Building Social Capital in South Sudan: How local churches worked to unite a nation in the lead up to the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement

By Timothy Brown
for Professor Rita Abrahamsen

August 12, 2011

Table of Contents

Introduction

Sudan, Africa's largest state, has recently split in two. On July 9, 2011 the southern third of the country, representing about 20 per cent of the population, became the world's newest country.

The divorce was preceded by nearly four decades of civil war between the north, which largely identifies as Arab and Muslim, and the south, which largely identifies as Black African and Christian/animist. About two million South Sudanese died as a result of the conflict, and another four million were displaced. Today a sense of inevitability pervades news coverage and commentary on the nation's politics. TIME magazine reported shortly before the official separation that "it is not surprising that the southerners – who have suffered through the two civil wars...are pulling the plug on Africa's largest nation" (Boswell 2011).

Yet it was profoundly surprising. For in order to pull the plug, South Sudan[1] first had to end a seemingly intractable conflict within.

In the early 1990s, South Sudan, riven along ethnic lines and suffering the impact of hellish attacks from the north, was itself a society deeply divided. Internecine fighting plagued southern communities. Traditional conflict resolution mechanisms were broken (Wilson 2011). In some areas the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) – the de facto southern authority – was hated more viscerally than Arab troops (Brown 2008, 207). Improbably, less than a decade later, southern elites would unite to strike a peace accord with Khartoum, paving the road for secession. Though many factors combined to make this treaty possible, one critical component was a greater degree of unity between the peoples of South Sudan.

This thesis will examine the role local churches played in building cohesion in advance of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. I attempt to capture this "pulling together" or increased

[1] In February South Sudanese leaders decided to christen Africa's newest state "The Republic of South Sudan" in anticipation of the July 2011 secession. For the sake of consistency this paper refers to the nation of *South Sudan* throughout.

solidarity through the concept of social capital: a sociological concept which attempts to shed light on the connections within and between social networks.

Two questions have guided this research. First, to what degree has the Church[2] contributed the bonding, bridging, and linking social capital necessary to stabilize South Sudan? In other words, how important were churches – acting intentionally or otherwise – in creating connections within and across social divides? My second research question concerns the inner-workings of this machine. What mechanisms at work in church life helped generate this social capital?

I focus on the Church because it was without question the most important actor in South Sudanese civil society, providing a rare theatre in which community members were drawn together rather than apart. In many parts of South Sudan, church influence was felt more powerfully than any other governing source. "During the war the church was the only infrastructure," explains John Ashworth. "There was no government, no UN, no aid agencies. The Church was there at every level, providing many of the services that the government would normally provide – health and education, for example – but wasn't" (Ashworth, 2011b). To sum up, no other organization rivalled the church in terms of membership and devotion.

This paper is rooted in secondary sources, both popular and academic. It is also based on 10 semi-structured interviews conducted in late 2010/early 2011 with experts on South Sudan's political and religious landscape. The study begins by outlining the concept of social capital according to prominent theorists. I proceed by applying the concept to Sudan, particularly in the south in the wake of the country's second civil war. I then analyse the interplay between church life and social capital reserves.

[2] I refer to 'Church' as the entire body of Christian congregations within South Sudan. While important theological differences divide the faithful, churches in Sudan are highly cooperative. The relatively powerful New Sudan Council of Churches (comprised of Catholics, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Pentecostals, the African Inland Church, the Sudan Interior Church, and the Sudan Church of Christ) represents the collective interests of the largest denominations. And while the churches do not always maintain a united front, retaining doctrinal distinctions and sometimes engaging in direct denominational competition, they have collaborated greatly in social and political spheres (Brown 2008, 3).

Churches are shown to have offset the decline of social capital by strengthening group identity, reconciling inter-tribal hostilities, and by linking up with religious and political establishments abroad. The study also shows how churches self-consciously leveraged social capital to become a powerful political force in the emergent nation. I conclude by reflecting on the Church's future as a civil society actor in Africa's newest state.

Literature Review and Theory

Social capital theory

By definition, social capital is an essential component of social cooperation, problem solving, and democracy.[3] I will argue that social capital theory, which is a relatively new concept in social science research, offers a helpful framework through which to interpret the impact of Sudanese churches on society. This section begins by outlining this model. I will then engage with current debate on social capital vis-à-vis conflict and will offer evidence that suggests a decline of social capital in South Sudan over the course of the country's second civil war.

Robert Putnam defines social capital in terms of human relationships:

> Whereas physical capital refers to physical objects and human capital refers to the properties of individuals, social capital refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them (Putnam 2000b, 19).

Similarly, Francis Fukuyama defines the concept as informal norms that facilitate cooperation between individuals and groups (Fukuyama 2001). Units of analysis include the institutions, relationships and customs that together determine the quantity and quality of social connections (World Bank 2011). Social capital assumes that relationships are important and that trust – regarded by social scientists as an important gauge of social capital – is a primary determinant of the prosperity, competitiveness, and politics of a given society.

[3] The relationship between social capital and democracy is beyond the scope of this study, and has been examined elsewhere. For an Africa-focused discussion, see Gifford 1998.

Putnam delineates three ways in which social capital benefits society (Putnam 2000b, 288-289). First, it allows people to work together to solve collective problems. This point is echoed by John Field (2003, 1-2) who writes that "by making connections with one another, and keeping them going over time, people are able to work together to achieve things that they either could not achieve by themselves, or could only achieve with great difficulty." A case in point is the provision and enrichment of public goods such as security, food, health, and education, which often require cooperation to produce in adequate amounts.[4] Some scholars identify this emphasis as a *micro* approach to social capital, similar to game theory, since it looks at the likelihood that individuals or groups will collaborate to further their objectives (Ahn & Ostrom 2002).

Second, social capital serves as a sort of lubricant for quotidian social interactions. When people trust each other there is less need for complex contracts, expensive litigation, and other inefficient systems which increase the cost of everyday business. A focus on the conditions which 'grease' social relationships is identified as a *macro* approach to social capital since it emphasizes the norms and values conveyed by a society's social, environmental, and political structures (Franke 2005). I will employ both micro and macro approaches to social capital in order to provide a fuller picture of the Church's impact – a portrait that includes the fine detail of particular interactions, but also broad brush shifts in culture and norms.

A third way to study social capital looks at the networks which underpin reciprocal relationships and how these can be vectors of helpful knowledge. This is considered the *structural* approach since it is social networks, rules, procedures and other structures which comprise the groundwork for information sharing (Grootaert & Bastelaer 2001, 5). As will prove evident in the case of South Sudan, local churches proved a rich source of structural capital for local members, reconciliation advocates, and SPLA leaders, as well as for international governments, IOs, and NGOs.

[4] Berkeley economist Miguel Heft (2004) provides evidence that greater inter-ethnic cooperation among Tanzanians (as compared to Kenyans) helps explain Tanzania's ability to supply substantially better public goods.

Identified above are three mainstream perspectives on social capital. But scholars also identify different forms of social capital in accordance to robustness or strength. *Bonding social capital* – dubbed "sociological superglue" by Putnam – conveys the ties between family, close friends, and neighbours. This is the strongest form of social capital, and is especially important when the state proves unable to provide basic services. When this is the case, family and kinship relations can provide a cushion against hardship (Fukuyama 2002). Clifford Geertz (1973, 259) proposed that people with a shared ethnic identity are likely to act in accordance with their supposed cultural constitution since shared conceptions of family, language, and history form a compelling basis of self-understanding.

Woven through many studies of social capital is the idea that while bonding capital is desirable and necessary, it is not sufficient for the smooth functioning of society. For when a tight-knit community is created, some elements of society will always be excluded. Thus, it is not enough that members of certain factions get along with one another; in order to enjoy peace and prosperity in a heterogeneous society, members must also reach across groupings to bridge social divides.

This ability to "bridge" has been aptly described by theorists as *bridging social capital*. Weaker than bonding capital, Putnam describes bridging capital as "sociological WD-40": a wider scope of connections between more dispersed individuals or people groups. While it is theorized that bonding is more likely to occur between people of the same religion, ethnicity, or geographic distribution (Woolcock 2001, 72), bridging capital links an expansive variety of individuals which can lead to broader political and economic development (Panth 2010). For the purposes of this paper, bridging capital is measured in terms of trust, reciprocity, and shared norms (Onyx & Bullen 2000).

Linking social capital registers the weakest form of capital on the sociological spectrum. It describes the links that develop between dissimilar people in disparate situations, such as those who live in entirely foreign communities (Woolcock 2001, 13-14). Linking to outside individuals or groups can allow a society to leverage a diverse range of resources that are otherwise unavailable.

Social capital, regardless of its form, is often conceptualized in positive or desirable terms. But scholars such as Patricia Landolt and Alejandro Portes have noted that strong norms of reciprocity and trust do not automatically lead to attractive outcomes. A society that exhibits a high degree of cohesion can be powerfully mobilized to produce social goods; but as criminal networks such as al-Qaeda, the Sicilian mafia, and Rwanda's Interahamwe clearly demonstrate, tight-knit groups can just as successfully pursue and produce social 'bads.' Landolt and Portes argue that the very ties that benefit in-group members enable them to exclude those on the outside (1996). Fukuyama agrees:

> Group solidarity in human communities is often purchased as the price of hostility towards out-group members. There appears to be a natural human proclivity for dividing the world into friends and enemies that is the basis of all politics. (Fukuyama 2001, 8)

Nowhere is this proclivity more pronounced than in questions of religion, which, with its ancient roots, powerful symbolism, and often rigid doctrine, frequently sets the frontier of who is 'in' and who is 'out.'

While it is obvious that social capital (or any form of capital for that matter) can be abused, it is not clear whether or not a strongly cohesive society is more or less likely to fall into conflict. Does strong social capital among the Hutu in Rwanda help explain the 1994 genocide that killed nearly a million people? On the surface, it seems reasonable that strong intra-ethnic bonding could, as Landolt and Portes argue, demonstrate a "downside" to social capital.[5] Yet many scholars reject the presumed causal relationship between ethnicity and conflict. Ethnicity may in some circumstances create "in" groups" and "out" groups, but it is an unreliable predictor of conflict (Hintjens 1999, 248; Rosemary & Bellamy 2010, 459).

[5]Most Africanist scholars reject purely ethnic accounts of conflict as conceptually flawed. Ethnic relationships, by themselves, do not explain violence since tribal identities are subject to change and renegotiation, and are frequently manipulated by politicians to serve their own interests. War in Sudan, for example, has just as frequently been intra-tribal as it has been inter-tribal (Schomerus & Allen 2010, 6). On Rwanda, see (Hintjens, 1999).

Also relevant to Sudan is the debate on whether social capital is diminished during times of civil war. Conventional wisdom posits that norms of trust and reciprocity are indeed a casualty of intra-national conflict:

> Unlike inter-state conflict that often mobilizes national unity and strengthens societal cohesiveness, violent conflict within a state weakens its social fabric. It divides the population by undermining interpersonal and communal group trust, destroying the norms and values that underlie cooperation and collective action for the common good, and increasing the likelihood of communal strife. This damage to a nation's social capital...impedes communal and state ability to recover after hostilities cease (Colletta & Cullen 2000, 1).

But this is not always the case. As Coletta and Cullen recognize, the relationship between conflict and social capital is complex. Civil war often causes a simultaneous depletion and creation of social capital; while some norms of reciprocity are destroyed, new dependencies and social relations will emerge (Keen 2000; Colletta & Cullen 2000, 15). At times the creation or depletion of social capital seems to depend on the intensity of the fighting, with front-line areas suffering net losses, and more stable areas experiencing net gains (Goodhand, Hulme, & Lewer 2000). To demonstrate the unpredictable – yet overall negative – impact of war on social capital reserves in South Sudan, a brief account of the country's second civil war is in order.

Social Capital and South Sudan

Commonly dated to President Gaafar Nimeiri's institution of Sharia (Islamic) law across the whole of the country, Sudan was immersed in second of two civil wars in 1983. The conflict pitted the Khartoum-based government of Sudan (GOS) against the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), a rebel movement that demanded greater autonomy for Sudan's three southern provinces. The Government's counter-insurgency campaign, which grew in intensity through the early 1990s, was waged primarily by Arab militias. In 1991, however, the Government was able to capitalise on an ideological split within the SPLA, and began waging a proxy war by supplying arms to a splinter group which labelled itself SPLA-Nasir (Deng 2010, 235). Between 1989 and 2005 South Sudan could accurately be described as a warzone within a warzone as southern commanders supposedly focused on Khartoum frequently turned their Kalashnikovs inwards in an effort to assert military and political ascendancy.

Whereas SPLA-Nasir was predominantly comprised of Nuer[6] fighters, the group successfully recruited prominent Dinka commander Kerubino Kuanyin Bol and his Dinka militia. These soldiers meted out ruthless attacks against Dinka communities purportedly aligned with the SPLA. The internecine assaults, which helped produce the 1998 famine in which 60,000 civilians perished, had a devastating impact on social capital within these communities (Collins 2008, 250). Luka Biong Deng (2010, 239) concludes that in the town of Gogrial, for example, 94 percent of households experienced a decline in kinship support. Conversely, Dinka communities in the same region that suffered at the hands of Arab fighters saw reserves of bonding capital increased. According to Deng (245), the threat of an alien force tended to pull people together, while the assault of fellow tribesmen caused social relations to disintegrate.

In addition to intra-tribal conflict, the SPLA schism also precipitated a significant intensification of intertribal raids between Nuer and Dinka:

> This new form of warfare transgressed all the ethical limits on violence that had been honoured by previous generations...swiftly transforming earlier patterns of intermittent cattle-raiding into no-holds-barred military assaults on Dinka and Nuer civilian populations armed with little more than spears. Whereas before this war and, indeed, up until the SPLA split in 1991, Dinka and Nuer fighters would not intentionally kill women, children, or the elderly, these vulnerable segments of the population became the primary victims (Hutchinson & Jok 1999, 131).

It is not a difficult to imagine how this fighting would reduce trust and curb reciprocal relationships between peoples. Sharon Hutchinson and Jok Madut Jok recount the 1997 expedition of several Dinka chiefs into Nuer territory during a time of drought. Whereas in the past, generations of Dinka and Nuer had called on each other's prophets[7] in times of suffering, this visit ended prematurely after the prophet they hoped to consult reported their presence to local authorities. Four of the Dinka chiefs were killed and the rest were arrested. One man said upon returning five months later: "we started to feel that all possible ways to resume being good

[6]The Nuer comprise Sudan's second-largest tribal group.

