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THE IDENTITY, AGENCY AND POLITICAL INFLUENCE
OF AL-HAKKAMAT BAGGARA WOMEN POETS IN ARMED
CONFLICT IN DARFUR, SUDAN, FROM 1980S TO 2006

Volume 1

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Of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Peace Studies

University of Bradford

2011
Abstract

Title: The Identity, Agency and Political Influence of al-Hakkamat Baggara Women Poets in Armed Conflict in Darfur, Sudan, from 1980s to 2006

Candidate Name: Suad Mustafa Elhag MUSA

Key Words: Conflict, Darfur, Baggara, Gender, Women, Hakkamat, Identity, Agency, Influence, Sudan

This research explores the role of al-Hakkamat rural women poets in the context of armed conflict in Darfur, from 1980s to 2006. Utilising QSR NVivo7 software, the study analyses and interprets qualitatively collected data in the light of the posed research questions. Processes and attributes leading to the identification of al-Hakkamah, such as her singing and composing talents, are explored - from identifying and nurturing to fully constructing her role as a folk singer and agitator as well as a powerful social actor. Her nurtured personal and social identities reconstruct for her gender roles that are found to be both feared and revered by the community and appropriated by the government. She is found to respond effectively to situations ranging from gallantry (lauding), solidarity (lobbying) to downright belligerency (inciting). These roles exhibit robust and proactive gender roles and power relations in Darfur that enable women, not without historical precedence, to exercise their own identity, agency and political influence in an otherwise overwhelmingly patriarchal society.
The study also reveals that the conflict of Darfur is rooted in the history of the neopatrimonial domestic politics pursued by the riverine ruling elites, marked by systemic failure to manage resource issues equitably between tribal and ethnic entities in Darfur. In such circumstances, *al-Hakkamat* agency is either volunteered or enlisted in the attempt to secure an advantage. In either case her agency is verifiably seen to bolster the hypothesis that rural women in Darfur exercise more power than their counterparts in rural northern Sudan.
Acknowledgement

First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to my supervisor, Professor Donna Pankhurst, for her valuable and insightful advice, guidance and ever-present support and encouragement throughout the conduct of this thesis.

I am also grateful, and thankful, to the Gordon Memorial College Trust Fund for their financial support which made it possible for me to continue my studies. Thanks also due to the Population Council for supporting me financially at the beginning of my studies.

I am very grateful indeed to all respondents who volunteered to be interviewed at such awkward times and circumstances as in Darfur then. Thank you all for sharing with me your experiences and valuable information which made this study possible.

I would also like to thank Adam AbelKareem Daggash and Ibrahim Abbakar at the Ministry of Information and Social Affairs and Ahmad al-Mahdi Joah and Mohamed Salih at Nyala radio and TV. Thanks also due to Dr. Mohamoud Adam Daoud, a lecturer at Nyala University and to his colleague Ali Noah, the Chairperson of the Union of Folklore and Heritage – all in South Darfur state.
There are also my lovely young female relatives in Sudan, Sujood Salih, Aasma Mustafa and Manahil Babikir, who dedicated their time to looking after my 18 month old daughter – Hadiya Adam (now seven years old). She still yearns everyday to see them again. My thanks are also extended to other relatives, friends and colleague, in al-Fashir, Nyala, Khartoum and Britain, who are far too numerous to name individually. I must however mention you, Abdeldin Adam Mahmoud, not just for your generous and wonderful hospitality and help during my stay in Nyala but also for the follow up with many issues afterwards to enable me to successfully accomplish, and complement, my fieldwork. Special thanks also go to Imad Shatta who accompanied me during some of my information gathering trips. I am hugely indebted to their families too. I would also like to thank my family, brothers, sisters, and father and mother for their continuous encouragement.

Last but not least, my great heart-felt appreciation and thanks to my husband and daughter whose selfless support, love and compassion have sustained my drive to progress and go all the way to this moment. Thank you, Mohamed, for supporting me throughout this journey and for surviving with me all the inconveniences.
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# List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALC</td>
<td>Adult Literacy Campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARCC</td>
<td>Arms Repossession and Confiscation Campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASF</td>
<td>Al-Salam Forces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAP</td>
<td>Comprehensive Advocacy Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPA</td>
<td>Comprehensive Peace Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPAF</td>
<td>Creative Popular Arts Festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPA</td>
<td>Darfur Peace agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DUP</td>
<td>Democratic Unionist Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GBP</td>
<td>Great Britain Pound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H/S.</td>
<td>Hakkamah/Sheikhah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC</td>
<td>Informed Consent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JEM</td>
<td>Justice and Equality Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LASU</td>
<td>Literary and Artistic Standards Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MC</td>
<td>Military Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCI</td>
<td>Ministry of Culture and Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCP</td>
<td>National Congress Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIF</td>
<td>National Islamic Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCP</td>
<td>Popular Congress Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDF</td>
<td>Popular Defence Forces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIM</td>
<td>Popular Information and Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP</td>
<td>Popular Police Force</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

XIV
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q-A</td>
<td>Question and answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SANU</td>
<td>Sudan African National Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCC</td>
<td>Sudan Council of Churches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCP</td>
<td>Sudan Communist Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLM</td>
<td>Sudan Liberation Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPLA</td>
<td>Sudan People Liberation Army Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPLM</td>
<td>Sudan People Liberation Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWU</td>
<td>Sudanese Women Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UAF</td>
<td>Union of Art and Folklore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UHS</td>
<td>Union of <em>Hakkamat and Sheikhat</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UP</td>
<td>United Police</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note on Transliteration

The symbols used for transliteration are shown in tables I and II below, the former showing consonants and the latter vowels. A notable difference in pronunciation between Darfuri Baggara Arabic and fuṣḥa is that the uvular qāf /q/ in fuṣḥa is invariably pronounced as a velar /g/. Where the source transliterated is spoken /g/ is used, but if written, the /q/ is used. Proper nouns are Romanised and for Popular names, popular spellings are used, e.g. Muhammad is also written Mohammed and Mohamed as and when the latter two were preferred by the authors themselves. Also Romanisation was preferred in the text to transliteration but the latter was used for all cited poems. The definite article is always written al even when assimilated in pronunciation into the following letter, e.g. al-Tīshī as opposed to at-Tīshī. Tā marbūṭah is written as /h/ or /t/ depending on whether or not it is followed by a voiced sound.

Table I: Consonants in Darfuri Baggara Arabic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Labial</th>
<th>Dental</th>
<th>Palatal</th>
<th>Velar</th>
<th>Pharyngeal</th>
<th>Glottal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stop</td>
<td>b (ب)</td>
<td>t (ت)</td>
<td>ț (ط)</td>
<td>k (ك)</td>
<td>ʾ (أ)</td>
<td>h (ه)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasal</td>
<td>m (م)</td>
<td>n (ن)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fricative</td>
<td>f (ف)</td>
<td>th (ث)</td>
<td>z (ظ)</td>
<td>kh (خ)</td>
<td>h (ح)</td>
<td>h (ه)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affricate</td>
<td>j (ج)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibilant</td>
<td>s (س)</td>
<td>$ (س)</td>
<td>sh (ش)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lateral</td>
<td>l (ل)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trill</td>
<td>r (ر)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glide</td>
<td>w (و)</td>
<td>y (ي)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table II: Vowels in Darfuri Baggara Arabic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Front</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Back</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>High</strong></td>
<td>i (kasrah, as i in pin)</td>
<td></td>
<td>u (short ḍammah, as in put)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ī (long kasrah, as ee in deep)</td>
<td></td>
<td>ū (long ḍammah, as oo in moot)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mid</strong></td>
<td>e</td>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low</strong></td>
<td>a (fatḥah, as a in tab)</td>
<td>a (fatḥah, as ā in father)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ā (long fatḥah, as ā in father)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diphthongs</strong></td>
<td>ey (shortened form of ay)</td>
<td>ay (fatḥah before yā)</td>
<td>oy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>aw (fatḥah before waw)</td>
<td>ow</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both tables adapted from:

4. [http://transliteration.eki.ee/pdf/Arabic_2.2.pdf](http://transliteration.eki.ee/pdf/Arabic_2.2.pdf)
## Glossary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abid, ibaid (diminutive)</td>
<td>a slave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arraqie</td>
<td>Short robe worn by males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘a’raf</td>
<td>local tribal customs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afandiyyah</td>
<td>government employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ageed (pl. Augada):</td>
<td>tribal military commander, usually leading fighters from one of the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>clans of the tribe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ageed al-Augada</td>
<td>the chief <em>Ageed</em> just like a commander general in modern armies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ageed al-Shoosha</td>
<td>Same as above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ajaweed (sing. Ajwadi)</td>
<td>mediators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Gidairee</td>
<td>Folk dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Harimah</td>
<td>Folk dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Katim</td>
<td>Folk dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Nuggarah</td>
<td>Folk dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angarah</td>
<td>Hibiscus, a local crop that is planted deep and far a pace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baggara</td>
<td>cattle raisers/herders, Arab tribes of Darfur and Kordofan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baramkah (sing. Barmaki)</td>
<td>Men folk poets of the Baggara tribes (the male counterpart of *al-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hakkamat)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boshan</td>
<td>type of chivalrous poetry normally recited and sung by a chorus of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>men/horsemen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cadal</td>
<td>Folk dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dar</td>
<td>Tribal homeland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darb al-marowb</td>
<td>footprints of the sacred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eid</td>
<td>Muslims’ festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faqir</td>
<td>A religious person, supposedly knowledgeable in religious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faza’</td>
<td>communal solidarity activity, normally to recover stolen animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fartuk</td>
<td>a rope made from palm leaves and it is used to scare away birds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fursan (sing. Faris)</td>
<td>horsemen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaydoomah</td>
<td>Folk dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hakkamah (pl. Hakkamat)</td>
<td>a female folk poet among the Baggara tribes of Darfur (and Kordofan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imarah (pl. imarat)</td>
<td>An Emirate, a small native administrative unit, encompassing or supposed to encompass a tribal dar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraij</td>
<td>Folk dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamel Ragad</td>
<td>Folk dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janjawid</td>
<td>Rogue armed horsemen of predominantly Arab composition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judiyah</td>
<td>mediation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kasrat qaid (f)</td>
<td>A shackle breaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khail</td>
<td>horses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khashum bait</td>
<td>A clan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mada</td>
<td>An open dance courtyard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahaliyah</td>
<td>A locality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masar (pl. masarat):</td>
<td>Same as murhal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merkoob</td>
<td>local shoes made from leather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mu'tamad</td>
<td>a Commissioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murhal (pl marahil)</td>
<td>a social and administrative migratory route for the mobile pastoralists to navigate their paths through lands of settled farmers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murhakah</td>
<td>A flat stone used by women for grinding grains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nafir</td>
<td>a cooperative gathering to help do some work for one member of the tribe, e.g. harvesting his plot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nahas</td>
<td>a huge drum made from cobber and symbol of power associated with ruling families within tribes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nazir</td>
<td>a title of a tribal chief who ranks 1st in the tribal administration hierarchy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuba</td>
<td>Tribes especially in southern Kordofan but used pejoratively in the context of the war in Darfur to mean a slave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omda</td>
<td>a title of a tribal chief who ranks 2nd in the tribal administration hierarchy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Omodiya</strong> <em>(pl Omodiyat)</em></td>
<td><strong>Chieftainship</strong> <em>(Native Administration)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rākūbah</strong> <em>(a shelter)</em></td>
<td>‘a’raf, i.e. local tribal customs, regulations and conventions used in <strong>judiyyah</strong> to settle especially murder between tribes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sanjak</strong></td>
<td><strong>Folk dance</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sheikh</strong></td>
<td>a title of a tribal chief who ranks third in the tribal administration hierarchy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sheikhah</strong></td>
<td>new designation for a woman who will have some authority organising women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Soja</strong></td>
<td><strong>Folk dance</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tobe</strong></td>
<td>A saree worn by Sudanese women wrapped round their bodies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tora Bora</strong></td>
<td>Reference to militias of African tribes in Darfur, especially Fur militias</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Umm Digaina</strong></td>
<td><strong>Folk dance</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Umm Jekkay</strong></td>
<td><strong>Folk dance</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wadi</strong></td>
<td>A small stream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Zaffa (ḥ)</strong></td>
<td>tribal parade</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1: Thesis Introduction
1.1 Introduction

This research investigates the exercise of *agency, power and political influence* by *al-Hakkamat* women poets of the *Baggara* tribes in contexts of armed conflict (and peace building) in Darfur of western Sudan. *Al-Hakkamat* are hypothesized to be effective agents within the local social and political institutions of the *Baggara* Arabs – such that they are feared and revered, solicited and snubbed and are therefore able to influence both conflict and peace situations in the region, as will be shown in this thesis. My interest in this topic was raised by personal, social and professional experience drawn from immersion in the Darfuri context, both as resident and worker. I felt, as I did in my work capacity, that I could investigate the context of gender power relations in the recent social and political history of Darfur that have been addressed mostly from a stereotyped position, and its relevance to conflict and peacebuilding.

This chapter is divided into two sections. Section 1.1 highlights the rationale (the problem) behind conducting the research and the research design – aims and objectives of research, research questions and hypothesis and thesis layout. Section 1.2 sets out the conceptual background against which the analysis is made.

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1.1.1 Genesis of Research

In conducting this research, I was driven by three main interwoven factors: firstly, what I see as an inadequate representation of women, other than victims, though legitimately this may be, in literature of conflict in Darfur. The vast majority of the published literature on conflict in Darfur determines that the armed conflict experienced in Darfur, from the 1980s to 2006 (research covered period), appears to be seen as just another of the long and protracted brutal African wars fought either between tribes/ethnic groups, or between insurgencies and their central governments, for more or less conventional causes and triggers. Thus, many scholars and observers (e.g. Mukhtar 1998; Mohamed 1998, 2003; Takana 1998; Bashar 2003; Musa 2009) assert that the recent history of Darfur shows that Darfur witnessed more than 80 per cent of the tribal and ethnic armed conflicts in Sudan. During the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, up to 2006, almost all tribes in Darfur were involved in armed conflicts; and from 1968 to 2006 not less than 36 large scale conflicts were experienced involving more than 30 tribes of both Arab and indigenous African tribes and ethnic groups.

Nevertheless, most, if not all, of this literature, may not have highlighted, acknowledged and/or analysed the political involvement of Darfuri rural women as potential or real actors in agitating for and igniting conflict and in contributing to reconciliation and peace resettlement. In the meantime, the literature tends to paradoxically follow the stereotyped analysis of presenting women as merely
victims of conflicts, thus departing from the historical recognition of Darfuri women as having developed and exercised agency, autonomy and power (see 1.2) that they acquired, aided by the socio-cultural contexts of their communities and their unique economic and subsistence position to be explored in this thesis. The literature thus tends to overlook, disguise and obscure the agency and political influence of rural women and their subtle, yet conscious, contribution to these conflicts positively and negatively. This oversight could partly be attributed to the lack of gender sensitivity among authors and/or to attitudes that intentionally or otherwise disregard women’s identity, agency and political influence. I see this as a gap in information on the political economy of Darfur and gender relations, and the social context in general and which overshadowed women's experience and exercising of agency and political influence that ought to be filled.

Secondly, what I see as state government domestic politics played out in the political economy of Darfur, especially following the annexation of Darfur into Sudan in 1917, and in particular since 1970s, tend to influence patriarchal gender power relations in rural areas which degrade women’s historical legacy of social and economic rights and autonomy². I perceive this government’s political approach as being brought about by ideological perception on women and by lack of awareness of historical characteristics of gender power relations in the Darfuri community.

² Defined as 'individual independence', 'self-determination of the individual woman' or the 'right to individual choice,' and public presence (Mies 1986: 40).
Thus, judging by my own social background\(^3\) and professional experience\(^4\) whilst in Darfur, this lack of awareness of the socio-cultural contexts and gender roles and power relations in Darfur among the riverine\(^5\) ruling elites, planners and decision-makers, who would normally dominate the powerful office in Darfur, usually leads to the disempowering of women’s social, economic and political capacities. I could support my argument by citing one of many incidents experienced in Darfur when an Islamist candidate from riverine Sudan was appointed as Minister in Darfur (Personal Observations, 1997).

Arriving in the region for the first time, while travelling to some rural areas during a rainy season, he observed that the vast majority of farmers were women, those fetching water on donkeys were also all women, and that women, to his dismay, were moving everywhere in rural areas unaccompanied by men and were not wearing scarves or long dresses, as he ideologically presumed, as Muslim women, they should (see 5.4.1; 5.4.2). He was surprised and, from an authorial position, contemptuously criticized the situation. He was determined, too, to stop rural women from behaving as they did, and to follow the supposedly Islamic ideals as designated by the NIF\(^6\) regime, also known as the

\(^3\) Born and lived in al-Fashir - Darfur over thirty years

\(^4\) Worked with the ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources in al-Fashir for three years and with INGOs e.g. Oxfam for seven years in predominately rural settings

\(^5\) Central Sudan and areas along the northern banks of the River Nile.

