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### Darfur—Ground Zero for Africa's Crises of Identity: A Psychohistoriography of Tribes in Conflict

Patrick James Christian <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Office of the Secretary of Defense, Department of African Studies, National Intelligence University, Washington, DC, USA

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# Darfur—Ground Zero for Africa’s Crises of Identity: A Psychohistoriography of Tribes in Conflict

Patrick James Christian

Office of the Secretary of Defense, Department of African Studies, National Intelligence University, Washington, DC, USA

**ABSTRACT.** Ongoing diplomatic and peacekeeping initiatives by the international community in Darfur over the past decade have failed to stem the violence and resolve social conflict.<sup>1</sup> Based primarily on political analysis, such initiatives do not address the underlying causes of the civil war at the individual, family, and tribal levels. This paper examines the psychological and sociological motivations for the violence within and between the Arab and African tribes of Darfur to include motivation exploration of ethnic defections, failing cultural identity markers, and the effects of cognitive dissonance of the personal and social identities of the Darfur tribes.

**KEYWORDS.** Ethnic and cultural identity conflict, psychohistoriography, contested meanings of Islam, Darfur, tribal violence, African Union, psychogeography, indigenous justice systems

## INTRODUCTION

Team Golf normally began each day with a patrol brief during which we reviewed the routes and villages that the group would travel to as we attempted to mediate a cease-fire among the tribes in Darfur, Sudan. As one of several African Union Military Observer (MILOBS) teams operating in Western Darfur, our ten-man group represented a diverse range of ethnic and religious diversity in Africa.<sup>2</sup> On the morning of Saturday December 11, 2004, we were introduced to a reporter from the *Washington Post*, Emily Wax, who was to accompany us on our patrols for the day. As we mounted up in our Toyota Land Rovers, Emily asked us what we thought of our assigned sector there in Kabkabiyah. We told her “welcome to ground zero,” the most dangerous place in Africa.<sup>3</sup> Darfur existed then and now as a conflict without

sense, populated with complex fighters who colored their violence outside of the boundaries of target expectations. The violence they engaged in was punctuated by ethnic defections amid stark identity markers and thick boundaries of belonging and rejection. The conflict has been variously described as a rebellion, an insurgency, genocide, civil war, and a clash of race and culture by diplomats, politicians, military strategists, and newspaper reporters. The villains blamed for the estimated 400,000 or so reported deaths and millions of displaced residents include the Arabs, Africans, Islamic Jihad, the governments of Sudan, Chad, and Libya, and the international community consisting of the United Nations (UN), African Union (AU), European Union (EU), United States, and sometimes China.<sup>4</sup> The ongoing opacity of the nature of the conflict and the intractability of the violence in Darfur is directly related to issues of psychosocial identity formation and sustainment within the host population.

There are primal forces at work in the conflict in Darfur. This conflict is physical, emotional, spiritual, and psychological. It rages between and within those who identify themselves as Arab and those who identify themselves as African. The genesis of this conflict is the origin of the tribes' modern historical narrative, nearly four centuries in the making. The historical narrative of these tribes and the group identity contained therein is in large part a product of the union of Arab and African, a union variously described as either subjugation or salvation, depending on whether the viewpoint is from the south or from the north. These forces in conflict relate to and undergird the entire range of ascribed and socially constructed systems of personal and social identity found among the populations living in the psychogeographic fault line between Arab Africa and sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>5</sup> The conflict in Darfur is inadvertently further aggravated during the intervention of Western diplomacy, humanitarian agencies, and media. Western society, seeking to alleviate the visible part of the violent conflict, interacts with the new and emerging leaders who are poorly grounded within their own disintegrating cultures even as they are exposed to egocentric, individualistic Western identity models that are not reflective of tribal identity in Darfur.<sup>6</sup> The ongoing destruction caused by these primal forces and abetted by a lack of cross-cultural leadership support threatens the historical memory of the tribes on all sides of the conflict and casts doubt on their ability to transmit that existential memory across time and space to future generations. This paper provides a short overview of the complex activity and violence occurring in Darfur, followed by an analysis of possible underlying psychological sociological causes of the conflict. Finally, the paper concludes with recommended initiatives for altering the approach to intervention strategies consistent with efforts at large group identity repair, redefinition, and strengthening as a starting point for conflict resolution.

### **Darfur: A Broken Place**

Little has changed since I first accompanied the AU forces into Tina and later Kabkabiya, in northern and western Darfur in 2004. The people I found

there lived in a world both real and metaphysical, where spirits they called Jinn and those of their ancestors battled for their honor and remembrance in the unforgiving life of the desert. Indeed, little has changed in Darfur since Suleiman “Solungdongo,” or the pale man descended from the Jebel Mara, to establish the first African-Arab Islamic Sultanate in the fifteenth century.<sup>7</sup> Houses are still made of straw mud bricks in the same pattern of closed wall construction with small living structures built within for both people and animals. Horses, camels, and donkeys still carry the burdens of much of the domestic activity, and herders of camels, horses, sheep, goats, and cattle compete with those who partition the land for agricultural production. At the tribal margins, men and women still intermarry within and between African and Arab tribes, with each new mixed family choosing which tribal identity to belong to, the default side favoring the male’s family, especially for Arab tribes where patrilineage determines ethnic social identity.<sup>8</sup> The invisible identity nerve threaded throughout the social fabric of Darfur’s cultural identity groups (tribes) is based on religion, blood, marriage, race, ethnicity, family and social ties, cultural expression, and economic and social participation. The identity is also threaded on generational inheritance of existential memory. I use the word “tribe” in this article to refer to the subcultural identity groups who define themselves as such. While the word has taken on a somewhat pejorative meaning in some anthropological circles, the word has power and meaning, especially in the Islamic faith. The basic meaning of the word tribe (*banu* in Arabic) is the children of, followed by the name of the ancestor. The Qur’an reveals that Muslim community is “made into nations and tribes” for the purpose of legitimizing social and political connections and ordering society.<sup>9</sup> The use of the word “tribe” in this paper helps ensure that I do not err in my attempt to illustrate complex relationships between contenders for and against Arab and Islamic identity.

The name *Darfur* means homeland (*dar*) of the Fur peoples, but in fact consists of a number of *dars* or homelands with the Zaghawa homeland in the northern state, the Fur homeland in the west-central state surrounding Jebel Mara and the Masalit homeland along the border with Chad in western Darfur. The majority of Dar Zaghawa is physically located in Chad, and many of the African and Arab tribes in Darfur exist across international borders that have varying levels of legitimacy depending on their usefulness to maintaining tribal existence. The Arab-African identity struggle in Sudan is reversely positioned in Chad where the Arab identity is dominated by its African other, a situation that has often left Darfur as a proxy battleground for African and Arab identity by Chad, Libya, and Sudan. From 2002 onward, the EU and the U.S. government have sponsored and funded the African Union (AUMIS), and the United Nations (UNMIS) as the international community attempted to separate forces along what appeared to be obvious lines of physical confrontation.<sup>10</sup> These lines of demarcation between the rebels and the government, between

victim and victimizer, have all proven to be illusory. Both the rebel coalition and groups supporting Khartoum's position quickly fractured, after the current outbreak of hostilities into what are now between nine to fourteen<sup>11</sup> different rebel groups representing differing combinations of Arab, African, and Islamist identities.

Darfur has always been a rough land populated by stubborn and strong-willed peoples whose system of justice allowed for simple robbery (mainly of animals) as a sort of intertribal rivalry that provided elaborate rules to compensate families when the rivals turned bloody. The peoples that inhabit Darfur are the descendents of the original African societies that survived the difficult climate in the relative safety of Jebel Mara, with waves of immigrants overlaid on them. These immigrant waves included the major movements of Arabized African Bedouin (nomad) Herders from North Africa who slowly extended their trading and herding routes south to the living spaces of Darfur.<sup>12</sup> Today's Rizeigat (Arab) tribes trace their heritage from these Bedouins, as do the Zaghawa (African) tribes. Besides the traditional Bedouin tribes, several waves of immigration by the sedentary Riverine Arabs from the east and north deepened Arab identity in Darfur and linked it politically with the national capital in Khartoum.<sup>13</sup>

The past 25 years have witnessed a slow increase in identity-based violence with robbery being eclipsed by intertribal violence spurred by the Sudanese, Chad, and Libyan governments as they pursued national interests at the expense of social cohesion in Darfur.<sup>14</sup> In the past decade, this violence has increased to include mass abductions, combat between armed forces, armed attacks on unarmed civilians, organized rape, forcible evacuation of villages and subsequent destruction, reprisal killings, and killings designed to instill fear and compliance by one side or the other. This short recounting of the situation in Darfur leaves out much of the complex political history that brought this situation to full violent contest. Events such as the national independence in 1956; the rise of the Sudanese Muslim Brotherhood and the Mahdist Movement; establishment of the National Islamic Front (NIF) and National People's Congress; election of the NIF that brought the Bashir, Turabi, and Taha faction to power in 1989; and the subsequent split of the central power elites in Khartoum into one supporting Arabization of Sudan by Omar Bashir and the other supporting Islamicization of Sudan by al-Turabi are important milestones in understanding the development of the violence in Darfur.

## **IDENTITY DISINTEGRATION IN DARFUR**

"The battle between autonomy and merger is fought most ferociously around relationships of domination."<sup>15</sup>

Few conflicts involving intrastate violence have generated such intense political and military scrutiny as that of Darfur. To date, every political and military approach taken to resolve the conflict there has failed. Tenzin Gyatso writes that violence is not the default condition of the human species.<sup>16</sup> But if we are to accept the explanations of diplomatic, military, and political press, then violence is the default condition of societies when political arrangements over resources and power fail. Perhaps it is appropriate then to finally widen the lens with which we view and understand the conflict in hopes of discovering deeper causes and conditions for the conflict that will lead to some measure of resolution. It is safe to say that much of the previous analysis of the conflict in Sudan generally, and in Darfur particularly, has been accomplished by diplomats, humanitarian relief agencies, and, of course, the international press. Nearly all this analysis has successfully framed the conflict as struggles motivated by limited resources, declining environmental conditions, historical enmities, regional politics between Sudan, Chad, and Libya, and of course religion, racism, and ethnic rivalry. I say *successfully* because the causes and conditions raised by the analysis do in fact exist and materially contribute to the violence. Each of these issues mentioned is part of the overall conflict, without which a full understanding cannot be achieved. What is missing is an underlying linkage that establishes a structure in which all the issues involved in the conflict are assembled as a coherent whole. This missing underlying linkage is the past and present disintegration of the psychosocial identity of the tribes and the social organizing force provided by that identity.

