THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

South Sudan Studies Association

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Education, Conflict, and Civicness in South Sudan: An Introduction

Julia Duany, Rebecca Lorins, and Edward Thomas

with contributions from Rachel Ibreck, Hannah Logan, Naomi Pendle, and Alice Robinson

CONFLICT RESEARCH PROGRAMME

About the Authors

Julia Duany is currently Vice Chancellor of Dr. John Garang Memorial University of Science and Technology, and the CEO and founder of Gender Equity and Women Leadership Program in South Sudan.

Rebecca Lorins has been living in South Sudan since 2014, where she is an assistant professor at the University of Juba and co-founder of Likikiri Collective, an arts and education organisation.

Edward Thomas has worked in Sudan and South Sudan for over 15 years, as a teacher, human rights worker, and researcher.

About the South Sudan Studies Association

The SSSA is a professional association of academics, students, activists and practitioners dedicated to the production, development, and promotion of knowledge on South Sudan. The SSSA has met on an annual basis since its founding in 2018 to consider various aspects of the research agenda for South Sudan, including the politics of humanitarianism, education and civicness, the political and social implications of the Covid-19 pandemic, regional dimensions of the conflict in South Sudan, and priorities for the newly established unity government.

About the Conflict Research Programme

The Conflict Research Programme is a four-year research programme hosted by LSE IDEAS and funded by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.
Our goal is to understand and analyse the nature of contemporary conflict and to identify international interventions that 'work' in the sense of reducing violence or contributing more broadly to the security of individuals and communities who experience conflict.

Table of Contents

South Sudan Studies Association

This collection of papers addresses education, conflict, and civicness in South Sudan. It is the outcome of a collaboration between the South Sudan Studies Association (SSSA) and the London School of Economics (LSE).

The SSSA is a professional association of academics, students, activists, and practitioners dedicated to the production, development, and promotion of knowledge on South Sudan. The organisation was founded in July 2018 by a group of 12 prominent South Sudanese scholars, academics, and practitioners that include vice chancellors at two South Sudanese universities (Catholic University of South Sudan and John Garang Memorial University) and distinguished South Sudanese professors working in South Sudan and other countries. The SSSA is developing a research agenda for South Sudan from within South Sudanese institutions. Right from the start, it identified education and society as paramount research concerns.

LSE's Conflict Research Programme (CRP) has collaborated with the SSSA since it was established in 2018. The SSSA has informed and influenced the CRP's research agenda in South Sudan. The CRP is a multi-year research programme which looks at how conflict affects public authority. 'Civicness' is one way of organising public authority – civicness refers to a kind of public authority which is based on consent generated through deliberative processes based on respect for persons. Other kinds of public authority include the political marketplace – where power and loyalty are traded for money – or identity politics – which in times of conflict can often be excluding and fragmentative. With the SSSA, the CRP identified South Sudan's educational system as an area for examining the potentials and limitations of civic public authority in a protracted conflict.

Together, the SSSA and the CRP have worked on participatory action research, and theoretical dialogue The SSSA has produced policy papers and recommendations related to peace-making, humanitarian response and security sector reform in South Sudan, drawing upon the field research produced by CRP. They also contribute a deep understanding of the realities of South Sudan's internal politics and the best approaches to communicating agendas for change.

Education, Conflict, and Civicness in South Sudan

Genesis of the research

This research project has its genesis in discussions at a meeting in Tanzania in July 2018, between the CRP and a panel of South Sudanese academics who went on to form the SSSA. This meeting illuminated the roles of academics as politically engaged public authorities, subject to political repression and economic hardship, but also innovating to create civic spaces and promote human development in the midst of the civil war. These discussions led to the development of a research project focusing on education, conflict, and civicness in South Sudan.[1] This writing project aimed to create a forum to share the knowledge and experience of SSSA members concerning the political economy of education in South Sudan. It led to a collection of essays, aiming to (i) examine the nexus between politics, conflict, and education; (ii) identify civic identities and practices in the field of education and establish their political significance; and (iii) build on existing scholarship establishing a relationship between educational inequality and conflict, and the potential for education to contribute to peacebuilding. The following essay collection aims to foreground the research of South Sudanese academics and teachers and their contributions to these debates. The collection also sought to draw on the experiences of the CRP South Sudan Research Network (The Bridge Network), a network of South Sudanese researchers, many of whom also have current or previous experience as teachers and have conducted research in schools.

Theoretical background to the research

CRP research reveals a condition of turbulence in which political entrepreneurs in South Sudan must accumulate political budgets and purchase loyalty to secure power. For the past 15 years, most political budgets come from South Sudan's oil revenues, which flow to the state. Oil revenues have made political leaders independent of the productive efforts of most ordinary South Sudanese people: South Sudan's systems of production are only partially monetised, and the productive capacity of its farmers and pastoralists has been undermined by decades of conflict and displacement. So South Sudanese political leaders cannot easily siphon off wealth from these productive actors in a way that might turn them into political constituencies, in the way politicians do in countries where ruling elites or parties ally themselves with farmers, financiers, or factory workers in order to exercise control over society and the wealth it creates from nature. When building constituencies, South Sudanese political leaders must look for other formations, and they often use South Sudan's many cultural/linguistic groups as a starting point. They build these groups into ethnic or tribal constituencies, often by violently reconfiguring relationships between neighbouring groups, setting people against each other, and making everyone insecure. South Sudan's political leaders need to adopt an entrepreneurial approach to violence in order to build support – especially when their revenues contract.

