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**POLITICAL PARTIES AND THE DILEMMA OF NATION-BUILDING IN SUDAN**

MA Thesis

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## Abstract

The first emergence of Sudan as a state with defined borders and a central government started by the invasion of Muhammad Ali Pasha of Sudan in 1820. The second composition of the state occurred by the colonial powers in accordance with the Anglo- Egyptian agreement in 1899, which lasted until the independence.

After independence, the national government inherited *an* incomplete state with weak institutional structure including economic and political institutions, public administration and governance that would require an exceptional effort to build a modern nation. However, despite the succession of civil and military regimes, the national governments kept the legacy of colonialism remained as it.

The thesis argues that all the successive Sudanese governments; both democratic and autocratic regimes since the independence has failed solve the question of the nation building. Accordingly, led to the failure of the state.

A comparative-historical analysis method was used to analyze the policies used by the Sudanese elites in dealing with the national questions since the emergence of the Sudanese national movement till now. The data collected from secondary sources discussed the politics in Sudan.

The thesis begins with a theoretical background. A brief description of the nature of the regimes in Sudan as well as an analysis of the effect of the colonialism in the 19th century on the nation building in Sudan is provided. The thesis tracks the emergence of the nation in Sudan and it also gives weight to both socio-political and economic factors.

The thesis continues with an analysis of the impacts of the policies of the Sudanese parties on the national questions and how it led to the dilemma of the nation-building in Sudan. The secession of the south and the current conflict in the other parts of the country is a result of their failure.

### **Key words:**

political parties- colonialism- conflicts- identity- nation-building- sectarianism

## Özet

Sınırları belirlenmiş bir devlet olan Sudan'ın ilk ortaya çıkışı ve merkezi hükümet, Muhammed Ali Paşa'nın 1820'de Sudan'a girmesiyle başlamıştır. Devletin ikinci bileşimi sömürge güçleri tarafından 1899'da Anglo-Mısır anlaşması uyarınca meydana gelmiştir ve bağımsızlığa kadar devam etmiştir.

Bağımsızlıktan sonra, ulusal hükümet, modern bir ulus kurmak için istisnai bir çaba gerektiren ekonomik ve politik kurumlar, kamu yönetimi ve yönetim gibi zayıf kurumsal yapıdaki eksik bir devlet mirasını almıştır. Bununla birlikte, sivil ve askeri rejimlerin ardalanmasına rağmen, ulusal hükümetler sömürgeciliğin mirasını korumuştur.

Tez, birbirini takip eden Sudan hükümetlerinin hepsini savunuyor; bağımsızlık başarısızlığına uğrayan demokratik ve otokratik rejimler de ulus inşası meselesini çözmüştür. Buna göre, devletin başarısızlığına yol açarak bugüne kadar Sudan Ulusal Hareketinin ortaya çıkışından bu yana ulusal sorunlarla mücadelede Sudanlı elitlerin kullandığı politikaları analiz etmek için karşılaştırmalı-tarihsel bir analiz yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Sudan'daki siyaseti tartışan ikincil kaynaklardan toplanan veriler, tezde teorik bir altyapı ile başlayarak Sudan'daki rejimlerin doğasının kısa bir tanıtımı ve 19.yüzyıldaki sömürgeciliğin Sudan'daki ulus oluşumu üzerindeki etkisinin bir analizi sağlamaktadır. Tez, Sudan'da ulusun ortaya çıkışını izliyor ve hem sosyo-politik hem de ekonomik faktörlere ağırlık veriyor.

Tez, Sudan siyasi partilerinin politikalarının ulusal sorunları üzerindeki etkilerinin ve Sudan'daki ulus inşasının ikilemine nasıl yol açtığı üzerine bir analizle devam ediyor. Güney'in ayrılması ve ülkenin diğer bölgelerindeki mevcut çatışma, başarısızlıklarının bir sonucudur.

### **Anahtar kelime:**

siyasi partiler - sömürgecilik - çatışmalar - kimlik-ulus kurma-sekterizm

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Since the independence, Sudan has witnessed several national governments; civic democratic regimes (1954-1958), (1965-1969), (1986-1989) and military regimes (1958- 1969), (1969-1985), (1989-now). None of these regimes succeeded in building up the nation on a stable and productive basis. Instead, these governments with their rudderless policies, failed to solve the questions of identity, they couldn't agree on a constitution whereby all Sudanese citizens are treated equally, they couldn't prevent the outbreak of the longest civil war in Africa that claimed the lives of millions, they failed of economic development, which led to a "brain drain" in Sudan due to the migration of the best professional and skilled Sudanese labor. These issues are related to the nation-building process in Sudan and have accompanied the country until now because the birth of the idea of a nation state in Sudan came belated and faltering. Therefore, the Sudan has failed in transforming the traditional tribal and sectarian society into a modern society with a national identity.

The major purpose of this thesis is to shed light on the role played by the Sudanese political parties in nation-building process in Sudan. This thesis aims to survey the events and indicate the major forces which have shaped Sudanese political history. The paper traces the evolution of national and political consciousness in the Sudanese elites. It also chronicles the growth of the major Sudanese parties, their alliances and their complicated paths. The work begins with a historical background of the Sudan. It focuses on the key developments that have occurred in the political scene in Sudan, concentrating mostly on the pre- independence Sudan (the Anglo-Egyptian condominium (1899–1956) and post independence Sudan (1956-present). The work continues with a post colonial analysis of the Sudanese nation-building process, discussing the impact that successive governments have had on the nation-building process in Sudan with a focus on the role played by the different parties. The chapter argues that colonialism, as well as the Sudanese intelligentsia was responsible for the failure of the nation in Sudan. The work concludes by arguing that the political parties in Sudan were antithetical to national unity and progress. It was characterized by ethnicity, greed for political power and wealth. These phenomena created unhealthy political rivalry among political parties already formed along ethnic cleavages.

### **1.1. Problem Statement:**

The emergence of political parties in democratic societies differs from its inception in post-colonized states. The political parties in Europe and North America for example, are basically oriented according to ideological and social (class) criteria. Their platform reflects different views on how society can work at its best and different interests (entrepreneurs, farmers, workers ...etc). On the other hand, in many post- colonial states- like the Sudan, the political parties have been mostly established with respect to ethnic or religious groups.

This thesis argues that political parties in Sudan that are characterized by ethnicity, greed for political power and wealth are antithetical to national unity and progress. These phenomena created unhealthy political rivalry among political parties already formed along ethnic cleavages. The most influential political parties in the country are sectarian-based, and their origins go back to the Mahdist uprising in the 1880s. They are the Umma Party and the Democratic Unionist Party. The thesis examines the impacts of the policy that the Sudanese parties employed in dealing with national issues and how it reflects on the nation building.

The thesis argues that all the successive Sudanese governments; both democratic and autocratic regimes since the independence have failed solve the question of the nation building resulting in a failed state in Sudan. The thesis aims to examine this problem by focusing on the relationship between political parties and the process of nation- building in Sudan. In so doing, the thesis will answer the following questions:

### **1.2. Research Question:**

Main research question:

- Why did political parties in Sudan fail in nation-building?

Sub questions:

- What is the impact of colonialism on the nation-building in Sudan?
- How did tribalism and sectarianism affect the nation-building process in Sudan?
- Why did the Sudanese political parties fail to solve the nation question?

### **1.3. Research Hypothesis:**

*Sudan* is one of the largest and the most geographically diverse *states* in *Africa*, with a number of political parties before and after it attained political independence. Since it achieved self-independence on January 1, 1956 Sudan has witnessed a number of major political crises; coups

d'état, a civil war which lasted for 22 years and recently in 2011 a secession of the South region. These major crises are considered as indicators of dilemma of nation-building in Sudan.

While it is often assumed that political parties play a positive role in nation-building, the thesis additionally sets out to examine their negative affects and test the hypothesis that they may be a real obstacle in nation-building process in a country. In the case of Sudan, it can be hypothesized that, because the major political parties were not broad-based or national in scope (they were sectarian or regional based); they were most likely to constitute an impediment to nation-building in Sudan.

#### **1.4. Method of Research:**

This thesis seeks to find the relationship between the failure of the state in Sudan and the political parties by using comparative-historical analysis. The thesis discusses this question by examining the experience of the Sudanese national parties in the politics of Sudan since the independence and analyzing their policies in dealing with the national issues.

The data of the thesis is based mostly on secondary sources. The secondary source material involves studies about nation-building and political parties in democratic and post-colonial states.

#### **1.5. Limitations of the Study:**

The study presents in a nut shell the numerous political parties that have emerged on the national political scenario. It does not present a detailed study of the aforesaid about intra-party democracy nor the role of other civil society organizations in Sudan in nation-building, for the reason that the researcher has concentrated and devoted herself to study and critically analyze the role of Sudanese political parties in general because the theme of the study is the role of political parties on nation-building.

#### **1.6. Chapter Outline:**

The study chapter outline is as indicated below:

Chapter One - Introduction

Chapter Two - Literature Review

Chapter Three – Nation-building in pre-independent Sudan (1820-1955)

Chapter Four – Nation-building in post-independent Sudan (1956- now)

Chapter Five- Conclusion

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce, define the key concepts of nation-building and political party. It also gives a brief description of the literature published in Arabic and English on nation-building in Africa in general and on the nation-building in Sudan in particular.

### 2.1. The Conceptual Framework:

#### **Nation-building:**

There is controversy in the conventional wisdom around nation-building. Nation, derived from Latin *Natioas* has a variety of meanings. Amongst them; nation is frequently defined as a group of people linked by birth, and a nation as a concept is used in a congruence of uni-culturalism (or homogeneous culture) or oneness of people, and of culture.<sup>1</sup>

Jannie Gagiano defines nation-building as the integration of communally diverse and/or territorially discreet units into the institutional framework of a single state and the concomitant transfer of a sense of common political identity and loyalty to the symbolic community defined by the founding ideology of such a state.<sup>2</sup> Alberto Alesina and Bryony Reich in their article<sup>3</sup> define “nation-building” as a process which leads to the formation of countries in which the citizens feel a sufficient amount of commonality of interests, goals and preferences so that they do not wish to separate from each other.

#### **Political party:**

The emergence of political parties in post-colonial countries like Sudan is different from the one of the western countries. They also differ in functions and roles. The emergence of the single party system in post-independence era, for example, has been a departure from the anticipated Western style multi-party system. Therefore, when it comes to evaluate the role of the political parties in Sudan, it's important to start first of all by the definition of a political party and list the main functions of the political parties in countries in which the parties have played a positive role in all aspects of development.

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<sup>1</sup> Recently, state-building and nation-building have sometimes been used interchangeably. However, state-building generally refers to the construction of state institutions for a functioning state, while nation-building the construction of a national identity, also for a functioning state.

<sup>22</sup> Gagiano, 1990: 32

<sup>3</sup> Alesina , 2012:45

Like any concept of social science, there are many different definitions of political parties. The political party in general is defined as an organized group of people with at least roughly similar political aims and opinions, that seeks to influence public policy by getting its candidates elected to public office.

