major issue of concern among the pastoral and the farming inhabitants of the Sahel and the Horn of Africa. This is no different in Sudan where traditional farmers and pastoralists still comprise roughly sixty per cent of the population (Tohami, 2007). Land in Sudan is utilized for agriculture, cattle-herding and subterranean resources such as oil and water (Ayoub, 2006 p.1), it is 'a central issue to rural communities, a means for basic survival and social reproduction, a source of individual and tribal pride [and] a general relationship between social groups' (RBC, 2008, p.84). Land in Sudan is a constant source of exploitation, marginalization and conflict (RBC, 2008). Competition over resources has been identified as one of the central causes of violent conflict in the country (Tohami, 2007). Land and land ownership are the key to wealth and power, and a necessity for survival (Ayoub, 2006).

Tohami (2007, p.4) refers to Buckles and Rusnak (1999) when elucidating why natural resources, such as land, are vulnerable to conflict:

'Natural resources are embedded in an interconnected space where actions by one individual or group may generate effects far off-site as a result of biophysical or ecological linkages [...].

Natural resources are embedded in a shared social space where complex and unequal relations are established among a wide range of social actors.

Natural resources are subject to increasing scarcity due to environmental change, increasing demand, and development interventions.

Natural resources are used by people in ways that are defined symbolically. Land is not just a material resource people compete over, but is also part of a particular way of life (pastoralism, farming, ranching, fishing, etc.), an ethnic identity, and a set of gender and age

roles. Such symbolic dimensions of natural resources lend themselves to ideological, social, and political struggles or even manipulation' (Tohami, 2007, p. 4)

Buckles and Rusnak gave four central reasons why natural resources are vulnerable to conflict: interrelatedness, complex and unequal relations, environmental scarcity and lastly, the symbolic and ethnic dimension of natural resources. In this research, these four areas will be touched upon. The inequality and the environmental side of natural resources and conflict will be looked at in this chapter, the symbolic and ethnic dimension of natural resources will be explored in the third chapter and the interrelatedness of natural resources is a theme that runs through all the chapters.

The central aim of this research project is to explore how group identity and the Sudanese state influence the land conflicts in Gedarif State. Before exploring the influence of group identity and state in the Gedarif State conflicts, the relationship between land and conflict needs to be looked at. This chapter seeks to analyse the position of land in the conflicts occurring in Gedarif State.

In this chapter, the question '*What is the position of land in conflict?*' will be studied by making use of three academic trends related to natural resources and conflict. The first two trends - a general exploration of the relation between natural resources and conflict and on economic and social inequality and conflict – of which a short overview will be given, have been selected as they consist of influential theories on natural resources and conflict. However, they fail to reflect the conflict in Gedarif State accurately. The third trend explored in this chapter is the impact of environmental scarcity and climate change. This trend, looked at more thoroughly, is a relatively new development and it proves to be more relevant when exploring the Gedarif State conflicts. Together these three trends provide a clear overview of where, and where not, to position land in relation to the Gedarif State conflicts.

Natural Resources and Conflict

Natural resources play a prominent role in conflicts around the world and are a favoured subject in academic, as well as political, debate. The connection between natural resources and conflict is often put forward as an obvious one. But is this supposedly direct link between land and conflict present in Gedarif State? Or is the relationship less straightforward? This section gives a short overview of influential theories on natural resources and conflict and looks at the link between these theories and the real situation in Gedarif State.

Natural resources have often financially supported or sustained violent activities such as terrorism, intra- and inter-state violence and other armed violence (Westing, 1986). In this

way, a new political economy of war has been created (Le Billon, 2000). In addition, there is an increasing concern that whereas natural resources used to be a way of funding conflict, nowadays conflict is increasingly becoming a method to gain access to important natural resources (Berdal & Malone, 2000). Le Billon integrates these views by stating that conflicts and natural resources can be directly related in two ways: Armed conflicts can be motivated by the control of and access to resources, and resources can be incorporated into the financing of conflicts. Yet beyond the motivation and financing of conflicts, the intensity of dependence, the conflict-proneness, and the possibility to loot resources can also increase the susceptibility of societies to conflict (Le Billon, 2001).

Paul Collier (2000) states that natural resources weaken the state's capacity to resolve conflicts in a peaceful manner because they increase the susceptibility of countries to armed conflict. As a result of Collier and other influential empirical and theoretical literature and research the phrase *resource-curse* was coined in the 1990s. This notion has become popular in both academic and political circles (Bulte, 2008) and is central to the resource-scarcity literature explored in the third paragraph (Le Billon, 2001).

Bulte (2008) contradicts the resource-curse theory by stating that resource wealth lowers the probability of conflict via an income effect. In particular, the chances of a major conflict beginning are lowered. He found no empirical support of a connection running from resource dependence to civil war and therefore Bulte argues that the reverse chain of causation appears more accurate; conflict-torn societies become dependent on natural resources, which, he argues, is hardly a paradox (Bulte, 2008).

When looking at Sudan as a whole, many aspects of the resource-curse apply. The country's oil wealth has been an important factor in the many years of conflict between the North and the South; the regime that currently governs the North is not very inclusive and democratic and for the people of Sudan there has been little to no economic progress. However, when it comes to land conflicts in Gedarif State the resource curse is less relevant because the land in Gedarif State is not exported and sold as a primary export commodity. Although it could be seen as relevant in the way that the local governments sell land to large-scale mechanized farmers and take land unlawfully -land grabbing- from traditional communities for the sake of large scale profit farming as 'the appropriation of land by mechanized farming has been widely recognized as a major factor behind the rebellion movements in these areas' (Ijaimi, 2006, p.74). Moreover Gedarif State is also characterized by factors such as low income and slow economic growth. However, the initially apparent link between natural resources and conflict does not really apply in Gedarif State. Bulte's reverse chain of causation can be seen as more appropriate. After years of civil war and local conflicts the local communities have become, more than ever, dependant on the natural resources present in the country.

Sub Conclusion

The Gedarif State conflicts differ from the conflicts discussed in much of the literature on resource conflicts. They are shorter, less intense and land is not a primary commodity exported and used to finance the conflicts, as in other cases. However, land is of massive importance to the local communities and the conflicts in Gedarif State are a way of gaining access to this land. Years of civil wars and local conflicts has only worked to increase the local communities' dependence on this land and its natural resources. So land and resources are a central factor in the conflicts in Gedarif State but not in a way that corresponds with many traditional theories on resource conflicts.

Economic and Social Inequality

Conflict in Sudan is generally presented as a war between the Arab Muslim North, and the African Animist and Christian South. However, although religious and ethnic differences provide leaders with rhetoric for mobilization, they do not sufficiently explain the role of political and economic factors in civil conflict formation. Furthermore, it neglects the other conflicts that exist within the Sudanese borders. In an attempt to discover influential factors of the Sudanese conflicts, it is necessary to consider the roots of culturally and regionally imposed political marginalization and its economic effects leading to grievances and instability in the margins of the Sudanese society. The Sudanese Environmental Conservation Society (SECS) 'clearly noticed the solid link between the misuse of natural resources, and the social and economic injustice and conflict' in Sudan (SECS, 2008b, p.10). This underlines the importance of looking at land and socio-economic inequality in Gedarif State in more depth. This section will give a chronological overview of three influential theories on economic and social inequality and their relevance for the Gedarif State conflicts.

The importance of economic agendas in the foundations of civil war has led to many economic analyses of what causes civil wars to start. Ted Gurr's theory on relative deprivation was groundbreaking in the 1970's. According to Gurr (1970), relative deprivation the difference between the 'should' and the 'is' of collective value satisfaction - takes place when individuals think that what they should have (the value expectations) is not the same as what they feel they (can) have (value capabilities). Relative deprivation can then result in collective frustration, which can lead to aggression, which, in turn, can lead to violence.

Collective violence is always intended and present in a way that men expect this violent action to enhance the population's value position.

However, Ted Gurr's theory on relative deprivation does not wholly explain the violence in Gedarif State, as the relative deprivation theory does not make clear why some men rebel and why others do not when they are facing the same level of deprivation. Gurr also speaks of rebellion and civil war (unlike that in Gedarif State) and does not consider violence caused by scarcity of resources. Yet, it can be assumed that the unequal distribution of land and the perceived injustice that accompanies it; the 'should' and the 'is' of land ownership, leads to collective frustration in Gedarif State. So for relative deprivation to apply to the Gedarif State situation the economic component needs to be replaced by a land or natural resources factor and as such Gurr's collective value satisfaction and relative deprivation are made relevant for Gedarif State.

Another response in the economic analysis of civil wars is Kurt Schock's conjunctural model of political conflict. Schock (1996, p.98) believes that 'the production of grievances due to economic inequality varies systematically and interacts with political opportunities to generate violent political conflict'. When looking at the Sudanese North-South conflict, it could be said that at heart of both Southern rebellions lay the political marginalization of the South. Both Francis Deng (1995) and Aleksis Ylonen (2005) support this idea, viewing South as being both politically marginalized and economically excluded. The Eastern states are also politically and economically marginalized and have rebelled against the government in Khartoum. These examples coincide with Schock's argument that 'economic inequality [...] interacts with political opportunities to generate violent political conflict' (Schock, 1996, p.98). It could even be argued that violence in Sudan occurs because the deprivation goes beyond economic inequality. So Schock's model of political conflict can be transferred to both the Sudanese North-South wars and the Eastern rebellion. It explains that it is not principally rebel economic opportunity behind this violence, but rather socio-economic grievances derived from culturally and regionally imposed political marginalization, which require broader analysis than mere economics.

When applying this model to the situation in Gedarif State, although the local conflicts do not classify as rebellions, the herders and small-scale farmers do occupy a marginalized position when it comes to land entitlement (Babiker, et.al, 2005). In addition, in Gedarif State, 'the socio-economic characteristics of mechanized farm owners demonstrate clearly that the sector is dominated and controlled by the elites' (Ijaimi, 2006, p.75). Looking again at the bigger picture, the Eastern states, including Gedarif State, have rebelled against the Government in Khartoum as a result of marginalization. This marginalization has had its effect on the situation in Gedarif State as many of the local problems concerning land

ownership are not addressed properly¹. So although Schock's conjunctural model of political conflict does not fully apply to the small-scale land conflicts in Gedarif State, marginalization still affects the state directly, due to the discontent of the herders and the small-scale farmers, and indirectly, due to the marginalized position that the East inhabits on a national level.

The last theory referred to in this paragraph is Marie Besancon's (2005) study of inequality and ethnic conflict. Besancon (2005) makes use of Gurr's assumption that relative deprivation leads to conflict and proposes the hypothesis that 'increasing economic equality coincides with increasing levels of ethnic intrastate conflict' (Besancon, 2005, p. 396). The results from her studies show that inequality takes on meanings that include more than economic inequality. The results of the research indicate that more economic equality in a society takes place before an escalation of violence from ethnic uprisings and suggests that the perception of inequality is not necessarily restricted to economic deprivation. This means there is a greater chance that different identity groups will fight as they approach greater economic equality, but they lack political and educational equality. Groups aware of missed privileges then have the power to bargain for more by violence (Besancon, 2005).

As with Gurr's and Schock's theories Besancon's theory does partly apply to the land conflicts in Gedarif State. The different communities in Gedarif State can be seen as different identity groups². Although their economic circumstances do not seem too far apart at first, at least when talking about the inter-herder fighting and the herder-farmer conflicts that take place, the economic inequality becomes bigger when contrasting the herders and small-scale farmers to the mechanized farmers, the Dinder park authorities and the state. The herders and small-scale farmers have hardly any (or even no) political privileges compared to the mechanized farms and park authorities. As a result, the conflicts between small-scale farmers and herders can be partly explained by Besancon's study and also the rebellion against the state can be attributed to the political inequality between the herders and small-scale farmers on the one hand and the mechanized farmers, the Dinder park authorities and the state on the other, even though the economic inequalities are vast.

Gurr's, Schock's and Besancon's theories on how socio-economic inequality can lead to conflict seem partly adequate when trying to understand the Gedarif State conflicts. What's more, according to Belal (2008a), conflicts and crises, such as to ones in Gedarif State, originate over resources and environmental problems –which will be explored in the next paragraph- yet over time, when the conflicts intensify the conflict can obtain political and socio-economic dimensions. Thus, the conflicts obtain a socio-economic and political

¹ In chapter 4 the relation between the Government of Sudan and the local conflicts in Gedarif State is further explored.

² In Chapter 3 the relation between Group Identity and the local conflicts in Gedarif State is further explored.

dimension as the conflict progresses and the inequality is manifested in more than just unequal resource management. As such, the theories on socio-economic inequality are of a direct and indirect importance to the analyses of the Gedarif State conflicts.

Besancon, Schock and Gurr's studies and theories have been influential and innovative and they can, in some ways, be read as an interpretation of the situation in Gedarif State, yet they fail to fully capture the different aspects. It must be appreciated that these theories cover an academic field that is much broader than the situation in Gedarif State and every historical or present-day context will deviate slightly from wider theories. So, in conclusion, although the conflicts in Gedarif State cannot be fully explained by these socio-economic theories on inequality, there are certain factors – both direct and indirect -, which are relevant for the situation.

Sub Conclusion

When applying Besancon, Schock and Gurr's theories on socio-economic inequality and conflict to the land conflicts in Gedarif State, it is clear that they fail to completely capture the conflicting aspects of the situation. However, socio-economic theories provide a useful analytical framework for the understanding of how inequality – socio-economic, political and resource inequality - can lead to conflict. Furthermore, socio-economic factors can become even more relevant when a conflict intensifies. Thus, the economic inequalities and political marginalization discussed in these theories are of direct and indirect importance to the different identity groups of Gedarif State. So, although the influence of social and economic inequality on the Gedarif State conflicts is undeniable, the key aspect of conflict in the state – land - is not addressed sufficiently in socio-economic theories, which give a secondary role to the natural environment, or don't consider it at all.

Environmental Scarcity and Climate Change

After the cold war, theories on security have become more comprehensive and a new approach known as 'Human Security' has developed. Human security implies safety from both large and small-scale violence but also from chronic, non-military threats such as hunger, disease and repression (Frerks & Klein Goldewijk, 2007). The ideas have had a massive impact on arena of international development and are very relevant when approaching the situation in Gedarif State.

The East of Sudan has had low intensity conflicts with minimal fighting but thousands have died due to starvation and illnesses, at their homes and in refugee camps, as an indirect cause of the war, poverty and scarcity. A comprehensive way of looking at security

implies looking at several dimensions of security, including livelihood security and the related resource security and environmental conditions.

When exploring Gedarif State, issues of livelihood security, resource security and the effect of environmental conditions need to be looked at. 'In marginal environments, such as the ran inlands of Sudan where land use is continuously shaped and reshaped by environmental conditions, issues of nature and ecology cannot be ignored or neglected in the analysis and understanding of resource-based conflict' (Tomahi, 2007, p.4). In this section issues of nature and ecology, such as environmental scarcity and climate change, and their share in the Gedarif State conflicts will be looked at.