[7] According to Nuer and Dinka traditional religions, prophets are men with a direct relationship with the spirit world and are frequently consulted in times of crisis—for example in matters of famine, sickness, war and peace. See Johnson 1994.

neighbours were being frustrated by the Nuer" (Hutchinson & Jok 1999, 140). Reserves of bridging capital – the wider scope of connections between more dispersed individuals or people groups – were evidently in decline.

Sponsored by Khartoum, this violence opened fresh wounds between peoples, and caused existing sore spots to fester. While feuds had flared between the two peoples in the past, previous conflicts usually lasted just a few days. The Dinka-Nuer war, however, would rage throughout the 1990s, leaving in its wake hundreds of destroyed South Sudanese villages (Hutchinson 2000).

The 1990s also saw the rise of tensions between the SPLA and Equatorian[8] populations when battles between government troops and southern fighters plunged deeper into the southern heartland. Compared to the Dinka, or even the Nuer, Equatorian tribes were ill-represented within the SPLA leadership, and when army troops moved onto Equatorian soil they tended to treat it as conquered territory. Many Equatorians were forcefully recruited into the army and had farm animals and grain arbitrarily confiscated. Civilians who refused to follow SPLA orders were frequently executed, and entire villages were looted and torched (Human Rights Watch 1994, 142-145; Branch & Mampilly 2005, 5).

The above examples of inter- and intra- ethnic fighting are by no means exhaustive, but begin to show how social capital in South Sudan fell prey to attack in the years preceding the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. The picture is made clearer still by studying the decline of cattle wealth throughout the war. Cattle, according to Dinka society, are not only part of life; they define life. The most important component of the Dinka economy, cattle are central to maintaining social ties, religious rights, and the political establishment (Deng 2010, 237). According to Luka Biong Deng, cattle, then, can be viewed as a reliable barometer of the levels of social capital within Dinka society.[9]

[8] Equatoria is one of three historical regions in South Sudan. The two others are Bahr el Ghazal and Greater Upper Nile.
[9] The same can be said of the Nuer (Evans-Pritchard 1940, 16).

Aware of the critical importance of cattle to Dinka culture, the Khartoum government as well as Nuer proxies systematically worked to undercut this essential resource (Deng 2010, 238). They were so successful that in the two towns Deng surveyed, the average number of cattle owned between 1988 and 1998 fell by nearly 60 percent in Abyei, and roughly 90 percent in Gogrial. These declines had a crippling impact on kinship support. Based on these statistics alone Deng speculates that "general levels of social capital declined during the civil war, particularly among the communities exposed to endogenous counter-insurgency warfare" (239).

Deng concludes his case study with a call for further research. He writes that understanding structural social capital, such as trust in civil society, will bring additional clarity to the fate of social capital in times of civil conflict (Deng 2010, 249). While this paper does not focus exclusively on structural capital, it does investigate the relationship between one part of civil society[10] and social capital between 1989 and 2005: a period which encompasses some of the fiercest fighting in Sudan's second civil war. It is also a time during which the South Sudanese Church represented the principal, if not exclusive, form of civil society (Wilson 2011; Purekal 2011; Ashworth, 2011b).

Religion and Social Capital in South Sudan

This section sets out to analyse the interplay between church life and social capital reserves in Sudan. The justification for this focus is partly because, as Deng maintains, the relationship between civil society and social capital in Sudan remains largely unexplored.[11] Studying the Church also makes intuitive sense, as many scholars have suggested that in Sudan, as in many parts of Africa, Christianity is an important source of the cultural norms which produce social

[10] This paper employs the standard political theory definition of civil society as the political space between the household and the state. It is "a web of human relationships made up of individual people, their networks, organizations, and institutions around which social and community life is built" (Lederach 2001, 842). Not every non-state institution is considered civil society, however. Following Gellner, I consider as civil society only those institutions which are "strong enough to counterbalance the state and, while not preventing the state from fulfilling its role as keeper of the peace and arbitrator between major interests, can nevertheless prevent it from dominating and atomising the rest of society" (Gellner 1994, 5).

[11] Paul Gifford notes in *African Christianity: It's Public Role* that "religious groups are widely admitted to be the strongest form of associational life in contemporary Africa" and "it may be that Christianity is assuming an increasing significance in the creation of a modern, pluralistic African society" (Gifford 1998, 19-20). Gifford's case studies are limited, however, to Ghana, Uganda, Zambia, and Cameroon.

capital (Werner, Anderson, & Wheeler 2000; Bediako 2000; Sanneh & Carpenter 2005). Moreover, as has been demonstrated in Africa and elsewhere, religious networks and institutions tend to produce some of the most durable forms of social capital (Fukuyama 1999, 14; Goodhand, Hulme, & Lewer 2000, 401; Foley, Mcarthy, & Chaves 2001, 215).

Writing on the United States, but in broadly applicable terms, Putnam argues that:

> Houses of worship build and sustain more social capital – and social capital of more varied forms – than any other type of institution...Faith gives meaning to community service and good will, forging a spiritual connection between individual impulses and great public issues. That is, religion helps people to internalize an orientation to the public good (Putnam 2000a, 63).

His statement holds equally true in South Sudan, where to a much greater degree than modern America, the Church has been a pillar of community life – the locus of worship and rites of passage, baptism, marriage ceremonies and funerals (Lovink 2010, 98).[12]

Christian churches did not, of course, operate a religious monopoly in South Sudan. A small minority of southerners were followers of Islam,[13] and traditional religions maintained a wide base and strong influence among all ethnic groups – whether practiced alone or in a syncretistic blend with Christianity (Morton 2001, 6). Yet these traditional religious groups did not manifest strongly in the political sphere, nor did they organize themselves in such a way as to challenge the power of Khartoum or the SPLA/M. Recognizing the organizational strength represented by the Christian Church, some traditional spiritual leaders have encouraged their own followers to adopt a Christian faith. According to Sharon Hutchinson, this constitutes an implicit recognition that Church membership "provides a more sturdy [sic] bulwark against northern attitudes of religious and racial superiority" (Hutchinson 2005, 49).

[12] The World Council of Churches estimates that 60 percent of South Sudan's 10 million people follow the Christian faith, with roughly 33 percent following traditional religions (World Council of Churches, 2011). See *supra note* 16 for measurement.

[13] Few Muslims in South Sudan have in recent years wielded any social or political influence, however (Jaafar 2010).

The rise of the Church in South Sudan is striking, particularly when compared to the relative dearth of other community organizations. Long-time aid worker and activist John Ashworth, who advises an umbrella advocacy group of Sudanese churches, writes:

> During the decades of war there was no infrastructure in the South except the church. There was no government, there were no NGOs, no UN, no civil society, and even the traditional leadership of chiefs and elders had been eroded by the coming of the young men with the guns. The church is the only institution which remained here with its infrastructure intact. It remained on the ground with the people (Ashworth, 2011a).

This, of course, has not always been the case. While a history of Sudanese Christianity is beyond the scope of this study, it is important to note that the Church is a relative newcomer to South Sudan.[14] Ironically, the South Sudanese Church would remain numerically insignificant until the early 1960s when the northern government, suspicious of missionary motives, expelled them from the country (Lesch 1998, 39).

The growth of Christianity in Sudan has in many ways mirrored the growth of Christianity across Africa. According to the World Christian Encyclopaedia, whereas Christians numbered approximately 60 million in 1962, by the turn of the century this number had multiplied by six, reaching 423 million (Barrett, Kurian & Johnson 2001, 3-12). In Sudan the numbers of Christians swelled particularly high during throughout 1980s and 1990s. Douglas Johnson attributes this rapid Church expansion to the de-linking of church and state. He suggests that southerners began to convert to Christianity only when churches began to be seen as victims, with the southern populace, of the discriminatory policies imposed by Khartoum (Johnson 2002, 35). Francis Deng, in tandem with many other scholars, interprets church growth in Sudan as a cultivated act of resistance. Ironically, he writes that "the religious persecution of non-Muslims has the effect of promoting Christianity; Southerners now see Christianity as the most effective means of counteracting the imposition of Islam" (Deng 2001, 13).

[14] Though the Nubian kingdoms of North Sudan were converted to Christianity in the 6th and 7th centuries AD, Christian missionaries did not penetrate southern Sudan until the mid-19th century (Hart 2002).

Some explanations for church growth focus less on the politics of Christianity and Islam, and instead shine a light on the Christian message itself. Hutchinson observes that, while church growth through the 1990s received a cooler reception among older men,

> Civilian youth and women of all ages were especially attracted to Christianity's promise of a more direct relationship with God, unmediated by the rigid age and gender hierarchies characterizing indigenous sacrificial practices…Christianity encouraged hope in the protective powers of a compassionate and accessible God (Hutchinson 2005, 40).

This attraction to Christian spirituality was often coupled with disenchantment with the 'old Gods' who had proved either unable or unwilling to protect Nuer cattle and villages from destruction (Hutchinson 1996; Hutchinson 2005; Freston 2001).[15]

Whatever the engines spurring church growth, the trend had a deep impact on Sudanese society. Since President Bashir's 1989 imposition of Sharia law, the percentage of South Sudanese Christians rose from between 10 to 20 percent to approximately 60 to 80 percent of the population by the 21st century (Mans & Ali 2006, 7; Brown 2008, 24; Redekop 2007, 81).[16] The pace of Christian conversion was so aggressive that it has "stimulated considerable concern and debate between expatriate and local church officials over whether it is motivated by a sincere commitment to Christ's message or *by sheer panic*" (Hutchinson 2005, 41, emphasis added)— a fact that seems to support Deng's view of church growth as resistance towards Islam.

Curiously, however, very little has been written about the Church in the years preceding the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Those who have studied the Church tend to limit their scrutiny to the 'people-to-people' peace movement initiated by Church leaders. In his seminal history of the civil war, for example, Johnson devotes just one paragraph to Church participation

[15] Marc Nikkel's observations of the Dinka in the early 1990s parallel those of Hutchinson and Freston: "some Dinka Christians explain that a factor which now draws traditional people to Christianity is the perceived inadequacy of the traditional *jak* [spirit] in the face of the present conflict...petition can only be made to the highest spiritual authority...the immediate and personal God of Christian faith combined with the sacrificial imagery surrounding the person of Christ, are found by increasing numbers to be adequate to this role" (Nikkel 1992, 84).
[16] With little census data available for South Sudan, these numbers are based on membership estimates by South Sudan's mainline denominations including Catholic, Episcopalian, and Presbyterian churches, as well as smaller assemblies such as Pentecostal churches, the Africa Inland Church, and the Sudan Church of Christ.

in the 1999 Wunlit Peace conference (Johnson 2002, 125). Michael Ouko, a program officer with DanChurch Aid, says many researchers have forgotten the Church's impact because after the peace process, churches withdrew from the spotlight (2010). This is no doubt true to some extent, but it is possible that the reason has less to do with the Church, and more to do with the secular lens through which scholars tend to view religious civil society. Churches are considered part of the private sphere; an artificial delineation separates them, in theory, from political society[17]: "if not portrayed as a benign irrelevance religion is depicted as a malign force" (Brewer, Higgins, & Teeney 2010, 2010).

According to Edward Luttwak, scholars who are quick to interpret the importance of ethnic cleavages, economics, and politics, but are less inclined to dissect the role of religious institutions because of a learned "repugnance" to engage intellectually with religious forces which are not fundamentalist or radical in nature. He writes that "the role of religious leaders, religious institutions, and religiously motivated lay figures in conflict resolution has also been disregarded— or treated as a marginal phenomenon hardly worth noting" (Luttwak 1994, 9-10). Jonathan Fox and Schmuel Sandler share a similar concern. When religion is addressed, they write, "it is usually through viewing it as a subcategory of some topic that is considered more important such as institutions, terrorism, society, or civilizations" (Fox & Sandler 2004, 9). According to Fabio Petito and Pavlos Hatzopolous, international relations theory is especially closed to religious study (Hatzopoulos & Petito 2003, 1). Against the backdrop of a global resurgence of religion and its demonstrated impact on international politics, they write, "IR theory has oddly remained silent" (Hatzopoulos & Petito 2003, 3).[18]

Some scholars are not dismissive of religious movements in particular, but are sceptical that much of any civil society, as conceptualised by Gellner, even exists in the African context. Peter Ekeh writes that

> Civil society in Africa is largely indifferent to the affairs of the civic public realm

[17] Ronald Kassimir writes that the social power of religious institutions is often "assumed, ignored or treated as exogenous to its role in making civil society effective" (Kassimir 2003, 149).
[18] For an authoritative account of the rise of Christianity, see Jenkins' *The Next Christendom: The Rise of Global Christianity*, OUP, 2002.

> over which the state presides. Civil society is content to look after the affairs of other segments of the public realm out of the reach of the state or those about which the state shows little concern (Ekeh 1992, 196).

According to Ekeh, the majority of civil organizations in Africa are of a "primordial" nature and are exclusively focused on their own well-being, rather than a "generalized conception of the human person and individual liberty that transcends ethnic boundaries" (Ekeh 1992, 208). Bruce Berman agrees, stating that too often the ethnic factions and patron-client relationships common to African society generally are reproduced in so-called civil society, "rendering them into ideological and institutional facades" (Berman 1998, 341).

Whether the South Sudanese Church has been ignored by accident, institutional memory loss, a blind spot in academia or due to a particular conception of African civil society, the fact remains that its relationship to social capital is deserving of further research. Those who *have* studied the Church have tended to focus on its efforts to mediate between ethnic and political competitors. William Lowrey (1996) and Hadley Jenner (2000), both of whom have worked as Church-affiliated development workers in Sudan, conclude that the Church was instrumental to the people-to-people peace process. In the same vein, Vern Redekop and Jonathan Morton employ conflict resolution theory to explain the Church's success as peacemaker (Redekop 2007; Morton 2001). These studies do highlight important instances in which the Church contributed to peace and reconciliation initiatives. Yet their scope is limited. It is not clear, for example, whether the Church was generally adept at fostering social capital, or if the peace process was an isolated occurrence.

