

The Armed Conflict in Darfur: Analysis of the Motives and Objectives of the Rebel Groups

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ABSTRACT: Many researchers seek to identify the most common factors that may increase the risk of wars, including civil wars. However, analysing the causes and economic drivers of conflict is receiving increasing attention, especially concerning civil wars in the poorest regions. The main purpose of this article is to present the process of creating armed groups in Darfur, as well as their ideology, internal divisions, stages of conflict and the emergence of these groups. This study attempted to analyse the motives and objectives of Darfuri rebel groups. Using a model created by Spittaels and Hilgert, we explain the relations between events on the ground and the motives and objectives behind the waging of a war, which in future could make it easier to outline the essence of the conflict.

KEYWORDS: Sudan, Darfur, Janjaweed, Fur, Zaghawa, Masalit

Introduction

■ **For many years, the Darfur region has suffered from a shortage of resources and living conditions and a lack of sufficient road infrastructure, transport and communication. In addition, Darfurians felt successive Sudanese governments disregarded their problems since gaining independence in 1956 (Robinson, 2005).**

In the armed conflict in Darfur between ethnic groups, often perceived as “racial”, one can see a two-stage course and distinguish two main currents. The first is a typically “tribal” conflict, manifested in occasional clashes characteristic of the 1950s and much earlier and continued until the 1970s. (Wadi, 2000). The second trend included deeper, broader and more modern disputes; they

have appeared since the mid-eighties. While conflicts that arose in the past easily achieved satisfactory solutions, the next chapter in the history of conflicts became more complex since difficulties arose in resolving these conflicts using traditional methods that boiled down to financial compensation (Ibrahim, 2013). Clashes occurring since the mid-eighties, caused by competition for water and pastures, began to widen until their character took on the features of a full-scale war in 2003. Tens of thousands of people lost their lives; entire villages ceased to exist, many were burned, people lost their property, and a huge number were forced to resettle (Daly, 2010, pp. 119–130). Successive governments pursued a wide range of strategies to resolve various conflicts, but their efforts proved

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ineffective, and in many cases, even accusations of central government bias and unequal treatment of the parties to the conflict arose (Sturcke, 2007).

The analysis in this article contributes to the literature by presenting the creation of armed groups in Darfur, their ideology, internal divisions, stages of the conflict, and emergence – a context that has not been explored in detail and clearly in the literature. Using a model created by Spittaels and Hilgert (2008) to analyse the motives and objectives of Darfuri rebel groups, we explain the relations between events on the ground and the motives and objectives behind the waging of a war, which in future could make it easier to outline the essence of the conflict.

Conflict Background

The conflict in Darfur began in the mid-1980s and was known as the wartime uprising of Arab tribes. In 1984, during the drought, war swept the region. The main hotspot was the collapse of existing economic ties between Fur farmers and shepherds from the Zaghawa group (Mohammed, 2004). In the past, shepherds were allowed to enter the Jabal Marra zone with herds and graze livestock on farmland residues in December and January, when other pastures remained inefficient. Nomads could stay there until the beginning of the rainy season, which began in April and May. Farmers allowed them because, firstly, they received some of the animals from shepherds, and, secondly, animal residues and waste assisted fertilisation (Tubiana et al., 2012).

In 1987–1989, the conflicts calmed down when the democratic government in Khartoum was overthrown, and Islamic leaders stopped fighting in Darfur. This simple fact should remind us that the conflict in Darfur began as a civil war to which the government was not a party. The authorities became a party to the conflict only after 1989. Immediately after coming to power, the government promised to end the crisis. In fact, both representatives of Fur farmers and Arabs agreed quickly. In less than a week, the opponents signed a peace protocol and a declaration to return to the situation before the attack. In the long run, however, their initiative failed, and war broke out on an even larger scale (Shepherd et al., 2009).

When the government became a party to the conflict, it lost its position as a conciliator. As a result, the local conflict in Darfur developed into a regional one when it became interested in the neighbouring countries of Sudan (Chad, Libya,

Eritrea) and was then internationalised by joining with financial, material and military assistance from countries outside the region (China, Russia, USA). Hence it is classified as an internationalised internal conflict (Flint, 2010).