But this violent reworking of ethnic relationships is not the whole story. In South Sudan and elsewhere, the CRP looks beyond military and political elites to identify plural forms of public authority engaged in forms of governance, including customary, legal, civic, and religious authorities. The education research project was especially concerned with identifying authorities within South Sudan's education system that adopt

1 The research is supported by the CRP and UK Aid, and was a closed invitation primarily for members of the CRP South Sudan Panel..

civic registers and exploring the pressures upon them and their capacity to effect change. Since December 2013, educational institutions have provided spaces of protection, struggle, and change. This has included opportunities to come together and provide safety across ethnic lines. Some political and military leaders have enrolled in educational institutions, including the University of Juba, showing that they still seek the authority of education as a supplement to coercive military power.

Although South Sudan's educational institutions can offer alternatives to violent politicised ethnicity, they sometimes also reflect or reproduce the conflicts that surround them. This collection looks at the way schools and universities have created civic spaces and challenged the prevailing system, as well as the ways that education has become entangled in the conflict and the violent systems of patronage that have emerged out of conflict. It examines the relationships between conflict, authority, and education in South Sudan.

Original aims of the research

The research aimed to situate debates in the historical context of educational deprivations and inequalities, and to theorise the contemporary politics of the educational field in South Sudan. It sought to explore the relationship between a fragmented, poorly resourced education system and conditions of systemic political disorder and violent conflict. It also aimed to consider whether and how educational opportunities may be used as a form of patronage to build power and authority in the political marketplace, and attend to the political salience of ethnic and gender inequalities in education. The papers also sought to identify and analyse the emergence of civic identities and practices in schools and universities, and the ways in which these contradict, and might serve to counteract, South Sudan's history of violence.

The collection of essays is broadly interested in exploring the political significance of unequal access to education, considering gender, ethnicity, and locality; forms of political violence, patronage, and intimidation in the education system; and the ways in which teachers, lecturers, and students have individually or collectively responded to the predicaments of war and humanitarian crises in efforts to create and facilitate access to civic spaces.

The authors examine education from different starting points: the experiences and perceptions of teachers, parents, and students; debates on campuses and social media; and decisions about curriculum and media of instruction. They look at ways that these experiences, perceptions, and decisions reflect and reproduce the conflict around them – and also at ways in which 'civicness' can help them resist or reshape conflict. Authors brought different understandings of 'civicness' to the debate: Rachel Ibreck, Alice Robinson, and Naomi Pendle, writing with a network of South Sudanese researchers and teachers, understand civicness to mean everyday practices oriented towards deliberation, legitimate authority, and rights, even if they are ridden with everyday problems and disputes. This echoes a definition set out by Mary Kaldor (2019), adopted by Edward Momo and Kuyang Harriet Logo in their studies:

> Civicness [is] a logic of public authority, which we contrast to the political marketplace and to identity politics… It has something to do with the notion that public authority is based on consent and consent is generated voluntarily through shared deliberative processes based upon norms and rules that value respect for persons. This includes practices that sustain integrity, trust, civility, inclusion and dialogue, and non-violence.

Civicness is a term which lends itself to flexible application, and other authors in this collection come up with their own understanding of civicness. Yosa Wawa starts with the work of Paul Dekker (2009) and others that see civicness as values or behaviours, such as tolerance, respect, and social concern. For Wawa, the antitheses of civicness are negative characteristics such as aggression, greed, or resentfulness. Luka Biong Deng Kuol and Christopher Oringa draw on the work of Giulia Assirelli (2016) who defines civicness as a kind of social contract – a way the state and different social groups can agree on terms for living together, exercising power, and distributing resources through consent-based deliberative processes. For Kuol and Oringa, the opposite of civicness is passivity, in the sense of being discouraged from any participation in political life. Jok Madut Jok understands civicness as quality of discourse. Civic discourse between different social, political, and regional groups aims at promoting peaceful coexistence, collective belonging, pride in the nation, and equality before the law. For Jok, the opposite of civicness is hate speech. For Leben Moro and Nitika Tolani, the civic goals of education are to do with national or social cohesion, and the antithesis of cohesion is conflict or breakdown. In their contribution, Emmanuel Loboka, Rebecca Lorins, Gai Maroth, and Oleyo Peter take Yusef Waghid's (2011, 2018, 2019) theorisation of "ubuntu caring" as pedagogical strategy in an African university setting as a starting point for thinking through the civic aims of a dialogue initiative they founded at the University of Juba.

Kaldor suggests that civicness can be a way of working within or around adverse systems based around identity politics or transactional political markets – and also a means of resisting those systems. The authors in this collection tend to present education as a means to reform or transform South Sudan's coercive structures of authority through civic behaviours, practices, or discourses – rather than a form of resistance to coercion. That consensus – that education is a social process which can potentially reform/transform authority – is striking for scholars writing from a country where formal education has been overshadowed and permeated by violence and coercion, right from the start.

Civicness and Coercion: A History of Education in South Sudan

Education in South Sudan during the first colonial period

> It is scarcely necessary to say we had no schools in Dinka land… we managed to be happy without them. We wrestled, ran races, and rather frequently fought, though not always after the scientific fashion of those who have a "set-to," in "Tom Brown's Schooldays." Did not Dinka boys know how to laugh! The woods rang again while we were at some of our games. We had our quieter pleasures too; and, as boys are boys the wide world over, we loved to gather in groups and discuss… whatever the conversation began with, it was sure to end with guns; and since, in our belief, it was possible to kill anything, at any distance though far away as the moon itself with one of these wonderful weapons, of course, it was the one desire of our life, to be the owner of one. (Kathish, 1901: 12-13)

Hatashil Masha Kathish was born around 1860 or 1870. His name would probably be spelt Acuil Machar today, and he also used the name Selim Wilson for some of his writings. He was the first South Sudanese to publish a book in English, the only extant documentary memoir of a nineteenth-century South Sudanese childhood. South Sudanese children learned about the natural world, about relationships, about agriculture and pastoral livelihoods, and about religion and values through informal systems which one foreign observer of the time summed up neatly: "Do as we do. See what we do. And do likewise," (Toniolo and Hill, 1974: 158).

