

Chapter 2

The History And Origins Of The Current Conflict In Darfur

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This chapter reviews some of the history of the causes of the current conflict. This is vital in order to understand the origins of key features of the current crisis. There have been many different approaches to analyzing and understanding the conflict in Darfur. Some have attributed the conflict in Darfur to what they called the inherent warring nature of tribalism and bedowism¹⁻³. Others have focused on the pressures of ecological degradation, which sheds light on the limiting natural resource base, land use etc^{4,5}. However, such approaches gloss over the political economy of the natural resource use and tend to provide technical fixes to what are essentially political problems. Moreover the focus tends to be on one single part of the problem at only one level. Others tended to provide a shopping list in which all the causal factors are of an equal importance. Such an approach fails to identify the immediate factors from the root causes and the ways in which they interact. A more systematic analysis is required to inform any intervention strategy.

An alternative approach to understand the nature of the conflict and its impact on livelihoods should try to identify and analyze the local, national, regional and international processes and factors operating at each level and their role and contribution to the conflict.

For the past two centuries, at least three major factors have shaped and influenced the political, social and economic life of Darfur, and also of the central riverain State, and Darfur neighbours. These critically important factors are Islamism, trade and tribal identity, which have contributed to the social importance and dominance of religious leaders, tribal leaders and merchants. These factors combined with the diverse ecology of Darfur, shed light on the rationale underlying the distribution and use of the agricultural and pastoral resources.

This chapter shows how these processes are critical elements of the current crisis. The chapter reviews the history of Darfur, focusing first on the Fur Sultanate, Turco-Egyptian rule, the Mahadiya, Anglo-Egyptian condominium rule, and post-independence. The Fur Sultanate laid the foundations of the current patterns of tribal territories, systems of administration, land rights and trade networks. These evolved under the subsequent administrations. Other factors have come into play including repeated episodes of drought and famine, and the impact of wider regional conflict including the Chadian civil war, the Libyan Chadian war, and the north south civil conflict in Sudan.

The origins of the economic and political marginalization of Darfur and between different groups within Darfur, date back to the nineteenth century. Prior to this the Kingdom of Darfur was at least as powerful and important as its neighbours. The Turkish empire strengthened the central Nile riverain groups at the expense and exploitation of the peripheral regions. This pattern was continued during condominium rule, and post independence.

Historically Darfur was an important independent centre in both trade and religion. For the history of Darfur three different dynasties were decisive⁶:

- The Daju dynasty, whose political centre lay in the southeast of Jebel Marra. It ruled from about the 13th century to the 16th century.
- The Tunjur dynasty, whose centre of power lay north of Jebel Marra. It ruled over Darfur up to the 17th century.
- The Keira dynasty: Its centre was in Turra in Jebel Marra and later in El-Fasher. The core group in the Keira dynasty were the Fur, but the dynasty sought to assimilate other groups⁷.

Historical background to Darfur

The Fur Sultanate

The Fur Sultanate was established by Sulayman Solongdongo(1650 -1680). Prior to that, the history of the kingdom in its earlier Tunjur and Daju eras remains unknown. Following the emergence of the Sultanate from Jebel Marra into central areas of the region (the richest and stable parts in term of soil and water) its growth and expansion was achieved through a combination of peaceful and coercive incorporation of territorial and ethnic groups⁸. In 1787 the 7th Sultan Mohammed Tayrab, extended the Fur Sultanate to the Nile by conquering the Funj province of Kordofan to the east and opening Darfur to the expanding commerce of the 17th and 18th century⁹.

Migration and ethnic diversity

Strategically located between the White Nile and West Africa, there was a constant flow of migration to the region from the west and east. In addition, a central strategy of the Darfur sultanate was to encourage immigrants' movement into Darfur to meet the pressing need for manpower. Immigrants from West Africa, the Nile Valley and other locations included holy men (*fuqara*), scholars (*ulama*), traveling merchants (*jallaba*) as well as poor immigrants. Many of these groups were encouraged to settle by grants of land and position from the sultans (*ibid*). In addition to this strategy a process of assimilation and acculturation was set in motion to incorporate other groups and territories. Such groups included among others Berti, Marareet, Mime, Daju, Bergid, Tunjur, Dading. These groups along with the Fur and Masalit and other small tribes inhabit the center of the region, where they traditionally practice sedentary farming.

In the north western part of the region, the semi-arid arc of territory north of Weddai in Chad and Darfur has been occupied by the Zaghawa and the closely related Bideyat since the sixteenth century (speaking Nilo-Saharan languages). To the North East migrated the Nubian language speakers: the Meidob and Bergid, ostensibly from the Nile Valley. Other groups emerged from the Fazara in North Egypt, the Zayadia (the largest camel owning group in the north) and the group collectively known as Northern Rizeigat. This group includes Nuweiba, Mahamid, Ireygat and Mahariya.

The expansion of the Keira dynasty westwards brought them into contact with the Dar Gimr (of Jaali origin, on the Nile) and Dar Tama (Daju in origin). The Gimr were conquered by the Fur, although the Gimr kept their Sultan. The rulers of Dar Tama were not subject to Darfur but paid tributes when territories were disputed (*ibid*, p84). The wetter Savanna to the south of the region was occupied by cattle nomadic group of the Ta'aisha, Beni Halba, Fellata, Habbaniya, Ma'alyia and Rizeigat (going from west to east across southern Darfur).

In broad terms the tribal distribution can be summarized in relation to livelihoods and ecology as including: the northern arid areas of camel nomadism; the central areas of rainland of agriculture; and the southern wet savannah area of cattle nomadism.

The current ethnic distribution Darfur has not changed substantially from the above sketch, although there have been shifts and movements of particular groups. Figure 3 shows one of the first known maps of the tribal *Dars* or homelands from 1928. Annex 1 lists the current Dar's, their location, and the name given to their leaders.

Figure 3

Trade, regional development and ethnic integration in the 19th century

Another factor that contributed to the expansion and internal consolidation of Darfur Sultanate was trade. Three major routes converged on the Fur Sultanate:

1. The route from western *Bilad al sudan* and going through Barnu, Weddai, Darfur and the Funj Kingdom to the Red Sea ports and the Hijaz¹⁰;
2. The famous *Darb al Arbain* or the forty Days Road beginning at Kobbei (25 miles north of El Fasher) in Darfur to and from Egypt. The route passed through Jebel

- Meidob, crossing the Libyan dessert through Bir Natrun, and on to Laqiyya, Salima, al Shaff, Kharja to Asyut in Egypt. In total it traversed nearly 1,100 miles of desert and took 40 days march. The route carried commerce of slaves and ivory from Chad and Darfur to Egypt for over 1000 years⁹.
3. A north westerly route to Tripoli and Tunisia via Fezzan¹⁰.

The *jellaba*, or arab merchants first came to Darfur as a result of these important trade routes. Around 1810 a fourth trade route opened up from Benghazi in northern Libya through the Kufra oasis to Weddai as a result of the decline of the caravan routes in the west⁹. This route thrived after the Islamic reformer and entrepreneur, the Grand Sanusi established religious hostels and sanctuaries from Kufra in south east Libya to Weddai in Chad for merchants and pilgrims.

These routes were well connected with local trade networks, which exploited the ecological variations of the Sultanate. This network of trans-Saharan, local and regional routes had a profound political, economic and cultural impact on the Sultanate. As a factor in state formation, local trade and specialization was probably most decisive^{8,10}.

The eastern trans-Saharan route from Benghazi to Weddai was opened to buy firearms for slaves in the first decade of the 19th century. The route flourished from 1875-1900 as a result of commercial (if not religious) alliance with the Sanusiyya of southern Libya. After 1881 the Darb el Aarbaein was closed by intervention of the Mahdist State.

Since then trade has been integral to livelihoods in Darfur. The role of local trade especially in the decades following the annexation of Darfur to Sudan in 1916 provided a forum through which the different ethnic groups interacted. Today there are more than 300 market places of different size all over Darfur¹¹.

Land - Origins of the Hakura system

Following the emergence of the Kiera sultanate in the central areas of the region, the sultanate started the organization of land through granting of *Hakura* (concession or estate). The granting of the *Hakura* included rights over the territory of the hakura and the people living within it. *Hakura's* were granted by the sultan to reward the notables for maintaining control over areas, or granted as a means of attracting newcomers to the sparsely populated kingdom, as well as to provide an income for members of the royal clan.

According to Abusalim (1974) the grant might include the transfer of the right as decided by the sultan as he is the absolute owner of the land. However the estate (*Hakura*) holder took neither *zakat* nor taxes from their estates these being reserved for the sultans. The main benefits derived from the estates were the tenants labor, and the various customary taxes, including *awaa'id* (customs taxes), the proceeds from the sale of stray slaves and animals, the fees and fines from rendering justice, and a share of the blood money paid to the deceased or injured's family⁸.

The Administrative System under the Darfur Sultanate

Darfur Sultanates adopted a three tier system of administration whereby people were ruled largely through their own chiefs. According to this system the administrative was

based upon four provinces, each divided into a number of district chiefdoms or *shartayas*. Each *shartaya* was further divided into a varying number of local chiefdoms or *dimlijyyas* administered by a *dimlij*. Some of the larger *shartayas* had chiefs called *sembi* who acted as agents for the *shartays* to control the *dimlijs*. The *shartay* was the sultan's representative and he was mainly concerned with justice and taxation. The appointment of the *shartay* was either made or confirmed by the Sultan. It is usually made from among the brothers of the previous holder. The village sheikh comprised the third layer of the system. They were responsible for the direct administration of land, tax collection, settlement of small disputes and all ceremonial activities concerning the upper level of the administrative system.

1874 – 1883 Turco-Egyptian rule

The Keira sultanate maintained its independence until it was overthrown in 1874 by the Ottoman empire (Turco-Egyptian rule), who invaded and occupied the northern part of Sudan by 1821. The Turco-Egyptians remained in Darfur until they were defeated by the Mahadiya troops in 1883. The brief period of Turco-Egyptian rule was marked by sporadic revolts by the Fur and the turbulent Baggara tribesmen to the south, for whom the coming of the Mahadiya promised the destruction of a hated foreign regime¹². They experienced a system of exploitative taxations that left them disgruntled. The methods of tax collection employed, as Hill (1959) described it, were derived from the old rule 'catch- as -catch can'¹³.

