DISPLACING DARFUR

PURITY AND DANGER IN SUDAN'S LATEST CIVIL WAR

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TO THE WOMEN
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Table of Contents:

1. Introduction: The Itinerary of the Work 1
Methodological considerations 5
The organisation of the dissertation 9

2. The State of Sudan: A Technology of Violence 12
Al Turkiyya 13
Al Mahdiyya 15
The Anglo-Egyptian Condominium and the creation of a native elite 17
Independence and civil war 18
The Islamist takeover and the path to peace 20
Danger in Darfur 22
The current state 23

3. *Al Naziheen*: A Comprehensive Displacement 26
Purity and Exile 27
Khartoum: A hegemonic topography 28
Al Da'wa al Shamila 31
Al Nazihuun wa Furus al Salam 33

4. The Darfur- Khartoum Axis: Horizontal Danger 37
Darfur, Islam and *al Mahdiyya* 37
Darfur in the state of Sudan 39
Famine 40
Islamism in Darfur 41
Bolad and the *Murahaliin* 43
The Arab Gathering and *The Black Book* 45
"*Khatr!*" Darfur viewed from Khartoum (January – July 2004) 48
The CPA and the timing of the Darfur rebellion 50

5. The Politics of Space: Language and Landscape in Darfur 52
The concept of "*dar*" 53
Drought and the distortion of conceptual geography 55
From spatial to racial: changing the vocabulary of conflict 57
War 58
The *janjaweed* 60
The politics of envy 61
The Wali and the "tribal" conflicts 63
De-localizing the *janjaweed* 65

6. *Torro Borro* vs. *Janjaweed*: Purity and Danger in Kalma Camp 67
Kalma Camp 69
"*Al mo'askar kullo torro borro!*" 70
The May riots 72
Containing Kalma 75
"*Barra kullo janjaweed!*" 77
Egeland escapes 79
Language and locality 80

7. "*Kullina Naziheen...*": Displacement and the Writing of Sudanese History 83
"IDPs": A new category emerges 85
War of Visions 88
Technologies of language 89
Shared spaces 90
Everyone and no one 92

8. Conclusion: Placing Darfur 94
History 94
Language 95
Space 95
Comparing categories 96
Purity and Danger 97

1
Introduction:
The Itinerary of the Work

The present work focuses on the recent crisis in Darfur. Over the past three years, a civil war has erupted in this western most region of Sudan, so far claiming between 100.000 and 400.000 lives and displacing as many as two million.[1] From being an area little known to outsiders, the region of Darfur has attracted massive international attention as the scale of the crisis became known and recognized as one of the biggest humanitarian catastrophes in the world. The major problem in Darfur and reason for the large scale international concern is the internal displacement in the region as a result of the war. Displacement means fleeing one's areas of origin, yet remaining within the borders of one's nation state.

My aim in this work is to understand displacement in Darfur as more than simply a result of a sudden outburst of violence that has forced people to flee from their villages of origin and caused a large-scale humanitarian catastrophe. As I shall show, there are deep historical roots of the conflict and conspicuous structural oppositions inherent in the state of Sudan that account for at least part of the problem; thus displacement in Darfur must be understood as more than a physical expulsion from a certain geographical locality. I will argue that "displacement" is at once physical, political and semantic, a comprehensive removal and reduction of a portion of the nation's citizens from all spheres of influence by a state maintaining an exclusionist self image and relying on violence to uphold this image.

As Darfur emerged on the map of conflicts and took over from the North-South civil war as the main problem in Sudan, it both revealed many differences

[1] Numbers accounting for the dead and displaced vary but a variety of sources, such as Human Rights Watch, put the estimated number of internally displaced close to two million. See Human Rights Watch Briefing Paper. *Targeting the Fur: Mass Killings in Darfur*, January 21, 2005. Available at http://www.hrw.org

between the two conflicts and highlighted some notable structural similarities. As commented upon by Sudan analyst John Ryle, Darfur "is agonizingly familiar to observers of Sudan during the past two decades"[2]. Analytically, my point of departure in the present thesis is thus a comprehension of the conflict in Darfur in the light of the history of conflicts in Sudan as a whole with an emphasis on the conflicts as a response to a particular structure and manifestation of the Sudanese state, as I shall show in chapter 2.

On a different level, the work also reflects a personal process of discovery, responding to a changing historical situation. I initially set out to undertake fieldwork in camps for the internally displaced in the Greater Khartoum area on the invitation of a local NGO. I was interested in the opportunities and possibilities of return to the areas of origin in the South for the displaced Southerners in the wake of a final peace between North and South Sudan, ending a 22 year civil war, the longest running conflict on the African continent. I arrived in Khartoum in early January 2004, the days of the signing of the Wealth Sharing Agreement between the two major parties of the conflict, the rebel movement SPLA and the Sudanese government, a crucial step towards the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) that was finalized and signed by the two parties exactly a year later. There was a general atmosphere of optimism in the capital Khartoum in the beginning of 2004. However, rumours of a new crisis and another emerging and devastating civil war in the country were increasingly voiced in the spring of 2004. The atrocities in the Western region of Darfur could no longer be ignored in the capital in spite of a tightly censored press. "Celebrating" the 10th anniversary of the Rwanda genocide, voices from the international community reached Khartoum comparing the war in Darfur to Rwanda. The focus in the international community's engagement shifted from the peace process between North and South to the rumours of a "genocide" and an unprecedented catastrophe unfolding in Darfur. The very level of violence demanded attention and analytical investigation and forced me to rethink my initial project.

My response was to seek access to Darfur, and together with a group of doctors from a local NGO I visited camps of displaced people in western Darfur in the borderland towards Chad in May-June of 2004; the immediate purpose was mainly to take stock of the situation and distribute primary aid to the hunger-stricken

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[2] John Ryle: *Disaster in Darfur*. New York Review of Books, August 12th, 2004

populations of the camps. On another level, my experiences definitively compelled me to shift my commitment of understanding from the Greater Khartoum area and the possibilities of return to long lost homelands in South Sudan to the eruption of the Darfur civil war and the unfolding displacement of hundreds of thousands of Darfurians. The outcome of this shift of attention is presented in this work.

As Darfur attracted increased international attention and condemnation and was finally labelled "genocide" by the then US secretary of state, Colin Powell[3], huge funds were allocated to organisations that wanted to start up humanitarian and development programmes in the area. As one of the few Westerners who had some recent experience with the situation in Darfur, I was invited to take up the post as Field Coordinator for a major Washington based NGO. Thus, following my first 6 months spent (mainly) in Khartoum, I spent ten months in Southern Darfur, from November 2004 to August 2005, where I was responsible for implementing development programmes among the displaced. Work was concentrated in the largest camp for displaced people in Darfur, Kalma Camp, 14 kilometres east of Nyala, capital of South Darfur State. I participated in my first interagency briefing at the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Nyala, South Darfur on November 2nd 2004. That date, too, was crucial. It was the day where the Sudanese government violated all international agreements and forcibly removed an entire camp for the displaced on the outskirts of Nyala, bulldozing it out of existence and using rubber bullets and teargas to remove the population. The sense of frustration and powerlessness felt by the representatives of international agencies who had the protection and assistance of the displaced in Darfur on the top of their agenda was evident. I myself was now a representative of this category of international workers and the November 2nd briefing made it very clear how the relation between the agencies and the state of Sudan was (and is) a strained balance act between assistance, cooperation and mutual distrust.

Although I became absorbed in very practical work among the displaced people of Darfur, I was still trying to understand both Darfur and my work in the camp for the displaced in connection with the structural features of the larger Sudanese state. The theoretical framework adapted for the study of displaced persons in Greater Khartoum still seemed relevant in spite of the changed physical location of

[3] "Powell declares genocide in Sudan". BBC News, September 9th, 2004. http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/3641820.stm

the fieldwork. The Darfur crisis itself revealed (and enforced and accelerated) the disruptive forces that are inherent in the structure of the Sudanese state itself. This will be substantiated in the course of my thesis. The contradictions are evident even on the micro level, at closer inspection one can see the technologies of the state manifest in the everyday experiences of life in a camp for the displaced in Darfur. My two different approaches to studying the State of Sudan – originally focusing on the displaced populations of Greater Khartoum and the history of the state of Sudan, and my later practical experience with the displaced populations of Darfur – provided a combined image of a particular way of acting by the Sudanese state and the ability of this state to displace large portions of its citizens from political influence. The *structural* similarity of the state of Sudan's responses to different challenges transcends the *political* ideology of the same state as this thesis will show. In other words, the behaviour of the state of Sudan towards anyone questioning its legitimacy and opposing it in rebellion has remained the same through both time and place and in that sense the crisis in Darfur is – in spite of its unprecedented scale in this particular region of Sudan – a case of history repeating itself.

The history of fighting for political inclusion in the Sudanese State by the peripheral regions of the country is as long the history of independent Sudan itself. Upon leaving Sudan I had the chance to participate in The Rift Valley Institute's Sudan course in Rumbek, South Sudan. The capital of South Sudan and heartland of the SPLA rebel leader John Garang and his Dinka tribe, Rumbek has been a contested battleground in the North- South civil war and an important symbol of Southern aspirations for both independence from and inclusion in political decision-making in the capital Khartoum. I landed in Rumbek on July 9th, 2005, the day when John Garang was sworn in as Vice President of Sudan in Khartoum. A general sense of optimism was evident among senior members and officers in the SPLA in Rumbek. Twenty two years of organised rebellion against Khartoum had borne fruit as a Southerner had finally penetrated the political machinery of the exclusionist Sudanese state and become an accepted figure in the government. Three weeks later it was over. John Garang died in a helicopter crash in Uganda on July 31st 2005. I was back in Khartoum when the news of Garang's death was made official and the streets of the capital erupted in violent protest. Although the crash was an accident, the fundamental distrust of the many Southerners in Khartoum towards the government was obvious. Refusing to believe it was anything but a deliberate murder by agents of

the state, uncoordinated riots spread throughout the capital in first days of August 2005, Southerners attacking and looting Arab merchants in the bazars in Omdurman, one of the three towns making up Greater Khartoum. The unrest, leaving hundreds of people dead, reiterated both the distrust of the Southerners towards the state and the fundamental inequalities of the capital's citizenry and accentuated the violent nature of political protest in Sudan. This time violent protest did not emerge in the South or in Darfur but in the heart of the state itself. The patterns of resistance and response in the state of Sudan were evident in the capital. I was witnessing a condensed image of how the state of Sudan works as I broke the curfew imposed in the wake of the riots to smuggle myself to the airport and find my way home.

Methodological considerations

The dissertation marks the end of a Master's Programme in Modern Middle Eastern Studies. Looking at the historical developments of the past two centuries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, the structures of both continuity and change are similar in many countries and in the words of Albert Hourani the Middle East "has a sufficient unity of historical experience to enable it to be an intelligible unit of study" (Hourani 1993:2). A central component of the shared (recent) historical experience in the Arab Middle East is the emergence of independent nation states. Features that have marked the post-colonial Arab nation-state are the autocratic regimes and oppressive political machinery of the state. An account of the consolidation of power in a state in the Modern Middle East that has been a source of inspiration for this thesis is Charles Tripp's *A History of Iraq* (Tripp 2000). His overall historical account of the process of the emergence of Iraq as an independent nation state led him to conclude:

> "Throughout this process, two important features emerge. The first is the power of the state to act as a centre of gravity, gradually drawing people into a field of distinctively *Iraqi* politics. This is connected to the second feature – the narratives used by Iraqis to understand and to justify their political engagement over time. "Narratives" here refer to the accounts people give of themselves and others in relation to the state, as well as their efforts to make the history of the state conform to their self-image. It is thus an imaginative

> construct and an organizing principle, embodied in the way power is in fact handled by those in a position of command. For them the goal has been to ensure that their account – and their account alone – of Iraq should triumph and become both the prism through which all Iraqis must see their country and the measure to judge its rulers." (Tripp 2000:3)

It becomes evident that there are many similarities between Sudan and Iraq when analysing both narratives of the state and the consolidation of political power in the hands of a narrow political elite deriving from a very small segment of the population in these two ethnically very diverse nations. Subsequently, in the present study the use of the word "state narrative" in Sudan will reflect the definition given by Charles Tripp above. Another common feature between Sudan and Iraq is the extensive use of violence to uphold a particular and exclusive vision of the state resulting in the expulsion of people contradicting the narrative of the state. When Saddam Hussein lost the Gulf War in the early 1990s, large populations of Iraqis in both North and South rose in revolt in a moment of political turmoil and a seemingly weakened Iraqi state. Saddam Hussein fought back with extensive counterinsurgency campaigns in both the South and in Kurdistan. The campaigns against the Kurds sent waves of displaced people towards the northern borders of Iran and Turkey. The Kurds were denied access to Turkey and the international community was faced with as many as one million people stranded within the borders of the same nation state that expelled them. The UN adopted a resolution that served as the basis for the relief operation aimed at the internally displaced Kurds, the "Operation Provide Comfort" (OPC) in 1991. This was one of the first cases of internally displaced people being recognised as a distinct group with special needs and concerns (UN OCHA 2003:17). In the case of Iraq and, as we shall see Sudan, there is a connection between the emergence of a specific national narrative and the emergence of internal displacement as a demographical and humanitarian problem that the international community cannot ignore. As much as a state narrative has the ability to draw its citizen into a specific orbit, the state has the ability of discarding, expelling and displacing those of its citizens that do not immediately correspond to (or rebel against) the machinery and narratives of the central state. By focusing on the internally displaced persons, a relatively new category in the vocabulary of the international community, in the tradition of research on the Arab state in Modern Middle Eastern Studies I wish to

bring to the fore this increasing demographical and humanitarian problem and make it an integral part of the study of states in the Modern Middle East.

This thesis is also the result of two periods of fieldwork in Sudan and an ambition to combine empirical observations and a lived experience in communities in Sudan with a wider theoretical framework. The process of translating social experience in a given community to scholarly knowledge is at the heart of the discipline of anthropology. The anthropological method is based on "participant observation". One seeks to engage oneself in the social life of a community and at the same time one must stand back at times to get the overview necessary to validate observations and theoretically frame empirical experience in order to place experience in a wider academic argument. This approach has enriched the regional theoretical framework of the present thesis. Making sense of one's observations and including one's field notes, interviews, meeting notes and general impressions and integrating them into a coherent academic product is the challenge facing the anthropologists. Anthropological knowledge is produced far from the field; this thesis is also written far from Sudan. The delayed production of knowledge, from field experience to academic argument, is an anthropological condition, the case of "being there, writing here" (Geertz 1989). Making (anthropological) sense is thus in some ways a retrospective activity. This thesis is retrospective on the historical level as it seeks to account for a specific history of a country, but it is also retrospective on a personal level as notes taken and interviews conducted have re-emerged months later and thousands of miles away. In order to succeed in translating my specific social experience to scholarly knowledge I realised that I needed to acquaint myself with anthropological theories and methodologies.

In the process of analysing the material I have, therefore, reverted to both earlier and newer anthropological accounts of various regions, peoples and problems in Sudan in general and Darfur in particular. In addition to regional ethnography, the classic work by Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (1966), also serves as a major inspiration for the more analytical points of the succeeding chapters, not only in its own right, but also by way of the influential work by Liisa Malkki, *Purity and Exile* (1995), directly addressing the problem of refugees (here in the wake of the Rwanda-Burundi civil war) reusing Douglas' classic theory in the study of displacement in "the national order of things" (Malkki 1995: 4). In brief, Douglas' book *Purity and Danger* claims that the concern for purity is a central conceptual and social concern in

every society and community making the unclean a source of danger. Pollution is thus a challenge to any given community at a very fundamental level. Adopting this approach, Malkki studies how refugees challenge the purity of a nation state. With the outset in Middle Eastern Studies and the exclusionist workings of the state in much of the Arab world it was tempting to look at internal displacement as polluting and challenging the purity of the national narrative of the state. As the following will show, the notions of purity and danger in the analysis of the war in Darfur proves useful at many levels. It can be used when one regards the position of Darfur *vis a vis* the centre of the state in Sudan, and when one analyses the patterns of atrocities committed on a very local level in the course of the war in Darfur. It is also a useful analytical point of departure moving in to a camp for the displaced and seeing how the displaced people categorize back and define their own social status.

In addition to the anthropological approach of this thesis I have also undertaken a more semantic investigation into the categories that have framed and pushed history forward. I have wanted to broaden the understanding of the driving forces of history in Sudan, by an analysis of the vocabularies of identification and exclusion. It becomes apparent that Arabic – the language of the Qur'an – in itself is a major agent in history. The Islamic revolution of 1989 brought to power a regime that sought to use Islamic and Qu'ranic references to legitimise both its coming to power and its subsequent political actions. The study of Qu'ranic and Islamic terms adapted in the political language of the Sudanese state thus becomes an important component for a satisfactory analysis of the workings of the Sudanese state. In the comprehensive Islamist narrative of the current state, the Qu'ran and the reference to the rightly guided community of believers is "both the prism through which all Sudanese must see their country and the measure used to judge its rulers" to re-phrase Charles Tripp. The connection between state and state narrative, in the case of Sudan after 1989, is thus a case of studying the coexistence of political ambition and religious reference. As Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatori have argued in their book *Muslim Politics*, in the case of Muslim societies,

> "persuasion is largely an act of speech, and the symbolic and persuasive dimension to politics has become virtually synonymous with the politics of language. It is now commonplace to argue that language is a social and political practice, and the way we use language is intimately related to how we

> construct communal identities and promote and defend our aspirations (for example, Shapiro 1984:8; Habermas 1981: 397). Never neutral in itself, language may be used to affirm or reaffirm hierarchies of power." (Eickelman and Piscatori 1996: 11).

Thus, I will argue, a satisfactory study of the tools used by the state to uphold political power must be accompanied by a deeper semantic comprehension of a certain vocabulary employed by the state in question for a full understanding of the state narrative. This thesis seeks to analyse, from a reading of Arabic sources written by both a minister and governor of the state of Sudan and the protagonists of opposition to the same state, how language may be used and certain vocabularies employed on a very subtle level to persuade the citizens of either the just nature of the state or of the legitimacy of, and need for, political opposition to the manifestations of the state. If language is essential in construction of communal identities, the study of displacement in Darfur must also be a semantic study of the categories of language from which people become displaced. It is therefore necessary to undertake an investigation of the semantics of space and the categories of language associated with different geographical localities in Darfur to understand the connection between language and landscape and thus the connection between semantic and physical displacement.

Methodologically, this thesis is a fusion of theoretical approaches from Middle Eastern Studies – i.e. the focus on the political manifestations and histories of a nation state in a particular region – and the anthropological approach relying on participant observation in a given community, combined with a philological approach reading Arabic texts and understanding the persuasive dimension of political vocabularies. Thus, it is a study of the displacement in Darfur on three levels – the political, the social and the semantic.

The organisation of the dissertation

Chapter 2, *The State of Sudan: A Technology of Violence*, accounts for the history of the state of Sudan. It is a reading of the history of Sudan through the prism of the technologies used to govern and control its vast territories. The chapter looks at the structural features of the state of Sudan that have repeated themselves in spite of the

changed governments and various political histories. The particular structure of coexisting expansion, inclusion and expulsion serves as an explanation of the violent manifestations of the state of Sudan and the basis for subsequent treatments of the state in the thesis.

Chapter 3, *Al Naziheen: A Comprehensive Displacement*, looks at internal displacement in the state of Sudan. It offers an analysis of the displaced, *Al Naziheen* in Arabic, in the capital Khartoum. This demographic phenomenon in the capital of the state of Sudan is viewed as a result of the specific structure of the state as detailed in chapter 2. The position of the internally displaced in Khartoum reflects a certain "hegemonic topography" of both the capital and the narrative of the state of Sudan. The language used by the Sudanese government in its explanation of the phenomenon of displacement and the present Islamist regime's policies towards the displaced are closely intertwined as will be shown in that Qu'ranic references and religious connotations are consciously evoked to explain displacement.

In chapter 4, *The Darfur- Khartoum Axis: Horizontal Danger*, focus moves from the structure of the Sudanese state and the displacement in the capital to the special relation between Darfur and Khartoum. As I will show, Darfur is a peripheral region of the state that has been neglected and marginalised sharing the history of other marginal areas of the Sudanese state. At the same time, however, Darfur also holds a prominent place in the history of Sudan and is in terms of its religious and political culture in many ways similar to the capital. The region of Darfur, although at present challenging the state of Sudan's legitimacy through violent protest, has historically given important contributions to the coming to power of various regimes in Khartoum. Thus, the Darfur-Khartoum axis is a horizontal axis of both compliance and challenge, both places identifying themselves with the other and dependent on the other's existence. At other times, such as in the present war, Darfur and Khartoum are vehemently opposed to the each other. The ambiguous state both of marginalisation and proximity accounts in part for both the reasons for rebellion and the swiftness and totality of the response of the state ultimately leading to displacement on a massive scale.

In chapter 5, *The Politics of Space: Language and Landscape in Darfur*, a closer look will be given at the local geographical orders of Darfur and how the co-existence of the nomadic and sedentary population segments has been negotiated in a particular semantic sense, the different locations having specific moral connotations

and vocabularies of identification. The current war and the violations of space are understood within the local geographical and moral vocabularies. It is the argument that the patterns of displacement seen throughout Darfur are a result not only of a central state forcing its citizens out of a particular lived space but also out of a vocabulary of identification with a certain space.

Chapter 6,*"Torro Borro" vs. "Janjaweed": Purity and Danger in Kalma Camp,* takes the analysis of the perceptions of state and space to micro level. By accounting for the history of the biggest camp for internally displaced persons in Darfur, the Kalma Camp, in the time of my employment as Field Coordinator, I present a history of a highly contested space in the vocabulary of both the state and the displaced people themselves. Here, the notions of purity and danger are used to explain both the danger to the purity of the state that the camp represents and the dangers faced by the displaced venturing outside and the emerging sense of purity associated with being displaced.

The analyses of displacement on the various levels in Darfur and Sudan leads to chapter 7, *"Kullina naziheen...": Displacement and the writing of Sudanese History*, where the history of Sudan and Darfur is re-visited as a result of the findings in the thesis. The chapter seeks to rethink Sudanese historiography in the light of the Darfur crisis and offer new approaches to the study of both the state of Sudan and the phenomenon of internal displacement.

The concluding chapter 8, *Conclusion: Placing Darfur*, seeks to place Darfur in three categories that have thematically marked the thesis. These are history, language and space. By offering examples of how Darfur is perceived on different levels the thesis ends by suggesting future approaches to the study of Darfur that can replace the region in more than one sense.

The itinerary of personal experience in North Sudan, Darfur and South Sudan, that informs this work, was not planned upon departure. Although I could not have predicted neither my journey of discovery nor the disaster in Darfur, the following historical account of the state of Sudan seeks to understand the mechanisms of this particular state and to investigate how the state has acted in different times and in different places. As I will show in the following chapter, the structure and response of the state to anyone challenging its power has been unaltered from the Turco- Egyptian conquest of the territory that makes up Sudan in the first half of the 19th century to the present day displacement of Darfur.

2

The State of Sudan:
A Technology of Violence

This chapter is meant as an introduction to the State of Sudan. It seeks to give a historical account of the state from Mohammed Ali's conquest of the country in 1820 to the present day Islamist military dictatorship. It is not an extensive political history of the past 185 years but rather a reading of Sudanese history with a special emphasis on the structure of *the state* and the relation between the capital Khartoum and the marginal regions of the country. It is the argument that the mechanisms introduced to secure the survival of the province of Sudan with the conquest of the country by Mohammed Ali's Turco- Egyptian forces have largely been maintained and continue to form both the base of the independent Sudanese nation state's policies to the marginal areas and the core of the state's perception of itself.

