BIRTH OF A STATE: RETHINKING SOUTH SUDANESE COLLECTIVE IDENTITY THROUGH IDENTITY ANCHORS

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Abstract: Following the independence of South Sudan in 2011, the coherence of South Sudanese "national" identity has come into question. Before the Southern secession, Northerners were united by a common language and religion, but Southerners did not have this uniting reality. For this reason, scholars now wonder whether there is a collective South Sudanese identity because the *sine qua non* of unity among South Sudanese tribes was a collective opposition to Northern Sudan. However, the present article defends a collective South Sudanese identity based on how "nation-building" has been undertaken historically. It also argues that tribal diversity in itself does not negate the presence of a South Sudanese collective "national" identity because internal tribal divisions are a global phenomenon and "tribal" and "national" identities are *activated* contextually.

Keywords: *Sudan; South Sudan; tribal identity; national identity; nation; pluri-national state; nation-state; nation-building*

Introduction

The failure to properly conceptualise the problematics of identity in Sudan from 1956 on has led to divisive governance catastrophes (Deng 1995; Wai 1980; Okeny 1991). Ignored or downplayed by the ruling elites, the failure became pivotal to the two Sudanese civil wars (Sharkey 2008). Although Northern, Eastern, Western and Southern Sudan had somehow defined themselves ethnically and geographically (Shepherd 1966), the main identity divide that would define the history of Sudan from Sudan's independence on 1 January 1956 to South Sudan's independence on 9 July 2011, was the North-South [Arab-African] contradiction. Northern Sudan was defined as Arabic and Islamic, and the South was defined as African and traditionalist (animist in anthropological terms). These identity distinctions have been

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criticised as uncritically totalising because the differences between Northern Sudanese and Southern Sudanese were (and still are) a complex socio-cultural entanglement (Deng 1973; Idris 2005) contrary to the way they were politicised and sentimentally embraced by Northerners and Southerners (see Yangu 1966; Albino 1970). In a speech held in London, UK, in 2002, John Garang, the former leader of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement and Army (SPLM/A), gave an example that epitomises the complexity of North-South contradictions. In 1983, a Northern military officer, who knew that Garang had recently visited Southern Sudan, asked, "*Yaah John, jitu Sudan miteen*" (John, when did you come to Sudan)? (Askou100 2014 [2002]: 14:24). Since Southern Sudan was still a part of Sudan, the question posed to Garang revealed an unconscious perception of Southern Sudanese as "foreigners" or not Sudanese enough. While Southern Sudanese also employed their othering consciousness against Arab Sudanese as portrayed in SPLA revolutionary songs, this othering was explicit. In the mid-1980s, some revolutionary songs urged Prime Minister Sadiq El-Mahdi to return to "Gezira" from where his ancestors are supposed to have emigrated (see Garang 2019a: 106).

Although Southern Sudanese identified as Africans and Northerners as Arabs, Idris (2005) and Deng (2004) aver that most Arab Sudanese are of both African and Arab ancestry. The genealogical reality of Sudanese identities was therefore considered more complex than the simplistic exclusivity with which Southerners and Northerners operationalise them. As Deng (2004: 1) has argued, the African-Arab "dichotomy is an oversimplification, for the majority in the North are non-Arabs, although Muslims." Nonetheless, a sense of a *collective identity* developed in Southern Sudan and Northern Sudan as state policies either created identity differences or exaggerated existing ones (Deng 2004; Warburg 1968). Without a common language and culture, Southern Sudanese minimised this shortcoming by downplaying their tribal differences in order to bolster a liberatory cause as "Southern Sudanese" (Nyaba 2016). Therefore, Southern Sudanese-ness was concretised as a collectivising socio-political reality against the North's power monopoly, the economic marginalisation of the South, and the oppression of Southern Sudanese. Consequently, when South Sudan seceded from Sudan on 9 July 2011, scholars wondered about the essence of South Sudanese "national identity" (Jok 2011; Zambakari 2015). According to Lokosang (2010), as the possible secession of Southern Sudan neared, tribes in the Greater Equatoria became increasingly wary of a possible Jieeng political

and economic hegemony. But analysts viewed tribal conflicts (Young 2005) as the major threat to an independent South Sudanese "nation." Thus, anxiety about ethnic hegemony and tribal conflicts made scholars sceptical of the uniting capacity of "South Sudanese-ness" after secession. Since "Southern Sudan" was forged by Anglo-Egyptian colonialists from a disparate collection of tribes (Willis 2005), its uniting and collectivising capacity (or incapacity) after secession became an important scholarly question.

Therefore, the present article intends to problematise what has become a received opinion by South Sudan's scholars: that (1) South Sudanese identity has not been consistently expressed and that it only existed as an oppositional identity (Jok 2011); and (2) that the then quest for independence was prompted by grievances against Khartoum because of discriminatory practices in state job allocations (Willis 2015). The article will contend that Southern Sudan/South Sudanese collective identity may be theoretically defensible if rationalised within existing "nation-building" and state-building theories (see the section on "Tribe, Tribalism, Nation, Nation-State, and Pluri-national States" below). Other issues in this article are: A Note on Methodology; Nation-Building, Collective Consciousness and Collective Identity in the Sudan; South Sudanese Collective Identity: Negative and Oppositional; Rethinking South Sudanese Collective Identity; Activation of Identity Anchors; and Conclusion.

A Note on Methodology

The present article uses archival records, memoirs by South Sudanese politicians, political and historical literature on Sudan and South Sudan, and state-building literature. Both scholarly and grey literature has been used. Having been a political commentator for over fifteen years on Sudanese and South Sudanese issues, the author has also used ethnographic observations collected in community meetings, social media debates, community leadership meetings, and local politics. With this ethnographic waiting fields (Manny and Morgan 2015: 172), the author is assuming a situated knowledge (Shiner 1982). This epistemological situatedness and the fact that the author is defending an argument, may make some contentions advanced in the article appear methodologically problematic. Against some scholarly positions for instance, the article contends that internal ethnic differences in South Sudan may undermine unity, but they do not, necessarily, undermine a collective South Sudanese identity.

