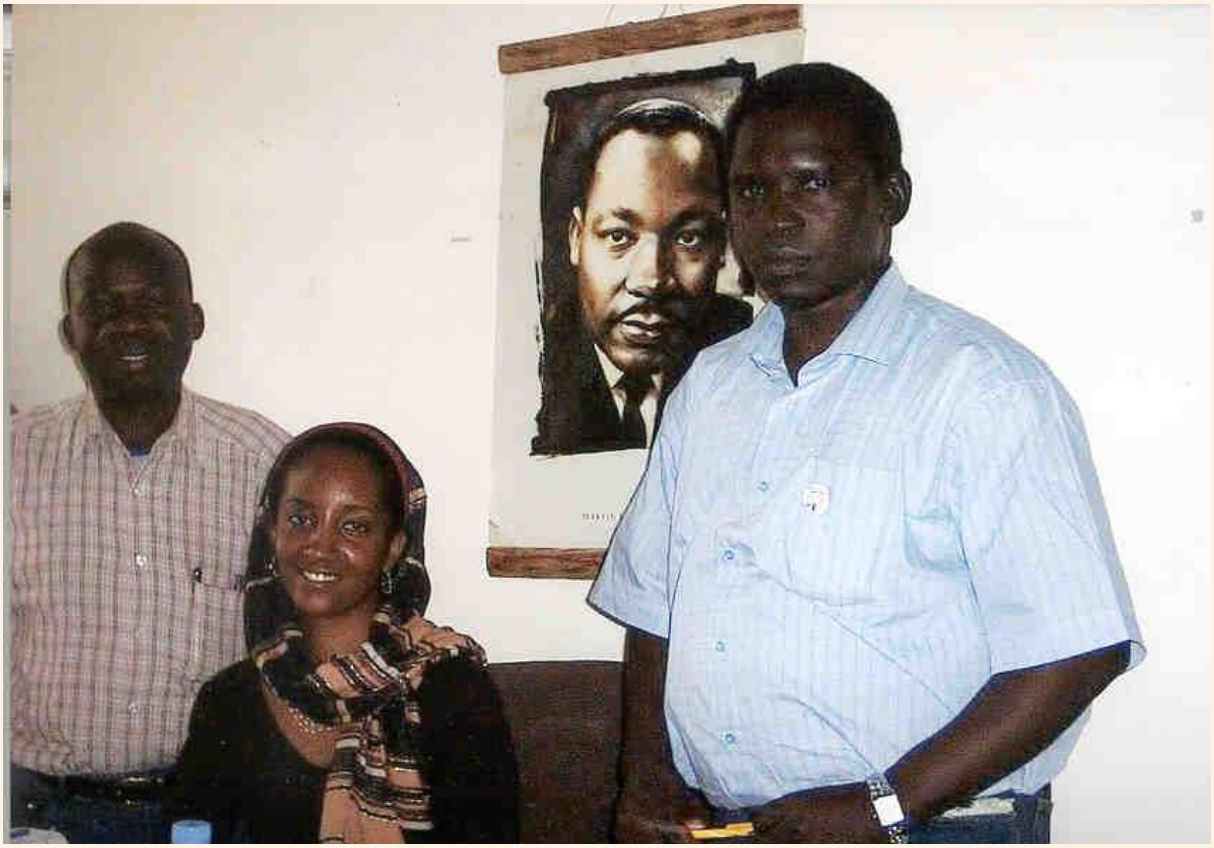
SUDAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION

2017 BULLETIN



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Editor's Note

Dear readers of the SSA Bulletin,

With this issue we are pleased to present Volume 35, 2017 of the Bulletin of the Sudan Studies Association, now in its 37th year. This issue contains more book reviews than articles, thanks to the excellent work of our Book Review Editor, Marcus Jaeger. Christopher Zambakari continues as Assistant Editor and helpful contributor, and we are happy to welcome back Tarnjeet King who has completed her doctorate and has agreed to return as a second Assistant Editor. We look forward to her supportive role as we move toward this year's events and our 37th annual conference of the SSA. The conference will be held at Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, May 11-13, 2018, to be held in conjunction with the 70th anniversary of the Program of African Studies, the oldest in the United States, founded by pioneer in African and African American Studies, Melville Herskovits. Several SSA members have received their degrees at Northwestern.

The theme of the conference of the

37th ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SUDANS STUDIES ASSOCIATION
AND
THE 70th ANNIVERSARY OF THE PROGRAM OF AFRICAN STUDIES AT NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY
"The Conflicts in the Sudans: Regional Contexts and Beyond"
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Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University
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Contacts for the 37th Program are current SSA President Souad T. Ali (taj_1234@msn.com) and President-elect Lako Tongun (lako_tongun@pitzer.edu).

The SSA is grateful to Dr. Bakry Elmedni, our host for two years at Long Island University in Brooklyn, NY, for his generosity and signal contribution to the SSA.

I would like to remind readers that Sudan Studies is published twice a year by the Society for the Study of the Sudans (SSKUK).

Thank you for your continuing support of the SSA Bulletin.
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(cfluehr@ric.edu)

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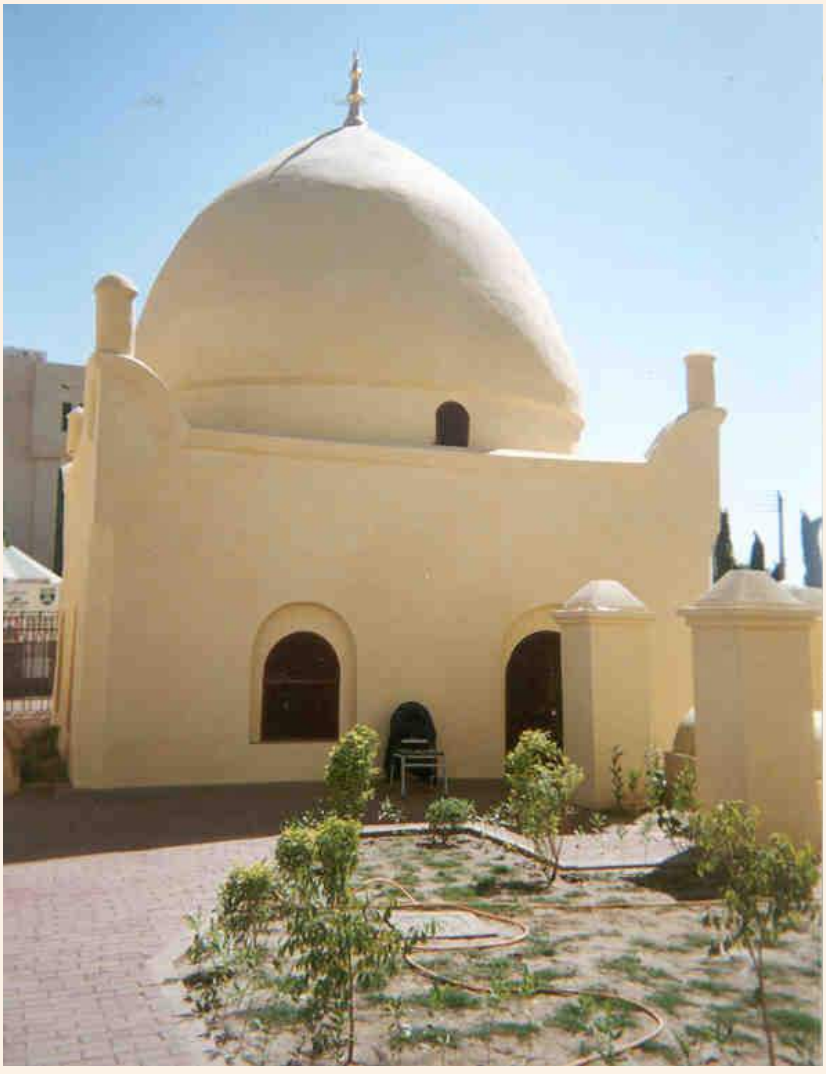
Who We Are

The Sudan Studies Association (SSA) is an independent professional society founded in the United States in 1981. Membership is open to scholars, teachers, students, and others with interest in the Sudan. The Association exists primarily to promote Sudanese studies and scholarship. It maintains a cooperative relationship with the Institute of African and Asian Studies, University of Khartoum and works collaboratively with the Sudan Studies Society of the UK. The SSA works to foster closer ties among scholars in the Sudan, North America, Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and other places. Normal activities of the SSA include the publication of this Bulletin, organizing meetings for the exchange of ideas, and recommending research candidates for affiliation with appropriate institutions of higher education in the Sudan.

The Association also sponsors panels and programs during the meetings of other academic organizations. It occasionally publishes the proceedings of its annual meetings in book form.



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Signs of Maternalism in the Nobiin Language

1. Introduction

Nobiin is a Nile-Nubian language, whose native speakers “Nobii” inhabit the historical region “Nubia” along the Nile River in Sudan and Egypt. It is akin to Old Nubian, the language of Christian Nubia . This research paper attempts to discover the maternalistic identity of Nobiin culture through analysing semantically the role of the Nobiin word een -‘mother’. This word seems to convey a maternalistic aspect whenever it appears in genitive constructions. The word een mainly appears in kinship terms but it does also appear in genitive constructions attached to animate nouns, inanimate nouns, and abstract nouns. This paper claims that the linguistic function and the aspect of this word reveal a maternalistic feature of Nobiin culture.

2. What is meant by “maternalism”?

Initially, it is necessary to create a precise definition for the term maternalism as intended to be used in this research paper. This is because of its wide range of applications and its supernumerary connotations in the fields of academic research. Maternalism is currently used in history, anthropology, sociology, literature, political science, and women’s and gender studies. Nevertheless, in each of these fields, the term has its own unique implication. Therefore, in order to limit its semantics to the intended purport of the research, the following meanings are to be considered as ones which this term does not imply. Firstly, the term maternalism, according to its use in this paper, is not related to the theory of Matriarchism and it does not refer to the existence of any ancient Nobiin matriarchy. The theory of Matriarchism is attributed to Johann Backhofen , the author of “Mutterrecht” i.e. “Mother-Right”. In his theory, Backhofen claims that ancient human society was derived from matriarchies where the mother played the key role in the development of ancient human societies. Another contrasting model was introduced by Henry Maine , and is known as the “Patriarchal Theory”. The concept of maternalism, which is to be introduced in this paper, is irrelevant to both theories.
Despite the fact that the region of Nubia is recognized for its early forms of matriarchy or matrilocality, where queen-mothers of Meroe “Candaces” used to exist , this paper does not discuss any matriarchal heritage in the contemporary Nile-Nubian Society.

Secondly, the term maternalism does not refer to any matrilineal theory that interprets the creation of current Nobiin Society. There is no attempt in this research to describe the existence of matrilineage in current Nobiin Society, nor to trace the descent of its members through their maternal lines.
Finally, the employment of the term maternalism does not address feministic and post-feministic perspectives related to this Nubian society. In other words, the concept of maternalism presented here is not directly associated with the political and societal rights of Nobiin women. In addition, this research does not evaluate the status of gender equality in the contemporary Nobiin Society and it does not measure the degree of women empowerment in this society.

Nobiin is also used through this paper to refer sometimes to the name of the culture which contains this language, and in other times to refer to the name of the society of the speakers.
Gerald M. Browne, Old Nubian Grammar, p.1
Myth, Religion, and Mother Right, selected writings of J.J. Backhofen, translated by Ralph Manheim, pp.69-82
Donald Mclennan M.A., Patriarchal Theory based on the papers of the late John Ferguson Mclennan, p.260
Richard A. Lobban JR., Historical Dictionary of Ancient and Medieval Nubia, p.248

The term maternalism is used in this research as a cultural term. It precisely denotes the state of maternity or the state of motherhood in the local culture. This cultural maternalism, which is born out of a collective appreciation for the role of the mother in the society, will be revealed by analysing semantically the genitive constructions related to the word een. In this study Nobiin language, will be used as a tool to excavate this cultural phenomenon. This enrolment of Nobiin language in the excavation of maternalism as a cultural value in the society of the native speakers is defined as an ethnolinguistic approach . Moreover, the use of Nobiin language in discovering this cultural maternalism applies the hypothesis of Edward Sabir and Benjamin Whorf, which claims that the structure of a language is related to the cultural view of its society. Their hypothesis assumes that the language determines and resolves the thoughts and the perceptions of its speakers . In this particular research, the thoughts, and the perceptions of maternalism in Nobiin culture are to be discovered by studying some structures of the local language.

Furthermore, before discussing the signs of maternalism in Nobiin culture, it is important to note that the advent of Islam has brought some cultural changes to this society. In fact some of these changes have radically affected the historical social position of the Nobiin mother. Therefore, this paper does not assume that the present Nobiin Society does totally preserve and practice this maternalistic culture. Nonetheless, the condition of women in this society, compared to many other conservative Muslim communities in the same region, is deemed quite healthy. Besides being a mother and a housewife, the Nobiin woman is a productive individual in her society. She farms in the fields, and prepares the Nubian house decorations. She produces kitchen tools and ornaments. She makes parts of the house furniture out pottery, palm reeds, and wood . In social practices, the Nobiin woman enjoys a good degree of social freedom in mingling with the other sex and in performing the group dance and the folk singing. Generally there are noticeable signs of maternalism in Nobiin Society which exist in the context of the local language and the cultural practices.

3. The maternal term “een”

The word een is drived etymologically from the Old Nubian word ein . This maternal term een is common in most of the Nubian languages; including the Nile-Nubian group, the Hill Nubian group in Kordofan, and the Darfuri-Nubian group; Midob and Birgid. Table (I) illustrates the translation of the word mother in some of these Nubian languages.

Table (I): The word *een* in the Nubian languages

Nubian Language	The wor44d "mother"[12]
Old Nubian (Archaic Nubian)	*ein*
Nile-Nubians (Nobiin/Dong./ *Kenzi*)	*een*[13]
Hill Nubians (e.g. *Taglenna, Karko*)	*eèn*[14]
Birgid (S. Darfur Nubian)	*(n)iin*[15]
Midob (*Tidn-áal*, N. Darfur Nubian)	*ée*[16]*(n?)*

The word een usually appears in genitive constructions to form many kinship terms. The obvious example is the use of een with possessive pronouns. Table (II) displays the possible genitive constructions which can be formed by the use of the word een with possessive pronouns.

Table (II): *een* with possessive pronouns

Possessive Pronoun	Genitive kin term of *een*	Translation
1SG: anni-'my'	*an-een*	'my-mother'
2SG: inni-'your'	*in-een*	'your-mother'
3SG: tanni-'his/her/it'	*tann-een*	'his/her/its-mother'

This word een can form a genitive phrase with another noun with or without the genitive linker-n . Furthermore, the word een, in its genitive constructions, could be mistakenly labelled as a bound morpheme i.e. an affix, because it can be positioned in front of a noun, before a noun, or between two nouns. Table (III) illustrates all the three mentioned cases. However, it is necessary to note that een must always be considered as a lexeme because it can stand semantically by itself.

Table (III): Affix-like appearance of *een*

een position	Example	Explanation[18]
appears as a prefix	*Ex. 1* *een-ga*[19] mother-son "mother's son: brother"	This is a genitive construction without the genitive linker *-n*
appears as an infix	*Ex. 2* *tan-n-een-ga* 3SG-GEN-mother-son "his/her mother's son: his/her brother"	This is double genitive construction, the first is composed of the 3SG-possessive pronoun
appears as a suffix	*Ex. 3* *irki-n-een* land-GEN-mother "mother land"	This is a typical genitive construction

Many folk tools in lower Nubia are made women such as diidee -'cooking pot', shibir -'basket', shoyir -'food cover'.
Gerald M. Browne, Old Nubian Dictionary, p.207
These words which represent the translation of the word mother in different Nubian languages are written in IPA Script.
Murray, An English-Nubian Comparative Dictionary, p. 44
This information is provided by the native Nubian speakers and language activists Gumma Ibrahim Gulfan from Tegle and Wakil Girban from Karko,
Robin Thelwall, "A Birgid Vocabulary List and its Link to Daju", p.204.
Roland Werner, Tìdn-áal: A Study of Midob, p.85.