Under Turco-Egyptian rule, European and arab traders exploited the lucrative slave trade with southern Sudan often with the support of Turco-Egyptian officials. The cattle herding Baggara from Darfur were part of this commercial enterprise, and moved south and began trading slaves with small-scale traveling merchants called *jallaba*. Thus the beginning of a north-south divide in the Sudan associated with the commercial exploitation of southern Sudan involving European, Egyptian and northern Sudanese merchants occurred under this Turco-Egyptian rule¹⁴. At the same time this reduced the role and significance of previous trading links with Darfur, which marked the beginning of its 'marginalization' by the centre.

1883 – 1898 The Mahadiya

In 1883 Muhammad Ahmad declared himself as the Mahdi, 'the awaited one' who had come to restore Islam to its initial purity. His followers, known as the Ansar, gathered from all over Sudan. There were various unsuccessful attempts to put down this movement, and in 1885 Mahdist forces overran Khartoum, overthrowing the Turco-Egyptian regime.

The Khalifa Abdullahi, of the Ta'aisha of Darfur, succeeded the Mahdi. He did not command the support of all the Ta'aisha, and certainly not the Fur and other groups. From 1885-88 there were a series of revolts against Mahdist rule, first by the Rizeigat and then by the Fur¹⁵. There was also opposition to the Mahdists on the western frontier lead by a faqi – a holy man, from Dar Tama⁹.

So during this period the Khalifa was wrestling with the challenges of pacification and disputes in Darfur. In addition the state was involved in a policy of enforced migration of

the Baggara from their homeland in Darfur to Omdurman. This policy, which turned the nomads into a standing tribal army, coincided with the devastating famine and epidemic of 1889/90.

The Baggara did not respond willingly to the call of the Khalifa and they resisted both the threats and promises. However by 1888 and under the pain of destruction and dispersion by the military power of the Khalifa, the great tribal migrations of the Baggara started. By the early months of 1889 their first contingents reached Omdurman¹⁶.

These two periods - the Turco-Egyptian empire and the Mahdist years, came to be known as *umm kwakiyya* - years of misery, burning and banditry¹⁵. They were relatively short lived as compared with the independent sultanates, and had little influence on the institutions and processes established by the Fur Sultanate (ibid).

1898- 1916 Darfur – An Independent Sultanate Under Ali Dinar

In 1898 Darfur was the first region to liberate itself from the Mahadiya by Ali Dinar, a prominent Fur loyalist who was serving the Khalifa in Khartoum until the British troops captured Omdurman in 1898. He returned to Darfur and appointed himself Sultan intending to restore the Fur Sultanate as before, which meant imposing his rule on the southern arabs¹⁵. By 1916 Darfur was just emerging from a very severe famine, characterized by massive depopulation, localized civil disturbance and unrest. Compared with a century before, Darfur was ‘a shattered economy’¹⁵.

1899 – 1955 Anglo Egyptian Condominium rule

Although in 1898 an Anglo Egyptian army under Kitchener re-conquered Khartoum, it was not until 1916, that the British annexed Darfur by force, defeating and killing the Sultan Ali Dinar.

As with other countries under colonial regime the economic development was geared to serve the needs of the colonial economy^{17,18}. Production of cotton was one of the main interests of British rule in order to supply the flourishing textile industry in Britain (Manchester) adding to the already established trade route between the Nile region in Sudan and Egypt.

The object of satisfying the British market was mainly focused on establishment and expansion of cotton- growing on large centrally managed schemes or estates. Such a policy did little to improve the conditions of the many millions of small farmers outside the schemes. It also meant that the condominium *development efforts* were concentrated in a triangle area; which came to be known as the ‘3Ks’ - **K**osti, **K**assala and **K**hartoum. This cover the valley of the Nile to the North of Khartoum, the Blue Nile and white Nile areas immediately south of Khartoum, central Kordofan and the Southern parts of Kassala province. These areas benefited most from the spread of education and health services.

Peripheral provinces like Darfur experienced complete neglect. For example, by 1955 out of around 1,170 implemented schemes none were in Darfur. By 1947 Darfur had no province judge, education officer or province agriculturalist.

Table 1 Distribution of Agricultural Schemes in 1955 (adapted from Niblock¹⁷)

Province	Scheme (Name and/or type)	Number of Schemes
Blue Nile	Gezira (gravity)	1
	Pump schemes	581
Northern	Pumps schemes	430
Kassala	Gash (gravity)	1
	Tokar (gravity)	1
	Pump Schemes	4
Upper Nile	Pumps Schemes	34
Khartoum	Pumps Schemes	117
Total		1169

As a pre requisite for the imposition of the colonial type of economy in Sudan the condominium rule was involved in pacification and consolidation of its power in the country. For Darfur these goals meant the reorganization and management of the different tribes by defining the territories and retaining their tribal leaders (wherever that was possible) and avoid weakening them so that existing system should not be disturbed. In other words adoption of a soft landing policy in which old orders gave way to new and the new differed to the old. Annex 1 lists the tribal Dar's, their location, and the name given to their leaders.

1956 - Following Independence

Since independence in 1956 Sudan has had a succession of alternating military and democratic regimes (Box 3). Two major parties emerged both of whom were deeply committed to Islam: the Umma party (UP) with largely Mahdist followers and the National Unionist Party (NUP) with largely Khatmiya followers (with historical links to Egypt).

Box 3 Military regimes and democratic governments in Sudan since Independence

Date	Government
1956 1 st January 1956	Sudan becomes an independent republic based on a democracy of sectarian parties.
1958, November	Coup d'état resulting in the military regime of General Ibrahim Aboud.
1964, October	A transitional government led by Khatam al Khalifa (intended to prepare the country for democratic elections and devise a constitution).
1966, July	Coalition government of Sadiq al Mahdi, who won the parliamentary vote
1967, May	Mohamed Ahmed Maghoub replaced Sadiq al Mahdi
1968,	Elections returned Mohamed Ahmed Maghoub.
1969, May	Coup d'état led by Colonel Jaafar Numayri
1983, May	Numayri re-elected with 99.6% of the vote!!
1985, April	Numayri overthrown by the Transitional Military Council lead by General Swar al-Dahab
1985, 14 th April	Sadiq al-Mahdi re-elected, winning 99 of the 301 seats.
	Revolutionary Council
1989, June 30 th	Military takeover by the Revolutionary Command Council led by Brigadier Umar Hasan Ahmad al-Bashir. Ruled with the National Islamic Front led by Hasan el-Turabi.
1999	Split in the National Congress, and breakaway group formed by Turabi known as the National Popular Congress.

Although the condominium rule policies resulted in regional disparities of which Darfur was mostly affected, it left the Sudanese government in 1956 with a valuable flow of income¹⁷. This fund provided a good basis from which post independent government could launch development programs to address the inherited disparities. Yet the national administration intensified the same processes which were set into motion prior to 1956 i.e. expansion of pump schemes was maintained at an even higher rate. Of the 2280 schemes implemented by the mid sixties non were in Darfur. This is not surprising given the fact that governments of 1956 – 1969 were dominated by those social groupings who had a natural interest in maintaining the economic and social frame work from which they have benefited¹⁷. Therefore it did little to dismantle the pattern of society and economy created or maintained by the colonial rule. From 1969 to present day other processes come to play in the marginalization of Darfur. These processes will be discussed in the next section.

Table 2 Progress of Pump Irrigation Schemes in Sudan, pre 1920-1963 by Province

Period	Blue Nile		Northern		Khartoum		Upper Nile		Kassala		All Provinces
	Schemes										
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No	%	
Up to 1920	—	—	12	1.2	2	0.9	1	1.9	—	—	15
1921-30	4	0.4	10	1.0	4	1.8	—	—	—	—	18
1931-40	17	1.7	26	2.6	13	5.9	—	—	—	—	56
1941-45	15	1.5	25	2.5	10	4.5	1	1.9	—	—	51
1946-50	114	11.6	113	11.1	34	15.5	8	15.4	—	—	269
1951-55	431	43.9	244	24.1	54	26.4	24	46.2	4	25.0	757
1956-60	360	36.7	340	33.5	66	30.0	12	23.1	7	44.0	785
1961-63	40	4.1	244	24.1	37	16.8	6	11.5	5	31.0	332
Total	981	100.0	1014	100	220	100	52	100	16	100	2283

Adapted from Niblock (1987)17

1989 The NIF regime – National Congress Party

On 30 June 1989, 15 army officers of the Revolutionary Command Council led by Brigadier Umar Hasan Ahmad al-Bashir overthrew the civilian government of Sadiq el Mahdi. Sudan would now be governed by Islamic principles and the laws of the Quran, in accordance with the interpretations and regulations of the National Islamic Front (NIF) islamists, led by Turabi. The army, civil service and police force were reorganized, and positions filled with members of the NIF. The Popular Defence Force was established, which in some localities consisted of existing militias, formed under Sadiq el-Mahdi's rule. The new Islamic state of Sudan directed by Umar al-Bashir was to follow the new Islamic model espoused by Hasan al-Turabi, leader of the National Islamic Front.

With the NIF taking power in Khartoum a whole set of structural changes and processes were set into motion to serve and secure the new Islamic model. These processes included islamization, Arabism and mobilization of armed militia. Darfur has become one of the Mujahideen recruiting areas to join the Islamic Jihad in Southern Sudan. In this recruitment process many of the tribal leaders, who are now taking different alliances, and some of the leaders of the current opposition groups were involved. Meanwhile Darfur fell prey to intensive looting and robbery by Janjaweed and other groups in what became known as "armed banditry". Militarization of the Darfur society has taken place and tribal conflicts intensified. This has led to the formation of many armed opposition groups against the government such as the Daud Bolad movement in the 1990s.