Sudan is a state that was divided between the Muslim north and the animist-Christian south and between the Arab east and the African west. Arab identity in Sudan is much contested. This is a gross simplification of the issue, but I make it in order to focus on a deeper core issue; that is, the struggle over Sudan's Arab and Islamic identities and the subsequent disintegrating effects of this struggle on the personal and social identities of the tribes of Darfur. This overarching national identity struggle within the Muslim-Arab community (*ummah*) of Sudan has ramifications less for Christian-Animist South Sudan (because they have achieved independence status) but more for Muslim African-Arab Darfur and Kordofan.<sup>17</sup> Sudan's national struggle over its identity as Arab and Islamic is an inherited conflict imbedded within the historical narrative of Arab Muslims. This struggle is expressed and made real in the actions of the Khartoum government as it tries to nation-build along alternatively Arab and Islamic lines of effort, depending on which side is winning the underground war over the identity and direction of the Sudan. It is in this alternating support for two competing variations of Sudan's national identity (Arabic versus a universal belonging Islamic) that tears at the fabric of the remaining tribal identities of the people of Darfur, both African and Arab. After independence of Sudan in 1956, the adoption and projection of a coherent, nonsubservient colonist identity became nearly an obsession to the

elites in Khartoum, according to B.G.V. Nyombe, a linguist at the University of Nairobi:

For the Northern Sudan Arab government which constitutes the de facto central government, there has been an obsession since independence with the political need to project the Sudan to the outside world as a homogeneous Arab nation; a nation with one language (Arabic), one religion (Islam), one culture (Arab-Moslem culture), and most importantly, one race (Arab). The reality is of course far different.<sup>18</sup>

I use Nyombe's quote to illustrate the point that non-Arab, non-Muslim observers usually miss: the internal struggle in Khartoum is part of the larger struggle between Arab and Islamic identity that began even before the Prophet Mohamed finished receiving and promulgating the 114 Suras of the Qur'an.<sup>19</sup> The Arab society into which Mohamed introduced the faith of Islam consisted of ethnically based tribes of clansmen existing on the great steps of the Arabian Peninsula, one of the most barren and unforgiving places on earth, then and now. Few tribes were able to establish a settled life of farming, and the remainder lived on the edge of survival by herding and breeding animals in close knit tribal and clan-family units: "Nomadic (*badawah*) life was a grim, relentless struggle, because there were too many people competing for too few resources. Always hungry, perpetually on the brink of starvation, the Bedouin fought endless battles with other tribes for water, pastureland, and grazing rights."<sup>20</sup>

The Darfur tribes' rivalry of the robbery originated during this time with the *ghazu*, or acquisition raid, which is a practice used to redistribute wealth, food, and animals in order to stave off starvation.<sup>21</sup> Generations immemorial of such life produced a type of identity called *muruwah*, an untranslatable term that encompasses stoic suffering, chivalric codes of honor, and a rigid conduct meant to ensure the survival of the group and historical memory of their societal existence.<sup>22</sup> It is this unbending identity of sheer survival that has persisted among the Arab descendents of Sudan and Darfur that vie for supremacy with the Islamic ideal of universal egalitarianism among all men. The ethos of fatalistic survival originally created to sustain the Arab Bedouin tribes never fully disappeared with the advent of Islamic belief, and the two identities still struggle for dominance in the harsh landscape of the Sudan.

### Applying Identity Conflict Theory

The previous section was intended to illustrate that within Muslim Sudan there exists an overarching struggle over the makeup of the large group identity. At the core of this struggle is the salience ordering of the Arab versus the Islamic component, with the inherent differences between the two in terms of social ordering and inclusion or rejection of non-ethnic Arab identity elements. To help illustrate the internal workings of this struggle I overlay several

theoretical models that attempt to show the psychological dynamics playing out beneath the surface in this war of identity in Sudan and Darfur. Henri Tajfel developed the theory of social identity, which suggests that an important part of individual self-concept is derived from “the individual’s knowledge that he belongs to certain groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of this membership.”<sup>23</sup> Implicit within social identity is the utilitarian function of forming and ordering a person’s membership in multiple identity groups, which creates new group variations possessing unique psychological identity characteristics based on an agreed on ordering of identity salience. For instance, a person with an identity group salience ordering of white-male-Christian-American in descending order of importance might identify more with a white supremacy movement.<sup>24</sup> Conversely, a person with a salience ordering of Christian-American-white-male in the same descending order of importance might find themselves drawn toward missionary work. To the uninitiated observer, both have the same elements of identity but the ordering structure creates inherently different group identities.

Large-group identity exists as a shared mental construct of what it means valuationally to be a part of that group, or the value of that group’s existence to either a larger collective or competing series of group identities.<sup>25</sup> This shared mental construct can be thought of as what Georg Jellenik called a mass psychological function, or what William McDougall called a group mind, two explanations that support the ideas of self categorization theory of Tajfel.<sup>26</sup> McDougall described group identity as a reflection of a collective set of identities that together create a reflection of their group mind:

the individual minds which enter into the structure of the group mind . . . do not construct it; rather, as they come to reflective self-consciousness, they find themselves already members of the system, moulded by it, sharing in its activities, influenced by it at every moment in every thought and feeling and action . . . but the parts in the several individual minds reciprocally imply and complement one another and together make up the system which consists wholly of them.<sup>27</sup>

The recognition that group identities are reflected and sustained as part of a hierarchical system of classification or salience provides deeper insight into the crises of identity of Sudan’s Arabs and Islamists. The structure of the individual identity components can be nearly as important as their presence in determining the acceptance or rejection of the makeup of the group identity. With the exception of South Sudan, nearly all of the inhabitants of Sudan are Muslim, and in the conflict zones in Darfur, they often compete for superiority of observed piety.<sup>28</sup> All are black, and intermarriage is never proscribed between any of the Muslim tribes. Nearly every tribe uses a variation of Arabic for intertribal communication as well as honoring that language as the principal dialect of religious observance. Given the surface homogeneity of the tribal populations, observers unfamiliar with Sudan are often perplexed



by their inability to form stable intertribal relationships as a basis for modern state building or even collective action as part of a broader resistance movement. Even in the absence of horizontal inequalities or relative deprivation among the warring parties, the attacks and counterattacks continue as each side extracts measures of *diyah* (blood payment) that the other side can neither forgive nor forget.<sup>29</sup> This leads to charges and counter charges that the participants are operating from concealed political power agendas and/or a corrupted moral basis of leadership such as warlordism.

### The Arabs: Identity, Ethnicity, and Islamic Hierarchy

At first glance, the similarities versus the differences between and within the Arab and African tribes suggest the possibility of Freud's (2002) theory of the narcissism of minor differences (NMD) as agent provocateur with its emphasis on categorizations as political instruments.<sup>30</sup> Mahmood Mamdani argues that the issues of race, identity, and ethnicity are distorted and that the conflict is best understood in a political utilitarian context of cultural elites working to mobilize support for political movements and liberation armies.<sup>31</sup> Amir Idris and Heather Sharkey take issue with this view, reminding us that "successive Sudanese governments, parliamentary and dictatorial alike, have glorified the history and culture of the Sudanese 'Arab' so much that they have insisted on assimilation as the only tool to national integration."<sup>32</sup> Other researchers have moved the potential discussion of NMD among the tribes toward a deeper psychoanalytical approach with positive explanations for individual and group behavior observed there. Volkan and Stein link NMD to the ideas of trait dissociation where groups use NMD to create an "other" for use in casting off unwanted elements of behavior and thought onto these artificially created groups who are recruited into a symbiotic relationship for that express purpose.<sup>33</sup> Then, as the creator "destroys" the "other" in actual or imagined violence, the unwanted traits that were cast off are now destroyed, at least for a while. As I will attempt to demonstrate, some of this NMD and trait dissociation may be valid as used by the current tribes to reinforce or justify ongoing schemas of violence. Indeed, "minor differences" is not absolute but rather is a perceptual metric that changes with the perspective of either the outside observer or the inside participant. This negates our ability to trivialize the absolute nature of the underlying causes of the violence or attribution to political utilitarianism. "Rather than trying to think them [issues of identity] away, it is necessary to understand them and come to terms with their enduring power."<sup>34</sup> We can accept that there are unmet nonnegotiable human needs that drive the tribal conflict in Darfur even as we acknowledge the existence of political utilitarianism by emerging power elites within the Darfur tribes. While this political utilitarianism complicates and lengthens the conflict, it does not create the initial conflict, and, as will be explained, such

political utilitarianism is a learned behavior from the international community of observers and participants in the Darfur drama.

The more likely answers that explain these unmet human needs are identifiable elements of what psychologist Leon Festinger (1957) refers to as dissonance in the cognitive identities of the primary parties to the ongoing violence.<sup>35</sup> Dissonance is created by the conflicting awareness that elements of one's identity are contradictory and or warring for salience and expression. The elements of identity (and their hierarchical order) that create the dissonance and result in conflict are unique to each tribe, but these elements are all closely related. Within the Arab identity there is a system of social hierarchy in terms of resources, infrastructure, and political power that is not contested.<sup>36</sup> This acceptance or rejection of a hierarchical status quo on the lower group's part is not a matter of simple cost-benefit calculation, as was argued of the al-Misiryyah tribes in southern Kordofan, but of whether essential requirements of tribal identity and historical narrative are best met by joining one side or the other.<sup>37</sup> For the African Muslim tribes, the ongoing inner struggle between the northern Sudanese Arab elites combined with their own inner connection to this struggle places a crippling strain on their ability to synthesize the warring elements of their own group identity into a cohesive whole. During my research and fieldwork in the north, west, and south Darfur states and eastern Chad, I found four core areas of identity dissonance within the Sudanese Muslim community.<sup>38</sup> These identity conflicts individually create intertribal conflict and collectively make that conflict nearly intractable. These four core areas of identity involve the intimate relationship between Arab ethnicity and Islamic theology, and the relationship between Arab ethnicity, Islamic theology, and African ethnicity with its indigenous culture.

There are compelling historical arguments that Islam never fully subsumed the prototypical Arab tribal ethos that developed over millennia of severe deprivation.<sup>39</sup> "From the very beginning, Mohamed's religion was diametrically opposed to some of the essential principles of *murawah*."<sup>40</sup> The primary *jihad* or struggle of Islam was always against the resistance of the Arab tribes to abandon their patrimonial *murawah* and the *hasab* or tribal glory contained therein. This is where the identity dissonance occurs, in the placement of Islam as a subordinate feature of the tribe's Arab ethnicity, which has the effect of negating the universality of the Islamic social ordering force. This creates internal conflict because Islam is not merely a personal spiritual faith but rather a complete reordering of social values, family hierarchy, and human relationships. They begin with the parents' relationship to the child and include interfamily, interclan and intertribal connectivity based on spiritually constructed ties rather than those of blood and marriage. Another conflict critical to identity at the personal level is that of *jahiliyyah*,<sup>41</sup> which is poorly translated to mean an Arab man's self-concept of his warrior-honor-machismo-testosterone social identity. This identity trait was supposed

to have been subsumed by traits of *hilm* (forbearance), which laid the basis for more orderly and structured communities based less on force of arms and more on development of natural and human resources supported by developing infrastructure.<sup>42</sup> The time that I spent studying and observing the Arab Rizeigat in Darfur and researching the al-Misiryyah of Kordofan provided a comparison and contrast between historical accounts of early Arab life and society and the reality of Arab Janjaweed life in Darfur. Like their ancient Arab prototypes, the spirituality of Darfur's Arab tribes is rooted in their pride of survival, willingness to avenge any wrong committed on their members, and protection of their "chivalric code, which, by giving meaning to their lives and preventing them from succumbing to despair in . . . harsh conditions, performed the essential function of religion."<sup>43</sup>

The Qur'an was produced over time by and within a high context Arab culture that possessed significant elements of psychogeography and geology within their existing identity structure. Abdelrahman Munif's series on 19th century Arab life provides a riveting look into cultural identities as the geography and the geology are intimately connected with self-concept, purpose, and base survival. To the extent that Sudanese Arabs protect and defend the tenants of Islamic sharia (law and social ordering), sunnah (example of the Prophet), and hadith (sayings attributed to Mohamed), they do so in a hierarchical manner of ownership to non-Arabs.<sup>44</sup> This hierarchical ownership makes perfect sense as Islam was revealed expressly for them by one of their members and idealizes the geography and geology if not the racial and ethnic affiliations of the first Muslims.<sup>45</sup> By the time of Mohamed's first revelation in 610 CE during the month of Ramadan, the Arab tribes of the Arabian Peninsula already constituted two established identities that were slowly growing apart. The first was that of the *badawah* (Bedouin), which was generally acknowledged to be, if not the ideal, then at least the "point of genesis" of all Arab origin. The second was that of the *hadarah* (sedentary) consisting of tribes who had begun congealing Arab social life around established towns and cities supported by farming, trading, and support of the cross-desert caravans.<sup>46</sup>

Of these cities, Mecca and Medina evolved into the two most important for Mohamed's evangelization of Islam.<sup>47</sup> Coming from the *Quresh* tribe, the sedentary clan that controlled a miraculous water well and spring in the middle of the trading town of Mecca, Mohamed shared the common *hadarah* view of Bedouin life as mysterious, yet questionable in its morality because of the harshness of treatment accorded to the weakest members of society given the constant quest for water, food, and survival. Even as the *hadarah* Arab tribes settled into villages and towns, creating economies, social structures, and the moral basis necessary to support the evolution of a sedentary identity, the *badawah* Arab tribes resisted. For the *badawah* tribes, their acceptance of Islam changed little.<sup>48</sup> Their agreement to recognize Mohamed as God's final prophet was more political than spiritual, and the moral basis for their nomadic

identity remains to this day easily observable in the Bedouin tribes of Arabia, North Africa, and, of course, Sudan.