Offering a more comprehensive analysis, Elijah Brown's PhD thesis studies the role of the Church in bringing stability to South Sudan and in ending the war. Brown tackles his research through social identity and conflict resolution theory. He shows that churches worked to bridge ethnic and political divides, and successfully initiated domestic and international campaigns for peace. Even so, Brown's conceptual model falls short in at least one important regard: it does not help explain how participation in church life in itself engendered increasing levels of social trust which would prove critical to the success of its later initiatives. Examining church significance through social capital theory helps bring clarity to this missing dimension. It also brings into

sharp relief the Church's provision of bridging, bonding, and linking capital— scarce resources which have significantly impacted the trajectory of the nascent state.

Much of this paper explores the activities of the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC), a coordinating body formed to facilitate the collective action of South Sudan's various church denominations. The NSCC was jointly established in 1990 by Nathaniel Garang, head of the Episcopal Church of Sudan, and Paride Taban, head of the Roman Catholic Church (Rolandsen 2005). The council was established to compensate for the Sudan Council of Churches'[19] inability to represent its member churches in rebel-controlled areas. Like its predecessor, the NSCC constitution was modelled on a unique spirit of ecumenism so that its member churches included Anglicans, Catholics, Presbyterians, and several smaller churches including the Africa Inland Church of Sudan and the Sudan Interior Church (Jenner 2000, 11). Jenner (2000, 11) notes that the NSCC allowed "for a unified stance for all churches in the South and an uncommon ecumenical vehicle for conversation to the outside world." What knits these diverse churches together is a strong commitment to evangelicalism; consistent across each denominational divide is an insistence on conversion, activism, Biblical literalism, as well as a heavy emphasis on Christ's death and resurrection (Brown 2008, 158; Bebbington 1989, 2-3). A history of persecution has also pushed the denominations into a closer relationship. Pastor Peter Tibi explains that "we see ourselves united as one church working together to face one problem, one enemy. The enemy is the threat to Christianity...those who would persecute the Church" (Tibi 2008).[20]

Shortly after its creation, and not unlike Christian umbrella groups in other African countries (including the National Christian Council of Kenya and the Uganda Joint Christian Council), the NSCC soon became immersed in South Sudanese politics (Keller 1996, 205-206). The Council understood that internal dissonance within the SPLA/M had opened a window of opportunity for churches – the best-organized civil society organization in South Sudan – to influence the region's political trajectory (Brown 2008, 171). According to the Rift Valley Institute,

[19] The SCC was established in 1965. In May 2007, due to the end of the war, the SCC absorbed the NSCC. For now it appears the Sudan Council of Churches will remain united across Sudan and South Sudan.
[20] For a discussion on "Christian persecution," and how this concept is central to a global evangelical identity, see Agensky 2010, 8-10.

"throughout much of the 1990s, the NSCC maintained a critical stance towards all factions in the war, publicly calling on them to end their abuses of civilians" (Bradbury, Ryle, Medley, & Sansculotte-Greenidge 2006, 41).[21] For its part, the SPLA/M tolerated the NSCC because leaders of the movement assumed the council would prove a powerful public relations ally, both inside and outside the country. According to African Rights, the SPLA/M "hoped this might stimulate western countries to grant aid to the South. At the same time, NSCC would provide convenient channels for assistance particularly from Christian organisations abroad" (African Rights 1995, 10).

Throughout the 1990s and into the 2000s the NSCC saw its power and influence increase as growing numbers of Sudanese began to self-identify as Christian (Bradbury, Ryle, Medley, & Sansculotte-Greenidge 2006, 41). The NSCC held sway over individual congregations and church members and became a sought-after partner by the international community (Brown 2008, 4). Through the war, forced migration, famine, and poverty, the NSCC had, by the turn of the century, become a "key intermediary in all phases of life in southern Sudan" (Jenner 2000, 10).

Bonding capital: connecting and dividing

As increasing numbers of South Sudanese began to identify with Christian teaching, the emerging spirituality and its associated laws and values had an impact on the way people interacted with one another. This is not to say that traditional religion was forgotten and abandoned, or that the Christianity people adopted retained all the trimmings advocated by its original emissaries.[22] We have seen that Christian teaching did not gain mass appeal until Sudanese pastors replaced Americans and Europeans at the forefront of missionary efforts, yet, from a macro perspective on social capital, many southerners did modify deep-rooted spiritual and cultural norms upon their Christian conversion.

---

[21] In a public letter written in 1993 "To Our Flock," for example, the NSCC charged that "some of our liberators have become oppressors" (Flint 2001, 8).

[22] Alex De Waal wrote that "some of the most spectacular areas of [church] growth have been where local Protestant pastors have dynamically interpreted church teachings to fit in with local needs (de Waal 1998, 143).

One observable change was the Sunday morning church service, which brought vulnerable communities together in new configurations of worship and volunteerism. Sabina Panth (2010) writes that "bonding [capital] can be valuable for oppressed and marginalized members of the society to band together in groups and networks and support their collective needs." And, whether predominantly spiritual in origin, or, as Francis Deng suggests, a response to Arab pretensions to ethnic and religious superiority, churches did become a strong support network for their members. From a micro perspective on social capital, there is evidence that Church members did work together to solve collective problems. This was initially observed in Ethiopian refugee camps,[23] where in 1992, Marc Nikkel noted that residents "enthusiastically describe the manner in which old barriers were being eroded as they mixed with previously unknown Sudanese peoples in Christian worship, developing trust and interdependency" (Nikkel 1992, 91). While most South Sudanese Christians attended churches according to their tribe (Dinka tending towards the Episcopalian Church of Sudan, Nuer to the Presbyterian Church of Sudan, and Equatorians to the Catholic Church),[24] networks of trust and norms of reciprocity were indeed strengthened within these ethnic silos. As Church members collectively interpreted scripture, sang songs, and assisted their most vulnerable members, they simultaneously built and reinforced networks of bonding capital.[25] Thus, links between families, close friends, and the tribe were fortified at a time when kinship relations were under severe stress: for not only was bonding capital being purposefully targeted by the Khartoum government in the waging of its proxy wars and support of cattle raids, but, as we have seen, the 1991 split within the SPLA/M was the catalyst for vicious internecine fighting.

Churches fostered kinship ties in several ways— at times consciously and at times unconsciously. Its message of divine hope and shared destiny for the Sudanese people was one

[23] Elijah Brown suggests that Sudanese ecumenism was born in the Ethiopian refugee camps where Sudanese people with different ethnic identities were forced to live together in close quarters (Brown 2008, 170). Since the onset of Sudan's Second civil war, over 600,000 people fled Sudan to seek refuge in neighbouring countries (UNHCR 2003).
[24] Denominational divisions along ethnic lines are a throwback to the British colonial administration that, as elsewhere in Africa, designated different "spheres" of influence in which Protestant and Catholic missions could proselytize without competition (Collins 2008, 48).
[25] This process is especially pronounced among relatively smaller congregations (Welch, Sikkink, Sartain, & Bond 2004, 318)

such avenue. While Christian theology in Sudan varies between churches, each of the prominent denominations tends towards a literalist or conservative reading of Biblical scripture (Brown 2008, 158). This has led many congregants to read deeply into Isaiah 18, a prophecy in which God is supposed to foretell his judgment of Sudan because of its "slowness" in ending the "the worship of false gods" (Hutchison 2001, 325). While the prophecy itself is dire, churches have generally taught that God's wrath will eventually cool. The prophecy is not interpreted by churches as rigid and unalterable, but instead depends on the (dis)obedience of the people. Thus Hutchison writes that many Nuer and Dinka believe that their collective survival depends on a shared faith in Christ and his forgiveness (Hutchison 2001, 327). Similarly, Jenner (2000, 2) has observed that within Isaiah 18, as well as other scriptural texts,

> The Dinka see themselves as included in God's word, described, placed and identified. The Dinka (and particularly other Nilotes of the land the rivers divide) have powerfully augmented their identity through this linkage between themselves and the Israelites of the Hebrew Bible.

Unlike Western Christianity, which, since the reformation, has largely emphasized an individual responsibility in matters of faith (Kagitcibasi 1997, 5), the tendency of the Sudanese Church to identify with the ancient tribe of Israel has created a community-centred spirituality in which the health of the Church "body" is considered essential to the health of individual members. The following prayer, offered in 1999 by a priest in Maridi, is revealing:

> O dear heavenly father, creator of the Universe,
> King of Kings, God of peace, God of everlasting, have mercy on us Lord.
> We are the children of Sudan who have gone astray from your path.
> We have sinned against you and our own brothers.
> May you forgive us Lord and renew our faith
> So we may achieve peace in our country and eternal life at the end.
> Build us Lord in unity, peace, forgiveness and wisdom.
> Chain Satan to the hole pit which has no end
> So that your people will see your kingdom.
> We invite you to be with us always and ask your protection.
> Through the Holy Spirit and Son Jesus Christ, our Saviour (Hart 2002, 36).

What this prayer illustrates is that a sense of Christian community pervades Sudanese prayers—a community which transcends even ethnic bonds. Even if fellowship within church was based

on ethnicity, this prayer stresses unity: "*We* are the children of Sudan," says the priest. "*We* have sinned...Build *us* in unity."[26]

In addition to scripture-based preaching, hymns composed by Sudanese church members and sung on Sunday mornings also contributed to a common identity within and between congregations. Songs have long played a significant part in both Nuer and Dinka culture,[27] but as the number of churches and congregants grew, increasing numbers of people met regularly to sing and worship together, often proclaiming a message of hope and perseverance partly rooted in local tradition. Songs written by members of the Episcopal Church of Sudan, for example, combined the style and content of traditional Dinka songs with the Biblical themes of creation, sin, conversion, and the hereafter (Nikkel 1992, 80). In this sense, songs contributed to social capital in a matter that has been noted by Kristin Goss (2000, 29), who writes:

> Whether visual, musical, dramatic, or literary, the arts allow us to...nurture social capital by strengthening friendships, helping communities to understand and celebrate their heritage, and providing a safe way to discuss and solve difficult social problems."

Visiting South Sudan in the heat of Sudan's second civil war, Nikkel seems to witness this phenomenon, writing that "a continually evolving corpus of new compositions unite Christians from diverse areas and affirm a shared spiritual[28] vision" (Nikkel 1992, 82). Five years later Nikkel (1997, 86) noted that:

> Hundreds of new vernacular songs reveal an evolving theology of the Cross as flag, as symbol of initiation, as weapon against malign powers, as memorial to sacrifice, and, indeed, as the tangible affirmation of Christ's victorious presence in turbulent times. The present day crosses of the Jieng constitute an indigenous transformation of the initiator staffs and weapons, banners, and sacred posts, so integral to traditional culture.

[26] For similar examples of Christian prayers and poetry, see Hart 2002; Nikkel 2001.
[27] Douglas Johnson traces a history of apocalyptic songs within the Nuer tradition to Prophet Ngundeng Bong, who died in 1906. Ngundeng's prophecies, some of which allegedly predicted South Sudan's emancipation from the Arab north, are sometimes referred to as the 'Nuer Bible' (Johnson 1994, 336).
[28] Though the churches would eventually play a powerful role in the politics of South Sudan, sacred songs tended to focus on spiritual issues, rather than questions of secession, independence, or the internal affairs of South Sudan (Nikkel 1992, 83).

It is clear that songs both reflected and inspired religious change within churches. In light of the predominately oral culture of South Sudan (see Johnson 1981), and the centrality of songs in the constructing a shared identity, it is reasonable to conclude that the singing of popular hymns also increased bonding capital in South Sudan.

So far it has been argued that Church activities, including preaching and the singing of songs, tended to reinforce ties within the Church community. Yet the unifying influence of the churches spread far beyond mud-brick walls or open-air meetings. As the sphere of Christian authority expanded and subsumed traditional forms of South Sudanese spirituality, the new religion tended to create new spheres of common ground where previous beliefs and practices tended to emphasize diversity. One example, according to Brown, relates to funeral ceremonies. The high cost of funerals had been a frequent source of family conflict during the war, pitting those who, according to custom, were responsible for funeral costs against their relatives who demanded payment. As churches gained a more prominent presence within the community, however, traditional rites were all but replaced by Christian services in which the cost of funerals – now hosted at the Church – were shared by the greater Church membership. In this case, atavistic Church practices (first modeled by Western missionary organizations) eased the financial burdens associated with death and helped to relieve a "time of tension that had previously proven a flashpoint for conflict" (Brown 2008, 136).[29]

Certain ethnic delineations within tribes also caved under the weight of Christian influence. According to Nikkel, the venerated Dinka gods (ancestral spirits or *jok)* saw their authority diminish vis-à-vis *Nhialic*,[30] the supreme creator god whose name was eventually appropriated by missionaries to represent the Christian god, or *Yahweh* (Nikkel 1992, 88). The Church taught that Dinka Christians should no longer sacrifice cattle or other livestock to the jok, who were to

[29] It is also true that the momentous shift from traditional religions had a negative impact on some forms of social capital. For example, Brown writes that church teaching on marriage has eroded support for many traditional practices which encouraged communal care: "By categorically emphasising monogamy without reflexively establishing other venues of social care for women and children many local church leaders are indirectly loosening ethical bonds of common kinship that once defined communities. To a certain extent, Christianity is contributing to the loosening of individual social mores" (Brown 2008, 156).

[30] For a thorough and authoritative description of Dinka cosmology, see Godfrey Lienhardt's *Divinity and Experience: the Religion of the Dinka* (1961) and Francis Mading Deng's *The Dinka of the Sudan* (1984).

be shunned as the "evil spirits" or "demons" found in scripture. Whereas traditionally, subsets within the Dinka tribe were responsible to their own jok (eating food separately according to their jok's blessing, for example), these divisions became less important as confidence in the ancestral spirits waned throughout the war. Nikkel quotes Episcopal Bishop Nathaniel Garang Anyieth, who suggested that the death of spirit worship opened new avenues for intra-tribal reconciliation:

> There is a tribe, another tribe that always fight with another tribe. When we build church here we bring all these people, clans, in one family so there is no quarrel between them. You see. And there is changes, changes because there is love between people. They eat together. They pray together. You see, eh. And people, they feel better (Nikkel 1992, 88)**.**

While this evokes a somewhat idealized representation of community within the Christian fold, it is certainly true that the Church brought former enemies together as congregations gathered together to eat a slaughtered bull,[31] the meat "shared across all delineations of family, clan, age and sex" (Nikkel 1992, 88). Such a conclusion, while optimistic, nevertheless demonstrates the impression of a long-time observer that, on a macro level of cultural and religious norms and values, constructive change was in the offing.[32]

Recalling Landolt and Portes' argument on the "downside of social capital," as well as Europe's history of war between Catholic and Protestant, it seems reasonable to assume a degree of friction between, for example, the Episcopal and Catholic churches in South Sudan, or even more likely the Episcopal and Presbyterian churches, whose ranks were primarily composed of the Dinka and Nuer communities, respectively (Brown 2008, 158; Gai, 2011). Michael Woolcock and Deepa Narayan hypothesize that strong bonding capital based on shared ethnicity tends to benefit more powerful "in groups" who dominate the state and create societies "characterized by latent conflict" (Woolcock & Narayan 2000, 237). While this seems an apt description of South Sudan's ethnic rivalries, little evidence points to violent or even hostile

[31] Nikkel argues that while the spiritual significance of cattle may be called into question by Christian teaching, the social and monetary value of cattle remains intact (Nikkel 1992, 88).