From 2002–2003, there was again conflict when anti-government forces in Darfur began actively cooperating with the opposition in the country's centre. Since then, the local conflict has progressed into a national conflict. In 2003, unlike 1987–1989, it covered all of Sudan, and the problem was not just limited to Darfur. From the point of view of Arab tribes, the problem began when Fur farmers proclaimed their right to land belonging to Arab tribes. When they began to define themselves according to colonial (Western) terminology as “Africans” threatened by “Arabs”, in a country where such divisions were unknown, where all groups were referred to by their ethnic or tribal name. In turn, fur farmers considered themselves victims of Arab political domination, resulting in racism (Unruh & Abdul-Jalil, 2014). The Arabs claimed that Fur farmers started the entire conflict, trying to expand the so-called “Negra belt” (al-hizam Zandji), aiming to exclude Arabs, who, as equal citizens, have the right to access natural resources, especially during the crisis. In a situation where each party only defended its case, their arguments began to take on a racist tone, and both saw themselves as victims. On one side stood camel shepherds from northern Darfur and landless refugees from Chad residing in Darfur, who saw their protectors in strong Arab leaders, such as Colonel Gaddafi and the Islamic government in Khartoum. On the other hand, there were groups settled in Darfur and non-Arab forces in Chad under Hissen Habre (Marchal, 2008), as well as Western allies such as France, Israel, and the USA. In May 1989, the conflict spread beyond the lands around Jabal Marra. For the first time, almost all Darfur pastoral tribes, Arab and non-Arab, gathered under a common banner, with Libyan support behind them (Flint, 2010).

Literature Overview

Many researchers have tried to identify the most common factors that trigger and increase the risk of war. In this context, analysing the causes of conflicts and economic motives attracts increasing attention. The most prominent in this regard are scholars (Collier & Hoeffler, 1997), who presented the dependence of civil wars on the structures and organisation of the rebellion. They stated that

during the revolt, the plunder of natural resources took place, forcing out local people, supported by ethnic leaders.

Based on data on the wars spanning 1960–1999, they also stated that the economic aspect appears to be the leading explanation for the genesis of most civil wars and political and ethnic inequality. In contrast, religious differences are generally a poor explanation for the causes of civil wars. In addition, the higher the income of a country or region, the lower the risk of civil war due to the high costs associated with conflict, and the greater risk of conflict goes hand-in-hand with the large supply of natural resources in the region (Rice et al., 2006).

Similarly (Fearon & Laitin, 2009), based on an analysis of 127 civil wars, primarily in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, regardless of how ethnically heterogeneous a country is, the likelihood of a civil war decreases as the wealth of a country increases. According to the presented thesis, there is a severe risk of conflict in a place where there is no visible increase in income. Not all researchers accepted these theses and views. Ali, Elbadawi, and El-Batahani (2005) identified 17 economic, political, ethnic-religious-cultural and external factors said to be the causes of conflicts. Based on the analysis of the wars from 1960–1999, Elbadawi and Sambanis (2001) stated that the reason for the conflicts in Africa is primarily ethnic and

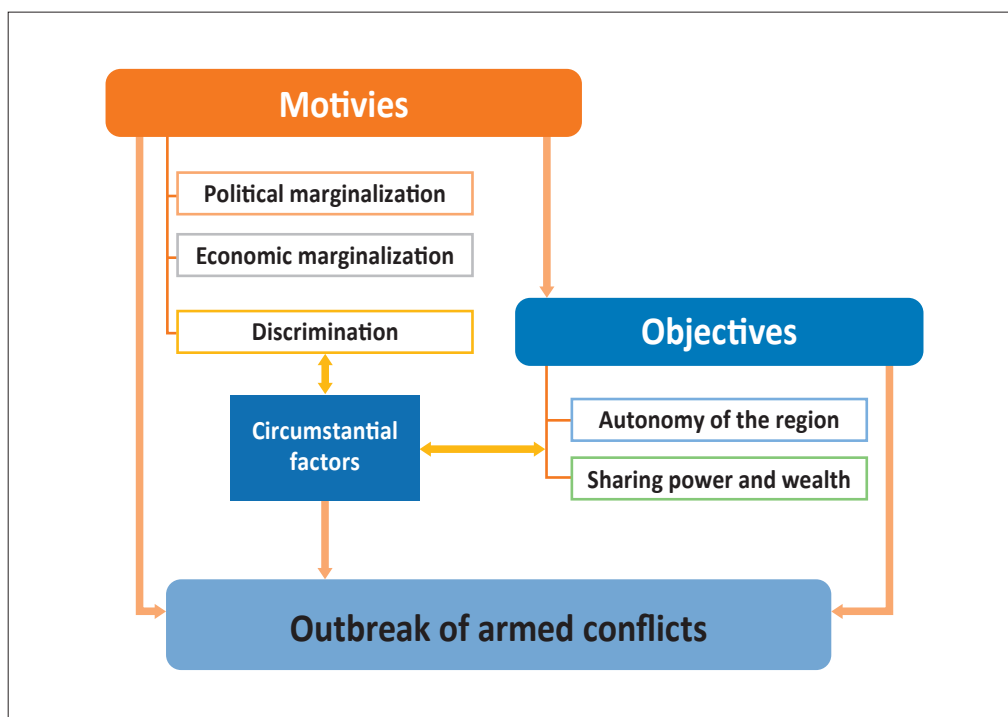
linguistic fragmentation and high poverty, rather than political or economic institutions dependent on natural resources. Furthermore, Stewart (2000) noticed that the level of inequality is an important element of well-being and may have detrimental consequences for further development.

