

# A South Sudanese State?

*A case study of power dynamics and conflict in a state-building country*



Freja Toft Stagsted Sørensen  
Master Thesis 2018  
Global Refugee Studies  
Supervisor: Vibeke Andersson



**AALBORG UNIVERSITY**  
DENMARK



## Abstract

South Sudan has for many decades been ruled by other empires: first by the British and later by elite powers of Khartoum in the northern part of Sudan. This time for South Sudan was characterised by exploitation, underdevelopment and marginalisation. To find the government of South Sudan in a position, where power struggles internally in South Sudan help spark a conflict of ethnic character that was interrelated to the rise of the third biggest refugee crisis in the world, was very interesting. Especially after the President, Salva Kiir, stated in his independent speech in 2011 that the country would now have to stand together and finally be safe.

Which led the to the decision of taking a qualitative approach by building the thesis as a case study, where the particular in this case would be South Sudan. In order to get an in-depth understanding of the case theoretical concepts like 'the security dilemma', 'group identity', 'greed and grievance' will be used for the purpose of guiding the empirical material into a direction, where the research question will be unravelled throughout the paper.

The main findings of the thesis centres on the idea that South Sudan in fact can call itself for a state, as it possess land, people and government. But that power dynamics leading to civil war has created a conflict in which ethnicity comes to play a significant role to the peoples of South Sudan. Ethnicity was by the two major figures in the conflict, Salva Kiir and Riek Machar, used as a means through which to mobilise ethnic groups to support them. This was done through the commemoration of the past and the memories hereof.

The state-building process in South Sudan is to be seen as one factor in the rise of the third biggest refugee crisis in the world today, as power struggles seems to have mobilised people in the country to an extent, where people being compelled to flee the country in order to protect themselves.

**Keywords:** failed state, civil war, power struggle, ethnicity, state building, South Sudan, identity

## **List of Abbreviations**

CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
GNI	Gross National Income
HDI	Human Development Index
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
R2P	Responsibility to Protect
SPLM/A	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army
SPLM-IO	Sudan People's Liberation Movement-In-Opposition
UN	United Nation
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USA	United States of America



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## 1 Introduction

South Sudan, the youngest nation in the world, became independent from Sudan in 2011 with big hopes of a bright future lying ahead for the people. Before independence, South Sudan was a part of the united Sudan, a former English-Egyptian colony up until 1956. The North and the south of the united Sudan have always known to have culturally and religious differences: the North being predominantly Muslim and the south belonging to various different tribes, hence it being divided in the Arabs in the North to the Africans in the south (Ruay, 1994: 13-15). This, “us” versus “them” situation grew ever more prominent during decades of civil wars, as well as new laws being constructed in Khartoum in the North without much inclusion of cultural views of the south. These differences and clashes ended in two civil wars, before South Sudan finally was able to call itself an independent state, and thus no longer confined by the laws of the North. It sparked new hope for the citizens in South Sudan, and the first time after the separation was characterised by peace and continued hope of uniting the country’s many tribes under one national identity. However, the peace was short-lived: In 2013 internal conflicts in government started to rise between President Salva Kiir and then-Vice President Riek Machar. Kiir accused Machar of an attempted coup, whilst others accused Kiir of staging it in order to justify and initiate an attack on the opposition (Howden, 2013b). This became the beginning of a long-standing, violent conflict in South Sudan; today characterised as a civil war.

The situation is considered to be the source of the third biggest refugee crisis in the world after those in Syria and Afghanistan. Consequently, the hope from independence has been replaced by fear, despair and insecurity. As of August 2017, 1.8 million people have fled the country; the vast majority to the neighbouring country of Uganda (Wachiaya, 2017).

Both sides of the conflict, Salva Kier on one side and Riek Machar on the other, have been accused of cruelty during the conflict, and this has led some experts to fear that the conflict is turning into an ethnic conflict (Al Jazeera, 2017). Throughout the years of independence, South Sudan has received economic aid from the United States of America and the United Nations to help the country in its process of becoming a democratic state.

This has led me to wonder how a country that fought for independence for so many years, especially against the discrimination from the Arabs in the North, can now themselves be involved in a conflict that seems to divide the country. South Sudan wanted independence on

the basis of creating a nation that would stand together as one, no matter what community you belonged to. So what happened to the state-building process in South Sudan? On what grounds did conflict break out again? Is there hope for the youngest nation in the world?

### 1.1 Research Question

Based on the above problem statement, this thesis will provide an in-depth examination of the conflict in South Sudan. This will be done by addressing the below research question:

*To what extent can power dynamics within the state-building processes in South Sudan be seen as interrelated with the rise of the third biggest refugee crisis in the world?*

Within this research question the following operational questions have been defined to help bring light to various aspects of the research question:

- *How has South Sudan's history shaped South Sudan today?*
- *To what extent does identity and ethnic tensions affect the South Sudanese population?*
- *What role does economy play in the conflict?*
- *What happened to the state building process?*

Along with these operational questions, theoretical frameworks of greed and grievance, ethnicity, memory and the past and the security dilemma will all help shape the analysis in which the research question will be answered through a single-case-study approach. Furthermore, a contextualisation of the history of South Sudan should help get a better understanding of the current conflict.



## 2 Methodological considerations

This chapter will outline the methodological considerations behind the thesis, the limitations of the work and a description of my choice of material. The research design of the thesis will be outlined, and finally, the structure of the thesis will be presented.

### 2.1 Research Design

This thesis lies within the scope of Global Refugee Studies as the people being affected by the conflict in South Sudan have chosen to flee the country to an extent, where the crisis is now the third biggest in the world. Moreover, I will position myself in the field of failed state researchers, which can also be seen as being interesting to the field of Global Refugees Studies and especially to Development and International Relations in which the study is also a part.

The thesis will take a qualitative approach focusing on case study as a research method. Case study is used to: *“thoroughly describe complex phenomena, such as recent events, important issues, or programs, in ways to unearth new and deeper understanding of these phenomena [...] case study sets out to examine the particular.”* (Laplan et al, 2012). In this thesis the particular will be the conflict in South Sudan, where it will be investigated to get a deeper understanding of it.

Theory will be used to form and guide the empirical material and will help to get an understanding of the case.

The single case study approach works with five rationales: *critical, unusual, common, revelatory, and longitudinal.* (Yin, 2014: 51). Of these five, two will be used in this thesis. First, choosing a critical case that uses the chosen theories to unravel the research question. Second, the longitudinal case as the thesis will be studied over time, in this case drawing on South Sudan’s history to see how this has affected the present.

The study is carried out as a desk-study, as mentioned earlier, why it is obvious I will rely on other scholars’ work to be able to answer the research question. To do so I will use both empirical and theoretical research to investigate the case of South Sudan and how this has produced the third biggest refugee crisis in the world today.

To do so my thesis will be centred on the notion of 'failed/failure of the state' as this will help me understand the situation in South Sudan. In the field of 'failed states' or 'failure of states' there has been conducted a great deal of research. Many of which centres on four aspects: colonial, external and economical impact as well as security dimensions of states. As mentioned in the previous sub-chapter this thesis will not include the aspect of external impact on failed states, but more on the remaining three aspects mentioned.

The classical notion of 'state failure' centres on the western idea of the state in the fact that a state has to provide public goods, security, education, etc. to its population. And if a state is not able to comply with these, it was considered to be failed or not able to sustain itself as described by Helman and Ratner (1992-1993: 3). Rotberg, too, lies in this line of scholars, he argues that failed states are characterised by communal discontent, disharmonies between groups, inability to control borders and to provide goods for its citizens, etc. (2003: 5-6). Other scholars have a more critical view on the notion, Stein Sundstøl Eriksen is one such scholar, who works in the field and takes a critical view on the notion of 'failed states'. He critiques the term to be too westernised and based on "our" idea of what a state is supposed to look like. Instead he wants the field to focus on the states' relation to its society, and at the same time look at how the relations to the outside world are, and at last it should be investigated as an inter-relationship between the notion of the state and how the state actually forms itself in these relationships (2010: 28).

I will position myself in between these two lines of thoughts of the notion of 'failed states', since much of the literature supports this notion and the whole discourse in the field is bent in that direction it is difficult to argue otherwise. Furthermore, it is difficult when comparing a country in a fragile position to a state like Denmark, not to get the idea that something is failing in the given country. Therefore, I find Eriksen's contribution to the field very useful in the way that it will help me shape my analysis in a way, where the western notion of the state is viewed at with new perspectives and not in relation to the Western notion of state, to find out how South Sudan is building its state as a new country.

## 2.2 Empirical Material

In this sub-chapter I will go through the empirical material I have used to shape this thesis, both by introducing the material I have chosen and my reasons for choosing exactly these scholars' research.

The thesis will in a later chapter be focused on the colonial impact, just as the years/decades leading up to independence will be described. For these particular parts the thesis will be based primarily on the works of Matthew LeRiche & Matthew Arnold and Hilde F. Johnson.

LeRiche and Arnold both come from an academic background, focusing on security and political studies. They have both worked in South Sudan and the surrounding region for many years. Together they published the book 'South Sudan: From Revolution to Independence', which will be the primary source for chapter 4.

Johnson, was the UN Secretary General's Special Representative in South Sudan from 2011-2014 (Johnson, 2016: xv), but has been working with South Sudan for a total of 15 years. As Johnson has great insights in the current conflict and knowledge of the years before independence, and especially her insights during the conflict, the decisions made by both main figures of the conflict (Salva Kiir and Riek Machar) are highly valuable to this thesis as it will give a more nuanced picture of the conflict. What makes her book especially relevant for this thesis is that she has insight in what is taking place on both sides of the conflict in the sense that she both talks to the government and the people caught in the conflict during her time as Special Representative.

Prevalent for both these choices of empirical material is that, they cannot stand alone, why newspaper articles describing the situation and academic journals will also be used in both these chapters as two primary sources are presumed to be insufficient. Thus, the secondary empirical material will be applied to nuance the thesis.

When using few primary sources, the agenda of the authors have to be taken into considerations in the discourse of 'conflict studies', it is important to remember while writing that the authors can be biased. E.g. Johnson has been working more with the government and LeRiche and Arnold have worked through observing the country and through narratives. Their choices, which must be based on their interest in the subject,

will lead their research in a certain direction, and as a strictly platonically view on the subject of conflict seems difficult to leave out. Johnson's book is guided by her time and her job as Special Representative making her research limited to and influenced by her position in the UN. This is, though, also what makes her book especially relevant as it provides other perspectives that might not have been gained by other researchers, as her position in the UN allowed for her to have a great insight in the government, but also allowed for her to speak with key figures in the conflict.

Therefore, I am aware of these matters while writing and it is also the reason to use secondary sources to back the findings of these researchers' work and hence giving the thesis more depth.

For the theoretical part of the thesis I will rely mostly on the works by Paul Collier, Barry R. Posen, Barbara Tint, Frances Stewart and David Eller. These will all help put the South Sudanese conflict into a perspective that will make the conflict more understandable in the light of the notion of 'failed states' discourse, and further it will help highlight the consequence it has had for the country. Common to these scholars is that they all research in the field of conflict from different perspectives. Tint and Eller focus on ethnicity and their relation to the past as an important factor in times of conflict, and they will be useful for the thesis as they can help get a better understanding on how groups mobilise based on their past and memory hereof.

Stewart and Collier both work in the field, where grievance and greed are analysed to be important means of conflict. Collier is well known in this field and to a big extent writes off grievance as a cause of conflict, but though argues with other scholars that groups tend to use grievance in their propaganda to collect more members. Stewart on the other hand argues that grievance is just as important as greed and brings up the concept of 'horizontal inequalities' to describe the importance of grievance, where political, economic and social dimensions are in focus in order to explain why people mobilise in fragile states. Despite the fact that Collier does not think much of grievance, I have chosen to use his thoughts of greed in my thesis as I find this aspect important in order to understand why some leaders or rebels act based on economy. At the same time I will still use Stewart's research of grievance as I feel it gives my thesis more depth by bringing more dimensions to the table in order to answer the research question.