A well-known definition of political parties comes from the American political scientist Anthony Downs, who wrote: “A political party is a team of men seeking to control the governing apparatus by gaining office in a duly constituted election”<sup>4</sup>. The Italian scholar Giovanni Sartori, who is internationally one of the most well-known researchers on political parties, defined political party as: “any political group identified by an official label that presents at elections, and is capable of placing through election, candidates for public office.”<sup>5</sup>

Hence, the political party is a group of people who share a common political vision as well as how the country should be governed. They are working on new laws or amending existing laws to keep pace with their policies. Therefore, all the competing parties in the same state are active to win the voters' confidence and win the number of seats that qualify them to reach the political authority to implement their programs. Political parties are therefore regarded as one of the tools of political development in the modern era. Political parties and the party system reflect the degree of political awareness in the political system of any given country.<sup>6</sup>

The freedom to form a political party and to declare its membership and therefore the participation of candidates in electoral campaigns is the measurement of the state's commitment to liberal democracy as a political value for the peaceful circulation of political power. When opposition parties are oppressed by the ruling government, because their ideas and programs are in conflict with the party in power, this is an indicator for describing leaders of such governments as oppressors, which are common in Third World countries, especially in Sudan.

From the above definitions, it's clear that one of the political party's primary roles is to seek political power, to compete for and gain state power and/ or the control of the government through legal means.

Ruling a state requires adoption of a specific economic philosophy or a combination of a number of them. Thus, we always find that political parties adopt one of the economic theories to ensure

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<sup>4</sup> Downs, 1957

<sup>5</sup> Giovanni Sartori, 1976: 63

<sup>6</sup> Wild & Domingo, 2011:42

the achievement of social justice - at least in theory - when it comes to power such as a fair distribution of wealth of the country.

### **Roles and Functions of political parties:**

In democratic societies, orderly competition for power is the definitive function of political parties. Parties offer ideologies and programs that the public can choose whether to support or not. Party members and their leaders have certain common aspirations, principles, and policies, and they join together in a political party mainly in order to sell their ideas to their fellow citizens. The ultimate goal is to put these ideas into practice in government for the good of the nation. Parties field candidates in elections so that the aspirations, principles, and policies of the party can be implemented through government programs.<sup>7</sup>

A political party performs a governance function whether they win elections or not. The winning party forms the government and it exercises the power to attain the socio-economic objectives of the party. The socio-economic objectives of the party constitute the basic policies for that party as stipulated in the manifesto, election platform, position papers and other policy documents<sup>8</sup>. When political parties fail to be elected to form the government, they form the opposition. The role of the opposition is to criticize government policy and prevent abuses of power.

Political parties carry out various tasks and functions which differ according to the party system in each country.

The basic functions of any political parties in democratic societies according to Burnham<sup>9</sup> can be summaries in the following:

1. Office-filling function or elite recruitment.
2. Political education or political socialization.
3. Policy making function and,
4. Nation-building.

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<sup>7</sup> Keverenge, 2008

<sup>8</sup> Katz & Crotty, 2006

<sup>9</sup> Burnham, 1967

## 2.2. Review of Literature

A number of hypotheses have appeared to explain the dilemma of nation-building in Sudan. The most common view of the failure of nation-building in Sudan is that it is because of the clash of identities and its variant; the long years of North-South war, characterised as the Arab-Islamic north against the African, Christian or animist south. Other conflicts like the one in Darfur which cannot be characterised in religious terms, could be characterised in colour-based and Arab-African labels. An example of this approach is the work of Deng *War of Visions: Conflict of Identities in the Sudan* (1996). In the author's view, north-south and Arab-African divisions have caused a national identity crisis in Sudan and thus a failure of national integration in Sudan. In another work of his; *Identity, Diversity, and Constitutionalism in Africa* (2008) he illustrates the dilemmas of diversity in nation-building with the case of Sudan. In this regard he states that “post-independence governance frameworks have contributed to a crisis of national identity throughout much of the African continent. Existing frameworks that stress unity through the suppression of diversity have left many Africans feeling disempowered and unable to see a reflection of themselves in the governance of their nations”.<sup>10</sup> He argues that if African constitutions and their attendant governing frameworks are to embody the soul of the nation, as they are expected to do, they must reflect the essential cultural values and norms of all of the nation's peoples and build on their worldview as the starting point for constitutionalism.<sup>11</sup>

Conversely, Bassil in *The Post-Colonial State and Civil War in Sudan: The Origins of Conflict in Darfur* argues that the disparities rooted in race and ethnicity is not the causes of the crisis, but the symptoms.<sup>12</sup> The attempts of the ruling elites to solve the problem of diversity by enforcing an Islamic state and Islamic constitution on a multi-ethnic society have led to prolonged civil war, endless military coups, and political, social, and economic bankruptcy. In short; it led to a failed state. Ole Frahm in her dissertation “*How a state is made*”- *state-building and nation-building in South Sudan in the light of its African peers* (2014) also illustrates this point in her analysis of the history of Sudan nationalism to examine the crisis of the South.

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<sup>10</sup> Deng, 2008:3

<sup>11</sup> Deng, 2008:3

<sup>12</sup> Bassil, 2013:193

The most common hypothesis amongst the leftist Sudanese is that the unequal distribution of power between centre and periphery is the cause of the crisis in nation-building in Sudan. Babiker in his the *Argumentative of the Centre and the Margin* which he developed during the last two decades, explains the relations between the centre and the margin regions by using the cultural analytical framework. Babiker shares the same perspective of the later John Garng<sup>13</sup> who argues in his work *The New Sudan* that the enemy wasn't North Sudan or the Northerners but the existing political system in the country. They both downed the role of ethnicity and race in the conflict and emphasised the role of ideas.<sup>14</sup> Garng represented his vision of a New Sudan as an alternative to the existing old Sudan that is associated with mismanagement, dictatorship and discrimination that caused armed conflicts and civil wars, resulting in the killing of more than two million and half of the Sudanese in addition other six millions injured/ disable and displaced. Muhammed Suliman on the other hand has a quite different approach; in his book *The Sudan: Wars over Resources and Identity* (2000), he argues that the violent conflicts in Africa emanate from ethnic, religious, or cultural differences is limited and misleading and that in the Sudan, scarcity resulting from denying or limited access to natural resources and from growing environmental degradation stands out as probably the most important factors behind conflict among the people of the country. In this regard he states that:

“The slow process of natural wear and tear on the environment has been accelerated by the unprecedented exploitation of natural resources. This is being carried out by the members of the northern Sudanese traditional merchant class (*the Jallaba*)”<sup>15</sup>

Fatima Babiker in *The Sudanese Bourgeoisie: Vanguard of Development?* explores how Sudan's merchant classes (commonly known as *Jellaba*) function, namely extracting profits from the peripheries and investing them in the centre.<sup>16</sup>

Several scholars base their studies on the hypothesis that seek to explain the failure of the nation by focusing on the ruling elites. According to them, the trouble with Sudan is the failure of the ruling elites. Among them are Mohammed Omer Bashir, Sharif Hariri and Atta Al-Batahani.

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<sup>13</sup> A Sudanese politician, who founded and led the 'Sudan People's Liberation Army' in the 'Second Civil War'.

<sup>14</sup> <http://africanarguments.org/2015/08/17/john-garng-remembered-10-years-on-by-mawan-muortat/>

<sup>15</sup> Suliman, 2000:98

<sup>16</sup> Babiker 1984:49

They called the Sudanese State, which was formed since the Fong Sultanate (1504-1821) to the Turku-Egyptian colonial rule (1821-1885), to the Mahdist state (1885-98), to the Condominium regime (1889-1956) then the national regimes from 1956 until today, as "the *Jellaba* State ". These forces in the *Jellaba* state were formed by a historical accumulation between groups with networks of economic interests represented by groups that benefited from the central authority in central and northern Sudan.<sup>17</sup>. The *Jelaba* institutions were formed since the Funj Sultanate in economic conditions in which the religious on one hand, and the racial superiority which associated with Islam and Arab elements on the other hand adding to that the history of slavery with its racial hierarchy played a pivotal role. However, all of them blamed the failure of nation-building in Sudan on the ruling elites. This thesis follows the same approach and emphasizes the role of the ruling elites in causing the dilemma of nation-building in Sudan. To illustrate this role, I examine the factors that formed the visions of the political parties in Sudan and illuminate their role in the nation-building.

Regarding the Mahdiyya and its role in shaping the current Sudanese politics, Warburg in his book *Islam, Sectarianism, and Politics in Sudan since the Mahdiyya*, (2003) traces the role of Islam played in Sudanese politics during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. His work follows on the heels of several earlier books and articles, including his *The Sudan under Wingate* (1971), *Islam, Nationalism and Communism in a Traditional Society* (1978), *Historical Discord in the Nile Valley* (1992), and others. Several scholars such as Hasan Ibrahim<sup>18</sup>, Muhammad Ibrahim Abu Salim<sup>19</sup>, and Mohamed Omer Beshir<sup>20</sup>, to mention only a few, have shed new light on the Turku-Egyptian period, the Mahdiyya, and the Condominium regime and investigate their impacts on nation-building process in Sudan. Western scholarship such as Bell<sup>21</sup> and Niblock,<sup>22</sup> historians like Collins<sup>23</sup> and Daly<sup>24</sup> provided detailed analytical works about the pre-independence era in Sudan.

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<sup>17</sup> Al-Bathani, 2011:83

<sup>18</sup> Hasan. A, 2000:32

<sup>19</sup> Manshurat al- Mahdiyya, 1979

<sup>20</sup> Basir, 1969:162

<sup>21</sup> Bell, 1983:96

<sup>22</sup> Niblock, 1987: 1898-1985

<sup>23</sup> Collins, 2008:239

<sup>24</sup> Daly, 1990:286

Since the last British colonial administrator left the country in 1956, Sudan's political, economic and social fabric has been dominated by the riverain elite from central Sudan, elite which is both Arab and Muslim. Tim Niblock in his work *class and power: The Dynamics of Sudanese Politics, 1898-1985* (1987) traces the Sudanese nationalist movement from its beginnings during the Condominium (1896-1956) until the end of Nimeiri era in 1985. His work doesn't only illustrate the role played by the Sudanese elites including the religious leaders, the tribal Shekhs, the graduates, the state officers and the merchants in the Sudanese politics, but also explain how they came to be in a position to play such role. In his book, Niblock shows the role played by the graduates in the light of their social position and how they formed the political parties takes a great part of his book. In this regard he states that:

“The objectives of these parties were inevitably shaped and moulded by establishment interests. Their main concern was with Sudan's political future, whether independent or in union with Egypt, rather than with social or economic change.”<sup>25</sup>

A number of works illustrate the impacts of policies such as Arabisation and Islamisation followed by the Successive governments on nation-building in Sudan, such as the book “*Sudan: what kind of a state? What kind of a crisis?*”<sup>26</sup> and “*War of Visions: Conflict of Identities in the Sudan*”<sup>27</sup>, to name a few.

Niblock in chapter three argues that the patterns of Sudanese politics may have been determined by two major factors; sectarianism and tribalism. Ole Frahm in his PhD dissertation *How a state is made” – State building and nation-building in South Sudan in the light of its African peers,*(2014) illustrates the impacts of these policies on the North-South relation and the southern crisis. He also accuses Northern academics' discourse in their explanation of the “Southern Problem” as if nation-building failure was due to the disrupting of what had been a natural process of Arabisation and Islamisation in Southern Sudan by the British during the condominium regime. About the role of successive governments in nation-building in Sudan Al-Bathani in his book *The Governance Crisis in Sudan: Crisis of Hegemony or Hegemony of Crisis* describes the crisis of nation-building in Sudan as "a structural, multifaceted, political, economic, and social crisis,

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<sup>25</sup> Niblock, 1987: 198

<sup>26</sup> de Waal, 2007:174

<sup>27</sup> Francis Deng,1995:76

and its roots deep in the core of the social system which is based on a complex structure with unequal relations among its components " .