\(^6\) The core of the NIF is Muslim Brothers. They engineered and executed the National Salvation Revolution of June 1989 in a coup d’état. In 1999, they split acrimoniously into two; Bashir’s National
Inghaz regime, in their ‘Comprehensive Advocacy’, the re-Islamisation project for the Sudanese people (see 3.4.2.3). His Darfuri associates, however, reminded him of some cultural norms in Darfur that see nothing wrong in these behaviours of women, and was advised that his decision to interfere would not only be vain, but would also tremendously jeopardise the food security situation that was based on significant women’s subsistence contribution. Furthermore, the ‘Islamic’ dress he was alluding women should wear, was also viewed as impractical for the rural women’s work let alone it would be the pririority of no one at that critical time of need to buy new dresses (in order to comply).

This incident suggests that a lack of knowledge about cultural and social diversity in Sudan shown by riverine policy planners and decision makers, often leads to their misinterpretation of local norms and values and to application of socially and culturally-oriented perceptions on communities where these perceptions not only have no relevance, but could also be seen as threatening to the established gender roles and relations and to the entire welfare of community. More importantly, it indicates, on the other hand, the recognition and support by the local community of women’s rights and roles no matter how these are interpreted by outsiders or indeed denied in other parts of north Sudan.

Congress Party (NCP) and the Popular Congress Party (PCP), led by Hassan al-Turabi, the Islamist ideologue and mentor. The former remained in power and the latter joined the opposition. Throughout this thesis, any generic reference to the ruling clique will remain the NIF, their designation when they took power in a coup d’etat in 1989.
My observations therefore suggest that there is still a need for a more gender-oriented study so that policy planners and Sudanese in general could realise that there are wide variations in rural women’s status across Sudan and that the political economy in Darfur and the gender division of labour have historically offered rural women a favourable position of autonomy, personal identity and agency that she exercises to enhance her welfare and influence her local community (chapters 5 and 6).

Third, there is this insufficient analysis of the politics of conflict in Darfur as one essentially provoked by ethnicity and tribalism (see 3.5.1; 4.5.3) as widely interpreted and propagated amongst the ruling elites, politicians, academics and journalists. I would argue that, judging by my previous professional and social engagement in Darfur and Sudan, that the main ‘triggers’ of Darfur conflicts are political and largely motivated by the inertia of the central state in dealing with post-independence challenges (see chapter 5) though this form of explanation receives least emphasis. In other words, it is not merely tribalism or ethnicity that gave rise to conflicts between tribes and ethnic groups in Darfur. But domestic politics and geopolitics (see 4.5.1) based on neopatrimonialism (see 3.4.2) played out in Darfur by various Sudanese regimes appeared to have done; as these policies played one group against the other.

With the lack of just institutions of law and order, all these factors in the end have become interwoven and mutually influencing to the extent that ethnic consciousness appears to be heavily politically charged by the government to
explode into prominence from among the many triggers of conflict in the region of Darfur as I shall go on to argue (see chapter 4). As most of these conflicts involved Baggara (and Abbala) Arab tribes and ethnic groups, *al-Hakkamat* women who, apparently, constitute the main ethnic zealots of the Baggara defending institutions, would often step in to rally to influence the pursuit of wars, and sometimes reconciliation and peace resettlement. This role played by *al-Hakkamat* has further reinforced the ethnic dimension of these conflicts to seemingly supercede other factors influenced by the state ruling elites.

1.1.2 *Al-Hakkamah*: A Preliminary Overview

*Al-Hakkamat* are talented women folk poets, combining composing, singing and performing, who represent a powerful female institution of agency and influence found among the Baggara and Abbala pastoral and agropastoral Arab tribes in Darfur. They are culturally recognised as wielding agency, social and political power and authority that they exercise, through composing and reciting poems and songs, presenting speeches, performing symbolic actions and issuing arbitrations to maintain social order and discipline. Men therefore like and at the same time fear *al-Hakkamat'*s tongues, as through their poems that are sung in choruses to reinforce messages, and given their moral licence to say what they believe they could say, *al-Hakkamat* can make or break men’s reputations (Cunnison 1966; Lampen 1933; Mohamed 2003a); thus forcing some to take unconventional decisions. It is not uncommon therefore to hear that someone was made to leave their home village, in disgrace, because of some reason
some *Hakkamah* had chosen to defame them by songs that are now sung by many women in the vicinity. Therefore, even men in positions of power often seek to please them as asserted by Lampen (1933: 115) that he knows 'three Nazirs'\(^7\) who give extravagant bribes to one of these *Hakkamaat* who threatened to sing songs against their meanness'.

This is because they are specifically devoted to projecting what it is that constitutes what their mensfolk should be and should do and can therefore spark off a conflict, assuming the mantle of the protector of the tribe’s dignity and honour, even though such actions of theirs may be described by some Darfuri people as evil (see 6.6.4).

Their tremendous agency and influence appear in decisively inciting and mobilising their tribesmen to go to war. Many Sudanese scholars (e.g. Ahmed 1998; Musa 1999; Abdullah 2004; Mohamed and Badri 2005; Daggash 2006) therefore claim that *al-Hakkamat* have become the ‘trigger’ factor in inflaming tense situations into fully blown all-out wars. In those reports and studies, this group of women were, apparently, judged, rather instrumentally, in such ways that their roles and influence were looked at from an ethical/moral viewpoint, which may or may not justify the conclusions derived by those scholars. In many ways, their role is acknowledged and legitimised by the tribe’s customs and norms as it is intended to address social, ethical and moral standards within

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\(^7\) *Nazir* is the title of the male chief on the top hierarchy of the native administration of the Baggara tribes.
the tribe and maintain discipline and order. They perhaps constitute a persistent female socio-political representation of ethnic consciousness and tribalism (see 3.5.1; 4.5.3) that recruits its agency and works towards preserving ethnic boundaries as suggested by Barth (1969: 9-10) in his remarks that 'ethnic boundaries … are often the very foundations on which embracing social systems are based'.

As shown in Diagram 1 below, al-Hakkamat women are being able to position themselves as effective social and political agents within the constituency of the the Baggara Arabs and their local traditional social institutions (is associated with …). This position enables them, facilitated by their acquired power, agency and identity, to effectively influence both conflict and peace in Darfur through undertaking various roles (is engaged in …) and objectives (is active in …). Their outstanding agency, personal and social identity and influence (see 2.6.2; 2.4) forced government’s recognition and facilitated for them to be incorporated in the ethnic mobilization (moral orientation) component of the government military and war machinery (see chapter 7). The diagram summarises some of al-Hakkamat roles and relationships to be addressed in this thesis.
Diagram 1: Modelling Al-Hakkamah’s Network of Main Roles and Relationships:

is active in (objectives) ...

- Peace Advocacy
- Warmongering
- Insurgency
- Tribal
- Community SOS
- Casual
- Social celebrations
- Eid
- Child Birth
- Wedding

is engaged in (roles)...

- Praises
- Glorifies
- Motivates
- Conflict
- Non-Conflict

is described as (attributes)...

- Spokesperson
- Standard bearer
- Conscience of group
- Conformist
- All round woman
- Rogue
- Non Conformist
- Maverick
- Morally deficient

is associated with (relationships)...

- Family
- Chief
- Ageed
- Tribal Leaders
- Officials
- Women
- Chorus
- Notables
- Other women
- Other Hakamat
- Horsemen
- Youth
- Other social actors and
- Baramkah Council
1.1.3 Aim and Objective of Research

The overall aim of this thesis is to contribute to the historical and contemporary knowledge, debate and understanding of experiences, modes and patterns of rural women’s agency and access to exercising identity, agency, power and political influence in Africa in general and Darfur in particular, and also to contribute to the analysis of politics behind the armed conflict in Darfur.

The objective of the thesis is to use the case of al-Hakkamat women poets as representing a lens through which the concealed political position of rural women in Darfur, in general, and Baggara women, in particular, could be seen. This would be through the following operations:

1. Explore, investigate, analyse and establish how and why al-Hakkamat acquire agency, power and access to political influence in the public domain; in particular, how the way was paved for al-Hakkamah to become what she is.

2. Investigate and analyse the political context of the armed conflict in Darfur and the role of domestic politics, based on neo-patrimonialism, played out in these conflicts.

3. Explore, investigate and analyse the reasons for the active involvement of al-Hakkamat in armed conflict and reconciliation, if any, since 1980s to date (2006) and the mechanisms they deploy in doing this.

4. Investigate how and why the agency and power of al-Hakkamat were reinforced by local and national power brokers and co-opted by government national political and military institutions to take part in war campaigns and peace advocacy.
1.1.4 Research Questions

The following are the specific research questions that will be addressed:

1. What are the attributes of the Sudan’s political order and domestic politics and how they influence conflict in Darfur?

2. What are the historical socio-cultural and the political economy context that characterise gender roles and power relationships of the Darfuri community and how have they enabled women to exercise agency and political influence in Darfur? How are these attributes being influenced by national governments’ policies, the Islamist NIF’s in particular?

3. What is the involvement of al-Hakkamat in the armed conflict and peace initiatives in Darfur since 1980s to 2006?

4. What is the politics behind the government co-opting al-Hakkamat since 1990s? What are the processes involved in this interaction? What impact did this co-optaion have on government’s war campaigns? How have the agency and identity of al-Hakkamah changed as a result?

1.1.5 Research Hypothesis

The research will test, as a tentative answer for the research questions, the hypothesis that:

In spite of the political fluctuations in Sudan and the adverse plight women experience under circumstances of war, there has been some continuity in the positive place that women hold in Darfur rural communities which is manifested in the access women have to exercising agency, personal identity and political influence. In particular, al-Hakkamat women have been in the forefront in setting the pace of morality and ethics of their communities and when conflict erupts, they enlist their agency, power and ethnic consciousness to enthusiastically influence political actions, thus aggravating and/or alleviating conflict situations.
1.1.6 Layout of Thesis

Chapter one is an introductory chapter which outlines in its first section the
genesis of research and its design. In section two, it outlines the methodology
adopted in conducting the research and highlights the ethical issues involved,
together with a reflection on the process of collecting data from the field.

Chapter two sets out a conceptual framework as the basis of analysis for the
collected data of the investigated phenomenon. It outlines and discusses some
concepts that were thought relevant to answering the main research questions
outlined above and testing the research hypothesis.

Chapter three provides literature review and critically discusses the political
history of Sudan, the main characteristics of domestic politics based on
neopatrimonialism, and the impact of how the ruling and governing elites in
Sudan have informalised and subverted the state governing institutions to serve
their own vested interests creating thus wars and armed conflict in the country.

Chapter four engages with Darfur case study, starting with the political history
and economy of Darfur, the relevance of the neopatrimonial domestic politics
pursued by national governments to the inter-tribal and inter-ethnic conflicts and
the civil war experienced in Darfur since 1991. It highlights the conflict analysis
approaches adopted by the NIF regimes which involve ethnic interpretation of
conflicts and ethnic mobilisation of Arab militias in violently responding to them. The chapter shows that ethnicity alone is not on its own right a trigger to these conflicts but the role played by the neo-patrimonial governing elites to their vested interest, did. Ethnicity and tribalism have therefore become devastating components in the power relations that connect Darfur community together. Among the Baggara ethnicity, their defensive mechanism involves the institution of al-Hakkamah who would step in to rally in support of her tribe through mobilising their ethnic consciousness as would come, later, in chapters six and seven.

Chapter five provides a detailed critical literature review on the general and relevant characteristics of gender power relations in Sudan as unfolded in the participation of women in political and decision-making structures. It presents how the context of power relations in Darfur differs, historically, in many instances, from that prevailing in rural northern and riverine Sudan and which are reflected in the relative access for Darfuri rural women exercising identity, agency and political influence. This is especially revealed through al-Hakkamat despite the prevailing stereotyped patriarchal context and which is further consolidated by the NIF Islamist regime since the 1990s.

Chapters six and seven present the findings of the data analysis and illustrate in detail, the processes that accompanied the construction and reconstruction of the identity, power, agency and influence of al-Hakkamah. They prove the
preliminary hypothesis set (see 1.1.6) and answer the research questions posed (1.1.4; 1.1.5). Chapter eight concludes.

1.2 Research Methodology

1.2.1 Introduction

As stated in section (1.1), this research is aimed at exploring, investigating and analysing the exercising of agency, identity and political influence of al-Hakkamat women poets of the Baggara community in pursuit of armed conflict in Darfur, the westernmost region of Sudan, from the 1980s to 2006. The research adopted a qualitative methodology\(^8\) to data collection and analysis using a general conceptual framework (chapter 2) as a background source of understanding the research theme as an existing reality.

Based on the research questions and the hypothesis, the underlying approach to the research is deemed exploratory, descriptive and interpretive. It has adopted the interpretivist anti-naturalist epistemological approach which emphasises the importance of interpretation in social science (Lazar 1998) which is the twin of social constructionist (also symbolic constructionist) approach to meaning construction. It suggests that our concepts, perceptions and acts are built on, and are, the outcomes of historical social and economic

\(^8\)refers to 'the choices we make about cases to study, methods of data gathering, forms of data analysis, etc., in planning and executing a research study' (Silverman 2005: 109).
processes and that knowledge does not stand on its own as an isolated reality in nature but is socially constructed and shared by people through their daily interactions. It is therefore, Lazar (1998) proposes, an appropriate tool for analysing people’s narratives by reflecting their subjective meaning more vividly than statistical figures.

It therefore deployed qualitative methods for data collection and analysis because they allow in-depth social and historical context-driven investigation of the research questions and in-depth comprehension of the phenomena under study through discovering, exploring, developing and testing hypotheses about social reality (Van Maanen 1977; Miles and Huberman 1994). Qualitative methodology also enables the investigation of the construction and deconstruction of socio-cultural and political processes of the social world, events and structures and the linkages between them; and the effects of these processes on the roles and interactions of different actors and the actors’ own perceptions and interpretations of these processes (Silverman 1993; Holstein and Gubrium 1997; Seale 1998; May 2001). More importantly, Marshall and Rossman (2006) assert, it enables the researcher to develop an in-depth understanding of how the research participants can better understand their worlds – an insight that would enable the researcher to present an authentic account of the complex social system investigated. On the whole, the research utilised interviewing for primary data collection and the NVivo software for data collation and analysis.
1.2.2 Literature Review

In the initial stage of the research, in order to be acquainted with the current state of knowledge and to help design the questions (e.g. Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias 1996; Neuman and Kreuger 2003; Punch 2005), a thorough, comprehensive, critical and selective literature review was carried out in relevance to the research theme and purpose, on the concepts, definitions and theories. It focuses on professional sources of the subject area - the political system and context of Sudan, the context of armed conflict in Darfur and the prevailing gender roles and power relations in Sudan. It outlines what put rural women in Darfur into a unique social position in contrast to the vast majority of rural women in northern Sudan. A summary of these sources is provided as background to the study and which helps in indicating how the study would contribute to the debate around the phenomenon investigated.

1.2.3 Primary Data Collection

1.2.3.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

I used semi-structured, also called focused, interview method as appropriate for collecting primary data needed for answering the research questions and testing the hypothesis (1.1.6). Its practicality lends the possibility of it being conducted both with individuals and with groups of people (Merton et al. 1956). Morgan (1997) also states:
focus groups and individual interviews can be complementary techniques across a variety of different research design ... the goal of combining research methods is to strengthen the total research project, regardless of which method is the primary means of data collection (1997: 23).

It thus, embodies the feature of “triangulation” - an approach in which more than one method are combined to obtain the same information which can enable mutual verification of information and reinforcement of the validity of research conclusions (e.g. Kvale 1996; Robson 1997; Bryman 2000). Combining methods, Morgan (1988, 1997) adds, also helps in producing a broad image and in filling some gaps of knowledge of a setting that cannot be obtained by either means separately.

Yet, I used one-to-one (individual), also referred to as key-informant, interviewing or personal interviewing as the main strategy for collecting data for its various advantages which include, firstly, it allows making contact with culturally diverse respondents and assessing the reliability and validity of the respondents' accounts (Weinberg 1983). Secondly, it can elicit rich and detailed information needed including disclosing sensitive data (Lofland 1971; Fielding 1993; Hall and Hall 1996). Thirdly, it offers more flexibility in the questioning and answering process as it enables the interviewer to clarify questions, maintain focus, stimulate discussion and probe for more information which guides the interviewee and enables him/her to attend to the topics, to freely and adequately present his/her views on each question asked as a result of having the privacy and confidentiality maintained (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias
1996; Morgan 1997). Most importantly for me, however, was that, given the prevailing conflict situation in Darfur, the process of this method has sufficient scope for building up trust and cooperation between me and the interviewee(s).