The spirituality of the Bedouin grew out of the geology and geography of its tribal habitats where base survival in an inescapable, unchanging climate served as a normative destiny. "Austere as it was, Bedouin life seemed inescapable. Western and northern Arabia offered only a few alternatives, mostly around small-scale agriculture and trade" sufficient to accommodate small numbers of Arab tribes who were able to make and defend their transition to a sedentary way of life.<sup>49</sup> The initial Bedouin spirituality that exalted the timeless ethics of survival in desert nomad life was reinforced as those tribes adapting to sedentary life created out-group competition. As the alternative to nomadic life took root, Bedouin spirituality took on a moral dimension of condemnation against the sedentary challenge to the idealization of fatalistic acceptance of what *dahr* (epochal time) would bring with certainty. If sedentary society could build towns, store water and food, and create defenses against the acquisition raid, then change was possible.

Bedouin spiritual philosophy expresses itself most clearly in the "belief in the relative profanity of all subjective rearrangement of the norms of nature, norms from which the idea of a possibly different future is absent. This view is based in the feeling that unchosen frames of social existence possess a claim to timeless and superior stability that surpasses the claims to stability of frames of existence chosen during an individual lifespan."<sup>50</sup> It's not so much the advent of Islam then that the Bedouin railed against but rather the fundamental change in moral and leader responsibility for directing human life best left to the finitudes of *dahr*. The Bedouins did eventually accept Islam as a component of their tribal identity, subordinated and placed in the perspective of nomadic life. But they rejected or ignored those elements that did not fit within the existing psychological framework of life in the open desert. The struggle between the evangelizers of universal Islam and the Arab identity as expressed by its prototypical society the *badawah* over the placement of Islam in Arab life continues, finding its way into most conflicts where Arab and Islam vie for primacy of salience.

Sudan is home to more than 500 separate ethnicities, with their own variations on language, laws, customs, and values. Even those who ultimately hold the Sudanese government in Khartoum responsible for the ongoing conflict in the south and west use the vast diversity of the country as a principal argument for the use of universal Islam as a multicultural and unifying force for social construction and ordering. While universal Islam embraces all races and ethnicities, it simultaneously attempts to purify the practice of Islam to its earliest origins, which are, of course, culturally and psychologically Arab. In all parts of the Muslim *ummah* outside of Arab domination, the practice and ideology of Islam has adapted to take into account regional, cultural, and linguistic expression.<sup>51</sup> The use of Islam and sharia as universal and unifying themes for

state or nation building within Arabized lands is problematic, given the determination by the religion's purists (most of whom are not Arab) to maintain integrity against indigenous adaptation, not to mention the continuing hold over Islamic genealogy by Arab ethnic nationalists.

## The Africans

The internal identity conflict between Arab and Islam fuels a psychogeologic (desert versus forested) and psychogeographic (Arabia versus Africa) fault line along the northern tier states of the African continent.<sup>52</sup> Wherever sedentary Arab and Bedouin immigration occurred, the psychogeography of Arabia moved with it through human patriarchal heredity as if Arabia were as much a state of mind as a place of being.<sup>53</sup> In Darfur, *hadarah* Arabs arrived from the east (sedentary riverine Arabs from the Nile River Valley) and *badawah* Arabs arrived from the north, descendents of the original Bedouins who first migrated to North Africa. While the *hadarah* and *badawah* Arabs do not share the same identity construction, the *hadarah* accord the *badawah* the respect of the ethnic prototype, even as they dismiss them as dirty and unworthy of company because of their nomadic lifestyle. The *badawah* on the other hand remain true to their heritage, oblivious of all that is not within their frame of life as survivors in an unchanging environment and that which falls outside the immediate survival of their tribe and *muruwah* code of honor.

The effect on the indigenous African tribes of this Arab migration and the dual identities it contained was complex. Tribes like the Zaghawa became African components of the Bedouin social structure, adopting the nomadic life of herding with many of the same spiritual identity components of the Arab *badawah*, but they retained their African identity nomenclature. Tribes such as the Fur and Masalit became African components of the sedentary Arab social structure, creating the first formalized African-Arab-Muslim governance structure in Sudan with all its attendant inconsistencies.<sup>54</sup> The warring identities of Arab and Islam eventually spilled over to life in the Sudan and ultimately engulfed the formation and sustainment of psychological identity and sociological ordering of the African and Arab tribes of Darfur. The hybrid identities created by the African tribes as they struggled to integrate Arab and Islam into previously existing identity structures were never able to crystallize into formal constructs that could be defended by intellectual elites as basis for social order and political power distribution, so pervasive was the presence and dominance of the Arab "other" in its warring duality. As this inner Arab war intensified, so did the pressure on the African tribes' identities, laden as they were with unintegrated elements of African-Arab-Islamic identity in dissonance.

The eventual disintegration and threatened disestablishment of African tribal identity created subsequent cascading effects on the sociological

structure and ordering within the family, clan, and tribe, which is measurable and directly contributory to the level of violence. The sociological foundations of society are negatively affected by the disintegrating identity of African families and tribes in Darfur. The negative effect includes how individuals, families, and clans interact on a daily basis (symbolic or functional interaction), how they make personal choices using relative benefit and cost considerations (social exchange theory), their expectations of advantage or discrimination based on their confused identity characteristics (expectation states theory), and the general process of socialization and role development within a large group identity under continuous denigration by internal and external influences.<sup>55</sup> The process of socialization within the family and within the tribe serves to meet the expressive and developmental requirements of cultural identity. As group identity changes or loses its salient hold over the population, the elements of socialization that protect and reinforce it are also abandoned by either adaptive preference formation or, if no other identity elements are forthcoming by prototypical leadership, despair and malaise preparatory to the extremism of the remaining elements of individual and group identity.<sup>56</sup>

For the Fur tribe, the elements in dissonance are African, black, and Islamic. At stake is their membership in a state Muslim *ummah* that is at odds with many of the traditions, language, cultural expressions, and historical narratives of their African tribal memory. Their ability to integrate African tribal memory and identity narrative into their Arab-based Islamic identity is resisted by their fellow Zaghawa and Arab tribes who outwardly shudder at the despoliation of the pure faith and inwardly shudder that their *ummah* is contaminated by the inclusion of descendents of slaves that their ancestors took for use as laborers. While the latter is hinted at in suggestive comments, the former is outwardly criticized, as African Muslims are chastised for incorporating traditional tribal music and traditions into the pure sterile Arab version of Islam. The integration of disparate elements of individual and group identity such as those found in Darfur occurs in a process of what James Marcia termed as exploration and commitment.<sup>57</sup> The development of identity is a process of individual examination and discovery of who and what one might be, with commitment to an identity being a consolidation of this process. Identity exploration might be seen as a basic process underlying the formation of an identity but not the only one. Ascribed elements of identity are accepted as identity foreclosure, where the individual accepts with little or no thought the identity element inherited from family.<sup>58</sup> For the African Muslims of Darfur, the identity formation process that attempts to integrate the warring elements of both ascribed and constructed identity create identity diffusion characterized by indecision between competing elements and identity moratorium, where the individual is unable to commit to a specific identity given the push and pull of forces external to his decision-making ability.

The current Fur identity mixes African tribalism with Arab-Islamism and dates back to the first Darfur Sultanate. Then, Sultan Solondongo, perhaps the first Fur prototype, simply blended the elements of existing African tribal identity with the politically controlling Arab-Islamic identity to create a hybrid which remained (relatively) uncontested until mid 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>59</sup> This inherited hybrid Fur identity is now contested by their Arab neighbors who dispute the legitimacy of their Muslim placement in the *ummah* because of the African additions to their identity.<sup>60</sup> The Fur people have a difficult time refuting this contestation because their acceptance of an Arab prophet as the final messenger of God presupposes their acceptance of Arab superiority in matters relating to religious doctrine.<sup>61</sup> Against an inward desire (or need) to integrate the prideful African half with his necessary Muslim half, the Fur person finds himself or herself with an impossible choice: maintain his historical African narrative and the existential transgenerational memory it contains, or maintain his or access to a post existential afterlife, but not both. The Fur's ability to bridge the inconsistencies of Islamic dogma with African identity are continuously defeated by denials and counter claims of the Arab owners of Muslim hierarchy and by fellow African (and Arab) Islamists who profess ownership of the Islamic purity of ideal. The former relegate the African identity explorer to a lower hierarchical caste within the Muslim social ordering with all the implications for access to political and social power and acceptance, while the latter threatens loss of generational memory passed on by centuries of paternal nurturance. Either way, the African Fur tribesperson is caught in an identity crossfire, unable to abandon his Muslim *ummah*, yet unable to abandon the existential memory of his historical African narrative.

For the *Zaghawa tribe*, the elements in dissonance are African, black, Bedouin and Islamic. As well, their identity contains significant elements of leadership and learning which creates susceptibility to aspirational deprivation against both African and Arab Bedouin tribes.<sup>62</sup> At stake is their ability to merge the universal Islamic superordinate element of their identity with their Bedouin heritage, an element contested by the Arab Bedouins who claim that identity for the purported pure Arab race where the practice and lifestyle of nomadic herders began several millennia past. Contested in their identity formation by both Arab Muslims and Islamists who seek to hold over them a preferential placement in the historical lineage of Arabs to the Prophet Mohamed,<sup>63</sup> they waver between identifying with Africans against their Arab Bedouin heritage and turn on their fellow Africans in a merger with universal Islamism where they are still on the lower rank. Two prominent members of the *Zaghawa tribe*, SLA leader Mini Minawi<sup>64</sup> and JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim<sup>65</sup> illustrate these opposite approaches to adaptive preference formation as they try to adapt to pressures on their base group identity. Their ability to integrate an African, black, Bedouin identity that is transcended by universal Islamism yet still providing them a satisfactory placement within their

larger social structure is continually frustrated by an Arab identity structure they cannot compete with socially or politically. Their attempts at expressing a distinctive universal Islamic identity politically are resisted by their Arab Bedouin neighbors and by the Arab dominated center of Sudanese Arab nationalism led by President Omar Bashir. They are supported, however, by Hassan al-Turabi (once imprisoned by Bahir) and the People's Congress Party, even as they are assigned a lower hierarchical ranking by those same Arab members of the Islamist movement to which they aspire to lead.