Posen is a researcher within the field of security studies and was one of the first to apply the security dilemma to ethnic conflict and violence. Originally the security dilemma was used about security and threats between states (Herz, 1950). Posen was then one of the first to connect the Security Dilemma as a threat of security internally in a country, where the threat does not come from the outside, but instead can be linked to ethnic groups, with the rationale being that if the state is unable to protect us, then we do it our self. The concept can be used to explain ethnic violence that end out in civil war, why I have chosen to use this along with the other theoretical aspects to get as deep of an understanding of the case as possible. Posen in that sense is particularly important for the thesis as he was one of the first to develop the traditional notion of the Security Dilemma to include ethnicity and intra-state conflict. As my focus in the thesis will be on South Sudan and their internal affairs, it therefore makes perfect sense to use Posen's notion of the Security Dilemma rather than the classical notion of it.

Finally, the thesis will rely on newspaper articles and works of NGO's, where I will be aware that they can take a certain political position, but I have tried to find more sources stating the same to be sure to provide the thesis with correct information.

### **2.3 Delimitations**

South Sudan has had a long and complex road until gaining independence in 2011. After independence the country has faced and is facing another civil war for which the reasons can be many. I have chosen to focus on the colonial, ethnic and to some extent the economical reasons that lie behind the current conflict that is now the third biggest refugee crisis in the world. In such a case it is natural that there are some limitations.

Thus, I have chosen not to include the international aspect of the conflict, this would have been extremely interesting, but it would have been a whole thesis in itself to investigate, why I have chosen to leave it out in my construction of the thesis. By choosing to do this, my focus will only be on South Sudan and not the impact of donor countries, NGO's, the UN, who have also had their share in the conflict in South Sudan.

Choosing not to focus on the international aspect or external impacts of the conflict will keep a more focused case study.

Moreover, since the study is a pure desk-study, interviews have not been possible. The thesis will rely heavily on observations and interviews made by other scholars within the field. For that reason this can also be seen as a limitation as I have to purely rely on the research of others and cannot myself gather and interpret findings, instead I have to interpret the findings of others.

### 3 Theoretical Considerations

This chapter will concern the theoretical aspects of 'Collective Memory', 'Group Identity' the concept of 'Greed versus Grievance' and an introduction to 'the Security Dilemma'. These concepts will all be introduced in relation to conflict to help answer the research question. These theories/concepts will both be looked at through the lens of 'state-centric' and 'rebel-centric' ways. The 'state-centric' model focuses on the role a weak or failure of the state plays in the structure of conflict. Whereas the 'rebel-centric' model focuses more on the why, how and when rebels choose to rebel.

These two focuses will be more clearly outlined throughout the analysis, where there will both be a focus on the state and the people.

#### 3.1 The Security Dilemma

The security dilemma is, in short, a term used to describe why some groups are more likely to end up in conflict, when considering how big of a threat a certain group is to the security of the other. Many have discussed the concept, but Barry R. Posen has described it in relation to ethnic conflict, which is why his definition is particularly well suited to analyse how the situation has contributed to the third biggest refugee flow in the world.

Barry R. Posen states that when there is no sovereign power in a country or is a power that is disbelieving of others; the different groups in society are bound to make their own security of themselves their first priority. As long as some regard the issue of power and security as the first priority, the competition will go on until the point where one has acquired sufficient security to pose a threat to others, who will then respond to this threat (Posen, 1993: 28). That is, one action is followed by a reaction that: "[...] *in the end can make one less secure.*" (ibid).

In political crisis Posen goes on to explain that pre-emptive war is an option when states go for an offensive operation, as they believe that making the first move it is the best possible way to survive or prevent an attack. Furthermore, he describes how groups in a young country often face struggles regarding how to best build new structures from the ashes of old empires, which makes these groups more vulnerable to pre-emptive war

(ibid: 29). To sum up, it is believed that protecting one-self from a feared attack by making the initial move is the safest option.

To further elaborate on the topic, Posen goes on to explain the difference of offence and defence in cases of securing one's group, and how the lines between the two in some cases can be very blurry, which is why many groups favour an offensive strategy by assessing to what extent other groups are a threat and how big of threat they potentially could be. In these cases, Posen argues that groups with a stronger group-identity are better off as members will be able to cooperate better as they have a common enemy (ibid: 29-30):

“When humans can readily cooperate, the whole exceeds the sum of the parts, creating a unit stronger relative to those groups with a weaker identity. Thus, the ‘groupness’ of the ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic collectivities that emerge from collapsed empires, gives each of them an inherent offensive military power.” (Posen, 1993: 30).

Thus, when people are able to cooperate, the whole becomes more important and you become greater than those whose identity is not truly defined yet. Thereby opting for an offensive strategy seems more likely as you have the stronger hand. Posen further states that if you are able to unite on the basis of one shared identity, and hereby letting go of your own, the collective will stand stronger as focus will be on one common goal (ibid).

One group gearing up, in terms of weapons, will lead other groups doing the same, again pointing out the heart of the theory; the actions of one group will lead to the reaction of another – a so-called chain of reactions. The whole idea of pre-emptive self-defence is based on the notion that no group in conflict times believe that the other group is good. Furthermore, also based on the idea that it is not in any of the other groups' interest to reverse them into having another identity. The actions can thus be seen as both self-defence, but also as being a survival strategy (ibid).

Another important factor according to Posen is to look at the other groups' history: How have they acted in similar situations in the past? Were they offensive or defensive, etc.? As history is in many cases likely to repeat itself, parties learn a lot about the strategies of others by attempting to understand previous actions, and hence better estimate future threats.



A group will then after having looked at these factors determine if the group is a danger to one's own group (ibid: 31). The importance of the past in group-dynamics will be introduced in a following section.

Finally, Posen describes how *"Isolated ethnic group [...] can produce incentives for preventive war"* (ibid: 32). That is, if you have an advantage at some point that you do not think you will have on a later point, you are more likely to use that 'window of opportunity' as Posen characterises it: the rationale will then be 'sooner rather than later' (ibid: 33), which makes pre-emptive war more probable in cases of isolated ethnic groups. In later times the isolated group might have stalked up on weapons, making the "attack" irrelevant, as it is not likely to be won. The rationale then comes into play again: rather be the first to attack than be the one getting attacked. This will at the same time give the group attacking first a sense of agency.

### **3.1.1 State Collapse**

When a state collapses, or is on the verge of doing so, it makes the government fragile. Posen argues that because other groups might attempt to seize power, pre-emptive conflicts might be more likely to occur in such situations. As mentioned, the fragile state tends to choose to act preventively when a 'window of opportunity' sees the daylight to prevent another group from taking over power. But if a group does not believe to possess the strength and manpower to take over the power from the fragile government, the group might try to solve the issues present between opposing groups until the group has obtained more strength (ibid: 34).

## **3.2 The Importance of Collective Memory and the Past in Ethnic Groups**

Ethnic groups can be defined in many ways. Jack David Eller explains an ethnic group as a 'product of the present' (Eller, 1999: 47). He further elaborates by explaining that the past only exists in the ethnic group due to a situation in the present that puts the past into play to further the ethnic groups' wishes. These memories of the past are due to be seen in the light of the present. Ethnic groups are thus groups looking for interests by using culture and history as a weapon to get what they interest (ibid). Memory and past

plays a big role in the shaping of conflict in the present This will be further explained in the following, drawing both on the thoughts of Jack David Eller and Barbara Tint.

### 3.2.1 Collective Memory

Collective memory is a memory common to a social group, where a such cannot “*exist independently from the social domains in which people live...*” (Tint, 2010: 241). That is, the collective memory is influenced by the surroundings in which it exists, and hence the collective memories existing in a society correspond to the number of groups in the given society.

In conflict, Barbara Tint suggests that memory and long-term conflicts are well-connected:

“[...] those who do remember their past, live their past, and honor their past are continuously replaying the cycles of struggle and conflict that are their legacy. [...] an inevitability is that they span generations and are therefore subject to the intergenerational transmission of history and memory...” (Tint, 2010: 239).

Tint hereby argues that by recalling and reliving one’s past, you are a contributing factor in reproducing the same events by passing on your own history to the next generation. The collective memory is not only reproduced through past events, but also through the events and society in which we live in the present day.

### 3.2.2 The Past

Jack David Eller describes the historical past as an important factor in the field of ethnic groups in conflict. The past as history is described as being porous, meaning that it has holes, in the sense that it is subjective: people themselves choose what comes in and what comes out (or what you want to remember and what not). Furthermore, it means that the memory of the past can be manipulated by others. Another word for that could be indoctrination; that you are told a certain story so many times that you start believing it to be true (Eller, 1999: 30). Often the memory of the past plays an important role for ethnic groups that have lived through some historically important periods, e.g. glory, humiliation, etc. or the loss of territory. These old events can come to be

significant in the future, where ethnic groups are inclined to systematise their past in order for it to fit in the present and thereby legitimise their actions (ibid: 32).

In this context, Eller mentions the colonial period as an important time for many ethnic groups, their perception of the past, and the changes it has brought with it in the present. The colonial powers did often not have any interest in the history of the ethnic groups in the area, which they colonised. This could both mean that some groups were split up by new borderlines and that some groups, who previously lived autonomously side by side would now had to be controlled by the colonisers, thus drawing some groups into conflicts as they now had to live under a new order (ibid: 33). The colonisers would infiltrate the customs of the groups; impose new rules, and potentially new leaders in groups. This would later lead to conflict between and within groups that still exist in the present.

Eller continues to explain how this would often lead to one group being favoured over others, which resulted in the creation of an elite that might not have been there before, and thus generated even more unbalance in society as certain groups felt neglected. Often these groups end up assuming power once the colonial power leaves the country (ibid: 35).

After gaining independence, a period of trying to democratise the country usually follows, which, according to Eller, is almost never successful. He argues that it actually often creates more rivalry, as the elite in the power position will typically want to introduce what Eller phrases 'Communal Representation': Attempts at introducing a common representation of the whole country, which is extremely difficult in multi-ethnic countries (Eller, 1999: 35).

Finally, Eller emphasises the importance of the present in relation to the past. That is, the past might in some instances only play a role if the situation in the present allows for it, which is likely to be the case in relation to ethnicity and conflict (ibid: 36).

Conflict would rise because new states merely acquired and continued the power of the colonisers, instead of looking at the interest and identity of the ethnic groups of which many countries consisted. But even if new states inherited problems and structure from colonial times, it is the new states' own decision to carry them into state-building processes. In many instances this leads to new conflicts, because colonial structures

reproduced. That is, if colonialism led people to want independence, continuing this line of thought after colonialism might lead to further conflict in the country since certain groups often become marginalised once again (ibid: 38-39).

The conflicts that arise can be a question of interest, e.g. one group wanting more rights; more jobs, more inclusion, etc. It is in this instance an ethnic group would look to its past, (where it might also not have had many rights) to find the will to fight for it yet again, when a new situation in the present sparks hopes for this (ibid: 43).

### **3.2.3 Group Identity and the Notion of National Traumas**

Apart from ethnicity, identity can also be a major cause for ethnic conflict. Such conflicts are often more receptive to become intractable conflicts. In these cases, people tend to be more aware of their group and group identity (Tint, 2010: 244). This means that when an elite group or authority denies another group's existence, this strengthens the group's identity and thus maintains the denied group's existing in the same position as always (ibid).

When groups have lived through various struggles, their individual memories and identities will be affected and develop into being one operating on conflict, and later to being integrated in the collective identity and memory of the group (ibid: 245).

The group identity is maintained through narratives and commemoration, but 'national traumas' also has a big impact in the development of an identity. These traumas can: "*... either strengthen or weaken a group identity, and be either unifying or fragmenting*" (ibid: 245). How these national traumas are tackled by the society as a whole has a big impact on the further development of a country. If certain traumatic events in a country's history are not resolved, this can also be a contributing factor in reproducing situations of conflict (ibid: 247).

### **3.3 Greed versus Grievance**

In this sub-chapter I will introduce the concept of greed versus grievance. These concepts will help in the understanding of how economy can spark conflict and how inequality between groups can also be a contributing factor in times of conflict.