Sudan's political history is turbulent and marked by seemingly endless civil wars and the country has been the stage for a series of very different political experiments in both colonial and post-colonial times. Sudan has had a myriad of political actors, various alliances between political parties and geographical regions. The fragmented nature of the country means that it can be difficult to fully comprehend the dynamics of Sudanese politics and clearly account for who was deciding what at various moments in history. Although the agendas of the different political actors may at times seem blurred, contradictory and confusing in light of the often chaotic and violent political realities of Sudan, there seems to be a major and permanent motivation behind the political alliances, namely the attempt at obtaining or holding on to power through the structure of the *state* of Sudan. A reading of the political history of Sudan is thus a reading of competing ideas and ideologies that have each fought for a comprehensive and uniform *control* of the state of Sudan,

where obtaining and securing political power transcends inherent differences in the ethnic, linguistic and cultural composition of the population. The state of Sudan, as the following will show, is a two-way centrifugal power that has the ability both to draw the geographical peripheries of the country into a particular *Sudanese* space, as defined by the centre, and at the same time to expel the same peripheries from influence on Sudanese national politics.

British historian Justin Willis has characterized the Sudanese State, both past and present, as "authoritarian, ambitious and weak". In order to ensure its survival and control of the Sudanese space, the state has had to rely on extraction for the purchase of a specific "technology of violence"[4]. The technology of violence is the reliance on military equipment and armed, organized manpower for the control of the space of Sudan. Thus the state of Sudan is a hierarchical, authoritarian structure, ambitious as it seeks to maintain control over its vast territories and weak as various peripheral regions have challenged the state's claims to the whole of the space of Sudan. In the following analysis I will keep the notions of authority, ambition and weakness at play and seek to account for the technology of violence as the prime instrument of the Sudanese state and the multitude of manifestations of this particular technology, the latest seen in the civil war in Darfur.

Al Turkiyya

The geographical space of present day Sudan is a result of the inclusion of Sudan into the Egyptian Empire that began under the Ottoman viceroy Mohammed Ali (1769-1849). When the Turco- Egyptian[5] forces invaded Sudan in 1820-21 it was to secure slaves, ivory and other commodities necessary to sustain the position and power of the political elite in Cairo; the country was thus invaded because it was important for the survival of the Egyptian Empire. Khartoum was established on the junction of the Blue and White Nile rivers as a centre for the coordination of the slave trade and the further transport of slaves and natural resources to the Empire. The capital of Sudan, initially an outpost and later the centre of its own political orbit, was thus the capital

[4] Lecture given at The Rift Valley Institute Sudan Course, Rumbek, South Sudan, July 2005

[5] The specific term "Turco-Egyptian" refers to the unique historical situation of Mohammed Ali who ruled Egypt as viceroy of the Ottoman Empire. Although his rule was autonomous from Istanbul and he himself was of Albanian origin I will use the term "Turco- Egyptian" throughout the present study as it is the common term used by scholars. On the same note the period of British rule through Egyptian administrators from 1898 to 1956 is referred to as the "Anglo-Egyptian" era.

of an *extractive* colonial state based on the systematic exploitation of the peripheries of the country, mainly the fertile South.

Control of such a vast region was an ambitious task that required a heavily militarized force of Turco - Egyptian soldiers who relied on brutality and the rule of arms as a basis for the operation of the country. Sudan was home to a range of independent kingdoms in both North and South who either succumbed to the new rulers or led rebellions against the foreign invaders. Collectively, these areas were known as "*bilad al Sudan"*, "land of the blacks", in classical Arab geography. It is beyond the scope of this study to give a detailed description of Sudan previous to the invasion by the Turco - Egyptians. However, it is important to note that the forces administering Sudan had no interest in educating the newly found subjects or converting them religiously or politically, making them loyal to the ideas of Mohammed Ali's modern Egypt. There was no *mission civilisatrice* behind the Egyptian colonial endeavours in the Sudan. The colonizers were themselves foreigners in a foreign land and the subjects and slaves of the Sudan remained a diffuse lot who served only a practical purpose. Although the invading forces were a mixture of both Albanians, Turks, Moroccans and Egyptian peasants, an "extraordinarily varied composition" (Holt and Daly 1998: 43) with a political centre in Egypt, the Sudanese themselves refer to this period in history as "*ayyam al Turkiyya*", colloquial Arabic for "the days of the Turks" or simply "*al Turkiyya*". The simplification of the other by both the ruler and ruled, "Turks" and "Slaves", was a reciprocal phenomenon.

The Turco- Egyptian colony of Sudan reached its apex under Khedive Isma'el (1830 -1895), who ruled from 1863 to 1881. During this period, the state of Sudan expanded to its present borders. The slave trade was gradually becoming a more and more unpopular ingredient in modern colonial schemes and Isma'el made the struggle against slave traders one of his primary policies. The 1860s saw a large emigration of Arab merchants southwards into Southern Sudan, which became a trading frontier. The Arabs were collectively referred to as "*Jallaba*", named after their traditional clothing of the same name. Although Isma'el officially rallied against slave raiding he was to a very large degree dependent on the taxations and revenues brought in from the slave trade and thus headed, in the words of Justin Willis, a "contradictory

expansion" [6] where many of the new policies adopted from modern, Western approaches to colonialism were an echo of former policies. And because liberated slaves in Khartoum most often had no other job opportunities and possibilities to return to their areas of origin they were easy recruits for the Sudanese army who could use the soldiers to expand and secure the control of the state. Although liberated they remained subjects to the same mechanisms of extraction for the sake of expansion that had characterized the slave raiding state.

Another feature which is characteristic for the operation of the state of Sudan is the reliance on foreign governors to guard the expanding territory. Under the Turco-Egyptian empire as a means to suppress the slave trade and secure control of the marginal regions of the country, governors from Britain, Austria and other European powers were appointed by the khedive. The state remained ambitious in its expansionist policies and relied on agents of foreign powers to represent the state in the periphery, the state itself thus weak in its central control of the vast territories.

Al Mahdiyya

The invading Turco- Egyptian forces had no intellectual design for the area of Sudan and did not impose any new models for social co- existence among its subjects. The diverse Sudanese peoples continued to live in very isolated communities and cultivated a variety of religious beliefs. Since the Middle Ages, Muslim sufi sheikhs had migrated to the North of the country establishing themselves as leaders of rapidly growing sufi brotherhoods or *turuq.* The version of Islam practiced throughout Northern Sudan to this day is heavily imbedded in the sufi tradition of saint worshipping. Central in the Sudanese sufi tradition is the belief that the sheikh is blessed directly from Allah with a variety of extraordinary powers. He has obtained these powers or has been born with them either because of descend from other holy men and ultimately the prophet Muhammad or from intense meditation and prayer reaching a higher level of understanding of the words of Allah. The isolation of the Sudanese communities and the extensive presence of holy men meant that the sheikhs could become very powerful local leaders whose sphere of influence and control reached beyond the religious domain.

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[6] Lecture given at The Rift Valley Institute Sudan Course, Rumbek, South Sudan, July 2005

One such holy man was Muhammad Ahmad ibn Abdallah who in 1881 started a campaign informing notables, government officials and community leaders that he was the expected Mahdi, chosen directly from God to restore the rightly guided religious community and end oppression and corruption. The tradition of the Expected Mahdi (*al Mahdi al Muntazar*), a millenarian, Messianic figure has had many different manifestations in Islamic dynastic history, an analysis of which is beyond the scope of this study. In the vocabulary of political science, the Mahdi in Sudan headed an "indigenous politico-religious movement" (Lesch 1998: 28) that would have major influence on subsequent definitions of Sudanese national identity.

The Mahdi started a successful campaign of rebellion against the Turco-Egyptian forces. Although armed with only primitive weaponry against the imperial war machine of the Turco-Egyptians, he and his followers succeeded against the odds at conquering most of Sudan and finally Khartoum, killing the British Governor General Gordon in 1885. He based his capital in Omdurman, next to Khartoum. The Mahdi himself died shortly after the successful conquest of the capital and the establishment of the just, pious and independent Sudan. With the establishment of the *Khalifa,* the just society based on the early community of the prophet Muhammad, the political control was in the hands of his followers, the *Ansar*. Sudan was now led by an independent national movement that was both an anti- colonial independence movement and a result of a unique culture of religious mobilisation. The gathering of various tribes under the flag of the *Mahdiyya* continues to inform key perceptions of independence in Sudanese nationalist imaginations. The state of Sudan was reinvented along religious lines. An important feature of the Mahdiyya is the use of the *jihadiyya* soldiers. Originally the *jihadiyya* soldiers were former slaves who had received training by the Turco-Egyptian army and served as regular troops. The Mahdi's army managed to integrate these elements in their own order, now as *jihad*[7]-waging warriors and thus repeated the pattern of systematic use of extraction for the sake of expansion. This time the slave armies rallied behind a cry for national independence in religious terms though they themselves remained subjects to an alien order. Although reinvented as an independent state free of former colonisers, the structures of the relation between the rulers and the ruled of the *Turkiyya* remained

[7] Jihad is a central term in much political Islamic rhetoric often meaning holy war for the defense of the territory of the Muslims.

the same and the technology of expansive political violence for the maintenance of political control of was repeated.

The Anglo Egyptian Condominium and the creation of a native elite

The *Mahdiyya* was replaced by a new colonial experiment that, like the *Turkiyya*, officially was a joint venture between two powers. The decision by Britain to engage itself colonially in the Sudan is both a result of events taking place in Egypt and an ambition to control the source of the White Nile and extend Britain's East African spheres of influence. Britain had invaded Egypt in 1882 and set out to conquer Sudan from there. Officially, the British wanted to restore Egyptian control over the Sudan and established a dual British- Egyptian rule known as the "Anglo-Egyptian Condominium", through the signing of the Condominium Agreement in 1899. In reality, all major political decisions were made by the British and Sudan became a de facto British colony.

The Sudan was once again governed by a foreign cooperate agreement. At the same time the British sought to create a series of administrative bodies in which the various geographical entities were given rule of their territories, in administrative structures corresponding to indigenous modes of social organization. *The Native Administration* sought to recognize traditional figures of political authority and equip them with corresponding political responsibilities in a new order. Cooperating with "native" modes of organization in the North and South was not the same process and the policies of governing the North and the South followed two distinctively different patterns. In the North, the Condominium relied on sheikhs and developed strong ties with the leading *turuq.* The brotherhoods were allowed to collect *zakat* (religious tithes) from their communities of followers. The two main brotherhoods were the *Khatmiyya* and the Mahdi's followers and descendants, the *Ansar.* The *Ansar* and *Khatmiyya* gained economically as a result of the cooperation with the foreign power. They cultivated lands and participated in ambitious development schemes in the first quarter of the 20th century. With newly acquired wealth and political recognition the *turuq* organized themselves in political parties. The Mahdi's *Ansar* who had been perceived as a bizarre, Millenarian and murderous movement by the British previous to the conquest were now regarded with respect as protagonists of Sudanese nationalist aspirations and became a well established political entity.

In the South the nature of relations between the Condominium powers and local figures of authority was different. The British administrators had a harder time identifying the local power relations in Southern Sudan. Unlike the North of Sudan, the South consisted of a great variety of independent, non- Muslim kingdoms where indigenous power structures and modes of social organization were more difficult to recognize and direct. It is clear that the British had a different political agenda for the South. They wanted to keep it isolated, seeing it in a larger colonial scheme as more "African" than "Arab" and fit to develop along the lines of neighbouring British East African colonies. Travel between North and South was discouraged and sometimes forbidden and the Southerners did not partake in the same economic development schemes as the Northerners. Historian Douglas Johnson states that *The Native Administration* in the Southern region "tended to discourage, rather than encourage, education in some areas of Southern Sudan" (Johnson 2004:15). By the early 1950s following events in Egypt, Britain decided to grant independence to a country where inequalities and lack of exchange between North and South were main characteristics. The British were keen to leave Sudan quickly and left the political apparatus and the institutional mechanisms of the state in the hand of the Northern elite that it was familiar with and had fostered itself. The Sudan was given independence on January 1st, 1956. And, Johnson notes, "what was negotiated for the South was the transfer of the colonial structure intact from Britain to the northern Sudanese nationalists" (Johnson 2004: 22).

Independence and civil war

Southerners thus rightly feared that independence would be a continuation of the British neglect of the South and lack of political representation in Khartoum. Political scientist Ann Mosely Lesch characterizes the situation in the wake of independence as providing "a clear case of one ethnic group imposing its values and symbols as the country's ethnic nationalism rather than embracing an inclusive territorial nationalism that would encompass the country's diverse peoples" (Lesch 1998:37).

Even before independence Southerners rose in revolt at the new political situation and their "independent" status was seen as a continuation of the marginalization and expulsion from the centre of political decision- making. A series of riots in 1955 marked the beginning of armed revolt and violent clashes between

Northerners and Southerners that has marked Sudanese history ever since. In the North, lack of coordination between the political parties and conflicting ideas of secularism and sectarianism in the political field paved the way for a military coup under general Abboud, who took over power in 1958 and ruled until 1964. Where the two first years of independence had seen a degree of political pluralism and free exchange of ideas (at least for the Northerners) the Abboud regime marked the introduction of another feature that was to become dominant in the history of the state of Sudan: the military dictatorship. Not only did the war against the Southern rebels continue on a more systematic and violent scale, the closure of newspapers, banning of trade unions and associational life in the capital Khartoum also meant that Northerners found themselves in an oppressive political climate and often equally alienated from the political centre as the marginal regions in the South.

What had started as uncoordinated attacks and spontaneous revolts against the North turned into a full-scale war between North and South. The war intensified and Sudan was drawn into the cold war orbit of different foreign powers with various strategic interests in the area. A peace was negotiated under president Numeiri, who came to power in 1969. He was originally inspired by the secular, Pan Arab nationalism of the Egyptian President Nasser. Numeiri himself took over power in a military coup, replacing a civilian government that had ousted the Abboud regime, and clampdowns on all manifestations of political opposition became characteristics of the state under Numeiri. Although a peace was negotiated between North and South in 1972 Numeiri became increasingly authoritarian and exclusive in his policies towards both the South and towards allies in the North. Where he originally had gathered much support for his grand schemes of modernization modelled on socialism and secured support from parties on the left, he increasingly sought political inspiration among a new group that would play an increasing role in Sudanese politics and, like Nasserism had its origins in Egypt: The Muslim Brotherhood. The Muslim Brotherhood was synonymous with the intellectual Hassan al Turabi, who continues to inform and inspire Sudanese politics and has been the most influential individual in the political life of Sudan for the past 25 years. Increasingly inspired by The Muslim Brothers Numeiri, introduced Islamic law in September 1983. The state of Sudan was reinvented as an Islamic state with religion at the centre of all political decision-making.

The members of the sectarian political parties, although devout Muslims themselves and descending from the religious elite, all opposed the idea and staged demonstrations along with unions, doctors, journalists and a range of other fractions and individuals. The military dictatorship and the monolithic version of the national narrative were not altered. Although ideologically reinvented, the structure of the state of Sudan remained the same.

Many Southerners felt increasingly disappointed by the de facto policies of Numeiri's peace. A series of structural changes in the governance of the Southern provinces increased Northern control. News of the Islamisation of the country and Numeiri's clampdown on all kinds of opposition sent shockwaves through the Southern communities. The introduction of *sharia*, Islamic Law, is often heard as an explanation for the resumption of civil war in 1983. "When he introduced *sharia* for the whole country, we knew we were not recognized, we had to go back to fighting"[8]. The southern rebels organized themselves in the SPLA/M, Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement that became synonymous with Colonel John Garang. Where many Southerners had stated that the aims of their fighting was complete autonomy and separation of the North and South, Garang's political vision was a united, pluralistic and multiethnic Sudan based on a secular, socialist model. The divisions between secessionists and unionists in the South was to be a key factor in Southern Sudanese politics that continues to divide many Southern politicians and people in South Sudan.

The Islamist takeover and the path to peace

Efforts to negotiate an end to the full scale war between North and South resumed under Al Sadiq al Mahdi, great grandson of the Mahdi and leader of the *Umma* Party, who had been elected democratically as President in 1986. President Numeiri had failed to address and handle the famine and drought in Western Sudan and had fallen in 1985, as I will return to in chapter 4. The Muslim Brothers had used Islamic banking, a concept imported from Saudi Arabia through the Faisal Bank, plus a range of different civil society organizations, such as Islamic NGOs, to promote Islamist ideas. In 1985 they emerged as the National Islamic Front (NIF) under the rule and guidance of Hassan al Turabi. He had been instrumental in guiding Numeiri on the path to Islamism and had extensive networks of likeminded political Islamists

[8] Interview with former SPLA commanders and soldiers, Rumbek, South Sudan, July 2005

throughout the Arab world but he had survived Numeiri's downfall. He was politically unharmed and NIF emerged as a powerful political entity. Fearing that an approaching peace between John Garang and Al Mahdi would compromise the Islamisation of Sudan Turabi and NIF orchestrated a military coup in June 1989. The new president of Sudan was a military general, Omar al Bashir, who had served in the war against the South and took a new uncompromising stand against the aspirations of Garang and the SPLA. The war against the South was reformulated along clear religious lines, as I will return to in chapter 3. The state of Sudan was now fully controlled by the ideas of Turabi and emerged once again as an uncompromising entity where the ideas of one man set the agenda for the entire space of the nation.

With its radical NIF government, Khartoum became the arena for a series of dissident militant Islamist organizations and individuals who found a haven to train and receive inspiration. Hassan al Turabi invited a series of leading Islamic terrorists from all over the Muslim world to Sudan. Most famous of these was Osama bin Laden who invested much money in infrastructure and agricultural projects and trained his al Qaeda followers in Khartoum. This led to an increasing isolation from both neighboring Arab countries and the international community as Sudan was now recognized as a state sponsoring terrorism.[9]

The Khartoum government quickly declared itself a supporter of the US war on terrorism in the wake of the attacks on New York and Washington on September 11th 2001. It had expelled bin Laden already in 1996 and had worked towards cleaning up its terrorist image. The cooperation with the US changed its position, and the possibilities for assistance by the international community in formulating a final peace in the North- South war were emerging. The war in Sudan had cost as many as two million lives and displaced as many as 4 million people internally in Sudan since 1983. The international community could no longer ignore one of the longest running civil wars in Africa and a permanent humanitarian catastrophe on a very large scale.

In the South, bitter rivalries between perceptions of unity and secession from the North were increasingly modelled along ethnic lines. This became evident in the early 1990s. Seeking to undermine Garang and the Dinka dominated SPLA, the Khartoum government made separate arrangements with Nuer- leader Riek Machar.

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[9] An overview of the terrorist connection and Sudan after September 11th 2001 is given in The International Crisis Group's book: *God, Oil and Country. Changing the logic of war in Sudan*. ICG Africa Report no. 39, Brussels 2002

A full scale South- South war erupted that was to be as fatal for many Southerners as any previous Northern attacks.

Since 2002 the UN, US, EU and a range of individual nations and diplomats have worked intensely on providing a framework for a durable peace in Sudan. On January 9th 2005 the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed by John Garang and Omar al Bashir amidst extensive media coverage and presence of top leaders and diplomats from around the world. The CPA gives a 6 year interim period for South Sudan after which Southerners can vote for unity or secession.

Danger in Darfur

As an end to the longest running civil war in Africa seemed to draw near, rebels in the Western part of Sudan, the vast Darfur region, rose in revolt. What started as a number of isolated raids against government outposts was in fact the latest in a series of increasingly violent clashes between various groups in Darfur and the central government in Khartoum. The historical relation between Darfur and Khartoum and the composition of the rebel movements will be analyzed in detail in chapter 4, but it is important to note that the new violent opposition stated many of the same reasons for revolt as Southerners had done since 1955 as will be discussed later. Neglect of the region and lack of political representation in the central government in Khartoum echoed Southern complaints. It became clear that the rebellion, organized in the SLA (Sudan Liberation Army, not to be mistaken for Garang's S*P*LA) and JEM (Justice and Equality Movement) was not a short lived phenomenon but a significant local force, increasingly armed and drawing new recruits from among dissatisfied Darfurians.

The government responded swiftly and thoroughly to the new dangers in Darfur. By arming loyal Arab militias backed by official government troops and Antonov airplanes, campaigns of systematic destruction were orchestrated to destabilize the bases of the rebels. The counterinsurgency campaign by the government-backed Arab militias, the so-called *janjaweed*, were disproportionately violent and most victims were women, children and elderly who had not had time to flee the villages. The campaign against the rebels has killed as many as 300.000 and displaced as many as two million people in Darfur and sent as up to 200.000 refugees into neighbouring Chad. At the time of writing, May 2006, the area of Darfur has

dissolved into a permanent low intensity civil war where it is difficult to get an overview of the various groupings now fighting each other. Like South Sudan in the early 1990s many rebel groups are fighting in internal rivalries of power and there has been a series of new alliances between Arab militias and rebels, both seemingly fighting government forces. The *janjaweed* roam freely and continue to be a dangerous presence in the face of civilians, many of whom still live in camps for the displaced, return to villages of origin still impossible due to the free roaming bandits and general disintegration and slide into anarchy of the entire region of Darfur.

The current state

As the international community concentrated all its energy on securing the peace deal between SPLA and Khartoum there was a general idea of the marginalized peoples finally getting their say on the political platform. However, the CPA was an agreement between two political leaders, Garang and Bashir. It may have addressed the North-South issue but failed to include all other areas of Sudan that are as unrepresented in the political centre in Khartoum as the Southerners. The rebels chose a time where peace and justice for the South seemed approaching and possible to violently voice the fact that there were other unsolved crises of neglect and oppression in Sudan. The reason that the government-orchestrated crackdown on Darfur could continue and reach a scale of such intensity and magnitude is paradoxically found in the international community's focus on and presence in Sudan. With so much at stake to secure a final comprehensive peace between the North and South no one dared to seriously criticize the Sudanese government's campaigns in Darfur fearing the government would pull out of the negotiations. The government of Sudan knew this very well and assumed it could have free hands to crack down on the Darfur rebels. Initially the government was right. But as the international community remembered the 10th anniversary of Rwanda and the failures to intervene, prominent voices in the UN called Darfur the "world's worst humanitarian catastrophe" and Colin Powell called the Arab campaigns against the Africans of Darfur a "genocide". In the meantime, the CPA had been finalized and Garang was sworn in as Vice President of Sudan on July 9th 2005.

His term as Vice President lasted only 3 weeks. John Garang died in a helicopter crash in Uganda in late July 2005. When news of his death reached

Khartoum on Monday, August 1st 2005, riots broke out. Poor displaced Southerners from the fringes of the capital refused to believe it was an accident, but saw it as a political murder and started to attack symbols of government and loot Arab- owned stores and enterprises. The events of the "Black Monday" caused an official 130 dead in Khartoum although the actual figure is deemed much higher. The Black Monday riots "sum up much of Sudan's new history, a history of the marginalized people of the country that never have obtained political representation and only know violent and oftentimes uncoordinated violent protest against the regime in Khartoum" (Hastrup 2005). The distrust felt by Southerners towards the North lies deeper than any immediate peace agreement and promise of political participation can present.

With Darfur in flames and the icon of Southern aspirations gone with the death of Garang, Sudan remains in a difficult state. John Garang's vision of an inclusive "New Sudan" where the periphery would have a say in the centre made him a role model not only for Southerners but for Darfurians as well. The fight for political inclusion and a multi-vocal national narrative remains the ambition of many of the marginalized regions' political actors. The State of Sudan remains an exclusionist monolithic power in the hands of people from a very confined physical location – the centre. Although the Vice President is now a Southerner, John Garang having been replaced by Salwa Kiir, a veteran SPLA member, the political results of the Southern presence in the government remain to be seen. Although the Southerners have reached as far as they have, the campaign in Darfur shows with utmost clarity how the state continues to rely on a technology of violence as an instrument of both maintaining the peripheries within its orbit and excluding them from challenging the state's version of itself.