The concept of 'environmental scarcity' encompasses environmental change, unequal social distribution of resources and population growth. According to Thomas Homer-Dixon (1994), these three things are the main sources of scarcity of natural resources and consequently, environmental scarcity. In his research on environmental scarcity and violent conflict, Homer-Dixon shows that environmental scarcities contribute to violent conflict in a large number of developing countries. In addition, he predicts an increase in violence in the coming decades as a result of, or aggravated by, scarcity. This violence, he says, will by and large be sub-national, enduring, and diffuse (Homer-Dixon, 1994). As poor societies are less able to shield themselves from scarcity and the crises that scarcity causes, they will be most affected. Mainly because these areas are already suffering from shortages in natural resources such as fertile, rain fed land.

According to Nils Petter Gleditsch (2007), Homer-Dixon's research has been criticized because it only encompasses armed conflicts and environmental destruction. Building on Homer-Dixon's theory, Gleditsch states that environmental degradation can be looked at as an independent cause of conflict. There are several resources 'worth' fighting for - territory, strategic raw materials, sources of energy and shared water resources - 'the struggle over territory is generally recognized to be the most pervasive form of conflict' (Gleditsch, 2007, p.180). Yet environmental degradation and scarcity can also be seen as a symptom of the various societal failures, which then in turn generate other types of conflict. As well as generating conflict, environmental scarcity can kill in other ways too -scarcity of fresh water, chemical spills, infectious diseases and natural disasters can also be 'effective in killing'-. So, conflict can lead to environmental scarcity while, at the same time, environmental scarcity can lead to insecurity. Environmental scarcity leads to insecurity in two ways, it can cause or aggravate poverty, hunger and disease, which lead to illnesses or even death, and it can lead to or prolong existing conflicts (Gleditsch, 2007). In addition, according to Homer-Dixon (1994), complex and unpredictable environmental problems can abruptly increase demands on key bodies, such as the state. The way the Sudanese governments deal with these

environmental problems, and subsequently influence the land conflicts in Gedarif State, will be further explored in chapter four.

All these above mentioned causes and outcomes are interrelated and perpetuate each other. Although Homer-Dixon's research only concerns armed conflicts and environmental destruction, it is applicable to the situation in Gedarif State in that the three conditions of environmental scarcity are present there. In Gedarif State there is environmental change and unequal social distribution of resources and a high rate of population growth, caused by both natural growth and migration (SECS, 2009a). Furthermore, Gedarif State is vulnerable to scarcity crises. As Homer-Dixon concludes, poor countries will be most affected by scarcity crises as they already suffer from shortages such as fertile, rain fed land. In Sudan, despite the huge land size, 'scarcity of the rain lands for primary production systems [such as pastoralism and dry farming] has become increasingly felt and perceived by resource users' (Tohami, 2007, p.4).

Gleditsch deals with scarcity and the question of whether scarcity leads to conflict, or the other way around, or both, or neither and how scarcity can also lead to non-violent insecurity such as poverty, hunger and disease. Gleditsch's theory supplements Homer-Dixon's theory, which does not address the non-violent aspect of environmental scarcity. Gleditsch recognizes the struggle over territory to be the most pervasive form of conflict. This is exactly what the conflicts in Gedarif State evolve around, although it is not a territorial struggle of countries fighting countries but rather the struggle over territory as a means of livelihood security and survival. Scarcity and marginalization in Gedarif State have led to conflict and also prolonged it.

Homer-Dixon mentioned environmental change, unequal social distribution of resources and population growth as the three aspects of environmental scarcity. Climate change could be seen as one aspect of environmental change. Large populations in third world countries are already suffering from environmental deficiencies. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), even though there has always been tension between nomads and farmers in Sudan, in recent years Sudan has been caught in a complex twist of dwindling resources and severe droughts. Accordingly, the scarce resources have become the trigger to most conflicts. The UNDP states that climate change is all set to exacerbate the already tense situation (GPF, 2008).

In a Post-Conflict Environmental Assessment by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) in 2007, UNEP expressed that the degree of climate change, as was documented in, for example, Northern-Darfur, was practically unprecedented. Climate change in Northern-Darfur has turned semi-desert land into desert land. Although UNEP does not deny the

multiplicity of other factors that are at play in the conflict in Northern-Darfur, it considers climate change to be directly related to the conflict in the region (UNEP, 2007 & GPF, 2008). Also Belal (2008b) attributes an important role to environmental development of which he things 'is the most important of the five sustained development dimensions which are economic development, social development, environmental development, political development and cultural development' (Belal, 2008b, p.3).

According to SECS, climate change plays an important role in Gedarif State. Flooding and rainfall fluctuations, as a result of climate change, have a devastating effect on the livelihoods of the Gedarif State communities (SECS, 2009a). As Belal (2008a, p.3) states 'the impact of climate change adds to the problems arising from scarcity of resources'. He also observes that the frailty of local communities, especially the communities living in the five most affected climatic regions in Sudan (of which Gedarif State is one) is strongly linked to the irregularity of climate, particularly in the short term. In a follow-up paper, Belal (2008b, p.1) reaches the conclusion that 'climate change will increase and reach alarming magnitudes in the existing absence of social justice by and the impoverishment of the poor'.

Clearly environmental scarcity and climate change in Sudan, and in Gedarif State, lead to more tension, to more livelihood insecurity, to social commotion, to pressurised and scarce resources and presumably to human *in*security. However 'both the resource abundance and resource scarcity perspective fail to take into account the socially constructed nature of resources, and in so doing, fail to explain why an abundance or scarcity of valuable resources is not a necessary or sufficient factor of conflict' (Le Billon, 2001, p. 565).

According to Le Billon (2001) the dependency on recourses is often associated with poor economic performance and with socio-economic inequalities (which have been discussed in the previous paragraph and where it was found that socio-economic inequalities are of a direct and indirect importance to the people in Gedarif State). The control of resources by the state - both economic and politically - leaves little room for accumulating wealth and status outside the governing elite. 'Resource dependent countries thus tend to have predatory governments serving sectional interests and face a greater risk of violent conflict' (Le Billon, 2001, p.567). These inequalities in accumulating wealth, as well as in access to, and control over, land are clearly visible in Gedarif State where the groups closest to the state own much more land than the small-scale farmers and pastoralists and where the state exercises its power to confiscate land whenever it prefers.

In addition, 'the transformation of nature into tradable commodities is a deeply political process; involving the definition of property rights, the organisation of labour, and the allocation of profits' (Le Billon, 2001, p.568). Even though this transformative process can be a process of peace and cooperation, most often it is a process of conflict and violence –

whether by physical force or through domination and coercion -. According to Le Billon (2001) the violent trend of resource exploitation is strongly linked to the failure of the political system and the degeneration into 'spoil politics', of which the primary goal is self-enrichment of those in power³⁴. The Sudanese state has a strong tendency to self-enrich and to benefit the elite groups. Furthermore, the Gedarif State land conflicts have worsened since the expansion of mechanized farming and the selling of land to outside investors; the transformation of nature into tradable commodities.

Sub Conclusion

The conflicts in Gedarif State are low intensity conflicts with little fighting, so when looking at the conflicts it is important to not only look at the casualties, but also at other consequences and keep the ideas of human security in mind. When looking at Gedarif State through a human security lens, the importance of non-violent threats such as insecure livelihoods, resource insecurity and poverty become clear.

Looking at environmental scarcity in Gedarif State, we come across environmental change, a high rate of population growth and unequal social distribution of resources. Homer-Dixon, the UNDP, UNEP, SECS, and Belal see conflicts as a result of depletion and degradation of natural resources. The land conflicts in Gedarif State are heavily pressured by environmental change and environmental scarcity and climate change aggravate these already existing factors.

Clearly environmental scarcity and climate change lead to more tension, to more livelihood insecurity, to social commotion and to more pressurised and scarce resources in Gedarif State. However, scarcity and climate change *an sich* are not fully satisfactory explanations for conflict. Yet, in Gedarif State the scarcity of resources is accompanied by socio-economic inequalities and the transformation of nature into tradable commodities by a political system, which is characterized by self-enrichment.

Conclusion

In this chapter the relationship between natural resources and (violent) conflict has been explored and analyzed in relation to the Gedarif State conflicts by looking at the literature on resources conflicts, economic and social inequality and literature on environmental scarcity and climate change

³ The functioning and the influence of the Sudanese state will be explored in chapter 4.

⁴ In chapter 5 this process of self-enrichment, by exploiting natural resources, will be referred to as 'environmental corruption'.

It became clear in the first paragraph that land is a natural resource of massive importance to the local communities of Gedarif State. Much of the literature on resource conflicts discusses situations that differ vastly from the Gedarif State conflicts in both intensity and duration. Especially as land in Gedarif State is not a primary commodity exported and used to finance wars, overall the apparent link between natural resources and conflict did not apply to the situation in Gedarif State. However, some aspects of theories were relevant as it became clear that conflicts are a way of gaining access to land and that years of civil wars and local conflicts, have only increased the local communities' dependence on natural resources.

The second paragraph concluded that a solely socio-economic analysis of the Gedarif State conflicts is insufficient. Socio-economic theories provide a useful analytical framework for the understanding of how inequality – socio-economic, political and resource inequality - can lead to conflict and socio-economic factors can become more relevant when a conflict intensifies, yet socio-economic theories give a secondary role to the natural environment, or they don't consider it at all. Thus, the economic inequalities and political marginalization discussed in these theories are of direct and indirect importance to the different identity groups of Gedarif State but solitary they are not a sufficient explanation.

In paragraph three Gedarif State was analyzed through a human security lens and the importance of non-violent threats such as insecure livelihoods, resource insecurity and poverty become clear. Looking at environmental scarcity in Gedarif State raised issues of environmental change, a high rate of population growth and unequal social distribution of resources. Furthermore, Gedarif State, like other poor countries or regions, is very susceptible to and affected by scarcity crises as they already suffer from shortages of fertile, rain fed land. The threats arising from environmental scarcity in Gedarif State are both violent and non-violent. The land conflicts in Gedarif State are heavily pressured by environmental change and environmental scarcity and climate change aggravates these already existing factors.

The position of land in the Gedarif State conflicts is complex and several of the theories discussed here do not fully explain why land is a factor of conflict. Bringing all these theories together however gives a more comprehensive view on land and conflict in Gedarif State: Years of civil wars and local conflicts have increased the local communities' dependence on natural resources such as land. As a result of environmental degradation and climate change this land is increasingly getting scarcer. The scarcity of land has a huge impact on the human security situation in Gedarif State, and as a result, land affected by environmental scarcity and climate change poses both violent, and non-violent, threats to the communities that inhabit the area. What's more, the transformation of nature into tradable commodities by the Sudanese state has aggravated the scarcity of land for the pastoralists

and the small-scale farmers while benefitting the governing elite. The combination of scarcity, marginalization and perceived inequality consequently result in conflict over access to, and control over, land. Thus, both the state and the natural environment have a share in the scarcity and inequality of land and land ownership, which lays at the basis of the Gedarif State land conflicts.

In chapters three and four, the share of group identity in land conflict and the level of state influence in Gedarif State will be analyzed. While exploring these factors it is important to keep in mind the local communities' dependence on natural resources; the direct and indirect role that inequality has and the ever-present and uncontrollable factors of environmental scarcity and climate change.

III Group Identity and Land Conflict

Group identity in the Gedarif State conflicts

Identity and conflict are often mentioned casually. In some ways the identities of different groups have contributed to both conflicts and peace. Movements toward international conflict, multicultural creativity and progressive coexistence can all be evoked by group identities (Mann, 2006). According to Sen (2006, p.xiii) 'violence is promoted by the cultivation of a sense of inevitability about some allegedly unique identity that we are supposed to have and which apparently makes extensive demands on us'.

In Sudan, identity and conflict are often spoken about together as things that are linked. Conflict in Sudan is mainly presented as a war between the Arab Muslim North, and the African Animist and Christian South. So the effect of identity on the conflicts in Sudan, and therefore on the land conflicts in Gedarif State, is an interesting point of focus. By using the term identity this chapter and this research project refers to 'aspects of relationships between groups which consider themselves, and are regarded by others, as being culturally distinctive' (Eriksen, 2002, p.4). For the purpose of this research the group dimension of identity in Gedarif State will be studied and the term group identity will be used. Also, as group identity and ethnicity are closely related, and as ethnicity is a vast component of group identities, the ethnic dimension of identity in Gedarif State will be looked at.

Identity and conflict will be explored alongside ethnic violence, although the term "ethnic violence" needs careful consideration. As Brubaker and Laitin point out, the notion of "ethnic violence" is, as a category of practice, created and replicated by social actors. Therefore, it should not be employed uncritically (Brubaker & Laitin, 1998, p. 446).

The central aim of this research project is to explore how identity and Khartoum's centralised regime influence the land conflicts in Gedarif State. After exploring the position of land in the Gedarif State conflicts, this chapter seeks to explore the relationship between identity and conflict, baring in mind the complexity of the terms identity, ethnicity, and "ethnic violence". Its main goal is to gain insight into the importance of identity for the land conflicts in Gedarif State.

The question '*How does group identity influence the land conflicts in Gedarif State?*' will be studied by analysing the following aspects: First the terms identity, ethnicity and ethnic identity will be explored and clarified. Subsequently, identity in Gedarif State and the ethnic dimension and importance of land for identity will be looked at. And lastly, the relation

between group identity and (violent) conflict in Gedarif State will be surveyed by putting academic theories side by side with the empirical Gedarif State data.

Ethnic Identity

Ethnicity and identity are closely related. If one is to comprehend either term, a thorough understanding of the other is required. According to Epstein (1978, p.8), for understanding 'the persisting facts of ethnicity [...] we need to supplement conventional sociological perspectives by paying greater attention to the nature of ethnic identity'. In this section, both identity and ethnicity will be looked at and clarified.

Identity

*'Identity: 1. The fact of being what or who a person or a thing is. 2. A close similarity or affinity. ORIGIN: Late 16th century (in the sense [quality of being identical]): from Late Latin **identitas**, from Latin **idem** 'same' (Oxford American Dictionaries, 2005).*

'The formation of personal and group identity is a complex phenomenon' (Mann, 2006, p.211). It consists of a jumble of cultural, social, psychological, environmental and biological factors. Psychologists and many other social scientists have developed a range of theories regarding identity. Generally differentiating between individual and group identity, which are integrally and reciprocally related (Seul, 1999).

Individuals are characterized by many identities. These differ and change in importance and relevance depending on the social context. Individuals see themselves as members of a variety of groups and belong to different collectives simultaneously. Together, these collectives give the individual a particular identity. None of them can be taken to be the individual's only identity or group membership (Sen, 2006).

For a healthy functioning individual identity, well functioning group identities are vital. Interpersonal relationships in the context of group involvement are central to achieving and securing a positively functioning individual identity (Seul, 1999). According to social identity theory, individuals seek a secure identity by 'striving to achieve or to maintain a positive *social* identity' (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p.16). In addition, according to Emile Durkheim's integration theory, the more people are integrated in to a specific group, the less likely it is that they will commit suicide (Ultee, Arts & Flap, 2003). This theory emphasizes the importance of well-functioning group identities. Thus, group involvement and good integration are essential for a positive and functioning social identity.