The identity conflict of the Zaghawa possesses elements of intractability that most Western observers fail to notice. To be Bedouin is more than just an identity that can be changed or adapted; it is a psychological and emotional imprinting of existential logic, geology, and morality that may or may not be subject to adaptation. "The desert is a sphere of absolute speechlessness. What is strange in the desert is speaking, thinking in words, dialoguing, communicating."<sup>66</sup> As befitting a Bedouin social order, Dar Zaghawa is a vast empty place, extending from the wastelands of north Darfur to the south Libyan Desert. Such vast and empty places have the psychogeological capacity to change patterns of human thought and mental relationships subjectively and objectively to the world around them.<sup>67</sup> Bamyeh calls this the ideology of the horizons, which sustains the wandering that is at the heart of the Bedouin psychological identity. The Bedouin identity is rooted in mental and emotional patterns of thought developed over millennia of survivalist existence in an environment that does not provide for normative understanding of time and waiting. Where time establishes the format for historical memory in terms of events such as trauma and glory, waiting establishes the capacity for expectation of human agency, two important concepts for psychological and sociological development. For Bedouin psychology, measuring time is an event of itself; nature stands stark and immutable in terms of seasons and interactive patterns of life in environments similar to that of the surface of the moon. With such faint natural patterns of changing time, early Bedouins used the event *hijja* or annual journey to measure out their life events and provide periodicity for their generational stories of the past. Within this absence of observed time lapse, the vastness of space and the survivalist ideology of the wanderer moving toward the horizon, patterns of emotional thought change. The desert and the wanderer are like the survival; they cannot be known and neither can they be controlled. In such an existence, "one loses the nervousness of the moment, the suspicion in the possibility of the different, hiding away in some unknown future dimension."<sup>68</sup>

Bedouin identity is rooted in their requirement to "remember, mourn, glorify, and re-create the past. In the unchanging Bedouin society, no grand social shifts are expected, and the material and spiritual frameworks created by millennia of sameness assume eternal legitimacy."<sup>69</sup> The differences between the *badawah* and the *hadarah* are not mere choices of economic activity that can



be negotiated by political compromise; rather, they are frames of human social reference starkly different in their beliefs and understanding of life. Emerging as a survival mechanism, Bedouin identity served to strengthen the members will to live and cohere in a communal tribal unit of existence. Later, as they were exposed to those tribal bands fortunate enough to transition to sedentary life, this identity morphed to protect them from the exterior of a more assured survival of life as agrarian farmers.<sup>70</sup> The fact that arable land and water were so scarce that such choice was reserved only for the best organized and adaptive tribes provided additional impetus for adaptive preference formation. This “sour grapes” adaptive preference was then overlaid with moral denigration for the *hadarah* “other” and sanctified by the “inner” group’s acceptance of the natural bonds of exterior nature that expressed “a belief in the relative profanity of all subjective rearrangement of the norms of nature, norms from which the idea of possibly different future is absent. This view is based in the feeling that unchosen frames of social existence possess a claim to timeless and superior stability that surpasses the claims to stability of frames of existence chosen during an individual lifespan.”<sup>71</sup>

This Bedouin psychology and identity of the Zaghawa is in dissonance with the universal Islamic elements that characterize Khalil Ibrahim’s modernistic approach to Zaghawa social development. In contrast to *badawah* subsistence ideology where survival itself is a prime purpose whose continuation constitutes life purpose, the above-subsistence survival goals of the sedentary *hadarah* requires more than simple survival. *Hadarah* works to “idealize an additional layer of life, a life larger than itself, that is, *a life larger than pure existence*.”<sup>72</sup> The dissonance of this psychological, mental, and moral conflict between wanderer and settled in Darfur is at the heart of the majority of the violence and nearly all of the fracturing of the Zaghawa peoples. As the Zaghawa embraced al-Turabi’s universal Islam, which elevates their African status as Muslim’s relative to their fellow Muslim Arabs, the implicit acceptance of *hadarah* and the devaluation of the *badawah* spirituality placed them in identity conflict with themselves, a condition reinforced by the agitation of Arab Bedouins.

## ELEMENTS OF INTRACTABLE CONFLICT

### The Language of Religion and of Slaves

For the Arabs, if desert is sacred geography, then language is even more so. The Qur’an, God’s final judgment, was revealed to Mohamed by the archangel Gabrielle who revealed it to humankind in Arabic (Jones, 1994). The final message of God is in “*lisan c arabiyy mubin*”<sup>73</sup> or clear Arabic language, and is the language of the Prophet, who speaks the message of God. Arabic, then,

is the only true lingua of understanding God's message, and any interpretation using a foreign language must necessarily be less correct and, therefore, of less validity.<sup>74</sup> Since the Qur'an establishes rules for ordering society as well as worshipping God, then Arabic must be the language of both the mosque as well as the governing order.<sup>75</sup> For the African tribes, this dogma further deepens their crises of identity. With 115 linguistic dialects in Darfur alone, African society has a rich oral linguistic tradition. Many of the customs and mores that carry significant portions of their historical narrative find expression only in the words and phrases of their native tongue. Within the Arab language, African tribes find both belonging and rejection. The belonging they find is their place in the greater *ummah* of believers in the one true God of Abraham and His final Prophet, Mohamed. The rejection they find is of that which they cannot discard—the color of their skin and the ethnicity that is the physical part of their existential identity.

The central Arabic word of the African rejection is *Abd* (or *Abid*), meaning slave. If one is an Arab, then one was (probably) never a slave.<sup>76</sup> The frequency of the dialogue over slave/freeman that occurs in both Arab and African's daily conversations serves to underscore its importance in their respective identities. The messages are both subtle and distinct but are never outwardly stated as political doctrine about what should be but rather about what was in the historical narrative. The simple act of naming behaviors or attributes qualifies them as markers for the positional placement of identity within the larger social narrative.<sup>77</sup> Thus, in a process that Stein calls trait disassociation, the Sudanese Arab society casts off their own unwanted negative attribute of *Abd* at the inadvertent expense of the Sudanese African society with messages such as: Arabs are lighter than Africans. White(er) people are less likely to have been slaves. If one is an African, then one's past is bounded by slavery. Black(er) people are more likely to have been slaves. Africans are darker than Arabs.<sup>78</sup>

These "history-as-accepted-fact" messages are imbedded in social discourse, childhood jokes, and negative social stereotyping of the sort that normally drives societal members toward acceptable conduct and reinforces group mores and values. As such, they are used as identity markers for social placement and positioning of individuals, families, and other identity groups within the society. Unfortunately, some of the truth of African peoples' tribal history lays dormant just under the surface of this social discourse. The inference of a lower hierarchical position in society based on the historical conditions of involuntary servitude leave the African members of Darfur society with little recourse for avoiding this stigmatization other than the shedding of their skin and the ethnic identity it contains. The cognitive dissonance of the personal and social identity prevents the tribes from achieving optimal distinction or a balance between assimilation and differentiation.<sup>79</sup> As such, harmony is negated by their unintegrated warring identities. As the socially constructed messages of the Arab tribes reinforce negative self-images absorbed from

childhood, the loss of assimilation or inclusion within the primal culture “reawakens all earlier infantile loss of face, estrangements from others and self.”<sup>80</sup>

Erik Erikson suggests that such loss creates “inner estrangements” beginning when the disavowed member (African) “feels that he neither knows nor is known, neither has a face nor recognizes one” and “becomes alienated from [himself] and [his] wishes alike, estranged from the inner [Arab] world in the outer [African] one.”<sup>81</sup> Tribes share an inner belonging, “an ethnic area, a historical era . . . [and] are guided by common images of good and evil. Infinitely varied, these images reflect the elusive nature of historical change; of compelling prototypes of good and evil.”<sup>82</sup> When the strands of shared identity that the affected members absorbed or constructed are broken, the damage creates feelings of abandonment, separation, and fragmentation.<sup>83</sup> Stein concludes that “through stranger-anxiety, shame, and guilt” the expelled members become strangers to themselves as they are detached from the identity they seek and subjugated to the identity that the favored “others” will on them, namely that of Abd.<sup>84</sup>

### Islam and “Paganism”: the Sacred and the Profane in Contest in Darfur

During my work with mediating tribal conflicts in Darfur, the exchanges were continuously marked with the Bedouin’s casting the farmers as African *kufr* (unbelievers), regardless of whether they were from the Fur, Masalite, Zaghawa, or Rizeigat (Arab) tribes.<sup>85</sup> The bitterness that accompanied such exchanges is partly explained in the common historical narrative where African unbelievers in Islam were accepted targets of slavery by Arab *jallaba*, a term used to describe Northern Sudanese Arabs who procured slaves in the south and west regions of the Sudan. The agrarian tribes normally respond to the Bedouin tribes that they are not real Arabs but merely Africans pretending to be something they are not and thus are a fraud to everyone else in Darfur. Each of these exchanges served to exacerbate psychological doubts about the legitimacy of each tribe’s cultural identity and historical narrative. Their discourse suggests a highly complex identity that defies simple renderings. Such psychological uncertainty only resulted in renewed efforts by the herder tribes to be better Bedouins and wedded them deeper to their cherished ideals of identity, culture, and historical narrative. The effect on the farming tribes was more fractured, with some, like the Zaghawa, taking a fundamental Islamist approach to out-believe the ragged Arab Bedouins who “would not know what to do in a mosque.” This approach often worked against the other more moderate African tribes; as the Zaghawa moved toward a more fundamentalist Islam it created discomfort in the way that the Fur and Masalite tribes practiced Islam.

As with Christianity, Islam had never completely replaced all of the old animist or indigenous African religions but merely overlaid a monotheistic structure over geologic, astrologic, and animistic beliefs that had been in place since the formation of human society. Like the Tuareg to the north, many African tribes in the Sudan and Chad combined Sunni Islam (specifically the *Maliki madhhab*, popular in North and West Africa) with certain pre-Islamic animistic beliefs, including spirits of nature (*Kel Asuf*) and such syncretic beliefs as divination through means of the Qur'an. Quite naturally, this outrages Arab-Islamic educated purists who continually advocate for a return to the original Islamic teachings of the Prophet. For the African Fur and Masalit tribes, however, this is easier said than done. Ever since the earliest Darfur Sultanate, a benevolent brand of universal Islam had held together both the Arab and African tribes in a loose confederation to ensure protection. Even the Sultan paid homage to both Islamic and pagan rituals, with pagan *aadinga* (succession rites) an absolutely key element in the king's legitimacy. The Sultan's *fashir* (palace) was carefully laid out to embody a cosmological symbolism that had nothing to do with Islam, and audiences with the monarch obeyed a number of taboos and observances that were of distinctly "pagan" origin. The court ladies at the *fashir* openly kept the old religion alive and served its cults from within the palace, something that shocked visiting Muslim clerics.<sup>86</sup>

Only Darfur's remoteness to the center of Islamic thought and culture allowed this quixotic brand of pagan-Islamic social life to continue. With advances in communication, transportation, and nation building by the Islamic Republic of the Sudan, this laissez-faire approach to Islamic culture and social ordering would be challenged, creating a choice of change and abandonment for many of Darfur's families and the tribes they created. The African Muslim tribes of the Darfur have long since melded their African heritage with a modified form of Sufi Islam that they believe retains all the essentials of the Qur'an and the Prophet's examples (*Sunnah*) into their daily life without sacrificing generational memory of their historical narrative. The changes that the Arab-Islamic purists desire, they say, is not a change to their religious beliefs but the devaluation of their African heritage and the denotation of (former) *kufir* and *abd* that their past contains. The changes that their fellow African tribes (primarily the Zaghawa) advocate would reduce the Darfur tribes' ability to compete economically with the less religiously encumbered tribes across the Chad–Sudan border. The Zaghawa tribes of Darfur, on the other hand, advocate the universalism of Islam to break through the constricting limitations of Arab nationalism as they seek an egalitarian version of Islamic social ordering. Unfortunately, the only current offering of egalitarian Islamic society that dilutes the effect of Arab nationalism is the fundamentalist brand being offered by adherents of Salafism—a return to the original way of life under the Prophet Mohamed.

## Law and Social Order: Sharia versus African Communal Justice

Each engagement by the government of Sudan with the tribes of Darfur, as well as their own intertribal engagement (both violent and nonviolent), served to break down the confidence that each tribe had in its large group cultural identity. Questions of race, ethnicity, religious practice, and adherence continually raised doubts in the minds of the tribal leaders about the authenticity of their own historical narrative and the existential identity it contained. One of the most important areas of community identity and culture within the African tribes of Darfur is their ability to administer law and social order within their societies. At the heart of national sovereignty is a collective belief in a people's right to exist, order themselves, enforce that ordering, resolve disputes that arise, and administer justice when offenses occur to maintain order.