In this chapter I have given a rough sketch of Sudanese history and analysed the mechanisms that transcend the political ideologies of the state over time. The State of Sudan rests on an idea of boundaries that never fitted the social and cultural realities on the ground. Therefore, a technology of violence was (and is) needed to keep people in place. The particular centrifugal state of Sudan has tried hard to contain all its citizens within its orbit, geographically and mentally, but has at the same time failed in doing so. In the following, I wish to further analyse a major physical consequence of the technology of violence of the state and look at the history of those Sudanese who are both excluded and uprooted but remain within the borders of the state: Sudan's internally displaced persons.

3

Al Naziheen:

A Comprehensive Displacement

This chapter is an introduction to internal displacement in Sudan. Prior to the war in Darfur the country already had the largest number of internally displaced persons in the world, an estimated four million in December 2002 (UN OCHA 2003: 12). The Darfur crisis has added another two million making the total amount of internally displaced people as high as six million at the time of writing[10]. Sudan has earned the title the "cradle of displacement" (Ruiz 1998: 139). Internal displacement in Sudan is primarily a result of war and famine. The specific nature of the state of Sudan and the technologies of violence employed by the state account for a large part for both the scale of displacement and the continuity in the patterns of displacement. The revolt against the state of Sudan, since 1983 organised in John Garang's SPLA, also displaced large amounts of Southerners who fled from contested areas in South Sudan to government controlled towns in the South. As return to villages of origin was made difficult by continuing acts of war in the countryside through the 1980s and 1990s people could not harvest and cultivate their lands and man-made famine engulfed the south (Ruiz 1998: 145). The famines in the western regions of Sudan that displaced thousands from the mid 1980s and the droughts in Darfur will be treated separately in chapter 4. My ambition with this chapter is to look at how internal displacement is at once a challenge to the state of Sudan and at the same time a confirmation of the just nature of the Sudanese state when the problem is rearticulated in the comprehensive narrative of the state. This chapter is both an introduction to internal displacement in and around the Sudanese capital Khartoum and a study of the coexistence of this

[10] UN OCHA puts the number of displaced persons in Sudan prior to Darfur as high as 4 million (UN OCHA 2003: 12) and a variety of agencies have put the number of internally displaced in Darfur close to two million. See Human Rights Watch Briefing Papers on Darfur available at http://www.hrw.org

humanitarian and demographic phenomenon with a particular national order, that of the Islamist state that came to power in 1989. The following is thus a semantic analysis of the vocabulary of the Islamist state and the use of a specific comprehensive vocabulary that can explain the displacement of millions of citizens in the state of Sudan.

Purity and Exile

The relation between internal displacement and the nation- state in the Middle East has so far been scarcely explored in academic writings. In the anthropological literature Lisa Malkki's *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory and National Cosmology among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania* provides both an interesting ethnographic study of refugees and some theoretical considerations that are useful in the present thesis. Malkki's study is not a study of internal displacement, that is displacement within the confined borders of a nation state, and not a study of a Middle Eastern Arab country. However, Malkki's analysis resonates well with a study of internal displacement in Sudan. As the subsequent chapters about internally displaced persons in both Sudan and Darfur will show, the displaced are seen as a particular conceptual "danger" to the order of the state of Sudan but they can be purified and confirm the purity of the state when categorized in the hegemonic vocabulary of the state. In Malkki's words:

> "The danger or pollution posed by statelessness or refugeeness to the categorical order of nation-states corresponds quite neatly to the processes studied by Mary Douglas in *Purity and Danger* (1966). Refugees are seen to hemorrhage or weaken national boundaries and to pose a threat to "national security", as is time and again asserted in the discourse of refugee policy. Here, symbolic and political danger cannot be entirely distinct. Refugees are constituted, in Douglas' sense (1966) as a dangerous category because they blur national (read: natural) boundaries, and challenge "time honoured distinctions between nationals and foreigners"(Arendt 1973:286). At this level, they represent an attack on the categorical order of nations which so often ends up being perceived as natural, and therefore, as inherently legitimate" (Malkki 1995:8).

It is Malkki's ambition to show how refugees in two different camps reconstitute and re-categorize themselves to create inverted relations of purity and exile, where the polluted status of statelessness as a result of the "national order of things" (Malkki 1995:5) gives way to counter-narratives where the refugees in camps redefine themselves as pure, not in spite, but because of their status in exile. I will return to emerging senses of purity among the displaced in Kalma Camp in Darfur in chapter 6. This chapter focuses on how displacement is a comprehensive displacement from the state, seeing the state of Sudan matching as Malkki's definition of a particular "national order of things". The contemporary system of the nation- states composes what Malkki calls a "hegemonic topography" (1995:5); a very apt metaphor to describe the state of Sudan. Studying how internally displaced people are being categorized, perceived and dealt with in the nation's capital, Khartoum, one can see the hegemonic topography not only as a metaphor for the self-perception of the state but as a very concrete and physical condition in the divisions and placing of the displaced populations in the camps by the government of Sudan.

Khartoum: A hegemonic topography

The following is based on six months of fieldwork (January- July 2004) in Khartoum with a local NGO working with displaced people in Sudan. The fieldwork also included visits to displaced peoples' camps in the White Nile and West Darfur states. Initially the aim was to undertake a study of the displaced Southerners and their possibilities of returning to their areas of origin as a lasting peace between North and South was approaching. I wished to analyse the ways in which the displaced populations in Khartoum were dealt with by the Sudanese government. It was my idea that the almost two million internally displaced citizens in the greater Khartoum area, many of whom had resided in the capital for more than 20 years, must have a profound impact on life in the capital and would create a vacuum were they to go back South. However, I gradually realized the large displaced population remained in a distinct orbit isolated from the rest of the capital's citizens, although they lived in the same city. I also realized that the displaced populations in the camps consisted of others than Southerners, forcing me to widen my scope and understanding of the geographical peripheries of Sudan. I understood that displacement in Sudan was more than a physical removal from a place of origin to a place of refuge. It is to be

understood as a comprehensive displacement where the displaced people are deliberately kept outside all spheres of political participation in the life of the capital. Seeing the government-built camps for the displaced and reading government policies dealing with displacement I could see a clear connection between the history of the state of Sudan and the state of the country's displaced populations.

Sudan's capital Khartoum is a physical manifestation of the centralized Sudanese state that works as a centrifugal power. In the course of the past 20 years, the population of Khartoum has exploded, drawing millions of displaced people into its vortex[11] at the same time as the state has undertaken intensive military campaigns in the peripheral regions of the country, uprooting communities and causing displacement through its wars against rebels fighting for political influence. With all educational facilities and commercial activities located in Khartoum as a result of the policy of centralisation, the capital is a preferred choice for the displaced. The displaced people flock in shantytowns and camps for the displaced on the fringes of the capital. Displaced people are called "*Nazihuun*" in Arabic ("*Naziheen*" in Sudanese colloquial Arabic) from the root Na-Za-Ha, that can mean "to be far off, emigrate, roam, wander". In the Sudanese context the word has become synonymous with the persons displaced from war and war induced famine since the 1980s when succeeding governments started to establish councils that sought to deal the problem of *naziheen.* As we shall see below, the Islamist revolution of 1989 brought with it the first attempts at a comprehensive national policy on displacement.

The situation of the displaced in Greater Khartoum has remained very different from that of the capital's other citizens. Countless displaced camps have been bulldozed, uprooting the populations once again, and forceful relocations have been carried by police and armed forces, often causing violent clashes between the displaced and the police and armed forces. Hiram A. Ruiz quotes a Human Rights Watch report from 1995 about the condition of the displaced in Khartoum in his article about displacement in Sudan:

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[11] The population of Khartoum rose from 1.8 million in 1983 to 3.6 million in early 1990 growing with an annual growth rate at 10.5 percent (Hamid 1996: 3). This huge increase in the number of displaced seeking refuge in the capital is connected to the outbreak of the second North –South civil war in 1983. Throughout the 1990s Khartoum continued to receive displaced southerners in tens of thousands with an estimated displaced population of 1.8 million in 1998. (Ruiz 1998: 165).

> "The tragedy of these "displaced people" is on a scale with few parallels.... They are systematically oppressed by their government and shunned and ostracized by the majority of the Northern townspeople.... [the government's] programme of forced relocation... is one of the largest relocation programmes in the modern world and one of the most abusive...." (Ruiz 1998:165).

The government has almost exclusively allowed local Islamic NGOs to operate and control health and relief facilities in the state controlled camps for the displaced. The new camps constructed by the government lie further from the capital than the previous spontaneous settlements. An example of this is the *Dar al Salam* camp in Jebel Aulia, 15 kilometers south of Khartoum where the NGO I visited runs health clinics. The camp has around 20.000 inhabitants.

The name "*Dar al Salam*" is often used as a name for government camps for the displaced and deserves some comment. Literally meaning the "abode of peace" it carries both religious and political connotations in the context of Sudan. In classical Arabic history the geographical space was defined as either "*Dar al Harb*", meaning the "abode of war" or "*Dar al Islam",* meaning the "abode of Islam". Central to this dichotomy was the idea that areas where Muslim rule was established moved from being areas of war to areas of peace. The government of Sudan consciously invokes religious connotations in its establishment of the "*Dar al Salam*" camps. Although the camps are not *Dar al Islam,* a majority of the Southern displaced persons are not Muslim, it is still a religiously defined enclosure of peace. Allowing only Islamic NGOs[12] to carry out relief services and excluding international relief agencies the "peaceful" enclosures of the displaced people remained defined by the hegemonic narrative of the Islamist Sudanese state. The displaced are re-installed in a specific version of the state and what was initially a major cultural, demographical and humanitarian challenge has ended up confirming a specific national order and can be contained within the language of a comprehensive state. I shall now take a closer look

[12] The National Islamic Front used local Islamic NGOs such as the Islamic African Relief Agency (IARA) to promote their Islamist ideas even previous to the NIF take over in 1989 and these NGOs were allowed to expand in the years following the coup spite a ban on associational life (Lesch 1998: 137-143). The Islamic NGOs were heavily embedded in the Islamism of Hassan al Turabi and the largest ones, such as IARA, have sided with Turabi's breakaway party Popular Congress. Politically opposed to the government they don't enjoy the same privileges as previous to the split between Turabi and Bashir but continue to be the main providers of relief in many displaced camps in Greater Khartoum.

at this particular language and its comprehensive fusion of humanitarian and militaristic components.

Al Da'wa al Shamila

The coup in 1989 was the vision of one man brought to life. As chief architect of the Islamic Revolution, Hassan al Turabi redefined the position of religion in the country to be an all-encompassing factor that should guide all spheres of life, public and private. The ambitions of the Sudanese state was thus a complete Islamisation of both the individual Sudanese citizen as well as of the institutions of Sudanese society. The "Revolution of National Salvation", as the new regime called itself, understood the word revolution as a continuing process, a civilizing mission. The new government launched the "Comprehensive *Da'wa* (*Al Da'wa al Shamila*)"[13] The programme of the Comprehensive *Da'wa* "was an ambitious and complex project, involving the unification of education, proselytizing, humanitarian, developmental, financial and counter-insurgency efforts" (de Waal 2002: 90). As the war with the South dragged on, it was increasingly understood as part of the comprehensive *Da'wa* and fighting the SPLA was seen as a religious duty with a civilizing mission of spreading the right faith. Perhaps the best example of the new religious perception of the war is the *fatwa*[14] issued by six Sudanese *ulama* (clerics) about the war in the South in April 1992:

> "The rebels in South Kordofan and Southern Sudan started their rebellion against the state and declared war against the Moslems. Their main aims are: killing the Moslems, desecrating mosques, burning and defiling the Qur'an and raping Moslem women (…). Therefore, an insurgent who was previously a Moslem is now an apostate; and a non-Moslem is a non-believer standing as a bulwark against the spread of Islam, and Islam has granted the freedom of killing both of them according to the words of Allah" (quoted in de Waal 2002: 72-73)

[13] *Da'wa* means "call" or "invitation" but is often used in much Islamic rhetoric as a call for God's help and it has become a key concept among many Muslim organizations describing the act of informing and enlightening the people about Islam

[14] A *fatwa* is a religious response issued often upon request justifying or forbidding a certain act or condition based upon a reading of the Quran and Islamic Jurisprudence

According to this *fatwa* one cannot be a true believer and rebel against the state. The fusion of anti-state behaviour with apostasy provides a clear picture of how the state perceives the Muslim as the sole legitimate citizen of the state. The state *is* Islam and therefore one cannot be a Muslim and work against the state. Killing Non-Muslims is a legitimate act and necessary for the survival of the state, an extreme example of the authoritarian, brutal and hegemonic narrative of the Sudanese State. The fusion of humanitarian, political and military interests led to the creation of a special sort of camps for the displaced where the people were perceived and dealt with according to the comprehensive enlightening and civilizing mission of the Islamic state. The military efforts and continuing war against the SPLA was accompanied by the construction of so- called "peace villages" that would serve as total institutions for the non-Arab populations of the South who were prone to join the SPLA or had already joined them. The villages were disguised as National Development projects where a range of Islamic organizations set up schemes and institutions. In reality they served as training camps where non-Arab, non-Muslim children were converted to Islam, sent to Qur'an schools and subsequent military training in the Popular Defence Forces (PDF), a semi autonomous army unit that, like the *Basiji* in Iran, serves as guardians and defenders of the Islamic Revolution. The most striking example of the all embracing civilizing Islamist remodelling of non Arab, non-Muslim, war- displaced people is the Nuba mountains[15], where "peace villages" served as labour camps where the indigenous Nuba populations were forcefully converted to Islam and used as a cheap labour force in labour camps. Some analysts have called the government campaigns in the Nuba mountains a "genocide" and a clear case of modern day slavery in Sudan, and there are even reports of organized rape of Nuba women with the purpose of forcefully introducing an Arab lineage in the non-Arab population (de Waal 2002:73, Johnson 2004: 158).

In line with the Sudanese state's new all-embracing civilizing Islamist objective, attempts were made at formulating a national policy for the displaced primarily seeking to address the displaced in the Khartoum area[16]. In November 1989,

[15] The Nuba Mountains are an isolated mountains in the province of Kordofan which borders North and South Sudan. Its position in between the clear geographically defined North and South has made it a contested area and the status of the Nuba Mountains was a major problem in the finalization of the North-South war with the signing of the CPA in January 2005.

[16] The following is based on Gamal Mahmoud Hamid's *Population Displacement in the Sudan. Patterns, Responses, Coping Strategies,* New York 1996.

a steering committee was formed to host the first conference about the displaced in Sudan under the current government. 68 members were appointed and a National Conference of the Displaced was held in Khartoum in February 1990 that led to the government's formulation of its principal policy issues regarding internal displacement. The policy statement produced in the wake of the conference includes promises of securing equal development and educational opportunities for the displaced, avoiding racial discrimination, promoting cultural diversity and securing local languages. The national policy for the displaced states that education of the displaced children in Greater Khartoum is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, giving attention to teach displaced children in the Arabic language, "as a national language and an essential tool for social mobility" (quoted in Hamid 1996: 163), echoing the Comprehensive *Da'wa* where knowledge of the language of the Qur'an is essential for a well functioning citizen of the state. Along with the immediate issues dealing with *naziheen* in Greater Khartoum, the policy statement includes promises of resettlement and incorporation of the displaced and resettled population in national development schemes.

Apart from these noble statements the situation of the displaced in Greater Khartoum has remained very different from that of the capital's other citizens. As critics of the steering committee and the National Conference had noted, the members formulating the policy for the displaced were carefully selected among people agreeing with the government's Islamist policies (Hamid 1996: 138).What has happened with the present government's policies towards the displaced since coming to power is quite the opposite of the stated intentions of securing social mobility and equality. Countless displaced camps have been bulldozed uprooting the populations once again and forceful relocations have been carried by police and armed forces, often causing violent clashes between the displaced and the police and armed forces. This pattern of continues displacement, where *naziheen* are uprooted time and again is evident and symptomatic in the present displacement of Darfur, as I will return to in chapter 6.

Al Nazihuun wa Furus al Salam

One of the first accounts seeking too address internal displacement and the issue of *naziheen* in the vocabulary of the Comprehensive Da'wa is the now former Minister

of Engineering Affairs (*Wazir al Shu'un al Handissiya*) Dr. Sharif al Diin Ibrahim Banaqa's book *Al Nazihuun wa Furus as Salam. Biltarkiiz 'ala Tajribat Wulayat Al Khartoum.* ("*The Displaced and the Chances for Peace. With Emphasis on the Example of Khartoum State"*) (Banaqa 1999). The book is a thorough account of the history of displacement in the Greater Khartoum area and the phenomenon of displacement in Sudan echoing many of the noble statements seen in the official government policy on *naziheen* that need not be repeated here. What is interesting for the argument of the present study is the way displacement can be contained and explained in the vocabulary of the Comprehensive *Da'wa* and comprehensive national narrative of the Islamist state. In the introductory remarks al Banaqa has the following definition of internal displacement in Sudan:

النزوح ظاهرة كونية توافق سنن الله في خلقه (قالوا كنا مستضعفين في الأرض قالوا ألم تكن أرض الله واسعة فتهاجروا فيها) النساء (٩٧) وقد بدأ النزوح في السودان منذ القرون حيث ينزح الإنسان من مكان لأخر بحثا عن المرعي والكلأ والماء والاستقرار وهي ذات الظواهر التي بدأت تتكرر نتيجة لظروف طبيعية ومتغيرات دولية ذات أبعاد اجتماعية واقتصادية وسياسية .

إن التعريف المضمن في الوثيقة الخاصة بالمباديء التوجيهية عرف النازحين بالأشخاص الذين أكرهوا علي الهرب أو على ترك منازلهم أو أماكن إقامتهم العادية أو اضطروا إلي ذلك وخاصة عندما يكون ذلك سعيا لتفادي آثار النزاع المسلح أو نتيجة لاندلاع حالات العنف والنهب المسلح والمتسع أو في حالات انتهاك حقوق الإنسان أو في حالات الكوارث الطبيعية كالزلازل والمجاعات أو الكوارث التي هي من صنع الإنسان وذلك داخل حدود الدول المتأثرة بالظروف المذكورة وبدون أن يعبر النازحون الحدود الدولية لدول أخري .

17

[17] "Displacement (*al nuzuh*) is a universal phenomenon in corresponding with the ways of God in his creation. (" They say: In what (plight) were ye? They reply: Weak and oppressed were we in the earth. They say: Was not the earth of Allah spacious enough for you to move away (from evil)?" Surat al Nisa'. 97). Displacement in Sudan began centuries ago when the human began roaming (*yinzuh*) from one place to the other searching for pasture, grassland, water and settlement and these phenomena repeated themselves as a result of natural conditions and global changes of social, economic and political conditions. However, the understanding [of displacement] inherent in the declaration of the Guiding Principles of Internal Displacement is a recognition ('*urf*) of the displaced as individuals who are forced to flee or leave their homes or places of habitat especially if this [is done] to keep down incitement of armed conflict or as a result of the flaring up of violent incidents and armed robberies or in cases of violations of human rights or in the cases of natural disasters such as earthquakes, famines or man-made disasters and this [is happening] within the borders of the affected states as a result of these conditions and without the displaced cross state borders."

The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement mentioned by Dr Banaqa will be treated in chapter 7. The naturalness of the existence of *naziheen* in Sudan and the correspondence of this particular humanitarian phenomenon with the ways of God is a subtle purification of displacement by the Minister of Engineering Affairs. Dr Banaqa continues his argument and explanation of displacement in Qu'ranic terms and places *al naziheen* along with *al muhajiruun*[18], recasting a humanitarian problem making it a natural condition in an Islamic state:

واعتبر المهاجر / النازح في سبيل الله كابن السبيل الذي يستحق زكاة المسلمين لظروفه الاضطرارية وحاجته للعون والمساعدة ولايوجد تمييز في الأدب الإسلامي بين النازح والمهاجر واللاجئ لأن الدين لايضع حدودا وحواجز بين المجتمعات ولأن أرض الله واسعة

[19]

In the comprehensive Islamic state the displaced are a natural ingredient entitled to *zakat*, religious tithes, one of the five pillars of Islam. Sudan is a just Muslim society, not in spite of the challenge posed by the large displaced populations, but *because* of *al naziheen*. The existence of millions of internally displaced persons in Sudan has the effect of reiterating the just order of the Islamic state, and the relation between the displaced and the state of Sudan becomes one of reciprocal confirmation: the *naziheen* are subject to one of the five pillars of Islam, receivers of humanitarian and economic assistance in a Muslim society. The State of Sudan, by recognizing *al naziheen* as an inherent humanitarian problem and embracing them in government camps fulfill its role as a just Islamic state. Dr Banaqa reveals a very illustrative version of a centrifugal state narrative and a particular national order of things. As Minister of Engineering Affairs he quite literally has the overall responsibility for monitoring the establishment of *naziheen* camps in a particular hegemonic topography of the state. The hegemonic topography of Khartoum is here explained in

[18] *Muhajiruun* literally means emigrants but has strong religious connotations. The Meccans who emigrated to Medina to join the early community of believers of the prophet Muhammad are referred to as *muhajiruun*, and in contemporary Arabic it is used to describe pilgrims to Islam's holy places.

[19] "And the emigrant/displaced (*muhajiir/ nazih*) is regarded as a son of the ways of God as someone entitled to the obligatory *zakat* (religious tithes) of the Muslims as a result of his condition and his need for aid and help. There is no distinction in Islamic culture between the displaced, the emigrant and the refugee (*al nazih wa al muhajiir wa al lajii'*) because religion does not set up borders or barriers between the communities because the land of God (*ard Allah*) is wide".

a particular *semantic* hegemony where the just Muslim society is confirmed and reaffirmed in an order corresponding to the vocabulary of the Qu'ran, although most *naziheen* have fled their areas of origin because of resistance to this particular order of the state and remain oppressed and out of orbit.

"The land of God is wide", writes Dr. Banaqa, and Sudan is the biggest country in Africa. The western most region of Darfur has played an important role and has been pivotal in creating a comprehensive Islamic state in Sudan. Yet, in recent years the area has witnessed displacement on an unprecedented scale as a new devastating civil war has engulfed the region. In the following I wish to analyse the special relation between the capital Khartoum and the province of Darfur to see how an area of great ideological proximity and familiarity can experience the latest version of the state's technology of violence creating a devastating humanitarian catastrophe and a new comprehensive displacement.

4

The Khartoum-Darfur Axis: Horizontal Danger

In the previous chapters I have sought to account for the state of Sudan and have show how the monolithic structure of the state has both included the peripheral regions of the country and excluded the same geographical peripheries from influence. The maintaining of a singular all-embracing version of the state has only been possible by a consequent and constant use of a specific technology of violence on part of the state to maintain control over the space of Sudan. I have largely looked at Sudan from the perspective of the capital Khartoum and have used the displaced populations in Greater Khartoum as an example of a challenge to the purity of the nation- state that has been dealt with through a systematic expulsion of the displaced from the centre. The geographic marginalization on the outskirts of the capital reflects the political displacement from the centre of the state.

The following is not an extensive reading of the history of the relations between Darfur and Khartoum but rather a reading of how a specific axis between the two places has had the reciprocal and contradictory effect of confirming the ambitions of the state of Sudan while challenging its self-perception.

