

**The Emergence Peace Studies in Sudan**  
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**مستخلص**

تستعرض هذه الورقة موقف دراسات السلام في السودان ك مجال علمي حديث في الجامعات السودانية ربما في الثلاثة عقود الاخيرة، وقد نشأ هذا المجال بعد نهاية الحرب الثانية، حيث صار توجهها عالميا دعمته عدد من المنظمات الدولية وغير الحكومية. واستجابة لهذا التوجه العالمي وكذلك تجاوبا مع الظرف الداخلي في السودان المتأثر بالنزاعات قامت وما تزال تقوم عدد من المراكز في عدد من ولايات السودان ومؤسسات التعليم العالي. تشير الورقة الى ان دراسات السلام في الجامعات السودانية هي حتى الان على مستوى الدراسات العليا (دون الدراسات على مستوى البكالوريوس) في المناطق المتأثرة بالنزاعات. اعتمدت الورقة على مصادر اولية شملت عدد من المقابلات الشخصية لعدد من مدراء هذه المراكز، وفحص بعض الوثائق التعريفية، واستعراض مواقعها الالكترونية، علاوة المشاركة في عدد من مناشطها. وكذلك اعتمدت على مصادر ثانوية شملت بعض الادبيات المنشورة في هذا المجال .

**Abstarct**

This paper touches on the circumstances leading to the introduction of peace studies in Sudan in the 1990s, by the Sudanese Ministry of High Education and Scientific Research. The paper traces the global context and high demand for peace as a sub-discipline emerging out of international relations, and as well an activity by various actors including N.G.O.s and inter-governmental organizations. The intensification of internal war in Sudan between North and South, before 2005, necessitated the introduction of peace programs at high education level to reverse and mitigate the mounting impacts of war that would presumably lead to the development of culture of violence. Various universities in Sudan established peace centers at the graduate level offering graduate academic programs, and non-academic peace-related programs, in response to the directives of the Ministry. The paper adopted primary sources including interviews apart from consulting some of the documents of these centres, and as well secondary sources examining some of the published literature on peace and conflict studies.

**The Nature of Peace Studies**

This is an emerging field of study out of social sciences, owing a lot to the cold war international relations mid-last century, where the memories of 2nd

World War were still echoing. International peace and security were then dependent on the balance of power between the two competing superpowers. By that time the discipline was part of the international relations sub-discipline – within political science - inquiring about war and disputes between states. It was only after the end of the cold war that the term “conflict” came to be used progressively to indicate internal wars within states<sup>(1)</sup>. Therefore it was established that inter-state conflict was a cold war era phenomena, whereas intra-state conflict is a post-cold war phenomena.

The concept and nature of war as a legacy of the medieval ages and before was, in the form of direct combat between antagonistic parties, however over centuries, that nature underwent drastic changes as demonstrated by the two World Wars, where non-combatant civilians were deliberately victimized. That was a serious development, more real than apparent, in the nature of war, to draw the attention of scholars, for more investigation in war affairs to minimize war-related impacts on humanity. This significant development in the nature and means of war could be attributed by and large to the discovery and introduction of firearms, this very fact has made it possible for warring parties to kill whoever is within the reach of their arms, irrespective of his identity as combatant or otherwise. That has no doubt necessitated existence of “International Humanitarian Law”, to govern the activities of hostilities between warring armies or even other parties to violent conflicts.

The intensification of intra-state conflict, particularly in 3<sup>rd</sup> World countries, could mean more civilian casualties and as well more suffering for the vulnerable groups within societies. These situations were/are classified as man-made disasters. That has drawn the attention of international actors, N.G.O.s, and academia to explore ways and means of addressing these situations, in the context of packages comprising peace-making, peace-keeping, and peace-building, and proposing measurements of avoiding repeated occurrence of the resulting atrocities in the context of conflict early-warning mechanisms<sup>(2)</sup>.