Greed and grievance has become a central lens through which to analyse economy causes of conflict. Greed concerns the desire to better one's situation (where cost-benefit is often used) and grievance revolves around when people rebel over issues of identity, ethnicity and religion instead of economical reasons. Many scholars have contributed to the theoretical framework over the years. Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler have made a thorough statistical dataset, where they favour greed over grievance as causes of war. This perception of the notion of greed over grievance has met some resistance as some argue that grievance can be just as big a contributor in violent conflict as greed. As for example Karen Ballentine and Heiko Nitzschke who argue that economical factors definitely matters to conflicts, but that these factors do not necessarily matter more than political and socio-cultural factors (Ballentine & Nitzschke, 2003: 2). Therefore I will use greed as explained by Collier and then still count grievance for a viable reason for conflict as well.

These aspects will provide the analysis with a deeper understanding of the conflict in South Sudan, and at the same time help explain how this has affected state building in the country.

### 3.3.1 Greed

Collier believes that greed is a very strong incentive to produce conflict, but also an incentive to prolong war, as some people are able to benefit from the war, which are not available during peace. In times of conflict, crime rates tend to rise due to government cuts of the police, as the military is preferred. Furthermore, for criminals who have acquired many assets, (s)he will try to move them out of the country, as his/her position is very insecure if the crime gets caught (Collier, 2000: 100).

Furthermore, he outlines that the greed-based approach to conflict argue, “[...] *that it is the underlying economic conditions that create the risk of conflict. Some societies will have repeated conflicts [...] because war is profitable for some groups*” (ibid: 105). That is, economy can both lead to war, but it can also be the underlying reason for its continuation, especially if the people who benefit from conflict are those who are supposed to make decisions in government (ibid: 109). Finally, he argues that those interested in benefiting from the conflict tend to maintain a low profile.

Mats Berdal and David Keen (who also writes in the field of economic and political agendas in conflict) put it in reference to sustaining a war on economic grounds:

“While military elites might have few incentives to abandon conflicts whose dynamics allow to maintain extensive privileges and influence, economic consideration can also have a very direct bearing on the decisions of soldiers and officers further down the hierarchy who are contemplating the disarmament and demobilisation option [...] is that weapons have an economic as well as a security value for those who possess them. With no employment opportunities, lack of food, and lack of physical security, there may be few incentives to lay down arms.” (Berndal & Keen, 1997: 812).

This observation refers more to the reason for rebels to keep their weapons, because they believe they are being ill treated. Weapons then are a way to obtain some agency and power over their positions.

### 3.3.2 Grievance - Horizontal Inequality

Horizontal Inequality is by Frances Stewart and Arnim Langer described as: *“inequality among culturally defined (or constructed) groups”* (Langer & Stewart, 2006: 1). It both includes socio and political factors and economic considerations. They argue that horizontal inequality matters a great deal to society and people as group members identify with the identity of the group, so when certain inequalities hit the group it will affect the identity hereof.

The economical aspect includes income, access to assets (e.g. land, cattle, etc. depending on in which country the group exists), employment opportunities.

The social aspect includes life expectancy, infant and child mortality, education and access to services: health, schools, universities, sanitation and water supplies, housing, etc.

The political aspect includes participation in decision-making and implementation; president, cabinet, civil service, military, etc. (Langer & Stewart, 2006: 2)

The social and economic aspects are not due to change, whereas the political aspect often changes.

These three aspects are what make up the idea of horizontal inequality that is inequality to be measured upon these aspects. And when inequality appears in all three aspects in

a society, then the groups who are most affected by the situation are more likely to be so for a more persistent period (ibid: 5). It is showed by the example of how the black population in USA experience persistent poverty.

Furthermore, Langer and Stewart, explain that groups who are stripped of the social-economical aspects often lack political power and influence, as these often influence each other. Because where political inequalities exist there is often an uneven distribution of government resources (ibid: 8).

Horizontal inequalities are not desired for countries, because it captures and sustains people and groups in a persistent position for years. Here they are left in poverty and without much power, which threatens political stability as people, who are in an unequal position are more likely to mobilise and rebel.

The political aspect in horizontal inequality is very important; because it determines the other two aspects in terms of making policies to ensure e.g. equal pay, rights, education, etc. So if the political situation in a country is very unstable it will most likely influence the other two (ibid: 38).

Stewart further elaborates on the field that “[...] *inequalities may be due to the unequal distribution of public goods*” (Stewart, 2002: 4). And when this is related to the distribution between groups with ethnic character: “*ethnic identities coincide with economic/social ones, social instability of one sort of another is likely –ethnicity does become a mobilising agent, and as this happens the ethnic divisions are enhanced*” (ibid: 33).

Thus, horizontal inequalities between ethnic groups can affect the situation in a country through mobilisation to better one’s situation, making grievance just as important as greed in conflict studies.

## 4 The South Sudanese Road to Independence

This chapter will describe the road to independence for the youngest nation in the world, South Sudan: from civil war to independence and back to civil war. I will start out by introducing the road to independence for South Sudan, which will be followed by a small elaboration of the conflict today. Afterwards, an overview of the South's time as colonised, Sudan and the two civil wars will be introduced to get a better understanding of the relationship between Sudan and South Sudan. Next, I will outline the main points in the independence process of South Sudan to be liberated from Sudan.

### 4.1 Independence for South Sudan

After decades of colonisation and civil wars the people of South Sudan voted for independence in January 2011. With a lot of hope and willpower the newest country in the world, with chairman of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), Salva Kiir, claimed that it was now their time to show the world that they were capable of leading their own country and protecting its citizens as no leader from either the British-Egyptian regime nor the United Sudan had been able to. But since the independence South Sudan has faced many challenges, both regarding new civil wars and security for its citizens.

The whole process of independence started with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005. With this agreement South Sudan would still be a part of the united Sudan. In retrospect, it was the beginning of the end for the New Sudan, but at the time being it was seen as a final try to give Sudan as one nation one last try. Though, Sudan would still be one nation it would have two system frameworks (LeRiche & Arnold, 2012: 110). This meant that the South would finally get the secular state it had been dreaming about for many decades, and furthermore the SPLM would at the same time have influence in the unified Sudan's government. Finally, the agreement gave the South the possibility of voting to either keep being a part of the unified Sudan or vote for independence at the end of a six-year interim period. In this period, the CPA would make the North share its power, wealth and security with the South. Furthermore, it would give the South the possibility of gaining independent through a referendum if this was



still wished for. Though this was not preferred by many international actors, who had helped shaping the CPA and securing peace for the National Unity of Sudan (ibid: 114).

During the six-year interim period there was not much monitoring of the implementation of the CPA, which meant that not much was actually done to comply with the agreement, like making it more attractive for the to be part of the National Unity after the interim period (Hilde, 2016: 12). Why in 2010 the South was very interested in secession from the National Unity, as the North had also failed to make a better future for marginalised people in the South. Only the South itself supported the desire for secession. The North and many observers and supporters of the CPA thought that the South was not ready to be an independent state, and many feared a new civil war between the two parts would break out again.

With a referendum the North would lose some of their main income – oil which sustained the economy of the Sudan. The majority of oil reserves are located in the South, so by agreeing to secession the North would with certainty lose some of its income as the oil then should also be able to carry the South's economy upon independence, why the North hoped that secession would not be possible. For the South a prolonging of the CPA, independence would be difficult to reach within a manageable future, therefore the leaders of the SPLM worked hard to convince international leaders that independence was right for the South. This resulted in a referendum the 9<sup>th</sup> of January 2011, where 98.8 per cent of the people in the South voted for independence (ibid: 14-15).

In the first years as a new independent state, South Sudan lived in peace with SPLM's leader Salva Kiir as the president. A four-year transitional period would begin on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2011, where a new constitution would be formed. After a considerably peaceful period South Sudan started to feel the pressure of being independent. The country, being one of the poorest in the world, was facing a transition period that turned out to be long and difficult.

For the first time in the country's history, it would have its own government – this had before independence always been in the hands of others.

For South Sudan it would be a big challenge to get the country up and running, some experts say it is due to the fact that letting a rebel-group taking over government power

was from the beginning a bad idea (Johnson, 2016: 16). The concern was on if military rebels, who had only governed small areas of land would be able to govern a whole country.

The challenge for South Sudan at independence was to build a strong government and with strong institution that could run the country and at the same time get acknowledged by the international community. The South was during colonials to a big extent left to it self, meaning people would continue life as normal without much education. With no great educational system the majority of the people have only attended school for five years on average (UNDP, 2016:2) leaving the country with out many educated doctors, nurses, lawyers, etc. , who are important when building a state to create the necessary institutions (hospitals, schools, courts, etc.) (LeRiche & Arnold, 2012: 147). Despite this Salva Kiir succeeded in establishing a basic system for government.

A few years later the basic systems was starting to fall apart as a power struggle between President Salva Kiir and Vice-President Riek Machar broke out.

#### **4.2 Sudan as a United Nation**

Sudan as a unified nation consisting of both North and South Sudan got its independence from Great Britain in 1956. Before independence Sudan was ruled by a combined British-Egyptian regime from 1899-1955. Already during this period of the nation's history the North and the South were split in two, as the British-Egyptian regime governed Sudan as two separate entities (LeRiche & Arnold, 2012: 8).

This was done by limiting the North's influence of the Arabic language and Islamic culture in the South as people in the southern part of Sudan consisted of many different cultures, where the majority of the population was Christian, Traditional African religious and only a small part were Muslims (Ruay, 1994: 16-17). By limiting the influence of the North in the South the British Empire promoted the use of the English language and allowed for Christian missionaries to influence the South (LeRiche & Arnold, 2012: 8).

The British limited this influence of the North in the South under the British Southern Policy, which was about separating the North from the South. This was first agreed upon in 1902 and further changed in 1922. It is said the British put forth this policy due to the

worry that the anti-British attitude set by the Egypt in North would reach the tribes in the South. So it can thus be said that the British was actually covering up its own agenda and fear of loosing its power status, it still had at the time in Sudan, furthermore it was afraid that this anti-British sentiment would also come to include the southern Sudan. The idea behind the policy was hence to preserve the diverse cultures and tribes in the South, this was though by some seen as a segregation of the Sudan society as a whole. By not letting the North having any influence in the country the southerners were also cut off when it came to economical development and education (de Hoyes, 1995: 47).

The southern part of Sudan hence descend from different tribes of which most can be traced back to Black Africans South of Sahara, considered as being the Sudanics (before the united Sudan split in two), even though the tribes are all different, in the sense that they have different languages, cultures, traditions, etc.

The northern part of Sudan has since the Arab invasion of Sudan in the 16<sup>th</sup> century identified as being mostly Muslim and Arab (Ruay, 1994: 13-15).

So by further separating the two parts from each other, the difference between them became even bigger, creating an “us” versus “them”. Some has even called the British Southern Policy an apartheid policy as it defined what being Nubian meant, hence outlining the identity of a group of people in a formal paper. Though Nubians are known to descend from the Nubian Mountains located in what is Sudan today, the British made this policy to strengthen the general tribe identity. By doing so, the British said no to the Islamisation it was afraid would spread to the South as the Nubians were starting to leave their mountains to go seek work in the bigger cities of northern Sudan. The policy further put a stop for the Muslims in the South to practice their religions and marriages between northerners and southerners were banned, again creating an even bigger difference between the South and the North. To completely stop the islamisation in the South the British let Christian missionaries enter the South (de Hoyes, 1995: 48-49).

From early on the country of Sudan has been split into two parts in which different backgrounds, cultures, languages, traditions, costumes, etc. were present. This has had great significance in the development of the nation of South Sudan and its further history.

LeRiche and Arnold claim that this split early on has created two different identities within the same nation, and that nationalism started emerging in the South already early

on (2012: 8). To further push this agenda of Sudan actually being two nations gathered in one, the British decided to give the head of the administration to Khartoum (capital in Sudan), trying to undo the Southern Policy, hence stating that there is a division between the two, and wanting to try and unite them under one administration. This is thought to be the beginning of the first civil war in the united Sudan as the power was given to the North without consideration of the needs of the South (de Hoyes, 1995: 49).