Darfur, Islam and *al Mahdiyya*

When Mohammed Ali's Turco- Egyptian forces conquered Sudan they found in Darfur a sultanate at the height of its power. Unlike the seemingly stateless areas of the South where the invading forces could plunder, pillage and subject the populations to the ideas of the slave raiding state and its capital in Khartoum, Darfur was a thriving and well established political entity in the first half of the 19th century (de

Waal and Flint 2005:8). Whereas Southern Sudan had been relatively isolated, Darfur had a long history of exchange with other sultanates, the Nile Valley and various West African political and commercial entities and individuals due to its location on the *Darb al Arba'iin,* the "Forty Days Road" connecting Egypt and The Red Sea with Western Africa. This was an extensive trading network that made Darfur a prosperous place benefiting from the presence of a variety of travelling merchants and labourers, exchanging both commodities, impressions and ideas from the surrounding lands. This meant that many Darfurians travelled to establish themselves in commercial networks and to this day the biggest bazar in Khartoum, *Souq al Libya,* remains dominated by Darfurian tribes.

Unlike Southern Sudan, Darfur is Muslim. Islam was the state cult in the successive Darfur sultanates and "the Fur and Islamic, the indigenous and external, dimensions were seemingly present from the beginning, sometimes competing, sometimes complementing each other" (O Fahey 1980: 14). Darfur played an important role in the establishment of *al Mahdiyya* and the conquest of Khartoum in 1885. In his essay on the origins of Darfurian identities, Alex de Waal describes the origins of this particular fusion of religious persuasion and militant policy as West African and as having its roots in the North Nigerian State founded by Osman Dan Fodio rather than in the Sufi traditions of the Nile Valley and Northern Sudan (de Waal 2004:10). When the Mahdi proclaimed his status as the Expected One and started what was to be both a comprehensive religious call for awakening and the origin of Sudanese independent nationalism it was with the help of an Arab from Darfur, Abdullahi al Ta'aishi. After the death of the Mahdi, Abdullahi al Ta'aishi became the Mahdi's political and religious successor, *Khalifa*, in the newly established capital in Omdurman. The *Khalifa* ordered the mass migration and import of Westerners from Darfur to support the base of power (de Waal 2004: 11). Thus Darfurians came to Omdurman and the centre of political decision-making in very high numbers. Relations between Darfur and Khartoum continued to be tense as local tribes rose in rebellion against both the transfer of Darfurians to serve the Mahdi's political experiment in the centre and the very little the periphery of Darfur was given in return by the central government.

Thus, very early Darfurians became conscious of their position of contributing significantly to the maintenance of the state and at the same time receiving very little in return, a feature that has continued to create tensions on the Darfur- Khartoum axis

and in part accounting for the breakout of the current war, as will be made clear below.

Darfur in the state of Sudan

When Anglo- Egyptian Condominium replaced *al Mahdiyya* in 1899, the Sultanate of Darfur was re-established, by Ali Dinar, a descendant of the last family of sultans, who fled back to Darfur after having been subject to the *Khalifa* policy of forced relocation of Darfurians in Omdurman. The sultanate existed until 1916 when it was annexed to the Anglo- Egyptian Condominium. The fact that the new British power waited until First World War competition over Africa, forcing them to include Darfur in their state of Sudan, significantly underlines the peripheral nature of this remote and vast region of Sudan. Darfur was added as an afterthought to the new state of Sudan and, like the South, remained deliberately underdeveloped by the new British colonial leaders. The Anglo- Egyptian Condominium ruled the whole of Sudan through a body called Sudan Political Service, "more a club than an administration" that had only 315 members in the years 1899 –1939 for the administration of the 2.5 million square kilometre area of Sudan (Prunier 2005: 25-26). The introduction of *The Native Administration* in Sudan was a pragmatic invention that also clearly marked the British disregard for the peripheral regions of Sudan.

As we have seen, the core of *The Native Administration* was the transport of political power on the local level to "traditional leaders". In Darfur "traditional leaders" meant that the local leaders and tribes were very much left to their own devices and the British rulers had "no economic interest in the region and no ideological ambition other than staving off trouble" (de Waal 2004: 10). Traditional administrations of space are subject to further analysis in chapter 5. It suffices for this present chapter to underline the fact that, like in the South, the British colonial administration saw no importance in educating or developing the area of Darfur and it remained sealed off by the Closed District Ordnance. In Darfur the British, perhaps recognizing the central role of Darfurians in the *Mahdiyya* revolution sealed off the area fearing Neo Mahdist rebellions, especially after an organized revolt in the South Darfur regional capital Nyala in 1921 was viewed as a display of Mahdist sentiments. The rebellion led to the deaths of at least 800 people (Prunier 2005: 28)that prevented

Darfurians and other peoples on the margins of the country from interaction with each other.

The "Neo- Mahdist" rebellion in Nyala in 1921 changed many of the views of the British towards Darfur and West African influence on the religious and political sentiments of the populace of Sudan. Ultimately, the British wanted to secure the loyalty of the people towards the rulers. They feared the influence of West African mahdist sentiments that could threaten the powerbase in Khartoum[20]. The Mahdi's son, Sayyid Abd al Rahman al Mahdi, had sought refuge on the Aba Island in the Nile where he continued to receive pilgrims, many from West Africa migrating via Darfur.

The transition to the independent state of Sudan on January first 1956 was an event that had little effect on day to day life in Darfur. Although the region had played an important role in the *Mahdiyya* and was regarded by the British as a dangerous area still prone to Neo- Mahdist sentiments, it remained a backwater in the minds of the ruling elites in Khartoum. The independent Khartoum government remained preoccupied in ascertaining its power and legitimacy *vis a vis* the increasingly militant guerrillas in the South and fought its ideological battles along a North- South axis and, to the extent the Northern politicians ever gave Darfur any serious consideration, they included it as a less important component in their own nationalist construction.

Famine

The consequent lack of development in Darfur was, as was the case with the South, both inherited from the British and maintained by the new ruling nationalist elites in Khartoum. People continued their lives largely unaffected by the political changes in the capital. They were to a large extent relying on the same mechanisms of survival and livelihood strategies as before. Darfur is a harsh area, a landlocked desert landscape were the seasonal rainfalls are essential for the cultivation of sorghum, millet and other crops depending on the water flowing into the *wadis* (riverbeds) that are dried out most of the time. Shortage of rain combined with locusts, epidemic disease and violent conflict has meant that the area of Darfur has been prone to famine for as long as one is able to trace it in both written and oral history (de Waal

[20] A correspondence between Al Sayyid Abd al Rahman al Mahdi and a prominent Nigerian *sufi* scholar was uncovered by British agents in 1923 where al Mahdi's son promised the return of the Mahdiyya and that an end to Christian rule was eminent. (Warburg 2003: 89).

1989: 59-77). More details on the geography of Darfur will be provided in the following chapters; here it suffices to note the precariousness of life in Darfur.

In the mid 1980s severe droughts led to a deadly famine in Darfur. President Numeiri showed very little interest in the warnings of an anticipated humanitarian catastrophe. His only interest in Darfur was to secure the place and use it as a forefront in the ideological battles for power in the Central and Sahelian African belt between Sudan, Libya, and Chad[21]. At the same time his ambitious modernization schemes, inspired by socialism, combined with an eagerness for securing support from foreign donors, most notably the US, made him refuse to admit publicly that any severe crisis was underway in Darfur. The governor in Darfur resigned in protest over the neglect of the drought and famine in Darfur and went into exile (de Waal 1997: 91-92). The neglect of the famine also made a coalition of doctors and various civil society bodies publicly protest and march against the government, and even made members of Numeiri's own ruling party turn against him. An important component in the public manifestation of distrust in the president's handling of the crisis was the large number of *naziheen* that had flocked around the nation's capital fleeing starvation in the west. The Omdurman branch of the ruling party, that had joined the coalition of protesters against the neglect of the famine disaster encouraged the civilians to help the drought *naziheen* encamped around the capital. "Many obliged: assisting the famine victims was simultaneously an act of charity and of protest" (de Waal 1997: 92). The democratic forces rallying in protest against the president's handling of the famine gathered momentum and this finally led to the fall of Numeiri in 1985.

The famines in Darfur and other parts of Sudan in the mid 1980s thus had two effects on the Darfur- Khartoum axis: Firstly, the western drought migrants were now, like the Southerners, an important part of Greater Khartoum's *naziheen* population, and secondly, the events leading to the downfall of the president sent a signal that the western Sudanese were a force to be taken into consideration as a challenge to the leaders of the state of Sudan. Although a geographical periphery, events in Darfur had proved central in altering the political balance at the centre of the state.

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[21] The relations between Chad, Libya and Sudan are an understudied but vital component in understanding some of the background for the current conflict in Darfur. It falls beyond the scope of the present study, but a brief overview of the historical dynamics between the three nations and their civil wars is given in Prunier 2005: 42-47.

Islamism in Darfur

The Muslim Brotherhood was integrated into the party politics of Sudan through the skillful tactics of Hassan al Turabi, a process already begun in the last days of the Abboud dictatorship in the 1960s (Holt and Daly 1998:152). The Muslim Brotherhood realized the potential for expansion in Darfur. With as many as six million Muslims, Darfur, traditionally an *Ansar* and *Umma* party stronghold[22], could provide an important component in a new type of political Islam spearheaded by Turabi. But there were inherent difficulties in integrating the non-Arab Muslim periphery into the Brotherhood ideology and Turabi's attempts at formulating a wider Islamic course that could embrace the African element. These difficulties were to have a lasting and lethal effect on the social co- existence of Arabs and non-Arabs in Darfur as will be seen later. The Muslim Brotherhood was an Egyptian product, whose ideology was heavily embedded in ideas of Arab supremacy and who drew their base from the same Nile Valley Arabs that dominated, and still dominate, the political scene in Sudan. As early as 1965, when Sudan created a constitutional committee following elections discussing the position of Islam in the constitution, much opposition came from Muslims in the east and west who feared that an Islamic constitution would consolidate "the hegemony of Northern and Central Sudan under the umbrella of an Islamic and Arabic culture which would perpetuate the marginalization of Sudan's Southern, Western and Eastern populations" (Warburg 2003:148). Gerard Prunier analyses the same quote and concludes that "this perception of a kind of "Islamic false consciousness" was one of the first political manifestations of a broader split in the ranks of the Muslim majority in Northern Sudan along ethnic and regional lines (…) The Islamic glue was beginning to melt" (Prunier 2005: 40).

This "Islamic glue" that could tie together the whole of Sudan and create the only valid model for harmonious social co-existence is a known figure in much Sudanese Islamist rhetoric. The South was seen as a "lost brother" among many Northern Muslim intellectuals who firmly believed that resentment and animosity

[22] In the first post independence elections in 1958 the *Umma* Party won 19 out of 22 constituencies (Prunier 2005: 37).

towards the Northern Muslim Sudan had been artificially installed in the Southerners by the British colonial power and the Christian missionaries (Lesch 1998:33).

In Darfur the Muslim Brothers started campaigns spreading their Islamist sentiments through a variety of civil society organs, NGOs and other components of *al Da'wa al Shamila.* The *Mahdiyya* had been the first example of Darfurians forming the core in a revolutionary Islamic movement in Sudan's history and in the eyes of the vanguard of the new revolution, Hassan al Turabi, Darfur became an interesting site to look closer at in the search for foot soldiers for a new comprehensive Islamic revolution.

The missions to secure support in Darfur from the Islamists had begun long before the 1989 coup and many Darfurians still vividly remember the visits and mobilization campaigns of the Muslim Brothers through the 1980s. Darfurians who were inspired by the campaigns and joined the Muslim Brotherhood recount many of the same reasons for joining. They speak of the Muslim Brothers stressing the insignificance of tribal and ethnic affiliations and how the Brothers managed to appear, "honest, very straightforward and with great morality" (de Waal and Flint 2005: 19). For many Darfurians the Muslim Brothers came to be seen as the only instrument for upward social mobility.

Bolad and the *Murahaliin*

Possibly the most significant example of the inherent contradictions between the upward social mobility offered to Darfurians by the Muslim Brothers (and later the National Islamic Front party that came to power in 1989) and the dominant Arab chauvinism of the political establishment in Khartoum is found in the career of Daud Bolad. His life, fate and death reflect many of the root causes of the current conflict in Darfur[23].

Daud Bolad, an ethnic Fur from Darfur became chairman of the Khartoum University Student Union (KUSU). A loyal Islamist, he had been drawn into the orbit of the Muslim Brothers in Darfur but had moved to Khartoum to continue a career in politics and had become the first non-Arab KUSU Chairman. This influential position was a traditional career opener into the field of national politics but Bolad was soon to

[23] The following is based on summaries of the Bolad affair given in de Waal and Flint 2005: 20-22 and Prunier 2005: 68-75.

realize that it took a lot more than sheer political credentials and ambitions to penetrate and influence the political centre. He lacked ties to influential people and the inherent racism of the political elites of the capital was an eye opener that left Bolad disillusioned on behalf of the Muslim Brotherhood and their ideas of non-racial Islamism. Gerard Prunier has gained a rare insight into some of the personal correspondence from Bolad while he was in Khartoum and this quote is typical of the disillusion of many non-Arab Islamists as they encountered the harsh racial realities in the capital of the state of Sudan: "even when I go to the mosque to pray, even there, in the presence of God, for them I am still a slave (*'abd*) and they will assign me a place related to my race" (quoted in Prunier 2005: 73).

Bolad remained politically ambitious but sensed the impossibility for a Darfurian to gain any fundamental respect in Khartoum. He returned to Darfur and sought a variety of political alliances; he ended at last with John Garang and the SPLA. He led an SPLA incursion into Darfur with a group of Dinka warriors but was defeated, captured and executed in 1992.

An important element in the government's success in cracking down on the Bolad insurgency in 1991 was the presence of loyal Arab militias in Darfur armed by the Sudanese government. In Darfur the arming of Arab militias began under the government of Sadiq al Mahdi in 1986. Collectively these militias were referred to as *murahaliin*, from the Arabic word *rahil*, meaning to "move away" and "emigrate". The government of Sudan needed a belt of loyal fighters to create a barrier between the West of the country, part of the political North and under government control, and the SPLA controlled South. In his analysis of the root causes of Sudan's civil wars, historian Douglas Johnson states that the reasons for joining the militias were primarily economic (Johnson 2004: 82). One of the characteristics of the civil wars in Sudan is the fact that although Southerners are deprived and have been systematically excluded from political influence, they inhabit the rich and fertile part of the country; since the *jallaba* merchants and subsequent trade and raiding schemes the Northerners have been deeply dependent on the wealth of the South. The raiding into fertile Southern territories by *murahaliin* militias resembles to some extent the patterns of exploitation orchestrated by the *jallaba* merchants in the early days of the state of Sudan. The present displacement of Darfur, as we will see later, is also a result of free roaming landless Arab tribes joining a government-sponsored aggression in some instances for the purpose of getting access to fertile territory. The government of

Sadiq al Mahdi resorted to the age old technology of violence and realized the potential in promising a quick economic gain for Arab tribes who were willing to raid into the fertile Dinka and SPLA Southern Sudan to destabilize the rebel bases and prevent the advancement of SPLA into Darfur. The arming of Arab tribes in Darfur was a deliberate strategy by the government in Khartoum to create a barrier between the South and Darfur, the latter, although underdeveloped and politically neglected, still being viewed as an essential component in the geography of the Muslim North and part of a bulwark against the South.

The fact that a senior Muslim Brotherhood member and stern NIF supporter could defect and join the left wing secular SPLA and lead a rebellion into Darfur itself should have been a warning to the government of the nascent desperation and frustration felt in Darfur, where political loyalties and support of the Islamist regime could not cover the fact that marginalisation and blatant racist sentiment towards the non-Arab peripheries remained the reality. The Arab militias provided crucial support in oppressing the Bolad insurgency and Bolad himself was captured and executed in 1992. Ten years later the patterns of rebellion in Darfur and the Arab militia crackdown on rebels were to be repeated, this time with a degree of ferocity and a comprehensive destruction and displacement of communities that no one could have imagined in the early 1990s.

The Arab Gathering and *The Black Book*

The Bolad insurgency showed with utmost clarity the inherent contradiction between Turabi's attempt at inventing a pan-Sudanese Islamism independent of people's ethnic backgrounds and affiliations and the Arab chauvinism of the Khartoum Islamist elite.

The latent Arab chauvinism of the political elite became more and more apparent in the course of the 1980s where political designs for Darfur were increasingly perceived along ethnic lines. A little known group who referred to themselves as "The Arab Gathering" (*Al tajamu' al Arabi*) published an open letter to the Prime Minister Sadiq al Mahdi in October 1987 in which they stressed the importance of Arab supremacy in Darfur. The letter was published in *Al Ayam* newspaper on October 5th, 1987. It was signed by 23 leading Darfur Arab intellectuals and stressed that Arabs historically were the bearers of culture, civilization and

represented more than 70% of Darfur's total population. The letter ended with a discrete threat to the Prime Minister:

> "Should the neglect of the Arab race continue, and the Arabs be denied their share in government, we are afraid that things may escape the control of wise men and revert to ignorant people and the mob. Then there could be catastrophe, with dire consequences." (quoted in de Waal and Flint 2005: 52)

The racial prejudice towards non-Arab Darfurians had never been articulated in such a clear manner before. Although the Gathering may have represented only a small population of Darfur Arabs it nonetheless articulated what people like Bolad already had felt. This time it was not just in the capital that the chauvinism towards non-Arabs was felt; a clear vision for an Arab dominated Darfur had been pronounced in a national media.

Since the outbreak of the current war in Darfur, much speculation has been attributed to the actual impact of the Arab Gathering, its political ties and the role of its protagonists in shaping the current conflict. In chapter 5 I shall look at the connections between the Arab Gathering and the *janjaweed*. Documents have been attributed to the Arab Gathering that bear plans of obstruction of the reform programmes in the regional Darfur government, paralyzing the service sectors of non-Arab *Zurga*[24] communities and a range of other measures to destroy the influence of the non-Arabs in Darfur[25]. Whether the documents are created centrally by the Arab Gathering with ties to the policymakers of Khartoum or are later fabrications is not certain. However, there is no doubt that the existence of the Arab Gathering for many Darfurians was a warning that Darfur was increasingly perceived as containing inherent political problems that could be articulated on racial lines. In the following chapter the notions of "Arabs" vs. "Africans" on the ground in Darfur's recent history will be examined in greater detail.

Statements such as the Arab Gathering's were clearly contradictory to the strategy of Turabi and his attempts at including Darfur in the comprehensive Islamic state. The impossibility of maintaining this version of the state became evident with

[24] *Zurqa* (plural *zuruq*) is a racially derogative term meaning "black, blacks" used in Sudan about the non-Arab population.

[25] The main themes of the alleged Arab Gathering documents can be found in the International Crisis Group's Report *Darfur Rising: Sudan's New Crisis,* available at http://www.crisisweb.org

the split between the chief architect of the Islamic State, Hassan al Turabi, and the President of the same state, Omar al Bashir, in 1999-2000.

Much speculation has been given as to the exact nature of the President's removal of Turabi from all posts of political power in 1999, but most analyses point to the fact that Turabi had become too powerful and succeeded in reducing the President to a mere figurehead[26]. It is beyond the scope of the present study to account for the internal rivalries in the NIF government leading to the split; what is important here is how Darfur, a peripheral region in the Western part of the country, became an important component in the battle for influence and alliances in the capital and consequently was drawn into the centre of politics in the capital.

Turabi formed a new party that is now known as *Al Mu'atamar al Sha'abi*, "Popular Congress" (PC) after the split and has continued to influence Sudanese politics since then, although initially placed in house arrest by the President. The split between the President and Turabi meant that old alliances within the Islamist movement were remolded. Many of the people who remained loyal to Turabi were to be found in the civil society organizations, NGOs and other bodies that had formed the core of *Al Da'wa al Shamila.* Although politically reduced in power the organizations remained active in the humanitarian field and many of the Islamic NGOs, openly loyal to Turabi, have continued to provide services for the displaced people in the camps around the nation's capital.

It was in the circle of PC loyalists that a photocopied book began to appear in 2000[27]. The book was distributed throughout the nation's capital at a great pace and rumours spread fast concerning the contents and origins of the writing. Entitled *"The Black Book: Imbalance of Power and Wealth in Sudan."(Al Kitab al Aswad. Ikhtilal miizan taqsiim al Sulta wa al Tharwa fi al Sudan)*[28] the book gave detailed information about the divisions of power in the state of Sudan: For the first time an exhaustive description of the ethnic composition of the ruling political elite was displayed. The introduction of *The Black Book* says as follows:

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[26] See for instance de Waal and Flint 2005: 29-32

[27] When enquiring where I could obtain a copy of this highly controversial document living in Khartoum in the first half of 2004 I was referred to members of Turabi's Popular Congress Party.

[28] The Arabic original of *The Black Book* can now be found at the Justice and Equality Movement's (JEM) website. JEM is one of the rebel groups in Darfur. All subsequent quotations from The Black Book stem from the JEM website, http://www.sudanjem.com/arabic/books/black_book .

يعكس هذا الكتاب بشاعة الظلم الذي مارسته الأنظمة السياسية المتعاقبة علي البلاد منذ الاستقلال الي اليوم بصرف النظر عن توجهاتها وألوانها.. علمانية كانت أم إسلامية, ديمقراطية مزعومة كانت أم دكتاتورية. هذا الظلم البشع المتمثل في محاباة جهة واحدة من السودان علي حساب باقي جهاته.

[29]

This introduction in *The Black Book* is followed by a detailed list of the individuals who occupy the major positions in the political and economic establishment in Sudan. It is clear from the lists provided in *The Black Book* that all positions of economic and political importance are held by Arabs representing only three tribes from the Nile Valley, north of Khartoum. There was nothing new in these facts alone but *The Black Book* was the first comprehensive documentation of the racial inequalities in Sudan's political establishment. Although Southern Sudanese had been saying the same for years and the political marginalisation and neglect of the South had been the main reason for the outbreak of the civil wars, the contents of the book were "revolutionary" (de Waal and Flint 2005: 17). The meticulous details and the exhaustive lists of named individuals demonstrated that the authors were not addressing and attacking the centre from a geographical periphery but had access to information and an intimate acquaintance with the inner circles of the Khartoum establishment. As another long neglected region of Sudan, Darfur, rose in revolt echoing the sentiments found in *The Black Book* and referring to it openly, it became clear that the danger from this revolt could have even wider implications and pose a greater threat to the political entities of the capital, not because the issues were new, but because they did not only come from the periphery but were convincingly articulated from the heart of the state.

"*Khatr!*" Darfur viewed from Khartoum (January – July 2004)

The ambiguous position of Hassan al Turabi in the Islamist movement and the alliance between dissident Islamists and the rebellion in Darfur became more and more evident in the course of the first half of 2004. I lived in Khartoum in that period and witnessed how the good news of a final North-South peace were overshadowed by events in Darfur. Having focused on *naziheen* and life in camps, I realized that the

[29] "This book mirrors the ugly oppression that the political system has practiced continuously in the country since independence to this day regardless of its orientations and colours.... be it secular or Islamic, allegedly democratic or dictatorial. This ugly oppression is embodied in one part of Sudan at the expense of the remaining parts."

position of Darfurians in the nation's capital reflected subtle nuances in the hegemonic topography of Khartoum. The *naziheen* are not the only Darfurians in Khartoum. The *Souq al Libya* bazar is dominated by Darfurians, most notably the Zaghawa tribe. Darfurians are recognized for their economic skills and their financial ambitions and many are petty merchants throughout Khartoum. Many Darfur women sell tea in the capital. "Tea sellers" is often a euphemism for prostitutes throughout Sudan and it is well known that women selling tea in the street often are prostitutes. I shall return to this in chapter 6. These informal labourers, who get by on the margins of the capital live and survive receiving no economic support or employment in state organs, are referred to as *muhammashiin* in colloquial Sudanese Arabic, from the word "*haamish"* meaning "margin". The divisions between the displaced, *al naziheen*, and the marginalized, *al muhammasshiin*, are blurred as many *naziheen* in time become *muhammashiin* when they enter the informal job sector. The same is the case for many of the camps for the displaced in Khartoum. Shops open in the camps, busses begin to go to the camps and the *naziheen* camps are gradually absorbed in the orbit of the capital[30].