"I believe that the crisis is at the core of the social system, in the sense that there is an inequality in it from its beginnings, and that it hindered its development." All societies have a degree of inequality, but the issue of managing inequality in the society remains the responsibility of those who are in power. Movement and progress of society is the issue and responsibility of those who address the leadership. The crisis has several aspects and it is an old crisis that did not arise with the current system in 1989."<sup>28</sup>

Al-Batahani argues that the *Jellaba* institution, which has become a de facto state in the modern Sudan, has refrained from providing an economic basis for the political / constitutional institutions that guarantee the participation of all nationalities in the system of government.<sup>29</sup>

He also claims that the outcome of its experience in shaping a Sudanese identity based on successful interactions across cultures is not positive. Its performance, according to him in the areas of economy, politics, and national integration, in all the democratic and dictatorial regimes, was mediocre. Its performance during the period of the Islamic Front, headed by Omar al-Bashir, between 1989 and 2005, was below average. This decline is due, in my estimation, to the use of religious discourse by the Islamists to greatest extent. As a result of this exclusionary accompanied by the military machine sparked the civil wars in the Sudanese margin, which put the institution of the *Jellaba* in a critical situation that even threatens the existence of the Sudanese state itself. The works of Mansour Khalid who was a Foreign Minister under Nimeri from 1969 until 1978 illustrates the role of Nimeiri regime in nation-building process in Sudan and the factors that led to the failure of the Addis Ababa Peace Agreement. He argues that "the Sudanese politicians have addicted failure and they are sensitive against success. ." And that "Much of the Sudanese politicians' failure is due to stupidity which is part of human nature."<sup>30</sup>

The role of political Islam in the Sudan's nation-building is extensively described in Azza Mustafa M. Ahmed's work *Islam and political parties in Sudan: the National Islamic Front*.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Al-Bathani, 2011:152

<sup>29</sup> Al-Bathani, 2011:153

<sup>30</sup> Khalid, 1993: 284

<sup>31</sup> Ahmed, 2014: 42

In my thesis I emphasize the role of sectarian parties that seized the power in all the democratic periods. The relationship between tribalism and political parties took a part in this thesis as well. In this regard, some scholars like Mahmud El Zain in his article *Tribe and religion in Sudan* (1996) illuminate the ways in which tribalism and other traditional structures have involved in politics in Sudan. In this regard he states:

“Tribalism and sectarianism separated the 'enlightened' sector of society, which perceived independence in a way that threatened the vested interests of sectarian and tribal leaders.”<sup>32</sup>

Willis Justin in his book *Tribal gatherings: colonial spectacle, native administration, and local government in Condominium Sudan* (2011) describes the role of the native administration and tribal system in pre-independent Sudan.

Nation building therefore is an ongoing process that tests the ability of national leaders or the elites in general to deal with problems of identity, legitimacy, penetration, distribution, governance and participation which are fundamental to nation-building.

Building of nations implies that the political identity of the “elite”/ person can expand beyond the narrow and eternal basic framework like the ethnic and tribe so that national identity takes precedence over the other identities. Within this scale of measurement, this thesis examines the successes or the failure of the Sudanese elite in building a Sudanese nation.

One of the tough challenges for all researchers in this domain is the study of the complex structure of Sudanese society. However, additional studies about the impacts of the political parties policies on the Sudanese society is required to create a concrete strategy of nation-building in Sudan based on the different elements of the actual Sudanese society.

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<sup>32</sup> Al-Zain, 1996

### **3. NATION-BUILDING IN PRE-INDEPENDENT SUDAN (1820-1955)**

#### **3.1.A Brief Introduction to Sudan:**

Sudan was the largest country in Africa before the secession of the southern part of the country in July, 9, 2011. Its size went from 2,505,813 sq km to 1,861,484 sq km and became the third largest country in Africa with approximately 30 million inhabitants.

Its capital, Khartoum lies between two rivers: the Blue Nile, which flow from Lake Tana through Ethiopia and the Nile which flow from Lake Victoria. The two rivers join and compose the great Nile which runs through Egypt ending in the White Sea. Sudan is rich in mineral wealth, agricultural products and it has also large cattle ranches.

Sudan located in northeast Africa is a particular conflict- torn region of the world. It shares the borders with ten countries all of which have experienced armed conflicts during the last fifty years. They are in the north, Egypt and Libya, Ethiopia and Eritrea from the east, Chad and the Central African Republic from the west and Kenya, Uganda, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo from the south.<sup>33</sup> Sudan has diverse linguistic, ethnic, social, cultural, and religious characteristics. Just like so many of boundaries on the African continent, Sudan's borders were drawn by the formal imperialist powers without regarding the cultural, the religious background of the country. Thus, Sudan ends up hosting a complex, historical variety of ethnicities, cultures, and religions.

#### **Religion in Sudan:**

Before the secession of the south in 2011, the percentage of the Muslim population was 70% while the Christians were about 19%. There are also practitioners of traditional indigenous religions in the south, in the Nuba Mountains and the Blue Nile areas in central Sudan. Before the secession of the south at least two million southern Christians have settled in northern semi-urban areas as internally displaced people due to the civil war.<sup>34</sup>

Before the secession of the south, the percentage of the Muslim population was 70% while the Christians were about 19%. There is also Practitioners of traditional indigenous religions in the south, the Nuba Mountains, and the Blue Nile areas in central Sudan. Now, the Muslim population is 97% including numerous Arab and non-Arab groups. The remaining 3% ascribe to either

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<sup>33</sup> It's now has the border with south of Sudan. The new emergent country

<sup>34</sup> Bashir, 1977:157

Christianity or traditional animist religions.<sup>35</sup> The vast majority of Muslims in Sudan are Sunni belonging to Maliki School of jurisprudence. The Islam in Sudan is generally based on Sufism, a largely peaceful tradition. There are several religious fraternities known as *tariqas*, each centered on the personalities and teachings of a particular saint “*sheikh*”.

Religion and politics are intertwined in the Muslim societies, and this has resulted in rivalries between the various *tariqas*, particularly the Mahadiyya and Khatmiyya traditions.

### **Ethnicity in Sudan:**

Historically, Sudan has been one of the most ethnically and linguistically diverse countries in the world. Sudan’s population consists of some 600 ethnic groups speaking more than 400 languages, broadly divided into Muslims and non-Muslims. Among Muslims, about 40% identify themselves as “Arabs” by culture and language and reside largely in Northern Sudan. Other northern but non-Arab groups are the Nubians along the northern Nile and in the Kassala area, Beja in the East and the Fur in the West. Major southern non-Muslim groups are the Dinka (Jieng), Nuer (Naedh), and Shilluk (Collo). The Nuba, a separate group culturally and linguistically, reside in the mountains of South Kurdofan.

This diversity has been an item used by the British colonization to rule the country in the nineteenth century. The British colonization, tribalism and sectarianism are the main factors determined nation-building process in pre-independent Sudan

### **3.2.Sectarianism in Pre-independent Sudan:**

In his book “Politics and Islam in Contemporary Sudan” Sidahmed define a sect as” a group of people, which has separated from a larger group and with a particular set of religious or political beliefs, which are strongly held and regarded by others as extreme.<sup>36</sup>In Sudanese studies, the word sect refers to two groups with a religious belief network but the emphasis is laid on their political agenda and actions. In this study, the term sect is following this emphasis and doesn’t imply any judges about religious beliefs or extremes.

Sudan’s Islam is Sufi Islam.<sup>37</sup> Sufism orders have a significant influence on the Islam in Sudan. It has been introduced to Sudan by the holy men who came from Hejaz and from Egypt. The Sufism

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<sup>35</sup> Sudan National Human Development Report 2012

<sup>36</sup> Sidahmed, 1997

<sup>37</sup> Nayel, 2017

orders at that time didn't interfere in politics. Rather, the role of the Sufism was educational and its main concern was the spiritual aspect of the relation between the individual and God.

Before the Mahdiyya (1881–99) Sufi orders didn't interfere in politics in politics<sup>38</sup>. The Mahdist gave the Islam a significant role to play in the politics of Sudan. Many Sufi orders supported the Mahdiyya because they believed that its jihad against the Turco-Egyptian regime will help them to get rid of the “Ulama”<sup>39</sup>, imported by the Turco-Egyptian rulers from Al-Azhar. But what happened after was quite the opposite; the first thing that the Mahdiyya did after overthrowing the Turco-Egyptian regime was to outlaw all of the other Sufi orders. The Mahdist state burned their libraries and many Sufi leaders were exiled to Egypt and Hejaz.<sup>40</sup>

The second phase started with the end of the Mahdist state by the British occupation of Sudan in 1898 which actually won a great support from some Sufi sects who had been suppressed by the Mahdist. During this period, all the Sufi leaders who had fled out because of the prohibition returned and reestablished themselves. And more, some of them became “sectarian”, in other words, they involved in politics.

The most significant Sufi orders which played a great role in the Sudanese politics was the Khatmiyya, originally brought to Sudan by Muhammad Uthman al-Margani (1793- 1853) from Hejaz. In the early 1880s, the Khatmiyya sect gained the support of the condominium regime in the hope that it will stop the Mahdiyya from developing an anti-British movement. This support strengthened the Khatmiyya as a sect and strengthened the position of Sayyid Ali al-Margani the leader of the Khatmiyya (1880- 1968).

On the other hand, the Mahdiyya developed its sect “the Ansar” under the leadership of Sayyid Abdrahman, Mahadi's posthumous son (1885-1959). The two leaders didn't only have religious authority and influence but a sizeable economic power also laid in their hand.<sup>41</sup>

Mahmud al-Zain argues that it was due to the Turco-Egyptian invasion in 1821 that some Sufi orders were transformed from mere spiritual guidance to a more political one<sup>42</sup>. This transformation drew a link between Islam and socio-political structure. It's the time when some Sufi orders transformed into sects. al-Zain states that it is in the period of the British colonization

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<sup>38</sup> Al-Mahdiyyah, religious movement in the *Sudan* (1881–98), established by Muhammad Ahmad ibn Abd Allāh al-Mahdī with the aim to reform Islam.

<sup>39</sup> Refers to those who have been trained in religious sciences (Quran, hadith, fiqh, etc.).

<sup>40</sup> O'Fahey, 1996, Vol. 26, Fasc. 3: 258- 267

<sup>41</sup> Niblock, 1987

<sup>42</sup> Al-Zain, 1996

that” the tribe became “tribalist”, the sect became “sectarianist”, and the culture became a source of domination and racism”<sup>43</sup>.

Each sect has its areas of influence, the Khatmiyya sect widely spread in the center, the north and the east of Sudan while the Ansar sect’s share of influence was covering the western and central region of Sudan.<sup>44</sup>

It was the condominium regime which supported sectarianism in Sudan from the beginning, strengthening its influence in the Sudanese society in order to serve its colonial interest. The condominium regime supported the two Sayyids economically to gain their loyalty to the regime; Sayyid Abdelrahman has given some land in Aba Island, a loan of £4500 which converted into a gift later in 1926. Contracts for the supply of wood to government’s river steamers during the First World War were made to him and contracts for the supply of materials needed in the construction of Sennar Dam in the early 1920s also went to Sayyid 'Abd al-Rahman. A similar support was also given to Sayyid Ali al- Mmargani; he was given lands in the red sea and in the northern region.<sup>45</sup>

The economic power given to Sayyid Abdelarahman has strengthened him politically therefore, the British started to have some concerns that his political position may over the time become a threat to the government by trying to be a national leader standing on the reputation of his grandfather al- Mahdi. The government then decided to limit his influence. The chance for that came after an article published in “*al-Nil*” - a newspaper owned by Mahdiyya sect - criticized the regime’s policy in the Gazira scheme describing it as “a foreign enterprise”. However, the government took some lands from him but that didn’t actually affect his position and he reminded economically strong.<sup>46</sup>

Sufism in Sudan wasn’t without advantages. In fact, it was a social movement going beyond the tribal boundaries, and we can see an attempt to mold a unity at ideological level. Sufism gives a sense of belonging and unity among the people living in the so-called Sudan now. It was almost replaced the tribalism which was fading gradually.