Tribe, Tribalism, Nation, Nation-State, and Pluri-national States

Society uses various indices of differentiation (Gilroy 1993) to create identity groupings. In the present article, these indices will be referred to as identity *anchors*. Using the concept of "anchors" suggests a theoretical commitment to constructionism. According to constructivists, identities are socially constructed (Hacking 2000) so they need not have existed as currently defined (Mallon 2007: 94). The word "anchor" is therefore intended to show that identities are contingent; they can be abandoned or transformed according to circumstances (Gergen 1999). Social psychologists call this dialectic identity *activation* (Stets and Burke 2000). As an identity becomes activated, it becomes more salient than identities that have not been activated. Tribalism, for instance, may be used to activate a tribal identity and regionalism can be used to activate a regional identity. The activation of regional and tribal identities will be revisited later because of their relevance to South Sudanese identity realities. It is important to note that relevant identities are not all activated, necessarily, at the same time. However, identities that have not been activated maybe activated over previously activated ones (see the section on "Identity Activation"). Below is a brief analysis of relevant identity anchors. This, admittedly, will not be an exhaustive analysis of these anchors for the analysis will only help the reader to know what these anchors mean whenever they are used in the present article.

Tribe and Its Effects

According to Bluntschli (2000), a tribe is a historical construct. However, the intimate historical and genealogical way Africans relate to their tribal identities makes the constructivist nature of tribal identities appear ludicrous. As Eisenstadt (2007) and Morgan (1877) have argued, a tribe is usually a general claim about a common history of descent. Unlike "political organisation," which creates social relations through territory and property, tribe is a "social organisation" that connects people through kin or gens (Morgan 1877: 61). This will be an important theoretical distinction because in South Sudan after independence tribal organisations and affiliations have become stronger and more binding than political organisations (Kuol 2020). During a panel discussion at a South Sudanese conference in Des Moines, Iowa, in 2017 audience members seemed puzzled when the author argued that there is nothing *natural* about our tribal identities. Objections were also raised on another occasion during the same conference when the author

discussed the constructivist nature of tribal identities with a group of conference attendees. The "history of descent" made the author's interlocutors and the audience passionately naturalise tribal identities. This naturalised power of tribal relations makes the social and political operationalisation of tribe—mostly referred to as *tribalism*—complex yet problematic. While tribalism features negatively in scholarly and popular usage, it is not always negative. As Luka B.D. Kuol (2019: 17) has argued in terms of the effects of ethnic diversity in civil wars, "There is [a] growing but limited empirical evidence that suggests a positive association between ethnic diversity and cultural differences and the incidence of civil wars." What then is tribalism?

According to Mafefe (1971), tribalism is (1) a way in which people organise themselves into tribes, and (2) a strong sense of loyalty to a tribe (Mafefe 1971). While tribalism in sense 1 and 2 is not problematic *per se*, it can nonetheless cause divisions and conflicts over power and resources (Garang 2019b) when it has been politicised (Mafefe 1971; Kuol 2019). Tribalism as a loyalty to a tribe [2] makes tribe more important than loyalty to a country ("nation"). This is not surprising because tribes predate modern African "nation-states" that were initiated by the inter-European imperial conference of 1884 (Akol 2016). As tribes emphasise tribal loyalties, a country is subjected to ethnic discord as tribes compete for state resources or safety against other tribes (Johnson 2016). In South Sudan, tribal loyalties have exacerbated corruption (Johnson 2016; Kuol 2020) and caused major tribal conflicts in 1991 and 2013 (Calissendorff et al. 2019). Therefore, tribalism may cause ethnic divisions and compromise the development of a coherent sense of "nationhood."

The civil war, which erupted in South Sudan in December 2013 (Kuol 2020) between forces loyal to President Salva Kiir and former Vice President Riek Machar, had tribal loyalty as a scalar factor. The war started due to the failure of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) to resolve internal political differences including leadership succession (Johnson 2016; Kuol 2020). However, South Sudan descended into an ethnic war when the then national army, SPLA, split between Nuer forces loyal to Riek Machar and Jieeng forces loyal to President Salva Kiir. While the army and the civil population had little if anything to do with factors leading to SPLM's internal woos and the eventual civil war, the people of South Sudan would face the dangers of politicised tribalism. In South Sudan, as it is in other countries with diverse populations, leaders do not have to sensitise fellow tribefolks

for support because tribal allegiance, when politicised, comes by default.

However, the concept of *tribe* has a problematic colonial history that is important to emphasise. The divisiveness one finds in Africa may not be something inherent in African tribal systems. There are important cases in which colonialists exacerbated tribal divisions (see Taiwo 2014). During the European colonisation of Africa, tribe was instrumentalised by colonialists and imperial anthropologists to culturally immobilise Africans as "savages" in a fixed "primitive" state (Wa Thiong'o 2009). The colonial use of tribe facilitated administrative control and worsened existing ethnic divisions. The creation of the "no-man's land" between Jieeng and Nuer in South Sudan is one such example (Pendle 2017).

Jieeng and Nuer are considered traditional enemies, but they still had common grazing areas, inter-married and had cultural exchanges. According to Pendle (2017: 71), "the Bul Nuer contested British imaginings in their response. Instead of moving away from the Dinka, Nuer instead ran across the *toc* east to the Dinkalands for safety." Another colonial use of tribe, which will be important in the discussion of South Sudanese collective identity, is the choice of "tribe" over "nation" in classifying African ethnic groupings. According to Morgan (1877), tribe is lower in a periodisation of civilisations than a nation. Since colonisation was styled as a civilising mission, it may have appeared inappropriate to use the same social nomenclature for Europeans and Africans. As Ngugi Wa Thiong'o has argued, "A group of 250,000 Icelanders constitutes a nation, while 10 million Ibos make up a tribe" (Wa Thiong'o 2009: 17). Since Nuer and Jieeng (like Icelanders) may be considered "nations" but are mostly classified as "tribes," the issue of South Sudanese "national identity" becomes even more wanting of further analysis. But let us end this section with a few examples of how tribalism is not only a South Sudanese problem.

When tribal affiliation is politicised, tribes tend to emphasise differences and downplay similarities. In Africa, according to Anders Sjogren, "sub-national" territories, political identities and power, continue to be contested on the continent (2015: 163). For Ilorah (2009), tribe affects the allocation of resources and political representation. This means that resources and power distribution are not based on objective needs but on favouritism. In Kenya, tribe-based grievances in political representation and resource allocation have led to post-election violence in 2007 (Umollu and Williams 2018). In Guinea, smaller ethnic groups, united by geography, feel margin-

alised in political representation and economic allocation by larger ethnic groups like the Fulani and Manlinké leading to an increased division and a susceptibility to armed conflict (Bah 2016). In Nigeria (Onuoha 2013), Ethiopia (Hussein 2017), and South Africa (Baloyi 2017), tribal politics is manifested in territorialising, framing, and reframing ethnic differences leading to ethnic divisions or conflicts. Within state borders, therefore, tribe *activated* more and has become salient in Africa than attachments to the state or "national identity." However, to conceive African countries as "nations" may be problematic because African tribes, as noted above, may be considered "nations" in themselves (Akol 2016). So, what is a nation?