[32] Anglican missionary Marc Nikkel had – as far as expatriates go – an intimate knowledge of Sudan and its peoples having lived and worked in the country for 20 years. During this time he was abducted and held captive by the SPLA/M and was later played a key role in the Wunlit peace process (Quinn 2002).

relations on the denominational plane. In fact, despite a strong correlation between ethnicity and denominational affiliation, churches in Sudan are notable for their close proximity in matters of both theology and collaboration. "All of the churches, from Catholic to Pentecostal, tend towards a conservative evangelicalism that embraces personal repentance and piety as well as a literalist reading of the Scriptures," writes Brown (Brown 2008, 158). A common spiritual grounding combined with the perception of a common Arab/Islamic threat has given momentum to the aforementioned ecumenical movement which has a long history in Sudan (Jenner 2000, 11). According to Philip Gai (2011), a Nuer evangelist:

> There may be leaders in the churches that [harboured hostilities] in their thoughts. But it didn't manifest in the churches...For example in Khartoum or in the South you had all the denominations coming together in united prayer. I'm not saying there wasn't animosity but I haven't seen it. It was minimal.

James Lagos, a Bishop in the Africa Inland Church,[33] agrees. He says that at funerals, Catholics frequently led the ceremony, while an AIC pastor was asked to speak (or vice-versa): "They can do whatever they want with their water— we in Sudan see the Catholics as Christians" (Lagos 2008).

In South Sudan, spiritual communion has, to some extent, led to tangible or material support— for in addition to worship, the Church's relief and development efforts demonstrated evidence of significant social capital reserves. As Field writes, social capital allows people to work together to solve collective problems— problems which can only be resolved by group effort (2003, 1-2). A simple example is given by Brown, who saw Elder Samuel Gai Puok encourage his Nuer congregation to keep extra jerry cans full of water to help ration water in case of shortage (2008, 68). Churches also proved to be one of the few available sources of help for "Lost Boys"[34] who arrived, destitute, in Kenyan and Ethiopian refugee camps. As food scarcity was a very real problem, Church leaders instructed members in food preparation and directed them to pool rations and eat meals communally to prevent the most vulnerable from going hungry (Brown 2008, 69). Many communities whose social infrastructure lay in tatters came to depend on the

[33] The Africa Inland Church of Sudan, founded in 1949, is one of South Sudan's smaller evangelical denominations.
[34] Name given to the roughly 25,000 boys who were either orphaned or separated from their parents during Sudan's second civil war.

organizing power of the Church to meet basic needs. Studies in the U.S. and U.K. have shown a strong correlation between social capital and health benefits.[35] In south Sudan it is not an exaggeration to state that during the country's second civil war, the ability to trust and depend on one's spiritual neighbour could mean the difference between life and death.

Churches in South Sudan were also able to leverage their ties to international organizations, both Christian and secular, to meet basic community needs. For a relatively isolated religious network which operated in the least-developed parts of the country, this represented an extraordinary accomplishment. As Scott Thomas (2004, 138) writes:

> Poor communities are often rich in localized or bonding social capital, but lack the kind of linking or bridging social capital necessary to gain access to economic resources and opportunities, a better education, functioning credit systems, and wider markets.

It is worth noting here that linking capital (the ties that develop between dissimilar people in disparate situations) served in this case to facilitate activities that were already taking place within church communities, though on a smaller scale, as a result of the strong bonding capital between families, neighbours, and close friends. In other words, bonding capital remained the engine behind community development efforts, although the NSCC partnered with organizations such as Norwegian Church Aid, DanChurch Aid, Christian Aid, and the Mennonite Central Committee to increase its capacity (Jenner 2000, 11). Catholic Churches, in addition to working with the NSCC, partnered with their worldwide counterparts, including CAFOD[36] and the greater Caritas Internationalis[37] network (Rees, 2011; Dallalah, 2011).[38] As a focal point for international giving, the churches in South Sudan maintained their position as the most important provider of essential services including food, water, health, and education.[39] According to Ashworth, "There was no government, no UN, no aid agencies. The Church was there at every

[35] For more on the health benefits commonly attributed to social capital, see (OECD 2010).
[36] CAFOD is the official Catholic aid agency for England and Wales.
[37] CARITAS a confederation of 164 Roman Catholic relief, development and social service organisations
[38] When UN, NGO, and government aid organizations found the SPLM/A wanting as a partner, they turned to the NSCC and the local churches due to churches' independence and considerable local network (Rolandsen 2005, 77).
[39] Christian education has a long history in South Sudan which dates back to the foreign mission enterprise. To quote Francis Deng (1995, 217), Christian education "fostered a new sense of identity that transcends tribal loyalties and created a Southern nationalist sentiment."

level, providing many of the services that the government would normally provide—health and education, for example—but wasn't" (Ashworth 2011b).[40]

Some analysts are less sanguine on the Church's performance as a relief and development actor, however. According to Oystein Rolandsen:

> Attempts at using the NSCC and local churches as aid institutions were not as successful as anticipated. These organizations, with the possible exception of NSCC, were not originally meant for this kind of task, and they encountered conflicting expectations...the churches were expected to perform better...because of the church leaders' perceived higher moral standard. That expectation was not always fulfilled (Rolandsen 2005, 77-78).[41]

The Sudan Council of Churches (the NSCC's sister organization in the north) was in particular discovered to have mismanaged donated funds and supplies (Mans & Ali 2006, 18). The NSCC's international reputation seems to have been damaged by proxy, but also as a result of its own actions. For example, in the early 1990s food aid intended for famine victims was diverted to "lepers" and theological students, and as a means to pay clergy and other staff (Duffield, Young, Ryle, & Henderson 1995). Rob Rees (2011), Pan Africa Advocacy Co-ordinator for CAFOD, says: "I cannot recall anything on quite the same scale within the Catholic Church, but transparency and accountability seem to be a national problem."

Nevertheless, partly due to its relief and development efforts, the NSCC and affiliated Catholic Church groups maintained a high profile throughout the war and retained a great deal of legitimacy in the eyes of South Sudan's growing Christian population (Mans & Ali 2006, 17; Rees, 2011). This legitimacy enabled the Church to maintain its prominence as an education

[40] Alex De Waal (1998) suggests that the Church's "vital role" in aid provision helps explain the steady growth of Christianity through the 1990s.

[41] Rob Rees (2011) says that church relief and development efforts were heavily weighted towards short-term 'relief' over long term 'development.' "People, including the church leaders, have been caught in something of a bubble," he says. They have missed out on much of the debate on development and the widely accepted evolution from "handouts to the needy" to "self reliance."

provider. And according to Asma Dallalah, former director of SudanAid,[42] school programming was another contributor to social cohesion.[43] According to Putnam (2004, 5-6),

> For any government concerned to increase social capital and social cohesion, the educational process is the single most important and effective policy lever...even holding constant other factors, including race, income, gender, ethnicity, occupation, and many others, more educated people have wider, deeper, stronger social networks and participate more in social, community, and political life.

Few studies have focused on primary education in Sudan, and between 1990 and 1999 "there was almost a complete absence of accurate information about the state of schools in southern Sudan" (Brophy 2003, 2). Yet certain benefits can be inferred from these programs. Goss, writing on the American experience, argues that:

> Schools encourage civic engagement in myriad ways...Schools teach the basic skills necessary to participate in civic life: reading, writing, public speaking, teamwork, and project organizing...A higher level of education, more than income or any other characteristic, affects the likelihood of participating in civic affairs (Goss 2000, 75).

Granted, it is difficult, if not impossible, to retroactively draw a correlation between churches' provision of basic education and a measurable increase in civic participation. Yet a strong case can be made that those who did attend Church-supported schools were better connected with their communities than those who did not. It seems plausible that, in offering educational programming, churches helped establish new cooperative relationships and increased the radius of trust within South Sudanese communities (Fukuyama 2002, 32).

So far we have examined how the Church fostered bonding capital in a positive sense— how it reached out to inhabitants of South Sudan. But by its very definition, bonding capital is exclusionary. Johnson (2002, 167) puts it this way: "when a society defines with whom it can, or must, make peace, it also defines, perhaps only by implication, on whom it can, or must, make war" (Johnson, 2002, 167). "In" groups are determined as much by who is on the inside as by

[42] SudanAid was the Catholic Church's relief agency in Sudan.
[43] Until their eviction in the early 1960s, Christian missionary organizations were the most important provider of education in South Sudan. See (Johnson 2002, 14-15; Collins 2008, 48-49).

who is kept out. Thus, while leaders within the Christian community worked to define the emergent nation of South Sudan in terms that included all "black" southerners— they did so by excluding what they perceived as the hostile Islamic north.

Churches were first thrust into the national spotlight on the eve of Sudan's second civil war. It was not a shock to long-time observers of the Sudanese government when, in 1983, President Gaafar Nimeiry – pressured by radical political opponents – instituted Sharia as national law. The move did, however, infuriate most South Sudanese, whose abiding attitude towards northern Muslims was one of "bitterness, hatred and fear" (Fluehr-Lobban 1990, 613). The Government's resolve to enforce Sharia law had helped incite Sudan's first civil war (1956-1983), and Nimeiry's decision to push the law a second time reintroduced the spectres of slavery, forced Islamization and Arabization, and was at least partly responsible for the country's return to war between 1983 and 2005 (Fluehr-Lobban 1990, 618).[44] According to Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban (623), the Government's Islamist agenda "has been pursued farther in Sudan than in many of the better-known examples of contemporary Islamic republics with respect to Islamization of law and application of the hudud [Sharia] penalties."

It was against this backdrop that Christian elites in South Sudan began to promote a Christianization of black/southern identity to counter the Arab/Islamic identity prevalent in the north. This strategy depended heavily upon bonding capital, which, as Landolt and Portes have shown, is powerful and exclusive.[45] The strategy was perhaps most evident among displaced southerners in Khartoum who found the relative ethnic, religious, and socio-economic homogeneity of southern churches to be a useful venue for resistance and protest (Woolcock 2001, 72; Brown 2008, 119). But as previously discussed by Francis Deng, this strategy proved powerful and effective in South Sudan. "Going to church is encouraged as both an act of faith

[44] Sudan's first civil war raged from 1956-1972.

[45] In this case the "other" was clearly the Arab/Muslim. Three years after the war, Sheikh Hanna Yousif , a Christian of Arab descent explained that he and his family were not welcome in black churches. "We are in the middle," he said, pinching his white—traditionally Arabic—robe. Yousif says southerners are suspicious of Arab Christians. "We have been kicked out of the church" (Yousif 2008). Writing several years before, Francis Deng (2001, 21) argued that "the crucial question is not only whether the Sudan is Islamic but also the related question of whether it is culturally and racially Arab. On both questions the South asserts a contrasting identity that is culturally and racially black African and religiously traditional with Christianity as the dominant modern religion."

and a political statement...against Islamization and Arabization" he wrote (2001, 20). Along similar lines, Amir Idris of Fordham University explained that "southerners have come to see churches as their political allies in the struggle against injustice and oppression" (Idris 2005, 67).

To illustrate the effectiveness of this strategy, Brown (2008, 110) quotes the compelling story of a Catholic priest, who, after being notified that the government planned to bulldoze his church building, made his way to the scene:

> I rushed there. I saw people— not all of them were Christians...Some of them they were small children with stones waiting for these people to come. The youth, some of them were not Christians, but there they were, there they were actually saying, 'we are Christians.' I think what they are also trying to say is that 'we are not Muslim...we are Christians and we will defend the Christians places'…Then nobody [from the government] came.

Clergy were also vocal about their grievances, and to the extent that this invited harassment and even violence from the Government, reflects their own trust, faith and dependence on the wider South Sudanese community.[46] For example, during the March 1995 Khartoum State elections, six Catholic Bishops "issued a daring pastoral letter that called on parishioners to boycott the polls since the elections were imposed on the people, parties were banned, and all candidates had to support a predefined Islamist orientation" (Lesch 1998, 123-124). According to a report by Human Rights Watch (2002, 257):

> The protestant Sudan Council of Churches and the Sudan Catholic Bishops' Conference regularly protest the discrimination against their membership, including the continuous relocations of displaced persons, the privileges given to Islamic relief organizations' in contrast to the tight limitations on Christian church relief activities, the harassment of non-Muslim citizens by the Popular Police Force, and the lack of equality in religious matters.

Although the epicentre of Church persecution – and thus resistance –was in Khartoum, churches in South Sudan also began to develop into a symbol of resistance against the Government's hard-line agenda. Throughout the 1990s and afterwards, the people of South Sudan increasingly

[46] For a brief summary of Khartoum's systematic harassment of Christians in the north, see Boyle & Sheen, 1997, 74-76).

turned towards the Church to communicate their desire for reform (Brown 2008, 113). And although the NSCC officially maintained a position of neutrality in the civil war, many priests and pastors on the ground admit that they actively worked to undermine Khartoum's authority (Washburne 2010, 64). In doing so, they were sustaining bonding capital, albeit it in a negative sense, by defining South Sudan in opposition to the Islamic north.

The above discussion has attempted to show that as Church members collectively interpreted scripture, sang songs, and assisted their most vulnerable members, they simultaneously built and reinforced bonding capital. Churches also created bonding capital by defining South Sudan as a nation that was fundamentally at odds with the northern Islamic state. At a time when kinship relations were under severe stress, the Church successfully maintained ties between families, close friends, and neighbours.

Bridging capital: peace and reconciliation

Woven through many studies of social capital is the idea that while bonding capital is desirable and necessary, it is not sufficient for the smooth functioning of society. For when a tight-knit community is created, some elements of society will always be excluded. Thus, it is not enough that members of certain factions get along with one another; in order to enjoy peace and prosperity in a heterogeneous society, members must also reach across groupings to bridge social divides. Putnam aptly refers to these cross-cutting relationships as "bridging capital," which will here be measured in terms of trust, reciprocity, and shared norms (Onyx & Bullen 2000).