The internal conflict that the tribes in Darfur suffer from relates to how they can synthesize a complex past with the demands of competing visions emanating from Khartoum and the Arab tribes in Darfur. Already the African-Muslim tribes are conflicted over whether they belong to the Arab world or the African, whether they are *abd* or *zurka*,<sup>87</sup> members of the *ummah* or *kufur*,<sup>88</sup> citizens of the Sudan or a new state in the making called Darfur. The demands for change have implications for breakage in the generational memory of the families within the tribe, especially in the areas of law and order. Their dilemma is even greater than the choice between remembering the tribal past versus accepting the universal Islamic future. It involves holding on to who they were versus letting go to change into an as yet undefined identity of fundamental Islamic community. In the past, tribes were allowed to change the labels of their collective system of ordering without actually having to actualize the full meaning of those changes. Thus, under that Sultans of Darfur's early life, tribes could accept *ta'rib* and the sharia that accompanied Islam but still cling to their African tribal heritage and ensuing memory. Prunier explains how this worked:

The "eling wukala" (village heeadmen) stood at the bottom of [a] three tiered administrative hierarchy, ensuring continuity between the three or four small settlements for which they were responsible and the maqadim and shartay. One of the key duties of these state representatives was to oversee the administration of justice—which, like almost everything else in the Sultanate, displayed an Afro-Arab duality. People involved in a court case could choose either to take it to the shari'a tribunal or to remain within the precincts of the customary law of their tribe. This customary law was curiously called *siyasa* ("politics" in Arabic), perhaps because it could be more open to complex interpretations than the more strictly codified written shari'a.<sup>89</sup>

The ability of the tribes to blend their African heritage with the newer Islamic laws and values with accompanied *ta'rib* prevented breaks in historical memory and loss of existential identity. Because this duality was never formalized

by the tribes of Darfur, the system continued to operate outside of the accepted models of the Islamic *ummah*, setting the stage for an eventual showdown over the unauthorized adaptation of the supposed universal Islam. As the Muslim Brotherhood and National Charter Front gained ground in the period between independence and the creation of the Islamic Republic (1956–1989), The African tribal electorates in Darfur were slowly drawn into intertribal and regional political conflict over identity and cultural survival. “Since the two electorates were in fact quite interwoven (and partly intermarried), electoral tactics forced them to exaggerate the kind of racial-cultural rhetoric which had begun to grow.”<sup>90</sup>

Even as the Northern Sudanese Arabs began to split between Arab nationalist and Islamic fundamentalist expressions of Sudanese identity, the Islamic and Arabic social ordering forces were beginning to unravel from the pressures of Khartoum’s nation-building. The underpinnings of tribal identity in Darfur that had been seeking some form of balance between the African past and the Arab-Islamic present/future were called into question both politically and psychologically.

The tribes’ ability to deal with this dissonance in a nonviolent manner such as adaptive preference formation is undermined by the psychologically and physically intertwined nature of their African, Arab, and Islamic identities.<sup>91</sup> The theories of optimal distinction, movements of assimilation and differentiation, and inclusion and placement of social identity all play a role in describing how the marginalized African tribes fight among themselves for the remaining psychological space to play out their fracturing and deteriorating group identity.<sup>92</sup> The competing claims over the ownership of Arab and Islamic identity, combined with the rejection of ethnic pluralism, frustrate African members’ efforts at balancing distinction with acceptance without an unacceptable level of loss of placement in the structure of social identity.

For African Muslims, resolving this crisis of identity becomes an existential need when the challenge to their ethnicity is wrapped up in imbedded challenges to their rights of social ordering, cultural expression, language, and religious expression. Unable to bridge the intrinsic conflict between their African and Arab identity halves, the African tribes of Darfur fragmented in a process of segmentary fusion with disparate elements adopting identity positions most salient to them as individuals, families, and subgroups of the larger tribal identity.<sup>93</sup> They are offered a choice between honoring an ethnicity they cannot escape or honoring a spiritual compact that relegates them and their children to a lesser place in the Kingdom of Heaven. The resultant segmentation of their society is fused with object loss “[w]here mourning and grief are too painful . . . too contaminated by aggression and fantasied consequence to the self—[they] simply cannot ‘let go.’”<sup>94</sup> Their subsequent identity counterattacks on the legitimacy of the Arab tribes’ claims to belonging in the larger identity tent of the *Qahtan* or even the *Shaab* create the same type of identity

dissonance fears faced by the African tribes.<sup>95</sup> The identity claims and counter claims between Arab and African thus create an adversary symbiosis of violence as Arab and African lay claim to an identity that neither one is completely sure it belongs to and of which neither is completely reflective.<sup>96</sup>

Left unsaid, however, is the awareness that continued violence threatens anarchy and the dreaded breakage of historical narrative as well as the generational memory it contains.<sup>97</sup> If the primal purpose of identity, culture, and societies is to build community and transmit memory, then “any order is better than chaos and violence.”<sup>98</sup> This suggests that while identity and culture may be used instrumentally by social leaders, the escalation of violence to a level that threatens the continued group existence must have complex inhibitors of natural social identity building mechanisms that prevent social disintegration and the anarchy that results.

## **Psychological and Emotional Trauma as Spoilers to Identity Definition**

The rage of the conflict in Darfur is breathtaking. In December 2004 I attended an impromptu meeting in a place called Adwa in South Darfur with my AU team. There we met with 150 heavily armed Arab Janjaweed who were preparing to attack and destroy an African village. When I asked them what it would take to stop their assault, they responded impassively to “take all these Africans out of Darfur, and we won’t have to kill them.” Later, as the village lay in ruins and the attackers retreated, the rebels took us to the battlefield where villagers wailed as they pulled and dragged their loved ones to hastily dug mass graves. They wrapped them in death, as in life: white robes for the men, gaily colored garb for the women and children, and they gently placed them in their mud coffins with great ceremony. From the dignity of death in battle accorded to the fighters, we moved past those whose dignity had been stripped away, the innocent victims in their nakedness, laying half in, half out of the carved mud hole that was to serve as their grave. As we entered a mud house that served as a makeshift hospital, we met those who faced the worst battle, the raped village girls, some as young as 12 years old.<sup>99</sup>

The daily history of Darfur consists of a collection of events overlaid with varying meaning by diplomats, nongovernmental organizations, reporters, and the participants to the conflict. What is not recorded is the sociological and psychological damage to the humans and their constructed societies. Sociologically, as the collective members struggle, so does the group. As the members feel shame, hate, rejection, or acceptance, so does the group mind. This suggests that the psychological processes of the individuals reflect the eventual psychological process of the group identity.<sup>100</sup> Psychologically, extreme trauma from extended threat of violence, loss by violent death and destruction causes damage to the psychosocial processes of individual and group memory and

emotional expression. Similar to the body's defenses against disease, the human mind uses a number of defensive mechanisms such as dissociation, which "enables (or causes) detachment from anticipation or actual experiences of fear, pain, and helplessness."<sup>101</sup> Eventually, defenses against extreme suffering and loss give way to "pervasive expressions of cruelty and rage [that] are psychologically understandable as responses to anxieties about one's own self-certainty; scapegoating and demonizing others are powerful ways to relieve inner fears of chaos and psychic disintegration that can be aroused when boundaries between self and other are undermined."<sup>102</sup>

Human beings who are traumatized for extended periods of time often lose access to normal human qualities like emotional expression, subconsciously replacing them with violence, compulsive behavior, and confused communication stemming from disintegrated identity and identity loss.<sup>103</sup> Such people rarely express many personality traits. Researchers have found using fMRI<sup>104</sup> that such destructive emotions have a visible, measurable, and possibly permanent effect on the brains of enraged, traumatized humans.<sup>105</sup> The extreme psychological trauma of individuals and families in extended war zones creates an inability to participate in the normal psychosocial activities of identity building and cultural expression; they replace the constructive with the destructive as identity loss transforms them from victim to victimizer, a process that creates suicide terrorists or attackers:

Family members and close acquaintances of the terrorists noticed that as the violent death of a family member or other societal trauma wrought a deep personal impact, the 'soon to become' terrorist underwent a psychological crisis in which feelings of unresolved grief, anger, depression, psychological trauma, and guilt for not having done more to save the family member became obvious.<sup>106</sup>

As the first members of the traumatized family, clan and tribe cross lines into violence that would never have been considered, others follow, mesmerized by the possibility of emotional expression and psychological relief from otherwise unendurable pain:

What was previously unthinkable now becomes a viable and considered option. Grief and trauma over the loss can further open the doors to considering following the same path. The traumatized individual seeks meaning. The bereaved seeks reunion. Both are in search of respite from psychic pain—respite that death can offer.<sup>107</sup>

These are the psychological pathways that allow the conflict in Darfur to spiral into a self-fueled conflagration of human destruction. The end result is anarchy, which I define as a society with a disintegrated or disestablished large group identity. Such a society, stripped of humanity, lives in a state of social existence that serves no other purpose than the cyclic relief of psychological pain and emotional rage. Welcome to Darfur.



## THE FUTURE OF INTERNATIONAL INTERVENTION

Given the track record of the Government of Sudan's attempts at nation building since 1956, we can conclude that its efforts at constructing a unified national identity have failed after the 2011 separation of the South. Its immature and clumsy attempts at the use of physical force to cohere the peoples of Darfur into a unified whole have resulted in the disintegration and near disestablishment of African tribal identity and the polarization of their Arab neighbors. The governing structure in Khartoum, divided as it is between its warring and unintegrated large group identity halves, cannot hope to successfully integrate yet a third component (African) into such a complex and conflicted set of identities. For this reason, any near-term conflict resolution in Darfur must begin with an international conservatorship of its three states, temporary or permanent. The Northern Sudanese Arabs must repair the identity split internal to their own frame of social reference prior to any attempt at integrating with additional complex identity elements, especially those that they are at historical odds with such as African identity. The proposition that the three states of Darfur (South, West, and North) be transitioned to temporary conservatorship by the international community remains the only possible initiative to conflict resolution outside of independence or supervised autonomy.

An international conservatorship under the aegis of the UN supported by both the African Union and the Arab League would have to create the framework for securing, stabilizing, and rebuilding the damaged societies of Darfur as a primary pathway toward meeting the physical and psychosocial needs and ending the violence there. The securing function includes assurances to the population for provisions of food, water, and medicine; for physical safety from external violence; for protection for livestock and crops; and for shelter and secure geographical boundaries along historical lines of ownership. The stabilization function establishes a foundation for rebuilding physically, psychologically, and emotionally. The rebuilding function uses physical acts of creation as psychosocial expressions of identity organization and management, attendant cultural expression, and emotional healing. This means that what is built is less important than how it is built, who builds it, and the net effect that the activity has on the member populace.

### Postconflict Stability and Security

Logically, human societies unable to meet basic requirements for physical survival are in no position to worry about underlying human needs of identity, purpose, and participation.<sup>108</sup> Kelman puts forth the requirement for identity change as a basic requirement for resolving identity-based conflict, but Beisser reminds us that such change under pressure will be resisted, possibly even to the point of annihilation and self-sacrifice.<sup>109</sup> What is necessary to set

conditions for identity change, definition, or reconstruction is the development of geographical safe spaces within Fur, Masalit, Zaghawa, and Arab identity groups. These safe spaces must be secure not only in terms of physical death and harm, but in terms of coercion and manipulation. Such safe geographical spaces provide the inhabitants room to begin the process of stabilizing their sociological order to end the immediate threat to life and health.