Its disadvantage, nevertheless, includes it being an expensive and time consuming approach (Weinberg 1983) and having a potential for interviewer bias and personal influence (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias 1996). I believe that the indigenous and professional knowledge, skills and experience I have acquired on these communities, have enabled me to neutralise this by conducting the interviews by myself. I thus, kept and maintained necessary distance that would guarantee the integrity of data offered and the ways in which it is solicited. Besides, whilst I believe that my gender played a role in enabling easy rapport and confident participation and cooperation by informants (Spradley 1979), I made sure it did not interfere with informants’ views and revelations. I monitored and ensured this through careful listening and probing and comparing of different interviews' accounts to check the reliability of the data after each interview.

In addition, I used semi-structured group interviews as a complementary method to the personal interviews to observe the dynamics of social and political elements involved in group interactions, that is, their ideas, how they present them, their responding to each others’views and the consistency in sharing views. This natural interaction and the spontaneous accounts it had generated (Merton et al. 1956; Kvale 1996; Morgan 1997; Flick 2006), served
as observational data in complementing individual interviews and in informing the data analysis process (1.2.3.6)

I guided the interviews through a topic-guide which contains a list of questions to cover selected topics relevant to the research questions and the hypothesis (see 10.3. Appendix 3: Topic Guide). This nondirective approach to interviewing allowed the respondents to exercise agency (see 2.6.2; 2.6.3) and autonomy in communicating ideas, expressing themselves and providing an authentic accounts of the social phenomenon (e.g. Merton et al. 1956; Kvale 1996; Holstein and Gubrium1997; Seale 1998; Flick 2006). This was because in such an explosive atmosphere as Darfur’s, autonomy and freedom in answering are essential measures for building trust.

1.2.3.2 Role of Researcher

It is proposed that the effectiveness of a focused interview is by and large influenced by the role of the researcher and how skilful and knowledgeable he or she is (Morgan 1988; 1997) and as Kvale (1996:103: 104) asserts, ‘(g)ood interviews require expertise – in both subject matter and human interaction’. Moreover, the interviewer needs to be alert to the conceptual issues of generating data through conversation (Morgan1997). Similarly, Fontana and Frey (2007: 365) suggest that the interviewer should be ‘flexible, objective, empathic, persuasive, a good listener’. Objectivity in this regard, as Flick (2006)
understands, is the role adopted by the moderator in managing the interview that allows participants to express their views freely, prevents domination by other participants and ensures that the topic is adequately covered. This entails for the researcher to be skilful in stimulating discussions, and managing interviews, well-informed about the interview theme and aware of the available and the accessible methodological choices in the field.

I believe that my professional skills, experience and my knowledge of the social and political context of the setting, and which were enhanced by reading and discussing about interview methods, especially with colleagues at the Politics and Social Change Research Group at Peace Studies Department at Bradford University, enabled the interviews to be successful and adequately informative to the demand of the research questions and the hypothesis. This is because while taking into consideration the orthodox methods learned from texts, I believe in what Barrett and Cason (1997: 90) highlight that the essence of success lies within 'the creativity, perseverance, and training of the researcher.'

1.2.3.3 Sampling Procedure

In order to generate a wide spectrum of diverse and interesting ideas and responses, I had initially identified the informants along seven set of categories: *al-Hakkamat*, tribal leaders, politicians, government officials, academics, NGO workers and a loose category of social actors (see 10.3 Appendix 3). However,
apart from *al-Hakkamat*, most of the informants were found to belong in more than one category, thus making the categories more overlapping.

Having been to the field (*al-Fashir* and *Nyala*), I used snowball sampling (e.g. Seale and Filmer 1998; Walsh 1998; May 2001; Bryman 2004) where I relied on social contacts, interviewees and professional networks that I have in the research setting to identify and trace local resource persons and potential informants. Indeed, I was focusing on a "good informant" (Morse 1994: 73) as a general criterion for selecting subjective interviewees. My selection of good informants was based on what was popularly recognised by the community members of a person as culturally knowledgeable, articulate, prepared to answer the research questions and available for the interviews. Thus, it is to be emphasised though that no special education and/or social background were considered conditional for the selection of informants. While the lessons I learned as a previous researcher did enhance my role as a researcher in a positive way, it did not advocate and/or influence the selection process which was mainly made in collaboration with interviewees and resource persons.

Subsequently, I gained access to, and obtained informed consent and conducted personal and group interviews with seventy two persons from diverse ethnic and tribal groups out of which women were thirty three displaying thus gender and ethnic diversity of the interviewees (see Diagram 2 below).
1.2.3.4 Number of Interviews and Size of Groups

I was able to conduct, fifty one-to-one interviews and four group interviews which involved 3, 3, 7, 9 informants. Each interview lasted for between one to two and a half hours. With three individual informants, who I recognised as resource persons on the culture of the community, I had two interviews with each which resulted in disclosing significant information as a result of trust developed between me and them as also postulated by Seale (1998). Given the lack of a general consensus among researchers on the number of the interview subjects required for qualitative research and which is perceived as dependent on the research purpose and situation, I perceived the data revealed by this

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9 The respondents were distributed along their individual tribes and ethnic groups (African and Baggara) in order to generate responses from those who belong to conflicting tribes of similar ethnic group and to have an idea about how people from different ethnic groups construct their accounts.
number of interviews was satisfactory to address the research questions and the hypothesis.

To this point, Kvale (1996: 101) suggests to 'interview as many subjects as necessary to find out what you need to know,' pointing out, thus, to the fact that the number of subjects required is influenced by the research subject and that generally in qualitative research this number can be small or large to the point 'where further interviews yield little new knowledge.' This is also perceived by Barrett and Cason (1997: 106), 'when you begin hearing (and believing) the same answers over and over again,' or when the moderator anticipates what will be said, which signals the completion of the data collection mission. This stage is referred to by Strauss and Cobrin (1998: 212) as "saturation" which is a stage when collection of more data does not add any depth to the topic. It should be mentioned, however, that informants were only asked the questions that were relevant to their positions and roles and not all the questions in the topic guide.

1.2.3.5 Data Collection Process

In conducting the interviews, whilst I took into account due care not to control the answers, I was able to distinguish what was or was not relevant which made the interviews to be more focused. The interviews’ accounts were continuously
checked and answers compared to ensure that the necessary level of saturation was accomplished.

This non-directive approach had facilitated an enabling environment especially as far as the power relation between me and the participants was concerned especially with regard to my gender, ethnicity and social identity. Apparently, this responds to a feminist concern that emphasises interviewing to be a shared practice between the interviewee and the researcher to avoid subordination and objectification of the former as a result of potentially unequal power relations based on gender, race, etc., especially when the interviewees are women (e.g. Hall and Hall 1996; Hollway and Jefferson 2000). The women interviewed expressed themselves with considerable ease, a position that could not have been accomplished if any form of imbalanced power relationship had occurred between me and them.

I anticipated the logistic demands (time and resources) in conducting, especially the group interviews, well before going to the field. This was based on knowledge of the social and political context of the research site where commitment to timekeeping and punctuality do not count much in people's routine transactions let alone the impact of the war on people's priorities where interviews are casually inconvenient. I was thus able to hold four group interviews with al-Hakkamat, government officials and two groups of tribal leaders i.e. Omadas, Sheikhs, Shartais and Nazirs. Whilst the group interviews were intended to observe and understand the dynamics of social and political
elements involved in group interaction (see 1.2.3.1), they were also meant to serve ethical aspects of no harm. This was because communicating the nature and intentions of my research to influential government officials and tribal leaders, most of who might actually act as gatekeepers, at a single event, would help dispel fears and potential suspicion, especially from “casual” gatekeepers and informants, which might otherwise jeopardise my fieldwork. This measure proved to be crucial in facilitating my movements in the field.

In order to maintain a precise record of the interview accounts and enable myself focusing on the discussion and observing the interview dynamics rather than getting distracted by taking notes otherwise (e.g. Kvale 1996; Barrett and Cason 1997; Holstein and Gubrium 1997; May 1993, 2001), I tape-recorded the interviews, after having the respondents’ consent. This enabled me to listen to the interviews several times over especially that I did most of the translation and transliteration away from the field.

1.2.3.6 Observations and Memos

In addition to recording the interview observations, outside the interview setting, I also used observation while attending tribal folkloric dancing forums at which some Hakkamat took a leading role. I used these for verification of interview

\[^{10}\text{You might expect any official to claim a position of a gatekeeper and could therefore exercise authority over you.}\]
data on the public performance (singing and dancing skills and their mesmeric effect) of *al-Hakkamah* and some of her peculiar observable characteristics (see 6.2.3). Besides, during my stay I had informal discussions with acquaintances (friends, colleagues and relatives) on the issues, which was an added value to verifying the interview data.

Moreover, I recorded some analytical ideas that had sprung to my mind about the data and the collection process and which helped me, tentatively, to screen the data and sharpen the research focus. This conforms to what is proposed by scholars (e.g. Silverman 1993; Miles and Huberman 1994; Walsh 1998; Gibbs 2002; Bryman 2004; Punch 2006) that the researcher should record any analytical ideas and perceptions that emerge during the data collection process, referred to as "memos", and which are helpful in providing a reflexive monitoring of research, in organizing and storing ideas, maintaining their flow and identifying a clear direction of the research.

**1.2.4 Primary Data Analysis and Interpretation**

**1.2.4.1 Introduction**

Data analysis is a process of exploring, describing and interpreting data (Miles and Huberman 1994) which involves a comprehensive process of organizing data in order to establish well grounded interpretation for hypothesis testing or theory generation. Morse (1994) defines data analysis as
To analyse the data and test the hypothesis (see 1.1.5), I followed the analytical induction method which is perceived as a general strategy in qualitative data analysis and as the standard method of testing hypotheses in qualitative field research (e.g. Fielding 1993; Silverman 1993; Bryman 2004; Flick 2006). It is defined as: 'the systematic examination of similarities between cases to develop concepts or ideas' (Punch 2005: 196). It implies that by induction, concepts are generated from the data and their interpretations are sought out.

The analytical operations pursued, involved revising and correcting field notes, editing, typing, correcting and transcribing tape-recordings, categorizing, synthesizing, searching for patterns and interpreting the data.

1.2.4.2 Transcribing Data

In order to maintain familiarity with the data and put it into an analysable and presentational format and interpretation, short after coming back from fieldwork, I started transcribing and simultaneously translating the oral interview records in Sudanese Colloquial Arabic - largely Darfuri Baggara variety of Arabic, into a written English language. It took six months to accomplish. This process, Kvale
1996 holds, produces transcriptions as interpretive constructions. During this process, I was focusing entirely on rendering the meaning as accurately as possible, taking for granted the poetic excellence of the original texts as understood, appreciated and exalted in in the social contexts in which they were sung and recited. I found it just relevant to follow the clear and general transcription rules of turn taking, breaks, ends of sentences, and so on, for a spoken discourse suggested by Bruce (1992: 145 cited in O'Connell and Kowall 1995: 96):

... manageability (for the transcriber), readability, learnability, and interpretability (for the analyst and for the computer). It is reasonable to think that a transcription system should be easy to write, easy to read, easy to learn, and easy to search.

I also transliterated a large number of poems that constituted considerable part of the transcripts. To maintain the privacy and confidentiality of the informants and their accounts, I have undertaken these tasks by myself.

1.2.4.3 Coding and Development of Categories

Having the data transcribed, the part relevant to the research questions and themes organized, a process of sorting, coding and analysis followed which involved comparing and contrasting, looking for and developing patterns (e.g. Potter and Wetherell 1992; Miles and Huberman 1994; Tonkiss 1998; Gibbs 2002; Strauss and Corbin 2008). This was made by using the QSR NVivo 7 computer software which is hailed by many scholars (e.g. Kvale 1996; Kelly
2000; Gibbs 2002; Bryman 2004; Richards 2005) as a powerful tool for researchers in the storage and retrieval of data, in searching for relevant texts and passages and ideas, and in assisting, inductively, in testing and refining hypotheses. In NVivo, the codes are referred to as 'nodes' (Gibbs 2002: 59) which provide a focus for analytical thinking about the text and its interpretation. So in this research I use the terms 'code' and 'node' synonymously.

Having in mind that the process of analysis requires familiarity with the data and maintenance of rapport (May 2001), at the beginning, I was extensively reading through the documents/transcripts with an open-mind following a Durkheim’s rule: ‘abandon all preconceptions’ (cited in Tonkiss 1998: 254) and Glaser’s (1978:56) advice of 'running the data open' which emphasises treating data as the primary source for initial perceptions. This enabled me to be fully acquainted with the data and text segments and to manually run the open-coding which is 'the analytic process by which concepts are identified and developed in terms of their properties and dimensions' (Strauss and Corbin 1990: 74). It involved searching and comparing of accounts, incidents, events, and other instances of the phenomenon, identifying passages of text or other data items that in some sense embody the same conceptual or descriptive meaning, and coding them, initially, to specific codes/nodes referred to as free nodes.

This process was subsequently transferred into the NVivo7 program for more consolidation. Having the relevant data on all the cases scrutinised and subsumed into codes, the open-coding eventually produced 147 free codes (or
nodes in NVivo) (10.4 Appendix 4) when I was quite satisfied that the coding has reached a saturation point. This process therefore functions as a safety measure against any bias or interference in the data.

The free nodes were subjected to further and frequent checking against each other, the text segments and the data compared, their relations specified, condensed and developed. They were further grouped into initial conceptual categories called tree nodes (Strauss and Corbin 1990; Gibbs 2002) which, Dey (1995) asserts, mirror the data and serve an analytic purpose.

This process was mainly guided by the research questions and I was therefore focusing on and selecting the themes and sections of the data and the categories most relevant to them. Besides, as suggested by Tonkiss (1998), I was also reading and searching between the lines to explore other relevant issues from within the data which might provide more interpretive elements to the text. This process was complemented by incorporating the memos (see 1.2.3.6). Thus, open coding could be seen as embodying elements of verification, rectification and saturation and its significance stems from, as Strauss (1987) suggests, its efficiency in substantially influencing the quality of research.

The tree nodes were eventually reorganized/regrouped hierarchically into four main named conceptual and descriptive categories which represent the central
issues and headings relevant to the research questions and the hypothesis.

Each category contains subcategories that are most relevant to the research questions – a process referred to as axial coding (a stage in grounded theory) which is defined as:

... the process of relating subcategories to a category. It is a complex process of inductive and deductive thinking involving several steps. These are accomplished, as with open coding, by making comparisons and asking questions. However, in axial coding the use of these procedures is more focused, and geared toward discovering and relating categories (Strauss and Corbin 1990: 114).

Thus, through an axial coding process, the tree nodes constitute factual nodes where information contained in the nodes cover the topics and provide sufficient evidence for verifying the hypothesis.

It worth noting that the qualities of the coding procedure as flexible, combined and integrated and allowing for the researcher to move back and forth (Flick 2006), were indeed helpful for me throughout the entire analysis process to the production of the report. Indeed, this was made possible by the effeciency of Nvivo7 in enabling the manipulation of nodes and coded texts and as well, by my skills and experience. This is in line with O’Callaghan’s (1996) account that the analysis requires analytical perspective to generate analysis from main issues in the research question, ability to sensitise the emergent concepts, and a degree of personal experience, discipline and priorities.
It is important though to mention that the coding process also searched for, identified and included some negative/deviant cases recognized as those 'cases that do not share the common features common to the cases in the conceptual categories' (Silverman 1993; Bloor 1997: 546; Flick 2006; Corbin and Strauss 2008). This stands as counter-evidence to the hypothesis and is referred to as directional coding (Strauss and Corbin 1990; Hesse-Biber and Dupius 1995). It is essentially associated with the analytical induction method for hypothesis testing used where the coding is made for the positive and the negative cases in the data and is therefore significant in producing meaningful results. Some deviant cases were found but were so few to significantly affect the initial hypothesis, although a slight reformulation was called for (see 7.5).

1.2.5 Ethics and Access

The word ethics 'is derived from the Greek ethos, meaning a person's character, nature, or disposition' (Kimmel 1988: 27). It is used synonymously with the word 'morality' which is derived from the Latin moralis, meaning custom, manners, or character as both - ethics and morality - refer to customary behaviour (Kimmel 1988). Ethics is defined by William Frankena (1973) as:

... A branch of philosophy that deals with thinking about morality, moral problems, and judgments of proper conduct. A moral judgement is the one that involves a matter of right or wrong, ought or ought not, a good action or a bad one (Frankena 1973, cited in Kimmel 1988: 27).
Thus, ethical problems are also moral problems but while the term moral is concerned with questions of the consistency of certain acts with the accepted notions of right or wrong in a specific setting, the term ethical is used to signify whether certain acts are performed in consideration to identified code(s) or set of principles (Reynolds 1979). But, both terms can be used interchangeably to refer to rules of proper conduct.