This social development was interrupted by the British colonization. It was the revolt of 1924 that made the British administration realize that they cannot only rely on the sectarian leaders

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<sup>43</sup> Al-Zain, 1996

<sup>44</sup> Al Gadal, 2002: 287

<sup>45</sup> Niblock, 1987: 195

<sup>46</sup> Niblock, 1987: 195

and that a more affective and stable policy is needed. Thus, after the individual level of collaboration with the religious leaders proved its ineffectiveness in preventing the national revolts, they started to think of institutions not individuals. Therefore, the tribal institution has emerged as an institution capable of being developed and transformed into an administrative unit.

### **3.3.Sectarianism and political parties in pre-independent Sudan:**

Sectarianism has its impacts on the Sudanese nationalist movement right from its beginning. We can say that the role played by the graduates in the national movement can be understood through the study of their relationship with the sects.

When the graduates club, the first nationalist organization in Sudan was formed in 1919, both Sayyids were competing to gain the graduates to their sides. Between the years 1920 and 1930s, Sayyid Abdelrahman attempted to spread his influence among the educated Sudanese. In so doing, Sayyid Abdelrahman gave donations to schools, founded a public library and he sponsored graduates and solved their problems. A security report, written in December 1934, attested to the strong position which the Sayyid had by then built up among the graduates:

“... to the graduate class, Sayyid 'Abdalrahman is a political leader, pure and simple ... [he] has been adopted, at least for the time being, by a certain section of the instructed (intelligentsia) as their candidate for recognition as the leading Sudanese notable.<sup>47</sup> The district commissioner of Omdurman in 1935 described the techniques whereby the educated were enticed into the coterie: He ['Abdalrahman] entertained them [the educated] whenever occasion offered, subscribed generously to their studies and charities and put government hospitality in the shade with his splendid receptions at religious and national festivals. He held court like an Abbasid Khalif.<sup>48</sup>

Although the members of the graduates club weren't interested in the religious aspect of the sects, many of them have family ties with the sectarian leaders, like the members of the Abu Roaf group which has ties with the Khatmiyya sect. and al-Fajr group who comes from families that were formally involved in the Mahdist regime and occupied important positions during their era of rule.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Niblock, 1987

<sup>48</sup> Bashir, 1980: 134

<sup>49</sup> Bashir, 1980: 134

The graduates give the respects, the admiration to the sectarian leaders in retrain for economic support. The sectarian groups were the tools for the graduates to achieve their goals but they were affected by the opinion of the sectarian leaders and by their preferences. This alliance between the sectarian groups who enjoyed the notability, the economic wealth, and the great relations with the merchants and the effective persons in the society had its serious impacts on the nationalist movement.

Their influence appeared clearly in the newspaper “*Al-Hadara*” that was established by the three sectarian leaders; Sayyid Abderahman, Sayyid Ali and Sayyid al-Hindi. Through this newspaper, they hoped to lead and shape the Sudanese opinion, especially that it was the only newspaper in Arabic at that time.

The graduates’ congress which was established on the 12th February 1938 was the seed that all the Sudanese political parties emerged from. It formed in order to achieve the principals and the hopes of the graduates in playing a great role in leading and representing the demands of the Sudanese people which led at the end to the development of a national movement with a wide public support. It was expected from this organization to lead the Sudanese into playing an effective role in governing their country leading to the possibility of self- governance. In the meantime, the religious leaders will be respected but they won’t have an effective role in the government, whereas it’s the educated that will lead and assume the leadership of the country after the British rule.<sup>50</sup>

However, it’s important to differ between the senior graduates who benefited from the government and were enjoying certain positions in the administration and thus allied with the sectarian groups and the young gradates group who emerged at the end of the 1930s.

As a consequence, the Sudanese elites were divided into two groups: one consisted of the sectarian leaders, the *Ulama*, the merchants, the tribal leaders and some senior graduates. The other group consisted of the younger graduates' who were against the British regime. The members of the first group had been active in rallying Sudanese opinion to support Britain during the First World War, played an equally significant role after the war in countering the anti-British campaigns mounted by Egyptian and nationalist Sudanese groupings and organizations.

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<sup>50</sup> Niblock, 1980

The new generation of the educated graduates who didn't participate in 1924 movement because they were still young fought against sectarianism and they blamed the seniors for the division of the nationalist movement. They were sharing the same views regarding the sectarianism and the traditionalism. An article published in the mid of 1930s by members of al fajr group express the political views they both shared:

“... we definitely wish to stand for a new order of intelligent reform, and a steady progressive life, along with our own lines ... We wish to see; the young enlightened generation taking an active part in the affairs of this country . . . We young men of this generation are sons of the soil, the fruits of a new order that is to link Sudan with the rest of the world. Both the rudiments of human loyalty and the sense of communal duty demand that those who hold the good fortune to know slightly better than their fellow-men should put whatever knowledge they have to the service and orientation of those with whom their fathers, themselves and their sons move, live and have their being..”<sup>51</sup>

What happened was quite different from what they aimed for; when the political parties established at the beginning of the 1940s, it was the religious leaders who brought their followers to join the parties rather than the parties which succeeded in mobilizing the people on the basis of new forms of allegiance.<sup>52</sup> The national movement was left to be in the hands of the religious leaders of the most influential sects from the beginning. The charisma and the respect that the sectarian leaders enjoyed and their enormous wealth made them the perfect allies for the graduates who were looking for an easy support.<sup>53</sup> This is how the sectarian political parties emerged in Sudan.

Furthermore, the sectarian leaders stood against the national movement in the beginning of the 1920s. They were afraid that the newly emergent elites who aspired to transcend the tribal and religious boundaries which they viewed as detrimental to the development of Sudanese society will threaten their interests and position in the society.

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<sup>51</sup> Niblock, 1980

<sup>52</sup> Bashir, 1980

<sup>53</sup> Niblock, 1980

One example of that is the white flag league movement<sup>54</sup>. They attacked it, described it as a foreigner movement that doesn't have the right to talk with the name of all the Sudanese people. Articles in *al-Hadarah* newspaper, owned by Sudan's three most prominent religious leaders, gave a consistently disparaging view of the social composition of the White Flag League. One such article read: The league should know ... that the country is insulted when its smallest and humblest men, without status in society, pretend to come forward and express the country's opinion. The article from which the above quotation is taken went on to complain that the dust which the petty riff-raff was stirring up was 'disturbing the commercial class and the financial side', and appealed to all true patriots to "quell the pro-Egyptian street boys:" Another article baldly stated: "Low is the nation if it can be led by 'Ali Abd al-Latif".<sup>55</sup>

Taking everything into account, sectarianism has a negative impact on the nation-building in Sudan. Since their early emergence on the political scene, the sectarian parties had the support of the main traditional leadership of the Ansar and the Khatmiyya sects and the interests and objectives of the graduates were shaped and influenced by the leaders of these two religious groups<sup>56</sup>; hence, Islam came to be a major factor in shaping the daily interaction of the parties with the general public throughout the country. Sectarianism separated the "enlightened" sector of society, which perceived independence in a way that threatened the vested interests of sectarian leaders.<sup>57</sup>

### **3.4.Ethnicity and Tribalism in Pre-independent Sudan:**

#### **Definition of ethnicity:**

The concept of ethnicity is one of the most controversial concepts and debate among scholars because of the wide scope of study of this concept, especially after the rise of national ethnic tide since the early nineties, some believe that this concept is used to describe a minority or a particular subgroup or tribe, while others believe that this concept is different from other concepts and must be scientifically accurate in its use.

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<sup>54</sup> Sudanese nationalist movement founded in 1924. Ali Abd al-Latif founded the White Flag League when the Sudan was governed by the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium Agreement.

<sup>55</sup> Niblock, 1980

<sup>56</sup> Niblock, 1980

<sup>57</sup> Al- Zain, 1996

The word ethnicity derives from the Greek word *ethnos*, which means pagan or barbarian non-civilized.<sup>58</sup> This term was used in Greek civilization to denote peoples that did not adopt the city state system. The term "ethnicity" is a relatively recent term. The term was used only after the 1950s by anthropologists and sociologists, so that this concept is related to contemporary social and political phenomena to study the problems of the state in the face of ethnocentric pluralism and conflict that may transcend the borders of the state to become matters of concern to the international community, such as the Kurdish and Armenian questions.

Many academics define ethnicity as "a group of individuals who reside in a certain geographical area and share several characteristics such as language, customs, religion, and race." This is what the Syrian professor, Burhan Ghalioun, agrees with in his talk about ethnic identity: he defines it as "a group of sub-populations or relatively small groups found within a larger society, this community binds its members, or unites them with ethnic ties such as culture, religion and language"<sup>59</sup>. Although Burhan Ghalioun wanted to show us that an ethnicity is a group of individuals who share some characteristics, his definition is scientifically inaccurate when it tried to subjugate the ethnic group to the numerical criterion when it considered it a relatively small population living in a larger society, the definition of ethnicity, in this case, becomes the same as the definition of minority.

John Stack argues that ethnicity is "a group of individuals who share common characteristics such as race, kinship, religion, language, customs, and territory"<sup>60</sup>. Antony Smith considers ethnicity to be the primary gateway to identity, based on six main elements: name, history, culture, territory, solidarity among individuals.<sup>61</sup>

Through these definitions, several main points can constitute the concept of ethnicity:

- The concept of ethnicity refers to a social identity, where ethnicity is the way in which individuals view themselves and others.
- Each ethnic group has certain cultural practices and cultural characteristics that it wants to preserve.
- Certain ethnic existence does not deny the existence of clear distinctions within the ethnic sub-groups.

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<sup>58</sup> Williams, 2001

<sup>59</sup> Ghalioun, 1979

<sup>60</sup> Stack, 1999

<sup>61</sup> Smith, 1987

There are many concepts that overlap with the concept of ethnicity in a way that creates a complex network of concepts that fall within the framework of identity. The most prominent of these concepts are race, tribalism, nationalism, nation, and minority. What matters to us here is to determine the difference between ethnicity and tribalism.

### **Definition of tribalism:**

The term tribe, derived from the Latin *tribus*, refers to a group of persons forming a community and claiming descent from a common ancestor.<sup>62</sup> Tribalism can be defined as a group of individuals residing in a particular geographical area, characterized by certain characteristics such as kinship, culture, joint solidarity, tribal organization.<sup>63</sup> Most studies consider that the main difference between tribe and ethnicity lies in the following:

- In terms of the field: Ethnicity is more extensive than the tribe. It includes a group of tribes.
- In terms of the nature of the meaning: tribe is a term with a political connotation contrary to ethnicity, which its meaning carries a more social and cultural dimension.