Nation in Historical Contexts

A nation is a construct and "an imagined community" (Anderson 2005). In the classic sense, it is an organic claim to a common history of descent (Morgan 1877) with the same history, the same culture and the same language (Pierson 2004). This definition of a nation is similar to the definition of the tribe offered in the previous section, which gives Wa Thiong'o concern noted above some credence. Contemporary "nations," however, are not Morganian nations as will be discussed below. Morganian nations do not have to have a defined territory or a governing state authority. Jews considering themselves a nation before the creation of Israel in 1948 would be an example. It is important to emphasise that European countries are not Morganian nations. According to Utz (2005: 622), England defined itself as a nation in the sixteenth century and imagined itself a sovereign people. In France, as Alesina, Giuliano and Reich (2013) have argued, French was a foreign language to half the children in France in 1870, so the French "national" culture and language preceded the existence of the French "nation." According to Connor (1990: 92), "most rural and small-town dwellers within France did not conceive of themselves as members of a French nation … as late as World War I." Connor has also shown how European immigrants to the United States in the 18th and 19th centuries only identified with the towns and the districts from which they originated. Homogenisation was also the case in Italy, as Massimo d'Azeglio, a co-founder of the united Italy, argued, "Italy has been made; now it remains to make Italians" (Alesina, Giuliano and Reich 2013: 2).

Therefore, what Europeans called a "nation" was a collection of various nations under one state authority. But if some of them succeeded in creating

unified, internally homogenous nations from disparate nations under one state authority, then it may be reasonable to talk of nation-states instead of "nations" because homogenisation was not created from a common historical descent in the Morganian sense but from a state authority homogenisation agenda. As Ingmar Karlsson (2009: 1) has argued, European countries, except for a few exceptions like Iceland that can brag of a long historical continuity, "began looking for common denominators for a nation to be." European "nations" were therefore formed through coercive education, conditional linguistic homogenisation, and conquests (Mbembe 2017). Nevertheless, it is possible to concede that some imperfect linguistic and sentimental cultural homogenisation materialised over a long period in Europe and therefore produced "nation-states." When some scholars argue that South Sudan has no collective "national identity" (see the section on "South Sudan Collective Identity") it must be made clear whether what is invoked is a Morganian nation or the nation as a politically homogenised people.

Nation-State and Pluri-National States

Unlike a nation in the classic Morganian sense, a nation-state has a legally defined citizenry (Abdulbari 2011), an acknowledged (or an unacknowledged) central sovereign state authority, a territory, a constitution, a government, and an army (Pierson 2004). If European states internally homogenised their constituting nations, then a nation-state may be an appropriate ascription for European polities. Postcolonial Africa, however, has never had homogenous nor state homogenised "nations." What Africa consists of are not nation-states because Africa has various nations that were arbitrarily lumped together by European imperial powers under central state authorities, a socio-political situation Jacob J. Akol (2016) has described as the "Burden of Nationality." Akol explains how members of the Azande people—a Morganian nation—found themselves divided by arbitrary borders to become "Sudanese" and "Congolese." Essentially, the African condition is similar to what Bolivia and Ecuador capture in their constitutions as "pluri-national states" rather than "nation-states" (Mignolo 2011: 72). Attempted post-independence cultural homogenisation, which is a failed and dangerous imitation of European "nation-building," has not materialised in Africa (Laakso and Olukoshi 1996). Yet, South Sudanese as a collective identity is questioned because of internal tribal divisions and the historical

condition under which it emerged (see the section below). Before presenting scholarly views on South Sudanese collective identity and the suggested rethinking of the said identity, it is important to analyse how South Sudanese collective consciousness has emerged as "Southern Sudanese."

"Nation-Building," Collective Consciousness and Collective Identity in the Sudan

Before Turko-Egyptians invaded the region that would become Sudan in 1820 (Gleichen 1889), various Islamic sultanates occupied Northern Sudan without a unifying state authority. Although these sultanates were independent polities, they had a common language (Arabic) and religion, (Islam) (Deng 1973). In the Southern region, according to Mawut (1995), African tribes lived with neither a unifying central authority nor a common language and religion. Contrary to a common scholarly argument that Mohammed Ali's invasion of Sudan introduced slavery, Beswick (2004) has argued that the presence of Jieeng [Dinka] slaves in the Western Sultanate in the late 1700s suggests that slavery predates the Turko-Egyptian state. According to Gliechen (1898: 141) the Sennar Sultanate raided the Shilluk kingdom in 1635 "and took a large number of slaves." It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the Turko-Egyptian state did not introduce slavery; it only commercialised it on a grander scale as a state enterprise.

Under this state-sanctioned slavery (Rolandsen and Daly 2016), Southern tribes faced a common existential threat (Wai 1980). Surprisingly, with no common culture, language, and religion, tribes who were traditionally enemies formed alliances against the Turko-Egyptians, the Mahdi ansars and the Anglo-Egyptian condominium. In the 1880s, according to Mawut (1995), a Nuer-Jieeng alliance attacked a government post in Bor and a Jieeng-Bari alliance attacked a government post at Rejab (Mawut 1995: 29). Harold Tangye (1910: 220) has also noted how Nuer tried to woo Jieeng into an alliance against Arab slave raiders. European travellers and Anglo-Egyptian officials also observed that Southern tribes had learned that Sudanese Arabs, Turks and Europeans were different both morally and administratively (Millais 1924: 176; Tangye 1910: 220). It must be noted, however, that forming alliances is not being interpreted here as the existence (at the time)

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[1] The Graduate Club was formed on 18 May 1918, and it became the Graduate's General Congress on 14 February 1938 (see Gaffer 2012)

of a collective sense of identity. What these alliances reveal, nonetheless, is a nascent collective consciousness that successive rulers of Sudan would later exacerbate.