Individual identities are at the core of group identities, yet group identities are not simply the sum of individual identities. A group can have its own identity. This identity will be accepted and communicated by the members of this group. The core of the group's identity is embodied and preserved in shared characteristics, tradition and many other aspects of community life. Ethnicity can be a shared characteristic of a group, thereby making this group's identity an ethnic identity. Also non-ethnic identities and principles of social differentiation, like gender and class, can be a shared characteristic (Eriksen, 2002). A group identity, like an individual identity, is dynamic. Yet, when it changes, it changes for all the members of the group simultaneously. The content of the groups identity consists of the joint 'conception of its enduring characteristics and basic values, its strengths and weaknesses, its hopes and fears, its reputation and conditions of existence, its institutions and traditions, its past history, current purposes, and future prospects' (Kelman, 1998) of the group members. The communication and preservation of the group's identity is done via writing, symbols and other material forms in which the groups, institutions, traditions and history are often embodied and represented (Seul, 1999).

Clearly both group and individual identities are complex phenomena; they are fundamental aspects of any human being, including the people in Gedarif State.

The term Ethnicity

'It takes at least two somethings to create a difference... Clearly echo alone is – for the mind and perception – a non-entity, a non-being. Not different from being, and not different from non-being. An unknowable, a Ding an sich, a sound from one hand clapping' (Bateson, 1979, p.78).

Ethnicity makes up an essential component of the term ethnic identity. Ethnicity is 'a social identity (based on a contrast vis-à-vis others) characterised by metaphoric or fictive kinship' (Yelvnigton, 1991, p.168). Ethnicity refers to 'the culture of a people and includes values, language, child-rearing practices, a sense of history, modes of expression, and patterns of interpersonal behaviour' (Mann, 2006, p.218).

Ethnicity is passed on to children by contact to the cultural customs and ethnic language of their family. Childhood ethnocentricity then diminishes through wider interaction with other social and ethnic groups. Assisted by interaction with different groups this ethnocentrism changes into ethnic consciousness and eventually an ethnic identity. Ethnicity carries on past adolescence and passes on a sense of historical depth to the adult identity (Mann, 2006). Ethnicity, and therefore ethnic identity, can be more or less important depending on the individual and their personal situation and identity.

Sub Conclusion

This section looked at identity and ethnicity and the relationship between them. It became apparent that both identity and ethnicity are essential aspects of individuals and of groups of people, but how important identity and ethnicity are depends on the individual and their situation. The next section explores the importance of identity and ethnicity to the people of Gedarif State.

Identity in Gedarif State

In the previous section it became apparent that identity, both ethnic and non-ethnic, is a very important aspect of individual and group well-being. When exploring identity in Gedarif State, the importance of ethnicity and other factors to the different identity groups in Gedarif State, the different groups need to be explored, especially the importance of land for identity.

Gedarif State is composed of several ethnic groups, some of which are dominant in the area. All these groups have their different origins; some originate from Arab-speaking areas and others from non-Arabic areas. The main groups in Gedarif State are the semi-nomadic Shukriya and Lehawin, who are mainly livestock owners but also cultivate crops. Minority groups include the Kawahla, Fur, Hamar, Massalit, Beni Amer, Fallata, Kenana and many other groups that originate from the North and the West of Sudan (SECS, 2005). The conflicts that arise in Gedarif State are mostly between these different groups, and rarely within them.

Ethnicity is shaped through contact with other groups of people, which provides a sense of your own identity. Of course, people have plural identities of which their ethnic identity is just one. In Gedarif State a person's identity includes a shared descent but also a common way of securing a livelihood and a common link to the land. Some groups have a pastoralists way of life, some are semi-nomadic, and others are farmers. Identity is strongly linked to the land (SECS, 2009a), which is strongly related to providing livelihood security. The way in which land and identity are interwoven is a way of life in Sudan, and Gedarif State. How important land is to the different identity groups inhabiting Gedarif State will be looked at in the following section.

In chapter two, Buckles and Rusnak's four central reasons why natural resources are vulnerable to conflict were mentioned. The fourth reason entailed an ethnic dimension of

natural resources: 'Natural resources are used by people in ways that are defined symbolically. Land is not just a material resource people compete over, but is also part of a particular way of life (pastoralism, farming, ranching, fishing, etc.), an ethnic identity, and a set of gender and age roles. Such symbolic dimensions of natural resources lend themselves to ideological, social, and political struggles or even manipulation' (Buckles and Rusnak (1999), In: Tohami, 2007, p. 4). The link between identity, land and conflict will be addressed later, for now, the importance and meaning of land for the different ethnic groups will be explored.

During the seventh RBC conference, held in Entebbe, Tohami (a SECS related researcher) stated that in North-Sudan land is a central concern to rural communities: it is a manner of basic survival and of social reproduction, a source of both individual and tribal pride, a general connection between different social groups, a continuous source of possible exploitation, marginalization and conflict, a culture and an ethnic and tribal identity (RBC, 2008). In addition, 'land is bound up with the identities and ways of life of communities that have lived on a particular area of land for generations' (RBC, 2008, p.9). The RBC Management Network states that both pastoralism and pastoralist culture have been shaped by, or have grown to be in sync with, the arid lands that they inhabit. The same holds true for the agricultural communities of the highlands in many countries in the Horn of Africa region: identity, culture and land are inseparably intertwined (RBC, 2008).

Pastoralism is extensively practiced in all parts of Gedarif State. The main pastoralist groups are the Shukriya, the Beni Amer, the Lehawin and the Kenana. The Shukriya largely herd camel and sheep, the Lehawin herd goats and camels and the Kenana herd camel, cattle and sheep. During the rainy season, the herders and their animals migrate to the Northern parts of Gedarif State looking for fertile land and pasture. During the dry season they travel to the Southern part of Gedarif State in search of drinking water (Babiker, et.al., 2005). The different pastoralist groups use land for travelling purposes - access to land is an important precondition for reaching drinking water and fertile land and pasture - and for the resting and feeding of their livestock. Land is essential to keep both their animals and their families alive.

The inhabitants of Gedarif State mainly depend on fertile land for survival. It is estimated that there is approximately ten million feddan⁵ of fertile agricultural land. Eight million feddan of this has been devoted to farming (and this amount increases daily). In Gedarif State there are two different systems of farming. The first is the traditional rain-fed farming, which is the oldest system of the two. It is characterized by small-scale farms and is dependent on family labour and basic technology. These small-scale farms are scattered

⁵ One feddan equals approximately 4200 square metres (m²) = 1.038 acres

across all parts of the State and grow staple food crops such as sorghum and millet. This type of farming is mainly survival-oriented and is often combined with livestock husbandry (Babiker, et.al., 2005).

The second type of farming system in Gedarif State is the large-scale agriculture composed of irrigated and rain-fed mechanized schemes. This is the largest farming system in Gedarif State; rain-fed mechanized agriculture started in Sudan during the colonial era in the 1940s and has been expanding ever since, often at the expense of forestry and natural rangelands. Large scale mechanized farming is also a major cause of land degradation as the land is subjected to permanent mono-cropping year after year. (Babiker, et.al., 2005). Compared to pastoralism and small-scale farming this mechanized system is relatively new and the agricultural lands are not so intertwined with the identities of their owners. Only 36 percent of scheme owners actually originate from Gedarif State (Ijaimi, 2006).

As mentioned before, ethnicity refers to 'the culture of a people and includes values, language, child-rearing practices, a sense of history, modes of expression, and patterns of interpersonal behaviour' (Mann, 2006, p.218). The importance of ethnicity for the group identities of the small-scale farmers and pastoralists of Gedarif State is clear. For the mechanized farmers it is less important for their identity than the (non-ethnic) business-focussed side of farming. However, for all the different groups in Gedarif State, ethnicity, combined with a particular way of life - such as pastoralism and farming - provides the different groups with an identity.

Identity in Gedarif State involves livelihood security, a way of life, taking care of family and belonging to a group. It encompasses both ethnic and non-ethnic identity; culture and land are closely bound. Small scale-farmers and pastoralists that share the same lands and culture, also share the same history, present and future. For the mechanized scheme owners land is not as bound up with their ethnic identities, it is more a way of generating income. Unfortunately, due to the massive extent to which they farm, the way of life, existence and identity of the pastoralists and small-scale farmers is being threatened.

Sub Conclusion

In this section the different ethnic groups that inhabit Gedarif State have been identified. All these groups have different origins and some are dominant in the area. In Gedarif State ethnicity includes a shared descent but also a common link to land. Next to this ethnic identity, the different groups also have non-ethnic characteristics, such as how they provide for in their livelihoods. Some groups have a pastoralist way of life, some are semi-nomadic and others are farmers, but land is bound up with the identities of all of these communities.

The crucial finding in this section is that group identity in Gedarif State is a combination of ethnicity and way of life. Neither of these two components sufficiently explains the essence of group identity for the Gedarif State people alone. Within the identities of the Gedarif State people lies the influence of the land they live on and the cultures this land nurtures.

Identity and Land Conflicts

That (political) violence can be ethnic is well established, indeed too well established; how it is ethnic remains obscure. The most fundamental questions – for example, how the adjective “ethnic” modifies the noun “violence” – remain unclear and largely unexamined’ (Brubaker & Laitin, 1998, p. 427).

The terms conflict and violence should not be used without first being clarified. Brubaker and Laitin state that in studies concerning conflict, accounts of violence are not clearly distinguished from accounts of conflict. ‘Violence has generally been conceptualized [...] as a degree of conflict rather than as a form of conflict’ (Brubaker & Laitin, 1998, p. 425). However, ‘violence is not a quantitative degree of conflict but a qualitative form of conflict, with its own dynamics’ (Brubaker & Laitin, 1998, p. 426). Thus, conflict can be violent as well as non-violent. Violence is one form of conflict that has its own dynamics.

Ethnic violence is violence ‘perpetrated across ethnic lines, in which at least one party is not a state (or a representative of a state), and in which the putative ethnic difference is coded – by perpetrators, targets, influential third parties, or analyst – as having been integral rather than incidental to that violence, that is, in which the violence is coded as having been meaningfully oriented in some way to the different ethnicity of the target’ (Brubaker & Laitin, 1998, p. 428). According to Tohami, the ethnicization of conflict has become a critical component of conflict in Sudan where the non-Jellaba clash with the Jellaba; in South-Kordofan the Baggara clash with the Nuba; in Darfur the Africans clash with the Arabs; in the Red Sea State the Beja clash with the non-Beja; in Abyie the Dinka clash with the Misseriya and in several states pastoralists clash with agriculturalists (RBC, 2008).

The terms identity and ethnicity have already been clarified, and the link between identity and land in Gedarif State has been explored. The importance of identity for the different communities in Gedarif State, and the ethnic dimension and importance of land as part of identity have been made clear. Now the link between identity and conflict needs to be addressed. As previously observed, group identity in Gedarif State is mainly composed of ethnicity, culture and a way of life and securing livelihoods. Therefore, whilst exploring conflict in Gedarif State we need to keep in mind the different aspects of identity. In the following section, the relationship between group identity and conflict in Gedarif State will be

surveyed by making use of three academic theories. The first two theories, only briefly mentioned, have been chosen because they are both influential yet in contrast to each other. They highlight the difficulty of trying to understand conflict in Gedarif State, but although they are influential, they do not accurately reflect the situation in Gedarif State. The third theory, looked at more thoroughly, highlights a different aspect of identity and conflict that is more relevant when studying Gedarif State.

The difficulty when trying to grasp the link between identity and conflict by looking at influential theories on the subject - such as 'the narcissism of minor differences' or 'the clash of civilizations' - is that identity in Gedarif State has both an ethnic and a non-ethnic component. In his 'narcissism of minor differences' theory, Blok (2002) argues that identity is based on subtle distinctions. These minor differences are defended, accentuated and strengthened against what is closest because that is what poses the biggest threat. However, as the Gedarif State conflicts do not solely revolve around minor ethnic differences but also concern land use and livelihood security, this makes Blok's theory less applicable to the situation there.

Huntington's theory of 'the Clash of Civilizations' also fails to apply to the situation in Gedarif State. According to Huntington, the conflicts of the future will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. 'The fault lines of civilizations will be the battle lines of the future' (Huntington, 1993, p.22). However, the land conflicts in Gedarif State are not between different religious groups and there is no civilization divide.

As identity in Gedarif State is tied up with survival, theories that centre on subtle, or even large ethnic differences, do not seem to accurately reflect the reality in Gedarif State. Badri (2005) argues that there are commonalities in the causes of conflict in the different regions of Sudan. 'Broadly speaking, the underlying causes of intra and inter-ethnic conflict can be characterized as being of a developmental nature i.e. over the control of natural resources within traditional systems of production' (Badri, 2005, pp. 59, 60). According to Baldri the ethnic conflicts in Sudan, while involving inter- and intra- ethnic groups, are due to the scarcity of natural resources and not due to ethnic differences, even though they occur along ethnic lines. This could be as a result of the importance of the natural resources as part of their ethnic identities and ethnic identity groups; so when resources are scarce, their identities and group survival are threatened. This observation of Baldri is in line with the previously observed importance and correlation of livelihood security and ethnicity for group identity in Gedarif State.

Oberschall makes use of the concept of a cognitive frame. A cognitive frame is a mental structure that serves as a tool to make sense of the social world that one inhabits and to

communicate and share this world with others. According to Oberschall, 'nationalism, ethnic identity and attachment alone, however intense, do not explain grass-roots ethnic actions' (Oberschall, 2007, p. 998). Therefore he introduces two frames: a normal frame and a crisis frame. People have both frames in their minds but in peaceful times the normal frame is dominant and the crisis frame is dormant and in crisis and war the normal frame is suppressed, making room for the crisis frame. The switch from the normal frame to the crisis frame is mainly triggered by fear. The emotion that often infects ethnic relations is fear. And fear eventually transforms into hate and ethnic conflict (Oberschall, 2007).

As mentioned before, the conflicts that arise in Gedarif State do not solely follow ethnic lines; they follow income-generating lines as well. This fear framework is more appropriate for Gedarif State - which is positioned in a country that has seen several years of internal strife - than many other theories on ethnic conflict.

The disputes in Gedarif State are triggered by a fear of livelihood insecurity, linked to scarcity of resources and inaccessible land that goes deep to the heart of the identities of these people. The effect of livelihood insecurity could cause the loss of animals and of crops, and as a result even their families and eventually their identity. Looking at the situation in Gedarif State from a 'human security' perspective is once again relevant; the researcher assumes that human *insecurity* leads to fear within these identity groups, which leads to conflict. This is also in line with Baldri's theory that states that the ethnic conflicts in Sudan, while involving inter- and intra-ethnic groups, are not due to ethnic differences. This explains why herders are more often the aggressors than the large-scale farmers. For herders, access to land is harder and scarcer and, more than this, land is intertwined with their identities and who they are. Ethnicity is also an important component of the small-scale farmers and herders' identity, and as such, the continuation and future of their ethnicity worries them. Therefore, the herders as well as the small-scale farmers have more to lose and more to fear when experiencing human *insecurity*.

Sub Conclusion

This section has explored the link between identity and conflict. The relationship has been analyzed by making use of three academic theories. The first two theories, 'the narcissism of minor differences' and 'the clash of civilizations' did not accurately reflect the reality in Gedarif State. Oberschall's 'concept of a cognitive frame' is more fitting for the Gedarif State disputes as they are triggered by fear; of livelihood insecurity, scarcity of resources, and inaccessible land. Fear of a situation that may result in them losing their animals, crop and eventually even their families.