Perhaps the most basic step in establishing geographical safe zones is the monopolization by the societal leadership of domestic violence, meaning demobilization and disarmament of social members bearing arms. Armed populations inhibit the development of identity definition and development along nonviolent lines. The demobilization and disarmament of the civil fighters is a necessary precursor to the resettlement of villages by the refugee populations. Refugees are inherently at risk, dislocated as they are from their protective associations of family, clan, and tribal structures. These structures must be physically restored before meaningful conflict resolution can begin because identities and the societies they empower are constructed from the individual upward to the society. As the villages are resettled, the underlying sociological ordering must be renegotiated based on the last remaining vestiges of legitimate identity and its cultural expression.<sup>110</sup> This renegotiation must include basic structures of law and order among the unarmed populations. Supporting the reestablishment of law and order must be a restoration of the indigenous system of justice at least as a temporary structure until a broader schema can be developed by future cultural elites yet to emerge or return from safety. Some elements of indigenous systems of justice may require redefinition or adaptation so that they meet international standards of acceptability directed by the UN.<sup>111</sup>

Experience has shown that physical partition of major large group identity segments can play a key role in alleviating immediate intercultural violence. Such partition creates physical impediments to continued violence but also serves to alleviate the effects of relative deprivation among groups and focus individual large identity groups inward to deal with the broken sociological structure of their community. This places pressure on leaders and elites internally from the community that empowers them to reestablish order, justice, food, water, shelter, and medical infrastructure as payment for continued acceptance of them as visible social leaders. Without a visible “enemy” to fixate on, community leaders are pressed by followers to resolve failing inner structures, both physical and social. This creates space for neutral assistance offerings to support leaders’ efforts as they try to meet the needs of the community and retain acceptance of leadership status from community elites. As international support works to restore essential services and lifesaving infrastructure within each of the geographically secure areas, their life-giving support can open pathways for the use of what Muslims call *hilm* as a mediation tool to achieve psychological space for the existence of the “other.” An important

spoiler in reestablishing damaged societies is community members' inability to deal appropriately with rage, shame, and humiliation borne of victimization, loss, and abuse. Psychologically, the victim does not just suffer the abuse but the pedagogy of abuse until he or she becomes the abuser or victimizer completing the pedagogic cycle. The specific mechanism of the transition is complex, involving a combination of replaying abuse on others in order to understand meaning, seek relief from pain, and dissociate the victimization experience onto yet another human being. The concept of *hilm* was advanced by the Prophet Mohamed as a counter to *Jahiliyyah* and taught a type of forbearance, a level of emotional and psychological patience that allowed victims to overcome transgressions and forgive rather than reciprocate the physical and emotional violence done to them.<sup>112</sup>

It is no accident that much attention during postconflict planning and operations is on the reconstruction of physical infrastructure. Interventionist forces seem to intuitively understand that the cultural expression of physical construction (or creation) validates-makes-real the identity construct that initially conceives and drives the physical activity. The act of building a classroom and a school for instance, makes real the desired identity component of learning and education. The act of building a memorial or monument to deceased group members connects and transmits past identity ideals to the living members who perform the monument construction. Physical construction of public and private infrastructure, whether it is utilitarian or artistic, is the most psychologically truthful expression of cultural identity outside of organized violent conflict. This is because it is costly in terms of will and the expenditure of resources and labor. Warfare is the only activity more costly and therefore has a higher degree of truthfulness to its expression of cultural identity. Societies do not casually build a cathedral, mosque, or a city in the desert. They do so with utter conviction that their efforts will entail each of them who participates a place in the generational memory of their society's historical narrative and the transgenerational memory it contains. This is the powerful motivator behind human identity that both constructs the greatest marvels on earth then tears them down in societal level rages of identity disintegration.

The process of rebuilding the psychosociological structures of damaged societies has both a physical and virtual component. Besides such obvious repairs as public facilities, agriculture, animal husbandry, water supplies like wells and treatment facilities, and the development of psychic spaces such as free trade zones between cultural areas can allow for economic expression and the onset of intercultural negotiation of psychological space, a precondition of justice and forgiveness. With the decade-long wars in Iraq and Afghanistan continuing, a new specialty of U.S. Special Operations Forces is emerging called VSO, or Village Stability Operations. Such operations, conducted by specially trained teams of warrior-diplomats, consist of micropolitical construction (or reconstruction) at the village level, concentrating on governance, the

administration of justice and process of grievance resolution, infrastructure administration, maintenance and repair, and microfinance and economics.

## CONCLUSION

Any analysis, resolution, and intervention in violence-laden regions such as Darfur by Western governments and humanitarian relief organizations must start with the awareness that they (we) have inadvertently exacerbated an already intractable problem merely by our presence. Western participants in this ongoing drama operate from a distinctly different psychological and cultural worldview than do the indigenous participants, one that is egocentric in its psychological construction of human beings and their relation to society.<sup>113</sup> Research now indicates that “western psychology does not hold cross-culturally and that a more sociocentric self could be found everywhere from America to Africa to Asia.”<sup>114</sup> As Western diplomatic, media, and humanitarian aid actors continue to interact with the indigenous participants and their leaders, they invariably begin to overlay their own (primarily Western) values and motivations on their indigenous subjects. Such Western interaction focuses on egocentrism as driving factors in the conflict over the culturally appropriate sociocentric nature of African and Arab tribal life. Western psychology takes for granted the “conception of the person as a bounded, unique, more or less integrated motivational and cognitive universe, a dynamic center of awareness, emotion, judgment and action organized into a distinctive whole and set contrastively both against other such wholes and against a social and natural background.”<sup>115</sup>

Western interventionists have much to offer conflict-plagued societies. They may in fact be the difference between survival and extinction given that they operate from the position of system dominance (knowledgewise) from the perspective of international finance, trade, law, diplomatic collective action, and military strategy. For Western interventionists to successfully mitigate or reduce non-Western identity conflict however, they must learn to cross cultural boundaries of psychosociological development. Culturally appropriate sociocentric approaches to mediating the identity conflict in Darfur require changes in operational strategies and tactics when dealing with the indigenous society and its leaders. This means getting out of hotels and into the field where sociocentric society and its leaders live and work in damaged and fragile psychosociological structures. The use of track 1.5 and 2.0 diplomatic initiatives must take precedence over formal diplomatic measures. Fieldwork must support the rebuilding of family, clan, and tribal sociological structures. Group identities must be redefined and strengthened with the development of physical and virtual infrastructure that is culturally appropriate and consistent with respect for UN mandated policies on human rights and the respect for life.

Finally, village, province, and state leadership elites must be grown (in place) as precursors to eventual societal reintegration under multicultural charters that protect the physical and underlying human needs of the postconflict societies. Past (failed) attempts at working with tribal leaders in Darfur treated them as Western based national elites without the requisite cross-cultural leader training, resulting in corruption and social breakage between leader and society. Darfur can be resuscitated before it devolves into an ungoverned state of disestablished identity, but as the damage increases, the cost to the humans living and dying in Darfur becomes that much more unbearable.

## NOTES

1. Darfur's popular antagonists are the Rizeigat Arab tribes, part of the *abbala* (camel herding) tribal federation of Arabs, while the protagonists are the African Tribes of Zaghawa, Fur and Masalit. Kordofan's popular antagonists are the Arab Misseriya and Hawazma tribes, while the protagonists are the African tribes, primarily the Nuba tribe of South Sudan. The Kordofan dispute serves as a spoiler issue for the division of the North–South border and the important petroleum reserves divided by the separation of South Sudan from Sudan proper.
2. Our team had a white South African Christian who spoke English, a black Masalit from Chad who spoke French and Arabic, a light skinned Christian black from Mozambique who spoke Portuguese, a Nigerian Muslim, a Kenyan Christian-Animist, a Muslim Arab Egyptian, a black Namibian who spoke English, a Muslim rebel Zaghawa, a Muslim rebel Fur, and a Muslim government liaison, all of whom spoke Arabic.
3. Emily Wax, "A Peace Force With No Power: African Union Monitors in Sudan Face Frustrating Limits," *The Washington Post*, December 11, 2004, p. A01.
4. The government of Sudan is, of course, a party to the conflict, and the government of Chad under Habre and Déby both contributed to the instability in Darfur because of their long running conflict with Libya. Mohmar Gaddafi's Arab Legion used Darfur as an Arab staging ground for his attacks on Chad in the 1980s as he attempted to build a Northern African Arab Federation. The UN, AU, EU and U.S. are the most visible participants in the struggle to end the violence in Darfur and receive much criticism in the press and from parties to the conflict for either not doing enough or doing the wrong things. Conspicuously absent is the Arab League, which has tended to avoid the conflict when possible. China has long-term contracts with the Government of Sudan to operate the oil fields located in the tri-border region of South Sudan, Kordofan, and Darfur. With oil reserves rivaling those of Saudi Arabia, the Chinese government maintains nearly 5,000 military troops in Sudan as protection for their investments.
5. The Arab Africa I refer to includes the psychogeographical landscape of those peoples on the Arabian Peninsula, North Africa, and the Horn of Africa who harbor an Arab identity.
6. Paul Riesman, "The Person and the Life Cycle in African Social Life and Thought," *African Studies Review* 29, no. 2 (1986): 71–138.
7. Gérard Prunier, *Darfur, The Ambiguous Genocide* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 8.
8. Major African Identity tribes in Darfur are Fur, Zaghawa, and Masalite, while the dominant Arab tribe is the Rizeigat. All of the tribes are black, with some noticeable variations in shade between the major groups.

9. Daniel Martin Varisco, "Metaphors and Sacred History: The Geneology of Muhammed and the Arab 'Tribe,'" *Anthropological Quarterly* 68, no. 3 (1995): 139–156, 139.
10. U.S. Department of State, "Bureau of African Affairs, Regional Country Desk Sudan, Background Notes," June 29, 2010, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5424.htm> (accessed October 21, 2010).
11. Darfur's African Rebel Movements circa 2009–2010: Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) led by Khalil Ibrahim; Democratic Justice and Equality Movement (DJEM); Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM) led by Mahgoub Hussein; United Revolutionary Forces Front (URFF), United Resistance Front (URF) led by Abu Garda and made up of Popular Front, Sudan Revolutionary Movement, and the Popular Forces Front; Democratic Revolutionary Forces Front (DRFF); National Movement for Reform and Development (NMRD) led by Khalil Abdallah; Democratic Sudan Liberation Movement led by Ali Karbino; Sudan Liberation Movement/Army SLM/A led by Minni Minawi; Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) led by Babiker Abdalla; SLM/A-Unity led by Abdalla Yahiya; SLM/A-Juba of Mohamed Saleh Harba ; SML/A-Juba of Ahmed Abdel Shafi; SLM/A General Line; and SLM/A Khamis Abdalla Abakar.
12. Note on the use of the word *Arabized*. Sudanese have been allowed wide latitude with regard to ethnic defection (see Stathis Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* [Cambridge: University Press, 2006]) or self-selected changes in the cognitive representations of the self that make up the social identity of either African or Arab.
13. Amir H. Idris, *Conflict and Politics of Identity in Sudan* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).
14. Julie Flint and Alex De Waal, *Darfur, A Short History of a Long War* (London: Zed Books, 2005).
15. Charles Lindholm, *Culture and Identity* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2008), 217.
16. Tenzin Gyatso, shortened from Jetsun Jamphel Ngawang Lobsang Yeshe Tenzin Gyatso, born Lhamo Dondrub, on July 6, 1935. He is the 14th and current Dalai Lama of Tibet; see Dalai Lama and Victor Chan, *The Wisdom of Forgiveness* (New York: Riverhead, 2004).
17. The Arab identity is represented by the National Congress Party led by President Omar Bashir and his Vice President Ali Osman Mohamed Taha, while the Islamic identity is represented by the People's Congress Party led by Hassan al-Turabi.
18. B.G.V. Nyombe, "The Politics of Language, Culture, Religion and Race in the Sudan," *Frankfurter Afrikanistische Blätter* 6 (1994): 9–20.
19. Karen Armstrong, *Muhammad: A Prophet for Our Time* (New York: Harper Collins, 2006).
20. *Ibid.*
21. Mohammad A. Bamyeh, *The Social Origins of Islam: Mind, Economy, Discourse* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).
22. Muruwah: code of honor and conduct within tribal life that served to physically protect the tribe from within and without; for Bedouins, Muruwah is both an adjective and a noun that describes who they are and what they gift to future generations. Combined with *asibiyyah*, tribal solidarity, the concepts of Muruwah produced what Bedouins called *karim*, generous hero, who receive, hold and transmit the tribe's *hasab*, or ancestral honor, the method of ensuring existential transgenerational memory for the large group identity. Toshihiko Izutsu, *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'an* (Montreal: Islamic Trust Fund, 2002).