The Methodology

Opportunity versus motivation is the question of whether opportunity or motivation is the main precondition for warring parties to initiate or continue fighting. The answer to this question is crucial, as it determines where policymakers should focus their efforts to prevent future conflict. Our research mainly focuses on the role of motivation as a cause of war. War is an ugly, dangerous and complex task, and it seems unreasonable for someone to get involved without sufficient motivation. Moreover, enthusiastic fighters with few opportunities can be highly creative when it comes to gathering the necessary resources. The operations of the armed movements in Darfur are a case in point.

Our model aims to reveal the motives of the warring parties in a particular conflict in Darfur; Figure 1 is a blueprint for how we will tackle this. We use the model created by Spittaels and Hilgert (2007), which explains the relations between events on the ground and the motives and objectives behind the waging of war (Figure 1).

Figure 1



Source: own elaboration.

Stages of Conflict and the Emergence of Armed Groups in Darfur

The First Phase

The first phase, comprising 1983–1987, was primarily the clashes between the Zaghawa tribes and the Almhiria Arabs, generally camel herders living in northern Darfur, and settled farmers from the Fur ethnic group. At this stage, the conflict was closely related to the drought that struck the region, especially in the early 1980s. During this period, many nomadic Zaghawa and Arab shepherds left the areas affected by drought and desertification, subsequently arriving in areas inhabited by the Fur people (Sturdivant, 2012).

However, farmers feared that the shepherds intended to stay longer this time, and perhaps even permanently, so they decided to show them that they were not welcome. In turn, shepherds, fearing for their own lives and the herds of animals being their only property, entered the area of Jabal Marra by force. Before the fighting, they initially tried to solve the problem through legal and political means. The local authority in Darfur is the province governor, who supported the farmers, ordering the shepherds to immediately leave the occupied lands of Fur, but providing no alternative for the shepherds (Duflos, n.d.).

Meanwhile, Zaghawa had previously suffered heavily from government forces that accused them of stealing animals and unlawfully seizing their lands. More than once, government forces (police and army) set fire to the villages of Zaghawa, murdering their tribal leaders. In this situation, the shepherds had no choice but to organise their own militia and arm themselves to face the repression of government soldiers (Diaz, 2016).

In the aftermath of these events, the situation became uncontrollable for all parties involved in the conflict (Almhiria, Zaghawa, Fur and the army), and modern weapons were widely used. The inflow of weapons to Darfur caused total militarisation (Cultural Survival, n.d.). The country was flooded with arms supplies from both Libya and America. In 1986, the AK-47 (Kalashnikov) assault rifle with accessories was sold for less than \$40; it became a ubiquitous weapon in Darfur. It was said: “Kalashnikov gives you money, you are nothing without Kalashnikov”. G-3 rifles, RPGs, explosives, heavy artillery, and Antonov bombers were used. It was estimated that in 1990, approximately fifty thousand new weapons were available in Darfur.

Each person over 16 was provided with at least a pistol and often an AK-47 rifle (Flint, 2009).

All parties to this dispute had access to modern weapons, mostly purchased in Libya or Chad. The use of modern weapons increased the number of victims and fuelled the conflict, making it extremely dramatic. After the involvement of external parties, the conflict began to take on an ethnic character: African-Arab. Attempts to understand its causes have been made, but it is not an easy task. The conflict related to managing scarce natural and economic goods has evolved into a typically political ethnic conflict (Kahn, n.d.).