It is universally agreed that while doing social research is usually intended to be of a beneficial outcome for the people studied, it does, however, require due ethical consideration to maintain people’s dignity and safety. This is usually accomplished through the researcher’s acquaintance with the professional ethical principles and values of social research such as the ASA\textsuperscript{11}, BSA\textsuperscript{12}, SRA\textsuperscript{13}, BPS\textsuperscript{14} and ESRC\textsuperscript{15}, and their obligation and commitment to proper conduct in executing research and in dealing with ethical or moral dilemmas resulting from situations of conflicting values and disagreement.

In conducting this research, the relevant ethical principles of confidentiality, privacy and anonymity, care and responsibility and no harm were attended to as follows:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{11} American Sociological Association (ASA), \textit{Code of Ethics}.
\item \textsuperscript{12} British Sociological Association (BSA), \textit{Statement of Ethical Practice}.
\item \textsuperscript{13} Social Research Association (SRA), \textit{Ethical Guidelines}.
\item \textsuperscript{14} British Psychological Society (BPS), \textit{Code of Conduct, Ethical Principles, and Guidelines}.
\item \textsuperscript{15} http://www.esrc.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/Images/ESRC_Re_Ethics_Frame_tcm6-11291.pdf
\end{itemize}
I confirmed the research site in Darfur and left for it when I was reassured by relatives, friends and professional colleagues in Darfur, of the situation as enabling for me – politically and security-wise, to do the research; a situation largely influenced by the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005 (see 3.5.2) followed by the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) on May the 5th, 2006 (see 4.5.4.2).

My position as a Darfuri woman had practical advantages that I counted on in the sense that, as Robson (1997) asserts, the advantage of an ‘insider’ researcher is knowledge and acquaintance about the socio-economic, socio-cultural and political context, the language, etc. Subsequently, I gained the approval of the gatekeepers ‘who have the power to grant or block access to and within a setting’ (Walsh 1998: 221), to conduct interviews, and secured, too, unimpeded search to seek documented sources.

This was followed by gaining the informed consent (IC) of individual informants (Reynolds 1979) after introducing myself and explaining, to them, sufficiently and honestly the nature and purpose of the research (that the benefit is collective) together with anticipated outcomes including possible risks involved and how to respond to them. I emphasised the voluntary nature of participation and that they could withdraw or refuse answering questions at any time, and responded honesty to their enquiries. My overt approach and lack of ambiguity
and/or deception (concealing and/or passing false information), allowed
systematic rapport with the belief that if honest and informed answers were not
volunteered, it could be better they didn’t come by because of lack of deception
rather than its presence. The informants grasped the research aspects and
were forthcoming to participate and give support as evident by them willingly
and actively identifying other respondents (snowball sampling, see 1.2.3.3).

ICs were accepted verbally and signed forms were not used in order to avoid
harm associated with them if being misinterpreted or inadvertently misused; and
also generally, because forms often invoke fears about the purpose no matter
how well-intentioned and sincerely explained.

Avoiding harm to the participants was also ensured through maintaining privacy,
confidentiality and anonymity. Privacy, which is a state of a person defined as:

... the freedom of the individual to pick and choose for himself the time circumstances
under which, and most importantly, the extent to which, his attitudes, beliefs, behaviour,
and opinions are to be shared with or withheld from others (Ruebhausen and Brim
1966: 432 cited in Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias 1996: 86);

It was ensured through allowing respondents to decide on the time and
interview locations and we ended up by conducting the interviews in either the
informants' houses (all women interviewed in houses) or government offices.
This enabled a trustable discussion and generation of quality of answers. Yet,
no accounts, information and/or identities were identified by informants as confidential and/or not to be publicised in reporting research results.

Nonetheless, in order to anticipate and guard against any unforeseeable harmful consequences of the research on participants, and taking into account the persistently precarious political context of Sudan, I used anonymity in presenting the results of the analysis despite the fact that it appeared to be contentious as most of the informants would prefer their names to be explicitly attached to their accounts, when quoted, on the pretext that the issue is already in the public domain. I referenced the respondents with an ‘R’, with ‘n’ to indicate the number of informant and the group (G). For instance respondents in individual interviews are labelled as Rn (e.g. R1, R2, R3 … etc.) whereas the members of group interviews as RnGn (e.g. R1G1, R15G2, R50G3 … etc.). Al-Hakkamat and al-Sheikhat informants are abbreviated to their initials in upper case, for instance, (H.) for a Hakkamah, (H/S.) for Hakkamah/Sheikhh.

Identifying al-Hakkamah differently from other informants, and sometimes stating the ethnic group, is because they constitute the significant feature of the research. Locations left unidentified whilst occupations of some informants, where perceived as illustrating a critical viewpoint, are mentioned (see 10.1 Appendix 1).

I was sensitised to my role as a researcher demanding people’s time and information and acted, morally, according to presumptions of the local culture where hospitality, generosity and the warm welcome of guests are cultural
obligations that people usually observe irrespective of their financial difficulties. This unfolded in the hospitable way I was often received by informants at a time the vulnerability of people makes it costly for these values to be fully maintained.

I therefore used to bring to the interview preferable items e.g. sugar and tea as gifts to be served during meetings, pay transport cost and sometimes buy breakfast for informants. Gifts given this way are valued in their own right and though they facilitated rapport, they did not have any strings attached to them as inducement to participation in the research, or otherwise. Some scholars (e.g. Fowler 1993; Cohen and Manian 1994; Barrett and Cason 1997; Robson 1997) highlight the importance of considering what can build trust with informants and motivate their cooperation and participation. Fowler (1993), however, emphasises that it should be made with caution and should not compromise the confidentiality and any other ethical principles and/or be seen as exploitative.

With al-Hakkamat, it was indeed a commonplace cultural expectation that if you were talking to, or visiting al-Hakkamah, you would offer gifts - often in the form of sugar, tea or even money and sometimes clothes. In trying to conform to this courtesy obligation, I exceeded my budget but I was ethically and morally satisfied that at this point the benefit outweighed the cost, and as a Darfuri insider researcher, the practice was no more an inducement than what was really expected – an icebreaker.
1.2.6 Reflections on Fieldwork

As I initially anticipated difficulty to travel to rural areas, I planned the time of my fieldwork (March-July) to be in the dry season (October-June), a period when rural people come regularly to towns for social and economic purposes.

In general, during the fieldwork, the security situation in rural Darfur was precarious; but while the political context in some rural areas was more tense and fraught with danger than usually the situation was, life in the main towns e.g. Nyala and al-Fashir was normal despite the fact that they became recipients of the war internally displaced people where the largest camps were established e.g. al-Salam and Abu Shook in al-Fashir and Kelma in Nyala. Conducting interviews in this environment was however not an adventurous enterprise, nor was it a compromise on the safety of the informants, myself and the general public. Rather, the decision was based on intense, collaborative and timely situation analysis and daily monitoring with relatives and colleagues in government institutions and NGOs.

It is usually advised (Barrett and Cason 1997) that in order to achieve a successful fieldwork, prior preparation in terms of adequate training in field methods and sufficient logistic, administrative and intellectual resources are needed and to which I responded well. While I counted more on my knowledge about the setting, skills, personal and professional experience in communicating
with gatekeepers and ordinary people in conducting interviews, I was more backed up, having been from the area, by a wide social network of family, friends and professional colleagues which altogether enabled a successful fieldwork, that is, movements, communication and meetings - thanks also to the introductory letter from my supervisor.

In Nyala, from among several formal and informal services, political and military institutions\(^{16}\) associated with *al-Hakkamat*, I approached, as the main gatekeepers, the Ministry of Culture, Tourism, Arts and Sports (MOCTAS)\(^{17}\); which was, since 1992, responsible for administering the tribal popular folklore groups including *al-Hakkamat*, and the Union of *a-Hakkamat and al-Sheikhat* (UHS). I introduced myself, explained the nature and purpose of my research to both, answered their questions and was offered the go-ahead.

Other factors that had facilitated my access to the informants and generated valuable support and help from them and the gatekeepers, included, firstly, for the gatekeepers, the informants and acquaintances, the topic was novel and perhaps it was the first time *al-Hakkamat* are being studied at such a level (PhD). Secondly, they perceived it as a first (qualitative) research that addresses an overwhelming social problem in Darfur in contrast to the

\(^{16}\) They include forces such as the Armed Forces, The Police, the Popular Defence Force (PDF), National Congress Party (NCP), tribal leaders, Tribal Folkloric Teams (TFT), etc. There is also the Women Union which constitutes a political body associated with al-Hakkamat groups at the neighbourhood and district levels.

\(^{17}\) Used to be the Ministry of Culture and Information and later the Ministry of Social Affairs.
quantitative research that people are familiar with and that are merely
conducted for economic and taxation purposes. Thirdly, participants from the
Baggara community in particular, viewed the research topic as an opportunity
for having a significant part of their culture documented and were therefore
enthusiastic to offer help. One significant facilitator of my trip, repeatedly
mentioned to me by both gatekeepers and informants, is my gender as a female
from Darfur who has come from abroad to conduct a study on Darfuri women
whose social, economic and political contributions are obvious and significant
but are nonetheless being neglected by other research.

On the other hand, even though I succeeded in getting informative and
interesting answers from those I interviewed, and had a relatively quiet and
peaceful experience of fieldwork, my data collection was not entirely without its
frustrating moments. For instance, three famous Hakkamat who gave their
informed consent in the initial meeting were reluctant to participate fully in the
interview, later on, for fear that they might breach an oath the government made
them to swear not to repeat past insulting, inciting and agitating songs, or talk
about the experience altogether. With help from a mutual friend, their fears were
dispelled, but I also had to re-confirm their informed consent and my obligation
to tell them that if they were still unsure of their participation, then could simply
pull out. But when they eventually voluntarily expressed their consent to be
interviewed, the interviews were very informative. I was delayed, too, by lack of
commitment to interview appointments (see 2.3.5) as was also very difficult to
use phone or email communication which resulted in limited consultation with
my supervisor.
1.2.7 Research Limitations

The phenomenon of *al-Hakkamat* is, indeed, originally constructed in rural areas where reliable comprehension as to how the agency, personal identity and influence of *al-Hakkamah* could naturally be observed. The interview samples were, however, all drawn up from the town environment even though the sample displayed wide range of rural-based experiences and views. The sample also did not include *al-Hakkamat* from all the Baggara tribes of Darfur.

1.2.8 Validity and Reliability

The terms “reliability” and “validity” are universally used in evaluating quality of research where reliability refers to ‘the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasion’ (Hammersley 1992a: 67); whereas validity, is the truth, ‘the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers’ (Hammersley 1990: 57). Apparently, both terms are used to refer to the extent to which research reveals an authentic image of the setting investigated and that similar results would be obtained should the research be repeated by same or different researchers (Gibbs 2002). Yet, qualitative research scholars use different terms such as "rigor" (Mays and Pope 1995), "trustworthiness" (Lincoln and Guba 1985) and "credibility" (Corbin
2008), which encapsulate, more or less, the same meanings of validity and reliability.

Hence, given the lack of unified assessment criteria across qualitative methodologies to identify research quality (Flick 2002; Corbin and Strauss 2008), Corbin and Strauss (2008) advocate that quality qualitative research is:

research that makes the reader, or listener, stand up and say things like "wow" ... "there is so much depth in the study that it covers details that I never knew about this subject" ... in other words, quality qualitative research ... is research that is interesting, clear, logical, and makes the reader think he want to read more ... has substance, gives insight, shows sensitivity' (2008:302).

In general, I have adopted a fallibilistic approach for ensuring quality in qualitative research advocated by Seale (1999) which entails commitment to self-critical approach in order to create a sense of value and originality in research that, even though people have the right to disprove, yet, they may not because of the sound presentation of the author. The methodological measures adopted include the following:

First, I addressed and enhanced the aspect of internal reliability in organizing and describing the data by using 'low-inference' descriptions in transcribing and presenting the data (e.g. LeCompte and Goetz 1982; Flick 2006) which may help other researchers and bring confidence in the consistency in the way data was organised and analysed.
Second, the coding procedure involved a constant comparative method where the data was subjected to 'comprehensive data treatment' (Mehan 1979: 21), and which eventually led to the production of a set of categories that constitute central issues of the topic. This enabled a valid generalisation on the meaning of the data to be made and the hypothesis to be confirmed.

Third, while maintaining commitment to qualitative work, I used simple counting by illustrating the numbers of respondents who shared similar accounts or arguments. This was to enhance the degree of generality of results (Bryman 1988) and to avoid what is called 'selective anecdotalism' which is the use of particular examples to make a general point' (Gibbs 2002: 231). The value of simple counting in qualitative research is perceived to be useful:

Simple counting techniques can offer a means to survey the whole corpus of data ordinarily lost in intensive, qualitative research. Instead of taking the researcher's word for it, the reader has a chance to gain a sense of the flavour of the data as a whole. In turn, researchers are able to test and to revise their generalisations, removing nagging doubts about the accuracy of their impressions about the data (Silverman 1993: 163).

Fourth, in enhancing "credibility", heightening rigour and expanding understanding of the research topic, deviant instances (see 1.2.4.3; 7.5) can be identified. This reveals that both the search and the analysis have covered the whole relevant data rather than selecting only anecdotes and or incidents that support own interpretation and conclusions. This, eventually, led to reformulation of the hypothesis as Cressey (1950: 743) reminds that 'future revision will be necessary if negative cases are found.'
Finally, in presenting the main findings of the analysis, I have cited selected extracts of some examples of individual’s accounts; incidents, stories and a good number of *al-Hakkamat* poems that I consider to be representative. This reveals the grounding of trustworthiness and credibility of the report in the data and that the descriptions truly represent the context as advocated by many scholars (e.g. Miles and Huberman 1994; Seale 1999; Silverman 1993, 2005; Flick 2006; Corbin and Strauss 2008). In addition, where necessary and appropriate, some literature are incorporated to link the point(s) while paying due attention to Glaser’s (1978) statement that the researcher should not heavily lean on the literature relevant to the topic in such ways that might confuse the originality of findings.

On the other hand, I did not use member or respondent validation method used in qualitative research and perceived as 'the most crucial technique for establishing credibility' (e.g. Lincoln and Guba 1985: 314; Miles and Huberman 1994; Seale 1999; Silverman 1993, 2005) and which is to seek the respondents’ judgement on the accuracy of research account (Bloor 1997). This was partly because, I do share Seale’s (1999: 63) proposition that 'it is unreasonable to expect members easily to understand social scientific concepts that are not part of their everyday reasoning' as also disapproved by other scholars (e.g. Bryman 1988; Silverman 2005). Fielding and Lee (1986), in particular, proclaim their disapproval by saying:
There is no reason to assume that members have privileges status as commentators on their actions … such feedback cannot be taken as direct validation or refutation of the observer's inferences. Rather such process of so-called 'validation' should be treated as yet another source of data and insight (1986: 43).

Moreover, as the method implies, going back to the field in an unstable political situation as in Sudan and Darfur, might ethically, practically and politically pose a threat to both myself and the respondents alike. This is because the belonging of respondents to, may be, conflicting ethnic and tribal groups (see 4.3), might influence altering respondents' previous views; not to mention possible suspicions by security authorities. Nonetheless, I followed up and validated some informants' accounts, later, by email and telephone calls.

On the whole, even though I aimed to achieve quality in the research findings and presentation, as Corbin and Strauss (2008: 297) state, 'we need to accept that quality is a somewhat illusive phenomenon that cannot be pre-specified by methodological rules.' In general terms however, I perceive that documenting the whole research process is the only way that can aid readers to assess the quality of research. This approach fits the assertion of Flick (1998: 247) that 'where trustworthiness and credibility replace reliability and validity … the problem of grounding is transferred to the level of writing and reporting' (cited in Gibbs 2002: 230). Similarly, Lincoln and Guba (1985: 314) prefer using 'dependability' instead, which can be attained through 'auditing' as a methodologically self-critical explanation of how the research was done and which involves documenting the whole process that accompanied the data collection, analysis and the production of the final report.
1.2.9 Conclusion

The chapter presents the rationale for conducting this study and outlines the design of the research (see 1.1). It also outlines the methodology used in conducting the research which involves qualitative semi-structured focused interviews for primary data collection, and analysis using NVivo7 software (see 1.2.3 & 1.2.4). It presents a full and detailed methodological account of the process accompanied data collection and analysis, the problems encountered and how they were dealt with alongside relevant ethical principles in social research (see 1.2.5 & 1.2.6). The quality of research is ensured through adopting reliability and validity measures in analysing data, drawing conclusions, and presenting the findings (1.2.8). Perceived research limitations are highlighted (1.2.7). Indeed, this presentation constitutes a form of reflexivity which might help the readers of the thesis, as Seale (1999) suggests, to assess the credibility of the findings irrespective of whether the research would be replicated or not.