Of these successive rulers, the Anglo-Egyptian condominium (1899–1956) would become the most important identity influencers. Initially suspicious of the "Moslemising influence" of Egyptians in Southern Sudan, Governor-General Wingate formed a Southern military corps [Equatorial Corps] in 1911 to replace Egyptian soldiers (Warburg 1968: 243). This imperial apprehension regarding an Islamic influence among Southern tribes would become the beginning of the *official* African-Arab divide. Although colonial linguistic and educational policies would later exacerbate the North-South cultural and "racial" divide (Sharkey 2008: 33), it is the *Southern Policy* of 1930 that amplified the identitarian and cultural divide (Mayo 1994; Rahim 1966). According to Cudsi (1978), Northern Sudanese intelligentsia of the *General Graduate's Congress*[1] considered the Southern Policy "divisive." They foresaw an independent, post-colonial Sudan with Southern Sudan as an integral part. What was "divisive" according to Southern tribes, however, was the history of slave raids and the Arab attitude toward Southerners. The cultural impact of the Southern Policy would be considerable even if scholars are still divided on the qualitative and quantitative impact of the policy. For sixteen years between 1930 and 1946, Southerners were administered, theoretically, on "indigenous customs, traditional usage and beliefs" (Albino 1970: 19). As Okeny has argued, the policy led to a "complete separation of the Negro provinces of the Sudan from the Arab provinces" (1991: 43). The policy did not, necessarily, lead to a "complete separation" because "some Northerners are Christians while some Southerners are Muslims" (Poggo 2002: 67). In other words, contacts and cultural exchanges between Northerners and Southerners became minimal, but they were not eliminated.

When the Sudanese quest for self-governance intensified in the mid-1940s, the impact of the Southern Policy became apparent. British officials and Southerners did not foresee harmonious relations between Southerners and Northerners in a united, post-imperial Sudan (Okeny 1991; Shepherd 1966). The decolonisation anxiety that swept the empire after World War II (Okeny 1991), as well as British geopolitical interests (Woodward 1980), would accelerate the British exit from Sudan before independence arrangements were complete. Additionally, the 1952 Egyptian revolution weakened the British imperial position and changed the political dynamic in both

Sudan and Egypt. The revolution ousted King Farouk and brought to power President Muhammad Mahgoub, who was sympathetic to the Sudanese independence from Britain. By 1953, the British government, through Sir James Wilson Robertson, then Governor-General, faced a nationalist Egyptian government and an emboldened Sudanese Arab nationalism. In this new dynamic, Southern Sudanese were not included in self-government arrangements between Arab Sudanese, Egyptians, and the British government in 1952 and 1953. Confronted by a resurgent Arab nationalism in Egypt and Sudan, Britain could not protect the interest of Southern Sudanese. Sir Robertson's words show Britain's seeming helplessness at the time: "What then do we do … would we desert the south or the *nazirs* (chiefs) if we give in? Have we the power to stand out any longer?" (quoted in Woodward 1980: 186, original emphasis). As the British colonial administration exited Sudan, Southerners were at the mercy of Egyptians and Sudanese Arabs and that did not assuage historical emotions among Southerners.

When Prime Minister Ismael El-Azhari assumed power in 1954 under the self-government statute of 1953 (Wai 1980), he intensified "Sudanisation"—the replacement of British officials by Sudanese. In the South, however, British officials were replaced by Arab Sudanese and that deepened Southern anxiety and suspicion. Between 1947 and 1954, Northern Sudanese pre-conceptualised Sudan as an Arabic and Islamic "nation." The Islamisation and Arabisation of the South, which Northern elites knew were resisted by Southerners (Shepherd 1966), would be operationalised by Arabs official in the South thanks to Sudanisation. To Northern elites, Islamisation and Arabisation were necessary "national-building" parameters; to Southerners, they were blatant de-Africanisation.

When the Equatorial Corps unit stationed in Torit was ordered North as part of Sudanisation, the soldiers mutinied on 18 August 1955. As a result, El-Azhari pushed independence arrangements forward and Southern elites were caught off guard. In order to secure Southern votes for independence in December 1955, El-Azhari assured Southerners that federalism would be given due consideration after independence (Albino 1970). After independence, however, El-Azhari overlooked the Southern call for a federal system. To Northern elites, federalism was a precursor to the independence of Southern Sudan. But Southerners "felt cheated" and aggrieved (Poggo 2009: 36), which led to increased discontent and frustration with Arab elites.

When Abdalla Khalil replaced El-Azhari in July 1956 (Albino 1970; Howell 1973), he institutionalised Islamisation through a new department of religious affairs. General Ibrahim Abboud, who assumed power through a bloodless coup in 1958, banned political parties and intensified the Islamisation agenda in Southern Sudan. Friday became the day of rest and Arabic became the official government language in Southern institutions (Poggo 2002).

Although some mutineers of the August 1955 Torit Mutiny intermittently attacked government forces, their military opposition to Khartoum was negligible. When Abboud's regime closed the democratic window that had opened between 1956 and 1958 and started targeting prominent Southern politicians, some of them fled to neighbouring countries. In order to articulate their grievances against Khartoum, they formed the Sudan African Closed District National Union (SACDNU). They would later change the name to Sudan African National Union (SANU) and organised the remnants of the Torit Mutiny into a resistance army called "Anyanya," a snake poison in a local Madi language. Sudan African National Union (SANU) politicians saw themselves as the voice of the oppressed Africans in Sudan (Kyle 1966). According to SANU, the Arabs' "solution to the multi-racialism in the Sudan is not the coexistence of both nationalisms but the upgrading of Arab-nationalism and the utter destruction of the grass roots of African nationalism" (SANU 1963: 14).

What exacerbated the North-South divide was not, necessarily, the existence of cultural and religious differences but the way various regimes in Sudan operationalised these differences for structural control. The post-colonial Sudanese state adopted methods that reawakened historical grievances and exacerbated contemporary ones. The Southern Sudanese and the Northern Sudanese would drift apart because of what John Garang would later refer to as a "monolithic" conceptualisation of Sudanese socio-political and religious realities. Having explained the historical conditions under which "South Sudanese-ness" has emerged, it is now important to look at scholarly views on South Sudanese collective identity.

South Sudanese Collective Identity: Negative and Oppositional

According to Zambakari (2015: 73), there is a "crisis of inclusive citizenship" in South Sudan, which he attributes to "the history of state formation in Sudan," the history presented above. As is common in countries

that have gone through civil war, there is a penchant in South Sudan for people who took part in the active armed liberation to assume they are more entitled to the spoils of the liberation struggle (Poggo 2013). Citizenship is a legal question (Abdulbari 2011), so I would rather rationalise what Zambakari is describing as a crisis of belonging (or of identity) rather than a crisis of citizenship (Marko 2015). According to Abdulbari, "A distinction should always be drawn between one's identity and citizenship. Identity can be shared by people belonging to several states while citizenship is shared only by those belonging to one" (Abdulbari 2011: 157). The South Sudanese Transitional Constitution, Chapter II (article 45, section 1) specifies how citizenship is acquired: "Every person born to a South Sudanese mother or father shall have an inalienable right to enjoy South Sudanese citizenship and nationality" (Republic of South Sudan 2011). Section 5 guarantees dual citizenship and section 6 argues that non-South Sudanese by birth can be naturalised to acquire citizenship.