#### **4.2.1 Civil Wars in the Unified Sudan**

As mentioned earlier Sudan as a unified nation got its independence in 1956, where the British finally gave up its power and left it to a small Arab Muslim elite in Khartoum (Johnson, 2016: 3). In the first years of independence it was relatively peaceful with small outburst in the southern part, where local politicians did not win the South the right to become a federal state within the unified nation. They thought this was the only way to protect the rights of the South, which was a well-founded fear, as the North intensified the spreading of Islam and the Arabic language in the South. This isolated the South even more, as the small elite, that did exist in the South, was considerably Christian and were the advocates for the federal state (ibid). This also meant that the South was not actually a part of the bureaucracy of the North nor part of the security sector due to the racial and religious persecution. It culminated in the First Civil War since the British left with rebellion in the South, where a group of Southern political activists and military leaders started the group Anya-Nya. The group started working with other armed groups from the South and created a stronger cohesion and put even more pressure on the government in Khartoum. Even though the armed groups found a common enemy, they were not able to agree on common goals and leadership; some wanted complete independence for the South, others for a federal state within the united Sudan, where it would be possible to protect the culture and religion of the people in the South. The war continued until 1972, where there had already been one attempt at a peace agreement that ended up with the North agreeing to give the South a regional government that was not clearly defined. And as the South was already split in different groups, this was not enough to stop the civil war (LeRiche & Arnold, 2012: 25-26). Finally, in 1971 the government in Khartoum was so pressured that it had to agree to peace negotiations, which led to the Addis Ababa Agreement in 1972. The Agreement

gave southern Sudan an autonomous Southern Regional Government, also the army of Anya-Nya were to be included in the national army, it would get ministers, a regional president – this Agreement became part of a new constitution for the South and the state was seen as being secular, just as they wanted. Still the South did not have much influence in the national government that still made all the big decisions for the nation of Sudan as a whole and which meant that the North were still able to manipulate the South (ibid: 27-28).

As with the first years of independence for the unified Sudan the years after the Addis Ababa Agreement were somewhat quiet, but then the Agreement started to show its weak points being that there was not much institution and the local politicians could yet again not agree on a joint path in which to take the autonomous state. This allowed for the influence and manipulation from the North, because the state did not have a strong body to fight this manipulation. To further worsen the uprisings and disagreements amongst the southerners the armed forces of the South were not giving the power and status within the national army as they were promised. All these factors created a dissatisfaction with the Agreement, even more so when the president, Nimeiri, undermined the Agreement by not doing anything to make sure the Agreement was complied with by all parties involved. In 1983 Nimeiri abolished it by dividing southern Sudan into three different regions and giving each region a capital and by doing so undermined the idea of a united southern Sudan. With riots and dissatisfaction in the South and a passing of September Laws, where Islamic Sharia was to be the basis for all governance in Sudan, war broke out again and starting the Second Civil War (ibid: 30). For many the Second Civil War showed that an independent South Sudan was far away, as politicians were still unable to create a united identity and defend the southern interests as these were never fully agreed upon.

The second civil war continued until 2005 with the formulation of the CPA, and hence characterises the beginning of independence for South Sudan. In this period the SPLM/A was created as the main force in South Sudan on the grounds of dissatisfaction with the Addis Ababa Agreement (LeRiche & Arnold: 57).

This contextual review will provide the reader with knowledge of the relationship between the North and the South, which will be further examined in chapter 6.1.

## 5 State and State failure

As established in an earlier chapter, South Sudan has been fighting for an independent state for many years. This period has mostly been characterised by violence, corruption, fear, etc. In 2011 this was replaced by joy and hope, when South Sudan was finally separated from Sudan and became a state in its own right with Salva Kiir as President and Riek Machar as Vice President, both coming from the SPLM. This meant that South Sudan went from being a region governed mostly by the foreign powers in Khartoum, the appointed capital of the unified Sudan, to becoming a self-governing entity. After a few years of optimism in the young nation, hope and joy was again replaced by periods of unrest, especially between the President and the Vice President, which led Riek Machar to flee the capital in 2013 on allegations that he was plotting a coup (Quass, 2013). However, the Vice President himself claims that Salva Kiir was making him a scapegoat for the violence occurring in the country at the time (Howden, 2013a).

Allegations have gone in both directions since conflict broke out again. Most serious is the possibility that the conflict has developed into what can be characterised as an ethnic conflict. Some experts are afraid that it might end in genocide, though this was not the reason for the conflict breaking out in the first place (Nichols, 2016). Since Riek Machar fled the capital the country has been in a new state of conflict, which has led to many citizens fleeing their homes.

In the following part the state and its main characteristics will be discussed, as well as the principle of failed states within two different discourses. The aim for this chapter is to get an understanding of the concepts of state and failed state, as this will shape the analyses and thus work as framework for the thesis. Furthermore, it should help guide the analysis in a direction that will end up discussing how South Sudan is doing in terms of building a state.

### 5.1 State

The state as a concept has been discussed as far back as Plato and Aristotle, who are believed to have developed the first ideas about the Western state and democracy. In their opinion, the state is to be seen as a social contract. With time the social contract has changed along with our needs. In the Western world, a state is typically defined as a

territory in which a government is accepted both by the people living within the territory, as well as by the outside world as an authority that can take care of its land and people (Betts, 2009: 43). This thus includes the concept of state sovereignty; meaning the idea that a state is the only one who can make rules and can exercise the legitimate use of power over its population and land, hence having the legitimate use of violence. It can thereby be said to require that the people give up their own sovereignty to the government in the hope and belief that the government is capable of taking on such an important position.

Bjørn Møller defines the state as a *sui generis*, meaning that it is characterised only by this particular kind: being one of a kind (Møller, 2012: 8). Furthermore, the Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States, 1933, which sets out the guidelines for what a state is, in the first article it sets forth four criteria to define a state: “...(a) a permanent population; (b) a defined territory; (c) government; and (d) capacity to enter into relations with the other states” (The Montevideo Convention, 1933). Basically what is needed to define a state is land, people, a government and relations to other states, at least according to internationally set standards. Møller goes on to explain that ‘stateness’ according to the Montevideo Convention is something that you can obtain but never lose (Møller, 2012: 12).

Moreover, it is widely believed that the state’s principal duty is to be able to protect its people, and when it is not able to do so, organisations like the UN can intervene in the affairs of any sovereign state when international peace and security is deemed to be threatened. This means that a state’s sovereignty can be overruled in some cases, but that in most cases is not. However, when a sovereign state does not live up to its obligations it can be characterised as being a “quasi-state”: a state that has not yet been recognised as such by the international community, mostly due to a weak state structure and poor economy (Kolstø 2006: 723). It can also be a state that has not lived up to its responsibilities as a state. That is, it has not protected its citizens and has not provided the necessary services to its population (ibid: 724). This last definition of a quasi-state could apply to South Sudan in the sense that the government at the moment appears unable or unwilling to protect the citizens, who are choosing to flee their homes either to neighbouring states or to more peaceful areas of South Sudan (Cumming-Bruce, 2017). According to Kolstø, the reason for this can be found in the fact that South

Sudan has always been under someone else's reign. Even when Britain left Sudan it was the elite in Khartoum, who took over control and governed both the North and the South. He points out that in past times states were established on the basis of war and somewhat diplomacy, and if a state was not strong enough, it would be taken over by a stronger state, and exist under their reign. But today, the weak states still exist even when the most basic government structures lack. This is possible, as an international system exist in which it is impossible to intrude in recognised states (ibid). A state like South Sudan can therefore keep existing as they have the international community's laws to protect them from outside intrusion, while the government might not have much internal support, as it lacks what we in the West consider to be a state's finest job: to provide security for its people, secure education and basic human rights. Therefore, the president does not actually rely on the support from below (the South Sudanese people), as Kolstø puts it, to remain President. This has been seen in various countries around the world: top politicians abuse their power and do not distribute public goods sufficiently enough to secure the people a safe future in the country. Instead there is a tendency, according to Kolstø, for state leaders to fight each other for control of the state (Kolstø, 2006: 725). This is also the case in South Sudan, where President Salva Kiir has accused ex-Vice-President Riek Machar of plotting a coup forcing Machar to flee the country. Another term in this relation, where South Sudan does not seem to be able to live up to its recognition as a state by the international society is "failed state": another term that is very close to that of a quasi-state, but differs in the way that it is evident that it is a case, where a state once has been present.

Thus, South Sudan can, according to the Montevideo Convention, be characterised as a state. The Convention can further explain, why the country was granted independence in 2011: The country has *a*) a permanent population (even now that many has fled, it still has one), *b*) a defined territory that was decided upon separation from the North, *c*) a government (even though some would argue that it is a questionable and unstable government these days. Which I will return to in a later chapter), *d*) capacity to enter into relations with other states, which the country was at the point of separation as it received funding from the international community, and still is to this day (Worsnip, 2011). This will be further examined in the following section, where the idea of failed states will be further explored.



## 5.2 State-failure

The notion of failed states has recurred, especially in relation to Third World countries, during the last couple of decades. The discourses of failed states are many, and are discussed with various points of departures, which differ a lot from person to person. Mostly, failed states are analysed in relation to the state as an entity that provides goods to the people or has the monopoly of violence (Eriksen, 2010: 35).

Stein Eriksen is one of the authors in the field, whom tries to critique the typical notion of what an ideal state is. He argues that we are supposed to look at the state as an individual ideal, in the sense that you cannot always compare a state in the Third World to the Western ideal of the state (ibid: 33).

Eriksen, though, agrees that we cannot discard the notion of the Western-state-ideal, as formal institutions are widely based on this model. Furthermore, most states do have courts, parliaments, etc. that are established on principles of sovereignty and especially popular representation as in the West (Eriksen, 2010: 33). Most states today are part of a global system that is also based on Western principles characterised by a basic idea of what the state is and what it constitutes in relation to the global order. He therefore argues that even though we should move away from the Western ideal of a state, it will be difficult as the model still shapes the failed states that in it might never fall under the understanding of what constitutes an ideal state. It consequently shapes the formal institutions of these states. If states do not follow Western ideals, they will not be recognised as a state by the international society. Therefore these states might also try to make it look like they act according to the model, when they in reality might not (ibid: 34).

Eriksen further explains that all states participate in this game of believing that they themselves possess the qualifications of the ideal state according to the West and that all others do as well. By upholding this façade, state leaders secure their countries continued international acknowledgement of statehood, which contradicts the whole notion of the ideal picture of the state.

Moreover, Eriksen says we should look at:

”The nature of the state that emerges in particular cases is the outcome of the totality of all actors’ practices. [...] On the one hand, the nature of the state that

emerges is a result of the concepts and discourses of different actors” (2010: 36).

That is, every state is shaped, not only by its own ideas, but just as much by external influences and their ways of practice. This again shows that, even though the ideal state is not wished for and is hard to explain, you cannot discard the opinions or influence of others.

Eriksen is not the only scholar, who believes that in the material on state failure there is a lack of perspectives in this literature. Pinar Bilgin and Adam Morton also address this issue by posing five problems, but also an alternative of how to study states that have failed. They believe that it is important to look at a country’s background, especially old colonial states, but also to take a look at the role of aid programmes and finally look at the institutional processes in the global political economy (Bilgin & Morton, 2004: 174-176).

By taking a different approach to the field of state failure, at least according to Eriksen and Bilgin and Morton, we might not even be able to speak of a failed state in the original way. That is if we stop comparing states outside the West to the Western ideal of a state, then maybe the state in question might not be failed, as it will be considered from different criteria that corresponds to the situation of the country and its history.

Eriksen suggests that when looking at states that would fall under the category of being failed, we should look at three components in a new definition of the state: All states should consist of a territory with an appertaining population, and that this territory has a government, which is recognised by other states. Moreover, the state should have laws, an army, police and other formal institutions. Where his definition might differ from others is that you can interpret what kind of government, law, how much control there is and who has the monopoly on violence, etc. (Eriksen, 2010: 36).