The Current Conflict

This section discusses processes that have contributed to the current conflict at different levels including regional, national and local levels. Often these processes are intricately linked and particularly the local processes are influenced and shaped by wider regional and national level processes. The section is divided into two parts, first the national and regional processes, followed by the local processes. The national and regional processes include:

- Political and economic marginalization of Darfur in the 20th century
- Islamization and Arabism
- The North South Civil War Peace Process
- The mobilization of armed militias
- Regional relations with Chad and Libya and implications for Darfur

National and Regional Processes Contributing to the Conflict

Political and economic marginalization of Darfur in the 20th century

The British adopted a deliberate policy of enhancing the business interests of certain influential families from the central Nile valley by preferential allocation of productive assets (mostly land), business contracts and bank loans (converted into grants), with the objective of minimizing the risk of resistance to the colonial regime¹⁹. These groups included religious leaders, tribal leaders and merchants. Their emergence was due to old historical factors relating to the domination of religious life in northern society by Muslim Sufi religious orders and to the indirect rule policy of the colonial state¹⁹. In the hand of these social groupings rested authority and political influence in the post independence era (see annexes). This aggravated the already existing disparities in development within the north as well as between north and south¹⁴.

The first step toward planning development in Darfur was a 1956 survey, which recommended that Darfur, like the South must strive for self sufficiency²⁰. Stemming from the imbalance in regional investments was the neglect in the service sector as illustrated by the statistics provided by Daly (1991) in Box 4²⁰.

Box 4 Disparities in health and development in Darfur, 1956²⁰

In 1939, of 17 maternity clinics in Sudan, there was only one in Juba and non in Darfur. By 1941 there were 73 licensed midwives in Khartoum province, 59 in Gezira, four in Upper Nile and non in Darfur. Major epidemics occurred; in 1926 an outbreak of relapsing fever led to more than 1000 deaths in Darfur. Similarly outbreaks of cerebro-meningitis were reported in the mid thirties with 7,000 people dead in Darfur from June 1935 to spring 1936. Between 1940-45 another outbreak was reported with the peak in 1944 when almost 2300 cases were reported. Case fatality in Darfur was 9.9% - the highest in the country. By 1948/9 amid the cotton boom, famine conditions prevailed and the price of Dokhon (sorghum) in August 1949 was twice than in found in Omdurman, free grains were distributed in El Fasher and others towns, while many people outside were reduced to eating wild foods. Outbreaks of smallpox prevailed in Sudan from 1951-1955, and as usual Darfur was hard hit with incidence peaking in 1952 (3653 cases and 578 fatalities). By independence Darfur had the least developed medical services in the country with 0.57 hospital beds per thousand people (Khartoum 2.9).

In 1951 of the 23 government intermediate schools operating three were in the South, 2 in Kordofan, 1 in Darfur, 15 in Blue Nile, Northern and Khartoum provinces. In 1935 there was but one elementary school (described as a finishing school for sons of the more important chiefs), one tribal elementary school and two sub grade schools for a population of at least 500,000. Admitting the Khalwa was useless, Crawford,

the District Commissioner of Southern Darfur at that time, nonetheless believed *'it would be the greatest of pities, if the present elementary schools developed into something ... which was more than the (Southern) district needed or deserved.*

While Darfur suffered during this period from a regional imbalance in development, inequality within the region was evident in the distribution of the limited educational opportunities within Darfur. This is no surprise given the fact that the colonial administration focused on strengthening the social groupings mentioned above.

In this regard the education policy had been carefully thought out with a view to the education of the sons of tribal chiefs' only²⁰. Entry to schools had been very strictly controlled to the virtual exclusion of the sons of low paid ghaffirs, petty merchants and police. Ingleson, the governor of Darfur 1934 -41 succinctly put it *"We have been able to limit education to the sons of chiefs and native administration personnel and can confidently look forward to keeping the ruling classes at the top of the education tree for many years to come"* cited by Daly, p 107.

In southern Darfur W.F. Crawford¹ tried to restrict a lowly khalwa to notables' sons: limited space could be cited as an excuse if necessary. As he said, *"the advantage of dealing with the sons of the sheikh alone is that they run no risk of being swamped in class by the sharper-witted sons of merchants"*.

At independence and during the subsequent post-independence period religious leaders, tribal leaders and merchants came to hold great influence on the political, social and economic life of northern Sudan and of the country. They dominated the first parliament and senate, the legislative body and the central council members. Their emergence was due to old historical factors relating to the domination of religious life in northern society by Muslim Sufi religious orders and to the indirect rule policy of the colonial state¹⁹. Thus, *'the main constituencies of the political parties lay within the social groups at the core of the economic elite, and not among the popular masses'*(Brown (1992): page 97 quoted in ¹⁹) despite their efforts to become enfranchised. Of the eleven Darfurian seats in the first parliament there were eight tribal leaders, one merchant and two government officers.

Darfur was ruled by commissioners who neglected the basic needs of the people of Darfur and merely fulfilled the interests of the central government⁶. Thus under British rule Darfur suffered both political marginalization and processes of economic neglect and stagnation.

A further problem was the phenomenon of 'exported members' – parliamentarians from Khartoum that represented Darfur in the National Assembly but had little or no concern for the region. In direct response to this poor representation and the economic imbalances in Sudan in 1965 a number of educated Darfurians formed the Darfur Front. The head of the committee was Ahmed Direige later to become governor of north Darfur. Other representatives in this group included Dr Ali El Haj; Professor Abdul Rahman Dosa and Dr Mohammed Adam Showa, all prominent Darfurians and all with the exception of Dr. Ali al Haj were members of the Umma Party.

¹ District Commissioner, Southern Darfur

Although, the two decades straddling independence saw a number of positive economic developments in Darfur² this was soon to be reversed. By 1978, national economic crisis and mismanagement lead to dramatic falls in exports, and widespread corruption. This affected the nascent economic growth in Darfur; cash crops suffered because of the problem of cost and supply of inputs and problems with local credit systems, which had a serious knock on affect on agricultural labour¹⁵.

An example of economic neglect is the limited development occurring in the region. The only two development projects financed by international organizations in Darfur, including the Western Savannah Development Project and the Jebel Marra Rural Development Project came to a completed halt when their administration was transferred to states governments rather than the central government²¹.

As a result poverty has increased in terms of intensity and prevalence. Of all the regions, Darfur was hardest hit (see Table 3) as the standard deviation (measure of dispersion) increased from 44.5 1967/68 to 57 in 1982/83²².

Table 3 Disparities in Regional Income^{22,23}

Region	Income 1967/68	Income 1982/83
Khartoum	236	283
Middle (including the Blue Nile)	183	201
Eastern (including Port Sudan and Kassala)	180	195
Kordofan (including South Kordofan)	153	164
Northern Region	124	130
Darfur	98	102
Standard Deviation	44.5	57

Moreover, out of a total fund of US \$13,414 million for development projects extended to Sudan by the international community from 1958- 2003 Darfur had only 10 projects which constituted a share of 2%²⁴.

The Black Book describes marginalization and oppression in marginalized areas in Sudan with particular emphasis on Darfur. There are two black books the first produced in 2000, and the second in August 2002. For example, it describes the disparities in educational services; *'pupils in the marginalized areas have been grounded at the primary level (of education)'. In the State of West Darfur, primary schools remained closed for two years for lack of books and staff pay.*²⁵p19' According to the translator *'some of the activists involved in the preparation of the Book took arms against the*

² with the introduction of groundnuts farming (an important cash crop), drilling of deep borehole wells in qoz areas and the extension of the railway to Nyala (1958-60) 15. de Waal A. Famine that Kills. Darfur, Sudan, 1984-85: Clarendon Paperbacks, 1989.. Expansion of commercial farming provided an agricultural labour market that was previously unavailable which provided a fall-back for small farmers. As South East Darfur was closest to the railway it became the most economically advanced, to the advantage of the Arabs. Economically the opportunities created by trade and development in Sudan have tended to favour South rather than North Darfur, which are evidenced in the way that Nyala has outstripped El Fasher 1. Morton J. Conflict in Darfur. A different perspective. Hemel Hempstead, UK: HTSPE, 2004. June 2004.

government.. ..referred to as the Darfur Conflict²⁵ p2. Thus political and economic marginalization of Darfur is widely recognized as a root cause of the conflict.

Islamization and Arabism

The development of modern day Islamism in Sudan is strongly associated with Hassan al-Turabi and his followers. A former academic Turabi entered politics in 1964 and was active in the Islamic Charter Front which first proposed an Islamic Constitution for Sudan, which would effectively render the two thirds non Muslim majority as second class citizens. The Islamic Charter Front and the Muslim Brotherhood, were dominated by the riverine Arabs as well as Darfurians. Turabi's followers "*perceived their duty not only to consolidate the Islamic kingdom in the Sudan but to reform by subversion if necessary their citizens as part of the global renewal of Islam and one mission, to bring Islam to the Africans*"⁹.

Turabi was not alone in seeking an Islamic constitution for Sudan, which was also supported by Sadiq al-Mahdi – leader of the democratic government of 1985 -1989 and 1966 to 1967) and grandson of the Mahdi. Turabi represented modern militant Islam, while Sadiq represented the historic traditions of Mahdism. The marriage of Turabi to the sister of Sadiq el Mahdi meant that Mahdist loyalty was more easily transferable to the Muslim Brotherhood⁹ (the Muslim Brotherhood became the National Islamic Front in 1985).

The Ansar and the Umma, did not fare well under the military regime of Colonel Jaafar Numayri – 12,000 ansar and the Imam were killed in a fierce engagement with the Sudanese army in 1970 at Aba Island (the place that witnessed the birth of the Mahadiya movement) (ibid). Darfur, as a stronghold of the Ansar, must have become increasingly frustrated and disillusioned with the Khartoum government as a result of this crushing defeat, and the imprisonment of Sadiq el Mahdi.

Numayri introduced what he and the Islamic movement in Sudan call Shari'a law (laws of islam) in 1983 for all sudanese, which was unacceptable and intolerable to the majority of Sudanese. Although Darfurians have always been extremely devout Muslims Numayri was unpopular and by popular consensus was overthrown.

In the elections that followed in 1985, although Sadiq al-Mahdi won by a comfortable majority (99 out of 301 seats) Turabi's National Islamic Front won 51 seats, and 40% of the vote in Khartoum, indicating growing support for this new islamism⁹. Sadiq formed a coalition government that included the DUP but excluded the NIF, the communists and the Muslim brothers.

The NIF continued to be active organizing conferences that appealed for Arab purity and the creation of a belt of Islamists from the west to the east. In Darfur this aroused some hostility among the non Arabs, including the Fur, Berti and Zaghawa (ibid), but nevertheless western sudanese saw Islam as a route to forging links to the center and enfranchisement²⁶.