Despite this constitutional clarity, there is still an issue of belonging (Marko 2015). Bishop Anthony P. Poggo (2013) demonstrates this entitlement and belonging question when he argues that diaspora returnees are insulted as cowards or *Jellabas* (a pejorative terms used to describe Sudanese Arabs). Since the constitution specifies the issues of citizenship, and no South Sudanese regardless of tribe is excluded from citizenship, the issue is, it is argued here, more about a sense of belonging, of entitlement, and of the unequal treatment of citizens based on tribe (Ilorah 2009). What complicates this sense of belonging is that the second civil war was dominated by the two major tribes, Jieeng and Nuer, so the question of who fought and who did not fight is easily tribalised and this is where the issue links to the questions of citizenship and a collective South Sudanese identity.

However, the question of belonging and of tribal affiliation as the primary source and anchor of identity within South Sudan continue to be used by scholars in order to problematise a collective South Sudanese national identity. For Frahm (2015: 253), the over 99% vote for Southern secession in January 2011, was "not tantamount to the existence of a collective national identity as the result is arguably more an expression of enmity towards the North than of Southern unity." Quoting the International Crisis Group, Arnold and LeRiche (2013: 227) argue that the vote for independence was based on a "collective opposition rather than any inherent harmony." In other words, any expression of a South Sudanese collective identity was/is

merely an expression of antagonism toward the North and therefore lacks a positive expression (Frahm 2012). For Jok, "The main glue that binds the country's multiple ethnicities together is the history of their struggle for freedom and collective opposition to the north" (Jok 2011: 2).

Southern Sudanese, as diverse as they were and lumped together by the colonial administration based on a lose racial ideology and a geographical location, invokes the Herskovitsian view of Africa being a geographical fiction (Mazrui 1963). In this Herskovitsian framework, Jok has argued that "South Sudan is only slightly more than a geographical expression" (2011: 2). Frahm has a similar assessment, arguing that Southern Sudan based on the 1956 border is "a partially fictitious construct" (2015: 255).

In addition to Southern Sudanese identity being an oppositional identity, and a construction based on a geographical expression, Southern Sudanese identity is also considered to be the making of a few educated Southern political elites who did not, necessarily, share the same consciousness with the Southern masses (Willis 2015; Howell 1973). Southern politicians, whether as part of the Sudanese government in Khartoum or during the wars of liberation—Anyanya (Poggo 2009) or SPLA (Arop-Madut 2006; Nyaba 1997)—did not agree on the question of unity or separation. This has given the impression that their demands for a separate Southern Sudan or their expression of "South Sudanese-ness" was shallow (Arnold and LeRiche 2013). Therefore, Arnold and LeRiche have argued that "the earlier frustration with Sudanese unity was not based on particularly coherent conceptualisation of 'Southern-ness', and certainly not on strong, consistently articulated desire for a separate state or even autonomy" (2013: 286). Questioning the idea of a collective Southern identity and the claim that Southerners were racially distinct from Northerners—something Southerners were keen to uncritically express for political and identity collegiality (see Yangu 1966; SANU 1963)—Justin Willis has argued that this sense of racial difference was a "consequence of a potent, cross-cultural, cocktail of assumptions about racial difference" (2005: 286). While the present author agrees with several issues advanced by the scholars cited above, he disagrees with other issues, as outlined in the section below.

Rethinking South Sudanese Collective Identity

While this may not be in line with some scholarly traditions although in line with critical scholarship demanding scholars to be reflexive (Buckner

2005), the author confesses that as a South Sudanese who has been writing about South Sudanese political and social issues for more than 15 years and as someone who interacts with South Sudanese on a regular basis, his disagreement with the scholars above may be motivated by political and ethical concerns. The author, loosely, considers some of the scholarly positions with which he disagrees problematic based on his claim to culturally situated knowledges (Shiner 1982) and historically Eurocentric discursive understanding of African realities. Therefore, in this section, the *rethinking* of South Sudanese-ness is discussed in the following sub-sections: "Southern-ness as Unity-in-Oppression," "Marginalisation Indicators" and "On Radical Difference."

Southern-ness as Unity-in-Oppression

Indeed, the author agrees that the overwhelming vote to secede from Sudan is based on a collective enmity and a collective opposition (Arnold and LeRiche 2013; Frahm 2011, 2015; Jok 2011). Given the history of suffering, oppression and marginalisation in Sudan, the secession vote makes clear what South Sudanese reviled: oppression and marginalisation. That essentially, is a position the author is willing to entertain in part because it has historical basis. This is "in part" because identities, in their genesis and existence, are oppositional (Todds 2014; Appiah 2005). What scholars call a positive identity (Gergen 1999; Mbembe 2017) is rather the way an identity is operationalised for non-discriminatory purposes in order to engender coexistence in the face of identity difference. That South Sudanese "national" identity is new and needs more development (Frahm 2011; Jok 2011) is a reasonable argument; however, this cannot be understood without its global and continental context. Even countries that have been in existence for a century and are believed to have a "positive" sense of identity still have a "not-x" about them. While the United Kingdom has been in existence for over 400 years, England (and English) continues to remain in a cultural and identity oppositional relation with Scotland (Scottish) and Ireland (Irish) (Clarke 2004).

Blumer (1958: 2) has argued in terms of race that to define another group is "by opposition, to define one's own group." For example, Germany defines itself against France and Switzerland even when there are ethnic Germans in France and Switzerland (Bluntschli 2000). Identities become negative when used to differentiate, or separate a given social group from anoth-

er. Appiah's (2005: 62-64) discussion of Robber's Cave experiment of in-group/out-group dynamics is illustrative. As William Conolly has argued, "identity requires difference in order to be, and it converts difference into Otherness in order to secure its own self-certainty" (quoted in Todds 2014: 75). According to Appiah, "The Malay came to know one another as such only after, and in opposition to, the arrival of the Chinese; the Hindu became Hindu only when the British created the class in the early nineteenth century" (2005: 64).