The following chapter presents the conceptual framework which is perceived as the relevant background to the research theme(s) and data analysis.
Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework for Analysis
2.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out a conceptual framework perceived as an analytical background to the theme of the thesis and to answering the main research questions and testing the hypothesis. It thus outlines and discusses some concepts and definitions of power and politics, agency and identity and highlights their implications on women's access to exercising political influence. These issues have been taken up extensively in the research methodology adopted.

2.2 Concepts of Gender and Power

Gender is a term used to refer to the socially determined characteristic of individuals whereas sex is a biologically determined characteristic. Gender therefore is not about men or women but about the relationship between them, their society and how it is socially constructed. Gender roles thus denote the activities that are socially ascribed to men and women on the basis of perceived differences. These roles are classified as reproductive, productive, community management and participation in decision-making. They are substantially associated with the social identity and value of a person (see 2.6.1) and are reinforced through the gender division of labour which varies and changes across cultures and communities. Gender power relations, on the other hand, are social relations which determine the ways in which men and women relate to each other in society. They include the ways in which the social categories of
male and female interact in every sphere of social activity, such as those
determining access to resources, power and participation in cultural and
religious activities. It is a dynamic process that varies across societies, (e.g.
Parker, et al. 1995; Pankhurst 1999) and often embody a well trenched
ideologically constructed dimension of inequality between women and men that
is subordinating to women.

*Power* could therefore be perceived as constituting a significant element in all
social relationships that relate human beings together - individuals and groups,
males and females (Stacey 1981; Miles 1985). It is shaped by the nature of the
context in which it is exercised and is therefore conceptualised differently by
different people (Zapata 1999). The most popular conventional definition for
power, is what drawn up by Max Weber, 'the probability that an actor within a
social relationship will be able to carry out his own will despite resistance,
regardless of the basis on which this probability rests' (Weber 1968: 53). It
implies that a person may be in a position to impose his/her own will on others
by deploying mechanisms that, in Maquet’s (1971) views, may involve
threatening, persuasion and authority that are usually used to create and
maintain a dominant relationship of one actor over others.

When exercising power becomes socially sanctioned and regulated through
laws and conventions, the power becomes authority, i.e. the right to use power,
to make decisions and to force obedience (e.g. Smith 1960; Erler and
distinguishes three forms of authority which are *traditional authority* that exists in tribal societies where the culture and customary law grant authority to its leaders; *rational legal authority* that exists in modern democratic states, where a system of statute law grants authority to people and offices; and *charismatic authority* which is gained as a result of a unique characteristic of a person.

Power is thus perceived as an attribute of imbalanced human relationships – dominant and dominated (e.g. Maquet 1971: 27; Stacey 1981:3). This form of *power-over*, as argued by many scholars (e.g. Miles 1985; Rowlands 1997; Alberti 1999; Townsend 1999), represents the primary form of power that is manipulated by state institutions and exercised by individuals and groups. It embodies forceful mechanisms such as coercion and violence, or enactment of rules that place power in some people’s hands and deny it to others. Feminists (e.g. Hartsock 1981; Albrecht and Brewer 1990; Townsend *et al.* 1999) therefore, reject such stereotyped Weber-based perception of power-over which they perceive as a commodity, humiliating and conflict-driven, and instead, they call for forms of power as necessarily *'power-with'*, *'power-to'* and *'power from within'*. It should rather be perceived, Miles (1985) emphasises, as a human need that should be exercised by all people, irrespective of their gender, to transform themselves.

This is because *'power-with'* denotes the capacity to achieve with others what one could not achieve alone’ (Townsend, *et. al.* 1999: 32). For Rowlands (1997: 13), it is not only a capacity but awareness, too, 'a sense of the whole being
greater than the sum of the individuals, especially when a group tackles a problem together’.

Similarly, “power-to” constitutes the power that mobilises humans for building capacities and competences to produce desired change (e.g. Kabeer 1994; Townsend 1999; Townsend et al. 1999). It is the form of power that enables women through exercising their own agency to reassess, reformulate and reposition themselves in society and to exercise their choices in achieving, in cooperation with others, their desired ends. It is thus a personal power which indicates and dictates a sense of self-confidence and capacity to manage challenges (Rowlands 1997). Meanwhile the "power from within" suggests a combination of the personal strength and the ever present support of the community and its institutions. Indeed, this is the form of power that enables women to exercise their agency in negotiating and influencing a relationship to their advantage.

Being a cultural attribute, and in order to set the scene for systematic power relationships among individuals, Adams (1997) asserts, exercising power, indispensably requires recognition, communication and acceptance by the milieu. This belief places power as a constituent of social relationships that is mutually respected and can therefore dictate socially accepted conducts and activities. Thus, recognising and accepting the power and influence of women by the community, is a prerequisite for women’s agency to influence decisions. In this regard, al-Hakkamat possess both traditional and charismatic power
which is recognised and accepted by their community and which they exercise to influence decisions (see chapters 6 and 7).

2.3 Concept of Women and Politics

The term politics has also been a subject to various conceptualizations. For instance, it is viewed as part and parcel of all aspects of everyday human activity whether religious, social or economic. Some scholars (e.g. Yusuf 1985: 212) therefore define it as ‘the pursuit of the good life’, while for others, it is ‘a systematic reflection of power’. Politics is also about maintaining control and order as Mair (1977: 18) points out, ‘there is no society where rules are automatically obeyed’. Thus being a social resource, it is context-driven and largely associated with resource distribution and conflict. The latter often ensues in contexts where resources are inadequate and therefore its distribution involves competition and conflict (Randall 1982). Yet, it could also be argued that even when resources are sufficient, the involvement of politics may make its distribution unsatisfactory among people and may therefore lead to conflict. This could be exemplified by the civil wars in Sudan (see 3.4.2) and the current conflict between Darfur insurgency groups e.g. Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) and Justice and Equality movement (JEM) since 2003 against the Sudan government in demand for fair distribution of power and wealth.
On the other hand, the role of political power is complementary to that of custom and law in maintaining order, social behaviours and organising societies along sets of social values, norms and doctrines. Custom can be defined as:

… a group procedure that has gradually emerged, without any constituted authority to declare it, to apply it, to safeguard it. Custom is sustained by common acceptance … customs are so intimate that, until we reflect upon them, we do not realise how they attend nearly every occasion of our lives (MacIver and Page 1961:176);

whereas law is defined as:

… the body of rules which are recognised, interpreted, and applied to particular situations by courts of the state. It derives from various sources, including custom, but it becomes law when the state, which means in the last resort the courts, is prepared to enforce it as a rule binding on citizens and residents within its jurisdiction (MacIver and Page 1961:175).

The institution of al-Hakkamah could be perceived as a customary mechanism that is locally constructed to contribute to maintaining law and order within her community (see 6.3) and which later, becomes co-opted into the state’s military institutions (see chapter 7) to serve other purposes.

But it is still contested whether politics is an activity involved in the process of resource allocation or, as more recently advocated, as part of structural power relationships. Randall (1982) argues that the perception that presents politics as a reflection of power relations, in theory, acknowledges its close association
with social life and as being exercised in both large and limited settings such as the family. Yet, the perception of politics as public activity necessitates the existence of a typical public political domain and consequently, politics is perceived as the process through which an organised society takes decisions on issues that are of public importance, in the public domain. This claim supports the perception of politics as something which ‘involves the authoritative allocation of values for a society’ (Easton 1953 cited in Ford 2002: 2). Such labelling of politics as a public activity, obviously, implies that women have no status in the domain of politics, since women seem to generally be perceived to belong to the domestic/private domain (see 2.5).

Collier (1993) contends that observers and ethnographers often view politics as men’s pertinent activity and domain that involves men’s relations where women have no relevance. This is validated by perceptions such as that, firstly, women are engaged with child-rearing and domestic responsibilities and are incompetent to assume political office because ‘women are seldom seen as political actors, but rather as pawns to be used in the political manoeuvres of men: hoarded for their productive, reproductive, and prestige-enhancing value, or traded to create and cement alliances’ (Collier 1993: 89). Secondly, women’s politics is understood to occur within the private domain of the domestic activity and subject to internal, moral and private terms rather than to terms made outside the domestic space, a perception geared towards reinforcing the irrelevance of the domestic and public domains to each other. Thirdly, Collier proceeds, based on the perception that every woman is more or less accountable to a man who decides her social and political pursuits, any
endeavour of women to exercise their own and/or dictate others’ actions inevitably hampers men’s legitimate social authority giving them thus ample motive to discount women’s public political engagement.

Yet, validating the political participation of women is intrinsically context-driven. To this end, some scholars (e.g. Lamphere 1993; Collier 1993; Rosaldo 1993; Sanday 1993) claim that in contexts and political systems where leadership is a matter of ability and skill and where there is no precise split between the public and the private domains, women’s achievement and exercise of agency and political influence is obvious and effective in contrast to situations where strict demarcations are made between the home as private domain and outside of it where politics and political decisions are made and where resources and leadership are merely available to, and controlled, by men. In such a situation, women's political participation is inevitably hindered let alone their meaningful presence in the public domain.

The perception of politics as a public activity is therefore, strongly rejected by feminists, Ford (2002) claims, on the pretext that on the one hand they focus exclusively on political activities of governments, politicians and their political institutions e.g. voting, campaigning, etc., as the merely recognized political activities; and on the other, tend to marginalise the contributions, attitudes, and actions of multiple communities and actors including women. Alternatively, they propose a perception of politics that transcends the stereotypical masculine institutions, structures, activities and behaviours and which institute gender as
an analytic framework in redefining and studying politics in order to properly and fairly identify and value women’s political pursuits and, I add, establish them as politically influential actors as would be discussed below.

The case of al-Hakkamat embodies their involvement in politics at both the public and the domestic domains and that exercising politics in their community is part of a structural relationship rather than an activity (see chapters 6, 7 & 8).

2.4 Concept of Women’s Political Power and Influence

It is argued (e.g. Erler and Kowaleski 1988; Rosaldo 1993; Townsend 1999) that even though in its conventional sense power refers to ‘a force exercised by individuals or groups’, women are often not considered as part of these individuals and groups by virtue of the Western tradition that views power as ‘public authority’ and assumes women as powerless and seldom visible in public life. This belief is argued for, advocated and reinforced by some social scientists who show women as being incompetent to wield public responsibilities and/or exercise authority, which in turn facilitates instituting legislation that confines women and their activities to the domestic realm. Besides, El-Bushra (2000) asserts, while it advocates for male authority, this belief propagates the idea that exercising power by women is unacceptable and inappropriate, and therefore informal and ineffective whereas that of men is formal and authoritative.
Nonetheless, Erler and Kowaleski (1988) claim that the intervention of social historians and anthropologists has contributed to transforming the perception of power as public authority to a broader perspective that encompasses 'the ability to act effectively, to influence people or decisions, and to achieve goals' (ibid.: 1988: 2), as also perceived by Smith (1960: 18) that power is 'the ability to act effectively on persons or things, to take or secure favourable decisions'. This perception shows that individuals can rationally, or perhaps tacitly, situate their power relationships to achieve goals without necessarily imposing or deploying forceful actions.

This development in the understanding of power as claimed by many scholars (e.g. Stacey and Price 1981; Miles 1985; Erler and Kowaleski 1988; Rosaldo 1993), has enabled its examination as a gender-based relationship rather than a one-way male dominated masculine relationship and has consequently paved the way for building a legitimate position for women in society as power holders. Besides, it supports the perception that even though it is often labelled masculine, power is not absolute but distributed relatively between men and women even though the distinction between power as informal influence and power as formal authority still remains. Thus, O'Barr (1984) maintains that the fact that power is associated with all activities of social life implies that exercising political power by women involves their inevitable role in social, economic and religious aspects of community life.
The political power and influence *al-Hakkamah* exercises in the social and political domains stands as evidence of women’s political influence despite their absence from formal public institutions dominated by men. It also proves that power is relative and exercised by both men and women.

### 2.5 Public Male vis-à-vis Domestic Female Domains

In Western political thought, the concepts of women’s power and women’s political power are seen to have been largely influenced by the concept of public and private domains that was coined by Rosaldo (1993) following the study of the nomadic societies of the Middle East conducted by Nelson (1973). In her study, Nelson identified the *tent* as the household domestic place of women where they perform reproductive activities; and the *camp* as the men’s place where social, economic and political affairs of the community are dealt with and where women are absent.

Rosaldo (1993: 23) clearly distinguishes the two domains as "domestic", which she identifies as 'the institutions and modes of activity that are organised around mothers and children;' and "public", which she refers to as the 'activities, institutions, and forms of association that link, rank, organise, or subsume particular mother-child groups.' It involves, Sanday (1993) explains, activities that are pursued outside the family boundaries and which include political and economic transactions and command over individuals and resources. In the
opinion of some scholars (e.g. Elshtain 1981; Sanday 1993, Townsend 1999), this social dichotomy of spheres, the "private" domestic sphere vis-à-vis the public realm, has become a universal framework used by ethnographers in conceptualising the activities of males and females in society.

Similarly, some others (e.g. Erler and Kowaleski 1988; Howell 1988) also claim that the public-private split is not merely a matter of contrasting activities; rather, it is about how power relationships are constructed and why women have little access to power accordingly. For Imray and Middleton (1983), it is built on the assumption that people see reproductive activities as constituting the only activities that link to the domestic sphere and nothing more and it therefore explains the stereotype of understanding that the exercise of political power and public authority carried out by men as socially accepted whilst unaccepted if carried out by women.

They argue that this formulation is analytically inadequate to explain the social relations between men and women, and as accounting for gender asymmetry which reflects on the one hand the prevailing male dominance, and on the other, the dynamic of cultural devaluation of women’s activities, their little access to power in general and public power in particular and their subordination to men. It also reflects that the public sphere - the domain of men - as the world of politics, legal rights and obligations and is thus the sphere of “real” power, prestige and authority, whilst the private or domestic sphere
encompasses women and their roles as wives and mothers and private family matters and it is therefore inferior to the public sphere.

It could be argued that this ideology of the private domestic and public political dichotomy is indeed influenced by the power of 'patriarchy' which

... literally means the rule of fathers. But today's male dominance goes beyond the 'rule of fathers', it includes the rule of husbands, of male bosses, of ruling men in most societal institutions, in politics and economics, in short, what has been called 'the men's league' or 'men's house' ... and as well denotes the historical and societal dimension of women's exploitation and oppression (Mies 1986: 37).

It thus indicates the subordination of women to men, in social systems where 'authority is vested in the male head of the household ... and other male elders within the kinship group' (Pearson 1992: 294). Mies (1986) asserts that the terms "subordination" and "oppression" are widely used to denote the position of women in the social hierarchy and the means to maintain them in lower status. The sphere dichotomy (e.g. Randall 1982; Mies 1986; Ford 2002) presents the domestic sphere as apolitical and thus institutes subordination of women and limiting their prospects for broader social responsibilities and denying them opportunities to engage in politics and political activities.

This has led to women being under-represented in the formal government milieu and their critical concerns overlooked as a result of them being deemed by the public domain as private matters (Ford 2002). Nonetheless, rather than
recognizing the spheres as two distinct entities, Lister (1997) calls for the reformulation of the concept through *de-gendering* of its meaning; recognition of their interaction and integration and to understand that both exhibit political characteristics. As such, this would help in breaking down the distinctions drawn along the sexualized values and attributes associated with each of them as an independent sphere and to accept, on the other hand, that each possesses its own attributes.

Nevertheless, it is argued that while the concept of public-private prevails among societies, its position and meanings vary across communities and groups. As a result, there are cross-cultural variations in the public status of women, their access to exercising public political power and authority and their subordination, too (Sanday 1993; Lister 1997). These variations are by and large shaped by variations in the social and economic conditions e.g. male absence, ecological factors and the transformation of the demand and supply system that organises and influences female’s roles and goods. It is unrealistic therefore, Chowdhury *et al.* (1994) charge, to establish as a fact that the domestic private sphere to which women are attached is "apolitical" and/or to claim that all women are subordinated or excluded from exercising political influence.

This is because there are often those women who exercise political power based on the socio-cultural and political context of their communities that embody a gender dimension in its distribution of power. This may apply to
communities that exhibit a sense of egalitarianism which Elshtain (1981) conceives as those communities where public and domestic spheres are only slightly differentiated, where authority is equally exercised by sexes, where the home constitutes the centre of social life and where men are engaged with women in domestic responsibilities. The other side of the image as explained by Elshtain is the societies where a strict differentiation between the two spheres is applied and where women are kept indoors under a man's authority and their interaction prohibited, women's status will inevitably be subordinate.