A key assumption in this section is that human *insecurity* leads to fear within groups, which then leads to conflicts. This concept of a cognitive frame explains why herders are more often the aggressors in conflict than large-scale farmers. For herders, access to land is harder and scarcer, and as land itself is more intertwined with their identities the herders have more to lose, and more to fear, when experiencing human *insecurity*.

Conclusion

This chapter has studied the question: '*How does group identity influence the land conflicts in Gedarif State?*' The terms ethnic identity, identity and ethnicity have been explored and clarified. Identity in Gedarif State, including the ethnic dimension and importance of land, were then looked at. And lastly, the relation between identity and (violent) conflict in Gedarif State has been analyzed by putting academic theories side by side with the empirical data on Gedarif State.

In the first section the terms identity and ethnicity were explored. This confirmed that the formation of personal and group identity is a complex phenomenon. Individuals are characterized by plural identities that differ and change in importance and relevance depending on the social context. None of them can be taken to be the individual's only identity or group membership. Furthermore, for a well functioning individual identity, well functioning group identities are vital. Individual identities are at the heart of group identities, but group identities are not simply a sum of the individuals involved. A group can have its own identity, which will be accepted and communicated by the members of this group. Group identities are dynamic and are embodied and preserved in communal writings, symbols, shared conceptions and other unique group features. Group members have common goals that motivate the continuation of the group and a positive group identity.

Ethnicity, which makes up another essential component of the term ethnic identity can be a shared characteristic of a group, thereby making this group's identity an ethnic identity. Non-ethnic identities and principles of social differentiation, like gender and class, can also be a shared characteristic of a group. Ethnicity is a social identity characterised by metaphoric or fictive kinship and can be more or less important depending on the situation.

In the second section, identity in Gedarif State was explored. Gedarif State is composed of several ethnic groups, which have different origins. Some groups are dominant in the area. In Gedarif State ethnicity includes a shared descent but also a common link to land. Next to ethnic identity, the different groups in Gedarif State also have non-ethnic characteristics, such as their livelihoods. Some groups have a pastoralist way of living, some are semi-nomadic and others are farmers. Whatever the way of life, land in Gedarif State is bound up with the identities of the communities that have lived there for generations.

The last paragraph looked at the relationship between (ethnic) identity and (violent) conflict in Gedarif State by making use of three influential academic theories on ethnic conflict. However, identity in Gedarif State is composed of both an ethnic, as well as a non-ethnic, component. And as ethnicity in Gedarif State is tied up with survival, theories that centre on subtle, or even large ethnic difference, do not seem to accurately reflect the reality in Gedarif State. Anthony Oberschall's concept of a cognitive frame however is more appropriate. A cognitive frame is a mental structure that serves as a tool to make sense of the social world that one inhabits and to communicate and share this world with others. According to Oberschall there are two frames, a normal frame and a crisis frame. People switch from the normal frame to the crisis frame when triggered by fear. The disputes in Gedarif State are triggered by a fear of livelihood insecurity, scarcity of resources, and inaccessibility to land that can result in them losing their animals, their crops, and as a result, even their families.

There have been two crucial findings in this chapter. Firstly, that group identity in Gedarif State is a combination of ethnicity and way of life and that both of these components are needed to sufficiently explain the essence of group identity for the people of Gedarif State. The identities of the Gedarif State people capture the symbiotic relationship of culture and land. The second, central discovery and assumption is that human *in*security leads to fear within groups, which, in turn, leads to conflicts. The concept of a cognitive frame explains why herders are more often the aggressors than large-scale farmers; because for the herders access to land is harder and scarcer and land itself is more intertwined with their identities. Furthermore, ethnicity is a strongly accentuated and important component of the identity of small-scale farmers and herders and the future of their ethnicity worries them. The herders and small-scale farmers have more to lose, and more to fear, when experiencing human *in*security.

As with the position of land in the Gedarif State conflicts, the influence of group identity in the Gedarif State land conflicts is complex. This is mainly due to the fact that group identity in Gedarif State is so much more than a common culture; it is composed of both an ethnic and a non-ethnic component. Identity conflicts in Gedarif State are not necessarily due to ethnic differences, even though they can, and do, occur along ethnic lines. Group identity is an undeniable component of conflict in Gedarif State and should be remembered in the next section when considering the role of the state.

IV The State and Land Conflict

The Sudanese government and its land policies

'The last decades have witnessed an exceptional high concern when it comes to land tenure issues in the Horn of Africa and the possible connection that land tenure has with poverty, land access and conflicts that preoccupy this region' (Egemi, 2006, p.29).

Even though Sudan has vast amounts of land, scarcity of land for primary production systems, such as pastoralism and small-scale farming, has become increasingly felt and the users of these natural resources have perceived it (Tomahi, 2007). According to Tomahi (2007, p.4) 'this perceived scarcity is [a] structurally created process related directly to dualism in land use policy and the contradiction between customary and statutory tenure arrangements, under conditions of population growth and increased climatic tendency towards aridity'. The Resource-Based Conflict Management Network's vision coincides with Tomahi's line of reasoning. In addition, they argue that in Sudan, existing legal structures concerning land are largely confused with the seeming dichotomy between statutory and traditional rights (RBC, 2008).

Although conclusions, policy ideas and recommendations are often contradictory, Egemi (2006, p.29) states that 'the established fact is that land tenure remains, at least, one part of a complicated combination of structural factors contributing to poverty and violence in contemporary Africa'. Therefore, the Sudanese state and its land policies will be explored in this chapter by first looking at land tenure in Sudan, then the land tenure situation in East Sudan and then land in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). Finally, we'll go into the role and function of the Sudanese state. In this chapter it is not the actual influence of Khartoum on the conflicts in Gedarif State being explored. Although the government in Khartoum has played a distinctive role in Sudan's recent history, it is not the direct influence and interference of the Khartoum government, but rather the effectiveness of the Sudanese government and the effect of its national and regional land policies on a local level that is being looked at. The first three paragraphs will not focus on the Sudanese state although the state's presence will be made visible. In the last paragraph, the direct and indirect influence and liability of the Sudanese state will be examined.

Land Tenure in Sudan

'Land law is important, not merely as an element of social justice. Sudanese citizens have a right to have a place for residence and for earning a livelihood. Good land law is essential for preventing conflict. It is also an important element in environmental policy' (Justice Africa, 2002, p.1).

In this section, land tenure will be explored by first examining, the traditional, customary land tenure and secondly, the statutory, judicial land tenure. Lastly the conflict and the cooperation between the land tenure policies will be looked at.

Traditional Land Tenure

Under colonial rule, local and state courts were required to employ customary law. Many customs, especially from Northern Sudan, were recognised by the colonial power and became part of the land laws. Although, this effort was not fully realised due to the lack of attempt to entirely document all the customary land laws from the different Sudanese regions, the colonial power made custom one of the main foundations of Sudanese land law (Justice Africa, 2002).

The politicization of land and land ownership in Sudan has its roots in the separation of tribal homelands carried out by colonial administrators in 1923. These homelands (plural *diar*, singular *dar*) are still clearly visible in present-day maps and they demonstrate that the link between tribal identity and geography still continues to this day (Ayoub, 2006). This concept of customary, traditional tribal homelands is the single most important ingredient of the traditional land tenure system in Sudan. What's more, it is closely related to the concept of native administration (RBC, 2008). This traditional system follows tribal territorial rights that have been historically derived and were initially constituted in pre-colonial Sudan in the course of the succeeding indigenous kingdoms. Within each of these *diar*, in which leadership is traditionally restricted to the original landlords, a number of *hawakeer* can be found. A *hawakeer* is the land of a particular clan or tribal group. The security and wellbeing of the tribe is very important and therefore it is constituted and safeguarded within the *dar*. Individual land rights are acknowledged and can be passed on by inheritance, yet no individual has the power to separate land from the tribes' ownership (RBC, 2008, Egemi, 2006).

Traditional land tenure is best defined as the self-governance and right of the leaders of traditional customary bodies that is used in the allotment of land, in the administration of land and when settling disputes over land. Land is considered the property of a tribe and

transactions in land are very uncommon. The power of allotting land rights is vested in the head of the village, the *Sheikh*. As the *Sheikh* has the power and the right to divide the land under his control, he can divide this land among his villagers and he can allot land to outsiders as well if he wishes to do so or if he wants to settle a dispute. Women however, have very limited access to land rights. In most cases, they do not possess the land that they work on, except when they inherited it from their fathers or their husbands (RBC, 2008, Egemi, 2006). Pastoralists also have a difficult time establishing their rights to land. As a consequence of the system of homelands and due to the strong relationship between the tribes and their homeland, the main tribes have been able to use and dominate the natural resources that are present in their *dar* and to deny smaller tribes any claim to land rights or land ownership which would, or could, allow them to exercise any political or administrative power. Traditional land laws among pastoralists suppose that pastoralists and their herds can use vast areas of land. Yet, both colonial and post-colonial laws recognise only users rights for pastoralists and often not even that. However, the abolishment of the native administration reinforced the, already marginal, position of the pastoralists even further (Justice Africa, 2002).

Statutory Land Tenure

The British colonial government always showed a great interest in the system of land tenure. In colonial times the British introduced the principle that land, which is not registered by groups or individuals, is owned by the State unless proven otherwise. Early on in 1899 the colonial power announced its first 'Titles to Land Ordinance', which recognized and commenced to register the cultivated lands in both North and Central Sudan as private property. The rain-lands of Central, Western and Eastern Sudan, as well as all the lands in Southern Sudan were excluded from the ordinance and as such they were excluded from land settlement and registration. The British did not recognize individual, personal ownership of any land in these regions (RBC, 2008, Egemi, 2006).

As most of the traditional land rights had been recognized, but not been registered legally, the government withdrew them. In addition, many colonial laws served to further consolidate the rights of the government. These legislations⁶ included the 1903 Land Acquisition Ordinance, the 1905 Land Settlement Ordinance, the 1918 Native Disposition of Lands Restrictions Ordinance, the 1920 Declaration on Gash, the 1927 Gezira Land Ordinance, the 1925 Land Settlement and Registration Ordinance and the 1930 Land Acquisition Ordinance (Egemi, 2006). However, as mentioned before, around the same time

⁶ See Annex IV on Land Legislation, for an overview of the different Laws and Acts.

in the early 1930s, Sudan acquired a tribal structure with recognized tribal homelands, based on traditional, customary rights (RBC, 2008, Egemi, 2006).

After independence, in January 1956, the colonial system of natural resource management was abolished and administrators, who predominantly originated from the North, came to replace the traditional tribal leaders. New laws on land were developed and, as a result, conflicts over land were further politicized. Land tenure post independence differed only trivially from the colonial legacy. The most significant difference was that the freshly installed national government took the already existing colonial policies and legislation to their logical conclusion. In 1970 the Unregistered Land Act was introduced and applied over all of Sudan. This legislation proved to be more repressive than the colonial legislation. The Act, which in reality can be seen as nationalization by the state, made land into a scarce commodity open to accumulation and privatization by rich local and foreign investors, which resulted in modified local land tenure systems and the ongoing separation of small-scale farmers and pastoralists from their traditional *diar*. The 1984 Civil Transaction Act revokes the 1970 Unregistered Land Act, but is more complete as it sets out guidelines and details for its practical implementation. With the 1970 Unregistered Land Act and the 1984 Civil Transaction Act the privileges of the State were strengthened (Pantuliano, 2007). This legislation proved to be more repressive than the colonial laws ever were, as it allowed the government to employ force while safeguarding "its" land, it also encouraged the accumulation of land by a minority of wealthy investors, both local as well as outer state and foreign (Ayoub, 2006). These new Acts allowed the elites closest to the government to attain land at the cost of rural people (Pantuliano, 2007). These legalized land grabs alienated and drove small-scale farmers and pastoralists from their traditional homelands, which led to massive displacement. Furthermore, these Acts denied any juridical status or formal legitimacy to customary property rights, and, as a result they implied the cancellation of all rights regarding water, land and grazing by the pastoralists and small-scale farmers (Ayoub, 2006).

The 1970 Act made it possible for the government to realize a development policy, which was based on the expansion of the agricultural sector, with special emphasis on mechanized farming. By 2005, the total area utilized for mechanized farming had increased fifteen fold. In addition, since the 1990 Investment Act, huge strips of land have been assigned to private capital investments. This has substantially cut the rural communities' rights to land and displaced people from their *dar* (Ayoub, 2006). In 1998 the Local Government Act was introduced. The Local Government Act was an attempt to restore the land administration vacuum at the local level, which had been created by the closing down of the native administration system earlier on in 1971 (RBC, 2008, Egemi, 2006).

Land Tenure Systems, Cooperation or Conflict?

Sudan is not that different from countless other African countries when it comes to problems concerning ownership over land. Sudan has customary land tenure systems, which are mostly used and valued by small-scale farmers and pastoralists, existing side-by-side with judiciary, 'modern' land laws. Customary systems are varied and include a shared history and unwritten ownership traditions. Both the colonial and the post-colonial governments have largely left them unaltered. Judiciary laws on the other hand have undergone transformation under succeeding governments, while in essence remain founded on the colonial laws (Justice Africa, 2002).

Consecutive laws, acts and legislation have diluted the legal rights of the communities in rural Sudan in particular for the pastoralists and the small-scale farmers. The introduction of the 1970 Land Act and the elimination of the system of native, traditional administration were virtually simultaneous. Since 1998, the traditional system has been reinstated, yet it has been considerably weakened and it lacks credibility (Ayoub, 2006). As a result, conflicting claims of access to land are found all over Sudan. The 1970 Unregistered Land Act dispersed the customary land tenure systems and consequently produced a confused legal framework. Currently, it is hard to make out whether statutory land tenure or customary land tenure is the dominant legal framework. To date, there is no legislation that sanctions the pastoralists' and small-scale farmers' right of entitlement to land and natural resources. While the statutory law benefits mostly the elites, the customary law discriminates exclusively against those whose families have been living within the domains of *díar* and tribes for centuries but without any recognizable or legitimate rights to that land (RBC, 2008).

As well as the 1970 Act, under the current system of decentralization, the confused and distorted delegation of powers between different regions and the central government in Khartoum has given rise to additional claims over land. All these claims have conflicting sources of legality and contrasting outcomes regarding who can establish access and ownership rights of the land. This situation is thought to have caused sharp sways in the availability of land, especially for small-scale farmers and pastoralists, and therefore intensified competition over resources, increased scarcity and consequently more conflict over land (Egemi, 2006).

In addition, the dislocation of people by investment capital such as mechanized farming, oil and dams is a prominent source of social grievances, marginalization and land alienation (RBC, 2008). The displacement as a result of mechanized farming remains a major source of unrest and conflict; it reinforces feelings of neglect, marginalization and social repression. It has led to the sealing off of nomadic routes, water points and pastures and as a result, fosters a culture of land grabbing. It creates large landless groups who, in

order to survive, are forced to work as unsteady wageworkers or to migrate to urban centres (Ayoub, 2006).