4. The word-family of een

The lexeme een appears generally in genitive constructions attached to nouns. These nouns can semantically be classified under the following categories:

A. Kinship terms
B. Animate nouns.
C. Inanimate nouns.
D. Abstract nouns.

A. Kinship terms.

As mentioned previously, the word een is found in many kinship terms. The following examples display some important kin terms that contain the maternal term een.

Ex. 4 een-bes
mother-sister
"maternal aunt"

Ex. 5 ann-een-ga
1SG-mother-son
"my brother"

Ex. 6 faab-n-een-ga
father-GEN-mother-son
"paternal uncle"

Ex. 7 een-bes-in-tood
mother-sister-GEN-son
"maternal cousin"

Ex. 8 id-een
man-mother
"woman, wife"

These words which represent the translation of the word mother in different Nubian languages are written in IPA Script.

Murray, An English-Nubian Comparative Dictionary, p. 44

This information is provided by the native Nubian speakers and language activists Gumma Ibrahim Gulfan from Tegle and Wakil Girban from Karko,

Robin Thelwall, "A Birgid Vocabulary List and its Link to Daju", p.204.

Roland Werner, Tìdn-áal: A Study of Midob, p.85.

The term genitive linker i.e. a genitive linking particle, is used here to refer to the semantic function of the genitive morpheme -n. It can also be called the genitive marker, if the morphological function is to be emphasized.

This explanations are written by the help of Dr. Angelika Jacobi, a German linguist and a specialist in the Nubian languages, who added some useful recommendations to this paper about the word class of een and its genitive constructions.

It is noteworthy to mention that this compound kin word een-ga is a genitive construction but without the appearance of the genitive linker -n. In Nobiin language, genitive constructions can exist without the marker -n, if the first word ends in [n] and the linker -n is located between the linked words c.f. aman-tetaay -'echo' which literally means "the frequency of the water of the Nile'.

From the above examples exx.1-8, it is evident that the word een is contained in multitudinous kin terms. In other words, many kinship words are triggered by the lexeme een. This special role of the maternal term een in constructing kinship terms may reflect a significant position of the mother in Nobiin Society. It also indicates that Nobiin culture views the mother as a source of family creation.

The genitive construction een-ga -'brother' which is used in examples exx.1, 5, 6, 7, literally means "the mother's son". The Nobiin translation for the English phrase "my brother" is ann-een-ga which does actually mean "my mother's son". Through analysing this genitive construction een-ga, it can be understood that Nobiin culture grants special honor to the mother by attributing the male child lingually to her via this expression "the mother's son". This cultural recognition of the mother's role in the society, is currently reflected in the living language. It may also explain why nowadays young and adult males in Nobiin Society are called by their mothers' names even after marriage . However, one may argue that Nobiin Society is currently a polygamous community where two brothers can come of a different mother. Again the argument against this opinion is that the aspect of maternalism of the word een-ga harks back to these cultural practices and perceptions of the past when Nobiin Society was in harmony with its maternalistic culture. Therefore, it is crucial to emphasize that the focus of this research is to study maternalism as a cultural phenomenon regardless of its continuation in the present time.

Similarly through analysing semantically the genitive construction id-een -'woman' in Ex.8, new definitions for the word "woman" can be discovered. This construction id-een consists of two genitivally combined words; id -'man' or 'husband' and een -'mother'. Since the word "man" is opposite in meaning to the word "woman", the second meaning of the word id -'husband' can be ignored. Then id-een can be literally translated as "the mother of man". This late interpretation of id-een as "the mother of man" describes how Nobiin culture views the woman. According to this expression, "the mother of man", the woman is defined in this culture by its maternalistic nature and not by its feminist nature. This expression shows a state of respect for and appreciation of the woman for her role as a mother. Moreover, this definition "the mother of man" expresses sort of guardianship and maturity for the woman with regard to the man.

20. e.g. orsod safuura, is considered a typical Nobiin male name which means "Orsod son of Safuura", where orsod is a male's name, and safuura (a female name) is the first name of his mother'.
21. Also this kin word id-een is a genitive construction without the genitive linker -n. In Nobiin language, similar genitive constructions can exist without the marker -n e.g. tulle-jaani -'tobacco merchant', is commonly used in the speech instead of "tulle-n-jaani" i.e. via the use of the genitive marker -n.

In Old Nubian i.e. the archaic form of Nobiin , the word id -'man' is a homonym which bears two semantic aspects; "man" and "human". This use of the word id as human is common in other Nubian languages cf. id -'human' among the Hill Nubians. Hence the expression id-een can be interpreted as "the mother of human". This second interpretation indicates a position of originality and maturity for the woman in the human world. To view the woman as the mother of humanity represents unarguably the highest appreciation and praise for women among humankind.

B. Animate objects
Additionally, the maternal term een is found in some genitive constructions associated with animate objects. Examples of these constructions are kaj-n-een, eged-n-een, and fenti-n-een which are used in exx.9, 10, and 11 respectively.

Ex. 9 kac-cuu mallee kaj-n-een-na-toon kacc-is-an
donkey-PL all donkey-GEN-mother-LOC-from come-J-PRET1.3PL
"all donkeys came from the donkey-mother"

Ex. 10 eged-n-een-ga goj-tam
sheep-GEN-mother-ACC slay-IMP.2SG
"don't slay the sheep-mother"

Ex. 11 man fenti-n-een-ga guuɲ-an
DEM palm tree-GEN-mother-ACC look-IMP.2PL
"You (PL.) look at the palm tree-mother!"

Example (9) contains a folk tongue twister which tells that "all donkeys come from the mother-donkey". According to this folk tongue twister, the expression kaj-n-een -'the donkey-mother' is perceived to mean "the mother of all donkeys". It is clear here that the addition of the term een in this construction kaj-n-een introduces a maternalistic value. Similarly, the construction eged-n-een -'the sheep-mother' in Ex.10 bears an equivalent maternalistic value. It seems that the use of the maternal term een in both constructions creates this mood of maternalism. In addition, these two constructions kaj-n-een and eged-n-een show that in Nobiin culture animal mothers receive the same state of appreciation human mothers do.

In Ex.11 the inanimate genitive construction fenti-n-een -'the mother-palm tree' is used. The word fenti-n-een is defined as a female palm tree which can reproduce without a need of insemination by a male palm tree. fenti-n-een usually appears in the form of three tangled palm trees emerging from the same root. The attachment of the word een to the genitive construction fenti-n-een indicates that the concept of motherhood in Nobiin culture is not limited to animals but also covers the plants. In conclusion, the above three examples kaj-n-een, eged-n-een, and fenti-n-een, demonstrate that mothers of all living beings enjoy the same level of appreciation in Nobiin culture.

C. Inanimate objects
The maternal term een is also found in genitive constructions associated with inanimate objects. The following two examples exx.12, 13 provide two of these constructions.

Ex. 12 man diffi-n-een uruu-n-a
DEM castle-GEN-mother king-GEN-PRED
"That is the king's castle-mother"

Ex. 13 aman marti mallee-lla marti-n-een-na-toon feen
water runlet all-LOC brook-GEN-mother-loc-from come out.PRES.3SG
"the water of all runlets comes out of the runlet-mother"

"diffi-n-een" is the biggest castle and "marti-n-een" is the biggest artificial runlet that feeds all other runlets in the farm. These two constructions diffi-n-een -'the mother-castle' and marti-n-een -'the runlet-mother' show that the state of motherhood can be granted to inanimate objects like the castle and the runlet. This implies that the glorification of motherhood in the Nobiin culture is not restricted to animate objects but is also extended to inanimate objects.

D. Abstract nouns.
The maternal term een can be genitivally attached to abstract nouns. Examples of these type of constructions are shown in exx.14, 15.

Ex. 14 nuuba nob mallee-n irki-n-een-a
nubia nubian all-GEN country-GEN-mother-PRED
"Nubia is the mother-country of all Nubians"

Ex. 15 een-ga-kane ug mallee-lla-m aag-i
mother-son-CL day all-LOC-AFF remain-PRS.3SG
"Brotherhood remains forever"

The attachment of the term een to the abstract noun irki-'country' introduces a dimension of maternalism to this genitive construction. This construction irki-n-een -'the mother-country' in Ex.14, demonstrates that Nobiin culture views the homeland as a mother to its native citizens. This may be considered as an ultimate appreciation of the state of motherhood. Furthermore, it shows that essential notions such as homeland, nationalism, and citizenship are conceptually associated with the concept of motherhood.
The genitive construction een-ga-kane in Ex.15 represents an abstract noun "brotherhood" or "fraternalism". This abstract noun een-ga-kane -'brotherhood', entails the maternal term een. It is literally translated as "the state of being a son of the mother''. This again discloses a profound maternalistic perception in Nobiin culture that human relationship like "brotherhood" and "fraternalism'' are derived from the word "mother".

5. Conclusion

The word een -'mother' is used in many kinship terms. It appears also in genitive constructions attached to animate, inanimate, and abstract nouns. The genitive combination of the maternal term een to an animate noun like fenti-n-een -'mother palm tree' or to an inanimate noun like marti-n-een -'mother runlet' imbues these nouns with a maternalistic aspect. This linguistic phenomenon is considered a type of evidence which proves the strong roots of maternalism in this culture. In addition, it shows that the concept of motherhood in Nobiin culture is not applied only to living-beings but to non-living beings as well.

Likewise, the combination of een with an abstract noun like irki-n-een -'mother country' in a genitive construction adds a maternalistic aspect to this abstract noun.

There is no doubt that these features of maternalism in Nobiin culture have their historical roots in the ancient civilizations of Nubia. The Nubian woman had enjoyed a superior position in society during the flourishing period of the ancient civilization. Particularly, in the Meroitic period, when queen-mothers like Amanerinas, and Amanishakhete had become the symbols of the powerful woman's leadership in the Nubian Society.

In Christian Nubia, Theotokos symbolized the holy motherhood for all the Nubian Christians. This idea of motherhood consecration was artistically reflected in the Nubian Christian icons. For instance, in this icon, which was found in the cathedral of Faras , Theotokos is shown with the Holy Child blessing Martha, the mother of the Nubian king . This icon carries a high degree of symbolism for the consecration of motherhood in Nobiin Culture. The divine mother of the universe is shown transferring her sacred power of motherhood to the mother of Nubia. Perhaps this adoration of motherhood represents one of the undiscovered reasons behind the spread of the Orthodox Christianity in the land of Nubia.

6. Glossing Terms

1 first person
2 second person
3 third person
ACC accusative
AFF affirmative
CL classifier
DEM demonstrative
GEN genitive
IMP imperative
J j-suffix
LOC locative
NMLZ nominalization
PL plural
PRED predicative
PRS present
PRET1 preterit 1
SG singular

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Necia Desiree Harkless, Nubian Pharaohs and Meroitic Kings, p.147

The Greek term for the Holy Virgin Mary, which was used in the Old Nubian biblical texts.

The Cathedral of Faras or Para was the famous cathedral in lower Nubia. It was used to locate in the boarders between Egypt and Sudan and was submerged in 1964 after the erection of the High Dam. Many Christian icons were rescued from Faras Cathedral during the International Campaign to safeguard the Nubian monuments in 1960s by UNESCO. Most of these icons are now displayed in the national museum of Khartoum.

In this icon Holy Virgin with Christ is protecting Martha, the mother of the king of Nubia. This icon is displayed in the national museum of Khartoum. R. Werner, W. Anderson, A. Wheeler, Day of Devastation Day of Contentment, p.64

This glossing terms and abbreviations are made according to Leipzig Glossing Rule.
https://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/resources/glossing-rules.php

The Disintegration of South Sudan: Political violence from 2011 to 2016

by
*Kyle Anderson
**Richard Rivera
The Zambakari Advisory

Abstract:

South Sudan has been characterized by instability due to violence that has exacerbated political, economic, and social issues within the country. We found that within the five years since South Sudan's independence in 2011, the most common violent actors in political incidents were government and rebel forces, who often fought with each other. Government forces were involved in two-thirds of battles and one-third of violent events against civilians, whereas rebel forces were involved a little over half of battles. Limiting the number of violent incidents will help the economy recover and make it easier to provide external and internal aid to South Sudanese citizens suffering due to the violence and famine that have resulted from the initial conflict between President Kiir and rebel leader Machar. Addressing not only the violence, but also the underlying political, economic and social issues, will contribute to prospects of sustainable peace for South Sudan.

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The Disintegration of South Sudan: Violence from 2011 to 2016

Throughout its history of colonization under British rule, Sudan, including what is now known as the new country of South Sudan, was characterized by conflict and political violence. This ultimately resulted in a lack of rights for South Sudanese citizens, and abuses of power by those in the government, (Metelits, 2016) which continue today. Based on a 2017 annual report that rates 178 countries along political, social and economic indicators, South Sudan has been ranked as the most vulnerable, deteriorating into a conflict-torn failed state (The Fund for Peace, 2017a; The Fund for Peace, 2017b; The Fund for Peace, 2017).

When the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed on January 9th, 2005, it resulted in an end to the two civil wars that initially began in 1955, with the hope that it would help bring stability, and solve political problems related to state legitimacy (Zambakari, 2013). Following a popular referendum, South Sudan finally gained its independence from Sudan on July 9th, 2011 ("South Sudan profile - timeline," 2016). However, peace in South Sudan was short-lived, as civil war broke out in December 2013, when President Salva Kiir announced suspicions that the then Vice President, Riek Machar, had been planning a coup ("South Sudan profile - timeline," 2016).

Review of Literature

Political issues are at the heart of the civil war in South Sudan. When the CPA was signed in 2005, it was viewed as having the potential to bring peace to Sudan, and would allow equality and democracy for marginalized South Sudanese citizens (Zambakari, 2013). South Sudanese scholar Jok Madut Jok (2015) notes that the agreement was ironically not comprehensive, as only the "top elites" were included in the process of its creation, which led some groups to feel left out and perceive the agreement as a ploy to perpetuate the existing power systems.

Three possible reasons have been suggested as precipitating the outbreak of conflict in 2013: the elite that supported the former President of Sudan, have taken over control of the South Sudanese government (Natsios, 2015), both Kiir and Machar were incompetent leaders (de Waal, 2014; Mamdani, 2016; Natsios, 2015), and South Sudan did not economically progress as a nation fast enough in the interim period to become stable following independence (Natsios, 2015). Economic issues in South Sudan have necessitated outside aid, generally coming from intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Although peacekeeping efforts remain important, they are hindered by South Sudan's economic issues, related to the dependence on oil for revenue to support its national budget, as well as instability which prevents citizens from engaging with their livelihoods. As of 2011, 98% of revenue for South Sudan's national budget was based on crude oil exports (Shankleman, 2011). After the civil war broke out in December 2013, fighting soon concentrated in oil fields located in the Greater Upper Nile States of Unity, Jonglei, and Upper Nile, which effectively crippled the economy of South Sudan. This was exacerbated by the fact that South Sudan and Sudan were in disagreement on how oil revenues would be distributed. The fighting between the rebels and government forces in the oil fields of South Sudan is arguably a result of the initial political conflict between Salva Kiir and Riek Machar, which we turn to next.

Mamdani (2016) sees the current conflict primarily as the result of political issues, mainly between Kiir (an ethnic Dinka) and Machar (an ethnic Nuer) over the distribution of political and economic power which ultimately resulted in violence along ethnic lines across the country (Natsios, 2015). Sustained peace seems questionable in the country's future, as de Waal (2014) concluded South Sudan was formed as a kleptocracy. Kiir valued loyalty over competence, resulting in, at the very minimum, four billion dollars that went missing from government funds (de Waal, 2014). It is unlikely that the current government will be seen as legitimate, which in turn threatens the stability of South Sudan. To date, general elections have been delayed while the leaders of the country try to resolve the political crisis.