The fast and ever-growing literature on peace studies testify for the status this multi-disciplinary field is going to acquire within the social sciences. The paradox here is that like many sciences, the discipline was developed in western academic and non-academic circles, whereas the actual relevance and need was/is mostly in 3<sup>rd</sup> World countries and Africa. What is the impact of

that on the ground, mindful of the fact that peace is a socio-cultural and dynamic value of global nature?, a question to be answered by those academics who would lead these centers to observe differences of context (social and cultural) between countries of origin in the West, and beneficiaries in 3<sup>rd</sup> world countries, while designing these programs.

### **Contemporary Global Context**

The establishment of the U.N. mid last century was a response to the international demand to end war-threats following the very high cost humanity has paid in the two world wars. The U.N. has done a lot – through the Security Council - to make that dream a reality; however war threats are still destabilizing the world socio-political order. The U.N. enacted the International Humanitarian Law to mitigate consequences of war and violence, but still we can see atrocities committed everywhere across the globe. To diversify its approaches the international organization opted for education as driver of peace among young generations, establishing the University for Peace in 1980 in Costa Rica in South America.

Inter-governmental organizations are progressively funding peace-related projects with implementing partners everywhere; UNDP, USAID, JICA, EU, and others, let alone interventions by various N.G.O.s in countless conflict-affected areas. An affiliate of the U.N. system, the UNESCO is adopting dissemination of "culture of peace" through multiple criteria along its mandate, networking with high education institutions assigning them to host Peace Chairs, develop partnerships with peace actors<sup>(3)</sup>, and convene conferences on peace issues....etc.

The concern of the U.S. academia focusing on "conflict-resolution" is remarkable; to name only examples in distinguished institutions including the University of George Mason operating a specialized school named "School of Conflict Analysis and Resolution", and the University of Carleton – Virginia running "school of Conflict Analysis"

### **Background**

The current map of Africa owes a lot to the most famous Berlin Conference in 1884, where the European powers divided Africa on map among them. That was done purposely by the colonialist Europeans to serve their own interests, however one century later after attainment of political independence and the emergence of the Organization of Africa Unity 1963, Africa declared

that these very colonial boundaries are and should be maintained as they are, and should be held as sacred<sup>(4)</sup>.

That was on and about the colonial legacy, but what is of more significance is the most recent and current post-independence phenomena of secession, which means more partitioning of the already partitioned African states.

It could be observed that secessionist movements, more often than not, emerge in border areas where state organs are so weak to represent the image of state, and where allegiance to the center (of state) or mainland faces some challenges. These challenges emanate from complaints of peripheralization from groups and communities at the border areas who consider themselves as disadvantaged citizens. Coupled with evident multiculturalism in Africa, this is often developed into divergent identity-related visions along center-periphery lines. Some theorists may put it that “ ..... secessionist movements are triggered or exacerbated by the regional dynamics of different groups in relation to the state, and that backward groups in backward regions are the most prone to secessionist movements”<sup>(5)</sup>.

The experience of the Sudan in two long armed conflicts in Southern Sudan 1955-1972 and 1983-2005, resulting in loss of lives, disabilities, dramatic drain of resources is/was a bitter one. The sudden and quick outbreak of armed conflict in Darfur in the last ten years or so, and the associated human cost, necessitating the interference of the Security Council, the on-going conflict in Blue Nile and South Kordofan, and other areas of conflict including Eastern Sudan, all that was/is a long history of conflict negatively affecting social stability of the country, and even worse paving the way for the emergence of culture of violence among the young generation. The Sudanese authorities were driven to explore ways and means to reverse these negative impacts. One way of doing that was through education.

The decade of the nineties witnessed the most active and intense military confrontations between Government of Sudan and “Sudan Liberation Movement/Army.” The later was launching guerrilla war against Sudanese army since 1983, before assumption of power by the current Inqath regime in 1989. The new government took it on itself to achieve peace at all costs. Whereas military operations were underway, the authorities thought it is wise also to seek other ways of achieving peace through education as the most significant tool of aculuration.