The mobilization of armed militias

There is a long history of mobilizing tribes to support the various causes of the central riverain Arabs, dating back to the call of the Mahdi in the 19th century. But more recent mobilizing and arming of tribal militias dates back to the 1980's when President Numayri mobilised *Murahaheen* militias who were the armed Baggara Rizeigat from Southern Darfur and the Misseriya from Southern Kordofan to fight southern Sudanese rebels.

Sadiq el Mahdi also used these militias in 1986. The atrocities carried out by the Arab militias were not limited to the war areas alone but were extended to central Darfur. In 1986 members of the same tribe as the Murahaleen militias massacred more than 1,000 Dinka displaced by the war in the south to Ed Daein in South Darfur - without anyone being prosecuted by the government²⁷. This gave the Arabs an air of impunity that reflected wider failures in the police and judicial systems.

After taking power in a coup in 1989, the National Islamic Front (NIF, renamed the National Congress) ruling party incorporated many of the murahaleen militias into the Popular Defense Forces²⁸.

In 1991 Daud Bolad a former NIF member, lead an incursion into Darfur under the SPLA. The government instead of mobilising the army and Darfurians generally as Sudanese citizens, mobilized the *Fursan* militias (southern Rizeigat, Beni Halba, Fellata, Ta'aisha), and with the support of the government they got the upper hand in Darfur. 1991 also coincided with President Bashir and the RCC rearming of Idriss Deby and his insurgents with weapons from Libya (see below). What is important to recognize is that the war in Darfur at the end of the 1980s "*was more than a conflict over land: it was the first step in constructing a new Arab ideology in Sudan*"²⁹.

The more recent mobilization of armed forces to put down the rebel insurgency in Darfur which started in 2003 was set in motion by a government appeal to all tribal leaders in Darfur to mobilize men to join the additional armed forces. These additional armed forces are widely known as the Jinjaweed although this term is somewhat misleading (see Box 5).

Box 5 Who are the Jinjaweed?

The label Jinjaweed is misleading as it is used differently in Darfur according to tribal affiliation and political viewpoint. Among the popular media and even in some circles of the international community (particularly fresh faced relief workers) there is the wrong and dangerous assumption that Jinjaweed = Arab = perpetrators of the human rights violations. Jinjaweed is more generally used to describe the armed militias mobilized by the government to address the counter-insurgency. Their methods and violations of human rights are infamous.

But among pro-government groups Jinjaweed are banditry gangs, whose activities are frowned upon, and considered as criminals and outlaws and not under the authority or control of any tribe³⁰⁻³². In contrast, the 'additional armed forces' are men mobilized by their tribe to become military personnel who receive training, are paid, and come under the direct control of government. In the words of Musa Hilal 'this is not like the Fursan [government armed militia].³³' Although obviously these groups have participated alongside the regular armed forces to perpetrate gross human rights violations.

The Gimr responded to the call of the government to fight the rebellion. They see their position as similar to that of the Fur and Zaghawa when they responded to the call of the government for the Jihad against the rebellion in the south and the east (two prominent Fur and Zaghawa Omdas joined the Mujahadeen)³².

However, after the war started many of the banditry gangs of Jinjaweed returned to their own ethnic group in order to join the 'additional armed forces' recruited by the government. Since their recruitment many have subsequently returned to their illegal banditry activities.

In addition, the governments call for additional armed forces extended as far as West Africa, and thus a large proportion of the additional armed forces include foreign elements.

Apart from these two categories of 'additional armed forces', and 'bandits', there are also armed Arab groups that provide protection for a price to either villages e.g. to Fur in Wadi Barrie³⁴, and to villages of Tamr and Gimr around Kebkabiya³⁵, and also protection to lorries traveling on the trade routes from El Fasher to the border with Kordofan (on their way to Omdurman)³⁶. Other protection forces are also thought to exist.

If the situation in Darfur is to be stabilized it is critically important to recognize the different and not necessarily related elements of 'Jinjaweed', their purpose, and the lines of authority that exert control over them. In relation to their purpose, this has a clear link with livelihoods – membership of the military, looting, occupying land, or operating a protection racket, are all sources of income in an otherwise very depressed economy and marginalized area of Sudan. Decommissioning of 'additional armed forces' therefore raises issues of finding alternative livelihood strategies. These livelihood linkages are part of the rapidly emerging war economy, which extends beyond the jinjaweed elements considered here.

The North South Civil War and Peace Process

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed on the 9th of January 2005 hopefully concludes the current phase of conflict between the North and South in Sudan which has been going on for 21 years. This section considers how this conflict and associated peace process have contributed to the current situation in Darfur by influencing actions of the major stakeholders.

The North/South conflict has directly and indirectly contributed to the current insecurity in Darfur in a number of ways, including; recruitment of militia from Darfur to fight in the south; use of similar tactics by GoS to deal with conflict in Darfur leading to increasing militarization of Darfur; drain on development resources and further marginalization of Darfur.

There is a history of mobilisation of different tribes and recruitment of militia from Darfur to go and fight in the South (see below). Those with militia experience include the current head of the JEM³ and members of the Southern Rizeigat⁴. This has resulted in increased militarization of Darfur with many Darfurians trained in warfare and familiar with operating in a war economy. It may conversely have also contributed to the reluctance of the Southern Rizeigat to become involved in the conflict given their past direct experience of militias.

Given southern Darfur's border with Bahr el Ghazel, there has been a degree of overspill of the North South conflict into Darfur, and overlap in terms of using Darfurian militias. Examples include, the 1986 Ed Daein massacre by southern Rizeigat, the incursion by Daud Bolad, a Darfurian with SPLA support in 1991, and the government response of mobilising Arab tribes into Fursan militia.

³ Dr Khileel Ibrahim

⁴ During the 1980s President Numayri mobilized murahaleen militias including the armed Baggara Rizeigat from Southern Darfur and the Misseriya from Southern Kordofan.

Other factors that have affected Darfur are that the war with the south, has drained government resources leaving little for development of the periphery regions of the political North. In turn this has meant that development aid has been severely curtailed with many donors only allowing relief aid to Sudan, which for Darfur has meant humanitarian assistance for drought relief and little else.

The two and a half year North South peace process may itself have influenced the Darfur conflict directly and indirectly. The peace process has been exclusive and is seen by many as an agreement between elites in the north and south. It has oversimplified conflict in Sudan into North and South and not considered the claims of the East, West and North (outside Khartoum). If it is to have any impact on other conflicts in Sudan it will be critical that the implementation is much more inclusive than the negotiation.

However, the peace process has also sent a clear message that the reward for armed struggle is a peace process and this may have encouraged other rebels. Some argue that the Government has been so focused on the North-South peace process that it has not/was not able to respond strategically or effectively to the Darfur situation. The difficulties of pursuing peace on two fronts meant that in Darfur the government fell back on its usual strategy of using tribal militia⁵. Now that the peace has been signed this argument is even less credible than before.

The GoS has pursued a strategy of parallel negotiating processes rather than trying to make the North-South process more inclusive. Managing three processes (North South, Abuja talks on Darfur, GoS dialogue with the NDA opposition (Cairo)) was inevitably difficult for all the parties including the international community (eg the AU, UN etc). While overstressing human resources, there have been critical information gaps between the processes. For example both the AU and the rebels working on Abuja are not well versed on CPA and its possible implications for Darfur. It has also allowed for a policy of divide and rule to be pursued by the Government.

The North South peace process may have destabilized the regime in Khartoum, and it is not clear what impact its implementation will have. There is a sense from some hardliners that the Government has given up too much. This may have affected the method and degree of response in Darfur.

The peace process and its accompanying oil revenue (to be divided by the GoS and the GoSS per the current agreement) has made the GoS less reliant on the livestock revenue from Darfur that previously contributed much to Sudan's Balance of Payments, as such there is less economic dependence on Darfur. Although, the GoS potentially stands to lose more in the future if the power sharing agreements in the north are widened.

The North South peace process has also influenced international response to Darfur. Up until early 2004 the international community were so focused on the peace process, they were unable to respond strategically or effectively to the Darfur situation. There has been a high level of internal debate within the international community on how the peace processes should be sequenced and so many sunk costs in the North-South peace that there has been reluctance to engage in Darfur beyond a humanitarian emergency for fear

⁵ Conversations with Diplomats

it will jeopardize the North South peace process. The push for the North-South peace is attributed by some as the reason why Darfur was not responded to for so long but rather allowed to fester.

Regional relations with Chad and Libya and implications for Darfur

Apart from the benefits of trade and migrant labour, Darfur's borders with Chad and Libya have exposed Darfur to the long-running affects of regional conflicts between Libya and Chad, the Chadian civil war and the wider pan-arabism ambitions of Libya. Since the 1960's there have been several movements of either Sudanese or Chadian groups crossing national borders as they either sought refuge in the neighbouring territory or while they prepared for retaliation and insurgency with or without support from the Khartoum government. This was one of the major factors in the rapid increase in armaments available in Darfur, and the arming of ordinary citizens and also in the increasing numbers of Chadian Arabs settling in Darfur, especially western Darfur.

The Government of Sudan has not been a neutral bystander in either the Chadian civil war or the conflict over the Aouzou strip. Various Sudanese governments and opposition groups have sought support and alliances with their wealthier Libyan neighbours and provided arms and a refuge to Chadian insurgents. During the 1970s under Numayri's rule, the Ansar leadership (Sadiq el-Mahdi) was in exile in Ethiopia, and later expelled and so Sadiq el Mahdi moved their headquarters to Libya. Subsequent armed opposition to Numayri was attempted from Libya, including the invasion of 1976³⁷. In 1977 Sadiq el Mahdi and many Ansar supporters returned from exile under Numayri's policy of 'national reconciliation'. The returning Ansar were settled on mechanized farming schemes in southern Darfur and Kordofan. Many Ansar remained in exile, to return on the overthrow of Numayri in 1985. Many of the Ansar returnees were involved in the Murahaleen militias (see xxx).