The main strength of the literature on South Sudan, in general, is it provides a good overview of the current human and societal cost of conflict in South Sudan. However, many of the publications focus on a single aspect of the issues facing South Sudan, such as political corruption, rather than pursuing a comprehensive understanding of the situation. Additionally, sources that take a bigger scope often do not have the most current data.

Purpose of this Study

The current literature on events and government, rebel, and other forces within South Sudan has yet to be looked at for the five-year period following the independence of the country. There is currently a gap in the literature, in that no one has quantitatively determined the most common types of actors (groups such as government forces, rebel forces, political and ethnic militias) and the types of events (for example, battles or violence against civilians) that have occurred in South Sudan. The aim of this report is to examine the conflict in South Sudan by investigating the prevalence of actor types and event types, as well as the inter-relationship of these variables. An assessment of events and actors in South Sudan can potentially be used to shape policies and peace strategies, with the goal of reducing political violence and instability in South Sudan.

Method

We set out to investigate political events in South Sudan for the five-year period from the country's secession on July 9th, 2011 to July 8th, 2016. The Armed Conflict and Location Event Database (ACLED) was selected because it provides data on real-time political events and actors.

An event is defined in the ACLED codebook according to several different components: location, actor type, event type, event date, and several other variables (Raleigh & Dowd, 2016). ACLED obtains their data from African media sources and non-governmental organization reports for events that are difficult to confirm or obtain specific details (Raleigh & Dowd, 2016). The analysis was conducted on data for all ten states within South Sudan. The operationalization for event types is described in Table 1. For the purposes of analysis, we collated three subtypes from ACLED's database into one category of nonviolent events. See Table 1 for further details on the event types we investigated.

Presidential decrees have established additional states in South Sudan, however this article relies on the guidelines of the original 10 states created at independence in 2011.

In ACLED, actors are defined in general terms on which general group they are a part of, such as government or rebel forces (Raleigh & Dowd, 2016). Actor types are not mutually exclusive. Even though ACLED is useful in that it provided us with data on the actors in South Sudan it has some limitations. Firstly, due to the security situation in South Sudan it is possible that some events remain unreported. Secondly, we can claim no direct relationship between any of the variables in question, because the study was not an experiment. Furthermore, ACLED's data collection protocols may indicate an overemphasis on media sources (which may be biased). Lastly, ACLED does not always give all of the details regarding events (Eck, 2012).

Results

There were a total of 2842 events that occurred in a five-year period (from July 9th, 2011 to July 8th, 2016, as documented in ACLED. According to Table 2, the most common event types were battles (46.6 percent, n=1324) and violence against civilians (32.8 percent, n=932), contributing to a combined 79 percent of the events in South Sudan. The most common actor type was government forces, who were involved in about half (n=1420) of the total events in South Sudan. Approximately one third (n=944) of the events involved rebel forces and a third (n=1022) involved violence against civilians.

The events government forces were involved were largely battles, (66 percent, n=880) and to a lesser degree violent events against civilians (34 percent, n =319). The event type that rebel forces were mostly involved with was also battles (53 percent, n =707); however, they only accounted for 10 percent (n=97) of violent events against civilians. Conversely, political militias accounted for 34 percent (n=321) of violence against civilians; but only 11 percent of the events with battles.

Discussion

Not surprisingly, data analyses suggested that the conflict is primarily political in nature, as the most common actor types were government and rebel forces, who were primarily involved in battles with each other. This fighting between government and rebel forces comprised a little over a quarter of the events in South Sudan.

Rebel and government forces were more likely to be involved in battles with other armed forces than in violence against civilians. Conversely, the analysis suggests that political militias were more likely to be involved in events producing violence against civilians, rather than battles or other events.

Data from this study supports previous literature (Natsios, 2015) stating that violent incidents involved the government forces of South Sudan, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) fighting against Machar's rebel forces, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition (SPLM-IO). The control over natural resources, as well as ethnic conflict, are a factor in this conflict. The oil fields are a pivotal battleground in South Sudan, as those that control this land control the monetary resources and power within South Sudan.

The fighting in the oil fields has crippled the economy and made it more difficult for citizens to resume their lives. The fact that 98% of the economy of South Sudan is based on the oil industry (Shankleman, 2011), fighting within the Greater Upper Nile region will destabilize the economy, and not allow citizens to resume work (Caruso et al, 2017). The civil war impacts public services and infrastructure development because it's what funds the national budget. Conflicts also prevent people from engaging in their livelihoods (such as subsistence agriculture) when they are displaced frequently. It also prevents humanitarian aid from reaching the region, and prevents long-term development from taking place. Furthermore, destabilizing the economy likely results in services being interrupted, such as healthcare or professional training that would eventually improve the economy (Adeba, 2015).

It might appear on the surface that the ability to stop the violence might start with how it began: solving the political conflict between Kiir and Machar (Mamdani, 2016). However, due to their documented corruption (de Waal, 2014; Gladstone, 2016), it may be necessary for new leadership outside of Kiir and Machar to be put in charge of South Sudan (Knopf, 2016). Both men's desire for power has led to an unwillingness to end the current conflict, contributing to the recently declared famine (Allison, 2017). In addition to the fighting between the SPLA and rebel forces in the Upper Nile region, violence against civilians was also a prominent occurrence across South Sudan and is hindering the ability of the country to repair itself from the bottom-up, which has been argued by Spears & Wight (2015). Previous research documents that bottom-up, rather than top-down reform, generally works better in African countries (de Waal, 2014). The current leadership might not align with a bottom-up approach, due to documented corruption (de Waal, 2014; Natsios, 2015; Gladstone, 2016) and centralization of political and economic powers. Although President Kiir declared a ceasefire in May 2017 ("South Sudan's Kiir…", 2017), it has not been entirely implemented, as since then, violence has continued in regions of South Sudan ("UN: Fighting rages…", 2017).

Dr. John Garang de Mabior, a historical and influential South Sudanese leader, had a vision he called "New Sudan", which focused on building a society based on the tenets of democracy where individuals participate in an inclusive government (Bankie & Mchombu, 2008; Zambakari, 2014). The concept of a "New Sudan" had great support in the area that is now South Sudan while Garang was alive, but has diminished in the political consciousness since his death in 2005 (Nasr, 2012). The fact that Kiir and Machar "own multimillion-dollar properties, drive luxury cars, and stay at expensive hotels", while many citizens are unable to meet their basic needs (Gladstone, 2016), highlights the importance of having safeguards against corruption to allow South Sudan to move towards the "New Sudan" model. It seems that if lasting change is to come to South Sudan, it will also needs to come from its citizens that actively participate in the formation of laws and government policies, as a complement to a reformed government (Spears & Wight, 2015).

For a "New Sudan" model to be implemented in South Sudan, it is likely that, as argued by Garang, external humanitarian and developmental aid needs to be given while South Sudan is rebuilding into a more stable state (Bankie & Mchombu, 2008). Lessons from the past need to be learned, as the CPA failed due to its lack of comprehensiveness, inclusivity by the leaders that created it, which prevented a strong national identity from becoming developed for many South Sudanese citizens (Jok, 2011; 2015).

Although it appears outside help is necessary to end the conflict in South Sudan, past failures suggest that a careful mediation is necessary. Imposing Western values, and exclusively negotiating with Kiir and Machar, when attempting to resolve these conflicts will likely alienate South Sudanese citizens and make such interventions ineffective, as has been demonstrated in the past (Spears & Wight, 2015).

While this article describes who the major actors are in the conflict in South Sudan, this study has several limitations, mostly due to parameters of the data available, which limits what we can conclude about possibilities that might resolve the conflict. First, our data does not address the direct effect that political leaders have had in the conflict. Secondly, we did not analyze the effect the current conflict has had on the economy of South Sudan. Lastly, the number of casualties involved in the current civil war, the number of South Sudanese refugees in other countries and IDPs in South Sudan, as well as the psychological impact of the current conflict on the citizens of South Sudan and the motivations underlying military and other actions taken against civilians, are not addressed in the data we investigated.

Resolving not only the current political conflict, but local conflicts as well, is needed in order to bring sustainable peace and build political and governmental legitimacy to South Sudan. Ultimately, the violence is delaying the possibility of creating a "New Sudan," by limiting the ability to build infrastructure that increases the likelihood of a stable South Sudan that benefits everyone, and not just those in positions of power.

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Table 1

Types of Events in South Sudan

Event Type	Subtype[a]	Description[a]
Violent		
	Remote violence	IEDs, long range weapons (*e.g.*, missiles), bombs
	Violence against civilians	Looting, pillaging, burning down villages/home, raping, killing
	Battles involving overtaking territory	No change in territory; government regains territory; non-state actor overtakes territory
Riots/Protests		A protest is a nonviolent event, with citizens airing their grievances against the government. A riot is a protest that has turned violent.
Non-violent		
	Non-violent transfer of territory	when land is acquired through nonviolent (possibly diplomatic) means
	Headquarters or Base Established	an event when a headquarters or base of operations is created by actors not affiliated with the state
	Strategic Development	an event where either rebels, militia, or government groups take actions with a political strategy in mind

[a] *Note.* The information was derived from Raleigh & Dowd (2016).

Table 2.

The Number and % of Actor Type Reported by Event Type in South Sudan from July 9th, 2011 to July 8th, 2016

	Event Type											
	Violent											
	Violence against civilians (*n*=932)		Battle (*n*=1324)		Remote violence (*n*=163)		Riots or Protests (*n*=184)		Nonviolent (*n*=239)		Total (*N*=2842)	
Actor Type[a]	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Government	319	34.23	880	66.47	86	52.76	20	10.87	115	48.12	1420	49.96
Rebel forces	97	10.41	707	53.40	67	41.10	0	0.00	73	30.54	944	33.22
Political Militia	321	34.44	141	10.65	12	7.36	0	0.00	26	10.88	500	17.59
Ethnic Militia	167	17.92	279	21.07	1	0.61	0	0.00	23	9.62	470	16.54
Mutiny	0	0.00	187	14.12	0	0.00	0	0.00	8	3.35	195	6.86
Outside or External Force	20	2.15	62	4.68	74	45.40	5	2.72	33	13.81	194	6.83
Protests	5	0.54	0	0.00	0	0.00	137	74.46	0	0.00	142	5.00
Riots	8	0.86	0	0.00	0	0.00	47	25.54	0	0	55	1.94

Note: Unit of analysis is events

[a] *Actor type is not mutually exclusive*

Breaking Sudan: The Search for Peace

By Jok Madut

Reviewed by Brendan R Tuttle, Research Associate at the Center for Human Evironmentsand the Children's Environments Research Group (CERG) at The Graduate Center of the City University of New York (CUNY)

Jok's Breaking Sudan: The Search for Peace is an excellent and engaging critique of simplistic models of conflict resolution and state-building that will appeal to a broad audience. The book is divided into eight chapters. The introduction situates Jok's material in relation to the legacy of Sudan's conflicts: the many and multilayered large and small wars, multiplicities of factions, rebellions and counter-insurgencies that, detached from their initial contexts, became the conditions for continuing violence. This is partly why changes to the relations that initially produced the two Sudans' conflicts did not necessarily end them. "The impact of these small wars on South Sudan was so deep," Jok writes, "that any agreement that reconciled the top layers simply left the ground beneath bubbling with explosive potential" (1777-1778). But there is another reason for not reducing the meaning of the two Sudans' wars to simple causes. National histories are not born, but made. "[The state] must acknowledge people's experiences and memorialize them so that they become part of a national history, in which every community sees itself represented," Jok writes; "it must not be reduced to a history of war heroes, as in the old Sudan" (2226). The hierarchies of citizenship that are rooted in histories of war heroes entrench the inequalities of belonging, fears of oppression, and uses of violence as a mode of governance that secure war's grip on the region.

Jok's primary focus in Breaking Sudan is on the varied lives and experiences of South Sudanese during the years between 2005 and 2011(the CPA interim period) and South Sudan's first three years of independence (2011-2014). The first three chapters describe the period following the CPA and the "shocking but not entirely surprising" return to civil war in December 2013 (874). Jok describes how, with the referendum and then independence, people's hopes for security, access to justice, basic services, and some measure of prosperity gave way to disappointment. With increasing violence in Jonglei, Upper Nile, Warrap, and Eastern Equatoria, people's frustrations turned into anger at the state and the élite who controlled the process of state formation (1091-1094). The first chapter, "The Two Sudans and the Defeat of the CPA Reform Project," describes the challenges that faced Sudan and South Sudan following the CPA and the failure of the process to bring meaningful human security. While the peace agreement ended the north-south war, it failed to resolve its many sources of conflict and laid out the distributions of power and wealth-sharing in a way that raised the stakes in contests over the control of the state (442-444, 1101-1106).

The second chapter, "Independent South Sudan and the Burden of Liberation History," offers a subtle critique of simplistic models of 'root causes' and examines security and military developments during the course of the 1983-2005 civil war(s), the failure of the disarmament campaign, and how the focus on securing order, while neglecting democratic reform and social and economic development, contributed to insecurity. "Having failed to rein in ethnic or militia violence, and unable to assert a monopoly over the use of force, the state found itself resorting to unconstitutional and abusive tactics that escalated into a war with the tribes" (4736-4737). Parallels with other periods of escalating violence and social and economic stagnation are not difficult to see (Rolandsen, 2011).

Chapter 3, "Sudan's Wars: The Experience of One Village," relates the story of the first two chapters, covering the years from 1983 to 2013, from the perspective of ordinary residents of Ror Col, a small village that "lies well off the beaten path" (2282) in Tonj North County. South Sudan's armed conflicts were not made by people who lived in Ror Col, who mostly tried to get on with their lives in the midst of growing insecurity. Like many other out-of-the-way places in South Sudan, and elsewhere, the war made itself felt indirectly through the absence of social protections and the demands of passing soldiers to be fed. The irony of being forced to provide recruits and provisions to an army that justified its brutality by citing the oppression of Ror Col at the hands of a Government that had never been seen there was not lost on the residents of the village. Despite protestations to the contrary, what the SPLA was calling "liberation" had almost nothing to do with freedom from coercion or the expansion of social protections. It was really about supporting a hungry army: "When robbed by an SPLA soldier, a woman might say, 'my property was liberated from me,' mocking what the concept of liberation had become" (2524-2525).

Chapters 4-6 discuss experiences of Sudan's civil wars and the repeated failures of peace accords to secure lasting stability. Chapter 4, "Political Rivalries, the New Wars and the Crumbling Social Order," examines how localized antagonisms, such as over cattle and grazing, had not led to violence of the magnitude seen in December 2013 until they were amplified and abstracted by political rivalries. Whatever the specific trigger in Juba, the conflict had much deeper roots in contests over state power and unresolved political divisions within the country's governing party, the SPLM, and the army, the SPLA, and in the breakdown of restraints on violence that had occurred during the Sudan's previous civil wars. Chapter 5, "Reporting Sudan's Wars," picks up themes raised in earlier chapters, and explores the risks of inciting further conflict by conflating parochial disputes with less context bound identities when reporting on war and memorializing death. Chapter 6 examines structural causes of conflict: how in the midst of sharpening inequalities of wealth and power, the patronage networks of South Sudan's civil and military administration made government officials more accountable to their superiors than to their constituents. Holding these networks together was largely a matter of controlling government revenues, which made state capture central to governance and provided few incentives to take an interest in the needs of ordinary citizens or the recommendations of policy researchers.