### **Tribalism in Sudan:**

As in most of the third world countries, tribal structure is an anthropological and sociological reality in Sudan. The condominium rule in Sudan didn't create tribalism. It has existed before. In fact, the so-called Sudan today (the Eastern Sudan and part of the Central Sudan) consists of many kingdoms and tribes:

#### **The Funj Sultanate (1504-1821)**

It also called the kingdom of Sinnar and the Blue Sultanate. Its capital was the city of Sinnar which dominates the Gezira and the Nile valley regions of the modern Sudan.

#### **The Beja tribes in the Eastern Sudan**

They live between the Atbara River and the Red Sea.

#### **The Kingdom of Kurdofan**

In Kurdofan there were two kingdoms: The kingdom of Tegali in the south and the Musabaat kingdom in the north and its capital was Al-Ubayyid city.

#### **Darfur Sultanate (1660-1874)**

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<sup>62</sup> Gregory, 2017

<sup>63</sup> [www.encyclopedia.com](http://www.encyclopedia.com)

Its capital was at El- Fasher, it existed from Waddai in the west till the borders of Kordofan and Bahr el-Ghazal in the south.

### **The Southern Nilotic tribes**

The most important tribes are the Dinka, Newir, and Sheluk. These tribes were not part from the Eastern Sudan, but after the Turco- Egyptian invasion they became part of Sudan.

All these political and regional entities started to compose into one entity after 1821 and form what is known by modern-day Sudan.<sup>64</sup>

The traditional tribal leaders of Northern Sudan had been in a position until the outbreak of the Mahdist movement in 1881.

### **Tribalism in the Mahdiyya era (1881-1898)**

It's with the emergence of the Mahdist movement when the sense of Sudanese nationalism appeared for the first time. Although it was a religious movement in content, it unified all the Sudanese from the north and even the southern tribes against the Turco-Egyptian regime. The Mahdi gathered Muslims in Sudan over the claim that Turkish rulers were not good Muslims and they were not applying the real Islam.<sup>65</sup>

"It is significant that in all his proclamations and circulars, there is hardly any direct political propaganda. He denounces not the injustice, oppression or corruption of the "Turks" as government officials, but their lack of faith, and improper observances as Muslims. It was bad religious and not bad government, that was intolerable and that must be overthrown. He followed that the new state he sent to erect on the ruin of the old would be a theocracy, in which government and society would be governed by religious, and in which he himself be the supreme spiritual and secular ruler".<sup>66</sup>

One of the reasons why the southern tribes supported the Mahdi had to do with the religion too. The Mahdi (*Maadi* in Dinka) was a recipient of the spirit of Dengdit, one of the Dinka's prophets from the sky. Of course there are other reasons why the Dinka joined the Mahdist campaign; one of these reasons was because the Ansar's Leader had promised the Dinka protection from slave trade to discover later, after the Islamic state's brutality and savagery in the pursuit of slaves stunned them that the Mahdiest and the Turkish government were the same.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Gaddal, 1992: 172

<sup>65</sup> Gaddal, 1992: 172

<sup>66</sup> Abushouk, The Ideology of the Expected MahdÊ in Muslim History: The Case of the Sudandese Mahdiyya, 1881-1898, Pakistan Journal of History and Culture, Vol.XXX, No.1, 2009

<sup>67</sup> Gaddal, 1992: 198

Some other scholars and historians mention different reasons for the outbreak of the Mahdist revolution but they all agreed that the brutality and injustice of the Turkish rulers was the main reason.<sup>68</sup>

The Mahdiyya confirmed the organization of much contemporary Sudan as a unit controlled by a central state, but this didn't mean that there was a single, clearly "Sudanese" identity that had emerged. Its only means that it's the first time this central structure of rule gained a local identity.<sup>69</sup> "While this was a state that established rule by Sudanese as a result of victory over non-Sudanese rulers, there was nothing in this ideology or organization of the Mahdist state that could be considered national."<sup>70</sup> The Mahdist state wasn't based on a national identity; it was based on an Islamic tradition of rule. One of the achievements of the Mahdist regime is the elimination of the tribalism. It considered the first attempt of central authority to be subjected to all the Sudanese of all tribes and sects, and its era didn't witness tribal conflicts.

### **Tribalism and ethnicity in the condominium regime (1899-1955)**

The tribal organization was subjected to the beating by the Mahdist state which left it weak; adding to that, it remained far from the central administrative influence throughout the two periods of the British rule thus it was difficult for the British rulers to reintroduce it to the administration. Some areas required re-identified tribal leaders for them. Al-Gaddal mentioned how the British officers were working hard to look for tribes haven't existed anymore and for tribal leaders has become forgotten, all that in order to recreate an obsolete social system.<sup>71</sup>

It is noteworthy that while the Mahdia revolution succeeded in dissolving tribalism, the colonial administration re-established it in the Sudanese society. In 1900, the Baggara tribes ordered to leave Aljazira region and return to Kordofan. Similarly, groups of Dinka and Shilluk tribes were encouraged to return to the south. Tribal resettlement policy continued for several years in order to reshape the tribal map and to dismantle the social mix created by the Mahdist state. The British administration followed this approach to serve its colonial interests.<sup>72</sup> The tribal organization was returned by the British and the British identified the leaders from the tribes as significant forces. The British administrators were working hard to revive it in attempt to re-

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<sup>68</sup> Gadaal, 2002

<sup>69</sup> Levtzion, Pouwels, 2000

<sup>70</sup> ibid

<sup>71</sup> Gaddal, 1992

<sup>72</sup> Yousif Takana, Sudanese nationalities and tribal affiliation of parties, Alayam Newspaper, No. 9170 29, June 2008

establish the tribal system in a form of the so-called “native administration”<sup>73</sup> in which these tribes’ notables were given recognition. The condominium regime employed tribalism to inherit and install the administration in Sudan. The country was at first ruled directly through a British bureaucracy up to the point where Milner compiled a report in 1921 advising Sudan’s colonial administration to shift to indirect rule.<sup>74</sup> This new form of relation between the government and the tribal system led to the emergence of tribal leaders who were ruling on the behalf of the British as an influential part of the elite group. However, “tribalism had penetrated all sites of power. It continued to influence politics even after the native administration system was dissolved, and in recent years it rivals sectarianism for predominance.”<sup>75</sup>

The ethnicity item is used by the British to separate the south from the north. In 1886, they divided Sudan between the largest Arab north and the mostly black south. There has long been tension because of the southern tribes like the Dinka, Nuer, and Shilluk - had historically experienced slave trade by northern traders.<sup>76</sup> It should be noted that even before the condominium regime there were conflicts from time to time between the tribes over cattle and land, but they also intermarried and traded with each other.<sup>77</sup>

The British did not have the forces to occupy the southern Sudan for its huge distances and it also feared that the newly emerging anti- British sentiments in the north, encouraged by Egyptian factions, might spread into the south, and from there into British East Africa territory Wenger claims that the British at this time planned to attach southern Sudan to the British colonial East Africa<sup>78</sup>. To achieve that, they created the so-called a “southern policy” in 1902. The Southern Policy stated that "the policy of the government in southern Sudan is to build up a series of self-contained tribal units with structure and organization based upon indigenous customs, traditions, and beliefs"<sup>79</sup>. These southern tribal units were to be completely separated from the rest of the country. Under the Policy, northern officials were transferred out of the south, trading permits

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid:346

<sup>74</sup> AbouShouk, 2004: 279

<sup>75</sup> Al-Zain, 1996

<sup>76</sup> Conn Hallinan, 2014

<sup>77</sup> Suliman, 2000, Gadaal, 1992

<sup>78</sup> Wenger ,1991

<sup>79</sup> Albino, 1970

for northerners were withdrawn, and speaking Arabic and even wearing of Arabic dresses were discouraged<sup>80</sup>.

Another factor of tensions between the north and the south was the underdevelopment of the south compared to the north. While the north developed economically and socially and became increasingly integrated with the wider Arab world culturally and politically, the south was steadily isolated; its economic and social progress retarded and its political and cultural development channeled to serve the British strategy of “divide and rule”.

To sum up, we can say that while the British applied the “southern policy” in the south, they played the card of the “tribes” and also the “sect” in the north to dominate. The British colonization has preserved in one way or another, the “sect”, the “tribal” and the “ethnicity” element as an essential component of the political system.<sup>81</sup>

It is in the context of colonialism, the process of state formation that salient ‘social and economic problems found, if not their origin, then certainly their expression in terms of the modern state’<sup>82</sup>. It’s during the condominium role that Sudan has witnessed a radical transformation in terms of political and social structure.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Albino, 1970; Eprile, 1974; Deng, 1978; Holt and Daly, 1979; Chapin Metz, 1992

<sup>81</sup> El-Zain,1996

<sup>82</sup> Khalid 1990, p. 39

<sup>83</sup> Ayers, Vol. 37, No. 124 (June 2010), pp. 153-171

## **4. POLITICAL PARTIES AND THE DILEMMA OF NATION-BUILDING IN POST-INDEPENDENT SUDAN (1956- NOW)**

While the previous chapter traces the factors that shaped the emergence of the Sudanese political parties in the period pre-independence which in turn had its impacts on nation-building in Sudan, this chapter illustrates the role played by these parties, either the ruling bloc or the opposition since the independence in nation-building in Sudan.

The chapter begins with a review of the governments that have ruled Sudan since independence then it continues with an analysis of the role of the most influential parties in Sudan in the nation-building process.

### **4.1.A Brief Introduction to the Sudanese Governments Since 1956:**

After more than half a century of the independence in 1956, Sudan has not been able to establish a stable regime of governance yet. The interaction between historical, social and political heritage has brought the country into a vicious circle that is a result of what Mamdani calls it “the dialectic of tradition and modernity”<sup>84</sup>. For more than 50 years, Sudan has been in a spiral of a democratic regime followed by a military coup which is overthrown by a popular revolution to bring in a democratic regime in which it finds the same fate and so on.

#### **The first democracy (1956-1968):**

Sudan gained independence in 1956. After independence, Ali al-Mirghani, the leader of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) met with Abdulrahman al-Mahdi, the leader of the Umma and the two parties formed the first coalition government to begin Sudan’s first democracy. The late Ismail Azhari was the prime minister. He was succeeded by Abdullah Khalil on July 7, 1956. However, the first democratic regime witnessed several governments, all of which fell due to political obstinacy, lack of adherence to the rules of the parliamentary democratic system, and the lack of trust between the leaders of the political parties.<sup>85</sup>

#### **The first military regime (1958-1964):**

General Ibrahim Abboud led a coup and formed a military junta in which he became President of Sudan and the Sudanese Prime Minister for the period (1958-1964). In October 1964, a revolution broke out against the regime's policies and calling for a return to democratic rule.

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<sup>84</sup> Mamdani, 2009: 61

<sup>85</sup> Collins, 2008

Abboud responded to the pressure of the masses by handing over power to the Transitional Government.<sup>86</sup>

### **The second democracy (1964-1969):**

After the end of Abboud's regime on 21/10/1964 by a popular revolution, a transitional government headed by Sir al-Khatim Khalifa has formed and it lasted for six months as the parties began to prepare for the upcoming elections to complete the transitional phase, which ended in April 1965. Neither of the two parties won the majority that could form the government alone, so the two parties (the Umma and the UDP parties) formed a coalition government from inside the parliament, in which they agreed to give the Umma Party the premiership.

The war in the south, the general political situation, the economic deterioration, the conflicts among parties and the political opposition all paved the way for coups once again and the second democratic regime was overthrown in 1969.