But a few schools appeared with South Sudan's first invaders in what Hatashil Masha Kathish called 'Dinka land' – and in other areas. In the 1850s, Catholic missionaries set up a school at their first mission station (Toniolo and Hill, 1974: 14). After the 1860s, when the Ottoman-Egyptian occupiers set up the first administrations in South Sudan, merchant slave-raiders trained their enslaved troops in firearms (Jackson, 1913: 24). In the 1870s, some Ottoman-Egyptian governors employed schoolteachers or set up schools, (Emin Pasha, 1888: 312). Romolo Gessi, the governor of Bahr al-Ghazal province between 1878 and 1880, led a military campaign against the merchant slave-raiders, during which Hatashil Masha Kathish escaped from slavery. During his short administration, Gessi set up schools too. These schools, according to Gessi's memoirs, taught children sent from 'their tribe' by local 'sheikhs,' 'children of the slaves,' and children 'belonging to the irregular troops' – who may have been enslaved. The children were taught what was "necessary to lead the growing generation on the path of civilization and social order," in order to work as government employees (Gessi, 1892: 424, 429, 444).

Guns overshadowed and enthralled Hatashil Masha Kathish's freewheeling, child-led learning system. Guns were part of the new coercive environment, encroaching with foreign markets and militaries. The first formal schools often reflected and reproduced this coercive environment – indeed, the earliest education systems were meant to reproduce that coercion, training soldiers or officials to help maintain the system of foreign domination. That coercion continued under the next attempt to bring formal education to South Sudan, under the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium (1898-1956).

Education during South Sudan's second colonial period

The Anglo-Egyptian government fought three decades of wars to defeat South Sudanese resistance to foreign rule. During these decades, education was a low priority, outsourced to European missionary societies. Provision was meagre: in 1933, after the wars of 'pacification' were over, South Sudan had 263 pre-primary village schools, 44 primary schools (11 for girls), and six post-primary schools (Sanderson, 1962: 114). These schools emphasised practical skills, labour, discipline, and religious instruction. In Upper Nile, the colonial administration even trialled schools which did not teach reading or writing at all: 'Boy Scout' schools, which trained boys in 'honesty, discipline and regular habits of work.' Few children wanted this kind of education. In the early days, colonial officials sometimes reported that parents were reluctant to send children to school, and sometimes the missionaries only taught small numbers of poor children, or children forced to learn after being 'rounded up' by colonial officials (Sanderson, 1980: 167). Although some chiefs, such as Deng Majok of Abyei, made a point of sending their children to school, some chiefs resisted education, associating it with enslavement, or viewing it as a disruption of traditional beliefs and values (Kocjok, 1990: 14).

The Anglo-Egyptian government's education policy reflected the contradictions of wider policies for managing cultural and linguistic diversity. For a host of well-studied reasons, the government wanted to limit the spread of Arabic and Islam in South Sudan, and to maintain a rural social order built around self-contained 'tribal' units led by chiefs – to paraphrase colonial descriptions of rural governance.

Colonial educators classified and ranked South Sudan's different cultural-linguistic communities into 'tribal' units with different aptitudes and psychologies: the bookless, unlettered Boy Scout schools were aimed at groups such as Dinka people, whom early education planners characterised as conservative and culturally isolated. In contrast, Zande people were perceived as versatile, lovers of novelty, and open to education in arts and crafts (Sanderson, 1962: 110). In part, these classifications and rankings were a clumsy attempt to come to terms with South Sudan's diversity. But they were more than just careless: they contributed to a process which concretised social diversity into tribal difference.

Although the first students were often forced to attend school, demand for education gradually spread, as people realised that education provided them with a means to negotiate with a government whose armies they were not able to defeat. For their part, colonial officials began to recognise the need for a more progressive educational policy, and from the late 1930s, the government began to hire its own personnel and invest its own resources in education, rather than pushing all costs onto the missions. Recurrent expenditure on education increased from 10,000 Egyptian pounds in 1938 to 750,000 Egyptian pounds in 1954. Despite this investment, in 1954, the vast majority of schools were village schools, which were nearly all run by the missions, providing two years of primary education and a chance of getting into the third year of the four-year primary schools (SDIT, 1955: 150-2).

However, the distribution of educational provision was highly uneven. This was a legacy of the colonial practice of basing education policy on the classification and ranking by 'psychology' and 'aptitude' noted above. Colonial administrators and missionaries believed that Equatorians were more 'progressive' than others, and schools were concentrated there (Sanderson, 1962: 106, 110). By 1954, differences in educational provision between different regions of the country were stark. The lowest level of provision was in flood plain

areas of Upper Nile and Bahr el Ghazal, the home areas of predominantly Dinka and Nuer agro-pastoralist groups, viewed by early education planners as 'intensely conservative.' In contrast Equatorians, whom those planners had viewed as 'progressive,' had much better provision (Sanderson, 1962: 111).