The Second Phase

The second phase of the conflict, covering the years 1981–2003, saw a series of clashes between non-Arab farmers living in the Jabal Marra area and a broad coalition consisting of almost all Arab shepherds (Awok et al., 2013). Since then, and despite the parties’ efforts (military and civilian authorities), the conflict has taken on a permanent character, temporarily succumbing only to become subdued or re-inflated. It came to possess the form of ethnic polarisation. The conflict advanced to a more vicious and brutal nature than in the first stage. As a result, neither the warring parties nor independent observers are able to determine its real causes. However, this phase of the Darfur war is very important to detect the ecological roots of the conflict. Accumulating evidence shows that the purpose of the shepherds was the land of farmers, over which there was a dispute. As indicated in the report of the African Union (AU) and Human Rights Watch (HRW) in 1990, Arab shepherds usually gave one- or two-day deadlines to the villagers of Fur to leave them immediately, calling the land “liberated areas” (Awok et al., 2013).

Unlike local clashes in the past due to water and pasture deficits, the conflicts that erupted after 1985 showed the shepherds’ desire to occupy the land in the central part of Jabal Marra. Previous conflicts were spontaneous, unlike the new conflicts, which were characterised by unprecedented cruelty and the persistence of these practices. The influx of shepherds from the poor and arid northern areas to the central agricultural regions inhabited by Fur farmers contributed to the escalation of the ongoing conflict. It was a desperate attempt to take over fertile areas by those who suffered drought and desertification losses. This conflict has led to competition over shrinking resources in a region suffering from a scarcity of suitable

land to grow and graze animals. This conflict can serve as a model of the classic ecological conflict (Busby, 2010).

It should be remembered that the second phase of the conflict, which began in 1987, involving roughly 27 Arab tribes in the “Arab Association” alliance (mentioned previously), did not cause a war solely against Fur farmers but fundamentally against all indigenous non-Arab groups in the region (Salih, 2013). Armed militants of shepherd warriors of the Arab tribes (Janjaweed) became a tool of aggression against Fur farmers and then all other ethnic groups in Darfur of African descent (*UNHCR and...*, 2012). In response, Fur immediately organised their own armed units for defence, and some of them sought to create political and military ties with the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement and Army (SPLA) operating in South Sudan. It was not difficult since the SPLA has long since tried to find support in other regions of Sudan by recruiting members of local tribes and their armaments. John Garang, the movement’s leader at that time, strongly emphasised the nationwide nature of the organisation, cutting it off from separatist tendencies (Gramizzi & Tubiana, 2012). The conflict caused great damage to the region’s resources and population. It is estimated that by the time the Peace Conference was convened in 1989, more than 5,000 people from the Fur ethnic group and 400 from Arab tribes had died in its second phase. The number of people forced to resettle reached tens of thousands, in addition to forty thousand burned houses and approximately 700 straw shelters, with hundreds of people being permanently mutilated. In addition, many animals were killed. Overall, the damage caused was valued at billions of Sudanese pounds (Human Rights Watch, 2004).

The Third Phase

In early 2003, well-prepared rebel troops, the Sudan Liberation Movement, alongside the Justice and Equality Movement, attacked a garrison of government troops in Al-Fashir, the capital of Darfur (Copnall, 2013). Thus, they launched the third, bloodiest, and most notorious phase of the conflict, which was underway until a peace agreement was signed between the government in Khartoum and partisans from the South SPLA in Nairobi in January 2005 and the conclusion of the second ceasefire in Abuja (May 5, 2006). This attack was unexpected for the government, and thus rebel forces gained the upper hand. By the end of 2003, rebel forces had conquered several villages and towns, expanding their influence to South Kordofan (International Crisis Group, 2005).

The actions of these two groups were a reaction to the forced resettlement of hundreds of thousands of people of African descent, mainly from the Fur, Zaghawa and Masalit tribes. The government responded to this situation by putting pressure on training and the involvement of Janjaweed troops. It also supplied many additional soldiers and military equipment, leading to the government gaining an advantage over the rebels (*Immigration and Refugee...*, 2015). The pattern of military operations was similar every time. First, government aviation, including Antonov aeroplanes, bombed densely populated zones without warning, including markets, wells, surrounding areas, densely built-up villages, and concentration areas for displaced people. Subsequently, Janjaweed militia or other ground military formations entered the operation (“SUDAN: Outlook For IDPs Remains Bleak”, 2007). These attacks were characterised by enormous cruelty against men, women, and children.