An example of communities in which this dichotomy is not strictly applied, even though they may not fit as egalitarian communities as perceived by Elshtain, are African countries where modern-state is still alien to their communities especially in rural areas (Lister1997). Evidently, historical experiences of some African societies and African women show that some African communities are characterised by fluid public/private boundaries and women’s networks cut across fragile public-private divisions. Al-Hakkamat women seem to have emerged from a rural setting with flexible gender relations that enable the construction and the operationalisation of al-Hakkamah as public actor (see chapters 6, 7 and 8).
2.6 Agency and its Implications on Identity.

2.6.1 Concept of Identity

In its broadest meaning, identity is a conscious sense of individuals and the understandings of people about who they are and what is meaningful to them in terms of beliefs, values and deeds (Papanek 1994; Yuval-Davis 1994; Giddens 2001; Lawler 2008). It is constructed through a unique personal experience over time and influenced by the surrounding environment and external processes which generally involve childhood socialisation whereby individuals establish their sense of belonging to a particular group and learn how they are distinguished from other individuals and groups.

Thus, the concept of identity is perceived as embodying a combination of two paradoxical meanings of similarity and difference (Lawler 2008:3). The similarity is based on the derivation of the word 'identity' from the Latin word "idem" (same) which denotes that we become 'identical' with ourselves, that is, we remain the same person from birth to death; but also, being a human race, we share common identities with others - as women, as men, as British … etc. On the other hand, the perception of difference that the concept embraces is based on the understanding that identities genuinely assume the exclusion of others who do not share the same attributes that are socially imagined or identified to connect individuals or groups e.g. race, gender, sex, kinship and ethnicity and cultural beliefs e.g. religions, ideologies and nations.
In sociology, it is generally proposed that there are two types of identity that are analytically distinct but quite intertwined which are referred to as social identity and self-identity or personal identity (e.g. Papanek 1994; Yuval-Davis 1994; McNay 2000; Giddens 2001; Layder 2004; Lawler 2008). Social identity stands for the identification of a person by people based on certain characteristics as similar to others but also situate them as relevant, through a dynamic of social relations, to others who possess the same traits e.g. student, mother, etc. People therefore, often have multiple social identities that reflect many dimensions of their lives, for instance, a person could be a mother, a student, a Muslim, a lawyer, an Asian … etc (e.g. Yuval-Davis 1994; Giddens 2001; Layder 2004; Lawler 2008). Identity in this regard denotes 'the social process whereby individuals come to identify themselves with a particular configuration of social roles and relationships' (El-Bushra 2000: 67). Yet, it is presumed (e.g. Papanek 1994; Yuval-Davis 1994; Giddens 2001; Giddens 2001; Lawler 2008) that people usually manage their multiple and competing attributes of identity, including ethnic identity, through exercising choices and electing values and experiences alongside identity sources that they perceive as the most substantial, enduring and irreversible.

Among ethnic groups for instance, kinship and tribal identities constitute powerful sources of identity as could be observed from the context of tribal communities in Africa e.g. Sudan and Darfur (see 3.3; 4.3). It can be seen from the accounts of Schneider (1968) that kinship identity constitutes the very basis
for biological identity and as well a significant component in the social and
cultural settings of non-Western societies. It serves in constructing unique
individuals and connecting them internally and externally with other groups. This
is because kinship is formulated on the basis of shared blood which is
interpreted as the natural biological association of individuals to each other.

This association is presented through cultural relations that they establish and
regularise through rules and customs. Kin is therefore, Schneider asserts,
recognized as an institution in which its members are associated through blood
and culture though blood bond is perceived as the most powerful, irreversible
and irremovable and therefore most substantial in constructing an identity. Yet,
despite the power of blood relations in constructing biological identity, culture
remains the most significant in constructing and distinguishing identities
especially when ethnicity prevails over kinship. It is the ethnic consciousness
that the government of Sudan has utilised in mobilising people for its civil wars
and co-opted al-Hakkamat whose ethnic mobilisation is appealing to their
constituencies (see 3.3.4; 4.3; and chapter 7).

While social identities are about the relevance of individuals to others (same or
different), self-identity (or personal identity), as perceived by many sociologists
(e.g. Papanek 1994; Yuval-Davis 1994; McNay 2000; Giddens 2001; Layder
2004; Lawler 2008), identifies the persons as unique by their own qualities and
denotes the social interaction processes through which individuals develop such
a sense of uniqueness which in turn inform their relationships with the
surrounding environment where they present meaningful interpretation of
themselves. Layder (2004) proposes that being unique individuals implies that we have our own set of experiences, abilities, knowledge, behaviours, thinking, reacting to events and relating to people – attributes that we acquire during the various stages of our growth - childhood, adolescence and adulthood (see 6.2.3).

Personal identity is therefore seen as a primary source of identity and foundational to social identities. Yet, both types of identification are complementary in the process of human interaction. This interaction between the two identities constitutes a “meeting point” between the personal and the public domains of the person (Hall 1996; McNay 2000) that constructs and reconstructs the person in order to enable him or her to act in different personal and social capacities. It is perhaps only by this interpretation that the construction of identities becomes relevant to the concept of agency as will be discussed later.

2.6.2 Concept of Women's Agency

*Agency* is 'the belief that one can act' (Doyal and Cough 1991: 68). To be an "agent" or to have "agency" denotes the ability to negotiate power which necessarily requires a belief in the self as capable to act, participate and has the capacity to make meaningful interactions with others. In other words, it is the 'capacity to embark on processes of autonomous self-realization and … willingness to take steps in relation to … social situation' (Goddard 2000: 27). It is thus the force that enables individuals to adopt other identities that are
enabling to creating viable life and challenging to obstructions associated with stereotyped identities (El-Bushra 2000). The idea of human agency is therefore typically used to characterise individuals and groups as 'autonomous, purposive actors, capable of choice' (Lister 1997: 36). According to Gould (1988), the actions and choices of these actors necessarily express one's own purpose and needs and constitute a process of self-development, that is, 'of concretely becoming the person one chooses to be' (1988: 47). This process involves engagement in collective activities intended for both collective and individual targets and therefore generate a wide range of actions and social interactions and relations that in turn enable development of new capacities and promotion of old ones. Expressing the individual agency through collective action is argued (e.g. Collins 1991; Doyal and Cough 1991; Lister 1997) to be crucial in achieving desired change which in turn contributes to consolidating that sense of agency.

Agency could therefore be seen as a form of representation of "power from within" that presupposes self-consciousness, autonomy, purpose and the agent's own will. Lister (1997: 38) emphasised that it is not 'simply about the capacity to choose and act but it is also about a conscious capacity which is important to the individual's self-identity' (see 2.6.1). In the meantime, expressing the individual agency through collective action is argued to be crucial in achieving desired change which in turn contributes to consolidating that sense of agency (e.g. Collins 1991; Doyal and Cough 1991; Lister 1997). Thus, agency stands as the ultimate driving force for projecting self-identity and enabling its engagement in social relations and activities.
As far as women's agency is concerned, it could be seen as a form of women’s ability to exercise control over their lives. Yet, being typically subject to more social restriction, subordination and less social, economic and political freedom, suggests that women’s will and agency are likely to be disempowered.

However, Jacobs (2000) charges that despite constraints encountered by some people in exercising their choices, it is observed that people usually tend to craft their own ways to exercise their agency and put their purpose into actions. It is therefore not surprising to detect that these restrictions enable women’s agency to materialize in various forms through women exercising other sources of identity that enable them, firstly, to challenge the life-obstructing stereotyped perceptions about their identities and the patriarchal division of gender roles and relations (see 2.2) that view them as powerless; and secondly, to establish themselves as a powerful institution capable of identifying and choosing its own actions.

The concept of agency as the personal ability and autonomy to choose, decide and act freely according to one's wishes, seems to stand at odds with most of the historical and contemporary prevailing masculine conceptions of power (see 2.2 above) which perceive power as either illegitimate ability to command obedience through force, threat, or coercion; or legitimatised by law and institutionalised as authority to exercise over people. Both conceptions imply that some people and institutions can impose decisions on others against their will and these others will have no choice but to comply with these decisions.
Gould (1988), therefore, contends that in order to maintain the significance of agency, it is indispensible to entirely remove all types of authority and instead of grounding authority on legislation, it should be based on common aims, values, vision, rules and procedures as guidance for making and enacting decisions and symbiotic achievements.

This is because through these rules, the authority of the members is promoted as a shared practice and value that is compatible with agency and participation which inspires individuals' commitment to their jointly designed rules and procedures. Thus, having drawn its power from within the agency of individuals who form groups, this shared authority can powerfully obstruct invasion of other authoritative forces e.g. individuals, or laws and rules outside the individual or the group boundaries. For Gould (1988), this is the only procedure through which authority can be transformed from being a hierarchical and vertical relation into a horizontal and reflexive relation. Indeed, this type of authority can enable women to exercise agency and political power and influence on equal footing with men.

2.6.3 Agency and Construction/reconstruction of Identity

It’s suggested above (See 1.2.5.2) that agency is the ultimate driving force for projecting self-identity and enabling its engagement in social relations and activities. It is proper therefore to deduce that agency influences identity construction and the manner in which it interfaces with the exercise of power and (political) influence. Individuals’ autonomy and agency (see 2.6.2) are
therefore crucial in exercising their choices, shaping their self-identity and in formulating their relationships with others in the group or society. As such, despite the fact that we are often obstructed by methods of social pressures such as rules, laws, expectations of others … etc., that tend to inform our behaviours, choices and decisions, Layder (2004) charges, we always have a private and personal capacity that guides us to exercise our freedom of choice.

This is evident by the fact that whilst some identities are perceived as stable and irreversible e.g. sex, gender, ethnic, race, etc., some of them may last with certain age, occupation, etc., and others may be acquired or forfeited according to social contexts (e.g. Papanek 1994; Yuval-Davis 1994; Lawler 2008). Ferguson and Gupta (1997: 13) spell it out clearly by saying, ‘identity neither “grows out” of rooted communities nor is a thing that can be possessed or owned by individual or collective social actors. It is, instead, a mobile, often unstable relation of difference.’ Identities therefore are dynamic processes and changing throughout the life-time experience of personal development. Yet, they do not simply change because we are fed up with them and would want to adopt other identities (e.g. Strauss 1991; Papanek 1994; Layder 2004); rather, Strauss (1991) maintains, they do because they are subject to the influence of many factors e.g. cultural, social, environmental, etc., and critical incidents that individuals encounter throughout their life experience and which force people to rethink their identity, explore and validate new characters and social positions.
This ability of individuals to choose their own identities is often subject to the freedom of action available to them within the society which is, nevertheless, limited by forces such as state institutions, political movements, clans, etc., which force individuals to comply with regulated sets of rules and ideals. Thus, in an attempt to realise their own agendas and interests such as enhancing their power and influence, institutions and interest groups lean towards building solidarity among members, expanding over new groups’ boundaries and forging new political alliances (Papanek 1994; Giddens 2001) (see 3.5.1; 4.5.3; 3.4.2). As for instance in order to ensure more control, conformity, loyalty, and commitment of the individual followers and transforming their identity, the patrimonial and neopatrimonial leaders (see 3.4.2) tend to decrease the range of choices for individuals by involving mechanisms whereby individuals command respect and obedience to the agreed rules especially if the individuals are required to act in what may be perceived as against the norms. *Al-Hakkamat* are a testimony to this argument as they have been co-opted by the government to serve vested interest of national political elites who rule Sudan.

Some of the changes in identities that are induced through institutions could be summarised as, firstly, the political, religious and occupational conversions of a person often influence change in his or her vocabulary by adopting a new language for communicating with the new setting and for establishing himself/herself as a member (Strauss1991). This is evident by *al-Hakkamat* adopting the political rhetoric and slogans of the government such as *tahleel*, *takbeer* (see 7.4). Secondly, when the process of institutionalization involves
forecasting and formal public declaration, candidates would have an impetus to prosper and to rise up to the institution’s challenges and consolidate their relations with the public audience through comparing between the status quo and their current status and achievements. The latter would inevitably prompt them not to risk losing them but to aspire to even better future prospects. The association of al-Hakkamah with the media and the TV is a vivid example.

Thirdly, when an individual adopts rather unfamiliar ideas or acts and achieves them successfully, he or she would be credited for that and this performance would enable the actor to realise a hidden strength and quality that he or she embraces and would subsequently enhance his or her agency and confidence as stated by Strauss:

> In coming to new terms a person becomes something other than he or she once was. Terminological shifts necessitate, but also signalize, new evaluations: of self and others, of events, acts, and objects; and the transformation of perception is irreversible; once having changed, there is no going back. One can look back, but can evaluate only from the new status (Strauss 1991: 316).

The involvement of al-Hakkamat with the government’s institutions of war and their visiting battle sites, have transformed their identity from local and tribal to become national Hakkamat (see 7.4).

However, when the identified role-model or hero adopts deeds that are perceived as violating the norm, his or her admirers may become dissatisfied and disappointed and may eventually shy away from him or her. This is what is experienced with al-Hakkamah as her involvement with the government and the
manner in which she chases promises were rejected by her tribal constituency and have lessened her value in town (see 7.4).

Thus, while most of the identity change is influenced by institutions, others are influenced by factors outside these institutions (Strauss 1991). These include factors such as the urbanization process, combined with mobility of people outside their original social and geographical boundaries. Giddens (2001) asserts that these have weakened people’s loyalty and commitment to local norms, customs and patterns that they would have associated with in their relatively homogeneous communities. Moreover, in their new destination they may have forged new relationships with others, adopted new perceptions and formed new coalitions which would paved the way for other sources of meaning e.g. gender and sex, place, etc., to surface as most influential in shaping people’s sense and formulating their new identities. The case of al-Hakkamah moving from rural to urban setting is a case at hand where she has become associated with new avenues and structures, adopted new roles and in turn acquired new identities that are compatible with the new roles and location (see 7.4).

Hence, the impact of changing circumstances and events in a specific context on individuals’ perception and their construction and re-construction of identities, is an important and challenging experience in the development of a person despite the fact that it may be perceived by others as against the norm and as a “violation of identity” (Papanek 1994: 44). Papanek further asserts that
because some of the attributes of identities may be potentially difficult to transform, matters of conscious choice are significant. The latter is perceived by Townsend et al. (1999) as originating from self-confidence, self-potential and self-consciousness of personal capacities and the surrounding environment but most importantly, it is dictated by our agency.

As far as the influence of institutions on women’s is concerned, Papanek (1994) asserts that the concept of an “ideal woman” constitutes a crucial component in the ideology of movements and states in pursuit of their social and political interests. This is because it is very influential when it is pursued as it would stand as an evidence of the leaders’ commitment to fulfilling their promises of ideal societies for their advocates and in constructing individual and group identities according to these ideologies. Muslim women, for instance, are placed as central actors in identity politics having been perceived as a site of group culture and its preservation.

This could be exemplified by the experience of Sudanese women under the neo-patrimonial leaders of the NIF regime since 1989 where identity change is being deployed both as a symbol and as an instrument to forcefully inform and manipulate individuals’ loyalty and their compliance with state ideology and policy, allegedly, in pursuit of what they project as an Ideal Muslim society (Hale 1996) (see 3.4.2; 3.4.2.3). This was largely enacted through formulating and enacting certain aspects of womanhood such as the Islamic dress, restricted movement and work, which constitute overt aspects of women’s lives and are
therefore easy to monitor. This has contributed to transforming women’s social identity into what the regime projected as an ideal woman and incapacitated their ability to fully exercise autonomy and self-identity.

Yet, experiences show that should women encounter attempts to change their identities, they do not succumb to threats but tend to exercise their own agency in resisting them through mobilising relationships, building solidarity and networks and forging challenging movements. This represents a form of a collective dimension of social identities, Giddens (2001) argues, which constitutes a powerful source of drawing meanings and experiences and sharing common goals, values and vision. Thus, mobilised by their agency and the interaction of their personal and social identities, women in Sudan continue to resist oppression and subordination.

To sum up here, it is obvious that despite variations in women's access to exercising public political power and influence (see 2.4), they often have the agency (see 2.6.2) that enables them to construct their personal identities (see 2.6.1) that enable them to acquire other sources of identity through which they could exercise political influence and resist subordination.