What Landolt and Portes describe as the "downside" of social capital is not a problem with social capital per se, but one of imbalance. Societies which possess strong bonding capital but are weak in bridging capital are fundamentally lop-sided: "the more powerful groups dominate the state, to the exclusion of other groups. Such societies are characterized by latent conflict" (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000, 237). Accordingly, peaceful and stable relationships between communities cannot exist unless bonding and bridging capital are somehow brought closer to equilibrium. This process is of course more likely to take place if social and political leaders are in favour of (or at least not opposed to) bridging social divides.

Throughout the 1990s the New Sudan Council of Churches slowly shifted its emphasis from relief and development to peace and reconciliation initiatives (Jenner 2000, 11; Redekop 2007, 75).[47] This was partly a matter of course: Church-led aid programming disappointed Western donors and external financial support diminished steadily over time. As Rolandsen notes, churches were not built for aid disbursement, and bled credibility when, on more than one occasion, donated funds were mismanaged.[48] Yet the shift also reflected a growing realization among religious leaders that churches could (and should) effectively bridge real and imagined differences in culture and ethnicity. As we have already seen, a robust evangelicalism pervaded much of South Sudan in the wake of the violent conflict between the Dinka (under leader John Garang) and Nuer (under leader Riek Machar)—a spiritual identity which allowed a spirit of ecumenism to flourish (Hutchison 2001, 327).

This is not to suggest that Christian faith as practiced in Africa is a panacea for ethnic conflict, nor that a common faith tradition is sufficient to produce bridging capital. In the lead up to Rwanda's 1994 genocide, 90 percent of the population claimed membership in Catholic, Presbyterian, and Seventh Day Adventist churches (Longman 2001, 149).[49] Some researchers estimate that more people were killed in church sanctuaries than anywhere else (Longman 2001, 156).

No sociological formula can predict if and when some religious leaders will choose to bridge ethnic divides, while others will not.[50] Some clues do exist, however. Colletta and Cullen (2000, 6) argue that "violent conflict is triggered by the presence of strong exclusionary bonds combined with a

[47] The NSCC's Peace Department was established in Nairobi between 1992 and 1993 (Redekop 2007, 75)
[48] It should be noted that the performance of Western donors – particularly in the case of the UN-led Operation Lifeline Sudan – has also been roundly criticized, in part for its pro-government bias (Minear 1990).
[49] Colletta and Cullen write: "though these groups may have been numerous and widespread, the relations created by these groups were largely exclusionary and tended not to bridge group divides" (Colletta & Cullen 2000, 20).
[50] In the case of Rwanda, it was not inevitable that the church – which, despite its close relationship with the state remained one of the only truly autonomous civil society organizations – would cooperate with the state. It seems, however, that religious leaders' interests were better preserved in alliance with their political kin than with their spiritual brethren. Longman writes: "in the local communities I studied, I found that strong reciprocal relationships existed between church, state, and business elites...Leaders of the churches, like leaders of the state, had a vested interest in preserving the status quo that had allowed them to gain significant privilege and power (Longman 2001, 149-150).

lack of horizontal and vertical bridging links." Here *horizontal bridging* refers to connections between peers, while *vertical bridging* refers to connections between organizations differentiated by either function or geography (Portney & Berry 1999). They suggest that bonding capital is "perverted" when unaccompanied by bridging across ethnic divides and an engaged civil society. In Rwanda, Christianity had, since the colonial era, been a "top down" institution closely aligned with the state (Longman 2001). In contrast, Christianity exploded in South Sudan as "a truly 'grassroots' religious revolution, spear-headed by a small number of Nuer civilians" and was only later instrumentalized by political elites (Hutchison 2001, 316). Also unlike Rwanda, the growth of Christianity in South Sudan did not follow or reify existing racial boundaries, but grew out of a spontaneous reaction against local elites who had used race to co-opt people's passions (Hutchison 2001, 321). These legacies set the tone for the relationship between Christians in each country, with arguably more space for trust, reciprocity, and shared norms available in South Sudan.

Rwanda aside, the Christian Church has, overall, a strong track record of bridge building in African contexts. Paul Gifford (1998, 347) writes:

> Churches can play a role in breaking down ethnic barriers, since the intensity of conversion bestows a new identity which transcends other identities...this can help foster democratic virtues like tolerance, respect, moderation, cooperation and compromise.[51]

In South Sudan, the Church's ability to transcend identities was tested through the 1990s as an already fractured South Sudanese society splintered further under the blunt axe of war. This was particularly the case in Kakuma refugee camp, located in Kenya's extreme northwest, where Church leaders worked to soothe escalating tensions between their constituents. Erected in 1992 by the UNHCR, the camp was created after some 17,000 South Sudanese boys (ranging in age from 10 to 17) crossed into Kenya, fleeing Ethiopian refugee camps where they were no longer welcome.[52] In 1998 the camp housed some 40,000 refugees: primarily South Sudanese who had

[51] Gifford notes that while churches can foster cohesion, they also limit the 'in' group to fellow Christian believers. "Many of these Christians demonise Islam, thus reinforcing other social divisions," he notes (Gifford 1998, 347).
[52] See *supra note* 34 concerning "Lost Boys." South Sudanese refugees fell out of favour with Ethiopia upon the fall of the Derg in 1987.

fled their country's ongoing civil war (Verdirame 1999, 62). The majority hailed from parts of Sudan traditionally associated with the Episcopal Church of Sudan and the Presbyterian Church of Sudan, which constituted two of the biggest churches. Smaller Catholic and Pentecostal churches were established in the camp as well (Brown 2008, 34, 41).[53]

By 2000 the number of refugees at Kakuma had swelled to 75,000 (Crisp 2000, 630). Here members of the Dinka, Nuer, and Equatorian communities (though voluntarily segregated by ethnicity) were forced to live in close proximity to one another. The security situation in the camp – a slight improvement, perhaps, over the Armageddon raging through South Sudan – was grim. Brown (2008, 58-59) writes that:

> Conflict, resource deprivation and ethnic hostility characterized life...numerous clashes erupted within the camp leading to armed conflicts primarily between southern Sudanese refugees resulting in burned homes, loss of property, injuries, a destabilised community and most grievously, death.

The UNHCR confirmed this depiction, reporting in 1999 that "increasing incidents of inter-nationality and inter-ethnic fights, thuggery and banditry have resulted in a situation of hazard and risk. Tangible measures must be looked into to curb the situation" (Crisp 2000, 602). The 'situation,' in fact, was so dire that one UN official admitted that UNHCR and other agency staff were confined to their compounds "from dusk until dawn" (Crisp 2000, 603).[54]

Despite its remoteness from Sudan (125 kilometres removed from Sudan's border) Jeff Crisp (2000, 623) of the UNHCR argued that Kakuma refugee camp remained intimately and symbiotically connected to its progenitor state:

> The SPLA plays an important role in the selection of community leaders and hence the administration of the camp. Kakuma provides recruits (and possibly conscripts) for the rebel forces. It acts as a safe refuge for the wives and children of men who are fighting in southern Sudan. It is visited on a regular basis by SPLA commanders. And the regular arrival of new refugees from southern Sudan

[53] To provide a sense of church membership, Elijah Brown visited the camp in 2006 and counted 1564 men, women, and children on a Sunday morning at one of Kakuma's four biggest churches (2008, 42).
[54] The Lutheran World Federation has, since Kakuma Refugee Camp's inception, taken the role of lead agency in under a tripartite agreement with the UNHCR and the government of Kenyan (DWS Country Programs: Kenya).

> (around 1,000 a month during the first half of 1999) means that the residents of Kakuma are kept well informed about developments in their homeland.

Crisp's study showed that Sudan's ongoing civil war not only had an impact on those who sought refuge in a neighbouring country, but that these refugees continued to play a reflexive role in the events shaping life in South Sudan. If this was true within the rebel movement, it was also true within the Church community, where formal denominational structures linked Anglicans, Presbyterians, and Catholics across the state divide.

It is not clear at what point, or to what extent churches in Kakuma mobilized in response to Kakuma's crisis of insecurity (Lutheran World Federation 2011). But throughout the late 1990s and early 2000s pastors did work to prevent conflict in the camp, assuming a peacemaking role that was customary for Nuer and Dinka religious leaders (Brown 2008, 58). Their job was not easy. For example, two major battles in 1997 left more than 140 dead and over one 100 injured (Crisp 2000, 608). Following such bouts of inter-ethnic hostility, Nuer and Dinka pastors risked crossing into each other's "territory" to offer condolences and prayer and to urge compromise (Brown 2008, 59-60). The security situation gradually improved in Kakuma, in part because of Church-led reconciliation initiatives. By 2006, both Kakuma's head of security as well as its chairman of the Nuer community reported peaceful inter-ethnic relations (Brown 2008, 57): an indication that more stable inter-ethnic relationships had been established, and that norms of trust and reciprocity – the building blocks of bonding capital – could be raised on solid ground.

Events in Kakuma demonstrate that some Church leaders took their peacemaking role seriously, and at great personal risk. However, with myriad social dynamics at work in the camp it is difficult to gauge with confidence to what extent Kakuma's pacification is due to Church initiative. While some pastors were active promoters of peace, others were not. Churches outside of Kakuma refugee camp, for example, were less active bridge builders (Brown 2008). This can partly be explained by individual personalities. It can also be partly explained by the highly "instrumental" nature of bridging capital, in which social connections are cultivated and sustained primarily to increase agency. The terms of reciprocity for bridging capital must be "more obvious, more immediate, and more explicit than for bonding social capital" (Rosemary & Bellamy 2010, 447) — and if no obvious or near-term advantage is to be gained in cultivating

these kinds of connections, bridging is unlikely to occur. Even within Kakuma, interdenominational cooperation was restricted to times of crises or was practiced more in theory than reality (Brown 2008, 67). Bridging capital, in other words, was built under stress and not as a normal part of everyday life.

Kakuma refugee camp is one example where the Southern Christian Church proved willing and able to build badly-needed linkages in a fundamentally unstable society. A second example concerns the Church's response to the Nuer Civil War in 1993 and 1994. While a comprehensive overview of this conflict is beyond the scope of this paper, it is necessary to catch a glimpse of the war's complexity to appreciate the Church's position as principal interlocutor.

In 1991 an ideological disagreement rent the SPLA into two factions. The split was largely along ethnic lines; most Dinka soldiers stuck to their Dinka commanders, while the Nuer sided with their own respective commanders. Douglas Johnson (2002, 91) writes that disillusionment with the pre-factious rebel movement had sprung in large part from John Garang's leadership style:

> In its suppression of internal dissent and its attack on military rivals, the SPLA followed a pattern similar to that of many other contemporary African liberations movements...the political price of the policy was that the leadership relied on force rather than persuasion to maintain cohesion. Dissenters were removed while the causes of dissent were not, and the civil base of the Movement was neglected in favour of the military organization.

Moreover, whereas the SPLA/M was actively supported by many Dinka civilians, the SPLA did not enjoy widespread political support in non-Dinka areas where SPLA/M forces were sometimes regarded as an occupying force (Johnson 2002, 91). Banking on this popular resentment, and spurred by political grievances and aspirations of their own, three SPLA/M commanders[55] jointly split from SPLA/M leader John Garang, eventually launching the essentially Nuer-dominated rebel group they called SPLA-*Nasir* (Johnson 2002, 96-97).[56] The

[55] Lam Akol, Riek Machar and Gordon Kong.
[56] The Nuer-dominated SPLA Nasir was renamed *SPLA-United* in 1993 and underwent a series of name changes through the rest of the 1990s (Johnson 2002, 101).

more powerful Dinka rival, which never officially changed its name, is often referred to as SPLA-*Torit* or *SPLA Mainstream*, depending on the period.

As fighting between the two factions intensified, the leaders of SPLA-Nasir assumed Nuer fighters would abandon SPLA-Torit en masse, weakening SPLA-Torit's military position (Johnson 2002, 116).[57] What actually occurred was more complicated, and demonstrates the pitfalls of essentialist conceptualizations of ethnicity. Johnson (2002, 116) writes that "the attempt to rally the Nuer in support of the split only widened fissures within Nuer society." Whereas at one time the Lou and Jikany sub-clans had shared access to various resources, the emerging power constellation destabilized intra-tribal relations and the Lou suddenly found that they had been cut off from external relief and development agencies, and estranged from established grazing grounds and fishing pools (Johnson 2002, 117). Instead of joining SPLA-Nasir to fight the mainstream rebel force, Lou and Jikany commanders faced off against each other, and when both factions requested arms from Khartoum (ostensibly to fight SPLA-Torit), the northern government enthusiastically complied.[58] It was a civil war, within a civil war, within a civil war, and it was to become one of the deadliest internecine campaigns Nuer civilians had ever seen (Jenner 2000, 13)**.** Over the course of the conflict 77,000 head of cattle were stolen, 3,000 homes were razed, roughly 150,000 Nuer fled their homes, and over 1200 people were killed (Jenner 2000, 13; Johnson 2002, 118). Existing social networks, trust, and norms of reciprocity were decimated between the Lou and Jikany sub clans. "What made this conflict so uniquely devastating was its impact on the social structure," writes Hadley Jenner (2000, 13). "The destruction and chaos had compromised the ability of traditional[59] institutions to bring order, restitution and healing."

In response, the Presbyterian Church of Sudan (which comprised a membership of both Lou and Jikany faithful) facilitated a large inter-Nuer peace conference in the South Sudanese village of

[57] SPLA-United sought and received ample military support from the Khartoum government— a fact that, when discovered, devastated its credibility among the South Sudanese (Johnson 2002, 118).
[58] Khartoum's motivation for supporting tribal warfare was two-fold: one, as a propaganda exercise to show the war in Sudan was essentially tribal in nature; and two, as a means of waging a proxy war (Johnson 2002, 69).
[59] "Traditional" here refers to village chiefs and prophets within the Nuer community. For more on the role of Nuer prophets as peacemakers, see (Johnson 1994).