Table 1. The number of internally displaced persons (IDP) and the population affected by the conflict in Darfur (2005 to 2009)

Year	North Darfur		South Darfur		West Darfur	
	Number of affected	Number of refugees	Number of affected	Number of refugees	Number of affected	Number of refugees
2005	725736	393750	824346	603719	854388	662000
2006	1307025	475257	1413099	722922	1276087	776348
2007	1355594	461399	1546173	862385	1263956	779226
2008	1516680	508499	1913518	1410704	1293394	766363
2009	1518064	508499	1913518	1410704	1283124	746912

Source: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

Table 1 illustrates the number of internally displaced people and the population affected by the war and also shows that in 2009, the Darfur conflict harmed 1.5 million people in North Darfur, 1.9 million in South Darfur and 1.2 million in Western Darfur. The war displaced 0.5 million people from North Darfur, 1.4 million people from South Darfur and 1.2 million from Western Darfur. The direct cost of the military conflict in Darfur also includes the loss of profits from the daily lives of the displaced (Guha-Sapir, 2005).

Like all other hostilities, the war in Darfur forced many people to change their place of residence, resulting in the risk of poverty, impeding access to education, or losing a source of income.

The army continued its attacks even though, on April 8, 2004, the government signed the first agreement in N'Djamena with rebels from the Justice and Equality Movement and the Sudan Liberation Movement concerning a ceasefire (Heavens, 2010). In July 2004, the AU decided to establish an observation mission in Sudan (African Union Mission in Sudan, African Mission in Sudan, AMIS) to monitor the agreement in N'Djamena. However, it only sent a few hundred soldiers to Sudan from Rwanda and Nigeria (Ekengard, 2008).

The Fourth Phase

On November 9, 2004, another ceasefire protocol was signed in Abuja. Sadly, however, two weeks later, the conflict escalated. It was not until May 5, 2006, after long negotiations, that there was a breakthrough, which was the signing of an agreement detailing the disarmament of Janjaweed and the incorporation of rebels into the Sudanese army. The fourth, less publicised and essentially internal phase of the conflict lasted until the revolution in Libya and the Doha peace agreement of July 14, 2011 (Reeves, 2004).

Some of the most crucial events are also worth mentioning: at the end of 2011, the regime of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi in Libya fell, known as the main protector of rebel movements in Darfur, especially the Justice and Equality Movement, which had the greatest influence on the course of events in the region (Elhag, 2012). After his death, the head of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), Khalil Ibrahim, fled Libya on December 22, 2011. However, the Sudanese government killed him with the help of Libyan rebels. In this way, the JEM lost a strong and charismatic leader, which had a significant impact on the morale of its fighters. That was because Chad entered into a dialogue with the government of Sudan, which had promised

not to support rebels against the government of Idriss Deby in Chad (Al Jazeera English, 2011).

In September 2020, the armed struggle movements signed a file of political issues with the Sudanese Transitional Government in the capital of South Sudan, Juba, under the mediation of the States of South Sudan, Chad and the United Arab Emirates, in addition to a representative of the Egyptian government (Radio Dabanga, 2020).

Analysis of the Motives and Objectives of Rebel Groups

Much has been written about the conflict in Darfur after the outbreak of war in 2003 to explain the conflict's causes. Most explanations misinterpret two types of factors, namely the root causes of the conflict and the current causes of the conflict, as well as its dynamics (Sikainga, 2009). Ethnic or tribal conflicts are based on inter-group confrontations that have long since characterised Darfur, largely between settled farmers and shepherds. However, the current conflict resulted from the relationship between the central government, its security apparatus, and the rebel groups. The causes of tribal conflicts are often attributed to the current political situation, which has consequences for their resolution (Mahé, 2016). This distinction is important to better understand the conflict's root causes and plan appropriate interventions. Although the causes of these two types of conflict may differ, the emphasis on working to understand the cause of a political or tribal conflict is vital to identify attitudes and motives, but without defining the positions and motivations of armed groups, it may be impossible (Kok, n.d.).