Chapter 7 examines obstacles to nation building in South Sudan, and the dangers of perpetual conflict posed by the failure to distribute services equitably and to see nation- and state-making as two parts of the same project. Nations are created, produced through public services and institutions that afford experiences of collective belonging and scaffold imaginaries of national identities. In South Sudan, Jok argues, the nation was unmade by a ruling elite that channeled resources to their own families and home regions.

Chapter 8, "The Fates of the Two Sudans," returns to the borderlands of Sudan and South Sudan and the idea of a solidarity rooted in common experiences of marginalization. This idea was central to the SPLM/A's the vision of a New Sudan. But what made it persuasive? The appeal of this center-periphery explanation did not come out of nowhere. It was rooted in experiences of those living in Bahr el Ghazal and Upper Nile, the Nuba Mountains, Blue Nile, Darfur, the Red Sea Hills: of insecurity and systematic humiliation, exclusion from political participation, and the appropriation of land. It was out of such diverse experiences that the vision of equal citizenship, political participation, and resource sharing under a New Sudan was made. Obviously, the "local grievances" that made this vision effective were as diverse (and potentially divisive) as Sudan's peripheries, but these disparate communities nonetheless cooperated remarkably well with one another in their struggle for the restructuring of Sudan.

Jok's discussion of the connections forged in the midst of conflict provides an important lesson about the two Sudan's political futures and the conventional idea that peace must first be brokered by elites before ordinary people can turn their attention to rebuilding trust and imagining a peaceful future. Jok suggests rather that peace must begin on the front lines, among those who live on the border zones. This section very usefully extends a wider literature on borderlands (Johnson 1989; Donham and James 1986; Schomerus, de Vries, and Vaughan 2013; Cormack 2016).The peaceful co-existence envisioned by the CPA, Jok argues, must begin from the bottom up, through the "invisible connections" of travel and trade, cooperation, family and friendship, which often outlast agreements made by elites. Peace accords brokered by politicians and elites will not work if these foundations of historical links are not there to build upon.

Breaking Sudan is an engaging book. Because it sometimes reads more like a collection of essays than a monograph, the topics form separate chapters and sections that are each interesting essays of their own. Still, the book hangs together very well. It is based on many years of ethnographic research in South Sudan and elsewhere among ordinary South Sudanese, the diaspora, humanitarian workers, and scholars, and Jok makes excellent use of his ethnographic material and interviews. His attention to the complexity of ordinary people's reflections on the Sudans' wars makes his book both unusual and a particularly valuable contribution to the literature on the region's recent history. A wide range of readers will find its discussion and insights productive.

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Identity and Lifestyle Construction in Multi-ethnic Shantytowns: A Case Study of Al-Baraka Community in Khartoum, Sudan.
Reihe: Beiträge zur Afrikaforschung. LIT Verlag.
MOHAMED A.G. BAKHIT. 2016.

Reviewed by Margret Otto, PhD candidate at Free University Berlin, Department of Political Science. Her research focuses on governance from below, neighborhood studies, construction of belonging.

Introduction

Since the consequences and features of globalisation became more and more obvious the interest in "the local" has led to new studies on residential areas, people on the ground and neighbourhoods. Appadurai in his book 'Modernity at Large' and his note on the 'Production of Locality' engaged in the discussion. Different disciplines have joined the debate and introduced new arrays of research including new methodological approaches.

The book by Mohamed A.G. Bakhit - it is his PhD thesis - is an interesting contribution to this debate and a rich study on a typical phenomenon in the urbanising Sudan: multi-ethnic shantytowns in the capital Khartoum.

One intention of this research is to contribute to the long debate on the identity of Sudan and Sudanese people. This discussion goes back to the independence of Sudan from colonial rule in 1956 and includes historical, philosophical, sociological and psychological arguments. Its origin dates even earlier. Since then the idea of a Sudanese identity has been repeatedly exploited for different political interest, arguments and strategies. It has often served as a justification for suppression, war and conflict. Having all this in mind however, Bakhit considers this debate not as useful to understand dynamics within neighbourhoods in newly created surroundings. Instead, the angle of his study is not to emphasize any Sudanese identity explained in binary oppositions like African/Arab or Christian/Muslim, but to look at the everyday lives and the self-concept of the people by following an ethnographic approach.

Appadurai, Arjun. 1996. Modernity at Large.

Multi-ethnicity and urbanisation form the background of Bakhit's empirical research. He incorporates the different waves of migration that since 1960 have brought a huge percentage of the Sudanese population from all parts of Sudan to the capital Khartoum. Migrants are mainly at the bottom of the urban hierarchy. Among the many different neighbourhoods in this megacity, he chose one that seemed to him typical and representative: Al-Baraka is a typical shantytown on the outskirts of Khartoum, where mostly migrants and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) from South Sudan, Darfur and the Nuba Mountains are sharing a neighbourhood. Al-Baraka is a case study of similar neighbourhoods in different geographical locations under different political conditions and circumstances in other urbanized countries in Africa and even other continents.

Retracing the history of Al-Baraka Bakhit sheds light on the main features of urban planning processes in Khartoum concerning the politics of how poor migrants are placed and displaced. It is obvious that this process is dominated by investment strategies favouring a politics of segregation.
Through Al.Baraka's social structure specificities and behavioural attitudes of its inhabitants are observed and described. As an analytical tool Bakhit applies the concept of life style, allowing him to compare inhabitants with different socio-economic status. Thereby he notes a social, cultural, economic and generational divide among them.

Bakhit illustrates the mixture and dynamics between the lifestyles through a triangular diagram differentiating between first generation lifestyle, second generation lifestyle and the lifestyle of educated people. Each of the three group's specific attitude and self-presentation are analysed in the context of typical situations. His findings are rich and inspiring for any researcher engaging in this field. The detailed observations encourage one to connect its findings with other research results. With his very dense description of situations and behaviour the author succeeds in grasping their dynamics and their meaning for each group. The research methods allow him to recognize patterns of behaviour in the myriads of what we call everyday life.

One important difference between the three groups is how intensively they continue to practice traditions and rituals from their area of origin. One example is the elder generation where traditional slaughtering in Ramadan is still practiced. Among them Bakhit observes that economic migrants have a status different from that of forced migrants, who did not decide by themselves to join the area. For the younger generation he identifies different ways to express and to locate themselves and how they reach out beyond the border of the shantytown. They create their own independent social network.

Within the group of the educated people, those with formal education, the older generation engaged in supporting private schooling, seeing formal education as the most important means to succeed in an urban environment. In contrast, the younger generation from this group are active in local administration trying e.g. to influence the politics of the local committees. Bakhit notes that despite all these efforts educated people living in Al-Baraka suffer a double marginalization: they are perceived by their neighbours as being part of the governmental structure and by people outside perceived as being just part of a shantytown. Whether this can be generalized for all shantytowns - as Bakhit is doing - remains to be discussed.
It might also be interesting to discuss the surplus of the triangle as research tool. Through the triangle Bakhit differentiates clearly between three lifestyles but on the other hand he observes that most of the people share more than one lifestyle. Perhaps a closer look on the household/family level could help to understand how in one household all three lifestyles come together in one family. In fact - following my own observations - different lifestyles can occur in one family and mediation between them often takes place on the household/family level where differences are discussed. Add a little bit of body text

At the end of his book Bakhit returns to the question of identity, elaborating on the theoretical framework of lifestyle and localization with regard to its implications, limits and also contradictions. Just as he rejects the concept of a Sudanese identity he is also critical of the concepts of ethnic and social identity, exploring them in the context of localization and the concept of lifestyle. On the basis of the rich and manifold empirical material he is presenting the debate around these concepts could be elaborated more deeply.

Different neighbourhoods in older parts of Khartoum might have a comparable ethnic and socio-economic composition of people though they are not characterized as shantytowns. Proceeding along Bakhit's line of research its scope could be widened by including contrasting areas in Khartoum, stimulating a useful discussion. The dynamics and contradictions of the actual urbanization process could then be studied in a broader context. Al-Baraka has certainly general characteristics similar to many other non Sudanese shantytowns but it may also be marked by proper Sudanese singularities.

For those who are interested and engaged in knowing more about neighborly relations and localization processes in Sudanese urban residential areas this book offers thoroughly analyzed insights. In the field of sociological research on this topic it contributes a fruitful methodological approach. It will be thrilling to have more such studies!

Nubian (Nobiin) Language and Grammar, Book 1.
ABDULMANNAN, NURADDIN. 2015.
Revised Edition. ISBN 978-0-6925776-4-6, $24.95.

This is self-published, contact the author in Maryland, USA for further information at nubiakey@msn.com. No other publishing information.
Reviewed by Richard Lobban, Professor Emeritus of Anthropology, Rhode Island College

As an ethnographer and archaeologist of Nubia I am always happy to see new publications in this area. Certainly the passion and scholarly engagement of Nuraddin Abdulmannan is exemplary as a great enthusiast of Nubian studies. Because this is not the first or only book on Nubian language, grammar and lexicon it is reasonable that it is compared with other parallel works. But before doing that I should say that this work is very attractive with glossy paper, sturdily bound, and clearly printed unlike some other works with hard-to-read type fonts. It presents a useful keyboard setting for those with the right "True Type Nubian Fonts" software. Twelve figures and a clear map of the Nubian region are also assets as is the information about articulatory phonetics. Fifteen pages of vocabulary and a 13-page glossary make for a dictionary that is keyed to the lessons and exercises that are built into the book. A modest nine references is helpful, but overlooks many of the standard sources that will be discussed below. Book 2 is said to follow.

After presenting the Nubian alphabet (based on Coptic), each of the ten chapters is organized around a grammatical or vocabulary theme such as Adjectives, Nouns, Gender, Days of the Weeks, Songs, and Calculations with appropriate vocabulary built into the lesson. This is done with Nubian inscriptions and English translations.
Certainly, the massive English dictionaries on modern Nubian languages by C. H. Armbruster (1965) and Murray have long stood the test of time as basic lexical references. Other books on Nubian ethnography by Fernea and Jennings do offer some modern terminology. We also have the Old Nubian Dictionary by Gerald M. Browne (1997). There are the Kenzi Nubian Texts with translation to German by H. Junker and H. Schafer in 1921.
In Arabic we have the book by Mukhtar Khalil Kabbara (1997) entitled Nubian Language: How to write it. In the preface, Kabbara is much acknowledged by Abdulmannan. In addition, there is the Nubian-Arabic-English dictionary by Yusef Sambaj (1998) that includes history and grammar. The Nubian Dictionary compiled by Muhamad Othman 'Adnan Ali (Cairo, 2002) has an extensive alphabetical listing in Arabic and English translations of Nubian words with some pictures of Nubian items. In Arabic and Nubian there is also the clear, but poorly published work that is designed for teaching modern Nubian in Cairo by the Center for Nubian Studies in April 1999.

Some of the other works on Nubian grammar and extensive lexicons include, in German, Inge Hofmann (1983) that is a rich source from the 17th century writings of missionary Carradori that might take us closer back to Old Nubian lexicons. Again, Gerald M. Browne also wrote his Old Nubian Grammar (2001) that covers the same topic.

One interest that is inherently supported is the continuing efforts to decipher the Meroitic language where linguistic relationship is still an open question. My own research has shown that the closest in time and region is Old Nubian, but there are few long texts, very few bilingual inscriptions, nor much in shared lexicons. Certainly Old Nubian has some ancestral relationship on to Modern Nubian, but as centuries passed, we are more frustrated than rewarded in finding possible cognates.

The work of Marc Zender on decipherment points out that there are five requirements or principles needed to advance our understanding of lost languages or writing systems. For Meroitic and Nubian 1.) The SCRIPT TYPE is known: generally alphabetic (overlooking a few syllabaries in Meroitic, and tone in Nubian, 2.) the CORPUS of Texts is a weakness in Meroitic for sure, and every new source in Modern Nubian may help in some cases, 3.) The LANGUAGE family for Meroitic and Nubian is most likely to be Nilo-Saharan, 4.) The CULURAL CONTEXT is fairly well known, but unfortunately the contents, contexts, and texts don't have much overlap, 5.) The BILINGUAL texts are virtually missing for Meroitic, but are plentiful in Modern Nubian and some exist in Old Nubian so that the written language is known by specialists.

Thus, the work of Abdulmannan will not advance us too much further with this other unfinished task that was significantly launched by F. L. Griffith with his pioneering studies and collections of Meroitic inscriptions more than a century ago. This work of Abdulmannan does not necessarily plow new ground in this respect, but this was not his intention.
The importance of this work rests in a basic and easily understood contribution in Nubian language to keep it alive, accessible and easily taught. The role of this work is then a pedagogical resource that assist all working in this domain. The author's pedagogical method is built around very clear Nubian type fonts with images and the words for them, and with grammatical and vocabulary exercises built around a written phonetic guide.
Alas, based on the current state of Nubian linguistics the representation of phonemes misses some consistency that is reflected in the orthography taught in the book. The description of Nubian grammar could be extended, especially when including results from previous works on Nubian language. Perhaps a tape with the words recorded would enhance accurate pronunciation, regional accent and tone.

Still, this is a very worthwhile and accessible work, for teachers as it breathes more life into this threatened language family of Kenzi, Sukkot, Mahas, and Dongolawi. Other scholars can turn to previous works on grammar and lexicon to study sociolinguistics, linguistic change, lexico-statistics and glottochronology.

Note: Zender, Marc. 2013. Writing and Civilization: From Ancient Worlds to Modernity. New York: The Teaching Company. Series: The Great Courses, Lecture 2, Disc 4.

Modern Muslims: A Sudan Memoir.
Steve Howard. 2016.
Athens: Ohio University Press

Reviewed by John Hursh, researcher and editor at the Stockton Center for the Study of International Law at the U.S. Naval War College, and previously, policy analyst at the Enough Project, where he focused on Sudan.

Steve Howard's Modern Muslims: A Sudan Memoir is an outstanding work that succeeds both as memoir and as cultural history. Modern Muslims recounts Howard's experience as a young researcher completing his doctoral dissertation in Sudan between early 1982 and November 1984. This experience centers on Howard's relationship with the Republican Brotherhood, an extremely progressive Islamist group that championed democracy, religious tolerance, social justice, and women's rights. The Republicans' ideology was unmistakably radical, both for its efforts to transform society through peaceful acts and democratic example and for its claim that Islam offered the best way to achieve (and reconcile) individual freedom and social justice.

The Republicans were led by Mahmoud Mohamed Taha, a key figure in modern Sudanese history and contemporary African thought. Taha's strikingly progressive interpretation of Islam and his growing influence in Sudan earned him many opponents, including the Muslim Brotherhood, Hassan al-Turabi, and even President Nimeiry. Taha's refusal to bow to social or political pressure eventually led to his arrest and to a severe crackdown on the Republicans. Howard's description of the systematic repression, particularly the "harsh and cruel" tactics that the group faced from the national security police (173), is one of the more poignant sections of the book. Howard witnessed and experienced these tactics firsthand, as the security police arrested and detained him twice (174-78). Ultimately, this repression resulted in Nimeiry ordering Taha's execution on January 18, 1985. This execution stunned foreign diplomats and occurred only a few months before a popular uprising removed Nimeiry from power.

Structurally, the book contains six themed chapters that seek to explain Taha's project and the Republican movement. Howard also includes a useful Prologue that sets out the book's purpose, "The intention of this memoir is to shed light on social change promoted through the vehicle of a modern Islamic movement dedicated to its members' understanding of and practice of the pursuit of peace" (5), as well as his desire to understand the movement. The Epilogue provides a satisfying ending and recounts Howard's visits to Sudan and Egypt following Taha's death. It also details his continued engagement with the Sudanese diaspora and with Sudanese academics and students as professor at Ohio University. Finally, the Epilogue includes the unlikely story of Howard meeting one of his interrogators after returning to Sudan as a Fulbright Scholar in the late 1980s (187-89), providing one of the more incredible occurrences in the book.