Akobo in July 1994. The meeting was held over several days and overcame significant logistical challenges to involve some 2000 representatives from various Nuer sub-clans. Representatives from the adjacent Dinka, Annuak, Shilluk, and Murle tribes were also included (Jenner 2000, 13; Johnson 2002, 118). Most observers of the Akobo process consider it a failure as resolutions agreed upon in theory were not implemented in practice. "Troops were not sent into the disputed pastures to keep the peace, and commanders previously involved in the fighting were not convinced that they would be free from retaliation," writes Johnson (2002, 118).[60] Akobo was not a complete fiasco, however. In addition to setting the terms by which the protagonists were willing to resolve their grievances, the process brought bitter enemies to a common table and to this extent emerged as a model for future bridge-building efforts (Lowrey 1995, 11).

As the Nuer Civil War continued unabated, the SPLA's military position in relation to Khartoum (already weakened by its internal split), as well as its reputation with the U.S. state department – a potentially powerful ally – was being compromised by its human rights abuses (for example, see Johnson 2007, 83).[61] Brown (2008, 206) writes that "fighting a number of aggressive though indecisive campaigns that at times resembled little more than ethnic retaliations, dissatisfaction with the SPLA permeated large swaths of southern Sudan." Andrew Onziga, a relief worker at a Sudanese refugee camp in Uganda, offered an assessment of the rebel movement from an Equatorian perspective:

> The Sudanese refugees in West Nile took refuge here [in Adjumani] because of atrocities of SPLA [Mainstream]. Some of them have never seen an Arab. Some are right here because the SPLA looted their property, they raped their girls, killed their sons…They will be sincere to tell you that they hated SPLA (Brown 2008, 207).

Antipathy between South Sudan's largest ethnic groups – the Nuer and Dinka – were, by the early 1990s, strongly entrenched (Johnson 2002, 115). Whereas in the past, various control mechanisms limited the brutality of rivalries, these systems were overwhelmed throughout the

[60] Church-associated observers of Akobo say the would-be peace process failed because it was controlled by politicians (especially Riek Machar—then leader of the UDSF) rather than civilians (Jenner 2000, 13).
[61] For an insider's perspective on SPLM/A human rights abuses, see Adwok 2000.

1990s (Johnson 2002, 172; Redekop 2007, 75).[62] Intertribal attacks were largely concentrated against certain civilian populations, and the overall impact was population displacement on a massive scale (Johnson 2002, 152). According to some observers, up to 90 percent of South Sudan's internally displaced were the victims of south-on-south fighting (Jenner 2000, 6). In fact, it is possible that south-on-south fighting was responsible for more death than direct conflict between southerners and the northern government (Bradbury, Ryle, Medley, & Sansculotte-Greenidge 2006, 32). It was then – as the de facto SPLA government teetered in its war effort and struggled unsuccessfully to unite its citizens under a common banner – that the South Sudanese Church made history.

In light of the recent Akobo process, the NSCC re-evaluated its priorities between 1995 and 1996, and shifted its focus from relief and development initiatives to peace mediation (Brown 2008, 179).[63] Its first breakthrough came in July 1997 when the NSCC and SPLM/A announced the *Yei Declaration*: an agreement that churches would henceforth be recognized as the prime intermediary between the various politico-military groups in South Sudan (Kiplagat, 1998; Murphy, 2006). Yet the capstone of the NSCC's reconciliation effort was laid in March 1999 in a village called Wunlit near the Nuer-Dinka border.

The Rift Valley Institute records that significant social forces had aligned in favour of peace by the late 1990s:

> Among SPLM/A commanders there was recognition that significant military gains against the Government were not feasible while the South remained divided. There was also a growing reluctance on the part of representatives of the civilian population to endorse the demands of the rebel commanders (Bradbury, Ryle, Medley, & Sansculotte-Greenidge 2006, 41).

[62] Johnson (2002, 116) argues that the "accepted" enmity between Dinka and Nuer are in fact "essentialized" and "ahistorical" caricatures.

[63] Akobo was not the first time Sudanese churches had acted as a conflict mediator. The Addis Ababa Peace Agreement of 1972, which put an end to Sudan's first civil war, was largely coordinated in partnership with the World Council of Churches as well as the All African Council of Churches (Jenner 2000, 12; Bradbury, Ryle, Medley, & Sansculotte-Greenidge 2006, 37). It should also be noted that Sudanese churches were by no means immune from ethnic divisions. Southern churches were indeed "riven by schisms, which prevented them from speaking with a common voice" (Bradbury, Ryle, Medley, & Sansculotte-Greenidge 2006, 37).

In other words, it became apparent to southern leaders, both Dinka and Nuer, that racist rhetoric was scoring fewer points with constituents, and was moreover tearing their would-be nation apart. Yet internecine war had raged in South Sudan for years, and its resolution in 1999 was by no means inevitable (Paul Collier notes that "the best predictor of whether a country will be in civil war next year is whether it is at civil war now" (Collier 2003, 79)). South Sudan was indeed in a conflict trap. What seems to have sprung the latch – aside from an improving socio-political climate – was the NSCC's determination to host and implement an intertribal reconciliation process. In this case, a civil society leader was attempting to bridge a social divide.

Apart from the fact that the NSCC represented one of the few genuine voices of the people, religious peacemakers are able to – in the words of David Little (2007, 438) – supply a theology of peace: "an interpretive framework that begins with the conviction that the pursuit of justice and peace by peaceful means is a sacred priority." According to Little (440), religious peacemakers are also frequently seen as a trustworthy and neutral third party, suitably detached from the fray, and equally connected with both political elites and ordinary people. Though this has not always been the case in South Sudan (see *supra note* 63), the NSCC, which represented a range of denominations and ethnicities, managed to preach a coherent and credible message on southern peace and reconciliation. And people listened.

The Wunlit Conference is South Sudan's best-known and most thoroughly studied peace conference (Bradbury, Ryle, Medley, & Sansculotte-Greenidge 2006, 31). Backed by international church partners, and supported by both the SPLA/M and the grassroots, the initiative was fully designed and orchestrated by the NSCC (Bradbury, Ryle, Medley, & Sansculotte-Greenidge 2006, 41). Church leaders facilitated both traditional and Western conflict resolution methods in a format that emphasized "people-to-people" participation (Unger & Wils 2007, 22; Bradbury, Ryle, Medley, & Sansculotte-Greenidge 2006, 46).[64] Trust was re-established as delegates communally participated in Christian and traditional religious ceremonies, and addressed grievances through dialogue (Ibid.). The decisions that the 360

[64] This is in contrast to the Akobo process which was dominated by political and military elites. Johnson writes: "the process begun at Wunlit has given public opinion a forum in which it can be expressed and brought to bear on local commanders and political leaders" (Johnson 2002, 172).

delegates agreed upon were implemented, and Nuer and Dinka leaders actually enforced the truce. Lowrey (1997, 146-147) concludes:

> It would be a major overstatement to credit the peace process and reconciliation effort only to the religious community. It would also be incorrect to think this peace process could have occurred without significant contributions from the religious community. It was the religious leaders, both African Traditional and Christian, who represented the beliefs and sentiments of the people. It was also those leaders who carried the power of the symbols and were vested with the responsibility of reconciling people with one another and reconciling the people with God and the spirits."

In referring to the power of symbols, Lowrey offers insight beyond what Christian churches did, and begins to answer why their bridge making was so successful. Christians leaders were able to craft a more compelling narrative than secular institutions – such as the SPLM/A – that had immersed themselves in previous peace talks. Richard Falk writes that secular thinking "lacks the deep historical foundations and universal roots of religion in the collective memories and traditions of peoples of varied background" (Falk 2003, 194).[65] According to the traditional Nuer worldview, for example, God (*kuoth*) is spiritually active among people, providing guidance through prayer, protection, and care giving.[66] A personal relationship exists between *kuoth* and people, and sin disrupts the harmony man can experience with God, fellow men, and with nature (Evans-Pritchard 1956, 315-318). It would seem, then, that any event or treaty designed to heal this relationship must acknowledge and ask the blessing of the creator. Writing about Wunlit, Vern Redekop (2007, 74) concludes that "in a situation where religion is a primary contributor to the most strongly held values, it is important to provide an environment in which religious based values and presuppositions find comfortable expression."

In addition to infusing the peace negotiations with a compelling narrative, the presence of Church leaders also introduced a higher authority into the equation. Concessions which, under normal circumstances, might appear too costly or humiliating are sometimes acceptable when

[65] Though the Yei accord broke the overt competition between the NSCC and SPLA, the SPLA/M maintained—under John Garang—a vaguely Marxist and entirely 'Garang-ist' ideology, which was about as fluid as the socio-political situation in South Sudan required (Young 2005, 539).

[66] In this respect, the Dinka and Nuer traditional religions are quite similar— especially as compared to the rest of the Nile Valley peoples, whose traditional religious beliefs revolve around ancestral spirits (see Lienhardt, 1961).

presented as a religious sacrifice: men often prefer martyrdom to disgrace (Evans-Pritchard 1940, 164; Luttwak 1994, 17).

A third advantage of a religious process was that the Church's recognized spiritual authority allowed negotiators to bypass spoilers as they reached across ethnic divides; in this case the military leadership whose capricious headship of the Akobo conference had undermined its success (Jenner 2000, 13). John Paul Lederach argues that mid-level community leaders have the "greatest potential" to establish a sustainable peacebuilding infrastructure, as these leaders relate both to grassroots movements as well as the ruling elite (Lederach 1997, 60). Because of their supposed moral authority, Church leaders were able to operate within this strategic social milieu, "functioning as a point of mediatory access between disillusioned grassroots communities and upper level military echelons (Brown 2008, 196).[67]

The Wunlit process is remembered as an "enormously" successful peace process that ultimately engaged all levels of society—from ordinary citizens to the military brass (Young 2007, 26). It is also considered a harbinger of the January 2002 Nairobi Declaration which brought to a formal conclusion the rivalry between Riek Machar's Nuer forces[68] and John Garang's SPLA and substantially curtailed South Sudan's internal civil war (Kelleher & Johnson 2008, 164; Johnson 2002, 109). The success of Wunlit was to bring South Sudan's bonding and bridging capital closer to equilibrium. At the same time it strengthened the southern cause for self-determination, and increased the SPLA/M's apparent legitimacy among interested Western powers (Brown 2008, 198).

Linking Capital : building global partnerships

This paper has shown how, at certain points during Sudan's civil war, Christian churches managed to shore up scarce reserves of social capital at a time when trust and social connections were, in many contexts, in short supply. As Christianity emerged as a mainstream belief system, bonding capital was strengthened within tribes. This occurred as the emerging Christian

[67] See also (Appleby 2001, 827).
[68] By this point the Nuer rebel movement was called the Sudan People's Defence Force (SPDF).

community worshipped together and came to believe in a common spiritual destiny, and as churches collaborated to provide community members with basic services. Bridging capital was also strengthened as the Church used its authority at both Kakuma and Wunlit to transcend ethnic divisions and pursue inter-tribal reconciliation.

Though not plumbed to great depth, it has also been argued that churches cultivated linking capital, the weakest form of capital on the sociological spectrum, which unites dissimilar people in disparate situations. Churches linked with faith-based NGOs (such as Norwegian Church Aid, DanChurch Aid, Christian Aid, and the Mennonite Central Committee) as well as religious groups to win financial and material support for clergy, Church members, and the greater Sudanese community. John Brewer and his colleagues write that "through these sorts of global connections, religious groups are able to encourage co-religionists from outside the country to expend resources that both address the private troubles of people affected by violence and transform them into public issues on a global stage" (2010, 1028).

Lasting political reform happens across networks. "The truly political role," writes Matthew Andrews (2008, 97), "requires someone with excellent relational skills and an ability to span organizational boundaries." Such an actor is "well known, liked and trusted, and [enjoys] high levels of social capital in his community" (107). Though Andrews refers to an individual actor, his reasoning applies equally to a large organization such as the NSCC. According to Jacki Wilson, who ran workshops in South Sudan with the United States Institute of Peace:

> The reputation of the New Sudan Council of Churches was that if you needed to get anything done in the south...the New Sudan Council of Churches was key… The SPLA and the SPLM— they were a military movement, not really a political movement…they had taken on this political role which in essence circumvented the role of the tribal leaders in many respects and pushed the tribal leaders to a less important role. But the New Sudan Council of Churches was good [and] bridged those gaps among the societies in the south (Brown 2008, 242).

It is clear from Wilson's observations that the NSCC filled a political void that proffered a significant amount of clout. This final section expands on this idea and explores how, in the waning years of Sudan's second civil war, the Church (particularly through the New Sudan Council of Churches) exploited its position as a central node in Sudanese society to engage far-

flung social networks and enlist the diplomatic support of the U.S. government— in effect, changing the course of Sudanese history.

Bayart (2000, 262) writes that church and religious movements are "a leading means by which sub-Saharan Africa integrates itself into the international system." In fact, a substantial amount of the NSCC's political prowess lay in its ties with international actors, both religious and secular, in addition to the social networks it cultivated in Sudan.[69] In addition to its close-knit and growing constituency at home, and unlike traditional religious groups which lacked both the material resources and international platform with which to voice their interests, the NSCC was able to exploit its contacts abroad to advocate on behalf of southern Christians (Boyle & Sheen 1997, 74). This ability to leverage resources, ideas, and information from formal outside institutions is, according to Woolcock (2000, 13) "a key function of linking social capital."

The Churches did not limit their advocacy to matters of faith, but also steeped themselves in matters of state. For example, in the early 2000s, as Sudan limped along in various peace negotiations between Khartoum and the SPLM/A, both the northern Government and rebel leader John Garang continued to insist upon the territorial integrity of Sudan. This was in direct contrast with the will of a majority of South Sudanese who were in favour of an independent state (Metelits 2004, 79). Thus, in March 2002 the Church produced the document *Let My People Choose*, which proposed an 'internationally supervised referendum' with 'clearly defined options, which would include independent statehood' (Let My People Choose 2002). According to Ashworth: "*Let my people Choose* was pivotal because shortly before that we had envoys from IGAD[70] telling us we would never get self-determination...just a few months later self determination was at the centre of the Machakos Protocol" (Ashworth 2011b).[71]

[69] Created in 1994, the Sudan Ecumenical Forum, composed of about 10 staff, became a key vehicle for providing external funding to the NSCC. The Forum was also active in advocacy, connecting the churches with international partners including the European governments as well as Canada, and the United States (Kelleher & Johnson 2008, 154).