The Objectives of Rebel Groups

(1) Autonomy of the region

The intellectual and political movements of the Darfur rebels also faced different demands. They appeared through conflicting statements from the JEM, which carried out military operations against the Darfur state, and the Darfur Liberation Movement, which later became the Sudan Liberation Movement. It can be argued here that this discrepancy in needs and declarations is due to the lack of a political agenda, meaning that the problem is not only the desire to achieve certain internal but also external goals related to the independence and autonomy of the provinces, as in the case of South Sudan (Salih, 2005).

(2) Sharing wealth

The main goal of the rebels in Darfur was to meet the aspirations of the people marginalised from Sudan in terms of sharing power and the wealth of the Hawakeer land. They also represent the rights and interests of displaced people and refugees. Their main goal is to ensure security in the region, limit the ensuing chaos and stop the regime's harassment of the nation. In addition, they intended to guarantee that in another region, the population would not take up arms to claim their rights (Suleiman, 2015; Mehmood et al., 2018).

The Motivation of Rebel Groups in Darfur

(1) Disproportionate distribution of power (political marginalisation)

One of the main political motivations of the rebels in Darfur was to counteract political marginalisation. Despite political efforts made by the central government in Khartoum, the actual cause of this situation is the historical injustice toward most of the Sudanese population. This accusation is made very clear in the statement issued by the Darfur rebels. Their alliance in that part of Sudan, including the South Sudan People's Liberation Movement, has been described as marginalised by a central authority (Young & Osman, 2006).

The reason behind this process of marginalisation was the monopolisation of power by the elites of the Nile Valley, which caused a disproportionate division of power between the centre and the periphery and contributed to the creation of conditions causing unequal development and widespread poverty in rural areas. Combined, these caused a feeling of injustice in the Darfur population, which led to a military rebellion against the central government.

Sudan's northern and central areas possessed 81.8% of the ministerial shares. On the other hand, the representatives of the marginalised areas held only 17.4% of the government, whilst the western region was completely excluded. During the subsequent terms in 1964–1985, the political exclusion of politicians from peripheral areas continued and deepened at the regional level. During this period,

the share of representatives from marginalised areas in power fell to 13.9%. Following the implementation of the 1981 Regional Government Act, Sudan was divided into six regions. The Darfur region had an external representative, while in other regions, the representatives were from the local population. The Darfur population protested with a popular uprising, which forced the central government to change its decision and appoint a governor in Darfur. In 1999, marginalised representation in the federal government was 33.3%, while in the provinces of northern and central Sudan, the representation was 60.1% (Seisi & Eltigani, 2007).

(2) Inequalities in access to resources (Economic marginalisation)

Inequalities in access to nationwide resources have prompted several political activists in Darfur to author a book entitled "Black Book"¹. This work, published in 1997, was the first attempt to document the inequality of access to power since Sudan's independence in 1956 by successive governments, whether secular or theocratic, democratic or autocratic, up to the present day. This document spoke of an imbalance of power and access to wealth in Sudan (Pamuk, 2004, p. 152).

"Black Book" proves the causes of the current conflict in the Darfur region are rooted in inequalities between the country's centre, located on the Nile, and its periphery in the west, which has not yet been the focus of researchers. More specifically, the dynamics of the dominance of the main political and economic elites and the marginalisation of the periphery are the main causes of the conflict in Darfur (Cobham, 2005). From this perspective, we analyse the arguments for the concept of the "marginalisation and exclusion" of the Darfur province and its people in nilocentric Sudan.

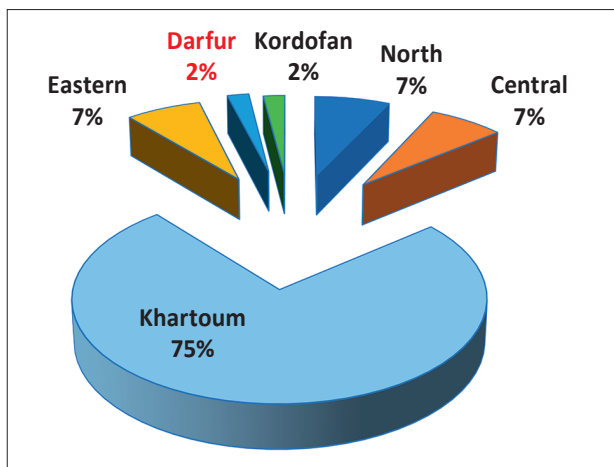
Taking advantage of the monopoly, the nilocentric political authorities began to manipulate state resources, thus distorting the possibilities of economic development within their territory. The result is economic and social disproportions that have severely affected the country's economic development. The situation is aggravated by the way in which macro-economic policies have been implemented, exacerbating inequality and