Number of schools by region in 1954 (SDIT, 1955: 152-3)

School level	Upper Nile	Bahr el Ghazal	Equatoria
Secondary		1	
Post-intermediate vocational		1	3
Intermediate	2	2	5
Intermediate vocational	3	5	6
Primary	31	39	52
Village	36	86	260

Education in South Sudan after Sudan's independence

After the second world war, education budgets and school numbers expanded rapidly (SDIT, 1955: 150-3). The new support for education was linked to new nationalist politics in Khartoum, that were undoing the Anglo-Egyptian government. At the end of empire, Egypt wanted to re-assert sovereignty over the Sudan, forcing the British to concede the right of Sudanese people to self-determination long before that right was accepted in international law. This right was to be exercised by all Sudanese people. Hitherto, only a few South Sudanese people had been educated. Most of them went to schools which aimed to make the student into a 'good tribesman,' as one colonial administrator put it (Johnson, 2016: 114). The need for South Sudanese people to participate in national decision-making revealed the shortcomings of this approach and led to the establishment of South Sudan's first secondary school in 1948, along with several other post-intermediate agricultural, vocational, and teacher-training schools. Education policy was reworked as South Sudanese voters and politicians were drawn into the end-of-empire drama in Khartoum.

Sudan's national question was foisted on an education system which aimed to train a small number of clerks and administrators, and otherwise repressing what the government called 'detribalisation' – the government feared any erosion of the 'tribal' boundaries it had erected. As well as reproducing social and cultural differences within South Sudan, colonial policies aimed at entrenching differences between the peoples of Sudan's southern provinces and the northern, Arabic-speaking, Muslim areas of the country. The colonialists justified this policy of keeping the north and south commercially, linguistically, and culturally

separate by invoking the nineteenth century slave trade, organised by merchant slavers from Europe, the Levant, and Arabic-speaking Muslim areas of the country. But its main aim was to prevent the emergence of a Sudanese national consciousness that might threaten colonial control.

One key element of colonial policies that separated development was the language of instruction in schools. In northern provinces, Arabic was the medium of instruction in all but the highest levels. In South Sudan, village schools employed one of seven widely used local language in primary education, gradually moving to English as they progressed. Two years before Sudan's 1956 independence, the government appointed an International Commission on Secondary Education which decided that education needed to serve the purpose of national unification, 'eradicating customs and traditions which are reactionary or out of harmony with the new shape of things' (Commission report, quoted in Beninyo, 1996: 42). It recommended that Arabic replace English and local languages as the medium of instruction in South Sudanese schools, a decision that shaped educational policy over the next half century, eventually turning culture and education into a weapon in the wars which began around the time of independence.

South Sudanese historians often date the start of these wars to a 1955 army mutiny. The repression of this mutiny led to several years of deep insecurity along South Sudan's southern and eastern borders, which evolved into an insurgency across the south. Paradoxically, this was also a time of educational development; in the six years after independence the government built schools across its southern provinces (Jok, 2007: 58). But the focus of school construction was on *ma'had*s (Islamic institutes): six intermediate *ma'had*s were built, along with one secondary *ma'had* with 500 students – there were only 361 students in South Sudan's two secular secondary schools at the time (Beninyo, 1996: 50; Beshir 1968: 81).

Educational policy after independence deeply polarised schools in the south. From 1960, a series of strikes led by students at Rumbek Secondary School spread to schools across the south. The first strikes were sparked by the government's decision to change the weekend break from Sunday to Friday, and strikers sometimes expressed their opposition to the changes in Christian terms (Arou, 1982: 45). After 1962, the government expelled most foreign Christian missionaries from the south. Many were replaced by teachers from northern Sudan, backed with army soldiers, who detained some students in military prisons. Teachers sometimes fought with students over issues such as equal treatment for Sudanese from north and south, demilitarisation of campuses, and freedom of religion. When the army shut Rumbek Secondary in 1962, many students fled to join armed rebel movements in neighbouring countries. The first police post to fall to the rebel army was captured by schoolboys on the Ethiopian border, given guns by a local Anuak prince (Arou, 1982: 51-2; Poggo, 2009: 96-99; Thomas 2015: 78).

In 1965, the army organised a series of massacres which started in the villages of Equatoria and then moved to main towns where educated South Sudanese were targeted (Poggo, 2009: 83-85). After this direct attack on learning, many people fled towns and primary enrolment collapsed, according to a study published by a World Bank mission (IBRD, 1973: Table C-3). Years after the massacres, the government got rid of pre-primary village (or 'bush') schools and imposed Arabic as the medium of instruction on all primary schools (Lolomode, quoted in Wawa, 2005: 230-1).

Education policy was merging with counterinsurgency, but popular recognition of the importance of education was growing. Refugees went to schools in neighbouring

countries. In South Sudan, many schools were destroyed or occupied by the army, but the 1973 World Bank mission found that there were about 200 schools serving 25,000 children in rural, rebel-controlled areas, based on the early village schools of the early twentieth century (IBRD, 1973: 44-5). All these signs of growing demand for education suggest that the formal education systems brought by colonialists had begun to change aspirations among many groups in the south. Even though the vast majority of young people were still out of school, the conflict drew them towards education.

Education and the Southern Regional Government, 1973-1983

When the war ended in a 1972 peace deal, the education ministry of South Sudan's new autonomous regional government responded to this demand. It was the first time that education was managed by South Sudanese officials, whose many achievements were undermined by the legacies of colonialism and war, as well as many resource constraints. Published data is inconsistent, but suggests that primary and secondary enrolment and school numbers increased significantly – female enrolment increased too. But South Sudan's new schools reflected the complicated compromise peace, which created South Sudan's first autonomous government, but made that government dependent on financial subventions from the central government whose commitment to peace disintegrated over the course of a decade. Schools and South Sudan's first university (established in 1975) reflected both compromise and disintegration over a decade of educational expansion.