In short, the variety of land tenure systems in Sudan is of crucial importance to the land users. They are a reflection of the diversified circumstance of land tenure that can be found in the country. There would be no single land tenure system that would be fitting for all the different parts and regions of Africa's largest country. Yet, there is a dire need to review and reform the land tenure systems in place in Sudan (Justice Africa, 2002).

Sub Conclusion

In Sudan we encounter a legal pluralism of traditional and statutory land tenure systems. Both systems have a different origin yet exist side by side in present-day Sudan. They lack any history or present of harmony and coexistence. While they both have authority, the customary and the statutory land tenure systems do not complete each other, which leaves a confused legal framework. Further more, both systems discriminate against some groups while favouring others. The statutory tenure system mostly benefits the ruling elites and makes it possible to grab lands at the expense of pastoralists and small-scale farmers. The customary tenure system mainly benefits the *sheikhs*' own tribe. Tribes who migrated many decades ago have hardly any ownership rights and women are entitled to little. Pastoralists' claims to land are poorly dealt with under both systems. For lasting social justice, land tenure reform and legal consensus is needed.

The Eastern Region

In Eastern Sudan the loss of traditionally owned land is a critical issue. The expansion of mechanized farms has seriously undermined the sustainability of the livelihoods of the pastoral groups and the small-scale farmers in this region (Pantuliano, 2007). In addition, in October 2006 the East Sudan Peace Agreement (ESPA) was signed, which brought an end to a nine-year conflict between the Eastern region and the government in Khartoum. The scarcity and alienation of land, as a result of population movements, caused by both mechanized farming and the North-South war, have been prominent characteristics of the Beja insurgency and main determinants of the conflict (Ayoub, 2006, Pantuliano, 2007).

The alteration of power between traditional and modern systems can also be felt in the East, where the modern state and traditional systems have clashed. As is the case with many transitional societies, which are changing from a subsistence to a market economy, natural resources, such as land, are considered to be commodities. Confiscating natural resources from the local residents is appealing to the elites in government, who can then

undermine communal ownership. Moreover, they demolish ecological coexistence by the relocating of resource ownership to large-scale mechanized farmers and investors. Examples of the relocation of traditional ownership by modern government can be found all-over Sudan. These problems are visible in the states of Blue Nile and Gedarif, in Amri and in Merawi Dam. Such ownership relocation leads to conflicts that can be hidden, open or even flaring, which threaten sustainable ecological and social peace (Belal, 2008a).

In addition to the alteration of power, in Eastern Sudan, a new level of native administration was created for the Rashaida. The Rashaida are a tribe that started coming from the Arabian Peninsula to East Sudan in 1874. This new level of native administration gives them administrative power without land ownership. In Blue Nile State something similar occurred when a new *nazir* status was designed for the Fellata, who originate from West Africa. It is striking that in both cases the results favourable to the government in Khartoum pulled rank (Ayoub, 2006).

The clash between the customary and statutory political realities, as a result of the alteration of power, is well illustrated by the story of the Massaleit who originate from West Sudan but migrated to Gedarif State in Eastern Sudan a long time ago.

'When Massaleit emigrants resident in al-Qadarif in eastern Sudan won two parliamentary seats in the 1986 elections, their request for a nazirate in that state was turned down by the local Shukriyya nazir in consultation with the Massaleit sultan from Western Darfur. The Massaleit sultan considered his dar to be one demographic entity regardless of geographical contiguity, led by one hereditary sultan and not influenced by the political process' (Ayoub, 2006, p. 2).

Thus, even though modern elections gave the Massaleit two seats in parliament, the traditional authority, the Shukriyya *nazir* from Gedarif State together with the Massaleit sultan from Western Darfur, ignored these results and turned down the Massaleit request for a *Nazirate* (traditional administration).

In Gedarif State, the traditional administration (*nazirate*) dates back to the 19th century. The *nazirate* is a remainder of the Turkish colonization of Sudan, it shapes and is shaped by the social and cultural environment in the State. There are five *Nazirates* in the State of Gedarif: The Nazirate of Dubbaniya, the Nazirate of Shukriya, the Nazirate of Dar Bakor, the Nazirate of Galaa El Nahal and the deputy Nazirate of Beni Amir. This traditional administration is an active conflict resolution body in the state. Most conflict cases do not even reach the government authorities. The native administration is the only institution in the state, which has reliable information and detailed knowledge concerning the natural environment and all the parties involved. In most of the cases there is a ruling in which the resolution includes some kind of compensation and sometimes, even blood money (*diya*).

However, in most cases conflict reconciliation without any financial or other kind of compensation is opted for by the conflicting parties (Babiker, et.al., 2005). Yet, as in other parts of Sudan, in Gedarif State customary law discriminates against those who do not have recognized or legitimate rights to land. In Gedarif State, this group is mainly composed of migrants, whose rights primarily depend on the generosity and the will of the *Nazirs* (RBC, 2008, Egemi, 2006).

Sub Conclusion

In Eastern Sudan we encounter a legal mixture of traditional and statutory land tenure systems. The customary and the modern governing authorities do not compliment each other, but rather work on parallel, non-communicating tracks. Both systems discriminate against some groups while favouring others, similar to the national tendency. In Gedarif State the traditional authority is most influential and most disputes over land do not even reach the government authorities. Yet when the traditional and the modern disagree, the national and regional state representation step in and the outcome will usually benefit the modern governing elite in Khartoum.

Post North-South Conflict: Land in the CPA

Given its complexity, for expediency's sake the problem of landownership was deferred by the CPA to the post-agreement phase' (Pantuliano, 2007, p.3)

To assess the situation of land tenure in Sudan since 2005, the issue of land in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and the Interim National Constitution (INC) will be looked at in the following paragraphs. In addition, several land related players and institutions will be studied and the current situation scrutinized.

The CPA and the INC

In essence the CPA and the INC were intended to reform governance by making use of power and wealth sharing arrangements. The issue of land and ownership is not explicitly addressed in the CPA, yet a process has been established to resolve land related issues (Pantuliano, 2007). In the CPA a special article is accorded to the ownership of land and other natural resources, this calls for competency in land administration and provides for the incorporation of customary laws and practices (RBC, 2008). At the same time however, the

CPA implicitly recognizes existing land tenure procedures as a de facto situation (Egemi, 2006).

The CPA and the INC also call for the setting of four Land Commissions (LC): A National LC (NLC), a South Sudan LC, a South Kordofan LC and a Blue Nile LC. The Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) and the Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement (ESPA) also call for the setting/introduction of the Darfur LC and the East Sudan LC. These Land Commissions were intended to be erected for several purposes such as the arbitration on land claims between contesting parties; to enforce the law on land rights; to assess appropriate land compensation; for the recognition of customary land tenure and for the likelihood of proposing land reform policies (Pantuliano, 2007, RBC, 2008, SECS, 2009b).

Land Related Actors and Institutions

In the CPA it is stipulated that government land should be administered through Sudan's three levels of governance: The federal level, the state level and the local level. The Government of National Unity is responsible for establishing the NLC, the Land Commission for South Sudan and the Land Commissions for the two protocol areas Blue Nile and South Kordofan (RBC, 2008).

The Land Commissions of Blue Nile, South Kordofan, Darfur and East Sudan are delegated to exercise similar powers as the NLC. According to the INC, state Land Commissions will be capable of evaluating existing land contracts and leases and examining the conditions for the current land allocations. In addition, they ought to be able to restore land rights or offer compensations (RBC, 2008).

Another sector involved in land is the private sector. The private sector investors are direct stakeholders through investment in mechanized farming. They have been continuously blamed for land grabbing and for the alienation of pastoralists and small-scale farmers (RBC, 2008). But the native administration, the tribal chiefs, and the tribal institutions, also continue to be key players in land issues. Traditionally they were customarily entrusted with the authority on land tenure. Nowadays, they have been losing grip on issues, for example things such as land alienation. In North Sudan, many even feel that the native administration should undergo profound restructuring. Mainly the radical youths view the native administration as an undemocratic, elitist, gender-blind and highly politicized institution (Pantuliano, 2007). The native administrations' connection to other levels of governance remains unclear but they are a recognized actor by the State (RBC, 2008).

Large groups of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees, who are overwhelmingly residents in rural areas with no codified claim to land, are in urgent need of a land policy, administration and management reform (Pantuliano, 2007). The last group of

important players in the situation are the national and international organizations. UN Agencies, donors and NGOs such as Oxfam, SOS Sahel, ACORD, USAID and others have been supporting a diversity of land-related initiatives (RBC, 2008). They have played an important role in examining land issues crucial to the local residents. Focussing on land tenure reform they have been documenting customary land tenure and working on many more pending and delicate issues (Pantuliano, 2007).

The Current Status Quo

In 2005 a commission preparatory team was established and assigned with the task of preparing a draft version of the Land Commission Act. However, progress was prevented as a result of the fundamentally opposing views of the National Congress Party (NCP) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). For that reason, after even more delays, the responsibility of drafting the NLC legislation was given back to the National Constitution Review Commission (NCRC). With support from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and a senior legal expert appointed by the NCRC, a draft Land Commission Act was produced. This draft Act was submitted to various stakeholders for consultation, discussion and revision in February 2007; since then the entire process has frozen. To date the NLC has still not been established and four years have passed since the signing of the CPA in 2005 (Pantuliano, 2007, RBC, 2008). From the six land commissions that were called for in the CPA, the ESPA and the DPA, the only two land commissions that have been established are the South Sudan LC and the Darfur LC.

In addition to the standstill, there is a lot of confusion surrounding land tenure, the CPA and the Land Commissions. It remains unclear if claims to land rights should be made on an individual or on a collective basis; the recognition of customary rights also raises questions about the position and mandates of traditional structures in relation to modern governance structures, and seemingly weak areas of the customary structures and institutions. There is confusion about the National Land Commission and whether this will be centralized or decentralized. It is unclear how direct land users, such as pastoralists and farmers, will be represented in the land commission. And overall, there is very limited public awareness and knowledge about the Agreement and in particular the Land Commissions. So in short, the challenge to establish institutional procedures, for the use and management of land that are inclusive, just and equitable remains.

Sub Conclusion

The issue of land and ownership have not been explicitly addressed in the CPA. For convenience sake they were deferred to the post-agreement stage of proceedings, at which point they created new problems and massive confusion. There are many land related players and institutions who all have differing views and stakes. Four years have passed since the signing of the CPA, yet only two out of six Land Commissions have been established. As a result, the challenge to establish institutional procedures, for the use and management of land that are inclusive, just and equitable remains

The Sudanese State

'It is the Sudan, the country of reliefs and aids, the country afflicted with its rulers and their policies' (Belal, 2008b, p.2).

As mentioned before, in this paragraph we will go into the role and function of the Sudanese state. We will look at the effectiveness of the Sudanese government and the effect of the state's national and regional land policies on a local level. We will be exploring the state's share, effectiveness and liability by first looking at the concept of good governance. Secondly, we will focus on good governance in land tenure and administration. Thirdly, the concept of a weak state will be explored, in particular the consequence of weak governance in Gedarif State.

Good Governance

When is governance regarded to be good governance? According to the UN's Food and Agricultural Organization one aspect of good governance, is the avoidance of corruption.

'However, features of good governance also include accountability, political stability, government effectiveness, regulatory quality and rule of law as well as control of corruption. Good governance means that government is well managed, inclusive and results in desirable outcomes' (FAO, 2007b, p.6).

Governance can also be poor when a government is not open to bribery but tyrannical anyhow, or when the government is democratic but nevertheless incompetent and ineffective (FAO, 2007b).

Relating this definition of good governance to Sudan, many aspects of good governance do not apply. In this chapter and previous chapters, it has become clear that the

Sudanese government does not show the accountability that is needed to govern. The many conflicts within Sudan's borders over the last decades have proven Sudan to be politically unstable; the government's effectiveness, the regulatory quality, the rule of law and the control of corruption have room for improvement. In chapter two, we saw how Khartoum's way of governing has led to many marginalized people across Sudan. The unequal distribution of land and the perceived injustice that accompanies it, has led to collective frustration and conflict in many Sudanese regions. In Gedarif State, marginalization is vividly present. Marginalization, caused by governance based on the principles of exclusiveness and preference has a direct influence on the position of herders and small-scale farmers, and an indirect effect seen in the marginalized position that the East inhabits on a national level. As a result, large economic inequalities can be found when contrasting the herders and small-scale farmers with the mechanized farmers, the Dinder park authorities and the state; the pastoralists have hardly any (or even no) political privileges compared to the farmers and the same can be said when considering the rights of the small-scale farmers and the herders in relation to that of the mechanized farms and the park authorities. When taking all this into consideration, it is safe to say that the Sudanese government is not well managed, not inclusive and that its governing methods do not result in desirable outcomes. As such, governance in Sudan can be defined as poor and meagre.

Good Governance in Land Administration and Tenure

'Explicit recognition of the importance of governance in land tenure and administration has come relatively recently' (FAO, 2007b, p.5).

There are specific features of good governance, which are included in international laws on human rights. For example, certain human rights that concern private property have implications for governance in land administration and land tenure. In many human rights declarations the relationship between the rights to land and human rights is documented and clarified in areas such as ownership rights deprivation, land use planning, unfair taxation, land registration and land restitution. When it comes to land administration and tenure, although certain essential principles are commonly accepted and it is possible to define some features of good governance, here is no overall consensus on the concept of good governance in international law.(FAO, 2007b).

According to Belal (2008b, p.5), 'the term rational environmental governance emerged in the early nineties concurrent with the term rational governance'. The concept of rational environmental governance includes good governance in land tenure and administration. The main pillars of rational environmental governance incorporate 'the

integration of environmental issues with environmental policies and planning and the evaluation of environmental impacts of projects for the realization of sustainable development' (Belal, 2008b, p.5).

An important aspect of rational environmental governance is the refusal to go along with environmental corruption. In environmental corruption the corrupted persons or institutions make use of their authority to violate the environment or to achieve illegal gains. Environmental corruption is an important contributor to the unfair situation concerning environmental and social justice. The consequences of this environmental corruption mostly fall upon the poor sectors of society. Yet the fruits of this corruption are channelled to the benefit of the powerful and elitist groups within the governing system (Belal, 2008b).

In Gedarif State the effects of environmental corruption are clear in the land alienation that had place. The negative impacts of climate change and poor environmental governance haven deepened and aggravated existing social and economic disparities. This aggravation has led to the weakening of human development, which is most visible and felt among the poorer sectors, such as the pastoralist groups and small-scale farmers in Gedarif State (Belal, 2008b). The Sudanese state as well as the native authority employs exclusive and discriminating policies in relation to land ownership. In land tenure and administration the Sudanese governing qualities are also best described as poor.

A Weak State

Where law is inconsistent, obsolete or complex, weak governance tends to flourish. A weak judiciary, ambiguous laws, weak institutions and fragmented institutional arrangements aggravate this situation even further. Commonly found in weak states are factors of corruption and favouritism (FAO, 2007b).