In 1985 the Sudanese Transitional Military Council (TMC) of Swar al-Dahab approached Libya in 1985 seeking weapons to tackle the SPLA insurgency in the south. In return for Libyan weapons, the TMC terminated arms to Habre and closed the western frontier. In addition, Gaddafi ended his military assistance to the SPLA and offered to train Sudanese army units. Libyan agents actively recruited in Khartoum, men who were mostly displaced people from Darfur, and within 6 months more than 2000 Sudanese had joined the Islamic Legion. *"Everywhere on the frontier were bandits and Islamic Legionnaires supported by the Libyan military to spread insecurity throughout the frontier"*⁹ p205. The Arab Baggara were attracted to the Islamic Legion more than the Non Arab groups, but were probably more attracted by the prospect of loot than ideological principals of Pan-Arabism. Libyans were also present in Darfur delivering drought relief, including the Libyan Red Crescent. Sudan's assistance to Gaddafi continued under Sadiq el-Mahdi's government.

Over a short period there was a massive influx of arms and according to one commentator this *"was the most criminal act by Qaddafi in the thirty years war for Chad"*⁹ p238. The weapons were also concentrated among Arab groups especially the Baggara, which was deeply disturbing to the Fur who started forming their own militia in response⁹.

This style of patronage has continued under Idris Deby's presidency. The Zaghawa, who straddle the border with Chad and were aligned with both the Ansar and with Deby - also obtained modern weapons³⁸.

Although the 30 years war is long past, Darfur remains closely tied with the people and governments of both Chad and Libya. Deby's Zaghawa background indicates where his loyalties lie. While the loyalty, friendship and support of Libya continues to be actively sought by the Khartoum government. Even during the Study Teams visit to El Kufra in July senior members of the Khartoum government were visiting Kufra, and Tripoli.

Local Processes

The affects of national level processes described above have been exacerbated by local level processes including:

- Drought and famine leading to depletion of assets and loss of livestock and increased competition over scarce resources (land, water).
- Drought induced north south migration and localized tribal conflicts.
- Failing local governance in particular the demise of the Native Administration and evolving tribal conflicts.
- The formation of an 'Arab alliance' and the Fur Arab conflict of the late eighties.
- The local mobilization of armed militia.

Drought and famine

The affects of economic stagnation and neglect from Khartoum governments have been exacerbated by drought and famine in Darfur. Famine and food insecurity are an integral part of Darfurian livelihoods, shaping the management of resources, livelihood strategies, and livelihood goals. A review of the major causes of famine occurring in Darfur since the 19th century indicates that although drought has played a major part, in all cases its localized effects have been exacerbated by conflict.

Box 6 Famine in Darfur

In 1873/74 there was a major famine called Karo Fata (white bone). The years that followed coincided with a succession of famine caused by drought conditions, poor harvests, and the frontier conflicts between Darfur and Weddai resulting from pillaging and trading¹⁵.

The famine of 1888-92 was possibly the worst ever – the major cause of which was fighting between large numbers of the Mahdist forces under the governor of Darfur and a religiously inspired rebel army¹⁵. This was the time of the Khalifa's forced migration to Omdurman. These years resulted in impoverishment and destruction.

The third regionwide 'famine that killed' and the only one whose major cause was a drought occurred during 1913/14. Famine was exacerbated in the south eastern Darfur by fighting between the Rizeigat and the forces of Ali Dinar. In a letter quoted by Alex de Waal the Nazir of the Rizeigat wrote "*there is not a single house that is not burned down by [the Fur armies]*"¹⁵.

The famine contributed to instability; breakdown of local government, raiding for food, and enormous famine migrations (the Zayadia left for Kordofan, many Berti moved southwards, Zaghawa came down as far as southern Darfur)¹⁵.

In 1973 the rainfall in Darfur was the lowest on record, but only those living in Dar Masalit and in the north east considered it to be a 'mild' famine¹⁵. Animals did not die, but the result was that herds were restructured particularly in the north and north east favouring more drought resistant species.

The drought of 1972/73 and the more severe regional famine of 1983/1984 coincided with significant north south population movements, losses of large numbers of livestock and depletion of assets, and increasing qoz cultivation by herders further north.

According to local observers in North Darfur, since 1972, there have been 16 drought years³⁶. Those that stand out include 1983/85, 1987-88, 1990-91, 1994? and 2000- 2001. None have been on the scale of the 1984/1986 famine, when it was estimated that death rates were three times normal (a total of 176,900 actual deaths, including 95,000 excess deaths)³⁹.

The most severe famines in Darfur have been associated with war – particularly the frontier Chadian border conflicts whose effects have spilled over into Darfur⁹. As a result of the Fur Arab conflicts of the late eighties, local level insecurity and civil conflict increasingly affected systems of production. The direct link between civil insecurity and food insecurity were apparent even in the late eighties; *“Assets are lost or destroyed, including livestock, grain stores and peoples homes. Livelihood systems are disrupted. And displacement causes concentrations of people in camps and makeshift dwellings around towns with associated health and hygiene risks”*⁴⁰ p106.

Conflict induced displacement of people is not a new phenomenon in Darfur either. First with the influx of Dinka in 1987 to southern Darfur, who would usually return to Bahr el Ghazal at the end of the agricultural season but were unable to because of the war in the south. Second people have been displaced as a result of tribal conflict within the region. In September 1991, there were at least 86,000 displaced people in Darfur (although many go unrecorded) including:⁴⁰

- 17,000 displaced from south Sudan
- 30,000 displaced in South Darfur because of tribal conflict
- 21,000 displaced in South Darfur because of famine,
- 18,000 displaced in North Darfur mainly because of famine

During 1991 large parts of south Darfur and areas in the north were simply out of bounds for food security monitors because of the dangers of traveling. This meant that local people in insecure areas who were most in need of assistance tended to be least well served, both by information-monitoring systems and by relief operations⁴⁰.

Depletion of assets and loss of livestock

Repeated droughts have contributed to the depletion of assets and impoverishment of people in Darfur⁴⁰. Throughout Darfur, livestock perished, or their owners were forced to sell them at rock bottom prices during the drought and famine years. For groups that were principally pastoralists, including the southern Rizeigat, their wealth was evaporating as livestock perished. In contrast, to the south the Dinka herds of the Bahr el Arab were not hit to the same extent. Cattle raiding in Bahr el Ghazal was therefore an attractive option for impoverished herders from south Darfur. Raided animals were sold cheaply to buy grain, as Dinka cattle are not hardy to thrive in south Darfur.

Depletion of the natural resource base has also occurred as a result of drought and desertification. Rainfall statistics show that overall rainfall has declined, and the pattern has changed to a shorter and more unreliable wet season. In a survey in 1986¹⁵, farmers

and herders both recognized that ecological deterioration was happening as a result of declining rainfall that forced farmers and herders to apply non-sustainable land use practices. These included cutting trees and over-cultivation of fragile soils leading to deforestation, desertification⁶ and declining yields. Over-grazing in turn has contributed to degradation of pasture.

Famine migrations were already common in Darfur prior to the major 1984/85 famine, however the patterns of migration varied according to how different groups were affected by famine and the options open to them. Fouad Ibrahim (1998) compared the migration behaviour of two groups from north Darfur, the Meidob and the Zaghawa, who have suffered as a result of drought in the seventies and eighties¹⁵. More than half of the Zaghawa and Meidob migrated southwards and to the towns. Despite the similarity of their livelihoods based on agropastoralism, the Zaghawa migrants were considered more economically successful than the Meidob migrants, because:

“ The Zaghawa started their out-migration earlier than the Meidob. Thus, they could establish ethnically-based networks in Libya and the Gulf countries, to which Zaghawa migrants can resort to make a good start in their destination areas. By the time the Meidob started their migration in the 1980s, the conditions of employment in the Arab oil countries had worsened.

– The Zaghawa show a strong clan solidarity. They readily lend money to young members of their clan to cover the high costs of travelling to the Arab oil countries for work, where many of them have already established themselves.

- The Meidob, both in the Sudan and abroad, have much less resources available. The only country open for them outside the Sudan is Libya. Lacking capital, the Meidob go there on camels, mostly illegally”⁴¹.

This once again illustrates the varying fortunes of people of Darfur as influenced by their tribal affiliation.

The newly arrived migrants were not always welcome in southern Darfur. As far back as 1935 Wilfred Thesiger (assistant to the District Commissioner in Kutum) remarks that conflicts occurred between the southern Rizeigat and the newly arrived Zaghawa⁴².

The Zaghawa who migrated southward settled not only in rural areas, but also in the major towns (el Fasher, Omdurman and Nyala). Today the Zaghawa living in these towns outnumber those living in Dar Zaghawa itself. The Zaghawa are reputed to be good traders *“they control the markets of all towns in Darfur today and compete with the Ja’ali traders in Omdurman”⁴³*. A great part of their capital was earned not in Sudan, but in the oil rich Arab countries.

De Waal describes how the processes of drought and desertification disturbed the moral geography of the Fur:

‘With the desert have come the people of the desert; feared Bideyat camelmen and others come south and prey on settled communities, and pastoralists bring their animals to cultivated places. They have penetrated further south than physical evidence of the desert. With ecological change has come an insecurity of community identity and relations’¹⁵. P89

⁶ when stabilized qoz degenerates into windblown sand sheets

Failing Local Governance – The Demise Of The Native Administration

The colonial government abolished the Fur sultanate but retained many of the institutions from the old sultanate under the newly instated Native Administration (*idara ahlia*).

The British relied upon a form of indirect rule based on a model developed by Frederick Lugard, the British High Commissioner in Nigeria. The Lugardian model as discussed by AbuShouk & Bjorkelo⁴⁴ (2004) was a practical form of administration and control that would leave the local population free to manage their own affairs through their own rulers, under the guidance of the British staff, and subject to the laws and policy of the administration. It is based on the following fundamentals:

1. A political hierarchy of local chiefs that would derive its power from the central government and be in charge of the maintenance of law and order, organization of labor and collection of local taxes.
2. A parallel hierarchy of native courts which would deal with minor criminal, civil and personal cases in terms of customary law and general principal of justice.
3. A native treasury that would manage local revenues and pay out necessary expenses of local authorities and social services.
4. A team of local staff which would carry out its duties under the guidance of British field officers and subject to the laws and policy of administration.

The application of this model in Sudan meant that British opted for the incorporation of traditional tribal and village leaders in the structure of the government. The native or tribal administration was based on earlier systems of magdumates divided into recognized 'dars' or tribal areas

Accordingly Nazirs, Omdas and Sheikhs were entrusted with administrative, judicial and police matters in their territorial domains. The system was gradually developed and finally legalized after a series of ordinances in 1922, 1925, 1927 and 1928 and eventually consolidated in the native Courts Ordinance of 1932, which regulated the administrative and police powers of tribal sheikhs and established a hierarchy of local courts in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan⁴⁴⁻⁴⁶. Such a system provided security with minimal staff and finances. The model was modified over time, the local government frame work was introduced in 1932, and municipalities, townships and rural areas and councils created in 1937. However, traditional tribal leaders with their executive, financial and legislative power remained an integral part.