This will work as a general structure for the following chapter that will be used to elucidate the state-building in South Sudan in chapter 7, in which the topic of state and failed state will be further discussed, both in the classical understanding and the understanding where new perspectives are taken into account.

## 6 Analysis

Based on the previous chapter, the following chapter will address each of these topics: Colonial impact, security dilemma, ethnicity, identity and economy in order to answer the working questions posed in the very beginning of the thesis. The following chapter will thus be guided by the theoretical choices made in the beginning ending up with a chapter following up on Eriksen's notion of failed state, where new literature on the topic will also be used to elucidate and fully answer the research question.

### 6.1 The Colonial Impact

This subchapter will help answer the research question by contributing a short analysis of the British impact in the current South Sudan. This will be done by looking into what marks the British colonisers have left, and how these have been a contributing factor to the third biggest refugee crisis.

As mentioned in chapter 4, South Sudan has been under British and Egyptian rule until 1956, when Sudan got its independence. It is obvious that this would have left its marks to some extent on the current formation of both Sudan and later South Sudan, e.g. in relation to institutions and ways of governing.

During colonialism, European-like institutions arose throughout colonies in the world in order to maintain control of the resources, which of course was the main reason for the colonial power to be in a certain territory. Welfare and security for the people was very low on the agenda for colonial rulers, which had big consequences for the countries involved, as money was not spent on infrastructure, development, etc. (Eriksen, 2010: 38). For South Sudan or the Sudan, as it was united during colonialism, was ruled by the British, who were present mostly due the big oil reserves the country possessed, but also because the White Nile that stretches through most of the Sudan, would provide Britain access to a big trading market in Africa. During the British rule in Sudan the North was always more important to the rulers: schools were made to educate people better to fit certain jobs in government that the British thought local schools could not provide. This move was of course made to benefit the British and not to develop the country per se. The South on the other hand was left to themselves or cut off from the

North, which stopped a possible development of the South and helped worsen the divide between the North and the South, both in terms of underdevelopment of the South and development for the North, but also in terms of further stating that the North and the South were not valued at the same level (Sharkey, 2003: 4-7). This corresponds with Eriksen's view on the colonial period and with the current situation in South Sudan, but also with the situation of the Sudan after independence in 1956. According to Eriksen: *"The colonial state was designed to control and to facilitate the extraction of resources, rather than promote welfare and security of the population"* (2010: 38) That is, in South Sudan the British were only interested in the oil reserves and the access to the White Nile in order to obtain wealth.

Then after independence it was evident that the North would possess the government power in Khartoum without much inclusion of the South (Leriche & Arnold, 2012: 15). This is by some characterised as the first wish for independence by the southern Sudanese; not so much based on a common identity in the South, but rather a wish for more participation and to have a voice (ibid). It can be said that even after colonisation the conditions in the South were not improved. In fact, the people were in a way being controlled by other forces that now was not a colonial power. Catherine Boone explains it as: "The fusion of elites found its institutional corollary in transformations in the structure and workings of the inherited state apparatus" (Boone, 1994: 129). That is, the colonised would take over the already established institutions and structures from the colonisers. This was natural as the people had been educated to live under these structures for many years. In Sudan this meant, as already mentioned, power was giving to the elite in Khartoum, both due to the fact that the people were better educated than the southerners, but also because it was more developed and was considered the metropole of Sudan during colonial rule. But during colonialism the new educated elite did not have full access to the regime. They were "only" government employees and did still serve the British, why it can be said that they might not have been fully educated in how to rule a country (Sharkey, 2003: 10). Especially in the South this played a prominent role as the country existed of farmers, where each area is run by local elites, also during colonialism (ibid: 8). By maintaining local structures and self-governing of small areas to local elites, the British was indirectly a contributing factor to the fact that the South kept reproducing old forms of living instead of developing alongside the rest

of the society in the North, which Boone refers to as *indirect rule*. It is understood that by keeping local authorities in the position, the British have always been aiming to weaken the political progress and development in the country. It can be characterised as the local authorities were being instructed under false pretences that they were just as much in power as always, when in fact they were living under and by the British rules (1994: 114).

Eller further elaborates on the topic by stating that if colonial structures are inherited or reproduced in the newly independent state, then chances are that the same struggles will resurface or be reproduced again, which can lead to conflict. In South Sudan this was represented by the fact that the South now was the ones wanting independence, which in two instances ended in yearlong conflicts as described in subchapter 4.2.1, and to which Eller can seem to be accurate in his assumptions of the impact of colonial rule.

Therefore, the South has in a very high degree also been greatly influenced by the British rule, and just as much as has the North in their institution structures (Sharkey, 2003: 11). This underdevelopment of the South and further advancement for the northern elite, which mainly consisted of Muslims, was a huge contributing factor to the breakout of the two civil wars. Mostly due to the Muslim and Arabic agendas being pushed after independence, as it was this societal group that were favoured and educated during colonialism. The rest of the country, who were non-Arabic speakers, felt marginalised under this Arabic-Muslim agenda in the years after independence, and hence this period was characterised by unrest and ended in the first civil war (ibid: 11-12). Boone refers to this kind of taking over an existing power structure as a form of *institutional appropriation*, where the colonised do not necessarily have the same interest as the colonisers, but merely an interest in maintaining a certain social order that has already been established (1994: 122). That is, the elite in the North jumped at the first chance it got to possess power over the whole country. This was particularly visible in the fact that the South was still not granted any influence in government and with the wish of propagating Islam to the whole of Sudan. The main structures that were appropriated from the Anglo-Egyptian regime was the lack of investment in the area in terms of public services or infrastructure, thus keeping the South in a position that did not allow them to develop or have any rights (Johnson, 2016:3-4).

From the beginning the South has been challenged in a lot of ways in terms of deciding what is best for the people within the territory of the South, as the South and North are very different from each other. This can be said to have had a big influence over the way South Sudan works as a country today, and why it to some extent has had a difficult beginning as an independent state.

In the next section it will be further analysed how the difficult beginning has been for South Sudan, and what significance it has had to the state.

### 6.1.1 Significance for South Sudan

“The combination of grand ambitions for ‘development’ and fragile state power led to a situation where, once the nationalist euphoria of independence waned, many ruling regimes became caught up in struggles for political survival to hold down contenders for power within and outside the state” (Migdal, 1988 in Eriksen, 2010: 39).

For South Sudan this was the case. The day of independence was filled with great hope, which was evident in President Salva Kiir’s speech to the people of South Sudan and the world, which he gave on Independence Day, 9<sup>th</sup> July 2011:

“Today is the most important day for the people of South Sudan, the proclamation of whose birth and emergence as a member on the community of world nations you have witnessed. It is a day which will be forever engraved in our hearts and minds. [...] We have waited 56 years for this day. It is a dream that has come true!” (Kiir, 2011).

Furthermore, Salva Kiir goes on to talk about how the country needs to focus on service and development for the people, and how the country will face hard times in terms of economic development, where it is expected that all citizens will help participate in the fight. He moreover places great emphasis on how it will only be possible: “*if we have a government whose first, second and final priorities are public interest, public interest and public interest!*” (ibid).

This is what Migdal refers to as euphoria of the public and the heads of country that are present in the first time of a new country’s independence. It can also be compared to the first time in a relationship, where the love period in the beginning overshadows everything else in the relationship that we only come to realise later, when the ordinary

days hit us, that things might not be so great as they seem. The same goes for South Sudan, where conflict hit the country after a few years with peace and hope. From focusing on development and security for its people, peace turned into a struggle for power between the President and Vice-President, who has always been known to be each other's opposites: Kiir to be a supporter of Garang, a prominent leader of SPLM up until his death, and Machar to be a contender for chairman of the movement (Johnson, 2016: 164). These disagreements and opposing opinions gave rise to small encounters during the years, but nothing too serious. At least not until Kiir and Machar both announced their candidacy for president for elections in 2015. The dispute between the two ended with Salva Kiir issuing a decree that deprived Riek Machar of his government powers, which later escalated in Machar fleeing the capital in fear for his life (ibid: 165). The following accusations flew in both directions, but most notable was Kiir, as he was the one in power, and the one, who at one point dismissed the whole cabinet and appointed a new government, this will be further elaborated on in section 6.2.1.

These moves are characteristic for what Migdal calls *fragile states*. This goes for South Sudan as well: It had ambitions to become a great state that would no longer force its people to flee; it would create economic stability; and not least peace and safety for the people (Kiir, 2011). Instead, after the euphoria of independence cooled down, Salva Kiir seemed only interested in maintaining power (Johnson, 2016: 160). Offers from official international counsellors to help strengthen and build a stable and strong structure for the state was declined, and the people in charge would rather rely on their own skills and knowledge. By doing so and by creating a government based on personal ties or common ethnicity, the structures in society became reproduced again, but this time reproduced in government control (Eriksen, 2010: 40). By focusing more on staying in charge it is thus natural that something else will be given a lower priority: In this case the welfare, safety and development of the South Sudanese people, and thereby sustain the people in the same position as they have been in for decades, both during colonialism, during the time as the unified Sudan and now again as a separate South Sudan.

Thus, it still makes sense, to a certain degree, to compare new states and their way of building a state to the general understanding of a state in the western way of thinking as

the institutions are passed on from the British Empire. Especially for South Sudan, which has been governed by others for so many decades by colonial-like rulers. And why it now is evident that South Sudan are reproducing the same structures and the same conflicts are starting to rise again as was the case, when the South was ruled by Khartoum. In this instance, it shows how the colonial impact to some extent has reproduced itself more than once by marginalising people, not being able to protect the citizens and provide them with basic needs.

In chapter 7 the thesis will return to a discussion of state and state-failure.

## 6.2 Statehood

*"Let our cultural and ethnic diversity be a source of pride and strength, not parochialism and conflict."* (Kiir, 2011). So said Salva Kiir in his independence speech in 2011 to the people of South Sudan, hoping for a country in which people would coexist on equal terms no matter ethnicity, class, religion, etc. Reality would come to be another for South Sudan, as has already been mentioned. This next subchapter will deal with the power struggles and how ethnicity, identity and security are used in times of conflict.

### 6.2.1 Power Struggle

South Sudan consists of many different social and ethnic groups, leading to the question of what shared identity exists in the country, and could it potentially be the lack of it that has driven the country into yet another civil war? Since the first civil war in Sudan, there has been a fight for a common national identity with the Islamic and Arabic being overthrown in the South. The Dinka and the Nuer are the two biggest ethnic groups in South Sudan, where Salva Kiir belongs to the Dinka and Riek Macha belongs to the Nuer.

These two men are seen as the primary reasons for the breakout of the political crisis in 2013. Salva Kiir as president and Riek Machar as his Vice President. Salva Kiir comes from a military background without much education, while Riek Machar was well-educated. Kiir came into position as president when taking over for the late John Garang, who died in 2005. Where Kiir obtained presidency, first of the SPLM/A and later South Sudan, Machar has been known to want the position, why he tried to coup Garang in



1991 without success. It was also in this year, where Nuer forces allegedly killed people of the Dinka group as a response of not gaining the position as chairman, or at least that is what the story was (ibid: 151). Tensions between the two, Kiir and Machar, and within the movement itself hence goes back a long time. In 2004 another internal crisis within the movement occurred, when third parties of the movement were not satisfied with Garang's wish to be part of the Sudan. They preferred the idea of an independent South Sudan. The internal disputes was avoided by reaching agreements that would satisfy both sides in the movement (ibid: 154).