The author therefore challenges scholars to rethink or incorporate this framework in their analysis of South Sudanese collective identity because "I'm X" becomes coherent with "I'm not Z or Y"; and this is a general basis under which most, if not all identities, are constructed in history over time and transformed and retransformed into new, specific subjectivities (Gilroy 1991; Appiah 2005; Hacking 2000). The historical development of a collective consciousness as a function of a collective suffering has also been shown by Bah (2016) in Guinea. As Bah (2016: 297) has argued, "the memory of colonial experience shared by Guineans became increasingly reflected in their collective consciousness of themselves as Guineans during the 1950s." South Sudanese racialised and territorialised collective identity—racio-regionalism in Sudan—developed over many decades, if not centuries of a collective suffering. This argument is not new, however, at least not to social anthropologists. Ever since Fredrik Barth (1969) we know that ethnic identities are limited by self-ascriptions and ascriptions of others.

Similarly, that the Southern Sudanese quest for separation was *originally* an elite conceptualisation (Willis 2015) is a reasonable argument. However, historically conceptualised, the argument becomes *ad hoc* when one looks at the history of modern nation-state formation, as nation-states were not created by the masses but by the elites (Utz 2005; Alesina, Giuliano and Reich 2013). In the case of the South Sudanese, however, decades of collective suffering, oppression and marginalisation inculcated in their consciousness that they are a separate people and a socio-political collective (see Albino 1970; Yangu 1966; Wakoson 1998). South Sudanese experiences from their collective suffering in Sudan made separatism more than an elite consciousness. Howell (1973) and Shepherd (1966) have argued that the separatist sentiment in Southern Sudan spread to the Southern masses because of their resentment of Northern officials and merchants in the South. Admittedly, the Southern elite was the fount of Southern "nation-

alism" and without them, the referendum that eventually led to the 2011 secession of South Sudan might not have been possible. Besides, Southern resentment and resistance to foreigners existed a century before the colonial administration created "Southern Sudanese" (Howell 1973). Based on their collective suffering, it may be ethically problematic to contend that after state-sanctioned oppression and assimilationist policies between 1956 to 2011, "Southern-ness" was still an elite creation and not consistently expressed or shallow, as Arnold and LeRiche (2013) argue. A feeling of a collective "Southern-ness" entered the consciousness of the civil population in Southern Sudan from their collective suffering.[2]

The following examples, while not exhaustive, may help support the argument that unity-in-oppression made the desire to secede from Sudan more than a parochial, elites' consciousness. This unity-in-oppression has many dimensions. There were civilians who (1) were subjected to oppressive government policies but remained in Sudan; (2) civilians who fled to the neighbouring countries because of the indirect consequences of the war such as lack of food or health services; and (3) civilians who fled because of direct government actions such as the burning of villages and civilians' massacres (Colvin 1965; Yangu 1966). Alienating policies that helped make Southerners see themselves as a persecuted collective included the expulsion of Christian missionaries in the 1960s by General Abboud's dictatorship (Yangu 1966) as well as the burning of Christian churches in the 1960s (Colvin 1965) and the 1990s (Wöndu 2011). Admittedly, Southern politicians bolstered their nationalist claims regionally and internationally by using a sensational and polemical language when documenting government atrocities. While Southerners were divided by tribalism, they still considered themselves one [suffering] "people" (Gidron 2018; Sano 2019). The massacres of over 1,400 civilians in Juba and 76 in Wau in July 1965 (Colvin 1965)—figures disputed by the Sudanese government at the time— were used by Southern politicians to sensitise Southerners as an oppressed collective. Father Paslino Derale (1967), through a testimony of a Didinga man, a certain Lotede, stated that the Ugandan government allowed the

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[2] Government policies did not always bolster unity-in-oppression. As Bona Malwal (2014) has argued, every Northern soldier became the judge and the executioner and every Northern Sudanese with a gun felt entitled to kill Southern Sudanese. On 26 July 1955, for instance, civilians were killed in Nzara by the Sudanese army, armed Arab merchants, and the police (Poggo 2009).

Sudanese army to massacre Southern Sudanese along the Uganda-Sudan border. There were refugees in Moyo, Koboko and Agoro inside Uganda. Lotede argued that he had escaped the massacre by the Sudanese army as they burned villages and killed civilians. These reports were independently corroborated by missionary reports (Yangu 1966) and media reports such as the one provided by Ian Colvin of the *Sunday Telegraph* on 28 November 1965. Mr. Felix Onama, the Ugandan minister of defence, admitted that the Sudanese army dropped bombs inside Uganda where Southern Sudanese had taken refuge (Colvin 1965).

Southern Sudanese leaders have always known that *Southern separatism* was no longer confined to Southern elites. SANU called for a referendum to challenge this argument in the 1960s (SANU 1963). Lam Akol (2003), following "The Nasir Declaration: Why Garang Must Go Now," emphasised that separatism was deep-rooted in the consciousness of the civil population in Southern Sudan. Speaking to SPLA senior officers in the town of Yei (South Sudan) in June 2000, John Garang, the co-founder of SPLA—who preferred unity to separatism—told Riek Machar in 1997 in Gulu (Uganda) that almost a 100% of South Sudanese would vote for *independence* if a referendum was held in 1997 (New Sudan Vision 2013 [2000]: 9/12.33). Garang had acknowledged the separatist sentiment among Southern Sudanese five years earlier at the Chukudum convention (see Garang 1994). These examples challenge the argument that the over 99% vote for independence did not prove the existence of a collective consciousness. Regardless of how they were divided, Southerners have been consistent about separation from as early as the 1930s and 1940s (Warburg 1968). Southern marginalisation and oppression created unity-in-oppression that united them across political and ethnic divides. As Jok (2011) has argued, "In the referendum in January 2011, South Sudanese had demonstrated their ability to unite around a single purpose, all other disagreements notwithstanding" (2011: 3).

Therefore, the present author finds it unconvincing that a collective South Sudanese identity consciousness would dissolve after secession (Arnold and LeRiche 2013) and that grievances about exclusion and demands for a separate South Sudan were only about jobs (Willis 2015). After independence, "Southern Sudanese" (in Sudan) became "South Sudanese" (in an independent South Sudan) as a collective under a state's formalised citizenship constitutional provision (Abdulbari 2011). It is also important to note that contemporary "national identities" are, in a Morganian sense, political identities, not social associations. In other words, they are legal

identities (Abdubari 2011). Contemporary tribes on the other hand remain social associations *à la* Morgan. Since internal tribal divisions have existed throughout the history of South Sudanese struggle for freedom, it is unclear what would dissolve after independence. After independence, some identity anchors became more activated and salient. Among South Sudanese (as among other Africans), ethnic identities are activated, but between South Sudanese and other "nationalities" attachment to the state (citizenship) is activated. James Baldwin (2012) has argued that European-Americans and African-Americans living in France during the 1940s found a collectivising "American Nationality" that did not have the same collectivising power in the United States. When different identity labels are applied to people, according to Appiah (2005), different kinds of people come to *being* through the social and psychological effects of attachment to these identity anchors.