2.7 Gender, Conflict Resolution and Peace Building
The dynamics of gender roles and the politics of women’s identity and agency (see 2.2; 2.3; 2.6.1; 2.6.2) are clearly revealed in conflict contexts through the different ways women experience conflict. Whilst men become warriors, thus get killed, injured, disappeared or generally harmed (e.g. Vickers 1993; Cockburn 1998; El-Bushra 2000; Kelly 2000; Pankhurst 2000; Simic 2011), women become victims of violence. Their position as symbolising ethnic or community identity makes them a specific target of inhumane atrocities of which rape constitutes the most destructive and humiliating offense committed against their gender, culture, and ethnic and religious identities.

Nonetheless, despite being victims, women may not remain passive, as generally portrayed and propagated. They may become agents of resistance (e.g Lister 1997; Kelly 2000; Pankhurst 2000) by exercising their autonomous agency which McNay (2000: 22) perceives as 'the ability to act in an unexpected fashion or to institute new and unanticipated modes of behaviour,' in reconstructing their self identity (see 2.6.3) and influencing change. This is reflected in the breakdown of stereotyped gender roles and power relations organised along private woman and public man domains (see 2.5), and in creating structural transformation in the social system of communities. The manifestations of this change could be noticed in the following:

First, women become shouldered with the responsibility of maintaining the welfare and sustainability of their families and the community at large, both during conflict and in post-conflict situations (e.g. Vickers 1993; Cockburn 1998; El-Bushra 2000; Pankhurst 2000; Kelly 2000; Simic 2011).
necessitates for women to enter into new social and economic activities some of which traditionally recognised as men’s whereby they retain authority over their income and family affairs. Second, they become human rights and political activists engaged in actively negotiating their perceived needs and minimising the burdens of war on citizens, a process perceived to have eventually wiped off the stereotyped perception on women’s activities as apolitical (Naraghi-Anderlini and Manchanda 1999) (see 2.4). Third, they also play a tremendous role in peacebuilding and reconciliation through joint advocacy against violence both at inter-personal and inter-group levels (e.g. Vickers 1993; International Alert 1999; Naraghi-Anderlini and Manchanda 1999; Kelly 2000; Pankhurst 2000).

Nevertheless, and against the perception and portrayal of women as necessarily merely victims of wars, and men as the perpetrators, it is generally observed that (e.g. Elshtain 1990; El-Bushra 2000; Kelly 2000; Jacobs 2000; Pankhurst 2003), women, as individuals and as groups, also become covertly or overtly involved in supporting conflict, albeit, through a wide range of actions. These include such as becoming combatants, remaining passive and/or silent towards crimes, and/or inciting and colluding in violence and ethnic and religious atrocities. This is revealed, for instance, in the case of Mozambique and Rwanda (see http://articles.cnn.com/2011-06-24/world/rwanda.genocide) when the former Rwandan minister of family and women’s affairs was charged for her complicity in genocide and crimes against humanity, including inciting for rape, committed during the 1994 Rwanda’s genocide.
Nonetheless, the destructive participation of women is put down to many factors such as ethnic consciousness and fear of consequences e.g. vulnerability, abuse and death especially, as Pankhurst (2000) argues, when the warfare is fought by small arms, the residential areas become the battlefield, and the fighting takes on ethnic dimensions and identities. This context leaves women with no choice but to sympathise with, and uphold their ethnic group though some women are also driven by the aspiration to gain social power. Apparently, these actions of women serve as survival mechanisms (El-Bushra 2000; Jacobs 2000; Kelly 2000) and also to fulfil roles they thought legitimate, and not just to seek revenge as in Ferris’s assertion that ‘women’s desires for revenge, for punishment, for blood are strong and do not fit the myth of women as peace-loving nurturing mothers’ (Ferris 1992: 5), though this, too, may be a legitimate drive to act.

The exercising of agency by women in war contexts suggests that war is not merely a domain for men’s to fight; but rather, it equally serves as an opportunity for women to negotiate their power and position in society and to reveal their capability to challenge the stereotyped gender roles, exercise other identities and ascertain themselves as reliable agents who can exercise power, self-actualization and assertiveness (El-Bushra 2000; Jacobs 2000; Pankhurst 2003). It could thus be interpreted as reflecting what Bartky (1990: 16) labelled as consciousness of weakness and consciousness of strength which enable women to sustain injury but can equally promote their personal development and proactive actions in enduring and resisting injuries. This dual power of women, Berkman (1990) postulates, allows to almost universally describe them
as good/evil, angel/whore, witch/wise (*ibid.*: 142). Importantly though, it confirms that the stereotype subordinating beliefs on women’s identity as peaceful and caring should not be taken for granted. Besides, as Pankhurst (2000) charges, ignoring their active contributions and their complicity in organised violence, might lead to constructing unrealistic perceptions about their prospective role(s) in peace.

Nevertheless, these positive and negative pursuits of women are being undermined by men in power, undervalued and perceived as being pursued outside the recognised public forums and therefore classified as part of women’s reproductive roles of caring and nurturing. Moreover, the resulting transformation in gender roles and power relations are perceived as a threat to the patriarchal power relations, a perception reinforced by the persistent portrayal of women as merely victims – a description that overshadows women’s agency, vision and contribution to peacebuilding processes.

This discriminatory masculine reaction is revealed through women’s ineffective and/or absence from formal reconciliation and peacebuilding processes which involve the warring parties, officials, politicians, the military and international institutions, etc (e.g. Vickers 1993; Cockburn 1998, International Alert 1999; Naraghi-Anderlini and Manchanda 1999; Pankhurst 2000; Simic 2011). This is what Pankhurst (2000: 6) refers to as ‘gendered peace,’ where the solutions sought e.g. new constitutions, ignore women’s needs and violate their rights.
Yet, the significant association of gender analysis to peacebuilding is being universally revealed especially when peacebuilding is meant to promote positive peace as opposed to negative peace, the terms coined by Galtung (1996). By negative peace, Galtung refers to the absence of violence through, for instance ceasefire enactment; whereas positive peace is the state where the underlying causes of conflicts are addressed and institutional reform on power relations and justice and equality mechanisms are pursued as effective peaceful resolution to current and future conflicts. It is thus geared towards reinforcing internal peace prospects and strengthening the indigenous capacity of society in conflict management and avoidance of violence.

This definition of positive peace intrinsically embodies women’s concerns of their roles in war and peace times. To achieve sustainable peace therefore, peacebuilding entails involving all the actors including women in political, economic and social interventions aiming for instituting efficient and sustainable livelihoods and human security measures. Vickers (1993) perceives the latter as the key to lasting peace, more than does the military, and which includes democratic governance, human rights, rule of law, sustainable development, equitable access to resources, and environmental security.

Subsequently, the importance of involving women in peacebuilding and negotiation processes stems from that, firstly, reconciliation is a complex and a long term process of healing and absolution which has different meanings and values for men and women (Furley and May 2006: 7: Cimic 2011). For instance, whilst it may relieve men from being held accountable for the atrocities they
committed, for women, it may mean acknowledgement of gender specific violence, bringing perpetrators to justice, compensating the widows and securing their welfare (Cimic 2001). In the absence of women, these dimensions may not be considered. Secondly, in women’s absence from peace negotiations, the issues of their concern are often not considered as stated by the U.N. Secretary-General on women, peace and security that ‘political structures, economic institutions and security sectors negotiated in peace talks will not facilitate greater equality between women and men if gender dimensions are not considered in these discussions’ (http://www.un.org/womenwatch/ods/S-2002-1154-E.pdf, accessed on 20th May 2011). Thirdly, women symbolise peace advocates and guardians and their networks and information position them as effective early warning monitors of tension and conflict. Their kinship relations, skills and social prospects, can enable them to be effective mediators (e.g. Naraghi-Anderlini and Manchanda 1999). Besides, their status as not being party to conflict reveals the possibility of them generating effective peacebuilding approaches and acting as effective negotiators.

Subsequently, the integral association of women and the female gender with peacebuilding, violent conflict and development, suggests that in order to avoid and reduce violent conflict and enable sustainable peace and development, gendered analysis frameworks and objectives of peacebuilding which address the nature of power relations between women and men, address women’s needs, and recognize and include women as equal partners with men in post-conflict societies, are substantially required.
Typically, most research on conflict in Darfur concentrates on the roles of male warriors with almost little mention of women other than victims. These views overshadow significant agency exercised by rural women, the group of Al-Hakkamat women poets, in particular, whose influence is far-reaching and can often be very devastating, for either war or peace, as can be revealed later in this study (see 6.5; 6.4).

2.8 Conclusion

In this chapter a conceptual framework intended to underpin the process of investigating the researched phenomenon (see 1.2) is being set out and the terms thought to be relevant to the conduct and analysis of research data are outlined and defined. In particular, the relevance of women to concepts of gender, power, identity and agency are pointed out and various aspects of interplay among them are explored in relevance to their roles in conflict and peacebuilding as shown in diagram 3 below. It suggests that the political influence of women in conflict and peacebuilding processes depends on the interfacing between the three attributes of agency, power, and identity (see 2.2; 2.6.1; 2.6.2).
Pulling these concepts together, it is presumed that in their totality, they can (dis)prove the assumption that women can generally be masters of their *agency* and that in contexts less demarcated by division into public (*camp*) and private (*tent*) spheres of activity (see 2.5), it is the agency that women can exercise which counts for real power and for yet further reconstruction of identities that enable them to act in different personal and social capacities. This process appears to have facilitated some sort of mobility, may be hitherto unallowed in certain gender-separated communities whereby women transcend those gender barriers and stereotyped identities in order to realise, in a public domain, roles and identities that not only are influential and proactive but also respected and required. I can presume that this position appears to be in tandem with the status of the group of *al-Hakkamat* Darfuri women (see chapter 6 and 7) who may have already translated their *agency*, through the invocation of their

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**Diagram 3: Interplay of Attributes of Political Influence of Women in Conflict and Peacebuilding**

[Diagram showing the interplay of Power, Identity, and Political Influence with Agency as a central point]

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multiple personal and social identities (i.e. their proactivity), into actual *power and influence* in the domain of armed conflict and peacebuilding that merit recognition by power brokers in their communities and by state institutions of power.
Chapter 3: Sudan’s Political History: General Overview
3.1 Introduction

The political history of Sudan is briefly surveyed in this chapter with a view to explaining the contexts of neopatrimonialism that characterised the practice of politics in the Sudan, especially with regards to systems of governance (and the resultant economic policies) which breed and sustain inequalities. It is also aimed to show how these policies created the conditions that make armed conflict in Sudan unavoidable.

3.2 Location and Society

The current Sudan (2010), the largest country in Africa and the Middle East, located in the Horn of Africa, is a vast country of an area of about a million square miles (967,500 square miles). It was amalgamated from different local, often warring, kingdoms that existed in Sudan in the pre-colonial era e.g. the Fung in the centre, Darfur in the west and other numerous kingdoms and sultanates in the east and the south. Its present boundaries are carved out by the condominium rule of Egypt and Britain (1898-1956), thus made to share borders with nine countries: Egypt in the north, Ethiopia, Eritrea and the Red Sea (Saudi Arabia) in the east, Kenya, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) from the south, Chad and the Central African Republic from the west, and Libya from north-west (Malwal 1981), (see map below).
Map 1: Map of Sudan (With Darfur Borders Highlighted):

These boundaries also cut across tribes and ethnic groups. Sudan therefore shares tribal and ethnic affinities with those of the neighbouring countries, for instance, Zaghawa and Arabs of Darfur have their affiliates in Chad; the Beja of eastern Sudan have tribal links with Ethiopia and Eritrea; the Nubians in the north have affiliates in south Egypt; the Equatorian people share clans with DRC, Central African Republic, Kenya and Uganda (Lesch 1991). Therefore, people from neighbouring countries who face crises of famine, war, and other political or economic adversities find Sudan’s neighbouring regions a convenient refuge where they get support and sympathy from relatives and affiliated tribes as evident by the huge movements of refugees into the Sudan from Ethiopia, Eritrea, DRC, Chad and Uganda (Lesch 1991) as well as reverse movements by Sudanese refugees fleeing their country for similar reasons.

The country displays a wide range of climatic conditions and although it entirely lies within the Savannah belt, most of its areas are characterised by low rainfall, meanwhile; in contrast, the River Nile runs across the country from south to north for two and a half thousand miles and provides rich source of economic activities at the centre of the Sudan (O’Neill and O’Brien 1988; Lesch 1991). The amount and distribution of rainfall decreases as we move from south to north where a semi-desert climate extends towards the borders with Egypt and Libya. The vegetation and agricultural activity is largely affected by the variations of rainfall quantities (Clay 1995). These climatic variations are reflected in the social and livelihood systems of people, making the majority farmers, who are leading either pastoral or agropastoral forms of socio-economic activities. Agriculture therefore has for a long period constituted the
backbone of the Sudan’s economy before Sudan turns to be an oil exporter \(^\text{18}\) since 1999.

A population census conducted in Sudan in 1993 estimated Sudan population at 28 million but according to Sudan census committee\(^\text{19}\), the most recent census conducted in 2009, estimated the population at over 39.15 million, notably 5 million in Khartoum; 7.5 million in Darfur and 8.2 million in South Sudan. The census results was contested especially by Darfuri insurgents and south Sudan authorities as well as other northern Sudanese parties. The former accused the government of fiddling census figures that they considered the whole process fraudulent and manipulated. To them, it was no more than a tool used by the governing elites to justify and perpetuate inequalities enshrined in domestic politics. It was therefore resisted by mass political movements that are launched in the south, the east and the west (Darfur) regions in demand for just share in distribution of power and wealth based, primarily, on population numbers.

This population of Sudan represents more than 597 tribes that speak more than 400 languages and local dialects (e.g. Malwal 1981; Harir 1983; Bechtold 1991: 1). These tribes are of both Arab and African culturally related ethnic categories

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\(^{18}\) According to the International Monetary Fund, oil represented 95 percent of export revenues and 60 percent of government revenues (U.S. Energy Information Administration Independent Statistics and Analysis; http://www.eia.doe.gov/cabs/Sudan/Background.html.)

\(^{19}\) http://sudanwatch.blogspot.com/2009/04/sudan-census-committee-say-sudan.html
displaying thus a society of a diverse spectrum of historical background\textsuperscript{20},
etnicity, tribe, culture, religion, language and way of life and livelihood, thus
making Sudan a truly microcosm of Africa.

These tribes and ethnic groups have coexisted together peacefully for hundreds
of years even though they would occasionally get into conflict with one another.
These conflicts, however, did not threaten and/or transform their coexistence
into crossroads as currently the situation suggests. It is crucial therefore to
comprehend the nature of tribal, ethnic and racial identities in Sudan in order to
establish the relevance of identity to the conflict and wars in the recent history of
Sudan.

\section*{3.3 Identity in Sudan: Ethnicity, Tribe and Race}

\subsection*{3.3.1 Concept of Tribe}

“Tribe” is a term used by colonials and colonials’ anthropologists to describe
social organisations of ‘primitive’ and ‘backward’ people in Africa (Firth 1958: 6
cited in Jenkins 1997: 16). It indicates an indigenous African ethnic group that is
characterised by sharing a common name, speaking a common language, has
a feeling of solidarity, shared beliefs in a common ancestor, organised along

\textsuperscript{20}The people are of diverse origins and historical backgrounds: Kushitic kingdoms 2500 B.C., succeeded
by Christian Nubian kingdoms on the Nile in 543 A. D., Islamic Fung Sultanate in 1504; parallel to this in
the west of the country is the Keira Sultanate’s in Darfur (O’Neill and O’Brien 1988) as well as Arab
infiltration from the north and west in the 13th and 14th centuries.
inherited social hierarchies and live in a demarcated geographical territories (Berghe 1975). Yet, they do not assemble under one ruler or administrative system despite the fact that recently many of them have organised politically in an independent government or state (Mair 1977). Prunier (2005) therefore perceives tribes as “micro-nations.” Appiah (1999: 703), nonetheless, argues that “tribe” is not an invention by the colonials and their anthropologists; rather, it’s an “ethnonym”. Ethnic names or ethnomyns are ‘products of the interaction between the ideas of European colonials and anthropologists, on the one hand, and pre-existing ways of classifying people in Africa’s pre-colonial societies, on the other.’ She proposes that what they call tribe is usually intented to describe an ethnic group.

On the other hand, ‘Tribalism’, is viewed as the ideological consciousness of belonging to a ‘tribe’ and sharing its belief, values, language and customs and subscribing to its regulations (e.g. Essien-Udom 1975; Manzool 1998). It is the bond that holds the tribe’s members together and enhances their loyalty, cooperation, solidarity and support to each other.