In Khartoum, "Westerners" are known for their economic abilities, their strong family ties, their ties to markets in West Africa and their domination of the city's bazar economy. Although many of them are *muhammashiin* they often command a certain respect from Khartoum Arabs. One adjective often heard when people in Khartoum describe Darfurians in the capital is the word "*Khatiir*", plural "*Khutr*". The semantic connotations of this particular adjective in contemporary colloquial Arabic deserve further comment for the purpose of the present study. The word "*khatr*" is often translated as "danger" and "*khatiir*" thus means "dangerous". But "*khatiir*" also means wise, smart, clever and quick thinking[31]. This semantic ambiguity reflects the social position of many Darfurians in Khartoum.

In analytical terms, *The Black Book* was a striking example of the fusion of knowledge and danger and formed a profound challenge to the purity of the state of Sudan. Darfur was becoming a serious issue and the tightly censored press in

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[30] A study of the gradual inclusion of the *naziheen* camps in the city proper and the transition from *naziheen* to *muhammashiin* is a hitherto understudied subject that would be a welcome addition to the study of the capital of Sudan.

[31] Anthropologist Paul Dresch provides an interesting example of "*khatiir*" in the sense of "knowing something" and thus being "dangerous" in his meditation on fieldwork in Yemen. See Dresch, James and Parkin (eds.) 2000:114

Khartoum could no longer neglect that something out of the ordinary was happening in the Western most region of the country. Now a free man and a political opposition figure of significance, Hassan al Turabi was becoming a stern open critic of the government's handling of the Darfur rebellion. The association of Turabi, Popular Congress, and the Darfur rebels became increasingly articulate in the first months of 2004. At a press conference in February of that year, Turabi openly said that the rebels in Darfur represented a "just cause".[32]

At the end of March 2004 Turabi was arrested again and placed under house arrest. Allegedly he had conspired to take over power with the assistance of PC loyalist army officers, all of Darfurian origin. Many contradictory rumours as to the reason for the arrest and about Turabi's actual ability to forge alliances strong enough to ouster the President were heard in Khartoum in the first half of April that year. Much is speculation and full light will probably never be shed on the details leading up to the arrest. March 2004 also saw riots in the Mayo camp for the displaced where Darfurians fleeing the crisis in Darfur rose in rebellion demanding recognition and better services for the displaced in Khartoum. At least 19 people were killed although unofficial sources put the figure much higher. An increasing presence of military and police was visible throughout the capital in the last half of March 2004. Together with the arrest of Turabi there was an increased sense of a new civil war emerging that could have far reaching impacts and even spread to the capital itself. The danger of Darfur was felt on the streets of Khartoum.

The CPA and the timing of the Darfur rebellion

There is an emerging consensus among Sudan analysts and academics that the timing of the rebellion in Darfur must be seen in close association with the North South peace negotiations[33]. The way towards a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between John Garang's SPLA and the Government of Sudan had been paved in 2002 by the signing of the Machakos Protocol. South Sudan was to be given an Interim Period of six years after which they could vote for complete independence from Khartoum. Seeing a final end to one of the longest running conflicts in Africa became

[32] See International Crisis Group: *Darfur Rising: Sudan's New Crisis*. http://www.crisisweb.org

[33] Personal conversations at the 7th International Sudan Studies Conference, Bergen, Norway, April 2006. See also Tanner 2005:4

a clear ambition for a variety of agencies under the auspices of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD). The governments of the US, Norway and EU have all played key parts in finalizing the wording of the CPA. Only a few critical voices about the nature of the CPA were heard as the details were finalized and the prospects for peace were becoming apparent. One of the earliest warnings came from the renowned think tank. In the introduction to its Africa Briefing entitled "*Sudan's Other Wars"* from June 2003, The International Crisis Group provided an analysis that in hindsight gave a series of assumptions that have later proved painfully accurate and thus deserves a lengthy quotation:

> "Thus far IGAD's general strategy has largely been to focus on resolving Sudan's civil war within the North-South paradigm that led to the Machakos Protocol in July 2002 (...) recent violence in Darfur make clear that all Sudan has a shared problem: the marginalization of peripheral regions and groups by successive governments in Khartoum. The clear danger is that as long as these groups continue to feel marginalized and their views are not represented in the IGAD process, the pull toward violence will remain compelling."[34]

Indeed, Darfur pulled towards violence. Included as an afterthought in the narrative of the State of Sudan, an area of little importance for the government, this western- most region of the country was soon to be the biggest concern and the worst threat to the coherence and hegemonic topography of the state. When the rebels rose in the distant region of Darfur, it was a peripheral region protesting against years of political marginalisation and neglect. However, although geographically distant from Khartoum, *The Black Book* had demonstrated the proximity of the rebellion to the very heart of the Sudanese state with utmost clarity. The Darfur- Khartoum axis was always one of a delicate horizontal balance between compliance and contestation, the region of Darfur both confirming and serving the political ambitions of Khartoum, and challenging the state's self perception. The rebellion in Darfur was particularly "*khatiir*" due to the ideological proximity of the rebels and state. The state of Sudan resorted to the age-old technology of violence to wipe out the horizontal danger and

[34] See International Crisis Group: *Sudan's Other Wars*. http://www.crisisweb.org

thoroughly displace Darfur from the state narrative, making as many as two million Darfurians flee their homes.

It is time now to shift focus and move to Darfur itself to see how language and landscape work on local levels and how the displacement of Darfur is not only a displacement from the state, but a thorough distortion of local geographies in the region and a displacement of local meaning.

5
The Politics of Space:
Landscape and Language in Darfur

In the previous chapters I have sought to analyse the conflict in Darfur as a result of the nature of the state of Sudan where the displacement of entire regions, Darfur being the latest, is caused by a specific structure of the state and its ability to expel from its centre all visions and voices not corresponding with the state narrative. It is the ambition of the present chapter to comprehend the area of Darfur in its own terms and shift the focus from seeing it as a part of the state of Sudan to view it as an independent geographical entity. This will allow a better view of the local complexities.

Darfur can be very easily located on the map as a "place" within Sudanese territory. Yet, when seen from within, Darfur is far from being a coherent political, social and geographical unit. Rather, it is a contested space. Implicitly, I here refer to the distinction made by Michel de Certeau between place and space and his claim that "space is practiced place" (1988:117). In the present context it seems pertinent to stress this distinction between the place of Darfur and the lived spaces within the region of Darfur. A significant element in the practising of place, that is in the creation of social spaces, is linguistic practice. The ways in which place is portrayed and dealt with *in language* form an important instrument in the politics of space, by rendering particular meanings and physical locations public. Therefore, in the following the politics of space will be seen in connection with the semantics of place. The two dimensions are closely interwoven when it comes to an assessment of the spatial order that encompasses negotiable differences. The negotiation takes place across physical as well as categorical boundaries.

Rather than providing an exhaustive account of the various ethnic groups and their different locations in the varying landscapes of Darfur I thus wish to account for

different *meanings* attached to the different locations. I wish to uncover what one may call the "conceptual geographies" of Darfur and show that the social spaces are not direct reflections of the geographical places. As we shall see, Darfur provides a series of examples of a subtle fusion of *political*, *spatial* and *semantic* ambiguities where local disputes over land and access to territory are remoulded and reinvented in political terms.

One reason to stress the conflation of these dimensions in the practising of place is the recurrent reference by the state to the conflicts of Darfur being essentially "tribal" in origin where one "tribe" states its claims towards another and solves the conflict using "traditional" methods of dispute settling. Within this imagery, which I find reductive, the actors in the conflicts are also reinvented along "tribal" and "ethnic" lines and their significance and claims to territory seen to correspond with changes in the actual political geography. As we shall see in the following, the notion of the "tribal" nature of the conflict serves the state of Sudan very well as an explanation for the local peculiarities of the conflict in Darfur and the violence that has engulfed the region. As I shall show, displacement in Darfur and patterns of displacement and disputes over territory reflect local orders and moral geographies. Displacement in Darfur is more than a physical removal from a place of residence; it is also a political and semantic expulsion from a certain area of local significance.

The concept of "*dar*"

The area of Darfur is a vast region in the Western part of Sudan, roughly the size of France. Most of Darfur is dry and harsh savannah. In the middle of Darfur lie the *Jebel Marra* mountains, an extinct volcano range that has been the traditional heartland of Darfur, "they mark not only the effective limit of Arabization from the East, but were both the base and refuge of the sultans in historical times." (O Fahey 1980:2). Darfur is thus a borderland in many ways, a place where various groups have co- existed and natural demarcations have formed borders between a variety of ethnic groups. Central in the historical geographical divisions of Darfur is the concept of *"Dar"*, meaning "abode" or "homeland". "*Dar Fur*" thus means the homeland of the Fur, but the present area of "*Dar Fur"* is home to a range of other "*dars*" that have been associated with different ethnic groups and have been autonomous political entities. Historically, Darfur was the center of an independent sultanate based in *Jebel*

Marra. Although the earliest dynastic history of Darfur awaits further (archaeological) research we know that the Darfur sultanate began expanding mid seventeenth century. Rex O Fahey's "*State and Society in Dar Fur"* (1980) is an authoritative and comprehensive account of the successive sultanates, their hierarchies and historiographies. What is important for the purpose of the present study is the way in which O Fahey demonstrates how the Fur was never a fixed ethnic identity and that genealogies of the sultans and nobles reveal a variety of different ancestors.

The Fur sultanate, which lasted until the British annexed Darfur in 1916, was a powerful structure that expanded and covered most of the present area of Darfur. Historically, the existence of *dars*, or tribal homelands, was a well-known concept in the history of the sultanate. Identifying a specific *dar* with a specific ethnic group in the history of Darfur is a difficult task and early historical sources make it clear that the fluctuations in the demography of Darfur impede an assessment of the exact boundaries of various *dars* over time. The history of Darfur as it has been transmitted makes it possible to give a detailed historical analysis of the dynastic divisions of space and power, but more difficult to asses the ethnic compositions and migrations in the areas surrounding *Jebel Marra* over time. The historical sources are generally political and elaborate on the centre of the sultanate but very few details have been given to the history of the margins. The sultans ruled from the fertile heartland in *Jebel Marra* and appointed governors to rule the provinces of Darfur. The "Fur" sultanate expanded and became an elaborate African/Islamic kingdom. The emergence and dynamics of this particular state is accounted for by O Fahey and for the purpose of the present study, the following quote sums up the ethnic dynamics of the successive Darfur states: "One may surmise that the label "Fur" is primarily cultural and linguistic, and that the Fur have expanded by the incorporation of other groups both during and before the time of the sultans". (O Fahey 1980:72). Ethnicity and the fixed territories associated with various ethnic groups were, and as we shall see are still, defined by political and pragmatic realities on ground level.

The incorporation of Darfur in the Anglo- Egyptian condominium was an introduction of a new order where the system of *dars* was institutionalized through *The Native Administration.* As we have seen before, *The Native Administration* was a way for the British to pay lip service to "traditional" modes of social organization and minimize their own political responsibilities for governance on local level in the vast

territory of Sudan. The formalization of the *dars* in Darfur meant that they became geopolitical entities. Gerard Prunier has the following characteristic of the new native elite: "Since they knew that they benefited from a "traditional" legitimacy (real or manipulated) and from the support of the Condominium administration, they tended to behave like petty tyrants" (Prunier 2005: 29). The new "petty tyranny" of politics in Darfur and the allocation of *dars* to select groups meant that local regions in Darfur acquired a new political influence where access to land for the *dar*-less would prove increasingly difficult.

In order to shed light on some of the conceptual boundaries and the interplay between spatial constraints and political confrontation, I wish to take a closer look at one of the major challenges to both the physical and the political environment in Darfur: The droughts and subsequent famines from the mid 1980s and onwards.

Drought and the distortion of conceptual geography

With the *dars* come different perceptions of both one's own land and the surrounding landscapes. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the 1970s and 1980s saw increasing drought in the Northern parts of Darfur, which led to a massive influx of people from a variety of ethnic groups into the Fur heartland.

In order to fully understand the thorough disruptions of the landscapes and the significance of local senses of geographical belonging it is time to look at the various perceptions of land that characterize the different peoples of Darfur. The conflict in Darfur is often depicted as a conflict between "nomads" on one side and "farmers" on the other. This is simplified while not entirely untrue. The area of Darfur can be divided into various belts each with their different meanings. Social anthropologist and Darfur expert Alex de Waal wrote a book about the consequences of the famine in the mid 1980s for the Darfur area called *Famine That Kills. Darfur, Sudan 1984-1985* (de Waal 1989). His overall ambition is an analysis of local perceptions of famine, drought and disaster and the inherent survival mechanisms of the local populace in the face of natural disaster. The following characterization and division of land in Darfur is drawn from the fieldwork of de Waal which forms the basis of his book. Landscapes and people overlap throughout Darfur. Yet ideas of space stay firm through generations. The following is thus a depiction of an ideal order that has been thoroughly distorted in the course of the past 20 years. In the central part of Darfur,

> "cultivated areas are the *dars* or *balad*[35], the sown, the domestic. Fur people are associated with this area: they are farmers and "belong". To the east and west are broadly similar farming people; other Fur, Berti, Masalit. Hills and forests count as *khalla*, that is wilderness, but "useful" wilderness providing bush fallow, pasture, wild foods, firewood and potential farmland. *Khalla* is found mainly to the north and south of the dar. Associated with the *khalla* are the semi nomadic herders; slightly disreputable, but also useful." (de Waal 1989: 87).

A central component of the mental geography of the Fur is the connection between the untamed land and the disreputable and untamed character of its people. The semi nomadic herders have a different perception of the land. As de Waal has it:

> "The Arab herders have a different moral geography (...) For them, the cultivated-forest distinction does not correspond to the home-wilderness opposition. They are also mobile. They see themselves as opposite, complementary, and equal or superior to the farmers. Their moral geography resembles a chessboard with one set of squares being places inhabited by farmers (Fur, Berti, etc) and the complementary set they can themselves inhabit. (de Waal 1989: 89).

Although de Waal notes that "Arab" herders have a different moral geography, he never uses the distinction between "Arabs" and "Africans" to indicate opposite moral landscapes and mental geographies in Darfur. As we have seen in the previous chapter the racial dichotomy between "Arabs" and "Africans" is very much an invention of the Khartoum government initially seeking "Arab" loyalty in its struggle against the Southern rebels SPLA. With the droughts in the 1980s the expansion of the desert forced many to flee from their areas of origin; subsequent struggles over grazing rights and the "violations of the moral landscape" (de Waal 1989: 87) began to have fatal consequences for the co- existence of Darfurians. Conflicts were now

[35] *Balad* means both country and homeland and the word has a series of different connotations associated with it in different Arab countries and histories. In Darfur, the word is to be understood in the simple sense of homeland.

increasingly understood along ethnic lines on local level in Darfur, introducing a new language and new dichotomies.

From spatial to racial: changing the vocabulary of conflict

Sharif Harir is a Darfur intellectual who joined the rebels in Darfur and today is the spokesperson for the SLA (Sudan Liberation Army), one of the main rebel groups in the current conflict. In his article "*Arab Belt" versus "African Belt*". *Ethno-Political Conflict in Dar Fur and the Regional Cultural Factors* (Harir 1994) he analyses one of the major conflicts in Darfur in the late 1980s. Harir's analysis has at its core a reading of the documents produced at the tribal reconciliation conference in the North Darfur capital, El Fasher. The conference took place from May to July in 1989, the same period as the state of Sudan was taken over by the coup d'etat of the Bashir government.

The key reason for the conflict in 1987-89 was to be found in the changes of the landscape and the increased pressure on natural resources and access to grazing land (Harir 1994:162). Studying both the war on the ground and the subsequent reconciliation attempts one sees a clear similarity both in the nature of conflict and the reciprocal rhetoric of blame from the warring parties. In the course of the war, 2.500 Fur tribesmen lost their lives, and many were disabled. The Fur also lost 40.000 head of livestock and 400 villages containing 10.000 people were burned down and levelled out of existence. A key element of the Fur response was the burning of pasture and denial of access to water sources on Fur territory (Harir 1994:144-145). At the El Fasher conference a 110 man delegation of Fur people put forward the following position and gave the following account of events:

> " The dirty war that has been imposed on us [i.e. the Fur], began as an economic war but soon it assumed a genocidal course aiming at driving us out of our ancestral land in order to achieve certain political goals. (...) The basic fuel of this war is racism. This conflict is about their attempt at dividing people of Dar Fur region into "Arabs" against "Blacks" (*Zurga,* Arabic) with superiority attributed to the former. The racial nature of the conflict is clearly revealed by the organizational vessel adopted by them, "The Arab Congregation." (Harir 1994: 147)

Of interest here is "The Arab Congregation", referred to by the Fur. This congregation is the same as the "Arab Gathering" (*tajammu'*) described in chapter 4. The racial policies and battle about Darfur that became apparent in Khartoum in the 1980s were manifest on ground level in the battle of the resources in Darfur. The Arab tribes also presented a 110 man strong delegation that gave their version of the conflict:

> "Our Arab tribe [note the singular form] and the Fur coexisted peacefully throughout the known history of Dar Fur. However, the situation was destabilized towards the end of the seventies when the Fur raised a slogan which claimed that Dar Fur is for the Fur "Dar Fur for Fur". (...) The Arabs were depicted as foreigners who should be evicted from this area of Dar Fur. (...) Ours is a legitimate self defense and we shall continue defending our right of access to water and pasture. However, let us not be in doubt about who began this war: it is the Fur who in their quest to extend the so called "African Belt" (*al hizam al zunji*, Arabic) wanted to remove all Arabs from this soil" (Harir 1994: 147).

For the present study it is important to see how the politics of space was redefined along ethnic lines where the warring parties defined their claims to space as "natural" in the face of an enemy wanting to expel them for racist reasons. This new claim to territory on ethnic grounds, coupled with a proliferation of small arms as a result of the North- South war and civil wars in neighbouring Chad, provided a highly volatile situation in an area prone to conflict as a result of the ecological changes and the subsequent accelerated contest for space. From the late 1980s Darfur was a bomb waiting to go off. In the first years of the new millennium it did.

War

The present war in Darfur, which has led to the internal displacement of up to two million people, started with a series of largely uncoordinated attacks on manifestations of the state of Sudan by loosely knit rebel groupings. The area had seen an upsurge in local conflicts throughout the late 1990s and in the beginning of the new millennium, but the attacks on the airport in Al Fasher, capital of North

Darfur, in the beginning of 2003 were the real wake up call for the Sudanese state. The attacks on Al Fasher managed to destroy a large portion of the Sudanese Air Force while the planes were still on the ground, a military success on behalf of the rebels of immense proportions that in part account for the swiftness and comprehensive brutality in the government's response. Khartoum was in shock. "In more than twenty years' war in the South, the SPLA had never inflicted such a loss on the air force. The rebels were jubilant" (de Waal and Flint 2005: 100).

But who were the rebels and how did distortions and violations of the local politics of space transform into violent protest against the state of Sudan?
I have previously sought to account for the Darfur- Khartoum axis as one of both ideological proximity and regional marginalisation, a relation of both mutual dependency and mutual distrust. The rebels' attack on Al Fasher was an unprecedented and dangerous challenge by groups who had once felt very close to the ideas of the state but who throughout the last twenty years or so had witnessed an increasingly systematic policy of racial exclusion and neglect by the agencies and bodies of the Sudanese government:

> "Darfur's rebels are an awkward coalition of Fur and Masalit villagers, Zaghawa Bedouins out of patience with Khartoum, a handful of professionals who dared to take on leadership, and disillusioned Islamist intellectuals" (de Waal and Flint 2005: 95).

This broad base of dissatisfaction was soon embodied in two major rebel movements: the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM). Where the political platform and ideological history of the SLA is blurred, the history and establishment of the JEM are better known. Central in the movement is Khalil Ibrahim, a veteran Islamist of the NIF. The JEM was originally formed following attempts to reform the NIF from within in the early 1990s embittered by the NIF regime's regional neglect but JEM has since been busy severing all ties to the party. De Waal and Flint quote Dr. Ibrahim "We regional people, especially Darfur, have been very disappointed by the NIF (...) The AIDS of the National Islamic Front is racism" (de Waal and Flint 2005: 89).

Indeed, the conflict in Darfur had become racial. Race had become an ideological tool that worked both ways and added fuel to the flame on both sides. The

response to the rebellion from the state of Sudan was to arm Arab militias with ideas of racial supremacy and small arms in equal measures. This proved a lethal cocktail for civilians in Darfur: the *janjaweed* started roaming.

The *janjaweed*

The technology of violence used in the counter- insurgency campaigns against the rebels in Darfur was an echo of former strategies employed by the state of Sudan. The government of Sudan armed loyal Arab militias promising weapons, political influence and a free hand to keep the booty looted from the rebels' nests. It was an immediate repetition of the *murahaliin* raids into South Sudan that had proven a great success not only against the Southerners but also against the Bolad insurgency. This time the militias also consisted of a large component of Chadian Arabs[36]. Collectively, these militias came to be known under the name *Janjaweed*[37] and bear the main responsibility for the atrocities on ground level in Darfur that have marked the area ever since the breakout of the present war. The patterns of attacks and the cooperation between the *janjaweed* and the Sudanese Government have been documented by a series of organisations, most notably Human Rights Watch, who in their briefing paper of July 2004 *Darfur Documents Confirm Government Policy of Militia Support* has published a series of documents from the State of Sudan authorizing *janjaweed* impunity and clearly documenting government support for the militias[38]. The sheer amount of eye witness accounts to the *janjaweed* counter-insurgency campaigns all point to the same pattern of attacks, a deliberate scorched earth policy where the *janjaweed* militias arrive on camels or horses and raid, kill, burn and attack the villages and their inhabitants. This is followed by official government troops in vehicles and heavier armour. Following the ground troops, government Antonov airplanes bomb what is left of the villages.[39] Civilians in

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[36] The Chadian element in the *janjaweed* militia remains an understudied component of Darfur's history but has been highlighted by Alex de Waal in his review of Gerard Prunier's *Darfur.The Ambiguous Genocide* in The Times Literary Supplement, August 12th, 2005.

[37] The origins of the name *janjaweed* are to be found in the colloquial Arabic of Darfur where the word "*jann*" means evil spirit and the name "*jawad*" meaning horse. Other Sudanese have given me the explanation that the word is a fusion of "GM 3", a machinegun and "*jawad*", meaning horse.

[38] See *Human Rights Watch Briefing Paper, July 19th, 2004*, available at http://www.hrw.org

[39] For more accounts of the nature of the *janjaweed* and government attacks on villages in Darfur see Prunier 2005: 99-110, De Waal and Flint 2005: 101-115 plus a series of reports released by The International Crisis Group, http://www.crisisweb.org,and Human Rights Watch, http://www.hrw.org

villages surviving the *janjaweed* attacks all tell of the militias addressing them in racially derogative terms, referring to their own Arab supremacy and the status of the villagers as “blacks” and “slaves”.

When the government of Sudan recruited forces to join the *janjaweed* it made sure to recruit only among Arab tribes, and there are numerous accounts of the government of Sudan echoing the racial supremacy of the Arabs and the ideology of the Arab Gathering. For the civilian population in the villages of Darfur the result of the militarized racial ideology were devastating. In the words of Human Rights Watch:

> “ The attacks are deliberately and systematically directed against civilians on account of their ethnicity. Some abuses stand out for the extraordinary level of brutality shown by the perpetrators, suggesting an intention to destroy the civilian group targeted in a given locality. All these incidents should be investigated in depth, and prosecuted as exceptionally serious international crimes, including potentially the crime of genocide” (Human Rights Watch 2004: 4).