### Ministry of High Education and Peace Studies

This drastic scene makes the history of post-colonial Sudan, a story of successive events of internal conflicts. It is only late last century in the 1990s, concurrently with launching by the Government (of Sudan) of the “Revolution of High Education”, that the attention of institutions of high learning, was drawn to this phenomena of conflict. Thanks to the directives by the Ministry of High Education, that many universities took the initiative with due enthusiasm, in consequence the University of Dalanj<sup>(6)</sup> was the first to establish “Peace Centre”, followed by the University of Juba<sup>(7)</sup>, as a symbol of national unity between the North and South. Later on the following centers were established;

1. University of Khartoum,
2. University of Dalanj
3. University of Sudan,
4. University of Alfashir,
5. University of Nyala,
6. University of Blue Nile.
7. University of Kordofan.
8. University of Zalinje.
9. Univ. of West Kordofan Univ.
10. In the making are centers of Omdurman Islamic University and Imam Almahdi University.

Apart from Al-Ahfad University for Girls offering peace and conflict courses as part of its gender-centered undergraduate programs, all these centers belong to public universities offering graduate programs. Of late Al-Ahfad has developed a regional center offering various programs related to peace, democracy and human rights, apart from mainstream in gender studies. Al-Ahfad has a long tradition of community service, and as well an extended collaboration with international organizations. The University is unique in being exclusively for girls’ education since its establishment mid - last century by the founding father Late Babiker Badri.

### Rationale

The idea behind establishment of these centers is to offer programs that encourage and promote the spirit of peaceful co-existence among Sudanese society, as a pre-requisite for developmental aspirations, this is to be done

through post-graduate programs, think tank-like model, research-based approach, and other forms of intervention in conflict affected societies of the Sudan. However these centers could explore other forms of conflict preventive mechanisms; early-warning systems and the like.

The expectation is/was that these centers could also contribute in normalizing livelihood systems in post-conflict situations. Apart from that the task of configuring the goals of these various centers was left to be done by individual universities in line with the immediate local circumstances. Therefore the methodology each center employed to achieve that goal varied, some of these centers opted to train graduate students as peace makers, whereas others opted to concentrate on interventions like awareness-raising, research and the like.

### **Objectives of Centers**

To assess the roles these centers are expected to play, we better examine the objectives of these centers as they appear in their documents. As graduate university colleges they are strongly influenced by the academic trends, where they are viewed as research centres rather than else, therefore it is noticeable that their objectives include:

- To promote research on conflict resolution and post conflict management leading to post-graduate diploma and Masters Degree. (CPDS University of Juba 2002).
- Carry out research and studies that concern grass-root community such as poverty, human rights, conflict resolution, peace building, livelihood, reconciliation...(CPDS. University of Zalinji).
- To conduct research and surveys in the area of sustainable peace in the Sudan and other related areas. (Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies-University for Peace- Western Kordofan).

It is worth noting that University of Zalinji included other very important clauses referring to the “Preparation of qualified professionals who are able to define specific nature of conflicts .... In their local contexts”. This reference to preparation of professionals is significant for an area like Darfur, however other centers did not refer to this aspect, despite the fact that similar conflicts prevail in their areas.

### **Scope and Focus**

It is quite natural that these centers vary in scope of mandate, and focus of activity, as they belong to different university systems and environments, despite the fact that they share more or less the same objectives. As has been indicated earlier most of the centers running academic programs are doing that at the graduate level program, this fact poses many challenges; some scholars believe that at that stage (graduate level) very little could be done to influence the mentality of a student to become peace-maker or disseminator of peace culture, therefore they recommend that peace programs be taught at the undergraduate level<sup>(8)</sup>. Others even went further to recommend that peace programs should be introduced at school levels (general education) where a student is more likely to respond positively to these kinds of programs.

However we can identify three geographical areas of these centers for the purpose of identification; the federal level, Western States level and central Sudan level.