[70] The Intergovernmental Authority on Development is an organisation of six eastern African countries that was actively involved in the negotiations that culminated in the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

[71] Signed in Machakos, Kenya on 20 July 2002, the Machakos Protocol was a signed agreement between the SPLA/M and the Government of Sudan on broad principles of government and governance. The Protocol was the first "chapter" in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

Where the NSCC was most successful in leveraging its linking capital was in its carefully cultivated ties with like-minded (i.e. evangelical) churches and NGOs within the West.[72] Starting in the late 1990s The NSCC developed especially close links with American evangelicals, in part through its skilful framing of the civil war as a religious conflict. According to Philip Jenkins (2002, 148-149), the South Sudanese "fell squarely within narratives of Christian persecution and martyrdom, which have traditionally been used as legitimizing and mobilizing devices for religiously-motivated actions." Journalist Rebecca Hamilton (2011) argues that the narrative was, in many ways, a true picture; the northern government had definitely attempted to Islamize the south. "But," she adds, "it was also a very useful framing of the conflict for getting the attention of key members of the U.S. Congress." It was a frame that became increasingly compelling following the events of September 11.[73]

Samaritan's Purse, a Christian relief and development organization, spearheaded efforts to place Sudan on the U.S. foreign policy agenda after one of its hospitals was bombed seven times by Khartoum (Phillips, 2001). They succeeded. President George W. Bush, who, shortly before entering office had declared that Africa "doesn't fit into the national strategic interests," would declare in 2001 that religious "persecution and atrocities in Sudan" would top his foreign policy agenda (New York Times, 2001). According to Eric Heinze (2007, 370-371),

> It was thanks to this sudden surge of U.S. involvement in the Sudan under the Bush administration that peace talks were allowed to move forward to end the North-South conflict...Ending Sudan's civil war, and with it the persecution of Christians in southern Sudan, would be the primary objective of U.S. foreign policy toward Sudan up until and even after the signing of the final North-South peace agreement on 9 January 2005.

In pursuing its policy of "constructive engagement," the U.S. would become one of the most important players in Sudan's recent history. Even today Sudan remains, despite a new

[72] Jonathan Agensky writes that "the Southern Sudanese insurgents instrumentally deployed a Christian frame for both tactical gain and, in the broader strategic context, for Western political and financial support" (Agensky 2010, 6). It is clear that both the SPLA/M and the NSCC instrumentalized each other, however, as churches were quite capable of using government connections to further their own agenda.

[73] It certainly helped that Khartoum's current government was known to have embraced and sheltered Osama Bin Laden in the early 1990s (Bodansky 2001, 231-245; Esposito 2002, 13-15).

administration, third in line after Afghanistan and Pakistan as the top recipient of U.S. aid (USAID 2011).

Conclusion

This paper has sought to fill a gap in the literature, studying how Sudan's most important civil society organization built social capital and Southern Sudanese unity ahead of the CPA. A primary aim of the study was to uncover the significant role of local Churches, and to understand both the extent of their contribution as well as how they managed to accomplish their goals. Rooted in social capital theory, the study followed a sociological logic, and concludes that the Church was successful in building and leveraging bonding, bridging, and linking capital— both for its own benefit, and for that of the Southern Sudanese people.

It is difficult to predict the future role the church will choose play as a civil society actor in South Sudan. One major question mark pertains to its relationship to the SPLM/A, with which it has long enjoyed a stable, yet uneasy relationship. It is helpful at this point to address the extent to which the NSCC acted independently of the SPLM/A. Many scholars have shown that in Africa, civil society tends to be dominated by the reigning central authority. Jean-Francois Bayart asserts that the state has been "set up *against* civil society" instead of evolving in conflict with it (Bayart 1986, 112).[74] And indeed, when scholars do recognize the Church as a political player, it is often conceived as an extension of the SPLM/A's will (Riehl 2001; Young 2005, 101). Eboe Hutchful offers a nuanced perspective, which is perhaps better fitted to the reality in South Sudan:

> Many central institutions of civil society - the church, trade unions, political parties, even the media - possess a dual character, capable in one setting of acting as mere ramparts of state power and in another as the spearhead of the will of the people and instruments of popular accountability (Hutchful 1995/1996, 73).

[74] This is arguably true of South Sudan, if we consider the SPLM/A to have been the de facto central government throughout the 1990s and afterwards. Johnson (2002, 76) writes: "the SPLA leadership learned the lessons of the first war extremely well and made the suppression of internal factions one of their initial political objectives—something they had in common with other more successful African liberation movements."

In other words, while the Church seems to have, under some circumstances, served the purposes of the "state"[75] quite well, it also appears to have at times challenged the SPLA/M government. In 1992, for example, the NSCC publicly called upon the UN and the international community to investigate both Government and SPLA/M human rights abuses (Boyle & Sheen 1997, 75). Michael Ouko, former Peace Programme Manager at the NSCC peace desk, explains:

> It was not our view to support the SPLA because even SPLA were committing certain atrocities which were against the NSCC values in human rights. There were some mistakes that were made by the SPLA and we stopped and told the SPLM, 'no you are wrong here and this one can't happen' (Ouko 2006).

Thus, although the SPLM/A executive probably expected the NSCC to function as the "spiritual wing of the Movement,"[76] by the mid-1990s, the churches demonstrated a determined independence and at times dared to contradict the regime (Brown 2008, 205).[77] Predictably, the SPLM/A came to regard the NSCC as a "haven for dissidents" and rivals (Rolandsen 2005, 131). According to Rolandsen (130):

> The core of the dispute has been NSCC unwillingness to succumb to SPLM/A control and the persistence of a right to pursue an independent agenda. The SPLM/A leadership interpreted this as something close to disloyalty, and saw the New Sudan Council of Churches as a competitor, not only among the Southern Sudanese, but also within the international community.

John Ashworth, who worked closely with and on behalf of the NSCC throughout the 1990s, says the Council was not always successful in changing SPLM/A behaviour, but did maintain steady pressure that produced results: "We didn't succeed every time. But we did succeed in some individual cases. We often engaged with people right up to [SPLM/A leader] Dr. John [Garang]. We advised them; we told them what we thought they should do" (Ashworth 2011b).

---

[75] Here I refer to the SPLA/M as a de facto "state."

[76] Wording attributed to SPLA/M leader John Garang who said that the NSCC would function as an auxiliary to his cause (African Rights 1995, 29).

[77] This put the lives of dissident church leaders in great jeopardy. In 1995, African Rights wrote that "Church leaders in the New Sudan...observe continuing repression against dissenters." As a result, it followed that "even the most courageous Church leaders have been selective in their criticisms, choosing not to name certain commanders responsible for abuses (African Rights, 1995).

Ashworth explains that two things happened after 2005, however. The first was a strong policy shift among donor states to focus on the ongoing Crisis in Darfur. According to Ashworth, while the churches recognized the suffering in Darfur, their top priority was CPA implementation. The opposing visions between the NSCC and its international partners led to a rift that was never been fully bridged. Second, Ashworth says that churches quite simply returned to their ecclesiastical duties. "I think you'll find parallels in South Africa after 1994," says Ashworth (2011b), referring to churches' fight against apartheid:

> After working so long on a common cause, against a common enemy, while their own churches were falling into disrepair...churches went back to their own diocese, to their own denominations to rebuild. While ecumenical respect continues—there hasn't been a falling out with each other—the priority has shifted to rebuilding their own churches.

And so, it is not clear whether churches will choose to enter the fray of South Sudanese politics, whether they will pull for government reforms, or – if left alone – will remain largely silent. Faced with dwindling support from international churches and faith-based organizations in light of the current calm, it is certainly the case that the Church no longer has the capacity it once commanded.

Nevertheless, Ulrich Mans and Osman Mohamed Osman Ali (2006, 1) write that a growing number of peacebuilding practitioners appreciate "the fact that religious actors have great potential to resolve conflict and decrease tensions," especially in post-conflict settings. As daily headlines proclaim instability and renewed conflict in South Sudan, it is evident that the success of Africa's newest state will depend at least in part on whether the Church, alongside other civil society actors, is able to play an ongoing role in shoring up desperately needed reserves of social capital.

Bibliography

Adwok, P. (2000). *The Politics of Liberation in South Sudan.* Kampala: Fountain Publishers.

African Rights. (1995). *Great Expectations: The Civil Roles of the Churches in Southern Sudan.* London.

Agensky, J. (2010, October). *Evangelical globalism and the internationalization of Sudan's civil war*. Retrieved April 25, 2011, from Academia.edu: http://cambridge.academia.edu/JonathanAgensky/Papers/316779/Evangelical_globalism_and_the_internationalization_of_Sudans_civil_war

Ahn, T., & Ostrom, E. (2002, August 29 - September 2). "Social Capital and the Second-Generation Theories of Collective Action: An Analytical Approach to the Forms of Social Capital." *Paper presented at the 2002 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association*. Boston, MA.

Andrews, M. (2008). Creating Space for Effective Political Engagement in Development. In S. Odugbemi, & T. Jacobson, *Governance Reform Under Real-World Conditions* (pp. 95-112). Washington DC: The World Bank.

Appleby, R. S. (2001). Religion as an Agent of Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding. In C. Crocker, F. Hampson, & P. Aall, *Turbulent Peace* (pp. 821-840). Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace.

Ashworth, J. (2011a, January 14). Advisor, Sudan Ecumenical Forum. (F. d. Lazaro, Interviewer). Retrieved January 18, 2011, from *Religion and Ethics Newsweekly*: http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/episodes/january-14-2011/sudan-referendum/7886/

Barrett, B., Kurian G., & Johnson, T. (2001). *The World Christian Encyclopedia: A Comprehensive Survey of Church and Religions in the Modern World*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Bayart, J.-F. (1986). Civil Society in Africa. In P. Chabal, *Political Domination in Africa* (pp. 109-125). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

— — — (2000). Africa in the World: A History of Extraversion. *African Affairs*, 217-267.

Bebbington, D. (1989). *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s.* London: Routledge.

Bediako, K. (2000). Africa and Christianity on the Threshold of the third Millenium: the religious dimension. *African Affairs*, 303-323.

Berman, B. (1998). Ethnicity, Patronage and the African State: The Politics of Uncivil Nationalism. *African Affairs*, 305-341.

Bodansky, Y. (2001). *Bin Laden: The Man Who Declared War on America.* New York: Random House.

Boswell, A. (2011, January 13). *Sudan: Will the North Survive if the South Secedes?* Retrieved January 24, 2011, from Time Magazine: http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2042218,00.html?xid=rss-mostpopular

Boyle, K., & Sheen, J. (1997). *Freedom of Religion and Belief: A World Report.* New York: Routledge.

Bradbury, M., Ryle, J., Medley, M., & Sansculotte-Greenidge, K. (2006). *Local Peace Processes in Sudan.* London: Rift Valley Institute.

Branch, A., & Mampilly, Z. (2005). Winning the War, but Losing the Peace? The Dilemma of SPLM/A Civil Administration and the Tasks Ahead. *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 1-20.

Brewer, J., Higgins, G., & Teeney, F. (2010). Religion and Peacemaking: A Conceptualization. *Sociology*, 1019-1037.

Brophy, M. (2003). *Progress to Universal Primary Education in Southern Sudan: a Short Country Case Study.* Paris: UNESCO.

Brown, E. (2008). The Road to Peace: The Role of the Southern Sudanese Church in Communal Stabilization and National Resolution. *PhD Thesis.* Retrieved January 5, 2010, from Edinburgh Research Archive: http://www.era.lib.ed.ac.uk/bitstream/1842/3260/1/EM%20Brown%20PhD%20thesis%2008.pdf

Colletta, N. J., & Cullen, M. L. (2000). *The Nexus Between Violent Conflict, Social Capital, and Social Cohesion: Case Studies from Cambodia and Rwanda.* Washington DC: The World Bank: Social Capital Initiative.

Collier, P. (2002). Social Capital and Poverty: A Microeconomic Perspective. In C. Grootaert, & T. v. Bastelaer, *The Role of Social Capital in Development: An Empirical Assessment* (pp. 19-41). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

— — — (2003). *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy.* Washington D.C.: World Bank.

Collins, R. O. (2008). *A History of Modern Sudan.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Crisp, J. (2000). A State of Insecurity: The Political Economy of Violence in Kenya's Refugee Camps. *African Affairs*, 601-632.

de Waal, A. (1998). Exploiting Slavery: Human Rights and Political Agendas in Sudan. *New Left Review*, 135-146.

Deng, F. M. (1984). *The Dinka of the Sudan.* Prospect Heights: Waveland Press.

— — — (2001). Sudan - Civil War and Genocide. *Middle East Quarterly*, 13-21.

— — — (1995). *War of Visions: Conflict of Identities in the Sudan.* Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press.

Deng, L. B. (2010). Social Capital and Civil War: The Dinka Communities in Sudan's Civil War. *African Affairs*, 231-250.

Duffield, M., Young, H., Ryle, J., & Henderson, I. (1995). *Sudan Emergency Operations Committee Consortium (SEOC): A Review.* Birmingham: Birmingham School of Public Policy.

DWS Country Programs: Kenya. (n.d.). Retrieved June 01, 2011, from The Lutheran World Federation: http://www.lutheranworld.org/What_We_Do/DWS/Country_Programs/DWS-Kenya.html

Ekeh, P. (1992). The Constitution of Civil Society in African History and Politics. In B. Caron, & A. Gboyega, *Democratic Transitions in Africa.* Ibadan: University of Ibadan Press.

Esposito, J. (2002). *Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Evans-Pritchard, E. E. (1940). *The Nuer: A Description of the Modes of Livelihood and Political Institutions of a Nilotic People.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

— — — (1956). *Nuer Religion*. London: Oxford University Press.

Falk, R. (2003). A Worldwide Religious Resurgence in an Era of Globalization. In F. Petito, & P. Hatzopoulos, *Religion in International Relations: The Return from Exile* (pp. 181-208). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Field, J. (2003). *Social Capital.* New York: Routledge.

Flint, J. (2001). *Consolidating the Process.* Unpublished.

Fluehr-Lobban, C. (1990). Islamization in Sudan: A Critical Assessment. *Middle East Journal*, 610-623.

Foley, M., Mcarthy, J., & Chaves, M. (2001). Social Capital, Religious Institutions, Poor Communities. In S. Saegert, J. Thompson, & M. Warren, *Social Capital and Poor Communities* (pp. 215-245). New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Fox, J., & Sandler, S. (2004). *Bringing Religion Into International Relations.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Franke, S. (2005). *Measurement of Social Capital Reference Document for Public Policy Research, Development, and Evaluation.* Ottawa: Government of Canada.