### **The Second military regime (1969 - 1985):**

The parties that formed the democratic regime after October 1964 revolution were weak, fragile and were so busy competing with each other until it was ousted by the Nimeiri coup d'état on 25/5/1969. The first statements of the new rulers focused on the failure of the multi-party democratic experiment in Sudan to solve Sudan's three problems: development, the south, and the constitution. Yet since the early 1980s, Sudan had suffered from an economic crisis and had become highly dependent on foreign creditors, adding to that, the war that re-erupted again in the south. All that was the fuel of April 1985's popular uprising which put an end to the second military regime and paved the way for the third democratic regime in Sudan that come after a transitional military council which functioned as overseer of a civilian government and of preparations for a democratic election.<sup>87</sup>

### **The Third Democracy (1986-1989):**

The Armed Forces, under the leadership of Gen. Abdel Rahman Siwar Al-Dahab, took the side of the people and supported the uprising. A military Council was appointed until a caretaker government was formed. After consultations, the Secretary-General of the Doctors Association,

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<sup>86</sup> Collins, 2008

<sup>87</sup> Thayer, 2003

Al-Jazouli Dafa'allah was chosen as Prime Minister of a transitional government tasked with paving the way for general elections to be contested by all Sudanese political parties.

Elections which were held in April 1986 resulted in the formation of a coalition government between the Umma and the Democratic Unionist Parties which won the majority of votes, thus heralding the beginning of the so-called "the third democratic government" with Sadiq Al-Mahdi the prime minister. In less than five years, this government was overthrown by a military faction headed by Omer al-Bashir in 1989<sup>88</sup>.

#### **The third military regime (1989–present):**

On June 30, 1989, a military coup put an end to the parliamentary regime led by Sadeq el-Mahdi, the prime minister since 1986. The leaders of the two main parties, the Umma Party and the Unionist Democratic Party (UDP), trade unionists, intellectuals and journalists were all arrested. In the weeks that followed, the links between the coup leaders and the leaders of the National Islamic Front (NIF) became more and more obvious.

When the National Islamic Front (NIF) came to power in 1989, the character of the state changed. The NIF transformed Sudan by plundering the wealth of the country, repressing civil society, imposing a narrow and intolerant Islamic dogmatism on every facet of state and society, and alienating Sudan's Arab and African neighbors. This Islamic state waged a vicious war against its own people, not only in the north-south conflict but also across northern Sudan.<sup>89</sup>

#### **4.2. Political parties and Nation-building in Post-independent Sudan:**

The contests between the two rival sectarian parties have been the centre of politics in the pre-independent Sudan. The situation has changed after the independence and so the nature of conflicts due to the emergence of other political parties which have contradictory ideas to the traditional sectarian parties. According to Mamdani, "the debate on socioeconomic change in independent Sudan was framed by a contest between tradition and modernity."<sup>90</sup> The tradition represented in the two sectarian parties dominated the national movement; the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and the Umma party. On the other hand, the champions of modernity were both secular and religious in orientation: the former were mainly linked to the Communist party

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<sup>88</sup> Collins, 2008

<sup>89</sup> Bassil, 2013: 3-4

<sup>90</sup> Mamdani, 2009: 209

and the latter to an amalgam of Islamic groups from which later emerged the “fundamentalist “ National Islamic Front and its much smaller “anti-fundamentalist” rival, the Republican Brothers. Mamdani adds: “it is this rivalry between the defender of “tradition” and the champions of “modernity” - and not the electoral contest between the two mass parties, the NUP and Umma- that drove the seesaw of Sudanese politics between civilian parliamentary politics and a series of military-led coups d’état.”<sup>91</sup>

The following section illuminates the role of the most influential political parties in the nation-building in post-independent Sudan.

#### **4.2.1. Traditional Sectarian Parties and Nation-building in Post-independent Sudan:**

After the end of the condominium regime and the declaration of Independence in January 1956, it was required from the sectarian parties to step down from power, considering that a new era of the history of Sudan has begun and that the national government must be free from sub-national identities, like sectarianism tribalism and regionalism. Political parties should gear the state's identity formation and nation-building in a way that reflects and celebrates its ethnocultural diversity rather than consecrate the sub-identities.

All the parliamentary democratic governments in Sudan: the first democracy (1956-1968), the second democracy (1964-1969), and the third democracy (1986-1989) were inevitably led by one of the two main sectarian parties, UNP or Umma, championing “tradition”.

In the first democracy, a coalition government is formed between the Umma party and the People's Democratic Party (PDP). For the first time, leaders of the two rival parties met in a historic meeting in 1956 known as” the meeting of the two Sayyids”. It was a great event that the masses went out into the streets chanting " Khatmiyya and Ansar one row will not collapse". This happened after a long history of fraught relations that has its roots back to the Mahdiyya era. Instead of cooperating in resolving outstanding national issues and forming nation-building strategies, the government has been preoccupied with disagreement among them. Although he was the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Government the two Sayyids, Mahjoub described the meeting of the two Sayyids in his book " *Democracy on Trial: Reflections on Arab and African*

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid: 210

*Politics* "one of the biggest disasters in Sudan given the crisis that followed as we shall see in the next pages."<sup>92</sup>

Abdullah Khalil (leader of the Umma Party) who succeeded Azhari in July 1956 was not in agreement with his deputy Ali Abd al-Rahman al-Amin (leader of the People's Democratic Party). The two had an incompatibility in foreign policy, particularly in the relationship with Egypt during the Nasserist Party's regime, where Ali was attracted to Egypt and Abdullah Khalil was not. To put an end to their disputes, the government was handed over to Ibrahim Abboud in November 1958.<sup>93</sup>

There were two crucial issues at independence that the ruling parties at the time did not resolve: the first one was the constitution. On the eve of independence, a transitional constitution indicated of making Sudan a secular republic where Muslim and non-Muslims found their place in matters of personal status. But as early as 1956 an appeal for a complete Islamisation of the law has been launched. The following year, the two sectarian parties voted for a parliamentary Islamic republic in which *shari'a* law was the sole source of the law.<sup>94</sup>

The second issue was the southern problem. The southern problem appeared as a result of the failure of Sudanese political regime in national integration. The first bow to the southerners was a year before the independence when they demanded a federal system as a basis for the governing of their three provinces: the Upper Nile, Bahar al-Ghazal, and Equatorial. The northerners promised them if they voted in the parliament for the independence their demand for federalism would be considered. Afterward, it turned out that the Prime Minister Al-Azhari had made all the attractive promises, including the consideration of federation only in order to gain southerners support in the parliament.<sup>95</sup> Mahgoub later revealed that they only deceived the southerners to keep them happy and vote for independence. It was the first but not the last act of betrayal and dishonoring of agreements by the northerners.

Although a mutiny of southerner Sudanese soldiers emerged against the government of Sudan just a year before the independence in 1955, the government has not taken serious steps to resolve this problem. On the contrary, southerners have never been represented in the regimes

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<sup>92</sup> Mahgoub, 1974

<sup>93</sup> Ruay, 1994

<sup>94</sup> Fluehr-Lobban, 1981: 76

<sup>95</sup> de Waal, 2007

apart from the northern-led political parties they had joined. In the reality, the transitional constitution adopted was distinctly a unitary one, with no significant concessions to southern aspirations for local autonomy<sup>96</sup>.

However, the economic, political and racial discrimination played a major part in driving southern Sudanese away from the Sudanese state and nation. The alienation of the south Sudanese within Sudan since the independence added fuel to the fire in the southern problem. When the trend of Sudanisation had become clear, only six administrative positions in the whole country were won by southerners. Azhari had asserted that no southerner was fit to occupy a post above assistant district commissioner.<sup>97</sup> Socially, the southerners Sudanese were at the bottom of the pyramid of social stratification in Sudan.

The crisis of nation-building has worsened in the second democracy (1964-1969); following the 1964 popular revolution, regional movements started to emerge on the scene as well, demanding recognized their roles in political, economic and cultural affairs. Claims were asserted by the Beja Congress (BC) from Eastern Sudan, Nuba Mountain (NMU) in the western part of the country, and Darfur Development Front (DDF). The DDF aim was to create a multiracial movement to channel people's political, ethical, social and religious aspiration into the right direction in the Sudanese and Darfur Province in particular. The issue of regional or decentralized government is no longer in only a southern demand; it has become a requirement in various regions of Sudan. It was therefore clear that Sudan's political stability and national unity required a response to the demand for regional governance. One of the recommendations of the Round-Table Conference on March 16-25, 1965 was the inclusion of regional governance in the Constitution. The parties of Sano, the South Front, the Beja Congress and the Nuba Mountains Union have united on this demand. However, ruling parties and influential newspapers considered regional demands of local autonomy to be racist. The Regional Council of the racial assembly rejected in a meeting of all parties included the northern parties, the idea of regional governance and dropped the idea of regional governance or decentralization of the 1968 draft constitution.<sup>98</sup> In the Constituent Assembly, which was mandated by Sudan's permanent constitution in July 1965, only one southerner deputy was elected; the late Joseph Garang, nominated by the Communist Party in the alumni circles. After the elections were held,

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<sup>96</sup> Ole Fraham, 2014

<sup>97</sup> Daly, 1991: 383

<sup>98</sup> Zambakari, 2014

the Constituent Assembly formed a committee to draft a permanent constitution, followed by the appointment of the government to a technical committee of jurists for drafting it in 1967. However, the committee did not complete its efforts because of the conflicts and partisan divisions which led to the dissolution of the constitution committee. In 1968, the constitution was suspended until the election of a new Constituent Assembly in May 1968. The ruling parties tended not only to ignore the demands of the south and the remote regions of the regional government in the draft constitution but the draft constitution also included texts devoted to centralization; “Sudan is a united and sovereign state on all the territories within its international borders”<sup>99</sup> without reference to regional decentralization or self-rule. In addition, it states that “the State consolidates the spirit of unity and solidarity among all Sudanese and eliminates racial and regional prejudices”.

Describing the demands of these regions as "racial prejudices" is evidence of the failure of the ruling parties to absorb the most serious problem facing national unity in Sudan. The idea of decentralizing governance in its various forms of federalism or regional rule is a strong guarantee of national unity, not vice versa. Because the large and multi-ethnic, religious and cultural countries such as Sudan, in order to continue united, the state must recognize this pluralism so that the region does not feel excluded because of the dominance of the centre, but the ruling parties after October Revolution of 1964 saw the tightening of the central grip as a safety valve for national unity, despite the fact that the south was waging a war due to the political and economic grievances. The fighting erupted again in 1966 because of the neglect of the decisions of the Commission of the Twelve.<sup>100</sup> The other regions sounded the alarm, and this bell has developed into wars similar to the war of the south since the eighties till now. The disrespect of the ruling parties to the demands of the regions that are now known as the marginalized territories represents a great deficiency in the concept of "national unity" in these parties.

The third democracy (1986-1989) was no better than its predecessors in dealing with the national issues. The biggest obstacle to the consolidation of democracy and national integration was the effects of the Nimeiri's era, which was preceded by the laws of September 1983, known for restricting freedoms and discriminating citizens on a religious basis, leading to renewed civil war in the south. After the elections, Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi declared a reform program

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<sup>99</sup> The Constitution of Sudan: Article 8

<sup>100</sup> Woodward, 1990

aimed at "eradicating the May's regime ruins" and that "the laws of September are into the dustbin of history!"<sup>101</sup>.