Marginalisation Indicators

As marginalisation has its ethical indicators, complaints by Southern Sudanese about senior political and administrative posts may be interpreted as marginalisation indicators. Jobs were symbolic because they form the obvious manifestation of inclusion-exclusion binarism. In the United Kingdom and the United States, for instance, indicators of marginalisation are inclusion or exclusion in politics, senior leadership positions, and socio-economic prosperity (Gilroy 1991; West 2001). Therefore, the failure to contextualise job grievances in a wider context risks creating ethical and epistemological questions because this relevant contextualisation may become a part of scholarly knowledge about South Sudan. In other words, a failure to properly contextualise job grievances risks trivialising South Sudanese suffering by reducing aspirations for freedom to self-serving demands for jobs. To reiterate, the following issue needs serious scholarly analysis beyond the current reductionist job paradigm: Have more than eighty years of being governed as a collective people (Wai 1980), being collectively oppressed, and engaging in two civil wars (Voller 2019), not created a consistent collective consciousness even after the loss of over 3 million lives? Answering this question is ethically imperative as social and political issues that are universal are given a discursive African uniqueness. This is, as Achille Mbembe (2017: 160) has argued, an epistemological problematic in scholarship, which presents and represents Africa as a place of "radical difference."

On Radical Difference

While political tribalism is an undeniable existential threat to co-existence in South Sudan (and in Africa generally), as noted earlier, it may be necessary to pay close attention to the subjects of scholarship when critiquing the epistemological basis of people's understanding of their realities. State policies and actions have produced the Germans, the French, the Italians, and the Swiss from disparate nations (Alesina, Giuliano and Reich 2013). The author is therefore convinced that "South Sudanese-ness" is similar to those historical examples. While the author understands that this conclusion maybe subject to objections, he welcomes arguments that would explain how the history that made "South Sudanese" is theoretically different from that "nation" and state-building framework. As Ernest Gellner has argued, a national consciousness "invents nations where they do not exist" (quoted in Anderson 2005: 6). For Africa and South Sudan—unlike France and Italy, for example— "national consciousnesses" preceded their "nations." According to Frantz Fanon de/colonisation, according to Frantz Fanon, which united the colonised on a "national" or "racial" basis (1982: 46), was undertaken under the premise of a "united" people, a colonisation enforced "Africanness" (Mazrui 1963).

Accordingly, the overwhelming vote for independence on 9 January 2011 may be rationalised as an expression of a collective consciousness informed by a long history of oppression (Yangu 1966; Deng 1995; Albino 1970; Ruay 1994). This long history, as argued in the present article, not only created a consistent collective consciousness, but it also built a collective "Southern people" united by, as in the case of Guinea, oppression and geography (Bah 2016). Over the years "Southern-ness" developed its own sense of being like the case of the Irish. As Ellis O'Hanlon has argued in the *Independent*, to be "anti-English was an integral element of what it meant to be Irish [but] Irishness exists now in its own right, on its own terms, its own merits" (2018). In the same vein, being South [ern] Sudanese acquired a stand-alone *being* before 2011 and afterwards.

John Garang, who preferred a united Sudan over a separate South Sudan (Young 2005), understood that a collective Southern consciousness in favour of separation was a people's choice because decades of suffering made "Southern-ness" more than an elite creation (see also Garang 1994). So, the referendum vote, which John Garang predicted in 1999, is also a strong

argument against the claim that Southern identity did not lead to a consistent collective consciousness. "Southern-ness" as a collectivising reality is also supported by empirical studies (Cook 2011; Kuol 2020; Levy and Cook 2010; Awolich, Tiitmamer and Mayai 2017). Also, Southerners have always acknowledged problems of tribalism. As Levy and Cook have argued, "Even the word 'unity' has negative associations for them. Since NDI's first public opinion study in 2004, Southern Sudanese participants have expressed a consistent desire for political separation from the North. That remains the case with this study" (2010: 7). Unlike European "nation-states" whose creation was dictated by state elites, the creation of South Sudan no longer needed elite enforcement by 2011 and Garang understood this in 1999 even when he preferred a united Sudan.

Activation of Identity Anchors

Identities are activated contextually. Contemporary "national" identities are activated when people from different countries come into contact (see Baldwin 2012: 127–140). However, internally, countries appear divided into pockets of tribes (South Sudan), provinces (Canada) or states or races (USA) that are at times antagonistic. Affinities and antipathies (Horowitz 1973) come into play as different identity anchors become relevant. The former Ugandan minister of defence, Flex Onama, told Ian Colvin (1965) how Kuku people from Sudan overwhelmed their kith and kins in Uganda after fleeing aerial bombing by the Sudanese army. The Kuku tribe (which is in both South Sudan and Uganda) was a collective for Minister Onama and the Kuku of Sudan (now South Sudan) but citizenship divided Onama from the Kuku of Sudan (now South Sudan). James Sidbury (2007) would call these relationships filiative and affiliative, respectively. But South Sudan, an affiliative attachment, would therefore form a collective identity for the Kuku of South Sudan and the Jieeng. Thus, tribal collectivities or divisions alone are not convincing as epistemological grounds to support the lack of a collective South Sudanese identity because tribe has a different contextual relevance.

Tribe is an internal identity anchor because it is one of many (social) ways people form groups within South Sudan. Other internal anchors in South Sudan are defunct administrative regions—which are still activated at times—like Bahr El Ghazal, Equatoria and Upper Nile. They have been

used to create regionalist (and in some cases separatist) sentiments (Kuol 2020). One of this popular regionalist collective is "Equatorian" (Mawut 1985; Sano 2019), a collection of disparate tribes with different cultures and languages that unites as a regionalist "people" against Jieeng tribes when issues of dominance arise (Lokosang 2010). During the formation of the Revitalised Transitional Government of National Unity (RTGoNU), regionalism, instead of tribalism (Modi 2019), was invoked on social media because three of the Vice President posts went to Upper Nile and one each to Bahr El Ghazal and Equatoria. The activation of identity anchors and collectivities is a complex issue. A country as an identity anchor—that is, belonging to a country such as South Sudan—brings different tribes together as a collective "national" identity.