Language was one of those legacies. The education ministry reintroduced local languages in early years education, but faced difficult decisions about the language of primary and secondary instruction, which were overshadowed by questions of national unity. The Southern Regional Government's language policy, adopted in 1976, was an unwieldy compromise. English was the medium of instruction at secondary level, Arabic at intermediate/junior secondary, and primary schools taught a mix of Arabic, English, and local languages, which varied between rural and urban areas (Beninyo, 1996: 203). This compromise was not backed with adequate resources or teaching personnel, and confused and undermined individual educations (Arou, 1982: 193).

One way that officials sought to deal with resource limitations was by widening catchment areas for the relatively small numbers of junior and senior secondary boarding schools, which spread across the south in this period. This policy, as Jok Madut Jok argues in his contribution to this volume, allowed students from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds to mix and learn from each other. But rapid, under-resourced growth often led to under-provision of essentials like chairs, beds, or food, and these privations helped foster militancy in schools. School protests were often occasioned by wider political crises: then as now, schools reflected surrounding tensions. In 1974, for example, senior secondary students from girls' and boys' schools in Juba mobilised a strike across Juba schools, after the spread of rumours that Egyptian soldiers and settlers were going to be sent to Sudan (Arou, 1982: 191). Mom Kou Nhial Arou's study of the period demonstrates how students protested over 'national' questions such as these, but that students also took to the streets over questions of employment and ethnicity, particularly after 1978.

Arou argues that student protests were linked to the high expectations raised by South Sudan's first experience of representative government. Students and demobilised rebel soldiers were among several marginal groups who combined political consciousness and aspirations to state employment, and were thus likely

to engage in protests (Arou, 1982: 192n, 197, 259). The 1978 elections in South Sudan marked a turn towards the use of ethnicity in elite politics – in part because the Khartoum government had begun reshuffling its alliances, fostering ethnic and religious difference in the process. Students – seeking government jobs and political participation – reflected these new ethnic tensions. In 1978, a Shilluk minister of education made a provocative speech at Malakal Senior Secondary School:

> Malakal Boys Senior Secondary School is notorious for indiscipline and as a centre of political troubles. If this situation repeats itself, I could destroy this school and start from zero. After all we had seventeen years of war without education (Fact Finding Commission, quoted in Arou, 1982: 213).

The minister expelled one boy and suspended 11 others, all Dinka. A factfinding commission found the phrase 'A Dinka is born to rule' on school noticeboards (Arou, 1982: 4). It was the start of several years of political disputes which helped turn South Sudan's cultural and linguistic communities into politicised ethnic groups. Between 1978 and 1982, the main political question was whether the Southern Regional Government should be redivided into the old provinces or regions of the colonial period, and proponents of redivision argued that a unified region would be dominated by larger ethnic groups: opponents of redivision argued it would weaken the south. Schools played a key role in this process: they were echo chambers full of marginal, risk-taking, politically conscious young people who feared exclusion from government employment. The crisis in the schools culminated in a 1982 protest against redivision at Rumbek Senior Secondary in the presence of the president of the republic, who closed the school and arrested some of the students. Many other students left to join a rebel movement organising across the Ethiopian border (Alier, 2003: 207).
The Southern Regional Government was able to provide graduates with some employment opportunities. But it was not able to adequately finance educational development, nor to make decisions on key questions such as the language of instruction: educational policy was overshadowed by the national questions implied in the language question. In 1983, the Southern Region was divided into three smaller regions, and the south went back to war.

Education during Sudan's second civil war

The 1983-2005 war ended a decade of government expansion of educational provision in South Sudan and once again complicated the connexions between education, civicness, and coercion. These complications followed some of the precedents of the previous war. First, the central government used the education system to impose a unified national culture on Sudan. Second, young people's search for education was entangled with military recruitment strategies. Third, young people's educations were configured around geographies of displacement. Fourth, as formal education in South Sudan disintegrated, new education actors and new curricula came in, undermining educational coherence and quality.

Schools were at the centre of a culture war. At the start of the second civil war, some schools in government-held towns continued to function. After the 1989 coup which brought the Islamist government of Omar al-Bashir to power, these schools became the focus of a campaign to develop a unified Islamic notion of citizenship and Arabic language. This policy was backed by Islamist NGOs who also became involved

in educational provision in government-held towns. The government set up new universities in Wau and Malakal in 1991. But many schools closed because of the conflict, and as a result, many students moved to the Arabic-medium education zone of northern Sudan, and joined educational institutions run by the government or by NGOs. In government schools, the curriculum promoted Arabic language and the government's version of Islam. The IDP schools in informal settlements were run by NGOs, but their curriculum was Islamised too (Sommers, 2005: 225). These fragmented and under-resourced education systems lowered education quality and brought the violent arguments about Sudan's national identity into every classroom.

Military recruitment strategies were entangled with young people's search for education. Young men who attended formal schools in northern Sudan were conscripted immediately after graduation. Youngsters from informal schools in Khartoum shanties were conscripted by press-gang. Some young people moved to the bases of the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army in Ethiopia – many believed that they would receive an education there, because the SPLA and other armed movements often used the promise of education as a recruiting tool. Sometimes they just got military training. But one commander set up a school in Unity State where children took turns on military patrol between classwork (HRW, 1994: 69, 77, 79; Sommers, 2005: 139; Ryan, 2012: 99; Deng, 2020).