The politics of envy

The new racial order imposed with the ruthless brutality by the *janjaweed* leading to the displacement of thousands of Darfurians had its origins in the policies of racial manipulation in Khartoum. Yet, when the *janjaweed* were let out to loot, rape, murder and displace, they did not redraw the maps of Darfur according to grand political schemes for the control of the region designed in Khartoum. They displaced Darfur by disrupting the local politics of space, in some places inverting the existing order. Independent analyst, Vic Tanner, has produced an interagency paper called *The Rule of Lawlessness. Roots and Repercussions of the Darfur Crisis* (Tanner 2005). Tanner has analysed the patterns of displacement as a result of the present war and the warring parties. He gives the following characterisation of the origins of the *janjaweed*:

> “The *janjaweed* militias are overwhelmingly drawn from the small poor Arab camel-herding (*jammala*) tribes of Northern Darfur. These tribes do not have

> their own dar – tribal homeland – that guarantees them access to land. The confluence of poverty, governmental neglect, ecological pressure, and generalised lawlessness has pitted these tribes against their neighbours – sedentary farmers with whom they used to live in close social and economic association" (Tanner 2005: 4).

Analysing the patterns of displacement following the *janjaweed* campaigns Tanner makes clear that there are indeed different objectives behind the *janjaweed* campaigns, depending on the place they attack. In parts of Darfur, notably the west, the *janjaweed* are known to have stayed in the areas they displaced, and indeed "land is the object of violence" (Tanner 2005:28). In the more barren parts of Darfur, the *janjaweed* have not stayed following their counter-insurgency campaigns of looting, burning, raping and killing since there was no immediate value on the ground in the locality itself.

Thus, the reasons for joining the *janjaweed* seem to correspond neatly with the reasons for joining the *murahaliin* in the 1980s. As Douglas Johnson has pointed out (2004:82), these reasons were mainly economic. By arming the *murahaliin*, and since then the *janjaweed*, the state of Sudan has managed to make use of local imbalances and envy to secure a combined control of space and local political loyalty. Tanner concludes his analysis of the mechanisms behind the *janjaweed*:

> "The current crisis confirms that bitter irony of Sudan – and elsewhere – that it is often society's least privileged groups that end up in human rights-abusing militias." (Tanner 2005:20).

The displacement of more than two million people in Darfur has taken place through a deliberate violation of the politics of space, the moral geographies consciously manipulated and inverted by agents of the state of Sudan. Although the landscapes of Darfur have been negotiated, contested and fought over before, the most recent and most comprehensive displacement was and is only possible because it is also a displacement *in language*: the racist and derogative vocabulary used by the *janjaweed* in their act of displacing Darfur may in fact be the most lethal weapon. The conscious reduction of the sedentary farmers to "black slaves" leaves no vocabulary for re-placement in the geography of Darfur, be it moral or physical. There are no "*dars*" to

return to for the "slaves", they are written out of both space and, as I shall argue later, history. The politics of space in Darfur before the war was, as I have shown before, a balance of shared vocabularies, where ethnic identities were categories open for negotiation in accordance with shifting political alliances and accesses to the space of Darfur. The technology of violence employed to control Darfur is also a technology *in language*, violating existing vocabularies in a new hegemonic order of "Arab" dominance. One feature in the state of Sudan's explanation of the tragedy in Darfur is reducing it to "tribal" conflicts, the term "tribe" working on a variety of levels, both as a tool to contain the crisis in the state and to deny responsibility for the events by the same state.

The Wali and the "tribal" conflicts.

The space of Darfur is divided into three states, North, West and South Darfur. The largest and most populous is South Darfur with the regional capital, Nyala. Nyala is the economic centre of Darfur and is the only town in Darfur with a railway that connects it to Khartoum and further on to Port Sudan. South Darfur is ruled by the State of Sudan through a Wali, a governor.

Throughout the present conflict agents of the State of Sudan have publicly stressed the "tribal" character of the conflict in Darfur, and have removed themselves from any involvement or responsibility. The Wali of South Darfur has made great efforts to publicly cast himself as mediator in the tribal conflicts in Darfur and has issued a "Charter for Peaceful Coexistence" in 2004. The Charter is signed by a all political parties, including parties of opposition, leading intellectuals, leaders of trade unions and civil society organisations. The Charter was launched in a great public ceremony in the courtyard of the Wali's office in Nyala. Invited to the publication of the Charter and many subsequent tribal reconciliation meetings in the courtyard were also heads of international relief agencies, increasingly present since 2004. Standing in the shade in the corner of the courtyard, many heads of agencies could see themselves on national television the next day, an excited voiceover proclaiming that "international agencies support the brave attempts of the Wali at reconciliation between the warring tribes of Darfur"[40]. The Charter is an interesting example of how

[40] personal conversation with heads of international agencies, South Darfur, first half of 2005

the State of Sudan has reformulated the current conflict in an all-encompassing state narrative, reflecting the order of the just Islamic state and the hegemonic narrative of that state:

أولاً :

نلتزم بقيم الدين وموجهاته في العدل و المساواة و الشورى و الديمقراطية و الأمر بالمعروف و النهي عن المنكر وإصلاح ذات البين وفق أحكام الشرع و الأعراف الحميدة .

ثانياً :

نعاهد الله على ألا يعتدي بعضنا على بعض في النفس أو المال أو العرض أو لأي سبب من الأسباب (إن دماءكم وأموالكم وأعراضكم حرام عليكم كحرمة يومكم هذا) الحديث .

ثالثاً :

أن نعمل على محاربة التمرد و الجنجويد و المليشيات وظاهرة النهب المسلح وعدم إيوائهم أو التستر عليهم أو مساعدتهم باي شكل من الإشكال وأن نقوم بإبلاغ السلطات المختصة بهم وعن تحركاتهم مع إلقاء المسئولية الكاملة على من يتستر عليهم أو يأويهم .

41

Reiterating the religious principles and the adherence to Islamic law, and the democracy inherent in Islam, the responsibility for obtaining peace is equal among all believers. The Charter is formulated in a way that cannot be objected by any citizens of Darfur.

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[41] Firstly: We adhere to religion and its directives in justice and equality and *shura* (consultation) and democracy and commanding the good and forbidding the evil and the settlement of disputes in accordance with *sharia* (Islamic law) and good customs. Secondly: We promise God that none of us should fight each other in spirit or [over] money or land or other reasons (for your blood, money, and land is sacred) – *hadith* (saying of the Prophet). Thirdly: we will combat the rebels, the *janjaweed*, and the militias and the armed robbers and deny accommodation, protection or assistance in any form and [we will] transmit them and [knowledge of] their movements to the relevant authorities and anyone who accommodates them offer protection to them should be held fully responsible.

Delocalizing the *janjaweed*

Interesting is the Wali's mentioning of the *janjaweed*. Further comments must here be added to the local connotations of the word *janjaweed*. Because of the Chadian component in the original *janjaweed* militias the word still carries with it associations of a non-Sudanese phenomenon. One person who in the eyes of many and in independent analyses of the war in Darfur embodies the very notion of the word *janjaweed* is the Arab sheikh and leader of *The Arab Gathering*, Musa Hilal, armed by the Sudanese government to crack down on rebels in Darfur:

> "Confident of the impunity afforded him by the government, and of the international community's refusal to mark its bark with its bite, Hilal has amused himself by playing word games while his men burn Darfur. He has never convincingly denied the crimes he stand accused of, nor shown any regret over the destruction of Darfur, its people and its multi-ethnic society. He has only protested at being called *janjawiid* – a word customarily used to refer to outlaws and highwaymen from Chad. "The *janjawiid* are bandits, like the mutineers. It is we who are fighting the *janjawiid*." What Hilal does not deny, indeed relishes, is being a government agent" (de Waal and Flint 2005: 38).

By delocalizing the *janjaweed,* placing them in the vocabulary of non-Sudanese outlaws, both the Wali and the leading *janjaweed* commander Musa Hilal can put the blame for the destruction of Darfur outside of their own realm of political responsibility and outside their own semantic space. The cooperation between Arab militias and the Government of Sudan is well documented; Musa Hilal is indeed a good friend of the Wali in South Darfur, greeting him as a stern supporter of his cause (de Waal and Flint 2005: 39).

With the above mentioned Charter, the Wali of South Darfur has managed to formulate a new model for peaceful co-existence of Darfurians and thus a new politics of space. The ones to be fought are the ones who do not belong. The *janjaweed* are an alien source of trouble and it is everybody's responsibility to combat them. The battle for a definition of the politics of space remains a semantic battle, the state of Sudan

laying out the rules for co-existence by defining who can be accommodated and who should be denied access to the social space of Darfur. Language was the principal and most lethal weapon used by the state of Sudan to seek control of the space through its politics of envy, pitting "Arabs" against "slaves". Language is also the most important tool used by the state to step back from events and blame outside forces for the disruption of the spatial order and the displacement of Darfur.

However, although the Charter reconfirms the narrative of the state, recasting the troubled Darfur in the comprehensive vocabulary of the just Islamic state, there exists a crucial space in South Darfur state that the Wali cannot contain in language and thus cannot politically control: The Kalma Camp 14 kilometres east of Nyala. It poses a specific danger to the state of Sudan and has the highest concentration of *naziheen* in the history of Darfur with more than 100.000 inhabitants. It is time now to move to Kalma to see how categories in language shape the reciprocal perceptions of purity and danger between both agents of the state of Sudan and the *naziheen* themselves.

6

Torro Borro vs. *Janjaweed*: Purity and Danger in Kalma Camp

The following is based on my experiences as Field Coordinator for an American NGO working in South Darfur from October 2004 to August 2005. As Field Coordinator I was the only non-Sudanese staff member in South Darfur and was responsible for the implementation and monitoring of a variety of development and educational programmes for the *naziheen* of Kalma Camp, the biggest camp in Darfur. This very practical experience with displaced persons in Darfur's biggest camp gave a unique insight into the day to day life of *naziheen* in Darfur and into the understanding and articulation of the conflict by the people who have fled their villages of origin to live a new life dependent on relief packages delivered by international agencies. Working in Kalma means working in the state of Sudan. Thus, getting access to the camp and obtaining the right permissions needed for the implementation of programmes for the *naziheen* required a continuous process of negotiation with the Sudanese Government's Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC).

On a more theoretical level, the discussion of access to a particular space in the state of Sudan for the purpose of implementing relief and development activities provided a series of interesting examples of the physical manifestations of the hegemonic topography of the state. It is also an interesting example of space as apractised place (de Certeau 1988:117), a geographical entity contested from both the outside and from within. As a development worker representing the international community I myself took part in practising the space of Kalma, moving in and out of the camp and in and out of the definitions of the space of Kalma given by the state and the displaced people themselves. As the following will show, the notions of purity and danger, employed in my analysis of the national narrative of the Sudanese state

and the particular challenge to this narrative by the region of Darfur, can be reused in an analysis of how space is perceived at camp level. An analysis of how the state acts towards its *naziheen* in Kalma is a study of both the hegemonic topography of the Sudanese state and of the technology of violence employed to maintain this particular topography.

The period from October 2004 to August 2005 was a period of major disruptions in Kalma camp, all of which can be analysed as symptoms of a larger struggle for language and hegemony that plays itself out between the state and the *naziheen*. In the following I shall sketch the history of Kalma Camp in the period of my stay in South Darfur. The information shared among international agencies at the UN security briefings held three times a week during my stay in Nyala are not passed on in writing as much information consists of unconfirmed rumours and some facts subject to much controversy. Very little written material exists on the history of Kalma Camp, but where UN reports or news from written media exist they will referred to. The main sources of information in this chapter are my own day to day conversations with the *naziheen* in Kalma Camp and the Sudanese police. These conversations were supplemented by my participation in a variety of meetings for agencies working in Kalma, the most important of which I will briefly mention. The weekly Kalma Camp Coordination Meeting was chaired by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), the agency responsible for the overall humanitarian management of the camp. The purpose of this meeting was to coordinate activities and let all agencies brief each other on the status of their programs. The medical agencies working in the camp, such as MSF, gave statistics on the health situation in the camp, trends in diseases found in the camp such as Hepatitis E and diarrhoea, and the agencies working in the water and sanitation (watsan) field accounted for the chlorification of the water containers in the camp and the transport of water to Kalma. The meetings in the Kalma Camp Protection Working Group (PWG) had the purpose of getting a full picture of the safety situation of the camp's population. This was the forum where issues of protection of women and reduction of exposure to Gender Based Violence (GBV), i.e. rape, was discussed. The issue of GBV in Darfur was also the subject of meetings twice a month in the GBV Working Group, held at the UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund) compound in Nyala. The Kalma Camp Relocation Working Group (RWG) also held meetings where issues of relocating displaced people to new camps were discussed as Kalma grew and areas of the camp were going to be flooded

in the approaching rainy season. Apart from these meetings, the UN OCHA office in Nyala held security briefings three times a week where the overall security situation of South Darfur was discussed. Together, all of these meetings and briefings provided a major base for sharing and receiving information.

Kalma Camp

Like many other camps for *naziheen* in Darfur, Kalma was originally a village and this village still exists on the outskirts of the camp. The camp is stretched out along the railroad track that connects the town of Nyala with Khartoum and Port Sudan, and is covering an area of more than 6.500 square kilometres[42]. Since the breakout of conflict in 2003 the camp received thousands of *naziheen* from many places in South Darfur. Kalma is a spontaneous settlement where the displaced persons have settled according to the social patterns and hierarchies of the communities they left. On my first visit to Kalma, the driver, himself a resident in Kalma, told me with great excitement: "we live in the *exact same way* as we did before we were *naziheen!"*

In the second half of 2004, where I took up the job as Field Coordinator, Kalma Camp had grown immensely and in the last two months of that year received a daily number of more than 600 new *naziheen*. That the camp had become such a magnet for people fleeing from all over South Darfur had to do with the continuing war and insecurity but also with the Sudanese Government's policies towards the displaced populations. In November 2004 the Al Geer camp for the displaced on the outskirts of Nyala had been declared illegal and bulldozed by the government. At the same time threats were made by the government against Otash camp, also on the outskirts of Nyala. The International Crisis Group's briefing paper *Darfur: The Failure to Protect* from March 2005 accounts for these events and quotes a report from a Médicins sans Frontières-Holland:

> "The situation in Darfur perverts the very idea of refuge. People escape the attackers once, yet they cannot find real safety. Constant insecurity and harassment, as well as lack of basic essentials for survival, mean that many

[42] For statistics on Kalma Camp pr. August 2005, see appendix.

> displaced people are continuously on the move, abandoning one place and trying desperately to establish a place of safety in another".[43]

This was the general status of many *naziheen* in South Darfur upon my arrival in Darfur and Kalma was thus a place of refuge for people already displaced once. When I asked new-comers to Kalma why they had chosen this particular camp many would answer that it was because of its size, they knew it was too big to be leveled. "It is the only safe place", many would say. Kalma had become a super camp, a magnet for *naziheen* from near and far. With the number of inhabitants reaching beyond 100.000 in the beginning of 2005, Kalma Camp was an obvious choice for many reasons. The marketplace in Kalma almost rivalled that of Nyala town itself. Everything could be bought: Scratchcards for cellular phones (due to its proximity to the town of Nyala, full mobilephone coverage exists in the camp), livestock, vegetables, Chinese transistor radios, lollipops, donkeys, building materials and tomatoes. Many town businessmen had simply moved from Nyala itself to establish small shops in the camp.

As the size of the camp increased, so did the logistical challenge in assessing needs and providing relief to the displaced. Due to the ad hoc creation of the camp and the sheer speed with which it had grown, defining the number of inhabitants and allocating the required relief packages was a difficult task for the international agencies. The camp is divided into eight sectors, each headed by a sheikh who has the responsibility of reporting back to the agencies, accounting for the communities in his sector. Many sheikhs have been known to exaggerate the number of people living in their sectors to get more food delivered, the surplus sold on the commercial markets in the camp. The agencies have thus had to undertake independent headcounts of the displaced population. These headcounts are difficult exercises as they involve getting all of the camp's population registered in the so-called "fixing areas" erected throughout the camp. Many displaced persons in Kalma express great concern about leaving their homes in the camp to register themselves in the fixing areas, fearing their huts will be robbed or even demolished if they venture too far away from it. The very notion of counting the displaced point to some categorical ambiguities as to who is "displaced" and who is not. Apart from a challenge to the international agencies,

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[43] Quoted in ICG Africa Report no. 89, March 5th, 2005. Available at http://www.crisisweb.org.

who have to have a precise number of recipients to allocate the required portions of relief and food aid, the category of *naziheen* at camp level is never neutral, as we will see below.

”Al Mo’askar kullo Torro Borro!”

As the camp grew to become almost a town in its own right, Sudanese authorities viewed the camp with increasing worry and suspicion. Kalma was slipping out of government control and the relation between the Sudanese government and Sudanese police on the one hand and the population of Kalma on the other was one of increasing tension. A significant event was the shooting of four police officers in the camp in November of 2004. The police officers, sleeping in a tent on the outskirts of the camp, were shot in their sleep in the middle of the night and eyewitnesses described the perpetrators fleeing into the camp following the shooting. On Kalma Camp coordination meetings, chaired by Norwegian Refugee Council, the agency responsible for coordinating humanitarian work in the camp, Sudanese police officers stated their increased concern that the camp was a rebel training ground and posed an immediate danger to their lives and work in Kalma. The shooting confirmed to the Sudanese police that anti-government sentiments were not only mounting in the camp but that large scale violence was likely to erupt and could lead to major coordinated attacks on Nyala town itself.

On the Kalma Camp coordination meetings the Sudanese police did not try to hide their opinion of the need for a demolition of Kalma, as they saw it as a rebel training ground where dangerous plots against manifestations of the Sudanese state were thought up and carried out. “*Al M’oaskar kullo Mu’arida!”,* ”the camp is all opposition” was a sentence often heard in the last months of 2004. Sudanese state officials participating in meetings continued to claim that more than half of the camps population were indeed Nyala citizens wanting a free meal and exemption from participation in the town work market. For them, the category of ”displaced” was a phony category consisting mainly of Nyala townspeople and potential rebels. The coordination meetings were stages for heated discussions between the Sudanese authorities and the international humanitarian community, the latter stressing the importance of protection of civilians and the need for an adequate headcount, while the former denounced the very notion of ”displaced” persons. The struggle for a

definition of adequate assistance to the *naziheen* of Kalma Camp went across both humanitarian and categorical boundaries. On more informal occasions and in private interviews the Sudanese police continued to claim that Kalma camp was an all-rebel territory, ”*al mo'askar kullo Torro Borro!”*

The notion of ”*Torro Borro*” deserves further comment. It is the name commonly given to the rebels by the authorities of the Sudanese state and in colloquial Sudanese Arabic of Nyala town the nickname for the rebel group SLA. It is a local pronounciation of the Tora Bora mountains in Afghanistan, known to house Al Qaeda rebels and bombed by US airplanes in the last part of 2001. Nicknaming the rebels ”*Torro Borro*” refers to do with the main rebel base in the *Jebel Marra* mountain range in the middle of Darfur. Thus, they are perceived as a violent terrorist network centred in the mountains of Darfur. The Sudanese authorities transferred a local armed rebellion into the vocabulary of international terrorism, delocalizing a very local phenomenon. And by equating the displaced of Kalma with terrorists in Afghanistan, the camp itself becomes a space outside the state of Sudan. The displaced are thus written out of Sudanese history and not given a place or an opportunity to respond and re-categorize themselves. But, as we will see below, the displaced people of Kalma have the ability to both fight and categorize back.

The May riots

The month of May 2005 was a month of significant events in Kalma Camp. As the Wali of South Darfur saw the camp slipping out of government control, the number of inhabitants growing dramatically and the markets booming with goods, creating a rival economic circuit to the town market, drastic new measures were taken from the state to control the space of Kalma. On May 5th, Norwegian Refugee Council was thrown out of the camp by the Sudanese authorities. NRC was accused of being an agency that had ”political motives” behind coordinating humanitarian activities in the camp, although no further explanation was given to the baffled NRC representatives. A series of internal changes in the HAC followed and a new council for coordination of humanitarian affairs in Kalma was established. The Wali reached straight into the heart of the state of Sudan and the new body governing Kalma was sent in from the capital, Khartoum. Controlling Kalma was now a matter at the centre of the Sudanese

state, incorporated into the central perspective of the capital itself. The weekly Kalma Camp coordination meetings were transferred to the HAC compound in the camp.

Tensions were mounting between HAC and the Sudanese police on the one hand and the inhabitants of Kalma on the other, and a riot broke out on May 19th and May 20th. Conflicting reports of the reasons for the riots have since emerged on subsequent coordination meetings and security briefings at the UN OCHA (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) in Nyala. The riots were triggered by the harassment of a lady selling tea by a young soldier of the Sudanese police forces. The tea ladies in Kalma also commonly serve as prostitutes, a phenomenon also known from the streets of the capital. Whether the fight erupted over the sexual services offered by the woman in the Kalma market or the quality of the tea she was selling is of less importance. What is interesting in this analysis is the response to the fight among the people of Kalma witnessing the harassment, who in their protest against the incident attacked both the tea ladies and the soldiers. Why? The tea ladies, I was told afterwards by the sheikhs, were *not* residents in Kalma, but poor women from Nyala seeking an opportunity to make money in the camp. The soldiers, representations of the Sudanese state, were the only customers, none of the displaced would engage in such immoral behaviour as the purchase of commercial sex in the camp. Both tea ladies and police were outside sources of social distortion, and subsequent violent actions were thus directed at driving both the tea ladies and the police out of the camp. However, since the police were living in tents outside Kalma, the displaced populations directed their anger at the two manifestations of the State of Sudan in the camp itself: the HAC. The HAC was thrown out of the camp and their compound was burned down to the ground.

The events of Kalma Camp and the violence of May 19th and 20th 2005 were by many seen as spontaneous and uncoordinated protests against any manifestations of the Sudanese state. But in my subsequent interviews with sheikhs I became convinced that the rebellion was a deliberate act of purifying the space of Kalma and thus the lived social space of the *naziheen*. By the police, the displaced were viewed as a non-local phenomenon (”*Torro Borro*”), geographically and socially, in the space of Darfur. For the displaced Kalma was the eye of the storm, the only place safe from danger in Darfur. The missing dignity and loss of social standing as a result of being displaced and living in the camp seemingly gave rise to a renewed sense of *moral* belonging. In the first half of 2005, NRC social workers, local employees monitoring

the social life of the displaced, reported an upsurge in the harassment of women who were not wearing the proper Muslim attire, such as a tightly worn headscarf in the camp. Apparently, mosques in the camp were preaching increasingly strong moral messages, stressing Islamic virtues and the need for living in full accordance with the Qu'ran in the day to day life in Kalma. Understanding the dynamics of Islamization in Kalma, it is tempting to look at Liisa Malkki's refugee camp for Hutu refugees in Tanzania:

> ”Far from ”losing” their collective identity – and far from living in an abscence of culture and history – the Hutu refugees in the camp located their identities within their very displacement, extracting meaning and power from the interstitial social location they inhabited. Instead of losing their collective identity, this is where and how they made it. The refugee camp had become both the spatial and the politico- symbolic site for imagining a moral and political community” (Malkki 1995: 16).