Therefore, South Sudan, like other countries in the world, is not an exception as a historically imagined socio-political and socio-historical construct (Anderson 2005; Connor 1990; Bluntschli 2000; Karlsson 2009) with internally heterogenous linguistic and cultural groups. Europeans forged their "nations" and nation-states from disparate people (Utz 2005; Alesina, Giuliano and Reich 2013) and South Sudan has been formed from a collection of various tribes. European "nations" were not primordial, pre-existing entities (Wick 2006) as we can hardly find a contemporary nation in a Morganian sense: family → gens → phratry → tribe → nation) (Morgan 1877). Therefore, Europeans developed "national consciousnesses" after their "nations" were *imagined*. Although most contemporary states are not "nation-states" but "pluri-national states" (Mignolo 2011), nation-building and political scholarship has accepted the contemporary metaphorising of pluri-national states as "nations." But assumptions that there are "nations" in Europe because of the relative coexistence or social cohesion (Kuol 2019) of European nation-states make tribal diversity in South Sudan the basis under which a consistently articulated collective national identity is questioned.

While Melville Herskovits referred to Africa as a geographical fiction (Mazrui 1963), a problematic characterisation that has been used extensively in post-colonial literature to underscore the way Europeans arbitrary divided Africa (Akol 2016), this Herskovitsian ascription becomes *ad hoc* if one carefully considers the fact that *all* countries are geographical fictions. Admittedly, some tribes in Africa have been divided by colonial boundaries and fall into two or more countries (Akol 2016; Dodds 2014; SANU 1963)

as the case of the Kuku and Zande noted above show. This is also the case in many countries globally. To avoid the moral risk of presenting Africa (and South Sudan in this case) in the nineteenth century context as a land of *radical* difference (Mbembe 2017; Mudimbe 1988), scholarly consistency may be necessary when frames of analyses are only applied to Africa even when their global context is similar, or even the same. Ngugi wa Thiong'o (2009) invokes this colonial legacy, which uses "tribe" for African ethno-linguistic groupings and "nation" for European groupings. Understandably, Europeans use "nation" because a nation is rationalised to be at a higher stage of civilisation than a tribe (Bruntschli 2000; Morgan 1877). Many Enlightenment writers did not believe that tribes whose customs and beliefs they deemed incoherent or "savage" could be called "nations" (Hudson 1996; 257). However, Frahm (2015) is right that European countries have had centuries to develop their collective "national" identities so South Sudan may arrive there in the *longue durée*. Nevertheless, internal cohesions within European "nation-states" (and generally in the world) are not a settled case (Karlsson 2009; Clarke 2004), because many such nations (like South Sudan) still struggle with the internal dynamics of identity anchors. There are still internal divides and antagonistic cultural contradictions between, for examples, Flemings and Wallonians in Belgium (Van der Linden 2017), Uyghurs and Hans in China's Xinjiang (Clark 2015), English-Canadians and French-Canadians in Canada (Jacobs 2016), Muslims and Hindus in India (Priya 2016), etc.

Conclusion

The present article has attempted to add a different dimension to existing scholarly questions regarding the "Collective South Sudanese identity" following the independence of South Sudan in July 2011 (Kuol 2020). While the author acknowledges that "South Sudanese-ness" emerged as a collective, oppositional identity against Northern Arab domination, it has been argued that this identity became internalised and concretised over time because of the collective suffering and oppression South Sudanese endured by slavery and socio-political domination from Khartoum. Of course, this does not mean that this sense of "South Sudanese-ness" was accompanied by an internal homogeneity. South Sudan, like many pluri-national states in the world, is internally divided by ethnic loyalties. However, it has been argued

that internal diversity and collective identity are not mutually exclusive. As it has been shown in this article, modern nation-states, whether in Asia, Europe, the Americas or Africa, are internally diverse because they were constituted by creating political and social entities from sundry groups; thus, South Sudan is not an exception. South Sudanese "nation-building" and state-building may be unique in details, but as the article has shown, they are not very different from what was done in Germany, France, Kenya, Guinea, or Italy. While "South Sudanese-ness" may have started as an elite consciousness, by 9 January 2011 it had concretised as a popular collective consciousness. Following the 2013 civil war and the failure of SPLM leaders to create inclusive institutions and provide services to citizens (Garang 2019b), this collective consciousness has become shaky. Nevertheless, despite internal ethnic divisions (Kuol 2020) and ethnicised politics (Calissendorff et al. 2019), South Sudanese collective consciousness remains.

While the author has acknowledged the oppositional historical context in which South Sudanese identity has emerged, scholarly positions on South Sudan, most of which are nuanced accounts, still risk trivialising decades if not centuries of human suffering. Therefore, the article invites scholars to critically re-evaluate the way South Sudanese identity has been contextualised as they risk placing it outside history. What is the collectivising anchor other countries have that South Sudan does not? Since most identities are inherently negative and most countries are not "nations" in the Morganian sense, more research is required to go beyond the historical oppositionality of "South Sudanese-ness." Although the author recognises that the scholars whose works are analysed in the article acknowledge the suffering of the people of South Sudan, expressions such as "shallow" or "quest for jobs" or "fictitious construct" risk, inadvertently, overshadowing the suffering of the people in the emergence and concretisation of South Sudanese collective consciousness. While South Sudan is internally divided by tribes and is also a colonial construct (Jok 2011; Frahm 2011; Akol 2016), these conditions apply to other countries as well. Therefore, the basis under which they are applied to South Sudan needs a wider global contextualisation. For this reason, the present article invites an open, critical but reflexive conversation on African and South Sudanese collective identity anchors.

This critical engagement with South Sudanese and African identities calls for empirical research to answer the following questions: (1) How different are African internal diversities from internal diversities existing in other

countries? (2) Since all modern nation-states are geographical constructs, what are the scholarly rationales for restricting a "geographical construct" to Africa? The arguments presented in this article and the above questions, the author hopes, may lead to critically productive research and informed conversations on South Sudanese and African complex identities.[3]

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[3] One of the reviewers recommended the inclusion of optional ways in which political activities that undermine, or nurture collective identity may be augmented or mitigated. The author acknowledges the importance of this recommendation; however, this is a big topic on its own so addressing it in this article may not do justice to the importance of the suggested recommendation. The author therefore leaves it for future projects or for author researchers.

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