Displacement affected student choices. Many displaced people could not access schools in South Sudan, and moved towards schools in northern Sudan, and real or imagined schools in SPLA rear bases. Others moved to neighbouring countries to be educated in refugee camps. The links between displacement, military recruitment, and education often affected girls' access to education. Most of the children going to SPLA camps in Ethiopia in the 1980s and many of the children who reached refugee camps in Kenya in the first decade of the war were boys too. The gender balance in refugee education in other countries, like Uganda, was much fairer (Sommers, 2005: 141, 164, 194).

The proliferation of education actors, combined with very low investment, meant that children learned in different languages and used different curricula, often borrowed from neighbouring countries. Many young people sought education in displacement – most who took the arduous journeys to schools in Kenya or Khartoum were boys. In government-controlled towns in South Sudan, some schools continued to function, and two new universities were established in 1991 by the al-Bashir government.

In SPLA-controlled areas of South Sudan, there was little investment in education. In the first decade of the conflict, the SPLA was focused on liberating territory, rather than liberating minds. After the SPLA split in 1991, different factions began developing civilian administrations which adopted education policies. These administrations largely left education financing to communities and Operation Lifeline Sudan, a consortium of UN and NGOs (SPLM, 2002: 18-20).

These militarised, conflicted, and fragmented education systems paradoxically increased the demand for education – as they had done during the first civil war. Education statistics from the period are problematic, but one 2003 study by Luka Biong Deng suggested that the war had led to a doubling of primary enrolment rates. Subsequent surveys suggest that this may have been an underestimate. Deng argues that civil war is not just about social breakdown but also the creation of new political and economic relationships. A new kind of education, oriented towards peace

and inclusion rather than marginalisation and exclusion, was one of the 'hopeful' aims of the war – an aim evidenced by the spread of education in South Sudan over the course of the war (Deng, 2003: 15). It was also evidenced by wide popular commitment to education. Families and communities contributed money and labour to build and maintain local schools and pay teachers. The need for money for school fees pushed many parents (and some children) towards paid labour, in a country which until recently had organised most agricultural labour through social networks (pastoralist labour is still mostly organised in this way).

Education facilities and student population in South Sudan (Deng, 2003: 8)

	1981/1982	**1999/2000**
Primary schools	809	1,500
Primary students	143,000	318,000
Population of primary school age	1,153	1,060
Gross Enrolment Rate	12	30

Education and South Sudan's independence

The second civil war ended in a 2005 peace agreement, and the establishment of a new autonomous Government of Southern Sudan, financed by oil revenues and oriented towards national independence. A 2007 quick count survey of South Sudanese schools estimated that there were over 3,000 primary schools with over a million students, one third of them girls (MOEST, 2008). The education ministry's statistics division produced regular and detailed progress reports. The education ministry budget, about five percent of government expenditures, was financed by the government's own revenues – in contrast, the health system depended heavily on contributions from donors. New language policies were discussed and adopted. Schools were built and improved, and teachers received salaries – for much of the war, they had received only tiny sums from local communities.

After 2005, South Sudan's expanding education sector was an important factor behind the rapid pace of urbanisation. Oil revenues dramatically increased the amount of money in circulation, and monetisation led more families to invest in education. New universities were established too. For most of the civil war, South Sudan's three universities relocated to Khartoum, but after the peace, they came back to Malakal, Wau, and Juba. The government established two more universities, in Bor and Rumbek, and the Catholic University of South Sudan set up campuses in Wau and Juba (Kuany, 2016: 24; Kuyok, 2017: 16).

Enrolment and school construction rates broadly followed an upward trend – at least according to official statistics. There were 3,766 primary schools in 2013, with 1.3 million students, down from a peak of 1.4 million in 2010: about 39 percent were girls. The decrease after 2011 was sharpest in states like Jonglei, Upper Nile, and Unity, where socially networked agro-pastoralist production systems were collapsing under the pressures of commerce and militarism, pushing neighbouring groups into a violent competition that presaged South Sudan's first civil war in 2013 (MGEI, 2014: 17-18). That war has seen a fifth of the country flee abroad, but paradoxically has also seen an increase in school numbers and enrolment – at least according to official sources. In 2018, the Ministry of General Education and Instruction reported that primary school numbers rose to 3,848 and primary enrolment to 1.6 million: 42.9 percent of enrolled primary school children were girls (MGEI, 2018: 16). These figures need to be treated with caution, but they may reflect what appears to be a pre-existing trend: people who are violently uprooted from their lands and traditional livelihoods may be more likely to invest in education.

Independence resolved some of the legacies of colonialism and war. The ministry of education in Juba was responsible for the curriculum after 2005, and when South Sudan became independent in 2011, the debate about Arabic-medium instruction ended and an era of English-medium instruction began. The debate of South Sudan's role in Sudan's Arab, Muslim order, which overshadowed education for more than five decades, has been decisively concluded. But other legacies – such as the links between education and the tortured politics of ethnicity and militarism and displacement – still shape the education system.

Some new challenges have emerged. The violence of the past few years is linked to changing patterns of accumulation which has seen well-networked security men deepen their control over wealth and access to employment. These rich people send their children to study in neighbouring countries, or at private schools in South Sudan – in 2018, one third of primary schools and over half of secondary schools were private (MGEI, 2018: 16). In contrast, poor families have to reorganise their working lives to get enough money to send their children to school – often selling labour to well-connected security men to do so (Kindersley and Diing, 2019: 36-38).