In addition to the book's well-organized structure, Howard's narrative style lends itself to this project and contributes to its success. Foremost, the narrative builds around Howard's increasingly close connection to the Republicans, beginning with his initial time in Khartoum, meeting Taha in 1982, and eventually moving into a communal Republican house. Although conscious of his position as an outsider invited to join the group, Howard's experience makes for an engaging and original perspective.

Republican Life

Early in the text, Howard states that he was motivated to write this book in part to offset unflattering portrayals of the Republicans and Taha and because neither the movement, nor Taha receive the scholarly attention that they are due (6). Howard presents the Republicans through his experience living with the group, illustrating the Republican view that human rights and democracy at the social level could only succeed when individuals expressed these values through their personal practice (6). Perhaps above all, Howard shows that the Republican Brotherhood was a deeply reflective and "radically nonviolent movement" (3). In contrast to most Islamist movements that viewed reform as the need to return to earlier practices from a distant golden era of Islam, or as the need to apply Islamic principles to modern life, the Republicans insisted that Islam was always modern and contemporary. Indeed, Howard writes that the Republicans considered their task to help society catch up to this conclusion (7). Again, the Republicans sought to accomplish this objective through example, rather than politics. Embracing a "philosophy of living," Howard notes that the Republicans' "only tools were moral suasion based on their understanding of the word of God and their intense effort to serve as a model community dedicated to peace and human equality" (7).

Throughout the text, Howard returns to the group's intense spirituality and its communal focus. Thus, while he makes clear that the Republicans felt reform was necessary, "getting as close to God as possible" was imperative (135). This communal focus shows through in the Republicans' approach to spreading their message and attracting new members, which included an impressive self-publishing and distribution campaign and knowledge production through hamla "the campaign to discuss, write, publish, and distribute books about their spiritual ideas and commentary on the modern world all over Sudan" (153-54). Although Howard lived and studied with the Republicans, he is forthcoming about his struggle to find his place in this community and his sometime uncertainty over the path that he chose. Despite this uncertainty, Howard's immersion into Republican life is one of the most interesting aspects of the book and his details of group life laboring in the "collective mode" (72) provide an insightful account of daily life with the Republicans. The invitation to live in a communal house with the Brothers was clearly a key point in Howard's time in Sudan. It was in these houses, many of which were located in the Thawra neighborhood in Omdurman, where Howard witnessed the everyday thought and practice of Taha's thought and approach.

Taha's Legacy

The progressive character of Taha's thought and the Republican movement is hard to overstate, particularly given the sociohistorical moment that the Republicans encountered in early 1980s Sudan. Taha's insistence on complete gender equality is perhaps the best example of just how far ahead the Republicans practice of Islamic values were from conventional Sudanese or Arab social mores.

Indeed, Howard writes that "[i]t could be said that Mahmoud Mohamed Taha's most significant contribution to twentieth-century African social history was his linkage of the elevation of the status of women to the political, social, cultural, and religious development of the continent" (105). Taha concluded that Islam requires complete gender equality through careful readings of the Qur'an and interpretive techniques that foreshadow the rise of modern Islamic feminism and the scholarship of contemporary writers such as Amina Wadud, Asma Barlas, Kecia Ali, and many others.

For example, Taha's emphatic rejection of polygamy-"It is not acceptable!"-stems from his consideration of the historical context of the sura and a consistent methodological approach when interpreting the Qur'an (124). Nonetheless, it is remarkable that Taha held such an iconoclastic view as early as he did.
The Republicans sought to apply Taha's principle of gender equality in their daily lives by transforming social roles and institutions. Thus, instead of elaborate weddings meant to display wealth and status, the Republicans constructed a marriage ceremony that highlighted their principles and values. Admittedly, Howard notes that applying this principle created considerable strain on Republican members, including tensions within the movement. These tensions suggest just how demanding Republican life could be, as even committed members needed to readjust their worldview and conception of Islam.

Howard's text also demonstrates the influence that Taha had on the intellectual development and scholarship of Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im. Of course, An-Na'im has acknowledged Taha's influence throughout his career, so this is not surprising. In addition to translating Taha's Second Message of Islam into English, An-Na'im references Taha throughout his seminal work, Towards an Islamic Reformation. He even uses a quote from Taha to introduce that work: "No person is perfect enough to be entrusted with the liberty and dignity of others." Still, it is fascinating to see the themes that An-Na'im would later take up in his scholarship in the everyday practice of the Republicans.

For example, Howard notes that the Qur'anic verse that there can be no compulsion in religion served as the core value of the group (169). More than three decades later, An-Na'im began Islam and the Secular State by stating, "In order to be a Muslim by conviction and free choice, which is the only way one can be a Muslim, I need a secular state."

Sadly, this principle of non-compulsion also led to the outrageous apostasy charge that resulted in Taha's execution. In addition to the personal tragedy of Taha's death, the execution carried broader social and political implications as well, most notably a turn towards a hardened conservative view of Islam at odds with Sudan's Sufi heritage and diverse population. As Howard observes, Taha's execution "signaled in many respects the beginning of the Islamic era that envelops Sudan today" (8).

What Might Have Been

As interesting and informative as Howard's book is, Taha's death hangs over the text, especially as the crackdowns on the Republicans intensify and the narrative moves closer to Taha's execution. And, while there is little to criticize in this work, Howard arguably underemphasizes the role that Turabi had in Taha's execution.

Certainly, many Sudanese believe that Turabi was responsible for Taha's death and that Turabi never forgave Taha for characterizing him as "clever but not insightful." Before his death, Turabi blamed Nimeiry for Taha's execution, just as Nimeiry had blamed Taha. Ultimately, both Turabi and Nimeiry, as well as others, share this responsibility. As such, a more thorough assessment of Turabi's role in Taha's persecution would have been useful in helping to explain the Islamic turn that Howard notes, albeit this is not central to the text, nor to Howard's objectives for writing this book.

It is difficult to read this book and not see unfortunate parallels from that earlier era to the current regime. For example, Howard notes that Nimeiry used the September Laws as a distraction from the country's woeful economic situation (171). These laws introduced a version of Islamic law at odds with Islamic values and served more purposely as a rallying point against Nimeiry's political opponents. This tactic is effectively the same strategy that President Bashir uses today when decrying U.S. sanctions as the sole reason for the country's poor economic performance. Never mind, that the regime spends perhaps 70 percent of the national budget on military and security costs, as opposed to 1 to 2 percent on education, public health, or infrastructure. Likewise, Howard's conversations with Republicans revealed unsettled questions over Sudanese identity, particularly for Sudanese with ties to other areas of Africa, such as the Hausa from northern Nigeria and West Africa (82). Of course, the competing influences of Africa and the Arab Middle East continue to pull on Sudanese identity today and the ruling regime's disparate treatment of "Arabs" and "Africans" remains a source of grievances, conflict, and violence.

Howard's account of Sudan in the early 1980s raises the question of what might have been. The apolitical and inwardly focused character of the Republicans likely ensured that the movement would have remained, at best, an example for others to follow or emanate. Still, that such a radically progressive and peaceful Islamist group emerged when it did in Sudan suggests a greater openness to varied interpretations of Islam, as well as more accepting attitudes towards human rights and gender equality.

Of course, not all groups welcomed this openness. The conservative Muslim Brotherhood, in particular, rejected these progressive interpretations and emerged as the Republicans' greatest opposition (165). Even this opposition is something of a "what if," since the early writing of the Muslim Brotherhood founder Hassan al-Banna were not especially different from aspects of Taha's thought, stressing resistance to colonial oppression and encouraging Muslims to think critically about Islam (165). Although initially similar, these groups soon diverged, as the Muslim Brotherhood's adoption of violent means to achieve political goals contrasts starkly with Taha and the Republicans' nonviolent ethos and peaceful activities. As the Sudan Muslim Brotherhood influenced (and arguably became) the National Islamic Front and then the National Congress Party, violence and repression became constant features within Sudan.

That a nonviolent and incredibly progressive Islamic movement seeking to establish gender equality and strengthen human rights fell victim to Nimeiry's authoritarian government and the same Islamist forces that would ultimately bring President Bashir to power in a military coup is both predictable tragedy and terrible irony. But, as Howard demonstrates, Taha's legacy as well as that of the Republican Brotherhood continues, often in surprising ways. As such, Howard succeeds not only in achieving his stated intent for writing this memoir, but also more broadly for providing a fascinating firsthand account of a key figure and movement in Sudanese history as well as contemporary Islamic thought and African culture.

George Packer, The Moderate Martyr, The New Yorker, Sept. 11, 2006, http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2006/09/11/the-moderate-martyr
Taha said that the Sudanese constitution needed to be reformed, in order to reconcile "the individual's need for absolute freedom with the community's need for total social justice." This political ideal, he argued, could be best achieved not through Marxism or liberalism but through Islam-that is, Islam in its original, uncorrupted form, in which women and people of other faiths were accorded equal status.

.Judith Miller, Sudan Publicly Hangs an Old Opposition Leader, New York Times, Jan. 19, 1985, http://www.nytimes.com/1985/01/19/world/sudan-publicly-hangs-an-old-opposition-leader.html.

.W. J. Berridge, Civil Uprisings in Modern Sudan: The "Khartoum Springs" of 1964 and 1985 (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015).

.Amina Wadud, Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Asma Barlas, "Believing Women" in Islam: Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'an (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002); Kecia Ali, Sexual Ethics and Islam: Feminist Reflections on Qur'an, Hadith, and Jurisprudence (New York: Oneworld Publications, 2006).

.Mahmoud Mohamed Taha, Reform and Development of the Islamic Personal Law Shar'ia, trans. Einar Berg (Oslo, 1971).

.Mahmoud Mohamed Taha, The Second Message of Islam, trans. Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996).

.Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im, Towards an Islamic Reformation: Civil Liberties, Human Rights, and International Law (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996).
. Ibid, v.

.Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im, Islam and the Secular State: Negotiating the Future of Shari'a (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 1.
. After the Nimeiry regime fell, Taha's daughter Asma Mahmoud successfully had the apostasy conviction overturned and the Supreme Court ruled that the apostate conviction was not lawful. Howard, Modern Muslins, 184-85.
. Packer, The Moderate Martyr.

Civil Uprisings in Modern Sudan: The 'Khartoum Springs' of 1964 and 1985. WILLOW J.BERRIDGE 2015.

London: Bloomsbury. ISBN 978-1-4725-7401-5.

Reviewed by Brendan R Tuttle, Research Associate at the Center for Human Environments and the Children's Environments Research Group (CERG) at The Graduate Center of the City University of New York (CUNY)

W.J. Berridge's Civil Uprisings in Modern Sudan (2015) is an outstanding contribution to a strong tradition of Sudanese history, whose authors have been producing important work that has had little influence on scholars working elsewhere. The literatures on popular protest and non-violent civil action in the Middle East and North Africa have overlooked Sudan's 'Khartoum Springs' of 1964 and 1985. This is perhaps partly because neither succeeded in establishing a long-term democracy, and partly because scholars are often unsure about what to do with Sudan. Scholars of the Middle East often lump it in with sub-Saharan Africa, and then disregard it since it doesn't really fit. Africanists have shown little interest in Sudan's civil uprisings. This is a shame, Berridge shows, not least because "the Sudanese uprisings occurred before the Western drive for democratization in Africa in the 1990s, [and thus] offer an excellent opportunity to study the local as opposed to the global causes of pro-democracy activism, and thus construct an anti-Eurocentric narrative of civil protest" (7). One hopes that this work will encourage others to continue in this line of research.

The book's first two chapters provide an engaging, close comparison of the October Revolution of 1964 and the Intifada of 1985. Berridge keeps an awareness of the contingency of actions alive in her account of insurrection in Khartoum. She captures a sense of uncertainties of these uprisings as they must have seemed to those who were engaged in them - improvised, hasty, sometimes chaotic, and undertaken without definite foreknowledge of their outcomes. This is not to deny the degree to which events in Sudan in 1964 or 1985 (or, even, 2011) were shaped and constrained by larger forces; but these are not the only point. Burridge pays particular attention to the perspectives of differently positioned individuals and groups, and what actions and alternatives they were able to see open to them at the time. She carefully traces a series of unpredictable and contingent events, showing the heterogeneity of civil uprisings; "it was not just mosques and Islamic associations that provided the networks through which anti-regime activity was mobilized; schools, universities, professional association headquarters, public squares and law courts also proved to be important loci for the spreading of dissent against the regime" (4).

South Sudan:
The Untold Story from Independence to Civil War.
JOHNSON, HILDE F. 2016.
London: I.B. Tauris.
Foreword by Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

Reviewed by Oscar H. Blayton.
He is attorney at law, specializing in human rights and development issues.

[AUTHOR'S NOTE: Despite recent events, particularly the December 1, 2016 Statement by the UN commission on human rights in South Sudan regarding ethnic cleansing in South Sudan and the declaration of the existence of famine in Unity State on February 20, 2017, this is a book review, and not a commentary on the civil war and its consequences. In this article, I shall limit my comments to the events set out in the book and the manner of their reporting.]

As the UN Secretary General's Special Representative, Hilde Johnson had a "front row seat" to the events that unfolded in South Sudan from 2011 until 2014. Bur she was not merely a spectator, she also participated in the disaster that moved eventually (and some say: "inevitably") towards an eruption of horrific violence.

In her book, "South Sudan, The Untold Story, From Independence to Civil War," Ms. Johnson gives a very detailed accounting of her observations of and involvement in, the neo-natal missteps of this nation state, before and during the Civil War. But the title gives one pause. How could this be called an "Untold Story?"

The world watched closely, and with great anticipation, as Southern Sudan navigated its way through an interim period created by the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), meant to be a path towards an ultimate referendum by the people of Southern Sudan as to whether they would continue to remain the southern portion of Sudan, or sever ties with the Khartoum government and form an independent nation.

After the referendum delivered an overwhelming vote for independence in 2011, the global community continued to observe the fledging nation as South Sudan tried to find its way in the global community. News stories, UN and NGO Reports chronicled the successes and failures of the leaders of "Southern Sudan" as those leaders sought to create "South Sudan." And more was written still, as South Sudan first clashed with Sudan, and eventually descended into civil war.
Rather than "The Untold Story," this book might more appropriately be titled by the author as "My Side of The Story." Most of the book is written from the personal perspective of the author, and she generously sprinkles it with her opinions.

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The dysfunction of the Government of South Sudan is laid at the feet of what the author describes as the "hegemony of the liberator." Here, she explains, legitimacy is not grounded in competence, but in the hero status of the freedom fighters, and when that hegemony is threatened, she explains, repression is sometimes used to maintain power. She reiterates her point about hegemony of the liberator on more than one occasion, as: "Military credentials and rank would often be more decisive than political competence and technical skills when allocating ministerial positions." [p. 21] And "Influence in decision making was often more determined by the prominence of the past than the competence of the present." [p. 21]

Also, in Chapter 2 the author alludes to "Old tensions" and "ethnic divisions" within the SPLM that would lead to the 2013 crisis. But, more importantly, she attributes mismanagement and corruption, which she says were inherited from the "pre-CPA system;" for creating major problems. Thus, she lays the blame on both Khartoum and the SPLM/A.

As the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations (SRSG), the author was in a position to interact with numerous government officials and private citizens with direct knowledge of events that took place, both during the period from 2011 through 2014, as well as prior to that time. Because of her extraordinary access, it is curious that she would veer from the facts, figures and notes of her interaction with the nation's leaders to delve into rumors and second hand accounts to make her points.
Citing dangers attendant to identifying individuals who are the sources of some of her information, Ms. Johnson explains that she is forced to cite many occurrences without being able to cite a source. But she seems to blur the lines between quoting anonymous sources and repeating rumors.