When interviewing displaced persons about why they had chosen the HAC as the target of their frustration over the police harassment of an (alleged) prostitute, many inhabitants of Kalma stressed that the HAC compound also served as a brothel. Whether this is true is not certain, but the fusion in the minds of many of the displaced people of the Sudanese state (the attempt at control, embodied in HAC), the police (a source of continuing violent manifestations of the state) and immoral sexual encounters (all of outside origin) is noteworthy. Together these intrusions into the life form a particular pollution of the ”spatial and politico-symbolic site” Kalma had become, a threat to the purity of the displaced community (in singular). The emerging consciousness among many displaced of belonging to a new single community could be seen on a variety of levels: The increased Islamization of the camp, where self-imposed watchmen publicly voiced the need for women to wear proper Muslim attire is one such example. Another is the denial heard in the camp of the sexually illicit behaviour originating among displaced women from *within* Kalma. Lastly, the perception of the HAC compound as a brothel is an example of conceptually merging the religiously unlawful with the presence of the state of Sudan in the camp. These

examples all bear interesting resemblance to the processes in the Hutu camp in Tanzania observed by Malkki:

> ”Curiously, the very status ”refugee”, which ordinarily acts to make people interstitial or liminal- and hence polluting (Douglas 1966, Turner 1967, Malkki 1992a) – in the national order of things, had here been transformed through a curious social alchemy into a state of purity” (Malkki 1995: 230-231).

The riots in Kalma camp in May 2005 were a violent manifestation of the merging of a new collective political community in the camp, a categorical subversion redefining the notions of purity and danger. The Wali in Nyala answered back through a physical re-establishment of the camp in the space of the state.

Containing Kalma

On a morning in the beginning of June 2005 I headed out to Kalma camp from Nyala to monitor our programmes. Heading down the road towards the camp the driver slammed the breaks almost sending me head first through the windscreen had I not been wearing my seatbelt. A cloud of dust whirled up following this abrupt halt clouding all vision and as it settled I could see the reason why we had stopped: A huge 1, 5 meter deep and 2 meter wide ditch cut open the road to Kalma making it impossible for any vehicle, man or animal to traverse and reach Kalma by this road. We headed south towards the railroad track, realizing with surprise that the ditch strecthed all the way to the railroad track. Here we were met by a checkpoint erected in the shade of a huge tree and manned by soldiers sitting with machine guns ready, keeping an eye on people as they walked by on foot from Kalma to Nyala in the hot sun of the approaching mid-day. The ditch reached all around Kalma, I was told by the soldiers and the railroad track was the only way in and out of the camp for both people, animals, donkey-carts and vehicles.

The digging of the ditch and the control of all traffic to and from the camp were a result of the Wali’s introduction of a ban on all commercial traffic to the camp. The official explanation was that this was a measure to prevent Nyala townspeople from establishing businesses in the camp: The displaced were served food rations through the World Food Programme’s implementing agencies and there was no need

for an additional market providing a surplus of goods. The market and the availability of goods within the camp itself only encouraged permanent settlement and attracted Nyala townspeople. A permanent village in Kalma of more than 100.000 people, ”*kullo Torro Borro*” , a source of constant danger.

The encircling of Kalma by the ditch dug around the camp and the control of all traffic to and from the camp by soldiers of the police were a literal manifestation of the hegemonic topography of the Sudanese State. Remembering Malkki’s use of Douglas’ classic division between purity and danger again: ”Refugees are constituted, in Douglas’ sense (1966) as a dangerous category because they blur national (read: natural) boundaries”. Digging the ditch was an attempt at containing the pollution of the camp to the national purity of the state, a space the Wali needed to control.

The ban on commercial traffic to and from Kalma was disastrous for the people of the camp. Whereas cars and busses previous to the ban (which included all motorised vehicles except the ones belonging to NGOs) could bring the people of the camp into Nyala in half an hour, the fact that only one road led from the camp into town meant that reaching Nyala by foot could take as long as seven hours depending on your point of departure in the camp. The UN Security Council’s Monthly Report to the Secretary General on Darfur released in July 2005 mentioned the ban on commercial traffic to Kalma as one of great significance and gravity. It analysed some of the consequences for life in the camp:

> ”The ongoing blockade of the Kalma camp for internally displaced persons demonstrates the perpetuation of protection problems in Darfur. Following unrest in Kalma camp on 19 May, a ban was imposed on commercial traffic to and from the camp. Banning the movement of commercial products into the camp has resulted in reduced availability of certain basic commodities. Malnutrition rates in Kalma camp were already rising prior to the ban, when internally displaced persons still had the opportunity to trade to supplement their food rations. Now that this option is no longer available to them, relief workers expect a negative impact on the nutritional status of internally displaced persons living in the camp. The ban on commercial traffic, including transport, is also preventing many women from travelling to the town of Nyala to work as domestic labourers. In a context in which 70 per cent of women are

> heading households, the ban removes one of the only sources of income for up to two thirds or more of households in the camp."[44]

As the women of Kalma were prevented to go into town to earn money, they sought other means to make money in the vincinity of the camp. Collecting firewood in the nearby woods was a source of income. This meant crossing the ditch on foot and venturing into the woodlands around the camp. As more and more women were collecting firewood the woods around Kalma were disappearing rapidly making women move further and further away from Kalma. And this was dangerous.

"Barra Kullo Janjaweed!"

The programmes I had the responsibility of implementing as Field Coordinator were centred in three Women's Centres in three sectors of the camp. Activities started in sector seven in the camp. Setting up activities for women in Kalma meant aquiring knowledge of the problems facing displaced women in Darfur and the ways in which women articulated and dealt with displacement. Interview after interview confirmed what I had already heard was a tragic feature in the displacement of Darfur: The use of sexual violence as a political weapon. From the outset of the present conflict,

> "Rape and sexual violence against women and girls has been a prominent feature of the "ethnic cleansing" campaign carried out by government forces and militias, both during and following displacement in Darfur" [45]

The multiple tales of sexual harassment documented by a variety of agencies all point to rape, not only as a consequence of displacement but also as a deliberate tool in the *act of displacing* Darfur by the *janjaweed*, agents of the state of Sudan. Raping is the ultimate act of displacement, an extension of the violation of the moral geography and semantic expulsion to the violation of the personal space. Raping has not only the short-term effect of causing pain and humiliation for the women of Darfur it is also a perverted revenge on the wombs that literally "bred" the rebels. It is not only ethnic

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[44] The whole report is available at www.un.org/Docs/sc/sgrep05.htm

[45] *Sexual Violence and its Consequences among Displaced Persons in Darfur and Chad. A Human Rights Briefing Paper, April 12, 2005.* Available at http://www.hrw.org

"cleansing", it is ethnic "pollution". By introducing the Arab lineage in the wombs of the "slaves" and "blacks" one ruins both the immediate social possibilities for women of Darfur and the future social cohesion of the communities**.** Prior to establishing women's centres in Kalma I visited camps in North Darfur to get an idea of the impact of sexual violence on the male population of the displaced. I carried out a series of interviews in the Zam Zam camp in North Darfur, one of the biggest camps for the displaced in North Darfur, outside the regional capital, El Fasher. It became clear to me that the sexual assaults carried out against women by the *janjaweed* militiamen had a profound effect on the male displaced populations. The men were all surprisingly articulate in addressing the problem of sexual violence against their wives, sisters and daughters. They talked about how the raped women were isolated from their communities and had difficulties being reintegrated in society. Asking to provide a list of their biggest problems they all listed the inability to protect their women as one of the main concerns facing displaced men in the camp.

I thus clearly understood that behind the widespread use of sexual violence lies a motive not only of the aforementioned pollution of women, but also a clear wish for the perpetrators to exhibit the inability of the displaced men to protect their wives, daughters and sisters. By raping the women of Darfur the *janjaweed* display the (literal) impotence of the male population, destroying the illusion that men have control of the bodies of their women, *displacing* them from their roles as protecting fathers and husbands.

Back in Kalma the first programme established in the women's centre, and of which I was in charge, was the weaving of grass mats. These mats are found throughout Darfur and serve a variety of purposes; they can be used as building material and serve as carpets on the dusty ground. The organisation provided the raw grass and 200 women were selected from Kalma to start weaving. The women were paid in cash and the mats woven were used as building materials for huts to house *naziheen* coming into the camps of Darfur. The purpose of this project was thus both the creation of building materials in the camp and the provision of an alternative source of income for the displaced women, preventing them from venturing outside the camp to collect firewood.

Inspecting the programme in the women's centre was an interesting and often moving experience. I witnessed the displaced women of Kalma quite literally weave their way back into the social fabric of the communities they were displaced from, as

they were establishing new social relations with other women in the same situation. Monitoring the progression of the weaving I was granted access to a unique female social space that I as a man otherwise could not have entered. The women talked of the dangers in leaving the camp and the assaults they were prone to if they collected firewood. A common phrase heard and repeated by all women I spoke to was ”*Barra kullo janjaweed!”*, meaning ”outside [of the camp] everything is *janjaweed*!” The *janjaweed* were everywhere and many women told tales of running away from these khaki dressed militiamen when collecting firewood to return to the safety of the camp.

Rape remains a threat for the displaced women in Kalma. Leaving the camp means exposing oneself to a particular painful and humiliating pollution. The camp was a safe haven – a pure space – in the accounts of life in Kalma given to me by the grass mat weaving women in the camp. Here, within a reconfigured domestic space, they were still subjects of their own history and could redefine both their own space and the space outside the camp in a new vocabulary: The word *janjaweed* meant not only the Arab militias armed by the state to battle the rebels in Darfur, but was a label given to any source of danger, violation and pollution. No woman ever sought to explain the motives of the *janjaweed* or give any nuanced analysis of where exactly the *janjaweed* were to be found outside the camp. By labelling ”everything” outside the camp ”*janjaweed*” these free- riding gang- raping horsemen employed by the state of Sudan were given a de-localized metaphorical status. This notion of *janjaweed* as everything distorting or polluting the social coherence and purity of the displaced people in the camp is evident in a very recent example of social unrest and violent protest in Kalma.

Egeland escapes

Although I left Darfur and Kalma in August 2005 I continued to monitor events in the camp through the internet and through staying in touch with my Sudanese friends still working in the camp. In May 2006, riots broke out in Kalma Camp again. On May 8th Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Jan Egeland visited Kalma to assess the general humanitarian situation of the displaced. He was initially greeted by cheering crowds of displaced demanding deployment of international troops in the wake of a peace agreement signed in Abuja, Nigeria. However, the mob soon broke out in violent protest forcing Egeland to flee

the camp. An Arabic interpreter working for the African Union in the camp was killed by the angry demonstrators after Egeland had fled in haste. Conflicting reports have emerged as to the reason for the lynching of the AU interpreter. A Sudanese friend of mine gave the following account of events when I called him up to hear his version of events:

> "the interpreter wasn't interpreting what was said. One of the displaced understood English too and realized the interpreter was passing on wrong information. Therefore they discovered he was a *janjaweed* and they killed him."

Apart from the interpreter lynched by the angry mob other violent events took place in the riot. Reuters had the following account of events in Kalma on May 8th, 2006:

> "The Kalma camp melee began when a female refugee shouted that an aid worker was a member of the Janjaweed militia blamed for atrocities in Darfur. Women wearing brightly coloured robes and men in white jalabiyyas gathered around shouting "Janjaweed, Janjaweed" then attacked a U.N. vehicle with axes, stones and sticks, shattering its windows".[46]

Both accounts of the violence and the reasons given by the displaced point to the notion of the word "*janjaweed"* used as a categorical, de-localized source of danger, what ever is out there to hurt, penetrate and destroy the purity of the *naziheen* in the camp: because the AU interpreter was passing on untrue information he was polluting the expressions of the displaced and consequently a *janjaweed*. And because a relief worker employed by an international aid organization was "recognized" as a *janjaweed,* all manifestations of international relief were suddenly "*janjaweed*" and a UN vehicle a legitimate target.

When Jan Egeland escaped Kalma Camp in the midst of the May riots in 2006, he not only escaped an increasingly desperate, disillusioned crowd of *naziheen* oppressed and humiliated by the technologies of the state of Sudan. He fled a confined space containing specific categories of purity and danger, where displaced

[46] The Reuters telegram can be found on different websites, for instance: http://www.sudantribune.com/article.php3?id_article=15542

persons attacked a categorical notion ("*janjaweed*") in both language and violence, a danger polluting an emerging moral and political order in the camp itself.

Language and locality

The war in Darfur is a war fought over space, where millions of people have been displaced from their origins to become *naziheen*, internally displaced. It is also a semantic war, fought in vocabularies of belonging and being alien. The concentration of more than 100.000 *naziheen* in one location on the outskirts of Nyala challenges not only the state itself but the phenomenon must also be redefined as an alien, non-local, source of danger. By labeling the entire camp as "*Torro Borro*" the Sudanese authorities refuse to frame the *naziheen* of Kalma in the local vocabulary and thus transfer the problem to a metaphorical realm of international terrorism with a base in Afghanistan. The *naziheen* thus remain displaced in more than one sense; they are denied a vocabulary of belonging *within* the space of the state and thus disqualified as citizens. When the Wali decided to dig a ditch around Kalma camp he wished both to contain a source of pollution threatening the purity of the state, and to contain *in space* that which could not be contained *in language*.

Having been displaced many times and living in camps bulldozed and levelled by the state of Sudan, the *naziheen* are aware of their *perpetual* status as displaced when they reach Kalma. The May riots of both 2005 and 2006 were violent manifestations of a new collective identity of *naziheen* that has come out of being oppressed, banned and denied access to the work market in Nyala. The ban on commercial traffic and the tight control of all persons moving in and out of the camp had the effect of creating the base for a new sense of collective identity, the "social alchemy" leading to purification. This purification of the space of Kalma led to the burning down of the HAC compound in 2005 and the killing of an AU interpreter in 2006.

The Kalma Camp riots and the battle for control of the camp were battles fought over both space and language. The riots thus reflect the entire history of the dynamics of the conflict in Darfur where displacement begins by violating a vocabulary of belonging through the manipulation of both language and space. The notion of "*Torro Borro*" used by the state to label the rebels, and ultimately an entire camp of *naziheen*, is just the latest label of alienating a portion of the nation's citizenry, displacing them

through a technology in language.

In the previous chapter I explored how the displacement of Darfur was a result of a combined violation of language and landscape. In this account of the troubled history of Kalma Camp, local language has not only been displaced but the very locality of a given danger and cause of displacement has moved outside the vocabulary of any practised place. The displacement of the other as either "*Torro Borro*" or "*janjaweed*" made the classical anthropological dichotomy of purity and danger (Douglas 1966) seem the most apt way of perceiving the displacement of Kalma Camp in the space of Sudan. On this very local level, the war and displacement in Darfur cannot only be explained as an expulsion of people from a say in a larger state narrative or as a violation of local semantic spaces. The categories of defining "the other" by both displacers and displaced are created ad hoc in language. Anyone threatening the purity of the state becomes a terrorist from Afghanistan and everybody, or even every*thing* questioning the rights of the displaced become a *janjaweed,* even if it is a UN vehicle.

The connection between displacement and language has so far been very sparsely explored in the writing of the history of Sudan. The history of Sudan is often told as a war of conflicting "identities" leading to "displacement" on a massive scale. With the use of language in the riots of Kalma Camp in mind, I must leave the camp and once again to look at the writing of Sudanese history on macro level, a history of both technologies of violence and technologies of language that work together to both place and displace certain localities in the space of the state.

7

"Kullina Naziheen...":
Displacement and the Writing of Sudanese History

When I was asked why I had come to Sudan landing in Khartoum for the first time in January 2004 I would promptly reply that I was interested in the country's internally displaced persons. My Arab friends found it amusing and couldn't disguise a slight bewilderment at my choice of object for study. I learned the word *naziheen* on the streets of Khartoum immediately after I landed and as I quickly jumbled out my notebook to note this first entry, an essential key word in my field notes, I was told to stop and not write it down. I was puzzled and slightly annoyed by my new friends' insistence that I did not note down the word *naziheen*. Who were they to define my entries? Was this not *my* thesis about displacement in Sudan and were they not just helpful informants who provided me with the right glossary and semantic tools for comprehension of a specific social category of people? My friend put a hand over my arm and made me put the pen down. He offered a slightly laconic smile and said with a quiet voice: "*kullina naziheen..."*meaning "we are all displaced". I did not understand this at first. This was not a dispossessed Dinka in a government-controlled camp for the displaced but an Arab merchant's son of quite some local standing in his Khartoum neighbourhood. As I made myself familiar with the streets of Khartoum walking around in the company of my friends, my preoccupation with displacement became a standing joke. Discouraged at first by my friends' quiet mocking of my ambition of undertaking a study of the displaced and their laughing at my blatant impatience in wishing to visit the camps on the outskirts of the city, I gradually realised that they were showing me something important. As we roamed the streets at night looking for food, fun and generally passing time the word *naziheen* worked on different levels and became a phrase we would use in a variety of circumstances. If

we could not find a vacant table at our favourite downtown chicken restaurant we would move on, referring to ourselves as "chicken restaurant *naziheen*". We would move from one point to the other always seeking new places, always "displacing" ourselves from what we left behind.

I gradually understood the semantic and social implications of displacement in Sudan. My friends' humorous overusing of the term *naziheen* was a subtle way of giving me and idea of how people in Sudan perceived themselves in relation to a larger whole and ultimately how they perceived their own standing *vis a vis* the state of Sudan. My friends were not physically displaced. True to the ideas of the Islamic Revolution in the late 1980s and early 1990s and loyal supporters of Hassan al Turabi, some of them even his former bodyguards, this particular group of friends had been, or at least felt they had been, very close to the inner circles of political decision-making and at the vanguard of defining the state of Sudan.

They had shared the ambitions of many Darfurians in their political motivation for rallying behind the ideas that brought to power the National Islamic Front in 1989. The new order, embodied in the ideas of Turabi, carried with it promises of replacement in a society divinely ordained and thus unquestionably just. It provided all groups of Sudan, potentially at least, with a new vocabulary, a comprehensive reinterpretation of the state of Sudan, a language everyone could speak. In reality, as I have shown in chapter 3, the new vocabulary of the revolution was an exclusivist language of political oppression that discredited and *displaced* the vocabularies of millions of Sudanese. *Al Da'wa al Shamila* was the comprehensive encircling of a particular Sudanese space where the displacement of people was both physically contained in government controlled camps for *naziheen* and semantically contained in a specific vocabulary of social mobilisation and humanitarian assistance.

However, a few years into the revolution disappointment was clear on a variety of levels throughout Sudan. My friends in Khartoum saw their opportunities in the work market dwindle. They saw the key mechanisms of society held in the hands of people who were as corrupt as the previous rulers. In 2000, they saw the ideological chief architect of the revolution, Hassan al Turabi, who articulated the new state in a specific vocabulary, displaced thoroughly from political influence and put in house arrest. The revolution had promised upward social mobility but doors were slamming shut, leaving these young men disillusioned and distrustful of the language of power. Hence, they felt as *naziheen*, displaced from their own semantic

identification with the state narrative, and thus perpetually displaced in the space of the state, regardless of their unchanged physical location in the capital.

The displacement of Darfur is a fusion of a semantic and physical displacement. The ideas of social equality in the vocabulary of the Muslim Brotherhood resounded well in a marginalised region of Sudan, desperate for development and recognition by the state. However, this language of the revolution did not, and could not, penetrate and thoroughly alter the state of Sudan. The vocabulary of the 1989 revolution created a new broader base of political identification stressing equality under God, but Darfurians trying to penetrate the circles of genuine political influence in Khartoum were quickly disappointed, disillusioned and desperate, as the Bolad incident so clearly showed. The Bashir-Turabi split fuelled a split between two contesting vocabularies expressed in *The Black Book* and by *The Arab Gathering* respectively. The displacement of Darfur started here: In vocabularies of mutual accusations, not with villagers fleeing *janjaweed* attacks and ending up in Kalma Camp.

However, it is when people flee their homes and move to camps that they are recognized internationally and subject to both political and humanitarian attention. The *naziheen* of Darfur move from a displacement in language to a physical refuge and into a new vocabulary of international concern.

"IDPs": A new category emerges

Since the end of the cold war, internal displacement has emerged as one of the biggest challenges facing the international community. In the year 1982 there were an estimated 1.2 million internally displaced persons from 11 different countries. In 1997 there were an estimated 20 million internally displaced persons from 35-40 different countries and at the end of 2002 an estimated 25 million displaced people could be found in more than 50 of the world's countries (UN OCHA 2003: 8). The amount of internally displaced people in the world surpassed the number of refugees by the mid-1990s.[47] The post cold war era has thus seen a dramatic increase in the numbers of the

[47] By late 2004, the world had an estimated 19,4 million refugees. (www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/basics)

displaced at the same time as the UN has struggled with a precise definition of this new humanitarian category.

Trying to create institutional responses to the growing problem of internally displaced persons became a priority of the UN in the early 1990s. In 1992 the UN Commission on Human Rights asked the Secretary General of the UN to appoint a special representative to study "ways and means for improved protection for and assistance to internally displaced persons" (UN OCHA 2003:30). This new post as Representative of the Secretary General (RSG) on internal displacement was given to the veteran South Sudanese scholar and diplomat Francis Mading Deng. The role of the RSG moved from assessing the situation of the internally displaced to give a full definition of the displaced and who could qualify as people of concern in this new emerging humanitarian category. In 1998 Mr. Deng presented the 30 *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* to the UN including a definition of the Internally Displaced Person, and his or hers new abbreviation: *IDP*. [48] *The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* are not legally binding and do not need ratification or approval from any UN member states. They serve, as stated to guide and "state the relevant rights and guarantees to protect persons internally displaced" and they "reflect and are consistent with international human rights law and international humanitarian law" (UN OCHA 2003: 127). The Principles echo central concepts of the Declaration of Human Rights from 1948 stating that IDPs share the same rights as their countrymen. A section of the principles has added emphasis on protection stressing the need for the individual states to seek alternatives before displacing its citizens.

The general and ideal character of the *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* poses questions to their relevance and practical implications in different countries and situations of internal displacement. Many UN officials and NGO workers in Sudan have questioned the utility of the principles and in the words of a UN Senior Adviser for IDPs in Sudan "The Guiding Principles are as relevant to explain social behaviour in Sudan as the Ten Commandments are anywhere else". [49]

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[48] The definition of IDPs reads as follows:" *Internally Displaced Persons are persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or man made disasters and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border*." www.idpproject.org/who_is_IDP.htm

[49] Personal interview, UNDP Office, Khartoum, April 2004

As we remember from chapter 3, the Sudanese Minister of Engineering Affairs, Dr. Ibrahim Banaqa also made a point of stressing how the Guiding Principles do not address the experience and reality of Sudanese *naziheen*. The principles are seen as an alien attempt at defining a local order, an intruding vocabulary disregarding not only the historical existence of *naziheen* in the pastoralist, nomadic Sudan but also the vocabulary of the just Islamic state.

When the Wali and the Sudanese police accused the population of Kalma Camp of being Nyala citizens registering themselves as IDPs to benefit from relief packages distributed by international agencies they accused them not only of lying about their social status but also of betraying their vocabulary of belonging. Both Dr. Banaqa's book and the police officers' statements on Kalma Camp meetings point to the existence of international agencies and their vocabularies of abbreviations, such as "IDPs", as agents violating local language and thus distorting local reality.

Seen from the outside, internal displacement in Sudan is primarily the result of civil wars. When the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs published the first comprehensive account for the global problem of internal displacement titled "*No Refuge. The Challenge of Internal Displacement* " (UN OCHA 2003) the description of Sudan reads as follows:

> "Roughly four million Sudanese are internally displaced, mostly as a result of civil wars between the government and various rebel movements, most importantly the Southern People's Liberation Movement/Army. Though the majority of internally displaced people are from southern Sudan, displacement has affected nearly all of Africa's largest country, both north and south." (UN OCHA 2003)

This account of displacement in Sudan is simplified and accounts for only part of the problem. The "S" in the SPLM/A stands for "Sudan" not "Southern" and seeing displacement in Sudan as a result of civil wars between North and South "affecting" both parts of the country is an outdated and insufficient explanation. Recently, the west of the country has been "affected" by displacement and the tragedy in Darfur must lead to a critical revision of both displacement in Sudan and Sudanese history.