In 2013 Salva Kiir changed his government from 29 ministers to 19, where among others, Vice President Machar was laid off (Astill-Brown, 2014), and many of the ministers were replaced by people closer to Kiir, including more people from the Dinka community. This move by Salva Kiir can be characterised as a way of reacting to Machar's move in 2012, where Machar tried to divide South Sudan into even smaller counties. This was seen as a way of gathering more followers in form of support of local leaders/governors, as with more counties there would be more leaders, whom Machar could choose, and hence get their support for him as president. It was though declined by Kiir, who was afraid it would create more competition between ethnic groups, as new lines would be drawn through existing lands (Johnson, 2016: 154). It is what Posen describes as a chain of reactions, where one part, in this case Riek Machar, seized the chance to "attack" or gear up before Salva Kiir could do anything to respond. This then forced Kiir to react. First by declining the opportunity to make new counties and to later fire Machar as Vice President, when he saw him as a potential threat to his power position (Johnson, 2016: 156-158). In that way Salva Kiir secured not just his own position, but also the Dinka's position in society by "getting rid of" both Machar and his attempt at obtaining more supporters. Thus, one action from Machar led Kiir to react, when he was feeling threatened. Salva Kiir can also, according to Posen, have taken a risk assessment of how big of a threat he saw Machar to be, and with the history of Machar trying to get power from late Garang. This can have been a feasible reason for his actions. Though, these actions cannot be seen as creating more peace in the country. Since Kiir reacted to Machar's action, then Machar might act on Kiirs action, thus creating a vicious circle of power struggles.

Discontent with the leadership also broke out in this period, where the third party from 2004, who were dissatisfied with Garang, again expressed their dissatisfaction with Salva Kiir as president. They therefore demanded that the leadership should meet so the SPLM could finally register as a political party instead of as a movement. But Salva Kiir was very reluctant to meet, and when he finally issued a meeting, the different parties could not agree on how much power the chairman (Salva Kiir) should have in government. This ended with no decisions being made and the status quo was maintained (Johnson, 2016: 161). If Salva Kiir had agreed to the changes over how much power he would have been granted, it could have led to his competition gaining more power, and thus lose some himself, thus resulting in increased vulnerability for Kiir himself. By avoiding a summit, where these decisions were to be made, he avoided an “attack” and kept his position safe once again. What can be deducted from this is the fact that the SPLM as a whole lacked a common identity, because: “*A group identity helps the individual members cooperate to achieve their purposes.*” (Posen, 1993: 30). The SPLM as a group did not have a common identity, and were therefore unable to cooperate, according to Posen. This made them unable to achieve their purposes, which for the SPLM as a leading party was/is to build a state in which people would feel secure and able to get by. Even though all the parties might, at least in the beginning, have wanted the same for South Sudan, their differences in power structures have led them to not being able to find a common identity, thus making them unable to work together as one unit.

Previously in the history of the SPLM/A there have been similar power struggles and disagreements over what the goal for the movement should be: independence or unity with Sudan. With a fragile government, hope might rise in other groups to take over power, thus making the idea of pre-emptive war more apparent (Posen, 1993: 34). In this case, the fragile government is represented by Salva Kiir, who has felt pressured from various sides within the movement and though the strategy of pre-emptive war as the only solution to keep his position in government. On the other hand, Riek Machar could have seen it as a ‘window of opportunity’ when the first signs of Salva Kiir’s government started to fall apart to finally get power. So Kiir felt the pressure and opted for pre-emptive conflict, while Machar saw the fragility of government as an opportunity to make a move at seizing power. In 1991 when Machar also tried to seize power, the

problems were solved; maybe because Machar did not feel he had enough strength and manpower behind him to follow through: This window has now open, and he choose to act on it.

#### **6.2.1.1 Struggles Taking on Ethnic Character**

The power struggles in leadership within the SPLM can be seen as the starting point to further conflict in the country. With time, the conflicts turned into a conflict characterised by differences in ethnicity, especially between the Dinka and Nuer, the two biggest ethnic groups in South Sudan. The crisis might have started out as one of political character relating to who should be in power. Later, the crisis turned into a crisis of security, as explained by the Security Dilemma as every party sees the other parties purely as threats (Posen, 1993: 32).

When a group sees the others as a threat, it is a natural reaction to gear up in terms of military arms and weapons to be best prepared, which was established in the previous section. According to the Security Dilemma, it is further argued that you want to protect people, who come from the same ethnicity as you. In this particular conflict, Salva Kiir was afraid of how Riek Machar would be able to mobilise the Nuer, and consequently mobilised the Dinka. In relation to this, the past also plays an important role: The Dinka and the Nuer has had their differences in the past, like the 1991 killings of more than 2000 Dinka (Johnson, 2016: 256), and the fear of a new such ethnic attack, which supposedly came from Machar's hand, could have been one factor leading to more violence in 2013. Kiir, so to speak, would not wait for another attack like the one in 1991 to happen, and therefore would rather act first as a means of self-defence (Posen, 1993: 30). Here, Kiir clearly used history as a tool to assess the threat of the other group, as described by Posen: "*How did the other groups behave the last time they were unstrained? Is there a record of offensive military activity by the other?*" (ibid). In that sense, it would be natural for Kiir to remember the attack in 1991 and with Eller's notion of how the past only matters if a situation allows for it in the present: The announcement from Machar that he would also run for president in 2015. Furthermore, it shows how the past can be very porous. As it was never confirmed, who ordered the attack in 1991, the Dinka (or Kiir) created their own version to fit with the situation in the present. Kiir

remembers the attack as had it in fact been Machar, who was the mind behind it, and then continues to spread this message to further his own cause in the conflict as described by Eller (1999: 30).

The way the past plays a role in this instance relates to the fact that Machar had tried the very same earlier in the SPLM/A history, where he tried to push Garang off the throne in 1991 (ibid: 154).

The importance of collective memory can also be seen as a mobilising factor for Kiir to mobilise the Dinka. By recalling the memory of the 1991 attack on more than 2000 Dinka, Kiir made people remember the past. Not only the generation that experienced it at the time, but also retelling it to the new generations. And as Tint argues, when groups remember, relive and honour their past, then it is more likely to be repeated. When Kiir revived the old memory of this event, it can have been a mobilising factor for many Dinka, who were not interested in history repeating itself. It will only materialise itself if the present allows for it, and as many people could feel past events reproducing themselves in society, this memory can be seen as playing an important role in Kiir choosing to act as he did – seeing Machar as a threat and choosing to react on it, and at the same time making sure that Dinka outside the government would also support him, also showing the importance of commemoration and the memory of trauma, furthering the identity of the group by unifying them through this particular memory in this instance.

The struggles in SPLM/A leadership escalated in December 2013, where Nuer and Dinka soldiers met eye to eye in the capital, Juba, where most Nuer were targeted. Following this attack two Nuer governors joined Machar's forces, who had earlier supported Kiir's leadership. Many Nuer communities joined Nuer's newly formed opposition movement SPLA-In-Opposition (SPLA-IO), while a few Nuer communities were divided between the SPLA-IO and Kiir's leadership (Hutchinson & Pendle, 2015: 427). The Nuer were especially "awakened" by the fact that their own people were being attacked, hence gathering the Nuer on the same reason as the Dinka. This time, though, the trauma was mobilising the Nuer in the present, and can in later years be used to maintain the group under one identity.

The conflict quickly spread to surrounding states and took on character of inter-communal conflict.

### 6.2.2 Inter Communal Conflict

Inter-communal conflict has been no stranger to South Sudan as it is a pastoral or semi-pastoral community with local leaders, conflict between neighbouring groups over issues such as cattle and land have been very common during the years. With independence, hope was that these communal conflicts would stop, but reality was somewhat different and it turned out that these conflicts would only get worse and spread (Johnson, 2016: 104-105). Even before the conflict between Kiir and Salva spread to other counties, smaller conflicts were starting to rise just after independence, and especially after the realisation that the government in South Sudan would be able to provide neither basic services nor protection for the people, conflicts quickly escalated and spread throughout the country.

As mentioned in subchapter 3.1, the Security Dilemma can help explain, why some groups are more likely to end up in conflict than others by assessing the degree of threat another group potentially could be. In 2013, communal conflicts started to escalate and worsen, especially in the region of Jonglei, the most populated in South Sudan (ibid: 102). Moreover, the region is very isolated and is thus only reachable by air or boat eight months of the year, which through the decades of conflict has made it a very underdeveloped region in South Sudan. Therefore, the region has often been fighting over resources and access to land. The most notable dispute at the time was between the Murle and the Lou Nuer in Jonglei, which escalated in 2009. In the early history of disputes between the two, violence has not been common, but with better access to weapons, and due to two civil wars in the Sudan, conflict took on a different character in 2009, where also civilians were attacked. It was the plan that disarmament should take place in both communities, but both parties hid many of their weapons in fear that the other would not surrender their weapons. Viewed through the lens of the security dilemma the decision for parties to not surrender arms relies on the notion of making security of one's group the first priority. By handing over the weapons, it would be more difficult to protect your group; much like Kiir not being willing to give up some of his power as chairman for the SPLM. Furthermore, by keeping the weapons, the groups will be in better capability to choose an offensive strategy, when assessing how big of a threat the other group is. Without weapons the group becomes more vulnerable to

attacks, and hence cannot be the first to make a move. This also comes down to the fact that, according to Posen, no group believes that the other group can be or do well. And when these two particular groups have been known to compete with each other throughout decades, it is easy to believe that the other is up to no good. When one group attacks the other, the other will fight back as a reaction to the action made by the first group. To the Lou Nuer and the Murle (11<sup>th</sup> biggest ethnic group in South Sudan) this was also the case: at one point, the Lou Nuer abducted a Murle SPLA commander's wife and children. A month later the Murle responded by attacking an area belonging to the Lou Nuer (Johnson, 2016: 104). Hilde Johnson, UN Secretary-General Special Representative in South Sudan from 2011 to 2014, spoke to both sides of the conflict:

“When I told each community that the other felt just as angry, abandoned and betrayed they were surprised. They saw themselves as victims and the other side as aggressors. By definition, the aggressor was stronger, had the full support of powerful elites (the government, the UN), and was able to kill more people and steal more cattle. As far as each side was concerned, they had not done anything but respond to the terrible attacks of the other.” (Johnson, 2016:104-105).

This underlines what Posen's definition of the security dilemma is: both sides are clearly frustrated with government and the fact that nothing is being done to protect and develop the region.

This again can be traced back to the incapability of the government of South Sudan to protect its people, as it has difficulty in structuring institutions in government, thus making it fragile in some instance.

In this region, groups formed heavily based on ethnicity and identity. In all three of these ethnic groups, Dinka, Nuer, and Murle, it is embedded that you both are a part of the “attacking” forces – in earlier times just in terms of cattle raidings, later with arms, but also that you help protect the group (ibid: 106).

Attempts at peace in the region turned out not to work, and the conflict between the three groups took on a more serious character of ethnicity than before (ibid: 117). The inter-communal violence between rival groups spread across the country. Along with already established leadership struggles between Dinka, President Kiir and Nuer, leader

of SPLA-IO identity and the importance of memory became important factors through which to analyse the conflict.

Identity as freedom fighters was at the heart of the SPLA. During two wars this had been their position in the movement: to fight for freedom for the South Sudanese people. But with South Sudan gaining independence, some experts, like Johnson, suggest that the army change its name. Now that South Sudan was free, she thought a name like 'South Sudan Armed Forces' would be more suitable (2016: 224). It would show the country that it was a unit and that old disputes in the movement/army was behind it. Committing to this change would also mean letting go of an old integrated identity for all the people in the movement and army: that they were first and foremost freedom fighters. With new conflicts breaking out after independence, they quickly resolved to their old habits: being freedom fighters. This whole situation is a good example of what happens when a problem or national trauma, as Tint describes it, is not dealt with; it can impact society in a negative way and history is condemned to repeat itself. When the SPLA refused to put its old disputes behind them and resolve their issues, and thus become one unit rather than two or more factions, who in the end was not able to agree and forget. By remembering and not looking forward, the people of the SPLA were able to keep their identity as freedom fighters. However, this identity later would also develop into being one about ethnic identity, when a divide in between the Dinka and Nuer surfaced.

### **6.2.3 Identity and Memory in South Sudan**

The past as described by Eller has already been shortly touched upon in the previous section. In this section it will be looked at through the lens of identity and memory.

To begin this section I will once again refer to the security dilemma as posed by Posen.

“[...], strong national identity has been understood by both scholars and practitioners to be a key ingredient of the combat power of armies. A group identity helps the individual members cooperate to achieve their purposes. When humans can readily cooperate, the whole exceeds the sum of the parts, creating a unit stronger relative to those groups with a weaker identity.”  
(Posen, 1993:30).