A further development took place in 1951 with the establishment of a new Local Government Ordinance. According to this new arrangement the Nazirs assumed an honorary role in the newly established local councils which took over the financial and executive powers given to the tribal sheikh and omdas (ibid).

The roles of the Native Administration were to⁴⁷:

1. Assure good management of tribal local community affairs.
2. Allocate land for agriculture and grazing (*the hakura*).
3. Look after security
4. Communicate with local council, the province and state level.
5. Collect taxes and other levies.
6. Settle conflicts of local tenure.
7. Mobilize communities and,

8. Chair tribal/sub-tribal local courts (*judiyya*).

For the Fur the Native Administration reduced their status to just another ethnic group or tribe, and their particular economic and administrative privileges were abolished. But for many other ethnic groups it increased their influence and authority;

The Native Administration provided a system of local governance which managed the use of natural resources and allowed various groups to live in relative peace and stability. Shazali and AbdelGhaffar (1999) discuss the role of the native administration in implementing the policy of resource allocation and regulating the grazing activities of different tribes and outsiders to avert conflicts between farmers and pastoralists. This included; the enforcement of grazing boundaries which demarcated the grazing and farming areas, regulation of the seasonal movement of pastoralists in terms of timing and routes from the dry season grazing areas to the wet season grazing areas, limitation and containment of tribal intermingling in the grazing areas as well as the opening and closing of the water points⁴⁸.

Despite the vital role of the Native Administration as a form of indirect rule, it was an issue of heated debate and criticism in Sudan, as discussed by Elsam⁴⁶. One aspect of the debate was the creation of an unhealthy dichotomy between the educated Sudanese and tribal leaders. It created tension between these two groups with the former stereotyping the latter group as tools of the colonial regime. On the other hand the tribal leaders viewed the educated Sudanese as a potential threat that might undermine their power and prestige. The other set of criticisms related to the origins of the concept and its stage of development. Many of the Sudanese scholars believed that native administration is a direct, centralized and bureaucratic system that was different from the indirect model adopted in Nigeria and other British dependencies in Africa.

Changes to the Native Administration after Independence

In 1971 Numayri's military regime passed the Local Government Act which divided the region into regional, district and area councils. This local administration replaced the Native Administration and abolished the jurisdiction and administrative authority of the tribal leaders. The creation of multiple administrative units bound together by the single political party, the Sudan Socialist Union, "*created a bureaucracy controlled by insensitive officials from the Nile. It infuriated the traditional authorities.*" P74⁹

Some say this re-organization was the first factor that triggered tribal conflicts on a wider scale in Darfur²¹. Ateem lists 16 different rural council border disputes and conflicts in southern Darfur province alone that occurred soon after the implementation of this act. "*All these conflicts were over the right to own tribal land or 'hakura'*" (p4, *ibid*).

This Act meant that a locality belonging to one tribe could be controlled by another, which generated more than 16 border disputes in southern Darfur province alone, for example; between the Fellata and Gimr; and Mahariya and Rizeigat. The government had thus promoted tribal competition⁴⁹. Morton (2004) also argues that the weakening of the Native Administration has contributed significantly to increased conflict in Darfur. The critical weakness in modernising administration lay in the change of emphasis from their previous judicial role to their administrative role. Additional rural police stations were established but the government did not provide necessary coverage nor resources¹.

In practice, tribal leaders continued to be acknowledged heads of their group, and the tribe became a political base to promote its members to senior positions in local councils, as well as members of the regional and national assemblies central parliaments²¹. Ethnic identity and increasing polarization are said to have permeated every corner of government office, as members of the group are considered as representatives of their tribes and are supposed to work for the interests of their tribe. This has been termed vertical ethnic expansion, from the local level to the regional and even national levels.

The vacuum was filled with an emerging new social and political force - the Sudanese Socialist Union; the only recognized party by then. These organizations were led by the rural elite such as teachers, small traders, government employees who occupied the scene in Darfur resulting in the emergence of new leadership. This leadership played a critical role in shaping the political scene in Darfur in the years following the establishment of the Regional Governments in 1980⁵⁰. They were given responsibility for services in Darfur but with a wholly inadequate budget.

The 1981 Regional Government Act - Regionalisation by Numayri's government, joined North and South Darfur as one region, with a regional assembly and a regional governor based in El Fasher. Numayri's first appointment of Regional Governor was rejected by the Darfuris and in his place he appointed Ahmad Dereij (a senior and influential Fur politician who had been a minister in pre- Numayri's governments).

In 1987 during the second democratic era the Native Administration was re-established. This period was short lived and by 1989 the National Islamic Front took the power in Sudan through a military coup of the National Salvation Revolution. Since then the Native Administration has been subject to structural and mandatory changes to conform with the Islamic orientation of the state. In this respect Islamic titles of *Amirs* (Islamic monarch) were used instead of sultan and nazirs. The *Amir* is now a *Mujahid* leading the tribe to protect the Islamic religion and the country and to hold to the *Sharia* values along the same tracks of the first Muslims in the prophet Mohammed's era.

In 1995 the Government further intervened in the administration of Darfur by re-dividing Darfur into three states despite fierce opposition and protests from the people of Darfur²¹. This is widely held to have weakened the social infrastructure and the integrity of the region. At the same time the government introduced what is known as "emirate" or principalities in every "Dar" appointing supporters as princes, which essentially represented a parallel native administration. The princes were political appointees, who performed tasks which overlapped with the native administration. *"The objective behind appointing "princes" is to weaken the structure of the native administration because the regime failed to mobilize their support and loyalty"*²¹ p12. (See the Al Geneina case study).

As an example the Governor of West Darfur issued a decree that divided the traditional homeland of the Masalit into 13 Emirate, nine of which were allocated to Arab groups^{10,45}, thus creating new Arab emirates. This resulted in the devastating conflicts such as the Masalit vs Arab conflicts in the late 1990s.

The allocation of tribal homeland thus introduces two inter-connected processes; conflicts over the land itself (including tribal territories and access for other groups including pastoralists), and second conflicts over local governance or local power struggles.

Electoral representation of tribal groups and competition for power

According to Morton (2004), *'The post-independence system, particularly the democratic system, has tended.. ..to turn the tribes into competing groups: competing for political status, for allocations of rationed goods and so on.'*¹ Thus the larger tribes will inevitably seek to exploit their greater voting power while smaller tribes will clearly be marginalized by these processes. The Berti of North Darfur are a good example of these processes; in the mid 1990s they developed *'a comprehensive plan for taking possession of the local government administrative offices in Darfur i.e., those of the governors, ministers, executive administrators, etc., at the state and province levels. The first practical step done by the Berti was that they increased their Ummodiyas from three to twenty-three ones. This meant increasing the number of constituencies in elections for political and legislative offices in the interest of the Berti group. Coincided with this were publications undertaken by Berti elite: "Berti and Land", "Berti and Geography", and "Berti and History", which were intended to prove Berti's rights in the ownership of land and the participation in authority'*⁵p45. El Tom (1998) argues that the present Berti identity is a conscious reflection of their subordinate position vis-à-vis the kingdoms and states which have dominated Sudan over the past few centuries⁵¹. In other words their current strategy is a reflection of the past subordinate position to other dominant tribes, hence graphically reflecting the competition for power between tribes that takes place within electoral processes.

Clearly the Berti have been successful; the current governor is Berti, and the Berti are the majority group of MPs in the National Assembly (with 6 out of the 16 MP seats for North Darfur) (Table 4). For the first year of the conflict at least, the homeland of the Berti appears to have suffered fewer GoS attacks than other areas. Other smaller tribes in the area recognize how their minority status limits their opportunities to gain electoral representation.

Table 4 Darfur MPs Distribution by Tribe.

Tribe	N.Darfur	S. Darfur	W. Darfur	Total	%
Fur	3	5	10	18	29
Zaghawa	3	2	-	5	8
Berti	6	-	-	6	10
Arab groups	1	15	1	16	26
Masalit	-	1	5	6	10
Fellata	2	2	1	5	8
Gimr	-	1	1	2	3
Tunjur	1	-	-	1	1.6
Burgo	-	1	-	1	1.6
Birgid	-	1	-	1	1.6
Total	16	28	18	62	100 %

Total number of the MPs in the National Assembly. 360
Total number of Darfur MPs 062
Percent of Darfur MPs 17 %

Figure 4 Distribution of tribal affiliation of Darfur MPs in the National Assembly

Box 7 Changes In Land Tenure Since The Fur Sultanate

The land law of the Sudan is a combination of Sudanese legislation, judge made rules, customary laws and Shari'a law. The major division in land ownership according to law is between land owned by the State and that which is privately owned. Since 1899 there have been three main land laws.

The colonial administration issued its first Titles to Land Ordinance in 1899. According to this law the rain lands of central, eastern and western Sudan labeled as unsettled areas were categorically classified as government owned and divided into two classes:

- government land subject to no rights, and
- government land subject to rights vested in a community such as tribe, section, or village.

On April 6, 1970 the Registered Land Act declared all land of any kind which is not registered is the property of the government of Sudan. The right of access to rangeland etc may also be established by customary law and depends entirely on community membership. The right to fence or enclose land is not recognized. When attempts to do so are made by settled cultivators bitter disputes arise because of conflicting interests.

In 1984 the Civil Transactions Act (CTA) was passed which is the major source of Sudanese land legislation, governing the possession, ownership and rights regarding land in Sudan⁵². The CTA provides that "Land belongs to God" however the state is declared responsible for the control of land and owner of all land which was not registered in the name of a private party prior to April 6, 1970.

Almost all land (99%) is owned by the state, although the right to use such land may belong to a private party through 'usufruct' rights (the right to use property that belongs to another person). The local, regional and national capital authorities organize the procedures for granting the usufruct of land to private persons, through the establishment of committees. Gordon concludes that "*The division of authority as between the central and regional governments and as between the regional and local governments as set forth in the applicable legislation is subject to conflicting interpretations*"⁵² p174.