Until the breakout of conflict in Darfur, much of Sudan's history was written seeing the difference between northern and southern "identities" as the core problem

of Sudan (see for instance, Lesch 1998). It is time to look at a few of the central works on the modern history of Sudan and, with the displacement of Darfur in mind, seek to revaluate not only the local connotations of displacement in Sudan, but the way the history of the entire country hitherto has been told.

War of Visions

Before being assigned to the post of Representative to the Secretary General on internal displacement, Mr. Francis Deng was a well-known scholar on Sudan and had written books on the country's history. His most significant work is *War of Visions. Conflicts of Identities in the Sudan* (Deng 1995). Identity, in Deng's words is

> "seen as a function of how people identify themselves and are identified in race, ethnicity, culture, language, and religion and how such identification determines or influences their participation in the political, economic, social and cultural life of their country." (Deng 1995:14)

Deng has the following analysis of the development of political identities in both north and south Sudan:

> "The rising profiles of the Islamic trend as a political force that can significantly influence national politics and of the SPLM-SPLA as its counterforce reflect the development of two important revolutionary patterns from the North and the South, with the traditionalism of Sudanese society as the incubator. In the North, conservatism follows Arab-Islamic lines, while in the South it follows indigenous African lines." (Deng 1995: 17)

A series of critical questions to this outline of the perception of "identity" and the historical development of "revolutionary patterns" arises in this attempt at describing Sudan. Like the *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* with their broad and de-localized definition of displacement, Deng's definition of "identity" questions the utility of the term as a central component in the writing of Sudan's history, "identity" seemingly covering both everything people are and everything they are not. There is an even graver series of misperceptions in the second quote. The "Islamic trend as a

political force" and the SPLA are rooted in "traditionalism" and then become "revolutionary" and able to "significantly influence national politics". This way of explaining the "revolutionary" potential of "tradition" in the political realm reflects a perception of the political system in Sudan as existing opposite "traditional" society. This is a serious disqualification of the historical experience of politics in Sudan. There is indeed a long "tradition" of political parties who come into existence according to peoples' "traditional" modes of both religious and social organisation, the transformation of the Mahdi's *ansar* to the political *Umma* Party the most obvious example.

The "traditional" sectarian politics and the fusion of Sufi brotherhoods and political parties were not the "incubator" for the Islamic revolution in 1989. Quite the opposite, the National Islamic Front grew out of the Muslim Brotherhood, who "traditionally" came out of Egypt and the revolution of 1989 was indeed a break with the sectarian tradition of politics based in religious orders and an introduction of a new order. Another problematic semantic dichotomy in Deng's perception of Sudan is the counter-distinction of the "Arab-Islamic" and "indigenous African" lines. As Darfur has so explicitly shown, there are inherent differences within the Northern "line" and indeed an African-Islamic "line" that has severe problems with "Arabs" in spite of a shared political and religious history. It is further problematic that "Arab-Islamic" is seen as the opposite of "indigenous African". All Sudanese are African as the live in Africa and all Sudanese are equally indigenous. Seeing "Arab" as opposed "indigenous" reveals an inherent perception of Arabs in Sudan as an alien force, their "conservatism" not of Sudanese origin, their presence in Sudan a result of displacement from the Arab peninsula. This is biased and highly problematic for the author of the *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*, the normative framework to address of the global problem of displacement.

Technologies of language

Rather than seeing "identity" as the cause of conflict and major problem in Sudan, Douglas Johnson's *The Root Causes of Sudan's Civil Wars* (2004) offers a more nuanced and fruitful analysis that can contain the recent history of Darfur and the comprehensive displacement of that region of Sudan. An updated preface was written in June 2004 as the international community was realising the scale of atrocities

taking place in Darfur and the 10th anniversary of the Rwanda genocide made analysts and various groups draw comparisons between Rwanda and Darfur. At the same time the peace talks that led to the final signing of the CPA between SPLM/A and the Sudanese government in January 2005 were well underway. Johnson writes:

> "...of course, Darfur is not unrelated to the war in the South, or to the wars in Nuba Mountains, Blue Nile or eastern Sudan (...) The government's reaction was a repetition of its behaviour in the South and Nuba Mountains: it declared the problem to be a "tribal" conflict, mobilized "tribal" militias, denied the evidence of the involvement of its air force and regular army units (freed from the Southern fronts by the cessation of hostilities agreements), obstructed international relief agencies, and tried to confine relief to designated "corridors" of its own choosing." (Johnson 2004: xix-xx)

The analysis and clear comparison between the different wars in Sudan corroborates the findings in this thesis. First of all, the state of Sudan resorts to the technology of violence in order to crack down on the latest rebellion in the state. In doing so, it uses a specific vocabulary, a language of "tribal" conflicts that both explains the nature of conflicts and writes out the state as a violent agent in the history of Darfur. The purity of the state narrative remains intact. By defining the corridors open for international agencies it not only confirms the hegemonic topography in Darfur but also sends a strong message to outsiders wanting to interfere with who is in charge of the space of Sudan.

The state of Sudan's technology of violence comprises a technology of language as the case of Darfur has demonstrated. It works two ways. It gives people an ability to displace others within the state, the *janjaweed* are equipped with the radical vocabulary of *The Arab Gathering* and thus able to crack down on a danger for the state. The state removes itself from the agents it sent out, the *janjaweed*, and the displacement of Darfur is translated to a local vocabulary of warring "tribes", fighting as always according into local relations and disputes over shared spaces.

Shared spaces

One of the striking features of the war on the ground in Darfur is that the two fractions at war, the rebels and the *janjaweed*, have never met, they are not at war with each other. Vic Tanner states the following:

> "There have been few cases of direct clashes between the rebel groups and *janjaweed*. In interviews, people argued that this is because on the one hand the *janjaweed* have no interest in facing off with an armed enemy, preferring to secure the loot and land from unarmed villagers. On the other hand, some say it reflects a desire on the part of the rebels to not create blood feuds with Arab communities." (Tanner 2005: 21)

Viewed in the larger history of Sudan this points to interesting mechanisms of both the Sudanese state and Darfur. First of all, it confirms the state's conscious use of a local politics of envy, employed to reconfigure and re-establish power of a certain space in the state. It also reflects the local orders of Darfur existing alongside the order of the state and the knowledge of both warring parties of a need for a social co-existence in the space of Darfur independent of the ambitions of the state. Historically, the politics of envy was employed by the state of Sudan to secure political control over the vast territory of the state. As we have seen, various agents representing the state of Sudan have set out through history to maintain raw political power, seemingly without any intellectual ambitions of designing the space conquered in a certain vocabulary. The driving force behind the initial conquest of the space of Sudan and the modern day *murahaliin* and *janjaweed* is to an extent rooted in the same envy. Douglas Johnson draws an interesting parallel between the early history of Sudan and the modern day Arab militias:

> "Thus in the late twentieth, as in the mid-nineteenth century, some Northerners were impelled towards the exploitation of the Southern Sudan in part by their own dispossession and loss of entitlements." (Johnson 2004: 82).

Again, Johnson's explanation works well to shed light on the mechanisms behind the displacement of Darfur. The war in Darfur is not a war of "identities", the "Africans"

not wanting to create blood feuds with "Arabs" and the *janjaweed* not interested in going to battle against an armed "Africans". "Identities" in Darfur thus do not meet and do not emerge as "counter forces" in the words of Francis Deng. Rather they are ad hoc creations in language. As we have seen in Kalma Camp, this ad hoc creation starts not with establishing one's identity *vis a vis* the other, but by writing the other out of the history of a given practised place. Thus, the entire camp is "*Torro Borro*" in the vocabulary of the state, and from within the camp everything displacing you and contributing to your state of displacement is a "*janjaweed*" whether this means an Arab outlaw or a UN vehicle. The "*Torro Borro*" and the "*janjaweed*" do not meet in a shared vocabulary just like they do not meet in battle. Since they do not share the same vocabulary of identification they cannot share the same space.

Everyone and no one

Historically, the region of Darfur was the capital of an independent sultanate that rested on power through identification in language of certain spaces allocated to certain people. The "identities", be they "Arab" or "African", were ascribed as a result of the identification of a people to a *dar*. Landless free-roaming Arabs did not have the same vocabulary of identification to a certain locality, many lived in Darfur without a *dar*. Thus in "traditional" society in Darfur, the people who now form the core of the *janjaweed* can with some justice claim to be the original "displaced" population.

Viewed statistically, there are currently around six million "IDPs" in Sudan. Although these people all share a common physical dislocation from their places of origin, they do not share the same history. In Darfur, two million people have over the past three years fled a violated moral and semantic landscape, where previous vocabularies of belonging have been brutally displaced by a new racial language articulated by those formerly dispossessed.

In the history of Sudan, the state has remained in power through the ability of drawing into its centre all peripheral regions of the country, defining the areas included in the space of the state. This has been done knowing the local mechanisms of these spaces. People serving the ambitions of the state, i.e. the maintenance of political power in a certain space, became ad hoc agents employed by a certain language of power articulated by the state but reformulated according to local politics

of envy. “Displacement” in Sudan can thus be a result of an alien vocabulary that forces you to go elsewhere. People quite literally don’t have a “say” in their own space of origin, which is what happened when “Africans” were told they were “slaves” before fleeing the burning villages in Darfur. When the vocabulary of power changes and the comprehensive state narrative is challenged from within, the people at the heart of formulating the state are equally displaced, removed from a language of belonging. This is what happened with the Turabi-Bashir split, the most loyal Islamists in Turabi’s Popular Congress Party becoming a new breed of “displaced” people in the capital. They tied their own political displacement to the wider history of Sudan and used a specific moment to launch “*The Black Book*”, a comprehensive account of the displacement of everyone else but Arabs from a certain geographical confinement north of the Nile. *The Black Book* became one of the main sparks that lit Darfur, the displacement of which has been the subject of these pages.

I had come to Sudan interested in how conflicts of “identities” had managed to create millions of “IDPs”. Two and a half years later I understand what my friend implied when he stated that they (the Sudanese) are indeed all displaced, and that the category of “displaced” could not and cannot be geographically confined to those who live in camps uprooted from their places of origin. The state, explaining the existence of *naziheen* in Sudan, can always stress this phenomenon as a natural component of the divinely ordained national order of things, no one in Sudan is thus “displaced” from the national narrative. Displacement in Sudan is a technology of violence, a technology in language and a technology in history, a necessary component in maintaining the power over the spaces of Sudan by the state.

It is this particular comprehension of displacement in Sudanese history that must be the starting point when the history of Darfur is retold and this region of Sudan placed in the wider history.

8
Conclusion:
Placing Darfur

The following concluding remarks seek to place Darfur. By "placing" I mean asking a question: what is Darfur? I will try to place the "what" in three different dimensions with reference to the underlying themes that have been recurring in the pages above. These dimensions are history, language, and space.

History

The history of Darfur, when accounted for by the Sudanese state, is a history of an area with no right to challenge or in any way go against the narrative of the state. Thus, all acts of war are "tribal", they have no place as acts of war against the state of Sudan. When the western rebels coordinated their attacks on manifestations of the Sudanese state with the finalization of the North-South peace it was an untimely group of bandits seeking attention through violent action with no legitimate political cause.

In the history of the international community, where history is understood as a chronological measurement of events in a given time in a given place seen from the outside, Darfur is a sudden humanitarian catastrophe of unprecedented scale in a neglected region of the African continent. It is measured against the standards of similar atrocities elsewhere in time and place, compared to Rwanda and by some labelled a genocide, de-localizing the conflict and placing it in an international vocabulary of ultimate evil that somehow exists beyond history.

In the history of the tens of thousands of displaced persons in Kalma Camp, the events in Darfur are tales of flight, loss and sudden change. Although many have

fled more than two years ago, the narratives remain accounts rooted in the present, no displaced person in Kalma would accept his or her place in the camp as a result of the "history" of Darfur; the very notion of chronology is not accepted.

Language

In the language of the state of Sudan, Darfur provides an exercise in semantic backtracking. The displacement of Darfur, to a large extent caused by a certain violent involvement by the state of Sudan, is reformulated to become the result of local "tribal" conflicts, and the government's own vocabulary, as expressed in the Wali's Charter, the only tool for the return of Darfur to its right place.

On countless meetings among international agencies and NGOs the situation of Darfur is constantly assessed in the abbreviations of the humanitarian community. People in Kalma are "IDPs", the women exposed to "GBV", children hepatitis "E" and "B". For the international agencies to explain the displacement of Darfur, they must contain it in a vocabulary that defies locality, applicable in similar situations of humanitarian catastrophe throughout the world.

In the language of the displaced people themselves, their situation is ascribed to the *janjaweed,* a term for "bully" that has become synonymous with Arab horsemen raiding their villages. In time, as the dangers of the *janjaweed* continue after displacement, this very word becomes metaphorical, containing all which is evil and causing their fate both past and present, here and there.

Space

The space of Darfur is an essential component of the state of Sudan, wherefore a manifestation of rebellion against the state in this region was answered with a comprehensive counter-insurgency campaign seeking absolute spatial control and prevention of future upsurge. The state has managed to fuel local politics of envy over divisions of space, letting inequalities work in the favour of the state for the benefit of maintaining control over a wider definition of space – the state itself.

For international agencies and observers, the space of Darfur is connected with the returning problem of obtaining access to this space. Accessing Darfur means

accounting for the scale of the crisis, the ability to carry out independent observations to help define the scale of events in Darfur, and thus ultimately to access the ability to write the history of the region in the vocabulary of statistics.

For the women of Kalma Camp, movement in the space of Darfur has been confined, indeed, since the breakout of the conflict and their comprehensive displacement. Whatever semantics defined the lived space prior to displacement, no vocabulary can explain the dangers of the space surrounding the camp, space itself becomes "*janjaweed*", a fusion in language of personal and spatial danger.

Comparing categories

All the answers that one gets asking what Darfur is can to some degree claim to be comprehensive. Everything can be explained, all histories can be contained and the displacement of Darfur can be laid out as a series of events, all leading to the present situation. However, as I have shown above, a series of contradictions arises when comparing the different accounts and perceptions of the displacement of Darfur. The exercise of placing Darfur must be one of continuous comparison of the claims, histories and categories presenting themselves to the person asking.

Studying the state narrative of Sudan, I learned that displacement was not only a natural phenomenon in Sudan, but indeed a necessary component in society ordained from God. However, I must doubt the "naturalness" of six million people all internally uprooted in a country plagued by civil wars. I have to read a counter narrative, *The Black Book*, to see how the state is perceived by those displaced from political influence.

In order to get an overview of the present displacement of Darfur I need the statistics from a variety of international agencies and observers collecting information on the ground to get answers to questions such as how many are displaced? How many live in camps? How do they survive, what are their needs? However, I must doubt that the international abbreviation "IDP" covers the social experience of all the displaced of Darfur. I thus have to spend significant time in an "IDP" camp in Darfur to see how both patterns of social relations are maintained and how new social connections and identities emerge, not in spite of, but because of displacement.

The women of Kalma tell me that outside the camp "everything is *janjaweed*". I must question this reduction of the space of Darfur in language and uncover for

myself the notion of the word "*janjaweed*". To do this I am forced to look at the mechanisms of the state of Sudan and the its ability to employ Arab militias as an extension of state control in a given area of the country, a pragmatic tool for the maintaining of power. Seeking to nuance the statements of the *naziheen* of Kalma thus brings me right back to the history of the state of Sudan.

Purity and Danger

The exercise of placing Darfur is an exercise of creating a theoretical framework that rests on the ability to compare categories. The notions of purity and danger have worked well as symbolic categories that can be applied on a variety of different social experiences and histories. The history of the state of Sudan is the history of the quest for national purity and an elimination of all danger threatening the purity of the nation. Historically, Darfur is the latest of such dangers.

Seeing the displacement of Darfur from the perspective of a displaced woman in Kalma Camp, the dichotomy of purity and danger proved a useful way of perceiving the dangers of personal pollution, sexual violence, that she is exposed to leaving the social purity of the camp.

Although "purity and danger" may thus be an adequate subtitle for a thesis on the displacement of Darfur, it is not unproblematic. Seeing purity and danger as continuously manifest in both time and space may even be a counterproductive exercise of being theoretically stuck in one dichotomy, constantly looking for evidence of the same recurrence. This doesn't necessarily offer a way forward. By "forward" I here mean providing some of the tools for the changing of the present situation in Darfur. One could claim that changing the social reality by pushing things "forward" is not a scholarly endeavour, not the work of academics wishing to analyse what happened in a given region of Africa at a given time in history. However, with more than two million people still internally displaced in Darfur and the entire region disintegrated into anarchy and impunity, things must move forward. This thesis has been a modest attempt at placing Darfur by accounting for its displacement. Moving on from here means replacing Darfur in new a framework of categories that do not work as inherently opposed to each other but are continuingly negotiated through an established consensus by the ones sharing the space of Darfur. Vocabularies of consensus and co-existence could once be heard throughout Darfur but they are not

articulate at present, the continuing war speaking a clear language of the opposite.

The scholarly act of placing Darfur can help push things forward by looking backwards into the history of the region, reminding people of the inherent abilities in Darfur for people to share vocabularies and negotiate access to the region's different places. Although both the language and landscape in Darfur have changed it is through reminding and looking back that the first steps towards a different future for the region can be taken. Steps towards a replacement of more than two million people in their own language and in their own place.

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Translation of the Qu'ran quote used in chapter 3 taken is from *The Holy Qu'ran. English Translations of the meanings and Commentary*, King Fahd Holy Qu'ran Printing Complex, Medina, year 1410 A. H.

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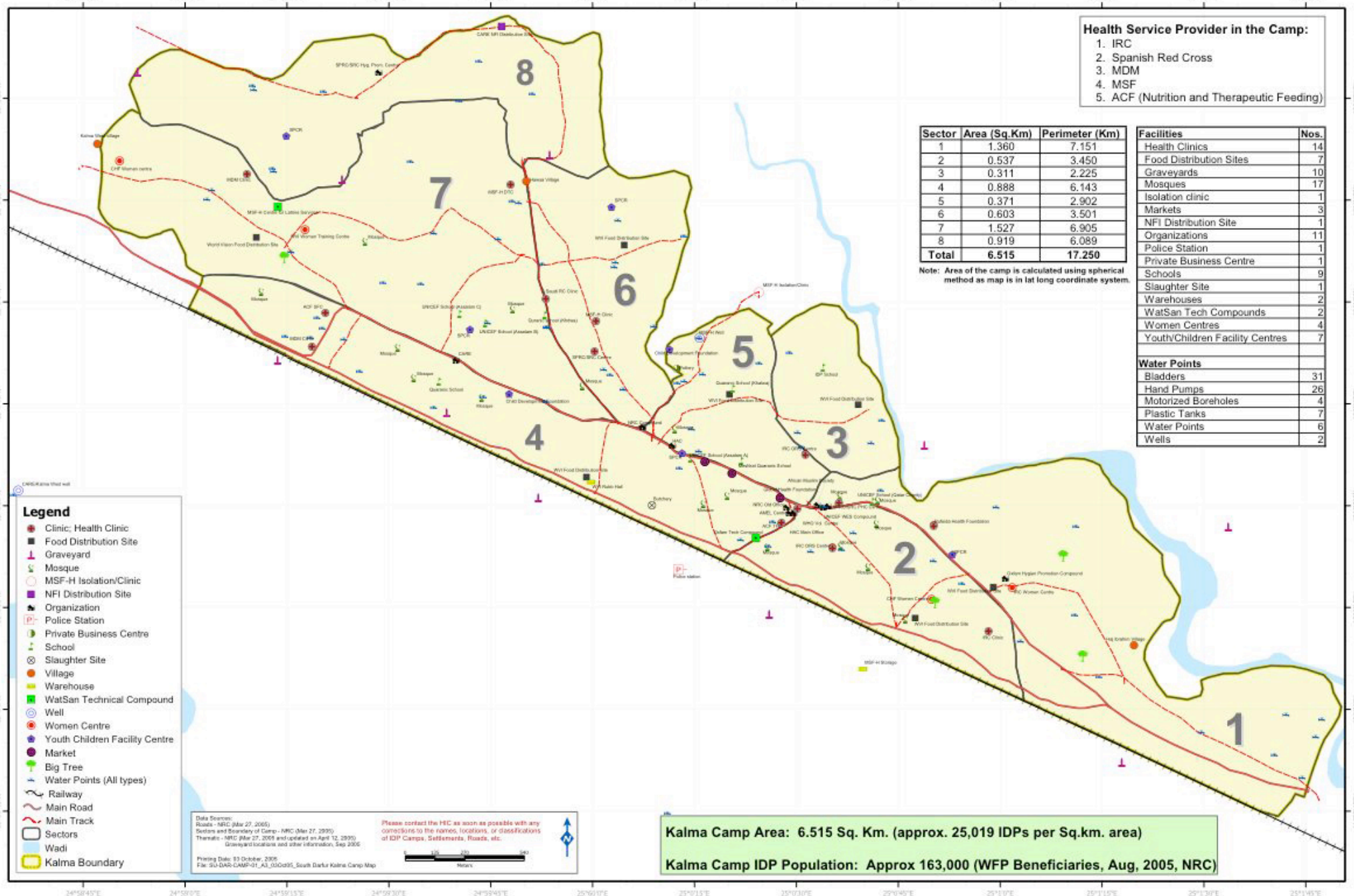
Kalma Camp



Health Service Provider in the Camp:

1. IRC
2. Spanish Red Cross
3. MDM
4. MSF
5. ACF (Nutrition and Therapeutic Feeding)

Sector	Area (Sq.Km)	Perimeter (Km)
1	1.360	7.151
2	0.537	3.450
3	0.311	2.225
4	0.888	6.143
5	0.371	2.902
6	0.603	3.501
7	1.527	6.905
8	0.919	6.089
Total	**6.515**	**17.250**

Note: Area of the camp is calculated using spherical method as map is in lat long coordinate system.

Facilities	Nos.
Health Clinics	14
Food Distribution Sites	7
Graveyards	10
Mosques	17
Isolation clinic	1
Markets	3
NFI Distribution Site	1
Organizations	11
Police Station	1
Private Business Centre	1
Schools	9
Slaughter Site	1
Warehouses	2
WatSan Tech Compounds	2
Women Centres	4
Youth/Children Facility Centres	7
Water Points	
Bladders	31
Hand Pumps	26
Motorized Boreholes	4
Plastic Tanks	7
Water Points	6
Wells	2

Legend

- Clinic; Health Clinic
- Food Distribution Site
- Graveyard
- Mosque
- MSF-H Isolation/Clinic
- NFI Distribution Site
- Organization
- Police Station
- Private Business Centre
- School
- Slaughter Site
- Village
- Warehouse
- WatSan Technical Compound
- Well
- Women Centre
- Youth Children Facility Centre
- Market
- Big Tree
- Water Points (All types)
- Railway
- Main Road
- Main Track
- Sectors
- Wadi
- Kalma Boundary

Data Sources:
Roads - NRC (Mar 27, 2005)
Sectors and Boundary of Camp - NRC (Mar 27, 2005)
Thematic - NRC (Mar 27, 2005 and updated on April 12, 2005)
Graveyard locations and other information, Sep 2005

Printing Date: 03 October, 2005
File: SU-DAR-CAMP-01_A3_03Oct05_South Darfur Kalma Camp Map

Please contact the HIC as soon as possible with any corrections to the names, locations, or classifications of IDP Camps, Settlements, Roads, etc.

0 125 250 500 Meters

Kalma Camp Area: 6.515 Sq. Km. (approx. 25,019 IDPs per Sq.km. area)

Kalma Camp IDP Population: Approx 163,000 (WFP Beneficiaries, Aug, 2005, NRC)

The boundaries and names shown do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the Government of Sudan or the United Nations.