In Sudan we encounter a central government in Khartoum that is challenged in extending its rule to its 25 states. In these states a regional representation of the government (a regional government) exists, often side by side with a traditional form of authority. According to the RBC Management Network this has resulted in conflicting decisions over land use, and in the constant intrusion of the federal government on land in the concerning states (RBC, 2008). The institutional structures for land administration are extremely weak and they are suffering from problems of poor recognition and visible ambiguity especially concerning the roles and the mandates of the different stakeholders and actors. In addition there is an ambiguous and confusing division of power between the federal, regional and state governments (RBC, 2008). On top of all of this are the inherent factors of corruption and favouritism that are present. In Sudan, a system of legal pluralism prevails; laws concerning land tenure are complex, obsolete and inconsistent. Therefore, it is fair to

conclude that the governing structures in Sudan are weak, although this does not imply that the Sudanese state lacks power. In fact, the Sudanese state can be very totalitarian, and does its best to keep the best interests of the ruling elites in Khartoum well looked after. The well being of all Sudanese states and their inhabitants are not looked out for with the same vigour. The weakness of the Sudanese state revolves around its lack of any will to govern well and with strength. The will to alienate land in favour of the elites, made the land-grabbing possible. But establishing six land commissions to reform the land tenure system for the benefit of the states people still seems an impossible task. Sudan is by no means a powerless state but it is a weak state.

The Consequences of Weak Governance

'The state is the most important actor in addressing hazards and damages' (Belal, 2008b, p.8).

This was emphasized in 2007/ 2008 UNDP report, in which the importance of political commitment and capacity in dealing with environmental damages brought about by climate change was highlighted; emphasis was given to the integration of an environmental aspect of development strategies to help in combating poverty (Belal, 2008b).

As was mentioned earlier, the 1970 Unregistered Land Act, in combination with the confused delegation of powers between the different regions and the central government in Khartoum under the current federal system of decentralization, has given rise to conflicting claims over land, with conflicting sources of legality and contrasting outcomes regarding who can establish access and ownership rights concerning land. This is thought to have caused sharp sways in the availability of land, especially for small-scale farmers and pastoralists and therefore intensified competition over resources, increased scarcity and more conflict over land (Egemi, 2006). Chapter two referred to Homer-Dixon (1994) who stated that complex and unpredictable environmental problems can brusquely increase demands on key bodies, such as the state. What has clearly come to the fore is that when demand on the state increases, the Sudanese government does not have the capacity, nor the commitment, to adequately address the hazards and damages that threaten Sudan. In fact, the 1970 Act, in combination with the practices of the poor and weak regime in Khartoum, has even increased scarcity and in consequence aggravated the situation further.

The FAO mentions several impacts of weak governance, some of which can be found in Sudan, and more specifically in Gedarif State. According to the FAO, poverty and social exclusion, which mostly affect the poor, are major impacts of weak governance. This view is

consistent with the realities in Gedarif State where the poorest communities experience marginalization at the hands of the government (FAO, 2007b).

Also according to the FAO, environmental degradation, tenure insecurity and land disputes are symptoms of weak governance (2007b). That there are disputes within the borders of Sudan and within the borders of Gedarif State is an undeniable statement. The existence of tenure insecurity and environmental degradation is also undeniable. Land degradation due to the massive removal of forests, due to the poor management of natural resources on both a local and national level and due to the absence of a national environmental plan (RBC, 2008) has led to both environmental degradation and conflict. These things underline the grave impact that weak governance has had on Gedarif State.

Sub Conclusion

In this section it has become apparent that behind the Gedarif State land conflicts a big share of responsibility lies with the Sudanese state. The Sudanese state's governing is poor and weak, and there is not enough will (nor capacity) to govern properly and deal with the countries' most pressing issues. Poor governance and, more specifically, poor environmental governance has led to tensions between the different identity groups of the state whose livelihoods are dependent on land. The consequences of weak and poor governance are clearly visible and only too strongly felt among the poor communities in Gedarif State.

Conclusion

In this chapter the Sudanese state and its land policies were explored, first by looking at land tenure in Sudan. Land tenure in Sudan is a legal pluralism of traditional and statutory land tenure systems. These different tenure systems exist side by side and while they both have authority, they conflict with rather than compliment each other, which leaves a confused legal framework. In addition, both tenure systems discriminate against some groups while favouring others. The statutory tenure system mostly benefits the ruling elites, and the customary tenure system the *sheikh's* own tribe.

Next we looked at the land tenure situation in East Sudan. In East Sudan the same legal pluralism of traditional and statutory land tenure systems is found. The customary authorities and modern governing authorities in the East work parallel to each other on non-communicating tracks. In Gedarif State the traditional authority is most influential and, as a result, most cases of land disputes do not even reach the government authorities. When the traditional and the modern disagree however, the national and the regional state

representation out powers the native administration to benefit the modern governing elite in Khartoum.

In the third section of this chapter, land in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement has been explored. The issue of land and ownership are not explicitly addressed in the CPA; they were deferred to the post-agreement stage at which point they created new problems and massive confusion. There are many land related actors and institutions in Sudan with many differing views and stakes. Four years have passed since the signing of the CPA and only two out of six proposed Land Commissions have been established to deal with.

In the last section of this chapter the effectiveness of the Sudanese government and the effects of its national and regional land policies on a local level have been looked at. Sudan is characterised by diverse government structures; pre-colonial, colonial and recent times have known different governments with different rules, different forms of authority and different interests. Over the years some have proven to be more static while others were rather more dynamic, often they existed simultaneously but not always in harmony. The same holds true for land tenure, which is characterised by a legal pluralism of customary and statutory systems. As a result the people in Gedarif State are left with a confused legal system that often results in disputes.

The Sudanese state is best defined as both poor and weak and the government's share in the land conflict in Gedarif State is considerable. Both directly and indirectly the lack of political will and capacity to govern have many consequences. Furthermore, the challenge to establish inclusive, just and equitable institutional procedures for land and natural resources use and management remains. For lasting social justice, land tenure reform and legal consensus is needed. For lasting social peace a strong state, responsible towards all Sudanese people, with the will and capacity to govern is needed.

V Analysis

In view of the changing character of wars, an analysis on the root causes of the land conflicts in Gedarif State would have been ineffective. Therefore this research project did not aspire to find 'the cause' of the land conflicts in Gedarif State but aimed to explore factors that have possibly sustained, prolonged and altered the conflict. In addition, it has been noted that there are many interrelated factors that influence conflicts and none of them operates in a vacuum. So far however, the position of land within the land conflicts has been looked at and two large and interrelated factors of influence –group identity and the state- have been examined. These three factors have been studied from their own influence-point, without taking notice of the interaction they have with the other factors. In the previous chapters the complex and interrelated relations have been disentangled and simplified. In this chapter the complexity and connectedness will be made visible. It will be explored how these three factors of conflict – land, group identity and the state - are interrelated by looking at the final question *'How do land, group identity, the state and conflict interact in Gedarif State?'*. First the interaction between land and group identity, group identity and the state and the state and land will be explored. Finally, these visions will be merged and the interrelatedness of land, group identity and the state for the Gedarif State's land conflicts will be looked at.

Land and Group Identity

In chapter three we came across Badri (2005) who stated that there are commonalities in the causes of conflict in the different regions of Sudan. 'Broadly speaking, the underlying causes of intra- and inter- ethnic conflict can be characterized as being of a developmental nature i.e. over the control of natural resources within traditional systems of production' (Badri, 2005, pp. 59, 60). Hence, he stated that the ethnic conflicts in Sudan, while involving inter- and intra-ethnic groups, are due to the scarcity of natural resources and not due to ethnic differences, even though they occur, following ethnic lines.

In addition, Ayoub (2006) refers to a period of severe drought, at the same time that the 1970 and 1984 Land Laws were adopted, which led to immense population displacement, environmental degradation and urbanization.

'In Darfur, the areas of the Fur, Birgid, Berti and Daju tribes then became targets for waves of displaced groups from Northern Darfur, especially the Zaghawa and various camel pastoralists of so-called Arab origin whose traditional grazing lands had suffered.

In this already chaotic situation, the famine of 1983-84 was devastating' (Ayoub, 2006, p.1).

The scarcity and the interrelated famine precipitated widespread conflict, which more and more took on an ethnic dimension because every group tried to justify their claim to land by emphasizing their culture and ethnic identity (Ayoub, 2006).

Once more, looking at the situation in Gedarif State from a 'human security' perspective is relevant. Hypothetically, human *insecurity* leads to fear within these ethnic groups, which triggers the conflicts. Natural resources are of an immense importance for the survival of the group. Thus, when land is scarce, the researcher believes that the identities and group survival of the Gedarif State people are threatened. Both Baldri's and Ayoub's observation underscores the importance and interrelatedness of both livelihood security and ethnicity for group identity in Gedarif State.

Consequently it can be argued that when land becomes scarcer, the people of Gedarif State are experiencing Human *Insecurity* as they fear of losing their animals, their crop and as a result even their families and eventually their common group identity. This fear presumably triggers their 'conflict frame', which results in conflict over the control of and access to land. This land is highly needed to provide in their livelihoods and as such makes up the non-ethnic component of their group identity. However, the second component of their group identity, ethnicity, which is also strongly related to land, is utilized to justify their claims to land. As such, a conflict over land obtains an ethnic dimension. The relation between land and group identity is schematically shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2 Land and Group Identity

Figure 2 portrays that when Land gets scarcer the people of Gedarif State experience human *insecurity*. Human *insecurity* leads to conflict as a result of the fear –and the conflict frame- it presumably triggers. Conflict, group identity and land are related in two ways. The land conflicts are fought over access to and control over land. This land is needed for livelihood security, the non-ethnic component of group identity. However, many conflicts get an ethnic dimension as the ethnic component of group identity is utilized to justify historic claims over Land as a result of a common culture and descent.

Group Identity and the State

Culture is common to ethnic groups as well as to a nation. However, with a nation, culture and territory are a union. With ethnicity that is not always the case. When does an ethnic group acquire territorial rights (Isumonah, 2003)? In Sudan, acquiring ownership rights to land depends on both the traditional power and the State, with the State's ruling being more decisive. The statutory land tenure system in Sudan mostly benefits the elites closest to the government in Khartoum and as such some groups are denied their ownerships rights while others are favored.

According to Isumonah 'land tenure is crucial to the definition of an individual's ethnic identity in an agrarian society. Thus as an element of national identity, land derives its significance from land ownership' (Isumonah, 2003, p.4). This ownership right is denied to some groups in Gedarif State and as such their group identities are threatened, as land is crucial for their ethnic identity as well as for providing in their livelihoods.

When one group feels marginalized or threatened by another group as a result of inequality or perceived inequality, this often leads to conflict (McCoy, 2008). In addition, according to Busumtwi-Sam (in McCoy, 2008, p.110), there are three factors that lead to protracted conflict: 'contests over the state and the distribution of political power, the distribution of membership in the political community and the distribution of values and resources'. In Gedarif State the conflicts revolve around the latter while the first factor, the state and the people with political power, are the ones who unequally divide the resources.

Thus, it can be said that in Gedarif State land ownership is of immense importance to the different identity groups for both their survival as for their ethnic identity. The state in Sudan grants ownerships rights, yet it favours their own elitist group over other identity groups. As such, as a result of the inequality in land rights the other groups believe to be threatened, which leads to conflict. The relation between group identity and the state is schematically shown in Figure 3.



Figure 3 Group Identity and the State

Figure 3 shows that land ownership –which is a crucial element of group identity for the various groups inhabiting Gedarif State- is regulated by the state. The state however grants ownership rights in an unequal and unjust way as it favours the own elite group. This inequality is believed to result in conflicts over land and land ownership.

The State and Land

In chapter two, climate change and environmental degradation combined with socio-economic inequalities have been identified as the main grounds why land in Gedarif State is conflict prone.

'In the multitude of concern over poverty and human rights, climate change came to confirm that human interference in the natural environment is the most important aspect of the social environment and the most important socio-economic human right. These negative impacts deepen and aggravate the existing social and economic disparities. This aggravation leads to the regression of human development, especially so among the poor sectors' (Belal, 2008b p.5).

As Belal says, climate change has deepened the already existing socio-economic discrepancies. According to him, an important factor in addressing climate change is the state and rational environmental governance.

'The state, especially so in developing countries must adopt adaptation as one of the strategies addressing climate change. The adaptation of the state is fundamental for the adaptation of the poor who are more vulnerable to the different aspects of the negative impacts of climate change' (Belal, 2008b, p.1).

The integration of environmental issues in government policy is essential for the realization of sustainable development and interrelated long-term peace.

However, in chapter four the Sudanese state was defined as a poor and a weak state, which means that this state is not willing or able to properly address these factors of environmental degradation, which affect the Sudanese people as a whole but most gravely the poor. While the adjustment of the state is essential for the adjustment of the poor, the Sudanese state does not tackle these problems. What's more, the state has illegally grabbed land for personal benefits and also the succeeding land policies have aggravated the scarcity of land for the different groups inhabiting Gedarif State.

The Sudanese state's behaviour concerning land is best defined as environmental corruption.

'Rational environmental governance is linked with the resistance and combat against environmental corruption in which the corrupted persons make use of their authority in environmental violations to achieve illegal gains. Environmental corruption is the main reason for the lack of environmental and social justice' (Belal, 2008b, p.5).

The end results of this corruption mostly affect the poor sectors as the amount of land that they can use becomes scarcer and providing in livelihood becomes harder while the profits of this corruption benefit the powerful groups in the governing system.

Considering all the above it can be said that the Sudanese state contributes to the land conflicts in Gedarif State in two ways. First of all it does not properly address the arising problems concerning climate change and environmental degradation. This neglect has an important role in the ever more scarcity of land. Secondly, Sudan is characterized by a poor and weak state and as a result a poor and weak land tenure system. Furthermore, the state is assumed to be environmentally corrupt, which also contributes to increasing scarcity of land. The relation between the state and land is schematically shown in Figure 4.

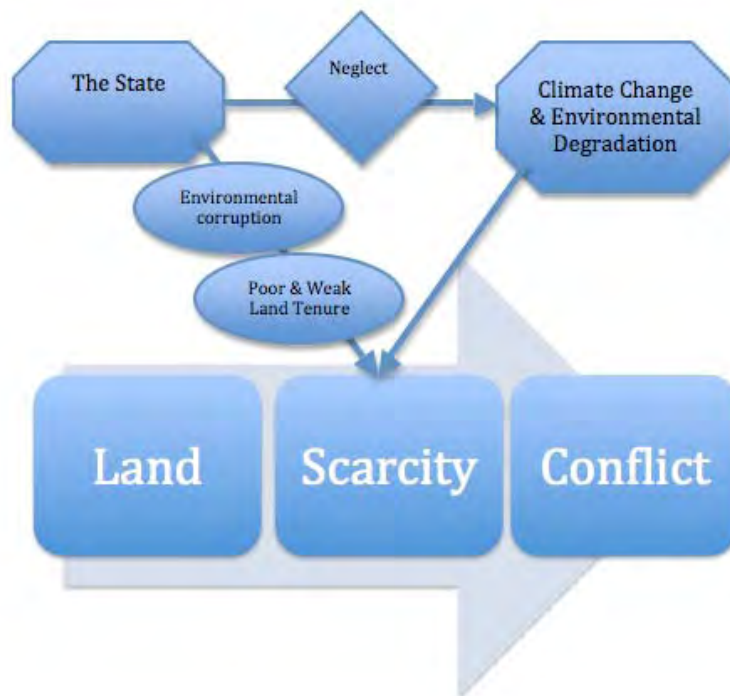


Figure 4 The State and Land

Figure 4 depicts the causal relationship in which the scarcity of land results in conflict. This scarcity of land is partly due to climate change and environmental degradation and partly due to the state as the state does not properly address the affects of climate change and

environmental degradation. In addition the state's environmental corruption combined with Sudan's poor and weak land tenure system has increased the scarcity of land even more.