The State can reclaim property from the grantee of usufruct rights, if the latter has failed to exploit the property according to the grant. *'The rights and obligations arising from usufruct are governed by the conditions imposed in the instrument creating it. The grantee is entitled to the products resulting from the use, including all crops, buildings, and construction undertaken by the grantee on the property, unless contrary to the granting instrument and the proprietor of the usufruct is entitled to court protection from the attempted encroachment of others'* (ibid).

Usufruct rights terminate if the obligations incumbent on the holder are breached at the expiration of the usufruct period granted or upon the total destruction or expropriation of the property (deprive of possession or proprietary rights).

However; as Carney (1984) notes *'there is often no relationship between formal legislation and what often takes place in the ground'* (quoted by Gordon, 1986). So the customs and practices actually being followed may vary from the legislative schemes provided in the law books in Sudan. This statement actually reflects the situation in Darfur where tribal land holdings prevail. Such a situation poses a problem that was never formally recognized in Sudanese land law

Conflict over tribal territories

As mentioned earlier when the British colonized Darfur they opted for a system which would stabilize and pacify the region: namely the indirect rule and the tribal land holdings which were based on the already existing system of the Fur sultanate. That is to

say land in Darfur is divided up into tribal home lands locally known as tribal *Dar*. However this is misleading as it implies that the tribal homeland is an ethnically homogenous territory, which it is not. Members, and even groups of members (other tribal communities with their own sheikh), are found in the homeland of another tribe. For example, a Gimr settlement, for example, could be found in Kebkabiya far from their tribal homeland which is around Kulbus.

The tribal homeland policy favored the larger tribes for which a nazir or sultan was appointed to be responsible for the land as well as the people. That means small tribal groupings with their chiefs came under the administration of these large tribal chiefdoms with or without their consent. The Ma'alyia tribe, for example, came under the administration of the Rizeigat. Many of the small tribes struggled for their own tribal entity and land. The 'claim' for an independent tribal administration is linked to ownership of a separate Dar as according to customary law a tribe could not have its own independent administration without having its own Dar.

The independent administration includes the native administration as well as modern leadership position and representation in local, regional or national institutions. It follows that the claim for a separate Dar by minority tribes is usually resisted by the majority tribes as it would lead to the fragmentation of the Dar. Such a situation has been a major source of tribal conflicts in the region, for example, the Ma'alyia – Rizeigat conflict in 1968²¹.

However such kinds of local conflict have escalated when the division of the Dar has been supported by the government. The decision to divide Dar Masalit into 13 emirates in 1995, which means the demotion of the authority of the Masalit Sultan lead to widespread insecurity as a result of a devastating ethnic conflict. Moreover it threw the region into a grassroots administration vacuum. The profound effect of this "vacuum" was felt in the resource management in all localities of Habila and Gereina provinces⁵³. As a result the West Darfur state was declared as an area of emergency from 1995 to 1999.

A parallel and critical issue is that the northern Rizeigat who are camel pastoralists (abbala) do not have their own Dars. This was in part because the granting of tribal Dar's favored larger tribes, and second because at that time land was not an issue; there were no shortages and the prosperity of Arab tribes depended on transhumant pastoralism and trade, not land ownership. According to the old maps introduced in Gostoph it was noticed that there were some areas carrying the Mahamid's name as their homeland. Their seasonal patterns of livestock migration covered northern and southern parts of the region thus their questions of access rather than ownership were important. In Western Darfur, there were additional pressures from the influx of Arab groups from Chad (see below). Many of these groups have close ties with the Sudanese nomadic groups. This a main case in west Darfur which was severely damaged compared to the other states.

The issue of 'Dar' became more critical following the pressures on the natural resource base as a result of the ecological degradation combined with expanding rain fed and wadi cultivation.

Political polarization within Darfur - the Fur Arab conflict of the late 1980's

Through the Mahdist movement Darfur had strong connections with the Umma Party, which the Darfur Arabs sought to exploit to gain advantage over the Fur¹. Various prominent Arab leaders from Darfur won national ministries in Sadiq el Mahdi's government.

An "Arab Gathering" in 1986 was a key event in the Fur Arab relations, with elites from Arab tribes claiming that they represented the majority in Darfur, and were marginalized as Arabs. In the famous Arab letter they called on the central authorities to address this. There was no formal response from the central government which was taken as an implicit endorsement. At the same time, the Fur, Zaghawa and Masalit felt that the ultimate target was to undermine their role and create ethnic division.

"At one level, the Alliance was simply a political coalition that aimed to protect the interests of a disadvantaged group in western Sudan, but it also became a vehicle for a new racist ideology"²⁶.

As a result conflict erupted between the Fur and the Arabs, and it dominated Darfur up to 1989. Losses on both sides were substantial; the Fur lost 2500 people, 40 000 heads of livestock, with 400 villages containing "10 000 residents burned down. The Arab groups saw some 500 dead, 3000 heads of cattle lost and about 700 tents and residences destroyed. Mosques, schools and dispensaries were burnt down"⁵⁴. Sadiq el Mahdi's government favoured the Arabs until 1988, with the appointment of a Fur governor in Darfur (Eltigani Sisei Ateem). There were local peace initiatives in 1988 and 1989, the last one of which coincided with the change in government and the arrival of the current NIF regime (30 June 1989)⁵⁴.

The Fur argued that the aim of the Arabs was to eradicate them totally from their land. On the other hand, the Arabs claimed the current problems started in the late 1970s, when the Fur started to talk about "Darfur being for the Fur" and that the Arabs were foreigners who should leave.⁴ As a result of fierce fighting hundreds of Fur had fled their villages in the Wadi Salih area, "which were soon occupied by 'soldiers' coming over the border from Chad"⁹.

Arab groups in Darfur emphasise the political agenda of the Zaghawa and how they have long contributed to the political polarization of Arab and Non Arab in Darfur³³. According to Hilal⁷ this dates back to the seventies, when the northern opposition lead by Sadiq el Mahdi was hosted by the Libyans which included the military training of armed opposition. The Zaghawa of northern Darfur were prominent in this group. In addition, at that time, Gaddaffi was using the Libyan Popular Committees to promote his own ideologies of democracy and governance, which superceded his earlier ideas around Pan-Arabism. He was supported in this by a prominent Darfurian and Zaghawa, Abdullah Zachariah, who later became the General Secretary of the Popular Committees in Sudan, thus helping to transfer these Libyan ideologies to Sudan³³.

⁷ Musa Hilal is Nazir of the Mahamid tribe (also known as Um Jalloul) and is notorious for his links with the mobilization of Arab tribes to join the Government counter-insurgency.

Links between local, national and regional processes

There were also important external influences on this Arab Fur war in addition to the Khartoum government, particularly the war in the south (SPLA involvement) and links with Libya and Chad, including Gaddafi's vision of pan Arabism, which played out in Darfur during the 1980s.

Links with national politics

In Darfur, many Sudanese saw the new Islam of the National Islamic Front as a route to links to the central government and enfranchisement, while Turabi saw Islam as a means of building constituency in Darfur. The Arab Alliance for example, latched onto the very different Arabism of Nile Valley, which was the dominant ideology of the Sudanese state²⁶.

However many of the Darfurians who had obtained government positions in the National Congress, found themselves out of government and part of a new group the Popular National Congress following the split of the National Congress in 1999. The relationship between President Umar al-Bashir and Hasan al-Turabi leader of the NIF, had been uneasy; a power struggle finally led to a split of the National Congress with Turabi leaving to form the Popular National Congress (PNC). For many groups, this split is not without an ethnic dimension, where Ali Osman and his group represent the River Nile Arabs, while Al Turabi's group represent the ethnic background of the non Arabs of the west.

One former member of the National Islamic Front, the current leader of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) Dr Khalil Ibrahim, a prominent Zaghawa, was previously the Minister of Health before the Turabi split with the government. He is also said to have been a leader of Murahaleen who fought in the south (see below).

After the Turabi split with the National Congress, Dr Khaleel did not align with either the National Congress or the Popular Congress but went to Europe to build the foundations of the Justice and Equality Movement (see Box 8). He has personal ties with Turabi and many people and analysts think of JEM as a sister organization to the NPC. Even close members of his tribe refuse to either deny or confirm this!⁵⁵

In 2001, al-Turabi and some of his colleagues were arrested on charges of undermining the State. He was released in October 2003 after the government pledged to free political detainees during peace talks with the southern rebels, but was detained again in 2004 over an alleged coup plot. In November, 2003 Sudan's Vice President Ali Osman Taha accused al-Turabi of encouraging sedition in Darfur.

Box 8 Rebel/ Opposition Groups in Darfur

The Justice and Equality Movement (JEM)

The JEM was formed in x by Dr Khileel Ibrahim, who is a member of the Kube sub-tribe of the Zaghawa and has strong former links with Hasan al-Turabi. The leadership is the Kube branch of the Zaghawa, but the JEM include other tribes, for example the JEM around Mellit area are said to be a coalition between the western Meidob and the Zaghawa. There are even some Arab members, including Miseriya.

The JEM's strategy is to highlight problems of marginalized areas, especially in Darfur and has been 'more or less influenced by Turabi and the Popular Congress' The initial talks between the government and the rebel groups in Paris in mid 2004 (June/July?) did not include the JEM, but they have subsequently been included.

The JEM are weak militarily as compared to the Sudan Liberation Army and on the ground they act as one military force, although politically they have very different agendas.