### **Peace Centers at the Federal Level**

By federal we mean centers in Khartoum as a metropolitan city. Under this category appears "**Peace Research Institute**" of the University of Khartoum, originally established in 1986 at the University of Khartoum; in 1990 upgraded to its present status as an institute, with long tradition in conflict-resolution interventions focusing on research projects, election monitoring, public consultation-related activities and the like, this Institute does not offer academic programs for students. PRI has well-established relations with UN system, in terms of project-funding and consultancy. The center also has published a lot of research and studies, apart from the refereed reputable journal "Discourse".

Sudan University of Science and Technology established **Culture of Peace Centre**<sup>(9)</sup>, whose approach towards peace focuses on the cultural aspects including drama, folklore, and other artistic means in the consolidation and sustenance of peaceful co-existence between communities. "The aim of this Center is to ascertain how developmental drama as a creative tool of social activities would contribute to humanitarian emergencies, grassroots peace and community building"<sup>(10)</sup>.

In the University of Juba/Bahri there is the **Centre for Peace and Development Studies**<sup>(11)</sup> (C.P.D.S.), focusing on academic programs at the

graduate level, apart from other public activities including workshops, public lectures touching on North- South relation and other social and political issues. The Centre use to host the UNESCO Chair for Peace before secession of South Sudan, later on University of Bahri ( C.P.D.S.) and UNESCO signed an Agreement establishing an independent Chair instead of changing the affiliation of Juba University<sup>(12)</sup>. CPDS before secession has signed an M.O.U. with Upeace to carry out co-teaching programs, besides offering M.A. scholarships for two students at Costa Rica. CPDS publishes a refereed journal on Peace Research.

Islamic University of Omdurman is currently establishing **Conflict Studies Centre**, with prime concern towards exploring Islamic principles in understanding conflict, and in the light of those encouraging Muslim scholars to review the existing literature.

### **Peace Centers in Western States**

These includeCenters belonging to Universities in Darfur and Kordofan as conflict affected states. The three centers in Dar Fur: **Nyala, Al-Fasher and Zalinji** played important roles in the current conflict in the respective regions, organizing short courses and training programs for tribal leaders, youth, women, displaced in collaboration with international N.G.O.s and the UNAMID, alongside their ordinary academic programs for graduate students. It is worth noting that Upeace<sup>(13)</sup> has extend technical assistance to most of the centers in the Sudan including Peace Center in University of Zalinj, where Upeace staff has sent Visiting professors who taught some courses, and as well offered M.A. level scholarships for students to be done in Costa Rica.

I have seen Peace Centre in Nyala benefiting from UN agencies grants in the establishment of their premises, on the ground that the Centre is operational in peace-building efforts. Alfashir Center is as well equipped by internet facilities thanks to support by international organizations, including UNAMID.

### **Peace Centers at Central States**

These include **Centre of Blue Nile University at Adamazine** as capital city of Blue Nile State, which is a conflict affected state. Blue Nile borders neighboring South Sudan and Ethiopia, with seasonal intensive livestock movement, alongside vast agricultural investments all over the most fertile lands in the state.This fact gives rise to continuous conflict between

pastoralist and farming communities. Peace Centre of Blue Nile Univ. participates in almost all conflict mitigation events that often take place in the State by the very many local and foreign N.G.O.s<sup>(14)</sup>

We were contacted early this year 2013 to give some assistance in the establishment of a new centre in **Imam Al-Mahdi University in White Nile State** (Kosti Town), This state now represents the southern frontier of the Sudan, bordering South Sudan Republic, sharing more or less the same dynamics of conflict in Blue Nile State, therefore there is every reason that a Centre is to be established to help cast more light on ways and means to resolve conflicts in the border, farmer-pastoralist relation, cross-border movement....etc.

Omdurman Islamic University also took the initiative to establish a center for conflict resolution studies, similar to the center of the University of Khartoum. Both focusing on research and culture of peace-related activities.

### **Upeace Efforts in Curriculum Development**

CPDS is among the first centers to design a curriculum for the academic programs, whose objectives include among other things training of students on conflict resolution techniques and practices, contextualizing peace building principles,...etc. other academic program- offering Centers followed Zalinji, Sudan, Nyala,...etc.