Land, Group Identity and the State

Conflicting claims over land ownership or exploitation [...] often rest(s) on complex economic, historic, ethnic, symbolic and power considerations which, in most instances, tend to create issues of identity and its politicization and mobilization as essential feature of the dynamics of the conflict (Tohami, 2007, p.5).

The relation between land, group identity, the state and conflict in Gedarif State is complex and difficult to comprehend. Mohamed Salih (in: Tohami, 2007, p.5) argues that 'under situations of increased competition issues of ecology are interlinked with questions of human rights, ethnicity, and [of] distributive [nature]'. He stresses the importance of looking at the ways in which the competition and conflict over natural resources can be connected to other conflicts, which are of a political and cultural nature. All these issues do not stand-alone and as such they influence and enforce each other.

Although, the many major conflicts that bestride the rain lands of Sudan, such as the conflicts in Darfur, Abyie, Rezeigat, Southern Blue Nile, Malia and Eastern Sudan, appear to be political, they are in essence of a land degradation and land ownership related nature (Tohami, 2007). However, 'rapid environmental degradation, unequal distribution of power, and changing consumption patterns exacerbate natural resource scarcity' (Redclift, in: Tohami, 2007, p.4). When land gets scarcer and when under increasing pressure the stakes rise and claims over land proliferate, natural resources scarcity is intensified. Furthermore, Ascerlad (in: Tohami, 2007, p.5) made the observation that 'environmental conflict is made explicit when communities establish an immediate logical connection between environmental degradation and the activities of certain social agents'. And as such, due to the state's failure in dealing with scarcity and environmental degradation these resource-based conflicts obtain a political layer. The above and all the previous chapters underpin a history of conflict in relation to land and access to natural resources. While at the same time, over a period of time, these conflicts have often obtained a political and an ethnic layer. Although these conflicts did not start over political or ethnic differences, yet they are prolonged and aggravated due to political and ethnic factors such as state failure and group claims to land.

In the light of the above, the effect of land degradation is a downward spiral of scarcity with growing proliferation of stakes and claims over land. The direct result has been the intensification of conflict and violence over land; ethnic and tribal group polarization; the corrosion of a long history of peaceful coexistence, which characterized Sudanese

communities; the institutionalization of poverty; a underpinning of feelings of neglect, and marginalization and ultimately political instability and social upheaval; all of which are characteristics that define both today's Sudan as well as today's Gedarif State (Tohami, 2007).

Consequently it can be argued that the main reason that the land conflicts in Gedarif State are sustained, prolonged and aggravated is the scarcity and inequality of land and land ownership. The resources scarcity is a result of environmental degradation and climate change intensified by political factors such as bad land policies, neglect of environmental degradation and land alienation by the state.

When land becomes scarcer, the people of Gedarif State are experiencing Human *Insecurity* as they fear of losing their livelihood security, their families and eventually their common Group Identity. This fear triggers their 'conflict frame', which results in conflict over the control of and access to land. This land is highly needed to provide in their livelihoods and as such makes up the non-ethnic component of their group identity. Even though ethnicity is not the 'reason' of conflict, the conflicts occur following ethnic lines. Ethnicity and the non-ethnic component livelihood security are strongly intertwined within the groups' common identity. In addition, ethnicity, which is strongly related to land by a common culture and descent, is utilized to justify the claims to land. As such, these conflicts over land obtain an ethnic dimension.

As the inability to access land results in livelihood insecurity, the loss of food, families and consequently the loss of their culture, shared descent and thus the identity of the group, land ownership is of immense importance to the different Identity Groups for both their survival as for their ethnic identity. The state in Sudan grants ownerships rights yet it favours the own elitist group over other identity groups, which creates inequality. In addition, Sudan is characterized by a poor, weak and environmentally corrupt state and as a result a poor land tenure system, which even more contributes to increasing scarcity of land. As a result of the inequality in land rights the other groups are threatened and feel marginalized, which leads to conflict. The relation between Land, Group Identity and the State is schematically shown in Figure 5.

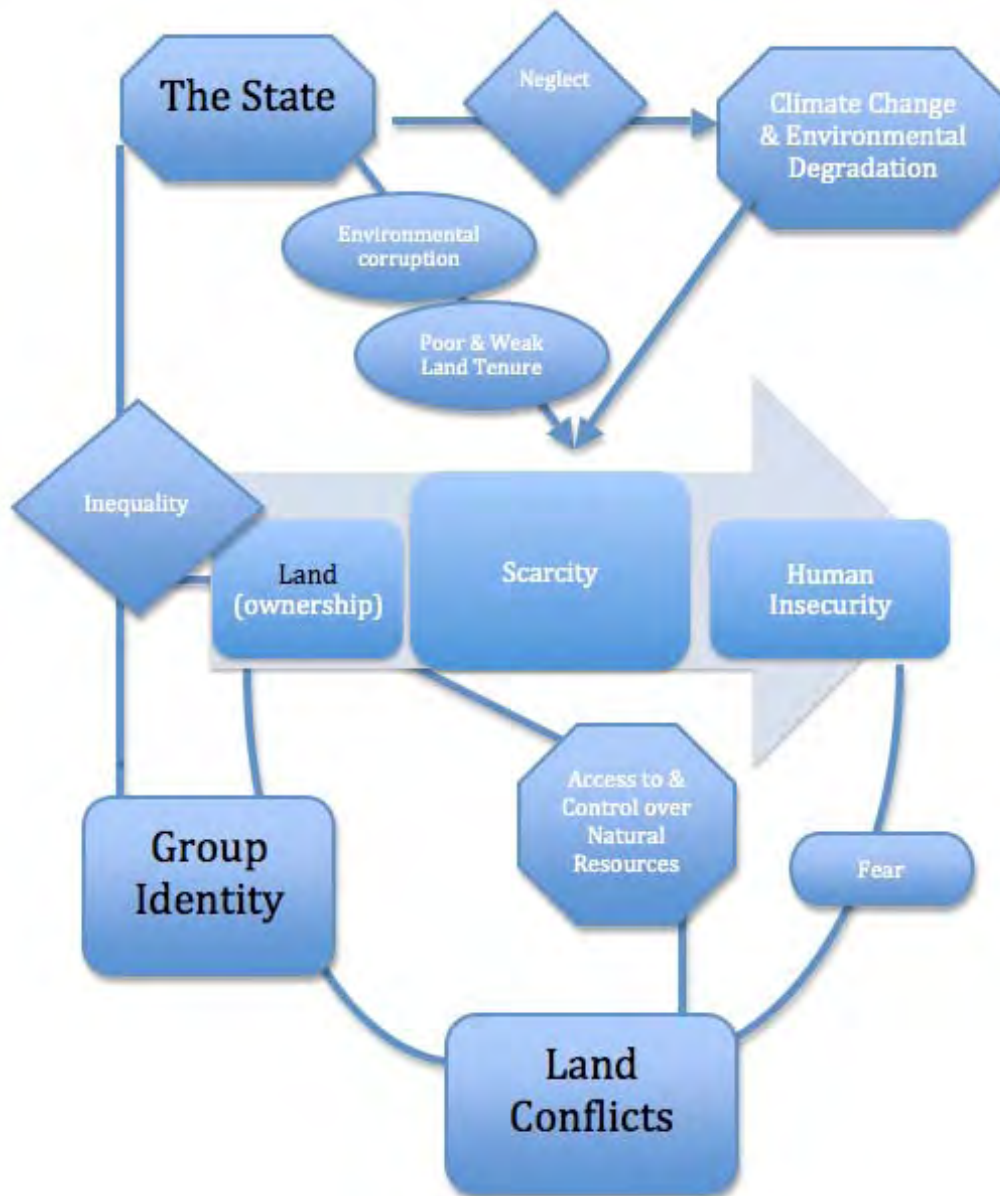


Figure 5 Systematic overview: Land, Group Identity and the State

Figure 5 reflects the complex relation between land, group identity the state and conflict. In the centre of Figure 5 the scarcity of land, which results in human *insecurity* it is portrayed. The scarcity of land is partly due to climate change and environmental degradation and partly due to the state, as the state does not properly address the affects of climate change and environmental degradation. In addition the state's environmental corruption combined with Sudan's poor and weak land tenure system has increased the scarcity of land even more.

Human *insecurity*, due to scarcity and inequality, leads to land conflicts as a result of the fear –and the conflict frame- it triggers. The land conflicts are fought over access to and control over land, as land and land ownership are an essential part of group identity –both

ethnic and non-ethnic-. The last link shown in Figure 5 is the link between land ownership, the state and group identity, which shows that land ownership is of crucial importance for the identities of the different groups inhabiting Gedarif State. Land ownership is regulated by the state that grants ownership rights in an unequal and unjust way as it favours the own elite group. This inequality sustains, aggravates and prolongs the conflicts over land and land ownership.

Conclusion

The central aim of this research project was to explore how group identity and the Sudanese state influence the land conflicts in Gedarif State and how these factors interact on a local level. This aim has been studied by firstly a disentanglement of these factors by analysing *the position of land in conflict; the influence of group identity on conflict and the influence of state politics on local conflicts* separately. Secondly, they have been studied more holistically on their interrelatedness in *an analysis on the interaction of these aspects*. Schematically the aim of this research project is shown in Figure 1b.



Figure 1b Conceptual Model

The position of land in conflict in relation to the Gedarif State conflicts has been analysed by looking at the literature on resources conflicts, economic and social inequality and environmental scarcity and climate change. Much of the literature on resources conflicts discusses situations that differ vastly from the Gedarif State conflicts in both intensity and duration. They are shorter, less intense and most of all, land is not a primary commodity exported and used to finance the conflicts, as in other cases concerning resources. Also a solely socio-economic analysis of the Gedarif State conflicts proved insufficient. Socio-economic theories provide a useful analytical framework for the understanding of how inequality – socio-economic, political and resource inequality - can lead to conflict and socio-

economic factors can become more relevant when a conflict intensifies, yet socio-economic theories give a secondary role to the natural environment, or they don't consider it at all.

In order to have a broader understanding of the position of land in Gedarif State, the land conflicts were analyzed through a human security lens and the importance of non-violent threats such as insecure livelihoods, resource insecurity and poverty become clear. Looking at environmental scarcity in Gedarif State raised issues of environmental change, a high rate of population growth and unequal social distribution of resources. Furthermore, Gedarif State, like other poor countries or regions, is very susceptible to and affected by scarcity crises as they already suffer from shortages of fertile, rain fed land. The threats arising from environmental scarcity in Gedarif State are both violent and non-violent. The land conflicts in Gedarif State are heavily pressured by environmental change and environmental scarcity and climate change aggravates these already existing factors.

The position of land in the Gedarif State conflicts is complex and several of the theories discussed here do not fully explain why land is a factor of conflict. Bringing all these theories together however gives a more comprehensive view on land and conflict in Gedarif State: Years of civil wars and local conflicts have increased the local communities' dependence on natural resources such as land. As a result of environmental degradation and climate change the land in Gedarif State is increasingly getting scarcer, which has a huge impact on the human security situation in Gedarif State, and poses both violent, and non-violent, threats to the communities that inhabit the area. What's more, the transformation of nature into tradable commodities by the Sudanese state has aggravated the scarcity of land for the pastoralists and the small-scale farmers while benefitting the governing elite. The combination of scarcity, marginalization and perceived inequality consequently result in conflict over access to, and control over, land. Thus, both the state and the natural environment have a share in the scarcity and inequality of land and land ownership, which explain the position of land in the Gedarif State conflicts.

The question *'how does group identity influence the land conflicts in Gedarif State?'* has been studied by exploring group identity in Gedarif State and by looking at the ethnic dimension and importance of land. In addition, the relation between group identity and (violent) conflict in Gedarif State has been analyzed by putting academic theories side by side with the empirical data on Gedarif State.

It was found that Gedarif State is composed of several ethnic groups that have different origins, some of which are dominant in the area. In Gedarif State ethnicity includes a shared descent but also a common link to land. Next to ethnic identity, the different groups in Gedarif State also have non-ethnic characteristics, such as their livelihoods. Some groups have a pastoralist way of living, some are semi-nomadic and others are farmers. Whatever the way

of life, land in Gedarif State is bound up with the identities of the communities that have lived there for generations. A central finding in this section has been that group identity in Gedarif State is a combination of ethnicity and way of life –their non-ethnic identity-. Neither of these two components sufficiently explains the essence of group identity for the Gedarif State people alone. Within the identities of the Gedarif State people the importance and the influence of the land they live on and the cultures this land nurtures is captured.

The relationship between (ethnic) identity and (violent) conflict in Gedarif State has been looked at, by making use of three influential academic theories on ethnic conflict. However, as identity in Gedarif State is composed of both an ethnic, as well as a non-ethnic, component and as ethnicity in Gedarif State is tied up with survival, theories that centre on subtle, or even large ethnic difference, do not seem to accurately reflect the reality in Gedarif State. Anthony Oberschall's concept of a cognitive frame however is more appropriate. According to Oberschall there are two frames, a normal frame and a crisis frame. People switch from the normal frame to the crisis frame when triggered by fear. The assumption was made that the disputes in Gedarif State are triggered by a fear of livelihood insecurity, scarcity of resources, and inaccessibility to land that can result in them losing their animals, their crops, and as a result, even their families. Hypothetically, human *in*security leads to fear within the Gedarif State groups, which, in turn, leads to conflict. The concept of a cognitive frame explains why herders are more often the aggressors than large-scale farmers as the herders and small-scale farmers have more to lose, and more to fear, when experiencing human *in*security.

As with the position of land in the Gedarif State conflicts, the influence of (ethnic) identity in the Gedarif State conflicts is complex. This is mainly due to the fact that group identity in Gedarif State is so much more than a common culture; it is composed of both an ethnic and a non-ethnic component. Identity conflicts in Gedarif State are not necessarily due to ethnic differences, even though they can, and do, occur along ethnic lines. Group identity is an undeniable component of conflict in Gedarif State.

The influence of state politics on local land conflicts has been explored by first looking at land tenure in Sudan. Secondly, land in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) has been explored and lastly, the effectiveness of the Sudanese government and the effects of its national and regional land policies on a local level have been looked at.

Land tenure in Sudan is a legal pluralism of traditional and statutory land tenure systems. These different tenure systems lack any history or present of harmony and coexistence. While they both have authority, they conflict with rather than compliment each other, which leaves a confused legal framework. In addition, both tenure systems discriminate against some groups while favouring others. The statutory tenure system mostly

benefits the ruling elites, and the customary tenure system mostly benefits the *sheikh's* own tribe while discriminating against women and migrants. In East Sudan the same legal pluralism of traditional and statutory land tenure systems was found. The customary authorities and modern governing authorities in the East work parallel to each other on non-communicating tracks. In Gedarif State the traditional authority is most influential and, as a result, most cases of land disputes do not even reach the government authorities. When the traditional and the modern disagree however, the national and the regional state representation out powers the native administration to benefit the modern governing elite in Khartoum.