23. Henri Tajfel, *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 2.
24. Being white and male are primary and secondary markers of individual identity and membership in Christianity and the American body politic that serve to narrow the holders' core identity group as well as provide a significant number of outgroups that serve to thicken the identity boundaries and provide suitable reservoirs for trait dissociation or externalization. A primary source is Vamik Volkan, "The Narcissism of Minor Differences in the Psychological Gap Between Opposing Nations," *Psychoanalytic Inquiry* 6 (1986): 175–191, 185.
25. Vamik Volkan, "Large Group Identity and Chosen Trauma," *Psychoanalysis Downunder* 6 (December 2005): 1–32.
26. George Jellinek, *The Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen* (Vienna: University of Vienna, 1895); William McDougall, *The Group Mind: A Sketch of the Principals of Collective Psychology with Some Attempt to Apply them to the Interpretation of National Life and Character* (Cambridge MA: Cambridge University Press, 1921).
27. McDougall, *The Group Mind*, 14.
28. South Sudan is dominated by the Dinka and Nuer tribes that practice various forms of Christianity infused with indigenous beliefs held over from the original British missionaries. Seventy percent of Sudanese nationally are Muslim; Patrick J. Christian, "Brokering Peace in Sudan," *Special Warfare Bulletin* 19, no. 2 (2005): 6–13, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/documents/christian.pdf>.
29. Francis Stewart, *Horizontal Inequalities and Conflict: Understanding Group Violence in Multiethnic Societies* (New York: Palgrave, 2008); Ted Robert Gurr, *Peoples Versus States* (Washington DC: USIP, 2000).
30. First used by Freud in *The Taboo of Virginity* (1917). Narcissus was the figure from Greek mythology whom the Goddess Nemesis condemned to fall in love with his own self-image of beauty and coined the term narcissistic or love of self to the exclusion of others; Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (London: Penguin, 2002). Additional explanations can be found in Vamik Volkan "Large-Group Identity: Border Psychology and Related Societal Processes," *Mind and Human Interaction* 13 (2003): 49–75.
31. Mahmood Mamdani, interview by Isma'il Kushkush and Islam Online, Khartoum, Sudan, February 25, 2009, <http://pulsemedia.org/2009/02/28/darfur-a-war-of-definitions>.
32. Idris, *Conflict and Politics of Identity in Sudan*, 1. See Heather J Sharkey, "Arab Identity and Ideology in Sudan: The Politics of Language, Ethnicity, and Race," *Oxford Journals, African Affairs* 107, no. 426 (2008): 21–43.
33. Howard F. Stein, "Adversary Symbiosis and Complementary Group Disassociation: An Analysis of the US//U.S.S.R. conflict," *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 6, no. (1982): 55–83. Vamik Volkan, "Transgenerational Transmissions and Chosen Traumas: An Aspect of Large-Group Identity," *Group Analysis* 34, no. 1 (2001): 79–97.
34. Thomas H. Eriksen, "Ethnic Identity, National Identity, and Intergroup Conflict," in *Social Identity, Intergroup Conflict, and Conflict Resolution*, eds. Richard D Ashmore, Lee Jussim, and David Wilder (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 42–68, 66.
35. Leon Festinger, *A theory of cognitive dissonance* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1957).

36. A caveat to this is that now, some Arab tribes in Darfur are beginning to join the movement against the Khartoum-based government. Parish describes this process in terms of growing awareness of their hierarchical placement in the larger society: "Every time social actors 'know' themselves and their society in terms of particular models of self and society, they must 'not know' themselves and their world in terms of other models (of and for reality) available to them." As some of the Arab tribes in Darfur observe their African counterparts fighting for change in the social hierarchical system of ordering, they realize the larger playing field that they are on the bottom of and join in the larger struggle; Steven M. Parish, *Hierarchy and Its Discontents: Culture and the Politics of Consciousness in Caste Society* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 86.

37. The Misiryyah tribes of southern Kordofan were accused of opposing the land division scheme of South Sudan government because they wanted to help North Sudan government retain the oil fields in Abyei, an area claimed by both the Dinka Njok and the Arab nomadic tribe of al-Misiryyah. The actual issue is not oil but grazing fields needed by the Dinka Njok for agrarian expansion and by the al-Misiryyah for nomadic herding. The issue takes on an identity conflict patina because the al-Misiryyah are traditional Bedouins for whom farming is an incompatible occupation for sustaining their cultural identity and maintaining and extending their historical narrative. The fact that their situational needs are being used instrumentally by the North Sudanese government will not prevent them from resorting to violence if necessary to maintain their way of life.

38. August 2004–February 2005, research, investigation and mediation locations: northern Darfur, including Tine, Karnoi, Furawiya, Umm Berro, el-Dur, Um Sayala, Mellit, Kutum, Bardie, Korma, Kabkabiya, Tawilla, Birkat, and al-Fashir; western Darfur locations included Kulbus, Bersiliba, Tandubaya, Gigira, el-Geneina, and Zalinjie; Jebel Mara locations included the villages of Mooney, Niertite, Thur, and Golo; southern Darfur locations included Nyala, Kalma, Isha, Ed-Daain, and Tulus; and Chad locations included the villages and refugee camps of Bahay, Bamina, Mille, Kounoung, Iriba, AmNamak, Guereda, and Farchana. My mode of travel for the eight months of work in Darfur consisted primarily of a Toyota Land Rover, with occasional MI-17 helicopter movements and twice by camel.

39. Mohammad A. Bamyeh, *The Social Origins of Islam*; Samiah E. Baroni, "Color Me Green: Saudi Arabian Identity and the Manifestations of Power," PhD dissertation, Florida Atlantic University Department of Conflict Analysis and Resolution, Boca Raton, Florida, ProQuest, May 2007.

40. Armstrong, *Muhammad*, 34.

41. Jahiliyyah, irascibility: an acute sensitivity to honor and prestige; arrogance, excess, and a chronic tendency to violence and retaliation. "Jahili people were too proud to make the surrender of Islam; why *should* a karim moderate his behavior and act like a slave (abd), praying with his nose on the ground and treating the base-born like equals?"(quoted from Armstrong *Muhammad*, 67).

42. Bamyeh, *The Social Origins of Islam*.

43. Armstrong, *Muhammad*, 12.

44. The Arab elites in power on the Arabian Peninsula used their tribal lineage as a rite of placement in the Islamic religious hierarchy to accord them rights of interpreting the Qur'an and especially the Hadith. For the Monarchists, their claims of lineage to the family of the Prophet gave them their theoretical base of legality for ruling their particular political state as God's representatives over their tribes and lands. These claims to be physical descendants of the Prophet provided them with a powerful weapon to maintain ruling authority over the Muslim *ummah*, not the least of which is the expected arrival



of a final savior of Islam: "It has been (accepted) by all the Muslims in every epoch, that at the end of time a man from the family (of the Prophet) will, without fail, make his appearance, one who will strengthen Islam and make justice triumph. Muslims will follow him, and he will gain domination over the Muslim realm. He will be called the Mahdi," *Muqaddima* by Ibn Khaldun, 14th century historian famous for his pioneering work in philosophy of history. Subsequent religious opinions emanating from the World Muslim League in Mecca have reaffirmed the belief in a Mahdi as central—even obligatory—to the Islamic faith. Entries in the Qur'an provide a detailed description of the expected Mahdi in terms of genetic provenance of lineage to the original Prophet Mohamed: (a) he will be an Arab, from the clan of Banû Hâshim started by the great-grandfather of Mohamed (Hashim), who was of the Quraysh Tribe, and of the Adnani Tribal Federation, (b) he will be from the descendants of the Prophet Mohamed through his daughter Fatima; and (c) he will be the descendant of Husayn, son of Fatima and Ali. Thus Arab lineage is of paramount importance in establishing reverence within the Islamic *ummah*, despite claims to universalist egalitarianism.

45. Geography in Islamic idealization consists of the Holy sites of Mecca (burial site of Ishmael, son of Abraham, who links Arabs to God by right of paternal lineage) and also, the Haj or Journey, began as the circumambulation of the Holy Rock of Mecca, which itself was related to the circumnavigation of the Arabian Peninsula on an annual basis by the pre-Islamic Muslim community. Geology in Islamic idealization refers to the desert and its life-giving oasis and well springs, such as the one at the Holy Rock in Mecca, reputedly placed there by God in order to save the life of Ishmael and his mother Hagar after Abraham's first wife Sarah forced them from the patriarch's camp.

46. During my fieldwork in Darfur, I was often partnered with an Egyptian officer of the same grade. Most, like Major Ala'a Eldin, were pious Muslims who neither drank nor smoked. These pious Egyptians immediately established an unspoken leadership ritual of establishing the place of prayer, leading the moment to cease work, and were accorded first preference to comment on religious questions or comments by both African and Arab Sudanese. There was, however, no second place. Sudanese Fur African Muslims did not accord their fellow Zaghawa African or Arab Muslims the same preferential role of religious authority, despite their assertions of ethnic clanship with the Egyptian team members. In fact, many a bitter argument broke out over such assertions, with the African Fur officers hotly disputing Arab Sudanese officers' claim to Arab heritage or right of lineage over African counterparts.

47. Mecca is the site of the Kabah, an ancient cube shaped building serving the Zamzam, a nearly miraculous spring in the middle of the Arabian Desert. Mecca was a place of significant importance to all Bedouin tribes in the Arabian Peninsula long before the Prophet Mohamed's Quraysh tribe took over the site and built a city around it, fusing commercialism and pagan religious practices. Central to Mecca's importance was the Haj, or annual pilgrimage, which placed it in the middle of a vast commercial and ritual cycle that slowly organized the Arabian tribes into a common society. With the advent and acceptance of Islam by the inhabitants of Mecca, the Qur'an's historical narrative of the Arab peoples was overlaid onto the site, and the Kabah became of a symbol of Arab's connection to Abraham and his son Ishmael and mother Hagar.

48. Izutsu, *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'an*.

49. Bamyeh, *The Social Origins of Islam*, 53.

50. *Ibid.*, 62.

51. As in Christianity, the practice of Islam changes to reflect local cultural expression, and real differences exist in Islamic practice in Indonesia, the Caucasus, and Africa that Arab Islamic purists work to change. One example is in the support offered to Chechen Rebel Leader Shamil Salmanovich Basayev by Saudi expatriate Ibn al-Khattab, the leader of al-Qaeda's Islamic International Brigade.

Reporter Wojciech Jagielski (2004) (Wojciech Jagielski, "Towers of Stone: The Battle of Wills in Chechnya," trans by Soren A. Gauger. (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2004).) described al-Khattab's negative reaction to the modified (corrupted) practice of Islam in Chechnya that resulted in his making al-Qaeda's military support to Basayev conditional on him allowing Arab jihadists to clarify religious doctrine and practice in rebel held areas. The subsequent drive to correct the Islamic practices made Basayev very unpopular with the Chechen people, as many cultural expressions were forced underground to make way for a purified form of Arab Islam.

52. The concept of psychogeology highlights the importance of the desert as context for the Bedouin archetype as a prototypical Arab. The concept of the psychogeology highlights the claim of African communities that claim inclusion in a greater Arab identity despite differences in geography, race, or even language.

53. For deeper explanations of psychogeography and by inference, psychogeology, Dr. Howard Stein, a professor of psychoanalytic historical cultural anthropology at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, writes extensively in this area of research: Howard Stein, "The Influence of Psychogeography upon the Conduct of International Relations," *Library of Social Science*, 2010, <http://www.psych-culture.com/> (accessed October 20, 2010). See also "The Scope of Psycho-Geography: The Psychoanalytic Study of Spatial Representation," *Journal of Psychoanalytic Anthropology* 7 (1984): 23–73; and "Historical Understanding as Sense of History: A Psychoanalytic Inquiry," *Psychoanalytic Review* 70 (1983): 595–619.