Thanks to efforts by late professor Mahmoud Azeen<sup>(15)</sup>, Upeace Africa Program in Ethiopia has called for a regional workshop for five universities in the Horn region, on M.A. program curriculum development<sup>(16)</sup>. CPDS and Zalinji centres participated in that workshop, where experiences were shared between the participating centres and Upeace. CPDS and Nyala Centre has participated in the final workshop Upeace convened in Jordan 2010, celebrating success of its two year program in Africa, Middle East, South East Asia, where beneficiaries of M.A. scholarships and staff who conducted co-teaching programs in these universities came together, to review their experiences, and to explore ways of cooperation and networking for the sake of continuity.

### **Ministry of High Education**

During the period that preceded secession of South Sudan, The Ministry of High Education was keen to see to it that these Centers play roles in peace processes in their respective states. For that matter periodic meetings were held in the Ministry where almost everybody presents a report on the activities conducted within the state where the center is located. CPDS attended almost three meetings; I presume others were convened afterwards. What is sure is that, these meetings did not so far continue after secession of South Sudan. The lesson to be learned here is that the Ministry attaches great importance to these centers to take part in peacemaking nationwide; however the Ministry falls short to extend assistance in the form of advice or guidance, most probably because these centers belong to university systems with varying and independent internal policies. This is not to talk on projects funded by N.G.O.s and the bureaucratic complications that often arise within each individual University.

### **The Nature of Peace Programs**

As has been indicated the current programs of most of these centres are at post-graduate level, without any corresponding under-graduate programs, therefore, they were designed to be multi-disciplinary. The rationale behind that is; to attract as many graduates as possible to these programs, as the field requires over and above academic credentials, willingness and aptitude on the part of candidates. It is worth noting that, most of those who join these programs are government officials, diplomats, N.G.O. workers, or even lawyers, and most recently we noticed engineers and medical doctors also joining these programs. Fresh graduates are a tiny minority among these batches; however females are a minority of the minority. What could be understood out of these proportions is that, those who demand peace programs are not necessarily employment-seekers, rather, they either demand consolidation of their respective careers, or they opt to pursue graduate studies per se.

About the nature of these programs we take as an example three centres and see what they offer, Centre for Peace and Development University of Juba, Centre for Peace Studies University of Zalinji and Centre for Peace and Development Studies University of Bahri;

### **C.P.D.S.- University of Juba ( Pre-secession Period) 1997-2011**

This Centre offers programs in English Language, therefore, members of diplomatic missions, non-Sudanese students, International N.G.O. s staff, U.N. workers.....etc. were mostly attracted. The M.A. and High Diploma degrees were offered on research and study basis, with exception of Ph.D. degree offered on research basis only. Study program includes 10 courses for each of the two semesters of both M.A. and Diploma. M.A. students are required to conduct a research as a partial requirement of their degree. CPDS offers degrees along the following specializations:

- Peace and Development Studies
- Humanitarian and Conflict Studies.
- Strategic Studies

CPDS also offers courses in Arabic language in the same program on distance-learning basis, where most Sudanese students are found, themselves also belong to the same categories of government employees...etc. however female proportion is a little bit higher than their colleagues in the regular program. Distance learning system is meant to meet the needs of Sudanese and non-Sudanese students, preferring courses in Arabic language who are abroad or even outside Khartoum.

### **Centre for Peace and Development Studies- University of Bahri (Post-secession period) 2011.**

This Centre succeeded CPDS – University of Juba in 2011, after the later had relocated back to Juba after secession. The new Centre drew a lot from the experience of Juba University Centre, only that University of Bahri requested all colleges to draft new curricula, including the Centre. Throughout the year 2012 the Centre finalized designing its new academic programs. The Centre declared three specializations:

- Peace and Conflict Studies.
- Population and Development Studies.
- Environmental Change and Human Security.