In the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) the issues of land and ownership are not explicitly addressed; they were deferred to the post-agreement stage at which point they created new problems and massive confusion. There are many land related actors and institutions in Sudan with many differing views and stakes and as four years have passed since the signing of the CPA and only two out of six proposed Land Commissions have been established. As a result, the challenge to establish institutional procedures, for the use and management of land that are inclusive, just and equitable remains

Furthermore, it was found that Sudan is characterised by diverse government structures; pre-colonial, colonial and recent times have known different governments with different rules, different forms of authority and different interests. Over the years some have proven to be more static while others were rather more dynamic, often they existed simultaneously but not always in harmony. The Sudanese state is best defined as both poor and weak and the government's share in the land conflict in Gedarif State is considerable. Both directly and indirectly the lack of political will (and capacity) to govern have many consequences. For lasting social justice, land tenure reform and legal consensus is needed. For lasting social peace a strong state, responsible towards all Sudanese people, with the will and capacity to govern is needed.

The influence of the Sudanese State politics on the local land conflicts in Gedarif State is complex and multiple. It has become apparent that behind the Gedarif State land conflicts a big share of responsibility lies with the Sudanese state. The Sudanese state's governing is poor and weak, and there is not enough will (nor capacity) to govern properly and deal with the countries' most pressing issues. Poor governance and, more specifically, poor environmental governance has led to tensions between the different identity groups of the state whose livelihoods are dependent on land. The consequences of weak and poor governance are clearly visible and only too strongly felt among the poor communities in Gedarif State.

With an analysis on the interaction of these aspects the main question **‘how do group identity and the Sudanese state influence the land conflicts in Gedarif State and how do these factors interact on a local level?’** has been looked at. Before getting into this, it is good to remember that the influence of land, group identity and the state were the only factors that have been explicitly explored in this research. As a result of selecting these factors other factors have largely stayed unaddressed. This does not mean, however, that they are not relevant. Nor does it mean that they are completely left out of the analyses. It does mean though, that they were not on the forefront of this explorative research. The Sudanese conflict is enshrouded with complexities and not only the factors analysed in this research project but several, entangled factors play a role in the Gedarif State conflicts.

For the three factors looked at in this research it was found that main reason that the land conflicts in Gedarif State are sustained, prolonged and aggravated is the scarcity and inequality of land and land ownership. Land is essential for the survival and the identities of the different groups inhabiting Gedarif State. The scarcity of land has two main reasons namely environmental degradation and climate change intensified and aggravated by political factors such as bad land policies, the neglect of environmental degradation and environmental corruption by the state. As such, both the state and nature create and aggravate scarcity.

The increasing scarcity of land affects the people of Gedarif State gravely as they experience human *in*security, due to the fear of losing their livelihood security, their families and eventually their common group identity. This fear triggers their ‘conflict frame’, which results in conflict over the control of, and access to, land. The land is highly needed to provide in their livelihoods and as such makes up the non-ethnic component of their group identity. Even though ethnicity is not the ‘reason’ of conflict, the conflicts occur following ethnic lines as ethnicity and the non-ethnic component of livelihood security are strongly intertwined within the groups’ common identity. In addition, ethnicity, which is strongly related to land by a common culture and descent, is utilized to justify the claims to land. As such, these conflicts over land obtain an ethnic dimension. Thus, the scarcity, created by the state and nature, threatens the survival and group identities of the Gedarif State people.

The state in Sudan grants ownerships rights yet it favours their own elitist group over other identity groups. As a result, many lands are not accessible for the pastoralists and farmers. The inability to access land and the scarcity of land results in livelihood insecurity, the loss of food, families and consequently the loss of their culture, shared descent and thus the identity of the group. Land ownership is of immense importance to the different identity groups for both their survival as for their ethnic identity, however the state in Sudan grants ownerships rights in an unequal manner. In addition, Sudan is characterized by a poor, weak and environmentally corrupt state and as a result a poor land tenure system, which

contributes even more to the increasing scarcity of land. As a result of the inequality in land rights the other groups are threatened and feel marginalized, which again leads to conflict. Consequently, the scarcity of land, created by the state and nature, combined with the unequal access and ownerships rights granted by the state threaten the survival and group identities of the Gedarif State people, as a result they clash in order to gain access to, and control over, land.

Recommendations

The vulnerability extended from the past, accumulated and piled up over the present. It will continue to the future if the situations remained unchanged or the root causes are not removed. It is cumulative vulnerability that multiplies every day, every hour and minute. It breeds threats to food security and social justice. Vulnerability is the outcome of the past and present colonial policies in alliance with the wrecked socio- economic policies of our governments (Belal, 2008b, p.2).

The situation in Gedarif State is very precarious. The vulnerability for the different identity groups in Gedarif State has worsened due to environmental degradation, climate change and successive government policies and interventions. Without drastic changes the present 'low intensity' conflicts have the expectancy to get out of hand with the possibility of a second Darfur – a conflict that originated over natural resources and scarcity -. Darfur had a dramatic course of action, a course that could be Gedarif State's future if the current problems are not dealt with properly, firmly and timely.

To avoid this ominous future it is advisable for all parties working on land and land conflicts in Gedarif State –NGOs, CBOs, CSOs, the state, investors, and local interest groups- to work on two tracks simultaneously. The first track would be on a governmental level. The national government and the regional governments will have to put in a strong effort to work on the negative effects of environmental degradation and climate change. In addition, a strategy for durable resource management should be developed and utilized. Furthermore, the national, the regional and the native authority should work together in formulating a land tenure policy that includes all inhabitants and that guarantees social justice, land rights and ownership rights for the small-scale farmers, the pastoralists, the mechanized farmers, the elites, the women and the migrants.

The second track would be on a ground level, aimed at the conflicting parties. The small-scale farmers and the pastoralists used to peacefully coexist, however in recent years this practice has been disregarded. The different groups should be trained to employ resources in a durable manner; to manage their conflicts without violence and to peacefully coexist once again.

What's more, at the beginning of this research Tolstoy's (1982, p.1812) observation that 'the deeper we delve in search of (these) causes the more of them do we discover; and each separate cause or whole series of causes appears to us equally valid in itself and equally unsound by its insignificance in comparison with the size of the event', was taken into

consideration and three factors of analysis were selected. Nevertheless, there are many more factors and actors that could be of influence in the Gedarif State land conflicts. It is therefore recommendable to address other possible influential factors and actors in follow-up research on the Gedarif State land conflicts.

In addition, the focus of this research has been on one state in Sudan and on three possible factors of influence. Therefore the outcome of this research is context specific what refrains it from making overall recommendations on land and resource conflicts. However, by narrowing the focus, this research was able to go into the specifics of the land conflicts in Gedarif State and as a result, it was able to give a detailed and holistic overview that other academics can use to extrapolate knowledge from. Hence, making a contribution to the overall academic literature on resource and land conflicts.

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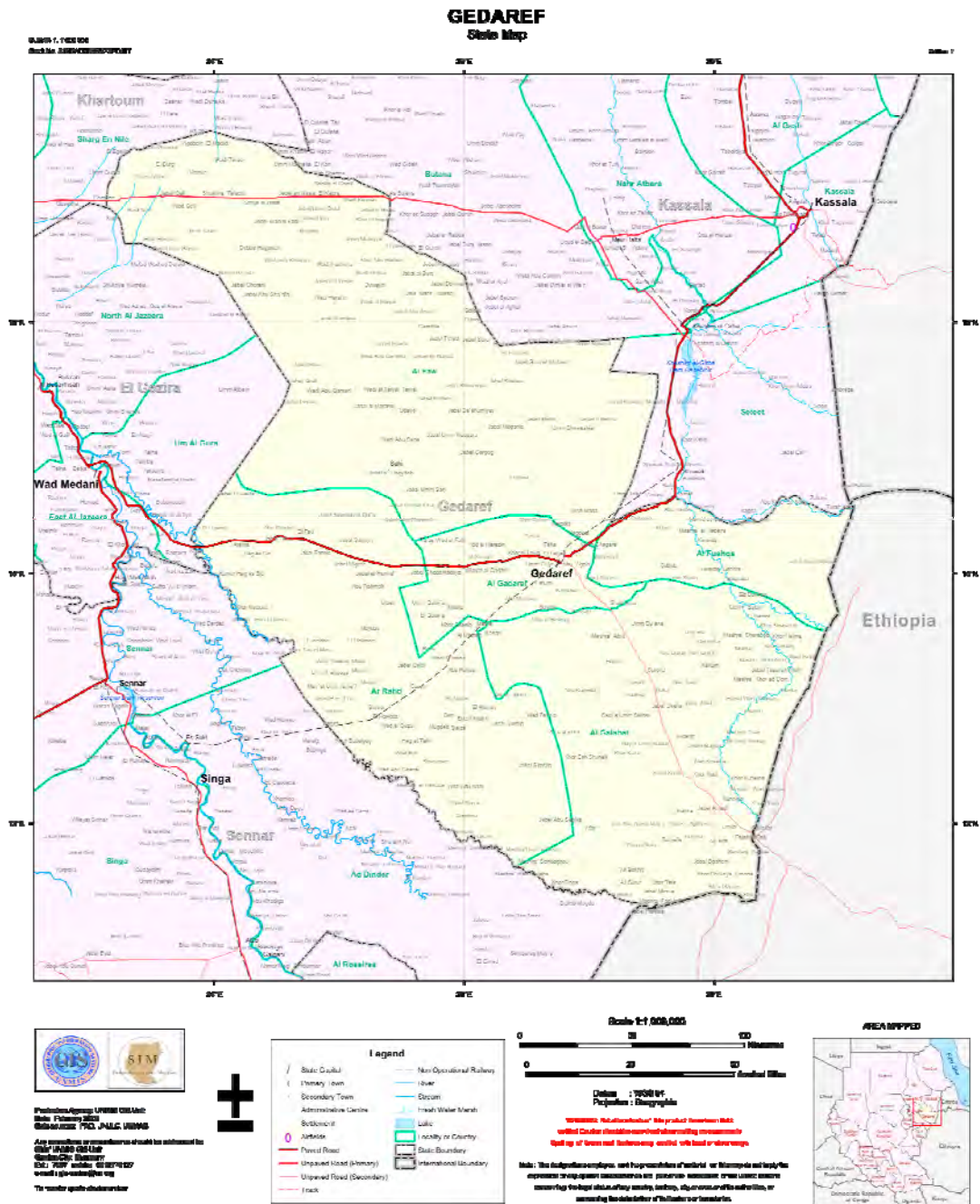
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Annex I Sudan Map



Annex II Gedarif State Map



Annex III Table of Aspects

Issue	Parties	Positions	Causes
Conflicts between farmers and nomads over land	Nomads	Do not always attend animals closely, or sometimes deliberately allowed to trespass into cultivated land, which leads to crop damage	<p>The routes in the state start from pastures in the north and cross long distances. Most routes are not properly designed and pastoralists may travel long distances without passing resting grounds (manazil)</p> <p>In general, there is strong bias against pastoralists in favor of farmers in the state</p>
	Farmers (And their Unions)	Tend to strongly encounter the opening of pastoral corridors more often than not	<p>The influence of the farmers and their union on the Legislative Assembly could be understood by reference to a 1994 Presidential Decree that allocated an exclusive area in the southern part of the state for the exclusive use of the pastoralists as a dry season grazing ground. Since then the farmers dominated Legislative Assembly have shown no interest in effecting that decision.</p> <p>More and more land has been illegally grabbed by some powerful members of the farmers' union for the purpose of large scale mechanized farming of sorghum and sesame</p>
	The police force	Accused by the herders that they blackmail them even if when their herds do not cause any damage to the standing crops in the field	
	The State	More and more land has been allocated by the state	
Conflicts between nomads over pasture	Between and among Nomads		<p>In the southern parts and when the nomads return to their dry season grounds they find nothing because all their lands have been overtaken by the ferocious quick-profit-seeking farmers. Even the little left is either grazed by farmers' herds or burnt to keep the nomads away from farmland.</p> <p>Thus the situation in the south is more critical since the nomads stay here at least 10 months before they move north again with the onset of the rainy season</p>
Conflict over Dinder Park	The villagers Local people	Object to any plan that makes them lose their right to cultivate, use pasture and build their houses	The expansion of the park boundaries in the 1980s resulted in the inclusion of (10) villages into its boundaries
	The park authorities	Their plan to move all the villages outside the boundaries of the park has culminated in the tragic burning of some of these villages	
	Pastoralists	Invade the park	It is better to lose half your herd due to penalties than losing it all due to hunger and thirst

Conflict over water points This type of conflict is similar to the one between sedentary farmers and nomads	Between herders themselves	Often resort to the use of force	This in order to have access to watering points
	Between herders and villagers and farmers and schemes' owners	Refuse to allow herders to use water that is available in their village or schemes Sometimes schemes owners poison the water and farmers and villages tend to fence water points which the herders believe are communal	

Source: Heul, van der, A., RBC Management Network, *3A conflict map on North-Sudan*, Not Published, pp. 9-11.

Annex IV Overview of Land Legislation

The 1903 Land Acquisition Ordinance - gave the government powers to acquire land for irrigation schemes and other public purposes.

The 1905 Land Settlement Ordinance - made general provision for the settlement and registration of claims to land. All land should be deemed the property of the government unless claims to the contrary were proved.

The 1918 Native Disposition of Lands Restrictions Ordinance – by which the colonial government sought the ‘protection’ of the native private landowners from dispossession by expatriates

The 1920 Declaration on Gash - stated that: the whole of the land situated in the delta of the River Gash is government land and the government reserves its full rights of ownership of land and the flow of the river through the area declaring the full rights and control of government over the delta.

The 1927 Gezira Land Ordinance - the first instance of withdrawing usufruct rights on a large scale, which undermined further the position of original land-holders and provided for the ownership of all land in Gezira by the government.

The 1925 Land Settlement and Registration Ordinance - enabled any body that claims title or right on land to be recognized and registered.

The 1930 Land Acquisition Ordinance - paved further the way for government to acquire any “land subject to village or tribal rights” when it “appears that it is likely to be required permanently or temporarily for any public purpose”.

The 1970 Unregistered Land Act - created land as a scarce commodity subject to privatization and accumulation by minority rich investors (both local and foreign) that resulted in modified local land tenure systems continuous alienation of agro-pastoralists from their traditional homelands.

The 1984 Civil Transaction Act - Repeals the 1970 Unregistered Land Act, but is more comprehensive giving some details and guidelines for its practical implementation. The

Act maintains the basic principles of usufruct rights but recognizes that registered usufruct rights are of equal status to registered ownership.

The Local Government Act 1998 - was an attempt to restore the land administration vacuum at the local level created by the abolition of the Native Administration system in 1971.

Source: Egemi, O. A. (2006), "Land Tenure in Sudan Challenges to Livelihood Security and Social Peace", in: Galal el-Din el-Tayeb (Ed.) - SECS, *Land Issues and Peace in Sudan*, Khartoum: Shamsaddin A. Dalwalbait, pp. 31-34.