Freston, P. (2001). *Evangelicals and Politics in Asia, Africa and Latin America.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fukuyama, F. (1999, October 1). *Social Capital and Civil Society.* Retrieved January 11, 2011, from International Monetary Fund: http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/seminar/1999/reforms/fukuyama.htm

— — — (2001). Social capital, civil society and development. *Third World Quarterly*, 7-20.

— — — (2003). *Social Capital.* New York: Routledge.
(2002). Social Capital and Development: The Coming Agenda. *SAIS Review*, 23-37.

Geertz, C. (1973). The Integmtive Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil. In C. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (pp. 255-310). New York: Harper.

Gellner, E. (1994). *Conditions of Liberty: Civil Society and its Rivals.* London: Hamish Hamilton.

Gifford, P. (1998). *African Christianity: It's Public Role.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Goodhand, J., Hulme, D., & Lewer, N. (2000). Social capital and the political economy of violence: a case study of Sri Lanka. *Disasters*, 390-406.

Goss, K. (2000). *Better Together.* Cambridge: John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard.

Grootaert, C., & Bastelaer, T. v. (2001). *Understanding and Measuring Social Capital: A Synthesis of Findings and Recommendations From the Social Capital Initiative.* Washington DC: World Bank.

Hamilton, R. (2011, January 14). Journalist. (F. d. Lazaro, Interviewer). Retrieved January 18, 2011, from *Religion and Ethics Newsweekly*: http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/episodes/january-14-2011/sudan-referendum/7886/

Hart, R. (2002). The Spirituality of Christians in South Sudan. Lampeter, Wales, United Kingdom: University of Wales.

Hatzopoulos, P., & Petito, F. (2003). *Religion in International Affairs: The Return from Exile.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hearn, J. (2007). African NGOs: The New Compradors? *Development and Change*, 1095-1110.

Heft, M. (2004). Tribe or Nation?: Nation Building and Public Goods in Kenya versus Tanzania. *World Politics*, 327-362.

Heinze, E. (2007). The Rhetoric of Genocide in U.S. Foreign Policy: Rwanda and Darfur Compared. *Political Science Quarterly*, 359-383.

Hintjens, H. (1999). Explaining the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 241-286.

Human Rights Watch. (1994). *Civilian Devastation: Abuses by All Parties in the War in Southern Sudan.* New York: Human Rights Watch Africa.

— — — (2002). Muslim-Christian Conflict in Sudan. In L. Gearon, *Human Rights and Religion* (pp. 249-261). Brighton: Sussex Academic Press.

Hutchful, E. (1995/1996). The Civil Society Debate in Africa. *International Journal*, 54-77.

Hutchinson, S. (1996). *Nuer Dilemmas: Coping with Money, War, and the State.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

— — — (2000). Nuer Ethnicity Militarized. *Anthropology Today*, 6-13.

— — — (2001). A Curse from God? Religious and Political Dimensions of the Post-1991 Rise of Ethnic Violence in South Sudan. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 307-331.

— — — (2005). Spiritual Fragments of an Unfinished War. In N. Kastfelt, *Religion in African Civil Wars* (pp. 28-53). London: Hurst and Company.

Hutchinson, S., & Jok, J. M. (1999). Sudan's Prolonged Second Civil War and The Militarization of Nuer and Dinka Ethnic Identities. *African Studies Review*, 125-145.

Idris, A. (2005). *Conflict and Politics of Identity in Sudan.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Jaafar, J. (2010). *The Future Direction of Islam in South Sudan after the Referendum: a Critical Interpretation and Suggestions.* Riyadh: Juba University South Sudanese Muslim's Staff Association.

Jenkins, P. (2002). *The Next Christendom.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jenner, H. (2000). *When Truth is Denied, Peace Will Not Come: The People-to-People Peace Process of the New Sudan Council of Churches.* Cambridge, MA: Collaborative for Development Action.

Johnson, D. (1981). The Future of the Southern Sudan's Past. *Africa Today*, 33-41.

— — — (1994). *Nuer Prophets.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

— — — (2002). *The Root Causes of Sudan's Civil Wars.* Oxford: James Currey.

Kagitcibasi, C. (1997). Individualism and Collectivism. In J. Berry, Y. Poortinga, J. Pandley, P. Dasan, T. Saraswathi, M. Segall, et al., *Handbook of Cross-Cultural Psychology* (pp. 1-50). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Kassimir, R. (2003). The Catholic Church in Uganda. In R. Kassimir, *Readings in African Politics* (pp. 148-160). London: School of Oriental and African Studies.

Keen, D. (2000). Incentives and disincentives for violence. In D. Malone, & M. Berdal, *Greed and Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil Wars* (pp. 19-42). Boulder: Lynne Rienner.

Kelleher, A., & Johnson, M. (2008). Religious Communities as Peacemakers: A Comparison of Grassroots Peace Processes in Sudan and Northern Ireland. *Civil Wars*, 148-172.

Keller, E. (1996). Structure, Agency and Political Liberalisation in Africa. *African Journal of Political Science*, 202-216.

Kiplagat, B. (1998). Is mediation alien to Africa? *Ploughshares Monitor*.

Landolt, P., & Portes, A. (1996). The Downside of Social Capital. *The American Prospect*, 18-21.

Lederach, J. P. (1997). *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies.* Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace.

— — — (2001). Civil Society and Reconciliation. In C. Crocker, F. Hampson, & P. Aall, *Turbulent Peace* (pp. 841-854). Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace.

Leonard, R. & Bellamy, J. (2010). The Relationship Between Bonding and Bridging Capital Among Christian Denominations Across Australia. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, 445-459.

Lesch, A. (1998). *The Sudan – Contested National Identities.* Oxford: James Currey.

Let My People Choose. (2002, March 6). Retrieved June 9, 2011, from The South African Catholic Bishop's Conference: www.sacbc.org.za/docs/denis/Let%20my%20people%20choose.doc

Lienhardt, G. (1961). *Divinity and Experience: The Religion of the Dinka.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Little, D. (2007). *Peacemakers in Action.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Longman, T. (2001). Christian Churches and Genocide in Rwanda. In O. Bartov, & P. Mack, *In God's Name: Genocide and Religion in the 20th Century* (pp. 139-160). New York: Berghahn Books.

Lovink, A. (2010, July 30). The Adaptation of South Sudanese Christian refugees in Ottawa Canada: Social Capital, Segmented Assimilation and Religious Organization. *PhD Thesis*. Ottawa: University of Ottawa.

Lowrey, W. (1995). *Sudan Case Study: Jikany-Lou Indigenous Peace Process.*

— — — (1997). Passing the Peace: The Role of Religion in Peacemaking Among the Nuer. In A. Wheeler, *Land of Promise: Church Growth in Sudan at War.* Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa.

— — — (1996, December 7). Passing the Peace: The Role of Religion in an Indigenous Peace Process among the Nuer of Sudan. *PhD Thesis*. Cincinatti, USA.

Lutheran World Federation. (2011, May 23). Correspondence.

Luttwak, E. (1994). The Missing Dimension. In D. Johnston, *Religion: The Missing Dimension of Statecraft* (pp. 8-19). New York: Oxford University Press.

Mans, U., & Ali, O. M. (2006). *Stuck in Change.* The Hague: Clingendael Institute.

Metelits, C. (2004). Reformed Rebels? Democratization, Global Norms, and the Sudan People's Liberation Army. *Africa Today*, 65-82.

Minear, L. (1990). *Humanitarianism Under Siege: A Critical Review of Operation Lifeline Sudan* . Lawrenceville: Red Sea Press.

Morton, J. (2001). *Religious Peacebuilding Interventions in Sudan: A Comparison of Intrareligious and Interreligious Conflict Resolution Initiatives.* Fairfax: George Mason University.

Murphy, P. (2006). The Delicate Practice of Supporting Grassroots Peacebuilding in Southern Sudan. *Accord (#18).*

New York Times. (2001, May 4). Bush Condemns Suppression Of Religious Freedom in Sudan. *The New York Times*.

Nikkel, M. (1992). Aspects of Contemporary Religious Change among the Dinka. *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 78-94.

— — — (1997). The Cross as a symbol of regeneration in Jieng Bor society. In A. Wheeler, *Land of Promise: Church Growth in a Sudan at War.* Nairobi: Paulines Publications.

OECD. (2010). *Social Capital, Human Capital, and Health: What is the Evidence?* Paris: OECD.

— — — (2001). *Dinka Christianity: The Origins and Development of Christianity Among the Dinka of Sudan, with Special Reference to the Songs of Dinka Christians.* Nairobi: Paulines Publications.

Onyx, J., & Bullen, P. (2000). Measuring Social Capital in Five Communities. *The Journal of Applied Behavioural Science*, 23-42.

Ouko, M. (2006, January 18). Peace Programme Manager, NSCC peace desk. (E. Brown, Interviewer).

Ouko, M. (2006). In E. Brown, *The Road to Peace: The Role of the Southern Sudanese Church in Communal Stabilization and National Resolution*, 205 (see above).

Panth, S. (2010, June 3). *Bonding vs. Bridging*. Retrieved February 4, 2011, from The World Bank: http://blogs.worldbank.org/bonding-vs-bridging

Phillips, J. (2001). *To Stop Sudan's Brutal Jihad, Support Sudan's Opposition.* Washington DC: Heritage Foundaton.

Portney, K., & Berry, J. (1999). *Neighborhoods as Social Capital.* Retrieved June 11, 2011, from Tufts University: http://ase.tufts.edu/polsci/faculty/portney/socialcap.pdf

Putnam, R. (2000a). *Better Together: Religion and Social Capital.* Cambridge: John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard.

— — — (2000b). *Bowling Alone.* New York: Simon & Schuster.

— — — (2004). Education, Diversity, Social Cohesion and "Social Capital". *Meeting of OECD Education Ministers.* Dublin: OECD.

Quinn, F. (2002). *Marc Nikkel*. Retrieved May 25, 2011, from Dictionary of African Christian Biography: http://www.dacb.org/stories/sudan/nikkel2_marc.html

Ranger, T. (2008). *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Africa.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Redekop, V. (2007). Reconciling Nuers with Dinkas: A Girardian approach to Conflict Resolution. *Religion*, 64-84.

Riehl, V. (2001). *Who is Ruling in South Sudan?: The Role of NGOs in Rebuilding Socio-political Order*. Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet.

Rolandsen, O. (2005). *Guerrilla Government: Political Changes in the Southern Sudan during the 1990s.* Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikaninstitutet.

Sanneh, L. (2001). A Resurgent Church in a Troubled Continent. *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 113-118.

Sanneh, L., & Carpenter, J. (2005). *The Changing Face of Christianity: Africa, the West, and the World.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Schomerus, M., & Allen, T. (2010). *Southern Sudan at Odds with Itself.* London: London School of Economics.

Thomas, S. M. (2004). Building Communities of Character: Foreign Aid Policy and Faith-Based Organizations. *The SAIS Review*, 133-148.

Unger, B., & Wils, O. (2007). *Systemic Conflict Transformation and Inclusive Governance in Southern Sudan.* Berlin: Berghof Foundation for Peace Support.

UNHCR. (2003). *2004 Supplementary Appeal for Sudan: Preparatory Activities for the Repatriation and Reintegration of Sudanese Refugees.* UNHCR.

USAID. (2011, January 27). *Sudan*. Retrieved June 11, 2011, from http://www.usaid.gov/locations/sub-saharan_africa/countries/sudan/

Verdirame, G. (1999). Human Rights and Refugees: The Case of Kenya. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 54-77.

Washburne, S. (2010, May 12). *Legitimacy, Identity and Conflict: The Struggle for Political Authority in Southern Sudan, 2005-2010.* Retrieved June 7, 2011, from The Exeter Research and Institutional Content archive: https://eric.exeter.ac.uk/repository/bitstream/handle/10036/106777/WashburneS.pdf?sequence=2

Welch, M., Sikkink, D., Sartain, E., & Bond, C. (2004). Trust in God, Trust in Man: The Ambivalent Role of Religion in Shaping Dimensions of Public Trust. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 317-343.

Werner, R., Anderson, W., & Wheeler, A. (2000). *Day of Devastation, Day of Contentment: The History of the Sudanese Church Across 2000 Years.* Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa.

Wilson, J. (2007, January 25). Senior Program Officer, United State Institute for Peace. (E. Brown, Interviewer).

Woolcock, M. (2001). The place of social capital in understanding social and economic outcomes. *Isuma: Canadian Journal of Policy Research*, 65-88.

Woolcock, M., & Narayan, D. (2000). Social Capital: Implications for Development Theory, Research, and Policy. *World Bank Research Observer*, 225-249.

World Bank. (2011). *Social Capital and Civil Society*. Retrieved January 10, 2011, from World Bank: http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/EXTSOCIALCAPITAL/0,,contentMDK:20185263~menuPK:418213~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:401015~isCURL:Y,00.html

World Council of Churches. (2011 July). *South Sudan*. Retrieved July 28 2011, from http://www.oikoumene.org/en/member-churches/regions/africa/south-sudan.html

Young, J. (2005). John Garang's Legacy to the SPLM/A, the Peace Process, and the South. *Review of African Political Economy*, 535-548.

— — — (2007, May 30). *Sudan IGAD Peace Process: an evaluation.* Retrieved October 30, 2010, from Christian Michelsen Institute: www.cmi.no/sudan/doc/?id=890

— — — (2005). Sudan: A Flawed Peace Process Leading to a Flawed Peace. *Review of African Political Economy*, 99-113.

Appendix 1: Personal Interviews

Ashworth, J. (2011b, January 22). Advisor, Sudan Ecumenical Forum.

Dallalah, A. (2011, March 15). (Fmr) National Relief Coordinator, Catholic Church in Sudan.

Elkazin, Tag. (2010, October 22). President, Sub-Saharan Centre.

Gai, P. (2011, March 10). Nuer Evangelist.

Lagos, J. (2008, February 20). Assistant Bishop, Africa Inland Church of Sudan.

Ouko, M. (2010, October 22). Programme Officer, Dan Church Aid.

Purekal, T. (2011, January 29). Program Manager, Catholic Relief Services.

Rees, R. (2011, March 15). Pan Africa Advocacy Co-ordinator, CAFOD.

Tibi, P. (2008, February 26). Chairman, Sudan Council of Churches.

Wilson, J. (2011, January 26). Senior Program Officer, United States Institute for Peace.

Yousif, H. (2008, February 19). Sheikh and community leader (Khartoum).