This observation can be transferred to the situation in South Sudan as of 2011, when the country gained independence. Hope was that the country would finally be able to unite under one common identity, and thus end old disputes build a country upon safety, equality and opportunity for all: "*We are all South Sudanese*" (Kiir, 2011). One shared identity was clearly wished for by the President. Identity is not a set phenomenon and can be changed, and a person can have more than one. That is, you can e.g. be both South Sudanese and Dinka, where one of them probably will mean more to you than the other (Kaufman, 2013: 266). For instance, when President Kiir held his independence speech, the people of South Sudan might have felt very Southern Sudanese, but in another situation in a person's everyday life, they might feel more e.g. Dinka. Taking into consideration, the history of South Sudan in the years after independence from the Anglo-Egyptian Empire, where the leading elite power (of Muslim and Arab identity) tried to impose this identity unto the people of South Sudan two times, which both times ended in conflict as the South rebelled against it (ibid).

They were so-to-speak going from resisting a certain identity to suddenly finding themselves in a position, where they have to agree on one. That is, before they could agree that the one posed from the North was not acceptable they did not take the time to define what it meant to be South Sudanese. What then happens in conflict times is that people tend to be more aware of their identity, and when the national/common identity of South Sudan does not seem to be present, then the local, ethnic identities seem to rise and mobilise people.

'National traumas' can also be either unifying or fragmenting to a group (Tint, 2010: 245). South Sudan can be said to have experienced national traumas in terms of colonialism and later two civil wars in which South Sudan were both left to itself, but also was forced to take on a new identity to which it could not recognise itself. This could have been a means to unify the South Sudanese, but instead it was not resolved. Hence, the trauma was revived in another conflict, where internal disputes became to be an everyday life. The national trauma was turned into something negative, and when ethnicity came to play a role in the conflict, only internal traumas were remembered and not the overall trauma South Sudan had suffered as a country for decades.

It seemed in South Sudan that people from different counties, especially the youth, were mobilising across county lines, but still along ethnic lines. The attack in Juba, 2013 by



Kiir on Nuer seemed to have awakened Nuer groups, it was not because they saw Riek Machar as a better leader, but merely because they did not like the killing of some of their own (Johnson, 2016: 257). So even if some of these groups were already gathered at the time of the attack, it seems to have sparked a larger mobilisation and a stronger feeling of identity as they sympathise with their own. The Nuer identity seems to be very important in the present, because of the events taking place across country, where Nuer, Dinka and other ethnic groups are being attacked by each other. According to Tint, these types of conflicts where identity comes to play a part, are more receptive to being intractable, which is evident in this case. The conflict between the Nuer, Dinka and Murle has been reproducing itself for decades and through generations. This time though it has taken on a more serious, violent character due to arms being more readily available as a result of the decades of war. Tint further states that another group's identity is strengthened when an elite group denies the very existence of the other group. With Kiir aiming mostly at Nuer in the attack in December 2013 it can be interpreted as him believing that the Nuer is worth nothing: Why else would he go solely after them? Thus, he denies them to be important, which turned out to mobilise and get even more Nuer to join Machar's forces with one purpose: Revenge (ibid: 199). With large numbers on each side (Dinka and Nuer) ethnicity and identity also became a word very much associated with the conflict in South Sudan.

#### **6.2.4 Partial Conclusion**

Before South Sudan gained independence the idea of finding a common identity and common grounds through which to gain independence was not in focus. Power struggles within the SPLM/A in some periods removed focus from finding a common identity, creating a division within the movement that would later be reflected in the South Sudanese society. With no common identity on which to build the new nation, old struggles resurfaced. Machar glimpsed a 'window of opportunity' to challenge Kiir's position as chairman of the movement and as president of the country, whether Kiir or Machar was the first to make a move towards the other is difficult to assess. What is a fact is that a struggle broke out in 2013, which would later turn into one characterised by ethnicity, as both Kiir and Machar used the past and memories as means to mobilise the Dinka and the Nuer respectively. If these ethnic groups would not have been able to gather on grounds of past traumas, it could have seemed difficult mobilising them into

choosing sides. Furthermore, this subchapter showed that with no common identity it can be difficult to avoid conflict, especially in a multi-ethnic country. It is possible to have more than one identity, and maybe the identity of the South Sudanese SPLM/A members is that they are freedom fighters first. The local ethnic groups then identifies first with the people and customs surrounding them; protecting ones family, friend, group in terms of providing food and securing members, when other groups come to raid ones territory, then that is their first identity. What changed these struggles, was the fact that the country was full of arms from earlier civil wars, and that the two main leaders, Kiir and Machar, used ethnicity as a means to mobilise people, why struggles this time came out more violent than past struggles.

With no common identity for the SPLM/A, it seemed impossible to gather and please all parties included. The same goes for the country, when you have no common identity in which you see yourself in the 'others', then it will be easier to mobilise. When government powers are slowly dissolving and institutions that were supposed to protect and provide public goods do not work, then the reasons to mobilise on terms of protecting one and one's group seems easier.

### **6.3 Greed as a Means of Protracting Conflict**

In this subchapter the focus will be on the economical implications of the conflict, focusing especially on the importance of oil for South Sudan and how this has been managed since independence. Afterwards grievance will be analysed through the perspective of horizontal inequality in order to determine the role inequality in the formation of the state.

Oil has for South Sudan been the main source of income for the country with 82% of the income coming from oil. Furthermore the livelihood is based on low-income agriculture and pastoral work, where as high as 85% of the population is involved with unpaid labour (UNDP, n.d.).

Since independence South Sudan has had disputes with Sudan over oil, as the big oil reserves are located in South Sudan in a state close to the border. During unity Sudan (both the North and the South) were financed mostly through this oil. In early 2012 the

disagreements over oil reached a dead end that resulted in South Sudan deciding to shut down oil production on allegations that Sudan was stealing the oil directly from the pipelines (Johnson, 2016: 62). This shutdown ultimately ended up costing South Sudan a great deal of income resulting in an economic crisis. It did not only affect the people in the country, but also the relations to donor-countries, and the countries buying the oil: Malaysia, India and China especially, as these could not get the oil due to the shut down. As majority of the South Sudanese population survives on agriculture, the economic crisis did not hit them at first, mostly because most funds went to public administration and to some extent to public services. But with time and as prices rose people started to notice, especially as it seemed that government officials did not lack anything in their lifestyle, despite and economic crisis was starting (ibid: 67).

Oil as the main income for the state, makes the part of the country where it is located especially interesting for those fighting over power. As has already been established, the power struggle between Kiir and Machar has affected the population a great deal. This was as evident for Unity State, where 85% of South Sudan's oil reserves were/are located, which resulted in that the region became object to much conflict as both sides wanted to dominate the region for the access to oil (ibid: 70).

Collier argues that economy in conflict can be exploited to an extent, where it is more favourable to certain parties for a conflict to continue rather than to seek peace, as it can be profitable for those, who know how to take advantage of the situation. In South Sudan this has also been the case, where many important leaders have been accused of benefiting from the conflict, while the rest of the country suffered (Johnson, 2016: 66).

To take advantage of the war seemed not to be a problem in South Sudan, where corruption was widely known and accepted by those in charge, though some measures to try and stop it was set in place, but not so often followed through with, maybe to, as Collier argues, keep oneself in a position, where funds still comes in one's direction. E.g. President Kiir, officially earns \$60,000 a year, but investigations conducted by The Sentry shows that him and his family has collected wealth to an extent that no longer correlates with the official numbers of what he supposedly earns. Moreover, many of his assets are placed outside South Sudan (The Sentry, 2016: 12). This corresponds with the argument posed by Collier that, when you have come in possession of funds you not necessarily should have had, then you would rather hide them out of country, perhaps to

hide them from the public (2000: 100). The report from The Sentry further underlines Colliers argument of why greed can also be a contributing factor in protracting conflict by outlining how Salva Kiir has spent government money on housing and development around his properties rather than spending it on public services in favour of the peoples. Also Johnson supports these finding, where she explains how a: *“senior official of the bank ran off with several million dollars in a suitcase [...] no further action was taken against the known individual”* (2016: 91-92).

To a country with economical problems, money in this dimension being reverted to personal gain is a big deal, but for Kiir to try to stop the corruption would mean that he himself would have to stop his small personal projects as these would probably also be discovered in an investigation. Another means to support this interpretation is due to the fact that during the economic crisis in 2013, when the shut down of the oil production was carried through, funds toward the security sector were still upheld, maybe as a means to keep people in powerful positions safe, as they knew it was maybe not the right decision to have made (Johnson, 2016: 93).

In one of Kiir’s residents, The Sentry found evidence (pictures) showing that Kiir houses military equipment in the form of attack helicopters, which according to their sources has been used in the civil war currently unfolding in the country (2016: 16). This can be interpreted as a sign of the President wanting to keep the war going in order to keep the money flow coming in his direction. His family is located outside the country and enjoys the perks of private schools and safety and are thus not missing much in their everyday life, while the rest of the country struggles to get by.

Lastly, for the elite to stay in its power position it was dependent on its own ethnic group to stand behind it. And without working institutions in government to provide the people with public goods, other means had to be applied to get their support. One of the means, which were adopted, was a salary people could get based on their ethnicity through patronage networks. Hereby, the people really hit a hard rock in terms of obtaining funds from the state as not all countries are divided by ethnicity, why many groups wanted new counties that were outlined along ethnic lines. By doing so reaching the right patron with funds based on one’s ethnicity would become easier, this was not obtained as described in an earlier chapter, where Kiir denied Machar’s proposal to do

so, maybe on the basis that it would cost government more money (Johnson, 2016: 93-94). In stead, it can have created a wish to rebel amongst the people, as they did not receive their share of the public funds, which outlines how economic differences can play a central role in why people choose to rebel, especially as at the same time the society was divided even more down ethnic lines.

It was not only Kiir, who was misappropriating funds. Also people working in the Central Bank were accused of illegal investments. These examples are according to various sources (Johnson, 2016: 222; The Sentry, 2016; Gladstone, 2016) only few of many examples of people benefitting from the war, thus turning the war into one of opportunity. Showing that even after the oil crisis and with the lowering of oil-prices did not stop the elite in South Sudan to make just as much money as before the crisis, and continue their lifestyles as before the crisis. In all cases the main point to be looked at is the fact that government and especially Kiir has not done much to stop this form of abusing a crisis situation.

Greed has thus shown how economical issues and disputes can also be a contributing factor in conflict, in the next section it will be explored how groups react to this based on horizontal inequalities.

### 6.3.1 Inequality

The horizontal inequalities between groups can also be important to societies in conflict as it can spark an already existing conflict or even start one, because of dissatisfaction due to uneven distribution of public goods. When groups in society do not have the same access to goods or access to the same possibilities, when this is the case for a persistent period of time, then groups are more likely to mobilise and rebel.

In South Sudan as of 2015 the Human Development Index (HDI), which measures progress in three categories of human development: health, access to knowledge and standard of living, all measured on different parameters, such as life expectancy at birth, years of education and by the Gross National Income (GNI) per capita (UNDP, 2016: 2).

In 2015 South Sudan was measured at 0.418 placing them in position 181 out of 188 countries. Furthermore, the report shows that South Sudan's GNI decreased by 36.4%

between the years of 2010 and 2015, while the overall HDI scores decreased by 2.5% in the same period.

These three measures of which to measure the HDI of countries fit into the description of horizontal inequalities in social dimension as this is measured by life expectancy, level of education, whereas the economical dimension as described by Stewart fits to the third measurement of HDI as it is based on the GNI per capita (ibid: 2-3).

This data thus shows that, since independence South Sudan has had some difficulty in maintaining the level of inequality as this has just increased during this five-year period to the point where 91% of the population lived in poverty (Alkire et al, 2015: 1). These numbers only show how standings are for the country as a whole, rather than how different groups are positioned differently to each other. Still the numbers are a good indicator of the situation in South Sudan and how the country has developed through the years of independence. Numbers might not have been good for the country at the time the United Nations Development Programme started to measure the HDI for South Sudan, but the numbers still show a decline except for the level of education, which has been constant throughout the five-year period with an average of approximately five years of school (UNDP, 2016: 2).