In one anecdote, found on page 36, Ms. Johnson serves up an example to make her point about corruption: "During the interim period. One Minister of finance on his last day in office, was observed in the VIP lounge of Judah airport with 7 black reef cases as hand luggage, waiting for a flight. One could only guess the contents."
We do not know if this account was related to the author by someone who made this observation directly, or by someone who was told of this occurrence. And, in any event, the significance of the story hinges upon the speculation that there was cash, or something else of illicit value in the brief cases. We can all appreciate the need to not disclose the identity of an anonymous source, but this anecdote, presented in this form, is nothing more than "gossip."

Barely more than three pages later [p. 39], Ms. Johnson quotes the journalist James Copnall: "A foreign consultant witnessed a senior official at a ministry receive a brown envelope, count the wedge of cash around three inches thick, and then tell the person who had handed him the envelope 'That's fine you will get the contract,'"
While James Copnall is a respected journalist and has spent a significant amount of time in South Sudan, it seems pointless for someone in Johnson's position to quote a passage from Copnall's 2014 book: "A Poisonous Thorn in Our Hearts" where Copnall cites a comment from an unattributed source.
This "third hand accounting" is also troubling because throughout most of the book, Johnson places herself in the middle of the story and makes significance use of the first-person pronouns - "I" and "we" in her narratives.

Ms. Johnson's attention to the mismanagement of oil revenues by the Government of South Sudan and its officials is a useful recitation of the problems that took place during the Unity Government and subsequent independence; and her use of Alex de Waal's statement that: "South Sudan obtained independence in July 2011 as a kleptocracy - a militarized, corrupt neo-patrimonial system of governance." [p. 41] squares with what has been described as of the perceptions of most external stakeholders. But, while the seriousness of the fact that millions of pounds went missing during both the Interim Period and after Independence should not be underestimated; painting a cartoonish picture of a nefarious bureaucrat absconding with multiple briefcases stuffed with cash, lends an offensive comical air to a very grave situation; and does little to move towards a solution of the core problem.

It seems that sometimes we in the West, give too little consideration to the gravity and depth of injuries inflicted by slights, well intentioned, but poorly thought out, when we open the door to offensive stereotyping; or by offering up a third hand recounting of events with the expectation that they be accepted, merely because of the person who is the subject of the story.

Ms. Johnson gives some behind the scenes versions of problems and issues that she witnessed or had intimate knowledge. On more than one occasions these events were reported in the press in enough detail to give the reader a thorough understanding of the situation without the need for a behind the scenes account. One of these events was the issuance, by South Sudan, of its own currency within days of its independence. This decision was prompted by the expectation in Juba, later borne out to correct, that Khartoum was about to issue new currency that would render worthless the Sudanese pounds held in South Sudan. The author wrote that she cautioned against issuing a new currency without the necessary months of planning and preparation. And while her discussions with government officials were not widely known, the reasons for the adoption of South Sudan's new currency was.

The Sudan Tribune reported on the new Sudanese notes on July 24th, 2011 in an article titled: "North Sudan Launches New Currency Into Economically Troubled Waters" that: "Before its launch, Mohammed El Hassan El Bahi, the Director General of Sudan Currency Printing Company which produced the new notes, and produces Somalia's currency said South Sudanese were amongst the team who developed the new notes."

In Chapter 3, Ms. Johnson treats the conflicts and disputes between Sudan and South Sudan, mainly over oil and the oil producing areas whose status was left ambiguous by the fact that border demarcations was one of issues left unresolved prior to South Sudan's independence in 2011. While the author was not involved in the discussions surrounding the unresolved issues, she does give an account of her involvement in the efforts to stop the dangerous slide of the two countries towards all-out war. Her recitations of the discussions during phone calls and meetings gives a clear picture of what was involved, and where the obstacles to a peaceful resolution lay.

Chapter 4 spends a great deal of time explaining the difficulties facing the United Nations Mission In South Sudan (UNMISS), and how UNMISS was unfairly blamed for events that took place leading up to the outbreak of the violence in December 2013.

When South Sudan became independent, the UN Security Council charged UNMISS with the task of protecting civilians within the nation's borders. This insulted the Government of South Sudan, which had expected the UN force to be assigned the task of protecting its borders from external threats.

UNMISS had also inherited the reputation of UNMIS (United Nations Mission In Sudan), which had frequently been accused by Southern Sudanese of taking little or no action when Khartoum killed civilians during their struggle for independence.

It was a significant problem that the UN had not formally engaged the leadership of South Sudan prior to establishing UNMISS's Mandate. And it is telling that this problem seems to cause Ms. Johnson little consternation. She rebuts the concerns of the South Sudanese by saying: "South Sudan had in fact been consulted informally about the establishment of UNMISSS at an early stage in the process..." [p. 100]

She goes on to state: "While some politicians were skeptical, I frequently heard from South Sudanese citizens, church leaders and community leaders that they felt assured by our presence." [p. 100] It seems very much like the author is saying that she had very little concern for the misgivings of the duly authorized leaders of the nation because she had conversed with private citizens whom she had deemed to be leaders. It is not surprising that when hostilities broke out in Jonglei State, UNMISS seemed to be stumbling badly as it tried to assert itself as a credible arbiter between the factions.

Chapter 4 is titled "Jonglei: The UN - Between a Rock and a Hard Place," and it reads more like an apologetics than a detailed recitation of events.
In Chapter 5, Hilde Johnson discusses the leadership within South Sudan, picking up at the death of Dr. John Garang in 2005. She takes several pages to treat both Salva Kiir and Riek Machar; discussing their backgrounds and personalities. And it is at this point that she flags the Bor massacre of 1991; for which Riek Machar must take a great deal of the responsibility.

In this chapter, Ms. Johnson also discusses the "Mainline" group of SPLM/A leaders as well as the "Young Turks" (also called the "Garang Boys") and the role of these two groups of leaders in the run up to the civil war.

The way in which Ms. Johnson presents the events in this chapter as they unfold, make it easy to connect the dots that took South Sudan, step by step into the violence that began on December 15, 2013. The crucial points in this chapter are the press conference held on December 6th by members of the SPLM who had concerns over the manner in which the organization was being led; and the National Liberation Council, which was convened on December 14th. Detailing the discussions and the points of view of the participants and key players, the author, presents a useful insight into how the sparks were ignited. In a curious anecdote, however, Ms. Johnson writes that when she was unable to gain access to President Kiir in order to have a meeting with him, she sent him a message in which she: … "urged him to keep the interest of the country and the presidency itself at heart." [p. 175] This writer has difficulty understanding how such a message would have had any significant impact on the president of a nation with numerous problems, who is in crisis mode attempting to avert a catastrophic political upheaval. It is the equivalent of her sending Kiir a message saying: "Try to do a good job."

In "The Nightmare," chapter 6 of the book, Ms. Johnson gives an account of the horrific violence that began on December 15, 2013. She tells of her efforts to get both President Kiir and Riek Machar to call for an end to the violence. Ms. Johnson tries to give a coherent account of what transpired as killing broke out in several locations around the country. Accounts were also given of the events that took place at the UNMISS compounds at that time, while civilians, and some soldiers, sought refuge from the deadly violence.

Chapter 7: "The Heart of the Matter: Security," tries to explain how a country with so few other resources could come to be so militarized and capable of mobilizing so quickly in order to bring about the type of catastrophe that was the civil war in South Sudan. Ms. Johnson points out that there were problems with providing the benefits of peace to the people of South Sudan. Among other things, the country initially was on a near-war footing with Khartoum. The nature and structure of the SPLA, and its "rock solid" support among the population in Southern Sudan during its struggle against Khartoum led to an ongoing culture grounded in conflict. The challenges posed by the lack of infrastructure and institutions made the task of nation building that much more difficult. Corruption was siphoning off funds that were much needed and already in short supply. And patronage was providing jobs where none were needed, or could be afforded. And often this patronage was seen as being influenced by ethnic identification.

Sudan Tribune, July 24, 2011: "North Sudan launches new currency into economically troubled waters" by T. Collins; posted July 25, 2011; http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?iframe&page=imprimable &id_article=39626

Ms. Johnson left UNMISS in 2014, and Chapter 8 focuses on the efforts by IGAD (Intergovernmental Authority on Development) to bring the two warring factions together to find a way to peace. This process is described as a "Bumpy Road" and she describes the "fits and starts" that have yet led to a clear outcome. Ms. Johnson concludes her last chapter: "As I left the region, I wondered whether South Sudanese leaders would be willing to do what was needed to save their country, not only from fighting, but also from failing." [p. 286]

Having penned her last chapter, Ms. Johnson also feels obliged to provide her thoughts on South Sudan in an Epilogue that deals mainly with the events that took place subsequent to the signing of the August 17 2015 Peace Agreement (although Salva Kiir did not sign the agreement until August 26, 2015). In this epilogue, in addition to describing some significant events since the signing of the Agreement, Ms. Johnson puts forward a number of "old saws," such as: "It would take much more than signatures on paper for peace to be achieved;" [p. 297] and "A unified leadership will have the best chance of unifying the country…" [p. 302]

Despite the good intentions of people like Hilde Johnson, what is lacking; and what no one has yet put forward, is a plan that takes into account the past role of external decision makers that helped to create this problem and also gives the decision makers in South Sudan the room to make meaningful decisions and find a way forward. South Sudan is not a missionary project. The West, proudly pointing to the "the world's youngest nation," as if it were some sort of poster child for a disaster relief fund, completely missed this point that newly sovereign South Sudan had been severely handicapped by years upon years of neglect, abuse and victimization, leaving it without the necessary technical resource to meet its expectations based upon its considerable natural resources.

While reading this book, the reviewer often felt a disquieting intellectual undertow that made writing the review difficult. The author's use of certain words hint at an implicit bias that is probably prevalent in the West. I do not believe that it is incorrect to believe that too many decision makers in the West assume that the citizens of this nation are incapable of governing their own society. The foundation of this house was not well laid. And the results of this have been catastrophic. Now, it is time for all of those who contributed to this catastrophe to acknowledge their roles, assess the cost of the damage, step up to their responsibilities as responsible members of the global community and pay the costs to make it right.

The Road to the Two Sudans. Newcastle UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
SOUAD T. ALI, STEPHANIE BESWICK, RICHARD LOBBAN and JAY SPAULDING. eds. 2014.

Reviewed by Susan M. Kenyon, Professor Emerita of Anthropology, Butler University, IN

The contents of this very timely volume will be familiar to many SSA members. Most chapters were first presented in the 2012 Association meeting in Arizona State University, and many of the authors are regular participants in SSA activities. Contributors include both academics - historians, political scientists, linguists, folklorists, anthropologists - and development practitioners; some are seasoned scholars, others emerging researchers. Several are Sudanese themselves, from both Sudan and South Sudan. All the contributors share a deep commitment to furthering understanding of "the two Sudans," particularly through this very challenging period of separation.

The editors organized the volume around three conceptual units. The four chapters grouped into "Perceptions" consider various lenses through which Sudan and South Sudan have been perceived, recently and over a longer time frame. Marcus Jaeger, for example, looks at Dongolawi and Kenzi proverbs which deal with outsiders, and thus indirectly at the shaping of their own identity over time. Hana al-Motasim examines notions of "place" and "home" among displaced southern Sudanese in relocation settlements near Omdurman, Jebal Awliya and in Yei. Kevin Boueri explores how hydro-agricultural development in South Sudan has been approached over the past two centuries. Brendan Tuttle looks at the topic of return migration, through the recent experiences of people in Bor.

Part Two, entitled "Legacies," examines lessons from Sudanese history and reflects on how these can impact the present. Stephanie Beswick describes the role of slavery in the rise and fall of the Shilluk Kingdom, the only satellite state of the Funj state of Sinnar, which it came to emulate. Jay Spaulding compares two legal cases concerning boundary disputes, one from north Kordofan in the 1920s, the other from 18th century Funj kingdom, to show how effectively local interests prevail against central authorities. Steven Serels examines the decline of the indigenous textile industry in 20th century Sudan. Iris Seri-Hersch analyzes the way history was approached in Sudanese schools in the last decade of Condominium rule.

Part Three, "Strategies," is oriented towards the future, particularly that of South Sudan. Sam L. Laki offers two chapters: the first provides a succinct description of the ecological variation in the new state and proposes important agricultural development strategies, ending on a relatively optimistic note. The second chapter looks at the role of oil in the Sudanese Civil War and concludes unequivocally that, from the outset, "Oil exploration brought misery and death to the people of Upper Nile region." Eliza Mary Johannes and Mumo Nzau look at the role of Sudanese in the Diaspora over the past half century, and find that they continue to have an important role to play, particularly in holding the political leadership of the new nation accountable.

There is something in this fine collection for all those concerned with issues of the Two Sudans, and much of what we draw from it depends on our own background interests. As a socio-cultural anthropologist who has been involved with Sudan studies for over half a century, I am struck by several overlapping points. The first is the recognition, in various chapters, of the importance of local knowledge in understanding the complexity of this area, past and present. Disputes over land, for example, are not new in this part of the world, and do not all derive from colonial interventions.
Spaulding's fascinating comparison of 18th and 20th century legal squabbles show that these have long been ongoing struggles and that invariably local knowledge trumps political decisions made by relative outsiders or unpopular power-holders. Surely there is a lesson here for today?

Local knowledge, even that of illiterates or females, can express both resistance and sound understanding of the local situation. Furthermore, ways of dealing with outsiders are often embedded in local knowledge, which may be expressed obliquely. Jaeger's stimulating chapter about Dongalawi and Kenuzi proverbs shows these reinforce the importance of group solidarity against outsiders. At the same time, he reminds us how the ease of modern communication is fast changing attitudes among younger people and thus of what exactly IS local knowledge.

Secondly, issues of gender and age are variously impacted by development, changes and conflict throughout this area. Serels' very interesting discussion of the vicissitudes and ultimate decline of Sudan's indigenous textile industry during the first half of the 20th century, shows it was due largely to changing government policies, with unforeseen consequences. Despite an initial surge in demand for their skilled labor, women spinners as well as male weavers were to lose their market and their skills to cheaper imported cloth. This must surely have impacted women's ability to make a livelihood in the later 20th century. Al-Motasim also recognizes the difficulty for many displaced southern women in making a living in their new homes. At the same time, image of home in temporary accommodation were largely created by women, her main sources of information (46), thus reinforcing many older ideals.

Thirdly, despite the shocking media publicity Sudan receives in the West, conflict is not the only way to understand this part of the world, and even those who have suffered through endless civil war are not preoccupied solely with violence. Tuttle's interesting discussion of identity and place in Bor underscores how very mundane are the goals of many of the people he spoke with, even though their lives had been transformed by war. "What is problematic about the focus on conflict is that it risks pathologizing young people by understanding them only through the lens of violence while ignoring the informal and ordinary practices and experiences…of 'everyday life'"(100-101),

He notes, a salutary reminder to academics and development practitioners alike. Laki offers thoughtful programs of agricultural development for South Sudan to help move the new state forward (many of which could be applied equally well in the North). He rightly emphasizes the need for "massive" investment in human resources as well as research and structural reforms. Boueri urges planners (including the government) to take into account South Sudan's "environmental and human realities" (85) as "new" agricultural policy is implemented. As he reminds us (86), the more things change, the more they actually stay the same.

Ambitious agricultural development projects have been introduced before, by colonial powers and national governments alike, with little apparent heed to prior failures. Are the Nuer, Dink and Shilluk, who occupy some of the countries' most fertile lands, now ready to become farmers? Drawing on the experience of displaced Dinka in Yei, Al-Motasim seems to suggest that they might be (55), though this in turn has the potential for further conflict in changing situations.

In the five years since separation, it has become clear that many challenging problems remain, in Sudan as well as South Sudan. This volume does not aspire to be comprehensive in its coverage of these challenges, nor to offer broad-ranging policy proposals for dealing with them. What it DOES do, successfully, is contribute to our broader understanding of this important part of the world, and stimulate conversation on a variety of issues which inform those very problems.