¹ The Black Book: The Imbalance of Power and Wealth in Sudan, commonly known as the Black Book, comprehensively describes the political control exercised by the people of North Sudan and the marginalisation of the rest of the country. It was published in two parts, the first in May 2000 and the second in August 2002. Although published anonymously, it was later revealed that the writer had strong ties to the JEM, a group operating in the conflict that later erupted in Western Darfur.

poverty in peripheral and marginalised areas, particularly in the Darfur region (Ali, 2015).

Regional bias in Sudan is also evident in the breakdown of economic development expenditure, as shown in Figure 2. It shows the results of regional development in Sudan in 1996–2001. As can be seen, this period was characterised by huge disproportions in the breakdown of expenditure on economic development. Khartoum alone accounted for 75% of the total spending on this development.

Figure 2. Breakdown of expenditure on regional development in Sudan (1996–2001)



Source: The Ministry of Finance and National Economy, Directorate-General. National Accounts, United Nations Population Fund, Sudan 2003.

Differences in economic activity, bias in the allocation of expenditure and the extent of poverty have been accompanied by divergences in the level of human development, particularly in health and education. The available data on social indicators reveal differences between the centre and the periphery, as well as gender differences. The national adult illiteracy rate in 2001 was over 60% for men and 42% for women. In Darfur, this rate was 39% for men and 37% for women, while in other peripheral areas, the figures were much lower (*The Ministry of Finance...*, 2003).

(3) Discrimination

The rebels in Darfur have always complained of discrimination against them by the government on the grounds of their native African culture and activities. It should be emphasised that the political elite in postcolonial Sudan consists only of people from the Nile, originating from the centre and the north of the country. By contrast, the people of western Sudan, and Darfur in particular, have not

taken power in Sudan since the fall of the Mahdist uprising, that is, for over a hundred years (Mutua, 2004). Despite the appointment of government officials from Darfur who took up high positions, their activities were limited to the capital and based on cooperation with politicians from the centre rather than on the Darfur issue. This situation goes some way toward explaining the reasons for the insurgent activity in Darfur (Hagan & Rymond-Richmond, 2008). Initially, the rebels' goal was to repel the attacks, then they expected the expulsion of the Arab nomad tribes from the region and blamed the government for the province's poor development; finally, they demanded independence and a return to strong power and the allocation of several key ministries to representatives of the region (Austrian Red Cross, 2017).

The motives and objectives are certainly the main drivers of the war in the Darfur region, and thus they will affect how the war is waged. Of course, these are not the only factors that determine the method of warfare. The relationships between motives, objectives and the pattern of war in Darfur are affected by a set of other circumstantial factors, such as the military balance, which severely impacted the behaviour of the warring parties.

Conclusion

This research tries to ascertain the motives and goals that made the movements in Darfur raise arms against the central government in Sudan. Are these goals purely economic, as many researchers believe, or are there other reasons?

Although all Darfur movements are fully compatible in all the motives for the war against the central government, such as political and economic marginalisation, racism, and discrimination on ethnic and tribal grounds, they may differ in their desired goals from this war. It is evident with regard to the issue of federalism or secession. Some movements signed peace agreements with the central government that would guarantee them some authority or influence in the regions, while others refused this notion entirely, as it did not meet the goals and ambitions they sought to achieve through the war.

The cessation of wars in the region does not necessarily mean the end of this war completely or that it will not return at any time, as long as those motives and goals for which the war was launched remain valid. Only temporary reasons led to the war's cessation, among them the imbalance of power in favour of the central government due to

the collapse of Muammar Gaddafi's regime in Libya, which used to support these movements militarily. In addition, the Sudanese government entered into a peace agreement with the Chadian government, which was a military incubator for some armed movements, especially the JEM. Likewise, the popular revolution that broke out in Sudan that overthrew the regime of dictator Omar al-Bashir, who ruled for nearly 30 years, also caused the armed movements to abandon some of the goals for which they were fighting, such as political marginalisation and imposing specific ideologies.

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