The National Movement for Reform and Development

The JEM split into two factions in May 2004; one group, under the leadership of Dr Khalil Ibrahim, has retained the name JEM; and the other group called al Haraka al Watania lel Islah u Tannia (National Movement for Reform and Development) led by the General Commander of the JEM military force, Colonel Gibril Abdul Kareem Barey. The new movement is made up of mainly Kobera (IS THIS THE KOBE?) Zaghawa, a distinct clan of the Wagi Zaghawa, who are also in the SLM/A. The split in the JEM occurred after a rift developed between the field commanders and the political leaders who controlled all political decisions and channels of support and refused to allow the field commanders to participate in these processes. Colonel Gibril served in the Chadian Army from 1990 till 2001. Disgruntled Kobera Zaghawa officers from the Chadian Army are reportedly joining the movement. The National Movement for Reform and Development is not party to the ceasefire agreement concluded between the Government of Sudan and the SLM/A and JEM in April, and as a result announced that it was going to continue fighting against the Government. The movement is reportedly based in the far north of North Darfur State, north of Karnoy in Basao, in Shigikaro and in Toundobai. (Nolte, 2004)

The Sudan Liberation Movement/ Army

The SLM/A was formed in ..The President is a Fur Lawyer - Abdul Wahid Muhammed Ahmad Nur, while the Secretary General is Zaghawa (sub-tribe =) - Mini Arkowi Minawi Domi. The Darfur Liberation Front emerged as a fighting force in February 2003 in response to the failure of the Government and the traditional leadership to address the problems of the region. Soon afterwards the DLF changed its name to the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army. On 13 March 2003 the SLM/A announced the launch of an armed rebellion to 'create a united democratic Sudan on a new basis of equality, complete restructuring and devolution of power, even development and cultural and political pluralism'. They accused the Khartoum Government of fuelling ethnic strife in the region, the SLM/A called on tribes with an 'Arab background' to join its struggle against the Government.

The membership of the SLM/A are predominantly Fur and Zaghawa (not Kube) but also include Masalit, Birgid, Meidop and other tribes. Small numbers of the southern Rizeiqat have joined the SLA and a southern Rizeiqatheads the SLA forces in south Darfur⁵⁶. In order to achieve a broader base across the tribes in Darfur, the SLM are actively recruiting arabs⁵⁷. Most members of SLA are less than 40 years in age, which is significant in that they do not trust the traditional tribal leaders. The JEM are also young.

There is no real documentary evidence as to which areas are in the control of the SLA/M. They are said to be strongest east and north of Jebel Mara and in Jebel Si, which are predominantly Fur. They control areas between Nyala and Ed Daein, and in Dar Zaghawa outside Tina, Kornoi and others, and also north of Kutum and outside Mellit. In Dar Masalit they have a presence in the Abeche area?, Geneina area and Mornay.

The SLA became a member of the National Democratic Alliance in March? 2004.

According to SLM/A representatives, the main aim of the SLM/A is to build a New Sudan, which includes:

- Liberal democracy - separation of religion and state
- Democratization and human rights
- Freedoms
- Devolution of power within a federal system i.e. Regions control power (like the us) with their own police force and judiciary within a wider constitution
- Darfur to be included in a sharing of power
- Sudan to be a model country of citizenship.

Their political programme is criticized as 'very rudimentary'.

The main differences between the SLM and the JEM (according to SLM representatives) are as follows:

- The JEM are considered part of the regime, as they have links with Turabi. They are a breakaway group of the NIF - and were formed following Turabi's split with the government. In contrast the SLM/A sympathies lie with the south and they have no problems cooperating with the SPLA.
- The JEM is essentially a political movement with a very small military (not more than 80). The JEM do not undertake military training - theirs is a political cause only.
- They do not have much power and are scattered. The SLA has more support from the people of Darfur!
- The JEM are not focussed on Darfur. The JEM feel they do not have to localise the issue and are not just focused on marginalization of Darfur.
- The SLA want State and religion to be separate i.e. a secular State, while the JEM are essentially an Islamist group for whom state and religion are the one and the same.

On the ground the SLM and JEM act as one militarily, although politically they have very different agendas⁵⁸.

Regional relations and trade

Relations with Chad and Libya have also had a significant impact on trade in Darfur. Insecurity in Chad from the 60s associated with Chad civil war led to the expansion of the markets just inside Sudan - at the expense of those inside Chad. From 1979 until 1982 Hissene Habre's rebel coalition embargoed trade into Chad through the southern part of Darfur⁵⁹. The chronic insecurity made trade difficult even after the embargo was lifted. This insecurity affected the larger traders who operated into Chad and made running commercial vehicles less profitable in general⁵⁹. Smaller traders benefited (most

of them farmers and herders based in rural areas). In the 1980s, the larger traders were hampered by and smaller traders benefited from local economic conditions⁵⁹.

Trade between Libya and Sudan (and presumably labour migration) increased as the Islamic Legion had opened a truck route from Kufra oasis through Ounianga Kebir, Fada and on to Kutum in Darfur⁹p205. Another desert route began at Ma'tan as-Sarra then skirted east to continue south to the Meidob hills. The 1980s was a period of intense trade with Libya, the market of Mellit in particular was awash with imported goods, included vehicle spare parts which were otherwise difficult to obtain in Darfur and Sudan generally.

Concluding remarks

This discussion clearly shows how the roots of the current conflict have a long history dating back in many cases to the 19th century or before. Many features of the conflict have their echoes in former times, including brutal inter-tribal conflicts, which are manipulated by the central Sudanese authorities.

The roots of the current conflict are intricate and intertwined – and almost impossible to separate out without ignoring their dynamic and shifting inter-relationship. With these difficulties in mind, this study identifies the following major contributing factors:

At national level -

1. The marginalization and neglect of Darfur by the central government since the nineteenth century. This has contributed at a local level to:
 - a. Failing institutions, including the judicial systems and policing, which latterly appear to have favoured certain groups. This has been in part because of the fragmented approach to administration, particularly the Native Administration.
 - b. Failing development, including education, healthcare, transport, veterinary and other services, which affect all of Darfur, but historically differentially affect ethnic groups.
2. The wider regional conflicts, which have contributed to the development and use of ethnically distinct armed militias and also the increased numbers of firearms owned by Darfurians generally. These conflicts involve the north south civil war, and their long-running conflicts within Chad and between Chad and Libya over the Aouzou strip, and the relationship between these countries and the Sudan.
3. The tactical manipulation of ethnic identities within Darfur (including racism) by the government of Sudan and political parties including; the mobilization of armed militias, and the political mobilization based on religion and ethnic identity (Mahdism and later islamization and arabism).

At a local level -

4. The competition and pressures on natural resources within Darfur in part a result of a history of drought and famine, with clear ethnic rivalries and ethnically distinct approaches to addressing the problems. Although it is generally recognized that disputes over natural resources cannot be considered as the main trigger of the current conflict.

5. Local political polarization between Arab and non Arab, with external influences from Libyan affiliated popular committees and some political parties (Muslim Brotherhood and Umma Party).

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Chapter 2

The History And Origins Of The Current Conflict In Darfur

Figure 1 Extract from 1928 Anglo-Egyptian Sudan - Tribal areas – ‘Dars’ of Darfur (source Sudan Archive, Durham University)

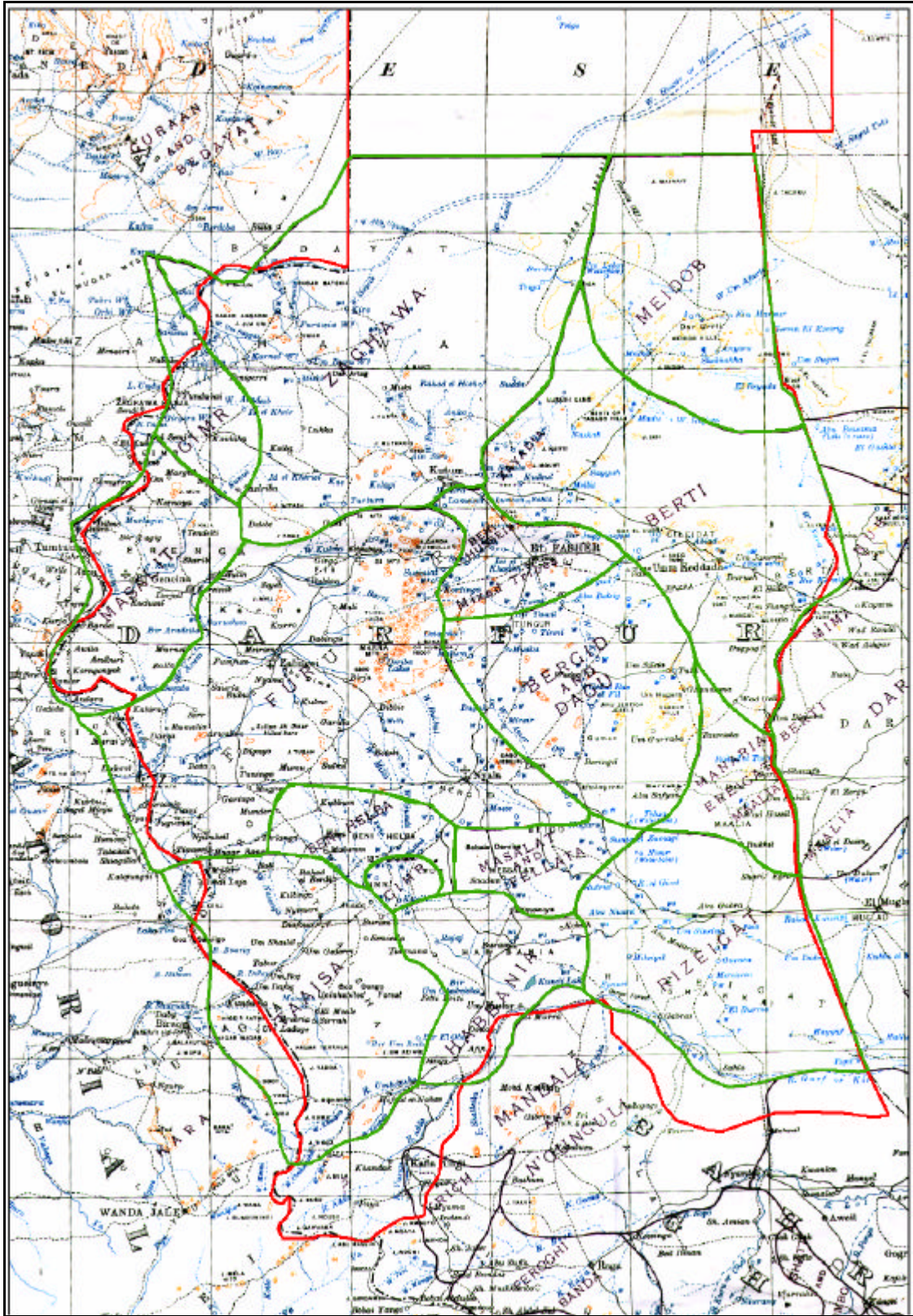


Figure 2 Distribution of tribal affiliation of Darfur MPs in the National Assembly