Resilience in South Sudanese Women: Hope for Daughters of the Nile. Godriver Wanga-Odhiambo. 2014. Lexington Books. ISBN 978-0-7391-7866-9 hardback.

Reviewed by Clare Hollowell, formerly Director of Capacity Building at Forcier Consulting

The Sudan Studies Association (SSA) is an independent professional society founded in the United States in 1981. Membership is open to scholars, teachers, students, and others with interest in the Sudan. The Association exists primarily to promote Sudanese studies and scholarship. It maintains a cooperative relationship with the Institute of African and Asian Studies, University of Khartoum and works collaboratively with the Sudan Studies Society of the UK. The SSA works to foster closer ties among scholars in the Sudan, North America, Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and other places. Normal activities of the SSA include the publication of this Bulletin, organizing meetings for the exchange of ideas, and recommending research candidates for affiliation with appropriate institutions of higher education in the Sudan.
The Association also sponsors panels and programs during the meetings of other academic organizations. It occasionally publishes the proceedings of its annual meetings in book form.

Resilience in South Sudanese Women is an account of two qualitative studies undertaken by Godriver Wanga-Odhiambo, who is an Assistant Professor of African History at Le Moyne College, Syracuse, New York. The first study, part of her master's degree, concerns Sudanese female refugees in Kenya, undertaken in 1998-1999. The second, from 2012-2013, studies resettled women in New York.

The strength of Wanga-Odhiambo's book lies in her clear and dedicated devotion to telling the stories of the women in her book, in her admiration for the difficulties they have overcome, and her obvious compassion. She has collected stories of hardship, challenge and success from women whose voices are often lost or ignored in research, and presents them as a vital piece of the history of both refugee studies and of Sudan and South Sudan. At times, the author's partisanship can be an obstacle in the book - the history of South Sudan and the suffering many people have experienced as a result of the civil war are facts that can stand alone, and the occasional editorialising is not necessary to convey the strength of character of the subjects of the book. This means that the narrative reads more like personal opinion than empirically evidenced research.

The book seeks an audience beyond those already knowledgeable about South Sudan and its refugees, and so the first section of the book comprises an overview of the Sudanese civil wars, and a high level account of the pattern of refugee migration following the wider outbreak of conflict. This provides an overall guide and background to the context of the refugees described in the book. Wanga-Odhiambo notes where Sudanese women in particular have been affected by the colonial actions of the Anglo-Egyptian administration, the treatment of South Sudan by the Sudanese government before independence, and the war itself. The themes drawn out in this chapter include political exclusion, social and cultural marginalisation, education, health, and economic marginalisation. Of these, education is the topic most frequently returned to throughout the book.

The earlier parts of the history presented are thorough, though the text can be repetitive in the way that key themes are drawn out alongside the timeline. Later, however, the author jumps from the early 2000s to an independent South Sudan within two paragraphs - without even a mention of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. This inattention to the political and social situation in South Sudan post-2000 is a flaw in the text. While the earlier cohort of women studied predates this, one would expect that for this publication the literature references would have been updated to include later insight. Instead, the majority of the chapters reference only the interviews conducted for the study and earlier texts. It is also rare that Wanga-Odhiambo engages with this literature. Rather than a sense of a contribution to a debate by building on existing work (which, while not as prolific as other areas, does certainly exist), the world that is described by the author appears to be in isolation from the work of other scholars.

For the main section of the book, Wanga-Odhiambo draws out some of the essences of South(ern) Sudanese womanhood that she says has helped them to develop strategies to maintain resilience in the face of adversity. Key aspects such as language, history and a sense of community are drawn out to explain their situations. The author describes the process of settling in camps and in the city of Nairobi. From there, she explains the assistance available, both from external actors such as the Catholic outreach services, and those that the refugees created themselves to support one another. However, there is a frustrating lack of deeper commentary, and the lack of a wider academic discourse again undermines the book. One key example is that there is no interrogation of the diversity of ethnicities within South Sudan. Dinka is in some places used to stand in for all South Sudanese. There is one brief reference to how the larger Dinka representation may have been problematic: "a one time member of the SWAN eventually dismissed the group as a Dinka affair, and, being a Nuer, she argues that she felt uncomfortable" (p 126), but there is nothing beyond a summary of the SWAN's response: "it appears that this was just an excuse because those who had little were willing to share with those who had nothing despite their ethnicity" (p 126).

It is difficult to tell who the women at the heart of Resilience in South Sudanese Women are; although a list of key informants is provided at the end of the book, they are not introduced within the text. We are plunged straight into their stories without knowing their backgrounds, or indeed any demographic information, which might draw out more nuances about how their resilience is constructed and enacted. Method too is absent. One can infer that each respondent was interviewed once, or at most twice, but how Wanga-Odhiambo came to include them in her study is not clear.

Reference is made a few times in the text to the "sample" of refugees, but not what they are a sample of. There is, at times, confusion in the writing as to whether "the Sudanese women" stands for her small cohort, or to the wider population. A timeframe is also elided. Although the dates of interviews are given, outside the chapter detailing historical events, we are in an "everytime" of post-conflict, pre 21st century. We are not told when the women interviewed first left South Sudan or how long they have been in Kenya/New York, which would help to contextualise the stories we are being told.

The penultimate chapter moves the focus to the second study, of women in New York, interviewed after South Sudan's independence referendum. This provides an interesting contrast to the experiences of the earlier refugees. Those in New York have predominantly come via Egypt, rather than the camps of Kenya; their adaptations involve using unfamiliar appliances rather than sleeping on cardboard boxes. However, they are viewed in isolation from the earlier study, leaving tantalising strands dangling instead of woven together. Ultimately, this book never successfully moves beyond description and assertion. It is apparent from the details of the stories reported that women have likely been resilient, but this is not explored. The interesting women detailed in the book are not enough to prevent this from reading like a missed opportunity.

Sudan's Killing Fields: Political Violence and Fragmentation. Beny, Laura N. and Hale, Sondra. eds. 2014. Africa World Press, Inc. & The Red Sea Press.

Reviewed by Ahmed El Bashir Ismail (PHD)

A new important book on conflict in the Sudan was recently added to the scholarly library. The book, edited by Laura Beny and Sondra Hale, is entitled "Sudan's killing fields: Political violence and fragmentation."
This book, in some of its chapters, proves to be comprehensive in tackling the issue of political violence in the Sudan with all its complexity. Some other chapters focus on certain regions and/or ethnic groups and even sub-ethnic groups that suffered the scourges of violence.

The book comes in four parts. The first part deals with the problems of identity and race, and the consequences of ignoring them, or otherwise mismanaging them in the framework of the historical process of the Sudanese state building. The second and third parts are devoted to the violent conflicts in southern Sudan, the Nuba Mountains, and western Sudan. The fourth part considers the links between the issues of gender, forced labor, and political economy on the one hand, and that of political violence in the Sudan on the other.

As they handle the issue of violence in the Sudan since its formation in 1821, the contributors dig deep into various aspects, causes, including root ones, manifestations, and legal definitions as well as the consequences of political violence in the Sudan.

In order to lay the foundation for, and to contextualize the subject matter of the volume, Mukhtar, Deng, Okeny, and Idris address the historical background of political violence in the Sudan; Mukhtar deals with the issue of violent conflicts in the whole country including southern Sudan, Darfur, as well as the Nuba Mountains. He attributes the conflictual nature and violence in the Sudanese politics mainly to culture as well as ethnic and racial identity, describing the reason of this violence mainly as "psychological rather than political, economic, or developmental." Mukhtar maintains that ignoring the diversity of ethnicity, race, and culture, among other factors, has created hierarchical social structures with a psychological basis for conflict and political violence.

Deng, Idris, and Okeny limit their study to southern Sudan (now the Republic of South Sudan). In partial agreement with Mukhtar, Deng mainly attributes political violence to identity conflict which also took territorial and regional dimensions. In contrast to Mukhtar, Deng deems of unequal wealth, power sharing, and oil exploration as additional driving factors of violent conflicts in the Sudan. Moreover, contesting the 'narrow' definition of genocide and the idea of 'intentionality' as a condition for a violent act to be considered as genocide, Deng maintains that the political violence in the Sudan qualifies as genocide. To rid the country from this vicious cycle of violence, Deng suggests

some measure in the short run for reconciliation such as acknowledgment of violence, apology and/or compensation, and forgiveness. In the long run, Deng suggests changing the attitudes toward self and toward national identity, to become inclusive of all the Sudanese regardless of their racial, ethnic, religious, cultural, linguistic, and regional differences.

Although Okeny partially agrees to Deng's reasoning, i.e. the conflict of ethnic identities, he focuses on contested religious identities as the major factor in political violence in Sudan. As per Okeny, the insistence of the northerners, who mainly identify themselves as Muslims, on the Arabization and Islamization of the country is at the heart of the crisis and the prevalence of violence in the Sudan.

Although they both focus on southern Sudan as a representative of other parts of the country, especially the Nuba Mountains and Darfur, Okeny and Idris' studies differ in certain aspects. For example, Okeny focuses on the general historical background, whereas Idris limits his focus to aspects as slavery, colonialism, and post-colonial governments' policies as the pretext of political violence in the Sudan, especially between South and North. That is to say, unlike most of the contributors, Idris denies that the political violence in the Sudan is due to race and/or culture. Instead, "the racialized state that transformed these cultural identities - through the practice of slavery in the pre-colonial period, indirect rule in the colonial period, and the Islamization and Arabization in the post-colonial period" - has created subordinate 'African' groups vis a vis privileged 'Arab' groups.

As for slavery, Beny maintains that in spite of its role in determining the socioeconomic status of individuals and groups in the past, slavery in modern Sudan is no longer economically justified. Rather, modern slavery has been used to enforce Arabic/Islamic identity to become the sole national identity of the country. In this connection, conflicts and wars have erupted, as both Beny and Deng emphasize, in the framework of resisting and contesting the imposition of Arabic and Islamic national identity on non-Arab and non-Muslim groups. Therefore, modern slavery became closely related to the acts of genocide and disappearance of people, especially women, in different parts of the country.

In resonance with most of the authors, Yongo-Bure writes about the role of ethnicity, culture, and religion in the violent conflicts in the Sudan. Yet, Yongo-Bure, along with Deng, adds that oil exploration and production has been crucial to the continuity and increasing severity of political violence, because the yields of oil were used for obtaining more quantities of advanced weapons. Moreover, regardless of environmental issues, the local population lost their lands as they were forcefully driven away from the oil fields. When they resisted this, these indigenous people encountered horrific cruelties that led to even more displacement and deaths. Because of its interest in oil, the international community turned a blind eye to these atrocities. Even after the secession of Southern Sudan, oil continued to fuel the conflicts and violence between the two countries.

Other contributors such as Collins, Ille et al, O'Fahey, and Salih focus on specific regions in northern Sudan. Ille et al and Salih study the conflict in the Nuba Mountains, whereas Collins and O'Fahey focus on the region of Darfur.
In his study of the historical background to the Darfur conflict, Collins sets the ground for understanding the other studies, especially the ones dealing with Darfur. Collins gives ample historical, geographic, administrative, and economic information about the ethnic groups and structure of the region. He talks about immigration to the region, ancient dynasties, colonization, as well as post-colonial governments and their policies in the region. It is an up-to-date description of the main incidents that occurred within the framework of the recent conflict in Darfur since its eruption in 2004. Further, Collins describes the stance of the international community, including the roles of neighboring countries, as well as the endeavors at resolving the conflict.

For O'Fahey the political history of the region provides only the background to the violent conflict. Instead, he attributes the root causes of this conflict mainly to drought, desertification, and famines that afflicted the region in the early 1980s. On the other hand, the attacks by the Sudan Liberation and Justice and Equity Movements, as per O'Fahey, began when their leaders realized that the CPA was exclusively between the government of the Sudan and the SPLA/M of southern Sudan, to the exclusion of all other Sudanese people, including the Darfurians. Like Collins, for O'Fahey the international community has not been in a position to help this situation because the main players have been busy with other hot spots such as Iraq and Afghanistan. Also, they did not want to compromise their own interests in the Sudan. Therefore, the African Union was the only party that sent troops to Darfur, albeit without any effectiveness for a variety of reasons. Although O'Fahey, like other authors, considers what is going on in Darfur as genocide, he maintains that it is of a different kind. It is a slow genocide that materializes over time with the government playing a complicit role in this conflict, and the international community not rescuing the Darfurians.

In resonance with Deng, Nyaba, Hale, Ille et al, Moro, and Yongo-Bure's studies, Salih considers that what has taken place in the Nuba Mountains since the early 1980s, especially towards the end of the transitional period (2005-2011), as genocide. In support of his argument, at the end of his chapter Salih gives a chronological account of the genocidal acts in the Nuba Mountains. The main factor, in Salih's view, is the dehumanization of the indigenous people of the Nuba Mountains by those who claim a divine type of humanity for themselves, and use this as a rationale for perpetrating all kinds of atrocities against indigenous people. For Salih, whose view resonates with Yongo-Bure and Deng, the reason for the non-recognition of this genocide, in contrast to Burundi and Rwanda, resides in the international players' tendency to prioritize their own immediate interests over defending the Human Rights.

Agreeing with Salih that genocide occurred in the Nuba Mountains, Ille and his colleagues endeavor to "contribute to the documentation and analysis" of the violence in the Nuba Mountains and to pinpoint the reasons that prevented the Comprehensive Peace Agreement to break this vicious cycle of violence in the Sudan, especially in the Nuba Mountains, and particularly since 2011. The CPA, as per Ille and his colleagues, was not capable to do so as it was neither comprehensive nor final. From the outset, the CPA kept silent about the atrocities perpetrated against various indigenous Sudanese groups, including the Nuba Mountain people, save the southern Sudanese.

The CPA also ignored the individuals' responsibility, so one could not be held accountable for his/her deeds. Moreover, the CPA led to the abortion of the Cease Fire Act of 2002 in the Nuba Mountains, which achieved some kind of peace between 2002 and 2005, and enabled, to a great extent, the civilians to return to their normal life. This recurrence of violence was characterized by a great deal of polarization and militarization of various ethnic groups in the Nuba Mountains society and instigating these groups against each other. Therefore, Ille and his colleagues conclude, there is no way out of this crisis but through addressing the deep root causes of resentment, and also through considering the responsibility of individuals and corporates in perpetrating these atrocities, for the victims to be compensated and these perpetrators to be sanctioned.

Other contributors, as Hale and Nyaba, study other sub-regional ethnic groups and conflicts. Nyaba focuses on the Shilluk from southern Sudan who were subjected to "physical extermination and cultural extinction" as he puts it. Nyaba attributes this state of genocide to various external factors, such as 'globalization'. Yet, he does not forget internal factors, such as Arab/Islamic hegemony as well as the warlords, who are mainly Shilluk elites, and their alliances with their own group's enemies. These internal and external factors solidify each other to lead to the threatening of the very existence of the Shilluk tribe.

Moro's study focuses on the Massaleit of Darfur as a representative of non-Arab Muslim northern groups. Using testimonies from Massaleit refugees in Cairo, Egypt, Moro makes the case that racism was used against the Massaleit, as well as other Sudanese African ethnic groups, in the framework of the northern Sudanese political elites' strategy for enforcing and imposing the Arabic Islamic identity on these African Sudanese groups. While the atrocities took place even before the eruption of violence in Darfur in 2003, they remained mainly unnoticed by the international players.

The only chapter allocated to gender in this volume is Hale's one. Hale sees the violence against women, such as rape and humiliation, and the misuse of women's bodies in the framework of these conflicts both symbolically and physically. The individual (a woman in this case), the village, and the whole ethnic group were to be humiliated. As the atrocities directed against women who are necessarily "at the center of culture", do not qualify as 'genocide' as defined by the United Nations convention, Hale suggests adding the concept of "cultural genocide" to the definition. Even the term "ethnocide", as Hale writes, does not broaden the term 'genocide' enough to include all the violence perpetrated against women. For this reason, Hale suggests the term "gendercide" to be added, so it can include the scourges that Sudanese women in various conflict zones suffered, especially in Darfur, and the Nuba Mountains.