54. Prunier, *Darfur, The Ambiguous Genocide*.

55. Only by combining a number of psychological sociological theories can we explain some of the more complex interrelationships of tribal society; Herbert Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1969); Andrew H. Michener, John D. DeLamater, and Daniel J. Myers, *Social Psychology*, 5th ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2004); Joseph Berger, *Expectation States Theory: A Theoretical Research Program* (New York: Winthrop Publishers, 1974).

56. Jon Elster, *Sour Grapes: Studies in the Subversion of Rationality* (Cambridge: Cambridge, 1983).

57. James E. Marcia, "Development and Validation of Ego Identity Status," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 3 (1966): 551–558.

58. James E. Marcia, "Ego-Identity Status," in *Social Encounters*, ed. Michael Argyle (Chicago: Aldine, 1973), 340–353, 340.

59. Prunier, *Darfur, The Ambiguous Genocide*; Flint and De Waal, *Darfur, A Short History of a Long War*.

60. Such as music, use of tribal language, and women's placement in the social order.

61. While the Arabs certainly profess that Islam is universal and egalitarian, they see Arabism as having a sacred guardian role of Islam, rather like the heritage of the Swiss who have the distinctive right by history and law as guardians of the Holy Roman Catholic Vatican. As such, those Arabs of Darfur hold a higher hierarchical place within the Muslim *ummah*, second only to those Arabs whose skin is lighter and whose genetic descent from the Prophet is closest to the tribes of Adnan. The importance of this placement lies within the validity of the Muslim *hadith* (narrative origin), which provides the inerrant history of origin of the Prophet and his receipt of the message called the Qur'an. The *hadith* provides a physical linkage between Mohamed's revelations and Judeo-Christian monotheism by establishing a lineage of descent between Mohamed and the ancient Jewish leader-prophet Abraham. This link is through Abraham's other son, Ishmael, the older brother of the biblical Isaac. The *hadith* traces the split between Islam and the Judeo-Christian faiths to this ancient family drama, which saw Ishmael

and his mother Hagar pushed out of Abraham's tribe in favor of his first wife and second son, Sarah and Isaac.

62. Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970).

63. Islam is inextricable in its present form in the Middle East and North Africa from the Social Ordering of society. This translates into political power allocation as well as placement within the larger national identity of the Muslim *ummah*.

64. Minni Minawi assumed the leadership of the Fur dominated Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) after Abdalla Abakir's death. He is from the African Awlad (Clan) Digen of the Zaghawa Tribe, a clan that was shunned by mainstream Zaghawa, because "more than others, the clan had kept some pre-Islamic traditions, and were considered by many as not very good Muslims." Flint and De Waal, *Darfur, A Short History*, 138. The clan's attempt to balance their African and Islamic identities eventually cost them leadership roles within the larger tribal social ordering that generated a historic enmity by Minawi against the more Islamic parts of the Zaghawa tribe. An example is the murder of Malik Abdel Rahman Mohamedein, chief of the Dar Tuer in 2004.

65. Dr. Khalil Ibrahim formed the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) early in the conflict while in the Netherlands, studying for a master's degree in public health at Universiteit Maastricht. His move from political participation in the Khartoum was in response to the release of the infamous "Black Book" by a splinter group of the National Islamic Front that went on to become the People's Congress Party (PCP) led by the imprisoned Hassan al-Turabi, the ideological architect of Sudan's Islamicist State. A trained physician, Dr. Ibrahim is from the Koba branch of the Zaghawa tribe.

66. Bamyeh, *The Social Origins of Islam*, 3.

67. Personal observation from living in the South Libyan Desert, Northern Darfur.

68. Bamyeh, *The Social Origins of Islam*, 74.

69. *Ibid.*, 63.

70. Abdelrahman Munif's historical fiction (1988) works such as *Cities of Salt* provide a great picture of early *hadarah* tribes as they transitioned from *badawah* way of life to life of an agricultural commune or a trade and support tribes on key wadis, oasis, or trade cross routes. For any transition from *badawah* to *hadarah*, the presence of water was a prerequisite.

71. Bamyeh, *The Social Origins of Islam*, 62.

72. *Ibid.*

73. Qur'an, Sura 16 Verse 103

74. Catherine Miller, "Language, Identities and Ideologies: A New Era for Sudan?" in *7th International Sudan Studies Conference* (Bergen, Norway: Center for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, University of Bergen, 2006), 1–11 <http://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/docs/00/15/04/38/PDF/millerBergen.pdf>.

75. Christine M. Helms, "Arabism and Islam: Stateless Nation and Nationless States," *McNair Papers* 10 (July 1990): 1–50.

76. Prunier, *Darfur, The Ambiguous Genocide*.

77. Nadia N. Morărașu, *The Shaping of Narrative Identity* (București: Editură Acreditată Cncsis, 2007).

78. These are common messages that I absorbed from my eight months of ethnographic observations while stationed in Darfur. For a deeper review, see Francis M. Deng, *War of Visions: Conflict of Identities in the Sudan* (New York: The Brookings Institution, 1995) and Bion Kuol Deng, "Sudan's Identity and the Notion of Broken Promises,"

October 11, 2011, <http://www.gurtong.net/ECM/Editorial/tabid/124/ctl/ArticleView/mid/519/articleId/2511/Sudans-Identity-And-The-Notion-of-Broken-Promises.aspx>.

79. (Optimal distinction): Marilyn B. Brewer, "Ingroup Identification and Intergroup Conflict," in *Social Identity, Intergroup Conflict, and Conflict Reduction*, eds. Richard D. Ashmore, Lee Jussim, and David Wilder (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 17–41, 22. (Movements of assimilation and differentiation): Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Contact* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 70.

80. Howard Stein, *The Dream of Culture* (New York: Psych Press, 1994), 130.

81. Erik H. Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1980), 102–103.

82. *Ibid.*, 18.

83. Volkan, *Large-group Identity*.

84. Stein, *The Dream of Culture*, 130.

85. Christian, "Brokering Peace in Sudan."

86. Prunier, *Darfur*, 12.

87. *Abd* or *zurka*, slave or dirty black person, used by the Janjaweed and Popular Defense Forces to refer to African-Muslim tribes.

88. *Ummah* or *kufur*, members of the believers in Islam or polytheistic pagans due to the African tribal rituals included in their daily life and practice of Islam.

89. Prunier, *Darfur*, 14.

90. *Ibid.*, 41.

91. The term "sour grapes" is taken from the story *The Fox and the Grapes*, one of Aesop's (ca. 620–564 BCE) fables. When the fox fails to reach the grapes, he decides he does not want them after all, an example of adaptive preference formation, designed to reduce cognitive dissonance.

92. Brewer for optimal distinction, Horowitz for assimilation and differentiation, previously cited. Ervin Staub, "Individual and Group Identities in Genocide and Mass Killing," in *Social Identity, Intergroup Conflict, and Conflict Reduction*, eds. Richard D. Ashmore, Lee Jussim, and David Wilder (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 15–184.

93. Eriksen, "Ethnic Identity, National Identity, and Intergroup Conflict," 65.

94. Stein, *The Dream of Culture*, 126.

95. Southern Arab tribal affiliation that the original Arab migrants and invaders of northern Sudan would most likely have been part of, albeit through diffusion by way of Egypt. On the Arabian Peninsula, Muslim authorities are in firm agreement that the northern Arabs called Adnan are the clear descendants of the Prophet, followed by the southern Qahtan. *Shaab* is a generic term for Arabic without inference to any placement in Arab social ordering and is a larger Arab societal grouping of the Qahtan or Adnan tribes.

96. Stein, "Adversary Symbiosis and Complementary Group Disassociation."

97. Claudine Attias-Donfur and Francois-Charles Wolff, *Generational Memory and Family Relationships* (Paris: CNAV, 2003).

98. Parish, *Hierarchy and Its Discontents*, 143.

99. Christian, "Brokering Peace in Sudan."

100. McDougall, *The Group Mind*.

101. J. Douglas Bremner and Charles R. Marmar, *Trauma, Memory and Dissociation* (Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Press, 1998), 116.

102. Lindholm, *Culture and Identity*, 219.

103. One example of this psychological breakdown at the individual level is the Arab militia leader Ali Mohamed Ali Abdel Rahman. Ali Kushayb, as he was known, commanded the Wadi Saleh militia forces and was indicted by the International Criminal Court for mass murder, rapes and torture in 2003–2004. Ali Kushayb was an African, not an Arab. He grew up in the African Borgo tribe “with Borgo scarification, but portrayed himself as an Arab”; Flint and De Waal *Darfur, A Short History*, 131. According to members of his tribe, Ali Kushayb possessed a deep hatred for all non-Arab peoples after experiencing trauma and loss during the wars in Darfur.

104. fMRI is a functional magnetic resonance imaging brain scanner used to measure the hemodynamic response (change in blood flow) related to neural activity in the brain or spinal cord of humans or other animals. It is one of the most recently developed forms of neuroimaging.

105. Affective neuroscientist Richard Davidson is the founder of the E. M. Keck Laboratory for Functioning Brain Imaging and Behavior at the University of Wisconsin. Davidson, cross-cultural psychologist Jeanne Tsai (Stanford), psychologist Paul Eckman (UCSF), biologist Matthieu Ricard (who is also a Tibetan Monk), neuroscientist Francisco Varela (Centre National de Recherche Scientifique), psychologist Daniel Golman and psychologist Mark Greenberg (University of Pennsylvania) collaborated with the Dalai Lama to investigate how the human brain processes and reacts to destructive emotions. The result is a growing body of study on the physical effects of violent physical and psychological conflict on the neurological structure of the human brain. From this research, conclusions can be drawn regarding the relative abilities of social leaders in violent conflict to be able to approach conflict resolution cogently without interfering destructive emotions. The cross-cultural psychological aspect of the research provides insight into the problematic separation of social leaders from the ongoing violence, as doing so separates the sociocentric leader from the society that empowers him, a break that can create issues of separation loss and abandonment leading to mistrust.

106. Anne Speckhard and Khapta Akhmedova, “Black Widows: The Chechen Female Suicide Terrorists,” in *Female Suicide Terrorists*, ed. Yoram Schweitzer (Tel Aviv: Jaffe Center Publication, 2006), 63–80, 5.

107. Anne Speckhard and Khapta Akhmedova, “Talking to Terrorists,” *Journal of Psychohistory* (2005): 33, 2.

108. The human needs theoretical model was developed by John Burton, Marshall Rosenberg, and Manfred Max-Neef (among others) and was based on the Human Development Scale. Researchers Carroll, Rosati, and Coate (1988) remind us that human needs cannot be traded, suppressed, or bargained for. In Manfred A. Max-Neef, Antonio Elizalde, and Martin Hopenhayn, “Development and Human Needs,” in *Human scale development: Conception, Application and Further Reflections*, eds. Manfred A. Max-Neef (New York: Apex, 1991), 18.

109. Herbert C. Kelman, “The Role of National Identity in Conflict Resolution,” in *Social Identity, Intergroup Conflict and Conflict Reduction*, eds. Richard D. Ashmore, Lee Jussim, and David Wilder (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 187–212. Arnold M. Beisser, “The Paradoxical Theory of Change,” in *Gestalt Therapy Now, Theory, Techniques, Applications*, eds. J. Fagan and I. L. Shepperd (Gouldsboro, ME: Gestalt Journal Press, 2006), 77–80.

110. Patrick J. Christian, *Combat Advisor’s Guide to Tribal Engagement* (Boca Raton, FL: Brown Walker Press, 2011).

111. Here we are talking mostly about amputations, stoning, and the like by Arab Bedouin society.

112. Armstrong, *Muhammad*.

113. Riesman, *The Person and the Life Cycle in African Social Life and Thought*.

114. Lindholm, *Culture and Identity*, 187.

115. Clifford Geertz, "From the Native's Point of View: On the Nature of Anthropological Understanding," in *American Scientist* 63 (1975): 47–53, 48.