High hopes were held by the Sudanese people that the new government will fulfill their aspirations; particularly that Sadig al-Mahdi -the leader of the Umma party and the Ansar sect- was an experienced politician who assumed the Premiership before. Therefore people thought that he might be able to lead the country on the right track. But the government failed to realize what the people were longing for to the point that they felt let down by the failure of the democratic regimes. Sadiq failed to reach a peace agreement with the SPLA and he also refused to revoke the Islamic laws that he himself had previously labeled as un-Islamic and that he realized that it constituted a major stumbling block in relations between north and south. Sadiq al-Mahdi criticized for his ineffective government and for his unwillingness to abolish Shari'a laws, promulgated in by Nimeiri.

Sadiq al-Mahdi in the third democracy could have prevented the secession of the south if he had abolished September laws<sup>102</sup> and guaranteed a participation of the southerners in the government. But the lack of clear political vision led him to an alliance with the Islamists, which had exacerbated the state crisis.

Furthermore, the sectarian parties that ruled in the democratic periods did not hesitate to use tribalism to serve their political interests. One of the most unforgivable mistakes made by 1985-89 democratic regime is the consolidation and endorsement of tribal militias in the country. The notorious massacre of 1987, carried out by the armed Baggara militia who killed and burned to death hundreds of Dinka and too many captivity, is a case in point.<sup>103</sup> Mahgoub had admitted in his memoirs that the government gave arms to tribal chiefs in the south to allegedly defend themselves against the Anya-Nya fighters<sup>104</sup>.

However, it should be noted that arming civilians to fight on behalf of government have been practiced by many Sudanese governments.

When analyzing the functions and performance of these parties in the Society we find that they are alienated from the society and its needs. The rural regions of Sudan were less well

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<sup>101</sup> Al-Ayyam, July 7-8, 1986

<sup>102</sup> Laws implemented in Sudan from 1983 to 1985 under Jafar al-Numayri as part of his Islamization program

<sup>103</sup> Elfatih Osman, Sudanese Alternative Discourses (SAD), Vol. 2 , UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA - AFRICAN STUDIES CENTER

<sup>104</sup> Mahgoub,1974

represented in national politics. The Umma and the People Democratic Party were able to dominate the votes of northern rural areas, but they showed comparatively little interest in regional development, while simultaneously stifling efforts to form regional parties. They remember them only when they need to collect their votes. They have never tried to raise the political consciousness among these groups because they wanted to keep the situation as it for if the sectarian loyalty has been replaced by national loyalty they would lose their privileges and authorities.

Sudan suffered from weaknesses in the leadership of political parties, as well as weaknesses in the formation of the parties themselves. The heads of the Ansar and the Khatmiyya were spiritual leaders and placed themselves above the hurly-burly of parliamentary politics; they didn't stand for elections.<sup>105</sup> Yet they were the major influences in the two largest parties, especially at election times when it was the spiritual movements that delivered the vote. Successive prime ministers were thus overshadowed by the patrons of the parties they represented. Such were the ingredients of what soon became a very centralized system in a huge and diverse country, one that suffered poor communications and great regional disparities in economic development.<sup>106</sup>

Because of the sectarian structure of the Sudanese party, Sudan has lacked good democratic practice in all the periods of the short democratic regime. The sectarian parties have been attacking the democratic approach, and at some junctures, they are approaching the creation of what can be described as a civilian dictatorship.

The traditional sectarian parties have failed the nation-building in Sudan and wasted a great chance during their ruling period in the democratic regimes. Irrespective of their shared Arab-Islamic orientation, the power struggle between the two Islamic sectarian parties, the Umma Party and the Democratic Unionists Party (DUP) was conducted on sectarian lines and not on broader national issues of development, governance and national identity. With their narrow sectarian vision and their inability to think outside of their personal interests, they led the country to the state of failure.

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<sup>105</sup> Ryle, 2012

<sup>106</sup> R. Ryle, 2011, p. 87

#### 4.2.2. Modernist parties and nation-building in post-independent Sudan:

Mamdani argues that military factions were invariably allied with one or another group of modernist intellectuals.<sup>107</sup> According to him; “this group consists of modern intellectuals who were both secular and religious in orientation: the secular mainly linked to the Communist party whereas the religious to an amalgam of Islamist groups from which later emerged the “fundamentalist” National Islamic Front and its much smaller “antifundamentalist” rival, the Republican Brothers. Ambitious members of the intelligentsia saw themselves as representing “modern” enclaves in a sea of “tradition”. Both parties weren’t integrated into the sectarian style political system thus neither of them had any significant followings other than students and the modern professional groups. Mamdani states that:

(They could not conceive of coming to power with the support of the majority. In their eyes, “democracy” was less a modern or revolutionary movement than the means by which traditionalists stayed in power. When they thought of breaking with “tradition,” they could think of doing so only by a violent overthrow of the existing power, a fact that inevitably led them to seek allies in the army. This was true of both secular and religious intellectuals, those who belonged to the Communist Party and those who formed the National Islamic Front.)<sup>108</sup>

This section examines the role of the most influential modernist parties: the National Islamist Front (NIF) and the Sudanese Communist party (SCP) in nation-building.

The Sudanese Communist party was considered one of the strongest communist parties in Africa and the Middle East but still had no mass following. The party has emerged since the 1940s it had a great experience in the clandestine organization. It was an elitist’s movement whose support came from the urban intelligentsia in the towns of central northern Sudan. Contrastingly, the Muslim Brotherhood formed in 1944, had its support from the intelligentsia of the rural areas. The party led by Hassan Alturabi and it begun as students’ organization. It advocated a formally Islamic constitution for Sudan.

Both were based on the young intelligentsia and on a complete rejection of the “sectarian” nature of the Sudanese politics. Neither of them ever achieved mass following comparable to the sectarian parties, but both of them, with their highly educated and vocal leadership, succeeded in playing important roles on the sideline of the Sudanese political scene and, at times, assumed a

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<sup>107</sup> Mamdani, 2009 ,p.210

<sup>108</sup> Ibid

leading role as a result of their “anti-sectarian” position. The two most notable examples of this role were provided under military regime. First, in 1964 both the Muslim Brothers and the Communists played a leading role in the Professionals’ Front which heralded the downfall of Ibrahim ‘Abboud’s military regime. The Professionals’ Front embodied intelligentsia elites and educated from several backgrounds.

The weakness of the democratic regimes gave the chance to the military to seize the power. The 1958 coup brought General Ibrahim Abboud to power. His coup was, in fact, a takeover of power by then-Prime Minister Abdullah Khalil. Abboud formed a military junta in which he became President of Sudan and the Sudanese Prime Minister for the period (1958-1964). When Abboud took power, he suspended the constitution, abolished parliament and political party activity, and gave local councils more power and freedom of action. His coup was blessed by religious leaders at the time: Sayyid Abdul Rahman al-Mahdi, leader of al-Ansar, and Ali al-Mirghani of the Khatmiyya. The Sudanese Communist party was the only party to oppose the new regime.<sup>109</sup>

The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, headed by General Abboud and the membership of senior military personnel, failed to understand the true causes of the southern problem and continued the same policies of the first democratic regime that preceded it. When General Abboud came to power, the conflicts between the Sudanese army and the Anyana intensified and the civil war spread all over the south Sudan. The response of 1958 junta was a top-down nation-building project:” Arabization and Islamization”. The junta declared that there must be “a single language and a single religion for a single country”<sup>110</sup> As Mamdani Said “at the most elementary level, state-enforced Arabization simply turned Britain’s southern policy of 1922-47 upside down”<sup>111</sup>. Arabic became the official language in government offices and schools. Koranic teaching schools and intermediate Islamic institutes were established in the south. Sunday was replaced with Friday as a weekly holiday in the south. State funds were advanced to build mosques and chiefs were pressured to convert to Islam. The promulgation of the Christian missionary law which prohibited Christian evangelization was declared in the south and ended with the eviction of missionaries.<sup>112</sup> In October 1964, a revolution broke out against the regime's

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<sup>109</sup> Harir, 1994

<sup>110</sup> Mamdani, 2009: 217

<sup>111</sup> *ibid*, P.217

<sup>112</sup> Poggo, 2008:92

policies and calling for a return to democratic rule. Abboud responded to the pressure of the masses to hand over power to the Transitional Government.

The rule of Abboud aimed at narrowing the party and political work and the parties had been dissolved. Hence the Sudanese Communist Party was forced underground but continued its opposition activities through civil disobedience despite harsh repression.

The response to Abboud's policies was a general strike that paralyzed Khartoum. A variety of civic organizations- the Sudan Workers Trade Union Federation (SWTUF); the professionals' associations of lawyers, medical doctors, and engineers; and the University of Khartoum Students Union- came together under the banner of the "Professionals' Front" and declared this strike.<sup>113</sup> The SCP joined with these groups opposed to the government of Ibrahim Abboud and played a key role in toppling the government in the 1964 October Revolution and joining the subsequent transitional government. The 1964 October Revolution brought down the Abboud military regime. Hence, the transitional government's first cabinet included a number of SCP members. After the 1965 elections, the party was declared illegal again, mainly because of pressure from the Islamist but continued opposition activities from its strongholds in the universities and labor unions.

The Nimeiri regime (1969–1985) has two achievements to its credit: the Addis Ababa Agreement of 1972, which ended the first phase of the war in the south, and the abolishment of the native administration system inherited from the colonial time.<sup>114</sup>

The first steps of the Nimeiri government to settle the problem of Southern Sudan were the June 9, 1969 declaration, which was based on recognition of the differences between North and South Sudan, and the right of southerners to develop their culture and traditions. The government negotiated with the southerners until the two sides reached the so-called agreement of Addis Ababa. Nimeiri brought peace back to Sudan by signing Addis Ababa' Agreement of 1972 with the leader of Anyana Joseph Lagu. This removed the major cause of the civil war and for eleven years the southern Sudan enjoyed a status of semi-autonomy and self rule.

Shortly after taking over power in 1969, Nimeiri abolished the system of native administration. This was done in response to the demands made by the technocrats who were advising Nimeiri at the time and in accordance with the reorganization of local government. Since independence in

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<sup>113</sup> Mamdani, 2009: 218

<sup>114</sup> *ibid* :223

1956, the continuity of the system of Native Administration, introduced by the British, has been a problem.<sup>115</sup> The demands to eradicate it came mostly from the educated people. Their rejection of this system comes from the fact that it is a colonial legacy first of all and secondly because it encourages tribalism and leads to the concentration of power in some families. Thirdly, it enforces the ethnic favoritism.<sup>116</sup>

The Nimeiri regime provided a Sudanese version of militant nationalism in postcolonial Africa. Uncompromisingly modernist, the regime was determined to chart a course free of the sectarian parties. Its belabored efforts to achieve this end took the regime through three different alliances: the first with the communist party, the second with the southern rebel movement and the third with the Islamist.<sup>117</sup>

In 1969, the SCP gained their strongest political position when Colonel Numeiri takeover the state. The May Revolution led by the new leader Jafar Nimeiri initially followed a leftist-style politics. Although the SCP remained officially dissolved, some of its members entered into the government and thus the communist party played important roles in the new military government in a way seemed that Sudan was heading for a secular-nationalist policy with leftist leanings. The immediate goals of the new regime were, first, to destroy political sectarianism, and, second, to work out an acceptable solution to the southern problem which had involved the country in a civil war since 1955. The first task was tackled brutally on 27 March 1970 when Nimeiri ordered the bombardment of Aba Island, the Ansar stronghold in the White Nile, where thousands of Ansar were killed or wounded. Sayyid al-Hadi al-Mahdi, their spiritual leader, was killed in a later skirmish, while al-Sadiq al-Mahdi, the leader of the Ansar-dominated Umma party, was exiled to Egypt. But the following years were to prove that the destruction of the Ansar had failed completely.<sup>118</sup>

In 1971 Nimeri accused the SCP of complicity in an abortive coup d'état led by SCP members Hashim El Atta. Mahjoub, the Minister of Southern Affairs Joseph Garang, labor union leader Shafia El Sheikh and many others were executed. Due to this wave of repression, the party was destroyed and once again forced to continue its opposition activities underground.