This Centre plays other roles like public awareness-raising, capacity-building, through three other non-degree awarding departments. In this regard the Centre offered in the last two years :

2 Public lectures on Environmental change and Human Security and Renaissance Dam, in collaboration with the UNESCO.

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- 2 Short courses on the culture of dialogue, in collaboration with the UNESCO
  - 4 Workshops on Conflict and Peace-Making in Darfur in collaboration with UNAMID
  - 2 Seminars on The Role of Darfurian Civil Society in the Conflict, in collaboration with UNAMID.

## **Conclusion**

This paper attempted to cast some light on the “state of the art” of peace studies in the Sudan. The paper has done sort of scanning of the public universities which pioneered to develop such programs. I believe there are other private institutions of high learning that offer such programs as part of wider disciplines. One could notice in Khartoum the existence of various cultural centers now bearing the name “peace centers”, or “peace and development”, operating as NGOs, I presume this is indicative of societal appreciation towards peace as a motto and as an activity as well, moreover in line with the high demand international community and organizations place/attach to these programs.

However, of late we noticed here in Sudan, (after secession of South Sudan) that; that glorious and good image of the motto of peace, has a little bit changed, based on the prevailing understanding that peace and unity in the Sudan are inseparable, and now that unity of Sudan is no longer there (between North and South), the central question persists: does the slogan of peace make any sense?. It will take us quite some time to clear out that localized understanding of peace, in order not to let the incident of secession of 2011 to distort our vision towards this global and humanistic value, trend and ambition<sup>(17)</sup>.

## References

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2. ThaniaPaffenholz, **Community-Based Bottom-up Peace building**, Life and Peace Institute, Sweden,2006,pp22.
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4. Asiwaju,A.I.,(ed.),*Partitioned Africans: Ethnic Relations Across Africa'sInternational Boundaries 1884-1984*. University of Lagos Press,1984.
5. Engelbert, Pierre and Hummel Rebecca (2003), *Let's Stick Together: Understanding Africa's Secessionist Deficit, African Studies Association*.
6. <http://www.dalanjuniversity.edu.sd/PeaceCenter.aspx>
7. Later on after secession of South Sudan emerged University of Bahri to carry on programs of University of Juba.
8. This trend was first suggested by the UNESCO regional office for Arab countries, which held a training workshop for university professors 2014 at Beirut, later on JICA also supported a project on” Peace Education through mutual understanding” jointly designed by University of Bahri and Al-Ahfad University for Girls 2017-2018.
9. Later on renamed “Culture of Peace Institute” in the year 2017.
10. [http://culture.sustech.edu/index.php/Centre\\_for\\_Studies\\_and\\_Culture\\_of\\_Peace/en/coll\\_about](http://culture.sustech.edu/index.php/Centre_for_Studies_and_Culture_of_Peace/en/coll_about)
11. [http://bahri.edu.sd/colleges\\_centres/peace/](http://bahri.edu.sd/colleges_centres/peace/)
12. In 2016 the UNESCO contracted University of Bahri to host the Chair of Peace in Sudan, the author of this paper was appointed by the University to be Chair Holder.
13. <sup>1</sup> United Nation University for Peace based in Costa Rica established in 1980, mandated to offer graduate degrees in Peace Studies, and help universities develop Peace programs.
14. CPDS took part in many workshops in Adamazine where Blue Nile Peace Centre presence is unmistakable.

15. A Sudanese professor based in Costa Rica who facilitated links between Sudanese Peace Centers and Upeace, died early 2012. Author of this paper co-taught with him a course on geopolitics.
16. The Workshop took place in April 2008 in Addis Ababa where Peace Centres from Sudan, Ethiopia, Somaliland, Uganda, Kenya took part.
17. The concept of peace is influenced by the immediate circumstances persons face, in a conference on peace culture one Palestinian to whom peace would only mean “Oslo” Agreement between the Palestinian Liberation Movement (P.L.O.) and the Israeli government, that man jumped up and expressed discontent with the whole idea of peace, on the basis of his particular understanding of the concept.