The decline in HDI can be due to the conflict South Sudan has experienced for real since 2013, especially combined with the greed aspect of war as shown in the previous subchapter. In the example, where the income became dependent on ethnicity, which can be an indicator of how inequality indeed is present between groups, who, though, all have a hard time getting by as the HDI report clearly shows. Johnson describes how the economic crisis made the divide between the elite and the rest of the people even bigger than before. The numbers further show that the people of South Sudan has been in a state of poverty from the beginning of the country's existence, which is what Stewart expresses in her work on horizontal inequality, where she describes how these inequalities in economy, politics and social dimensions are not desired, as it sustains people in a bad position for a long time, which can pressure the political stability in a country, as people in an unequal position are more likely to mobilise than people who are not. She defines the problem to be political, because it is this dimension that decides over the two others in terms of making policies on the fields; economical, educational, etc.

In South Sudan, it has been shown through the last chapters that government forces have had difficulty in making sufficient policies in these two fields. People start to get dissatisfied with government, and in South Sudan this became even more evident, when the President and other government officials in 2013 started warning journalists against criticising Kiir in public, which made the people feel unsafe to also speak up about their concerns in the country (Johnson, 2016: 95-96).

Thus the peoples of South Sudan by the time of 2015 (where the HDI was last measured in the country) were experiencing inequality in all three aspects of horizontal inequality; social, economical and political. In such a situation Langer and Stewart argue that people lacking the socio-economic dimension often also lacks the political aspect of the concept making the situation more serious. If the public lack political influence, then it will have no agency in terms of being able to change their situation in a legal manner and through democracy. That maybe can turn into rebel-like movements to confront the government with their discontent in a way, where they at the same time are able to protect themselves.

Ethnicity may come into play when ethnic identities and socio-economical differences between groups coincide and this can create social instability and make groups to mobilise. This can be the case with South Sudan, where ethnic groups, as described in section 6.2.2, started fighting over land and cattle, and then when the political situation started to weaken in 2013, where Kiir and Machar's struggle for real began, this option became more viable to follow. Together with the uneven distribution of goods between ethnic lines and due to the fact that the elite could keep leading their lives as usual, while the rest of the people suffered, more and more due to rising prices, it was according to Stewart maybe only a matter of time before conflict would commence in the fragile country. With the conflict taking on an ethnic character it is due to be a mobilising factor in the conflict as pointed out in subsection 6.2.1.1, creating an even bigger divide in South Sudan between ethnic groups, pushing even more people to flee their home (Johnson, 2016: 101).

### 6.3.2 Partial Conclusion

Greed and grievance has in this subchapter shown how both are important in order to understand the current conflict. Especially the horizontal inequalities (economy, political and social dimensions) show this. It is seen in the light of how all of these three dimensions influence each other: when the political instability for real showed itself in 2013 it mobilised ethnic groups to rebel, both because their own were being targeted, but also because their economical situation was pressured due to the oil crisis. Furthermore, greed has shown to be present in this conflict and hereby maybe a factor in it being prolonged. What came first of these inequalities between groups and the elite is hard to tell, but it is likely that they have all been affected by each other, in the end resulting in civil war. Which came first, the hen or the egg? That is also the case here, through examples and theories the subchapter has highlighted inequalities and a feature of greed among the elite in South Sudan that can all be characterised as playing an important role in the conflict leading to civil war and a collapse of state-building in the young nation.



## 7 A South Sudanese State?

This chapter seeks to return to the overall framework of the thesis as introduced in the beginning of the thesis: failed states. The chapter will include a discussion of Eriksen's notion of what a state and failed state is, afterwards it will be discussed how South Sudan fits this description based on the previous chapter's analysis of security, identity, ethnicity, economy and colonial impact. All these aspects should lay the grounds through which to see how these aspects has shaped the way in which South Sudan build its state.

As determined in chapter 5, Eriksen does not believe in the classical notion of state and state failure: the so-called two worlds approach. This approach defines the state in terms of the Western idea of state (whether a state is viewed in terms of its ability to provide services for its people or if it has the legitimate use of violence) and then defines a failed state as one that cannot comply with one of the two (Bilgin & Morton, 2004: 175). Eriksen on the other hand believes we are to abandon the notion of failed state and in stead define a state on the assumption that: "*all states in the contemporary world have a territory with a population, are recognised by other states, and have a government.*" (2010: 36). Furthermore, the state should have institutions, laws, an army, police, etc. (approximately as we know states in the western world to have, as he does not deny that it has shaped the institutions through colonialism, which has been explained in an earlier chapter). What makes the definition different is that other features of the state can vary from state to state: "*the form of government, the degree of monopoly of violence and control over territory, and the kind of services the states provide*" (ibid: 36-37). That is, in order to be a state it is not necessarily given that you have the legitimate use of violence or control over territories or populations, nor providing one's citizens with services is a given.

The state is thus not defined by these features, but is still constrained by the domestic and international, in terms of how it chooses to act will influence the public and the international community, why there are some certain criteria to be met in order to get the support from the society to continue the rule.

How leaders choose to react on these criteria set by the international and domestic actors to a large degree determine how the state will be formed.

By looking at this description South Sudan can be seen as a state, both in the classical notion (see chapter 5) and in Eriksen's notion.

South Sudan has a territory with a population, it has been recognised by other states (Worsnip, 2011), and it has a government. It furthermore also have laws, an army, to some extent police, an administration, which are the defining features which a state should possess in order to call itself a state according to Eriksen, if these feature function is a whole other discussion.

Throughout chapter 6 different aspects of the conflict has been elucidated through the concepts of colonial impact, the security dilemma, ethnicity and the importance of memory and greed versus grievance. The rebel centric model helped show why, how and when the ethnic groups in South Sudan chose to rebel, whereas the state centric model was used to look at the role of the power struggles between Kiir and Machar. The colonial impact has helped show how South Sudan to some extent has inherited Western institutions from Khartoum. Moreover, it also showed why the government can be characterised as being weak, as new states' institutions are typically inherited by the time of independence, and the new states thus builds the state on existing institutions from the old empire. What was inherited from Sudan was already weak structures, where South Sudan was deliberately resigned from the government in Khartoum, where the North kept backing out of agreements with the South, holding them in a tight grip (LeRiche & Arnold, 2014: 127). This structure was reproduced in South Sudan, where the government was repeatedly restructured, ministers were laid off, greed became significant to elite personnel on both sides of the conflict as analysed in subchapter 6.3 and section 6.2.1. According to Migdal, institutions in a new state are supposed to change along with society (1988: 90). That is, as society and our needs changes so should institutions resulting in new laws. In South Sudan new rules against corruption in government were pushed, but later not followed through with (Johnson, 2016: 90-92). Migdal expresses that when this is the case institution will weaken and make them irrelevant (1988: 91). Furthermore, Migdal also addresses the issue of the security dilemma, though describing it as politics of survival, which was addressed in section 6.2.1: President Kiir acting against Machar in order to maintain his power position, e.g. shown by "the big shuffle" (ibid: 214), where Kiir fired Machar as Vice President along

with four other members of government, and then replacing them with people he could be sure to trust (Johnson, 2016: 164-165). This is politics of survival according to Migdal. He argues that this diminishes the government's control and thereby weakens the state.

This weakness of some state institutions can have been one of the mobilising factors of ethnic groups in South Sudan, as some of their basic needs were not met and they were not satisfied with the corruption going on in the government, especially during the economic crisis, where the elite did not show any signs of suffering or cutting down on their normal living standards. This can have been a viable reason for people to rebel. And with weak state institutions this would be a possibility as change of getting criminalised for ones crimes in times of conflicts are slim, choosing to rebel seems better as it gives people a sense of agency. The mobilisation was further pushed by Kiir and Machar reopening ethnic tensions as a means to maintain and try to gain power, where past events in both the Dinka and Nuer history were used to mobilise people through identity and past struggles.

Eriksen notes that the action taken by different actors in a society helps shape the state formation process: *"Through their practices, actors may either contribute to or undermine the possibility of creating the kind of state presupposed by the idea of the state underlying formal institutions"* (2010: 36). That is, for South Sudan the choices made to e.g. not follow through with laws has helped shape weak institutions, in that sense making main actors, both government personal and rebels, responsible for the shaping of the South Sudanese state.

## **7.1 Who Has Failed?**

As described in the methodological considerations it is difficult to fully differ from the general discourse of failed states as it is used by many scholars and decision makers, so dependent on how you perceive the notion of state, South Sudan can be characterised as having failed in the general discourse of failed states as it is unable to provide security for its people and unable to provide the people with public good.

Following in the more recent discourse that states cannot fail as such, then according to Eriksen it has been established that South Sudan meets the requirements to call themselves a state within his understanding as showed in the previous section. Then

what differs in his notion of state, is the fact that a state does not necessarily have the monopoly over violence, which is the case in South Sudan, where in theory the military and police should be the only ones performing violence, but as conflict erupted violence became a common means to achieve one's interest. Just as South Sudan does have a territory, the situation now is that Kiir has the control over some states, while Machar has the control over others. Finally, the South Sudanese state does not seem able at the moment to provide services for its citizens. But all these factors just tell us how the state is operated, not that it has failed. It is merely operated differently from how we would have done it here in the west. What has been determined through chapter 6 is, though, that the states seem to be somewhat weak in its institutions.

What can be said about South Sudan is that the dream of a unified South Sudan has failed. Salva Kiir had a big dream of uniting the South in peace and finally being able to build the nation all had wished for for many decades, so in that sense maybe what has failed is the dreams and standards South Sudan set forth for themselves upon gaining independence in 2011 more than they have failed as a state within the classical discourse of state and failed states:

“Let all the citizens of this new nation be equal before the law and have equal access to opportunities and equal responsibilities to serve the motherland. We are all South Sudanese” (Kiir, 2011)

In other words it has failed its promises towards its people that are now fleeing the country in big such big numbers to the extent where it is the third biggest refugee crisis in the world.

## 8 Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to find the answers to my wonderings of how South Sudan had ended up creating the third biggest refugee crisis in the world, where discussions of ethnic cleansing came up in the debate surrounding South Sudan. In a country, they found themselves under decades of foreign rule were imposed to be Arab/Muslim more than once. This was investigated by answering the research question: *To what extent can power dynamics within the state-building processes in South Sudan be seen as interrelated with the rise of the third biggest refugee crisis in the world?*

Since independence, South Sudan has been fighting to get a state up and running. From the start it was evident that this would be difficult as the country was already facing a big humanitarian crisis upon gaining independence in 2011. President Kiir spoke to the country with confidence, and promised the people that it was now everyone would have to participate in order for the South Sudanese state to be able to succeed. It had already been given a territory, a people and a government. Formal institutions were mostly built upon the experience and existing structures of what institutions were present at independence. Various power dynamics soon broke out across the country; the most significant was the one between President Kiir and Vice-President Machar. When formal institutions were not able to reach the whole population in terms of public goods, economy was entering a crisis, and old struggles in the top of the SPLM broke out. It started to affect both the people and the state-building process in the country. With the conflict breaking out and entering a state where ethnicity was used by the leaders to mobilise the people through memories of the past, state-building was to an extent set aside in order to focus on maintaining and trying to gain power. Thus, it can be said that the state-building process in South Sudan was cast in the background, when old habits and customs started reproducing themselves.

A country characterised by conflict over a period of many decades has shown to be difficult for South Sudan to shake off; when interested in obtaining a certain status their way of reaching this goal is through conflict, and the people have learned that you get heard by rebelling, which is how South Sudan ultimately gained independence in 2011.

Thereby it can be concluded that power-dynamics in the state-building process is highly interrelated with the rise of the third biggest refugee crisis in the world today. In the way that the power dynamics at the top of management in the SPLM has been a contributing factor in starting the conflict in South Sudan that now leads people to flee their homes in search of protection. In that sense you can say that the South Sudanese government, represented by Salva Kiir, has failed its citizens and its own dream of becoming a peaceful country, and that the country itself has not failed as such within the new discourse of failed states, where states are not able to fail, but merely perform differently from each other.

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