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<sup>115</sup> Woodward – 2013: 148

<sup>116</sup> Ibid, 2013: 148

<sup>117</sup> Ibid

<sup>118</sup> Sudan's Nimeiri: More problems and fewer options, National Foreign Assessment Center, 1981

However, with the collapse of the Sudanese Communist Party, the Muslim Brotherhood emerged as the most advocate of an alternative system.<sup>119</sup> Nimeiri's changed his policy after this coup and turned to Islam, allied with the Muslim Brotherhood and incorporated the philosophies of Hassan Turabi (leader of the Islamic movement; the Muslims brotherhood) to buttress their Arab nationalism, legitimate the seizure of power, and burdens his base of support. Each reinforced his Islamic identity and image<sup>120</sup>. The foundation of the Sudanese Islamic Movement was influenced by Hassan al-Banna, the initiator of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood. Al-Banna's ideology was carried back to Sudan by Sudanese who had been studying in Egypt at the time and who began propagating this ideology in Sudanese universities once they returned home. Yet, the Islamic Movement would soon open up to other influence. During its first four decades, it was heavily coined by the political work of Hassan al-Turabi, the leading ideologist in the process of renewing the movement in line with different political and social situations in Sudan. The Movement succeeded in mobilizing the Sudanese public to call for an Islamic constitution and Islamic rule,"Sharia". Gaining courage from this experience, the Sudanese Islamic Movement began working towards gaining wider social and political influence through organizational work. The Islamic movement has had several names: the Islamic Constitution Front, the Islamic Charter Front, the National Islamic Front, the National Congress Party and its opposing Popular Congress Party after cleavage.<sup>121</sup>

It is during the second phase of his regime when the second largest bow had given to the nation-building in Sudan. In this phase, Nimeiri published *Why the Islamic Way* in which he delineated his "third way" or Islamic alternative to Western capitalism and Soviet Marxism. It happened in 1983 when he imposed *Sharia* law and divided the south into three regions. At the same year and after discovering oil fields in Bentu in the greater Upper Nile region in southern Sudan, Nimari split the southern region into three administration provinces and re-established central control in 1983. Thus, the Anyanya movement moved to Bentiu district claiming that they came to protect southern Sudan's oil field.<sup>122</sup> The mutiny of 1983 united the guerilla groups together into a new military organization; the Sudan people liberation SPLA under the leading of John Garang. The emergence of the SPLM addressed the failures of the Addis Ababa agreement.

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<sup>119</sup> Levtzion and Pouwels, 2000, :174

<sup>120</sup> Collins, 2008

<sup>121</sup> El-Affendi, 1991

<sup>122</sup> Craze, Tubiana, Gramizzi, 2016

On June 30, 1989, the National Islamic Front supported the military officers' under Colonel Omar Hassan El-Bashir to replace the Sadig El- Mahadi government. The NIF's ideology and political programme were implemented by President Bashir and his fellow officers, and Turabi and his colleagues soon became leading powers, until 1999 when the great cleavage happened; The NIF divided in two, Turabi and his followers established a new party, the Popular Congress Party (PCP), whereas Bashir and his disciples remained the National Congress Party (NCP).<sup>123</sup>

The ideology of Omer al-Bashir' regime is founded upon the imposition of the Islamic project on the state and society in accordance with the vision of the national Islamic front NIF which was headed by Hassan Alturabi in the first period.<sup>124</sup>The third biggest bow to nation-building in Sudan was when the military regime of Omer Hassan Al-Bashir (1989- present) seized the power. They have done many things that led to a dilemma of nation-building; they used tribalism as a weapon to strengthen their authority and influence. Building a state on modern foundations requires increasing the value of the institutions and following general and neutral criteria based on efficiency, rule of law and the support of civil society organizations represented in the parties and the unions recognized as public channels to express the national conciseness. The current system of government in Sudan does not adopt the general policies and standards above mentioned, on the contrary, it seeks to weaken the forces of civil society by fighting and narrowing the parties and opening the door to the tribes in interfering in politics and building alliances with them, because since it sized the power in 1989, the regime was feared for its authority from the parties rather than the tribes. The coup attempts by the parties and the pressure exerted by the parties, unions and civil society forces have not left to the system any options but to find themselves in alliance with the tribes. Tribalism has been mobilized and it has not taken it in a phased manner until it has established its authority and then abandoned. It still relies on tribal authority and its policies associated with tribal formations.

In all national issues that require popular mobilization, the Republican Palace has received delegations of tribes that stand on the regime's side. The tribes are competing as a kind of show of strength, prestige, and competition in front of other tribes, no doubt that these tribes were demanding as returned some appointments or quotas (Kota) political representation in the state

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<sup>123</sup> Kodouda, 2016

<sup>124</sup> Warburg , 2003

apparatus. During the crisis related to the war in Darfur, and the criminal court's allegations against the President Omer Al-Bashir related to the crimes against humanity in Darfur, and in all periods leading up to elections and ministerial formations, tribal delegations are a prominent manifestation of national media equipment. It was useful for the regime to gain legitimacy and to show its closeness to the masses and its cohesion with them.<sup>125</sup> The regime did not hesitate to do so in front of the media, without knowing that this leads to distorting his image and fueling conflicts in Sudan. In turbulent areas such as Darfur and the south, the tribe is the state's main instrument for dealing with the situation, bargaining, reconciliation, mediation or repression. In the south, South Kordofan and Blue Nile tribal militias were key tools in the conflict. In Darfur, the government used its armed forces to mobilize tribal tribes by mobilizing Arab tribes and supporting them to counter the insurgency.<sup>126</sup> The recruitment mechanisms for popular defense were based on the tribes. They sent military delegations to certain tribes and asked them for some knights or *Mujahideen*. The *Mujahideen* played a leading role in the civil war in the south.<sup>127</sup>

Tribalism is a natural phenomenon, and it has played a positive role in the past. However, how the tribe is employed determines the extent of harm or benefit of this role. Tribalism has now deviated so that it has been used negatively, which has a great impact on creating gaps and imbalances in the Sudanese society. It created social problems that are difficult to cure. Tribalism in Sudan today is removed from its context and used in other than its purposes, and the focus on it exceeds the required limit, this excess will make the tribe is the source of the new danger to the central government itself. Tribalism had a significant role in feeding the separatist tendency in the south, Have a key role to play in nurturing insurgencies in Darfur and some other regions, especially if the state itself is accused of not being tribal neutrality .

This is because most people will abandon their old parties and mount a wave of tribes, even the intelligentsia because they will find themselves forced to do that so they won't be ostracized by their societies (note the role of Darfur intelligentsia in armed movements).

A transformation in the nature of the state necessitated the retrieval of the 'tribal', not only as a political tool but as a cognitive appropriation necessary for the ongoing process of 'authentication'. The fundamentalist coup d'état of June 1989 did not make economic promises.

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<sup>125</sup> Ali, 1991

<sup>126</sup> Coetzee, 2009

<sup>127</sup> Wolf, 1990

In fact, what made it possible to rule up to now, despite severe economic difficulties, is its ability to shift the public focus from secular development goals to religious and ethnic concerns. The 'tribal' has a place of honor in this re-orientation. In the summer of 1995, the government organized a conference lasting over a month in which tribes and tribal leaders were celebrated as the best Sudanese society has to offer. The conference was part of the 'authentication' process. These policies of the NFP have augmented the crises of national unity and adversely impacted on the social fabric.

Furthermore, during the 1990s and early 2000s, in the name of jihad, the regime trained and sent the youth to the southern front to fight against the SPLA.<sup>128</sup> The southern problem that has affected Sudanese life for decades and ended in secession happened during this regime. The impact of these policies on national integration was obvious, and its impact on the southern national tendency towards secession is what needs to be studied independently.<sup>129</sup> Adding to that; Islam continues to be a factor of disunity rather than unity, making it impossible to create a “modern nation-state “in Sudan.

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<sup>128</sup> Jok, 2001

<sup>129</sup> El Effendi, 1990

## 5. CONCLUSION

In all political systems, political parties carry out various tasks such as political change and political participation, national integration and the development of public policies. Political parties are therefore institutions of civil society that play a prominent role alongside trade unions and associations in influencing citizens and organizing their political perceptions and representation. They contribute to the formation of a political class that governs the country, where the parties have become the necessary path to reach the government's electoral offices.

In Sudan, instead of helping in the nation-building, the political parties caused a dilemma which has affected the whole country. In many newly established states, colonial practices of divide and rule have resulted in ethnically heterogeneous populations. After independence, the Sudanese government inherited a political institution which thrived on dividing the two regions. That would have required an exceptional effort to build a modern nation. However, despite the successive democratic and military regimes, the legacy of colonialism remained as it because the successive Sudanese ruling parties have either failed or are unwilling to re-address the imbalances caused by colonialism in the country.

Moreover, the limited power of the central government since the colonial period has made central authority in modern Sudan dependent on tribal ties in ruling the state. This issue has led to sharp competition between the various political forces in Sudan, which in turn encouraged sectarianism and tribalism in political practices. In the face of unbalanced development coupled with acute societal divisions, any failure of the elite to effectively manage the state automatically leads to multidimensional conflicts and consequences. The vicissitudes of governance in Sudan between military and democratic and the continuation of political instability is a reflection of this socio-economic and religious reality.

Furthermore, most of the political parties claimed a religious background in order to gain legitimacy and thus win the hearts of voters and leaders of different sects and clans. For this reason, political competition in Sudan is not only between parties with Islamic leanings but also among Islamic parties themselves.

In the period from 1942 to 1956, the number of political parties exceeded 20 parties, most of which were small gatherings without any popular support, nor a clear visions and concrete

political programs. That clearly reflects the weakness of collective action and the absence of the spirit of democracy.

In addition, the unbalanced development between regions and between the different is one of the elements of conflicts in Sudan. The colonial economy has focused only on development projects in central Sudan and in the national capital Khartoum. This unbalanced pattern of development has not been changed but has been reinforced throughout the post-colonial period.

However, after examining the relationship between the political parties and the process of nation-building in Sudan we found that the political crisis in Sudanese politics is a crisis of idea and vision. The political parties in Sudan do not have clear programs that fulfill all these legitimate aspirations of the Sudanese citizen, who is suffocated by poverty and war. The citizens need no more than to live in safety and well-being; they can't depend on the traditional sectarian parties, which in themselves have been hit by divisions and splits. The one party has split from it many parties of the same name and adheres to the same qualities and slogans.

In the conclusion, we can say that the main cause of the failure of the nation-building of Sudan is the Sudanese political parties who from the beginning have emerged alienated from the community. These parties have committed mistakes that have affected the modern history of Sudan. They established a constitution which doesn't reflect the cultural, ethnic and religious diversity of Sudan. Their attempts to imitate the Arabs or the British made these elites strangers to their environment and culture. The majority of them were antithetical to national unity and progress and more, they were characterized by ethnicity, greed for political power and wealth. These phenomena created unhealthy political rivalry among political parties already formed along ethnic cleavages.

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