In conclusion, the book is a comprehensive analytical text that fills a significant gap in the literature, and deepens our understanding about the issues of conflict in the Sudan. Therefore, it deserves to be widely and critically read.

The Nile Institute's Women's Talking Group: Co-Constructing the Commons for Contemporary Times

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South Sudanese refugees in the United States often describe their experience with public institutions as one of "churning" (Zempsky 4), churning from one agency to another in search of the resources and respect needed to get their lives to go. So documents John Kuek in South Sudanese Community Insights (cf. Cushman, Struggle 88; Higgins and Brush 699-701). Under such circumstances, the "interventions" of public workers can do "more harm than good" (Kuek 30). As anyone caught in these circumstances can tell you, forced migration under globalized capitalism effects not only those on the move, but also those representing public institutions tasked with assisting in their resettlement.

This configuration of refugees, public workers, and public institutions has direct implications for higher education, especially for academic units responsible for educating future public workers who prepare for public-sector jobs. In Phoenix, Arizona, some women of the South Sudanese diaspora have formed a loosely organized "talking group" affiliated with the Nile Institute for Peace and Development to inform responsive education for public workers preparing to teach adult literacy learners. This collaboration is reinvigorating the idea of the Commons and operationalizing what it and its corollary—citizenship—mean for refugees, future public workers, and responsive public institutions under globalized mass migration.

Co-Constructing a Contemporary Commons

The Commons refers to the polity. As Iris Marion Young has written, a polity is comprised not of people who necessarily agree or identify with one another, but rather "of people who […] are stuck with one another" (Intersecting 67). In 1997, Young observed:

> The unity that motivates people's politics is the facility of people being thrown together, finding themselves in geographical proximity and economic interdependence such that activities and pursuits of some affect the ability of others to conduct their activities. A polity consists of people who live together, who are stuck with one another. (67)

Most obvious, the Commons includes those resources that people need in order to thrive and, so, necessarily share; for example, the air we need to breathe, the water comprising 70% of the human body. To be clear, in invoking the Commons, the project described here is not trying to herald the ancient days of classical Greece where the concept originally served only the few propertied men deemed worthy of citizenship. Rather, a challenge for the contemporary Commons is to attend to those with firsthand insights about how public institutions are working (or not) under contemporary conditions in order to bring out-of-sync institutional policies and practices into better alignment to support people's thriving according to the terms, needs and desires they identify for their own lives (cf. Benhabib 85-94).

Putting your finger on the Commons is trickier that it might seem. For the Commons is simultaneously a noun—that is, a thing, the resource in question (like water one might expect to flow on demand from one's kitchen faucet)—and also the very capacity of diverse people to engage in (often contested) talk about the different ways they need that resource (Clifton 59-64; Stanley 239).

Furthermore, contemporary conditions associated with global mobility are changing who's "stuck … with one another" and how (Young 76). So, it can be hard to tell how precisely we're stuck together and with whom. For instance, only sometimes is the relationship between an intrusive institutional practice or policy and people's capacity to thrive is quite clear given the locally situated details at hand (cf. Flower, Community 185). At other times, the relationship between institutional forces and thwarted efforts to thrive is far more elusive (cf. Payne). And in still other situations, institutional practices that thwart thriving may have no institutional face at all (cf. Cruikshank 10). These days, our interdependencies are embedded in complex knots of policies and practices—often spanning time and place in complex ways (Dingo and Strickland 79-91; Royster and Kirsch 110-30).

The Work of the Women's Talking Group

The South Sudanese diaspora spans generations and geographies that would be unimaginable were it not for the specific conditions of globalized capitalism that its members navigate daily. In response, the women's talking group makes publicly responsive institutions sites for enacting the Commons in daily life. It does so by reconfiguring how strangers relate to one another in public and by co-constructing the processes and discoveries of intercultural inquiry.

Reconfiguring how Strangers Relate to One Another

Taking this tack toward publicly responsive education can feel counter-intuitive. For the prevailing logic of service has taken off the table the question of how strangers would want to relate to one another in public. Instead, the prevailing logic of service perpetuates a reductive "doer/done-to" logic (Flower, Community 55) that casts recipients of resources less as citizens and more as consumers (Fleming 22) and casts public workers as gatekeepers of the resources and respect that lie on the other side of each institutional encounter (Cushman 124). A more robust alternative engages people across their differences in inquiry.

Co-Constructing Intercultural Inquiry

The talking group draws on women's own experiences with public institutions (or "critical incidents" they wish to share) to analyze the limits of conventional self-other logics and to invite public-workers-in-training to think about and to enact more responsive, more effective alternatives. Together, we've discovered disconcerting similarities between welfare delivery and adult literacy education programs when such programs construe the resources of the Commons as commodities for public workers to distribute to a deserving few (cf. Maynard-Moody and Musheno). These similarities are not vague, esoteric abstractions but specific attitudes and assumptions that affect day-to-day life. Compared to the diaspora, a state's welfare department and system of higher education may be relatively resource rich, but both also carry checkered track records and are poised to put their interests first. To be clear, the work of the talking group isn't to complain about an institution's shortcomings. Rather, experientially based collaborative inquiry drives us beyond institutional critique to discover and to rejoice together in the hard-won capacity to listen and to learn from one another about interdependencies by which we're stuck together in ways that we otherwise might not consider.

Critical incidents offer sites where localized knowledge of an individual or a group might indicate a more public issue of shared concern (cf. Clifton 100-110). In taking up such incidents, the talking group honors members' rhetorical skills and the joy they express in their own and each other's analytical arts. One such critical incident that the talking group has analyzed occurred at a recent meeting among the South Sudanese diaspora in Phoenix. The meeting featured presentations of a state welfare officer and a leader from another refugee community describing a culturally sustaining daycare for his community's children living in the heart of the city. So, on the one hand, the meeting's overt agenda was daycare. But the meeting's message carried a (not so) implicit critique: why hadn't the South Sudanese women's leadership council been more effective at ensuring the resettlement of South Sudanese families? With astute acumen, the members of the council carried out an amazing feat—the meaning of which has been the focus of several talking-group sessions: they took the microphone and redirected the meeting to show that the logic of service had overwritten the terms of engagement. By doing so, the leadership council disrupted the relational and gendered logic of service that otherwise structured the meeting. Then, with marked attention to their own purposes, just as soon as the meeting had adjourned, members of the leadership council began informally networking with others in the room—including the men who had called the meeting; myself; and a colleague, Jen, who had also been invited to attend the meeting. They worked to venture something that might become a better alternative to what existed. After all, they suggested, we're still stuck together.

In subsequent conversations, the talking group took up this incident as a site for collaborative analysis and discovery, articulating its implications for future public workers, as well as for members of the leadership council and diaspora more generally. At issue—the talking group members emphasized—is the discourse of blame-and-complaint that the logic of service perpetuates. This discourse asks people receiving services to defend themselves when their lives prove more complicated than the discourse assumes, but this discourse does not engage these people's experiential insights as grist for co-constructing more suitable—actually effective—institutional practices. Instead, the blame-game perpetuates the logic that the social service is sufficient; that conditions under which various service recipients make use of the service are either the same or not sufficiently different to challenge the adequacy of the service; that if recipients can't get the service to work for them in their lives, the fault is with them, their poor decisions, even their character. At the meeting, the women's leadership council had voiced critique of a blame-game that simultaneously held them up as the hope of South Sudan and blamed them for not doing enough to change the lot of their families, either by pursuing work and education—both of which require affordable, accessible daycare (see Clifton, "Lessons" 241-42).

As became clear over the course of the talking group sessions, the leadership council's frustration was with both the blame-game itself and with what this discourse rendered out of bounds for meaningful discussion: the real conditions of refugee resettlement in the context of Phoenix's urban sprawl that make it so difficult to render "resettlement" a private issue within the timeframe of formalized resettlement programs. The talking group has analyzed ways that the institutional practices in place may work for some refugees rebuilding their lives under other conditions, but these policies don't work under the conditions that define daily life for many of the 3,000 Sudanese resettling in the Phoenix area. If they are able to find jobs, they're likely low wage, within their kinship networks, and at different times of day and across vast distances of urban sprawl. Coordinating demands of family, work, education, and community is a perpetually elusive goal. In fact, the women's leadership council was initially formed in large part because the state's public institutions were not able to speak to these conditions. This is a locally situated instance of a global problem that is likely only to intensify. Their frustration set in relief the difference between public institutions that allocate services, on the one hand, and those that co-construct knowledge about access to and circulation of shared resources—the Commons—on the other. By raising this as a point for discussion, the women's leadership council employed means available to them to put the terms of engagement up for deliberation: to scrutinize, that is, the social world those terms set in motion and to refigure that world to include refugee women as citizens of the Commons in their own rights.

Challenging Literacy as a Commidified Service

The talking group's analyses—its talk, grounded in member's experiences navigating public institutions —led to a discovery that hit even closer to home for me, representing as I do college writing instruction: that the logic that limits welfare as a service too often pervades adult literacy education in town, as well. Examining the leadership council's critique of the logic of welfare in relation to members' experiences with adult literacy learning, we drew the following comparison:

The underlying logic of welfare-service delivery:	**The underlying logic of literacy-service delivery:**
• sets up reductive self-other relationships that render those seeking welfare services as somehow less adept than those delivering the services (Cushman 88; McKnight 266) • assumes in advance what people need rather than asking about what would best enhance their own life chances for thriving (Dingo 53-56) • takes deliberation about the institutional practices and policies off the table for joint deliberation, and with it, the rhetorical capacities necessary for difficult dialogue (Higgins and Brush 697) • limits public imagination about what responsive public institutions would look like and do (Dodson 135).	• sets up reductive self-other relationships that render those with "less literacy" as somehow more primitive and those with "more" as somehow superior (Street 4) • assumes in advance what people need rather than asking about what literacies are meaningful and valuable in their own lives—for what purposes (Grabill 123) • takes deliberation about the institutional practices and policies off the table for joint deliberation (Porter et al. 611), and with it, the rhetorical capacities necessary for difficult dialogue (Higgins, Long and Flower 22) • limits public imagination about what responsive public educational institutions would look like and do (Adler-Kasner 160).

As the above analysis suggests, the logic that commodifies and delivers literacy as a service is so naturalized it can be hard to recognize. To be clear, it's not that anyone in the talking group or at the Nile Institute is wishing to do away with resources that need to be shared in order for people to resettle under conditions of forced migration. But what the talking group has taken up are the ways that the logic of service curtails more robust enactments of citizenship that would reconfigure how refugees and public workers relate to one another with regards to these resources. The group's insights have informed a curriculum redesign project for responsive adult literacy education and an experiential curriculum for public workers in training.

Responsive Adult Literacy Education

Insights from the talking group inform a curriculum redesign project that reorients the writing curricula that adults may encounter in writing classrooms throughout our city. Starting with the women's own astutely performed, multilingual testimonials, this redesign projects takes writers' rhetorical purposes as a start point for effective writing instruction (Flower, Long and Higgins 298). It commends specific theoretically sound, research based practices for eliciting, supporting, and negotiating students writers' rhetorical goals, such as collaborative planning. Here, the very (nuanced, acute) literacy moves that adult literacy learners use to call a public together around a shared concern are honed in class—extending learners' "funds of knowledge" (Moll et al.; Tuoy-Giel) and multi-lingual "rhetorical dexterity" (Carter), rather than bracketing them from the institutional literacies that writing teachers often uncritically enforce in the name of "empowerment" (Flower, "Tertulia"). Because of the ways our university's writing program is networked throughout Maricopa County, the redesign project is transforming the ways not only teachers in college classrooms on our campus approach adult learners, but also influencing assumptions of writing tutors at community-college writing centers and adult education centers all around town.

Experiential Curriculum for Public Workers in Training

The talking group also informs theoretically sound educational experiences for future public workers. This curriculum takes inspiration from cultural navigators in the health care system—typically women who came to the country as asylum seekers themselves—who teach others to navigate a system that they, too, once had to figure out. As professionals who occupy multiple subject positions—including "American newcomer" and "public worker"—they help new refugees navigate gatekeeping encounters that would otherwise separate community residents seeking health care from medical professionals who could provide it (cf. Mayfield-Johnson). Inspired by this model and attentive to the insights of the talking group, the curriculum for public workers rewrites the terms of service in three significant ways.

First, this curriculum seeks to scaffold the intellectual work of collaborative inquiry and intercultural knowledge building (Flower, Community). The curriculum charts alternatives to the assumption that one is necessarily and primarily the communicating self within a public encounter; the idea instead is that listening and other modes of communicating can be shared capacities, ones performed reciprocally over the course of joint inquiry and intercultural knowledge building. Specifically, it teaches future public workers methods (such as eliciting "the story behind the story" and deliberately seeking "rival readings" of a complicated institutional encounter) for deliberately and specifically eliciting insights of those with firsthand experiences with potentially problematic, obsolete, or otherwise no longer just or effective institutional policies and practices (Flower, Long and Higgins).

Second, it drafts and proposes relevant institutional policies to institute change responsive to the experiences of those navigating out-of-sync policies and practices. These practices include inquiry-based professional literacies that commend a principled and embodied idea: that as public workers, they'll need to attend to the goals and situated knowledge of people with firsthand experience with the institutions they'll represent. Yet rather than trying to control their behavior (you should!), the educational experiences circulate "a rhetoric of public engagement" (Flower, Community 79) and "really useful knowledge" (Johnson 75) for attuning public workers-in-training to other people's experiences with the sorts of policies and practices that they'll be will be asked to facilitate, formalize and often enforce in the future.

Third, the curriculum puts real people who wouldn't otherwise talk together in conversation concerning their institutional encounters and the implications of those experiences for specific institutional policies and practices. For instance, a recent dialogue on campus included the executive director of the county's largest adult literacy center; the community-outreach officer for our region's United Way; writing-center tutors and writing instructors from the regional community college system; several social workers; eleven members of the South Sudanese diaspora of Phoenix, most of whom have navigated adult literacy programs in town in one way or another; a South Sudanese psychologist specializing in refugee resettlement; a local journalist; graduate students in rhetoric and composition; everyone affiliated with the university's writing program who wanted to attend; as well as three nationally recognized community-literacy scholars.

This curriculum is always a work in progress. We have much yet to learn, much yet to get right. But already it's successfully asking pre-professionals to grapple intellectually with the problems and possibilities of what Cornel West calls a "[d]emocratic faith [in . . .] the abilities and capacities of ordinary people to participate in decision-making procedures of institutions that fundamentally regulate their lives" (140).

The college students who have experienced this curriculum tell us: the most enduring understanding they've taken from the experience is that of enacting a contemporary Commons with strangers. In the throes of this new kind engagement, they are called to take risks, acknowledging the limits of their own current understandings in order to learn from others while still trying their best to contribute somehow usefully given the circumstances at hand. Students tell us that the invigorating complexity of the experience reframes what the "god-term" consensus means under contemporary conditions. Manfred Stanley's explanation offers a helpful shorthand. In the context of the Commons, he writes, consensus "does not imply [...] surface-structure agreement on specific value or policy directions. Rather it has to do with negotiating a shared, cumulative and ever more inclusive deep-structure narrative, as it were, regarding 'our' collective story and where 'we' want to take it from here" (249). As public workers are learning firsthand, such deep consensus is necessarily heteroglossic—"a polyphony of voices, identities, and positions and their negation of power and control" (Bakhtin invoked in Hesford 11). It is also a dynamic configuration of the Commons, capable of assembling and reassembling itself in light of new public and yet-to-be public concerns that call us to deliberate together on behalf of our mutual thriving.

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