Although coercion overshadows this education system, many young people see education as a way of protecting themselves from their coercive environment, and their parents work hard to support them. Girls, who face the pressure to marry in addition to the pressures of the violence surrounding them, often view education as a means to balance the pressures they face and plan for the future:

> "What will you do in your village when all your friends are married and you aren't, and they are abusing you for being old and not married?" One of them hung her head and said, "They are already abusing me," in an almost inaudible voice. We fear she will not stay long at school. Sometimes one of the girls would protest strongly and wonderfully. "No, I am not even thinking like that," said one. Another said "No, if a millionaire comes for me I will not accept him." And another: "They are already abusing me and I don't mind." A Didinga girl from a very remote village said: "When my mother said that I should marry, I said to her: 'My mother, send me to school, I don't have a father, I don't have brothers, I don't have sisters. You are crying but I must continue. Here there is not even a good hospital, the people are suffering, and no boy from our village has finished school. I will be a doctor or a nurse,'" (Quoted in Hodgkin, forthcoming).

The Papers in this Collection

Our overview here signals the many forms education has taken in the history of South Sudan: social learning occurring within agricultural and pastoralist settings; religious education and practical skills training disseminated within Muslim *khalwas* and Christian missionary schools; political education shaped by the exigencies of nationalist movements; military training in the context of wartime; and formal instruction at private boarding and government schools. Because the concept of education is expansive, there are also educational processes that go beyond the scope of our outline and the collection as a whole, such as intergenerational transmission of rituals and other community practices, and vocational and technical education. This short list reminds us that "education" has meant different things at different times and has resulted in different ideas and expectations of personhood, community, "civicness," and the social order.

We think it is important to remember the expansiveness of the concept of education, and its ability to embrace a range of types of exchanges, ways of knowing and ways of organising society, even as the term has increasingly come to be associated with a relatively narrow range of experiences we understand as formal schooling. In fact, formal schooling and formal educational institutions take centre stage in the papers included in this collection, a fact which may itself reflect the current context of rapid development and social transformation in South Sudan: the prioritisation of formal education—and especially primary education—by international development organisations, and the faith South Sudanese elites, intellectuals, and ordinary people place in these institutions as engines of change.

In their contribution, for example, Luka Biong Kuol and Christopher Oringa argue that formal education plays and will continue to play an indispensable role in building sustainable peace and strengthening good governance in South Sudan. Intervening in debates about social contract, the authors draw on a broad set of interviews and focus group discussions with secondary school students, undergraduate students, and post-graduate masters' students to suggest that students' educational journeys enlist them into a practice of civicness—defined as political participation and engagement—that ultimately leads to a more resilient social contract.

In his contribution, Jok Madut Jok echoes the optimism and faith placed in formal educational institutions and practices and "explores a wide-spread idea in South Sudan that education may be a vehicle for restoring a sense of civility in public discourse." He returns to the past to recover examples of how formal education—in this case multi-ethnic boarding schools in the 1970s and 1980s—played a role in fostering a sense of national unity and, more concretely, civil public discourse. The people whom he interviews suggest that these boarding schools served as vehicles for promoting civicness in two distinct ways: first, as educational institutions they helped to create and sustain tolerant and multicultural—in short, 'civic,'—spaces to mitigate stereotyping and encourage interaction among South Sudanese of different backgrounds, and second, they became centres for the teaching of a new curriculum that would equip students with applicable knowledge and the skills of critical and independent thinking. In the end, Jok's essay reaffirms the role of formal education in nation-building.

Yosa Wawa's contribution, "Civicness in South Sudan Secondary School Curriculum," analyses South Sudan's national curriculum, launched in September 2015 by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and finds evidence that both civic values and skills inform the learning outcomes and student competencies in the secondary school subject areas of Citizenship, Geography, and History. In his definition of civicness, Wawa starts with the work of Paul Dekker (2009) and others who see civicness as values or behaviours, such as tolerance, respect, and social concern. In the subject area of Citizenship, Wawa identifies course content such as Human Rights, Conflict Resolution, Community Work, and Environmental Conservation that clearly articulates commitment to civic values. In other subject areas, the commitment to civicness appears in the expected skills and values transmitted to the learner, such as 'critical thinking,' 'teamwork,' 'appreciation,' 'cooperation,' and 'tolerance.'

In fact, a large body of scholarship has explored the ways educational spaces and curricula may be used to construct 'usable pasts' for fostering social cohesion. However, even if the process of schooling could be proven to provide the tools to effectively build more civically-minded communities, the experience of school is not available to everyone and it is these exclusions that also deepen divides among communities. In their contribution, authors Leben Moro and Nitika Tolani remind us that the exclusions and inequalities endemic to the educational system in South Sudan mean that formal education has remained largely inaccessible. Their essay, "Education in South Sudan: Innovative Approaches to Elevating Student, Teacher and Community Voices," argues that it is not only, or even primarily, educational content that perpetuates conflict in South Sudan, but rather, "the way education is being delivered [that] is accentuating inequalities" and triggering conflict. They draw on data collected by the Rapid Education Risk Analysis (RERA), a large-scale, mixed methods research approach supported, designed, and implemented by USAID in several conflict settings, to show how the 2013 civil war's impact on the education system was not uniform across the country. They mine RERA data, identifying direct quotes in an approach that aims to amplify the voices of teachers, students, and their communities in debates about educational accessibility and quality.

In each of the remaining essays in this series, first-person perspectives are foregrounded, as the authors consider education in/as practice, exploring how learners, educators, and their communities make decisions and navigate possibilities for teaching and learning on a day-to-day basis.

In their contribution, "Bridging divisions in a war-torn state: Reflections on education and civicness in South Sudan," Rachel Ibreck, Alice Robinson, Naomi Pendle, and a network of South Sudanese teachers and co-researchers make the case for "a granular approach to the study of education," arguing that education is best seen through the lens of personal experiences and "'practical norms' in different localities." In their essay, the authors argue that the great potential of education to bridge social difference and counteract political violence lies primarily in the figure of the teacher, who performs the role of "civic actor," embodying legitimate civic authority, in opposition to coercive authority, and crafting improvised responses tailored to local challenges that are too often ignored in policy circles. To best reflect the "granular approach" to their subject, the authors reproduce long excerpts of first-person voices taken from a discussion held by network members with one of South Sudan's leading educationalists and from life history interviews with teachers.

This ground-level perspective reflects the authors' understanding that "everyday efforts by teachers and school communities to promote learning and orient classrooms towards peace" are "fundamental contributions to developing an educated population and a civic nation."

In other essays, the voices of the authors, who are embedded in the learning communities about which they write, and the voices of students, teachers, staff, and others, are entangled in deliberations and dialogue about the practice of formal education in South Sudan and its efficacy in bringing about civic change.

For example, informed by a methodological approach that treats the author's personal experience as 'integral' to the research process, Kuyang Logo brings her own history as the first woman lecturer to teach in the School of Law to bear on her examination of University of Juba's policies and practices around gender equality. In her essay, "Gender equality and civicness in higher education in South Sudan: Debates from University of Juba Circles," Logo argues for the centrality of gender equality to any holistic assessment of 'civicness.' Her personal history serves as a backdrop to a series of semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions she conducted with faculty and students from the School of Law and the Institute of Peace, Development and Security Studies (IPDSS) at the University of Juba on such subjects as the existence of and perceptions toward informal and formal gender equitable policies; faculty attitudes towards teaching gendered courses; and student attitudes toward women lecturers. In the end, Logo concludes that without deliberate and strategic institutional policies promoting gender equality and inclusion, university spaces have the potential to reinforce and even deepen inequalities.

In his contribution, "The language policy in South Sudan: Implications for educational development," Edward Momo too references his personal experiences as a primary school student educated using Bari primers, a Bari language officer employed by the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), and the head of the English department at SIL in charge of training teachers and producing English readers. These experiences grant him unique insights into the various stakes involved in the language debate in South Sudan, and an historical context by which to assess the impact of language policy on social cohesion, ethnic relations, and national identity at the local level. Kuyang Logo's piece restores the significance of gender equality to a robust definition of civicness, but many of the contributions in this series, as we have already seen, address the role of education in preventing, understanding, and even repairing ethnic conflict. However, how 'ethnicity' is understood and the way specific communities are cast as 'ethnic' is not straightforward. Still, language is one key component of ethnicity in South Sudan and in his piece, Momo shows how parents of young children negotiate ethno-linguistic relationships in the shadow of a conflict often carelessly characterised as ethnic. After tracing the historical development of language policies, Momo focuses on decision-making around the media of instruction at the primary level. Looking at the ways parents and teachers negotiate the language of instruction, Momo shows us how these negotiations are also about staking claims over culture in multi-lingual settings where "majority" and "minority" languages contest for power and authority in both the private and public spheres. The essay concludes that, by and large, parents are supportive of their children learning the languages of others, but that community-level dialogue over language choices in the classroom would best facilitate positive local outcomes.

Finally, in their piece, "*Kefkum* and civic education: Hospitality and an ethic of care in a student-led initiative at the University of Juba," Emmanuel Loboka, Rebecca Lorins, Gai Maroth, and Oleyo Peter, describe an intercultural dialogue initiative called *Kefkum* ("How are you (all)?") they co-founded at the University of Juba in the aftermath of the 2016 political crisis in South Sudan and reflect on the pedagogical value of such informal initiatives for under-resourced educational institutions operating in fragile, post-conflict societies. The authors build on the work of educational theorist Yusef Waghid, who sees the concepts of hospitality and 'Ubuntu caring' as central to the aims of education, (Waghid and Smeyers, 2011; Waghid et al., 2018; Waghid, 2019). Waghid defines 'Ubuntu' as a recognition of the interdependence and interconnectedness of the self and the other, and connects it to a wider African humanist tradition. The authors reflect on Kefkum within the framework of Waghid's ideas to understand the emergent potential of such dialogue initiatives to effect a civic consciousness among students, as well as the limits of this potential within a highly politicised environment. This reflection gestures toward more recent movements that call for educators to revisit the history of education as outlined earlier, and decolonise educational spaces, content, and methods at African institutions.

Inclusive, respectful, consent-based forms of public authority are key elements of South Sudan's many vernacular democratic traditions. Over the past two centuries, these traditions have been upended by the violence of colonialism and its long aftermath of war. South Sudanese people need to find new ways to constitute 'civic' forms of public authority. For the authors of the papers in this collection, and for many South Sudanese, education offers mechanisms that can help societies polarised by violence work their way through differences. The papers mostly focus on formal education, whose competitive culture can foster inequality and conflict – some authors express caution about the risks of gendered or spatial inequalities in education. South Sudan needs new forms of public authority based on inclusion, dialogue, and trust, and it needs to use the tools at its disposal to create these new forms of authority. Schools and universities, this collection argues, are amongst the most important tools available.

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