It is further thought of as a form of nationalism which resists domination and monopoly by other ethnic groups and demands equity and equality within the prevailed political system (Essien-Udom 1975). As Berghe (1975: xi) puts it, “‘Tribalism” is really nothing else than a nationalism of which you do not approve’. Thus what in Europe, Asia or Latin America is described as ‘nationalism’, which is ‘a political movement for unification, autonomy or
independence based on common ethnicity, becomes “tribalism” in Africa’. But
the term ‘nationalism’ is accepted because it appears positive meanwhile the
term ‘tribalism’ is rejected because it is perceived as divisive (Berghe 1975), as
also suggested by Fallers (1974):

Today “tribalism” means “ethnic divisiveness,” which cannot be denied. “African states
do contain diverse primordial solidarities … and these solidarities, in Africa as
elsewhere, sometimes rise instantly to self-consciousness and become divisive,
occasionally threatening the integrity of the states (Fallers 1974: 36-37).

Contrary to Fallers’ views, it could be argued that tribalism does not act as a
threatening constituent against states or other groups unless motivated by
factors threatening to the survival of the tribe per se. The problem of tribalism in
contemporary Africa therefore, Essien-Udom (1975) postulates, is the “identity
crisis” that emerges from the lack of a reliable “national society” and standard
systems and institutions that can guide the leadership and the institutions of
African states towards equality in distribution of wealth and power and therefore
inform people’s trust and loyalty. This is the context that provokes tribal and
ethnic consciousness and eventually leads to ethnicised political conflict and
struggle of various groups as is in the case of Darfur (see chapter 4).

3.3.2 Concept of Ethnicity

The term ethnicity originates from the Greek word ‘ethnos’ which stands for the
*ethnic group* is perceived (e.g. Weber 1978; Yinger 1981; Scherrer 1999) as a human collectivity that’s organised along shared belief in, real or imagined, common origin or descent, historical background, cultural\(^{21}\) attributes e.g. language, values, customs, social and economic activities, etc.

On the other hand, the dynamic nature of culture suggests that ethnicity is not about culture and shared values, etc., as it is about the belief in ethnic differentiation, that is, the group shares the ‘we’ consciousness as opposed to ‘they’ (Fukui 1994:33). It is thus a matter of the values contained in the socialisation of people that hold people of a particular ethnic group together and exclude those who are not part of the group and may at times rise against those others (e.g. Smith 1991; Scherrer (1999). Similarly, Barth (1969) assumes that ethnicity is the social organisation of cultural differences rather than just differences that set demarcations between ‘us’ and ‘them’ and it follows that ethnicity is about processes of maintaining such ethnic boundaries. Hughes (1994) proclaims rightly that:

> an ethnic group is not one because of the degree of measurable or observable differences from other groups; it is an ethnic group, on the contrary, because the people in it and the people out of it know that it is one; because both the ‘ins’ and the ‘outs’ talk, feel, and act as if it were a separate group. This is possible only if there are ways of telling who belongs to the group and who does not, and if a person learns early, deeply, and usually irrevocably to what group he belongs (1994: 91).

\(^{21}\) The term ‘culture’ is defined as: the system of shared meanings developed in a social and economic context which has a particular historical and political background. It is the distinctive ‘design for living’ that a group possesses, the sum total of its rules and guides for shaping and patterning its way of life (Khan 1982, cited in Richardson and Lambert 1985: 53).
It is claimed that the term was avoided before the nineteenth century (e.g. Scherrer 1999; Wolff 2006); since early last century, however, the concepts of ethnicity and ethnic group have dominated the politics of group differentiation all over the world as ethnic terms were used to label a variety of collective situations where people lived and acted together based on the belief that every person has an ethnic identity (see 2.6.1).

Whilst the meanings of ethnicity are generally agreed, its relevance to contemporary politics and people’s relationships is being perceived differently by different schools of thought. The primordial school (e.g. Vermeuen and Govers 1997; Nagel 1998; Wolff 2006) suggests that ethnicity is an old phenomenon and is being part and parcel of human history and experience. It should thus be considered as naturally existing among groups and individuals as all of them have an ethnic identity.

This primordial approach is contested by constructionists (e.g. Barth 1969) who claim that ethnicity is a product of interaction and is influenced by the dynamics of the surrounding circumstances. It presumes that ethnicity is constructed by individuals and groups out of the factors of language, religion, culture, ancestry, style of appearance or place and that, ethnic boundaries are not static but continuously negotiated both in location and meaning by their members themselves and outsiders. Thus, the construction of boundaries and the establishment of meaning are central to the element of ethnicity (Nagel 1998).
Jenkins (1997:13-14) summarises what he terms ‘the basic social anthropological model of ethnicity’ as

Ethnicity is about cultural differentiation… identity is always a dialectic between similarity and difference; …ethnicity is centrally concerned with culture - shared meaning … but it is also rooted in …. and the outcome of social interaction; ethnicity is no more fixed or unchanging than the culture of which it is a component or the situations in which it is produced and reproduced; ethnicity as a social identity is collective and individual, externalised in social interaction and internalised in personal self-identification (1997:13-14).

This constructionist approach, Vermeuen and Govers (1997) maintain, marked a departure from the focus on organisation and its relevance to ethnic mobilisation, to the role of social construction of identity. It therefore explains the relevance of conflict to ethnicity and ethnic groups. Yet, apparently, ethnic conflict is not just about timely construction of identities, but equally, it embodies the presumption that this construction is promoted by beliefs in primordial attributes as well as the constructed ones. The instrumentalists therefore (Nagel 1998; Wolff 2006) argue that ethnicity is a mechanism deployed by the leaders to mobilise people in pursuit of particular – individuals' or group's interests e.g. power, wealth or security.

Obviously, tribe and ethnic group share more or less similar meanings but the association of “tribe” with “primitiveness” and “backwardness”, makes the terms “ethnic group” and “ethnicity” wider in reference than “tribe” and “tribalism” even though some scholars (e.g. Fukui and Markakis 1994; Vail 1989) tend to use them interchangeably. In Sudan, however, both terms have significant social
and political implications that cannot be denied or ignored and they have permeated most of the political turmoils encountered in Sudan since independence to date (see 3.3.4; 3.5.1; 4.3).

3.3.3 Concept of Race

The belief in ‘race,’ Berghe (1967) suggests, is often associated with the ideology of racism which implies that the genetically based physical differences between human groups are essentially connected with the presence or absence of specific socially relevant features. Racism therefore exists as a forceful element that gives social prominence to physical characteristics especially among societies that are racially identified. Racial categories are therefore, Rex (1986) perceives, often used to intensify ethnic tensions, and thus, justify unequal treatment and exploitation of one group by another.

Yet, there is an apparent paradox between the biological and sociological views of race as it is argued that the majority of social scientists do not use the term ‘race’ to denote a biologically distinct sub-species of *Homo Sapiens* as the biologists do; rather, race to them means a group that is socially recognised as having physical characteristics different from others (e.g. Berghe 1975; Richardson and Lambert 1985). This makes the concept of ‘race’ a ‘subjective’ concept, in that the belief in ‘race’ is not a matter of possessing noticeable features, but rather a matter of believing among society in real or imagined existence of such characteristics. Thus what makes a society multi-racial,
Berghe (1970) asserts, is not the presence of physical differences between
groups, but the social interpretation to such physical characteristics. Hence,
when societies are identified on the basis of physical differences, we end up by
having multiracial society and where the basis of differentiation is cultural we
have multiethnic societies.

In both multiethnic and multiracial societies, however, ethnic and racial
pluralisms are often indistinguishable in terms of which is ethnicity and which is
race, especially in contexts of robust absence of cultural differences. Yet,
ethnic/tribal membership often verbally made on cultural and physical criteria
(Berghe 1967) despite the fact that sometimes the physical criteria becomes
indistinguishable as a result of groups mixing with each other as could be
observed in Sudan and Darfur.

Race and ethnic relationships must therefore, be perceived as a form of power
relations and relationships of production that can only be clearly understood
within the overall framework of political and economic institutions. Richardson
and Lambert (1985) therefore suggest that, similar to ethnicity, race is not a
natural phenomenon but ‘socially constructed’ as people may construct same
or different cultures irrespective of their races but dependent on whether they
live together or not.

\[22\] Society’s culture (its network of attitudes, values, meanings and ideologies) is connected in intimate
way to its ‘structure’ (the pattern of social institutions, productive arrangements and power
relationships) (Richardson and Lambert 1985: 14).
3.3.4. Tribe, Ethnicity, and Race in Sudan

Despite historical and recent significant political and administrative changes experienced in Sudan, and against the 19th century conceptualisation of tribe above, it is claimed that the political nature of tribe enabled it to survive and function as each person is recognised to belong to a tribe (e.g. Deng 1987; Johnson 2003). In rural settings, tribe exists as a social and a political organisation bounded with specific land territories (see 4.5.1; 4.5.2). Each tribe has its own institutions, customary laws and system of justice that identify and regulate the power relations among its members and across tribes (Fruzzetti and Ostor 1990). The position of tribe is reinforced as a result of lack of reliable system of governance and justice, a situation that obliges people to resort to their tribes in times of need especially during crises e.g. drought, famine and wars. Tribe thus constitutes the most reliable defensive mechanism for maintaining social, economic and political boundaries (see 4.3).

Nonetheless, Deng (1987) charges, the significance of belonging to a certain tribe varies from region to region depending on the socio-cultural, economic and political context, on the level of political participation in the state system of governance, and the issues at stake. Thus, in internal conflicts, tribal identities become the dominant factor whereas in north-south relationships, ethnic identities get emphasised to foster greater solidarity on either side.
On the other hand, while people in Sudan can clearly identify their tribes, identification of their ethnicity is a complex one. This is because an ethnic group is an aggregation of tribes and an ethnic identity is determined by a host of interwoven attributes the most significant of which is tribe per se, race, religion and geographical location as well as the way of life and livelihoods (also see 2.6.1). Thus, various dichotomous identities have evolved which include Arab/African, Muslim/animist, or Muslim/Christian, north/south, farmers/Baggara and Abbala etc. Yet, the riverine political elites of the Arab/Muslim ethnicity who claim Arab descent and race, and who have been dominating the state’s central power and wealth (see 3.4.1), have emphasised Arabism and Islamism through tools such as cultural domination, language and Islam. Their persistent drive to discriminatorily promote Arabism and Islamism in the country, has unfolded in them calling for the country to be identified as part of the Arab world (see 3.5.1; 4.5.3) ignoring thus other ethnic groups and creating a problem of “identity crisis” for the country that portrays the country as a divided land and turns people’s lives into crossroads. Yet, Deng (1993:213) charges that even though Arabism might be perceived by scholars as a cultural rather than a racial concept, the Sudanese who identify themselves as Arabs, usually do so not on cultural grounds, but by and large on imagined racial basis and then discriminate on this basis.

Hence, even though the Arab and African ethnicities are culturally imagined as two different races, in this identification, Deng (1987) asserts, in Sudan, the perceived and the real do not always agree and ethnic identity therefore is more of a judgemental designation rather than real facts. This is obvious as the term...
“Arab” has three denotations in Sudan: it is a pejorative label for people of primitive lifestyle namely the pastoralists, a label for those whose original and native language is Arabic, and as a racial category connected with Islamic civilisation. An old colonial geographer, K. M. Barbour remarks that:

(t)he term “Arab” is used in the Sudan in a variety of ways and on different occasions its meaning may be based on race, speech, an emotional idea or a way of life. Not all who claim to be “Arabs” would be universally accepted as such and there are those who at one moment claim ‘we are Arabs’ and at another will dismiss a ragged stranger contemptuously as “he is only one of the Arabs” (Barbour 1961:80).

On the other hand, the term ‘African’ indicates racial physical features – mainly the black colour and hair type. It also indicates the identity of a person who belongs to an African tribe and does not speak Arabic as a mother tongue.

The contest over the meanings of ‘Arab’ and ‘African’ which, among other ethnic identities, has significant implications in Sudan, could therefore be viewed as about power relations between the two ethnic groups and their representation in the state political machinery. Apparently, these ethnic dichotomies and diversity wouldn’t have constituted a threat to peaceful coexistence and/or acted as a source of conflict among the parties had they not been managed, as already noted, in unjust and discriminating ways that created disadvantaged groups with regard to the sharing of power, wealth, and other national resources (see 3.5.1; 3.5.2; 4.5.3).
Not surprisingly though, since independence, ethnicity and tribalism have been consolidated by the state neopatrimonial riverine ruling elites (see 3.4.2) instead of investing in national cohesiveness. They have become an embedded feature, though sometimes hidden, in the contemporary Sudanese politics to the extent that people strongly count on them in their demand for wealth and power (see 4.5.1.5; 4.5.1.6). During the reign of this current NIF government, tribal leaders and notables are often seen received by officials, including the president, where they pledge their whole tribes’ loyalty and allegiance, which indicates how entrenched this trend is, so noticeably in Darfur.

### 3.4 Political History of Sudan

#### 3.4.1 Government and Political Parties

The contemporary history of Sudan reveals that the country has gone through various political experiences of colonial and national governments since the start of the Turco-Egyptian rule in 1821. Following its independence in 1956, Sudan has gone through cycles of short parliamentary democracies alternating with longer military regimes (see Table 1 below):
### Table 1: Sudan Ruling Systems between 1821 and 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Regime</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1821-1981</td>
<td>Turco-Egyptians</td>
<td>The first colonial period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881-1889</td>
<td><em>Mahdist</em> national revolution</td>
<td>A religiously oriented rule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989-1955</td>
<td>Anglo-Egyptian condominium Rule</td>
<td>The second colonial period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956-1958</td>
<td>First parliamentary democracy</td>
<td>The first national multi-party regime after independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 1958 - October 1964</td>
<td>Gen. Abboud military regime</td>
<td>The shortest military regime in the country’s history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1964 - 1969 May</td>
<td>Second parliamentary democracy</td>
<td>This was an outcome of an October mass revolution against Gen Abboud’s military regime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1969 - April 1985</td>
<td>Military regime led by Nimeiri</td>
<td>Continued for 16 years until it was overthrown by a mass revolution in April 1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985 -1986</td>
<td>Transitional government</td>
<td>Formed following the overthrow of the Nimeiri regime and served to handover the state administration to an elected parliamentary government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986 -1989</td>
<td>Third parliamentary democracy</td>
<td>Coalition government led by <em>Sadiq Al-Mahdi</em>’s Umma Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1989- now (2010)</td>
<td>NIF military regime</td>
<td>An Islamist regime led by the NIF party that assumed power through a military coup</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The national governments are always dominated by political elites who belong to the riverine central Sudan in what could be described as, to borrow the formulation of Bayart (1993: 150), “reciprocal assimilation of elites”. Since the colonial period, these elites have dominated government’s organs and sustained their dominance into the independent Sudan as a powerful allied force that dominate the economic, political (both government and political parties in whatever colour or form) and social domains of activity. This elites’
politics is not dissimilar to what Bayart (1993: 154) notices as experienced in other African countries such as Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Cameroon, Tanzania and Kenya. Whatever hue is the government, the elites always count themselves in (see 3.5.2; 4.5.1).

This fusion of the riverine political elites and their coordination in Sudan, has produced, reproduced and perpetuated government neopatrimonialist political order to domestic politics (see 3.4.2) which resulted in creating political instability and wars in Sudan. Part of this politics is to leave out the segments that belonged to the peripheral regions and institute their marginalisation and disempowerment no matter what competence they have and/or dedication they have conceded to the elites’ dominant structures and ideologies (see 4.5.2).

Two often competing sectarian parties, the Umma Party - affiliated to the Ansar23 sect and al-Mahdi Family, and, the Khatmiyya sect-based Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) which is affiliated to the Marghani family, dominated the scene early on. Both families were administratively and economically collaborating with the condominium colonials, and as a result, commanded strong patron-client networks in rural areas (e.g. Daly 1993, Sikainga 1993; 79-80). Thus, as clientalism usually facilitates maintaining and legitimising the patron’s dominant position (Thomson 2004), these two families combined traditional status with government support which enabled their own formulated

23 the Ansar were the followers of the Mahdist religious revolution that overthrown the Turco-eEgyptian colonials (1881-1898) and mainly came from Darfur, Kordofan and the White Nile
political parties to rise and dominate the democratic parliamentary periods in Sudan (e.g. Daly 1993, Sikainga 1993) (see table 1). Sikainga charges that neither of these two parties is national in policy or membership and by the nature of their sectarian and religious base, they are essentially undemocratic as the spiritual leaders exercised ultimate control over the party’s organisation and decision-making.

Similar to what is observed in other African countries (e.g. Bayart 1995; Thomson 2004), these elites and their alliances, have become mainstreamed into the government office to be the core lead executives of governments’ institutions, political parties and parliaments that ruled Sudan – domination that enabled them to manipulate political decision-making processes and to institute neopatrimonial approaches to domestic politics by subverting public resources and office to serve their vested interests. The political history of independent Sudan, Niblock (1987: 204) charges, is therefore dominated by social groupings of those who had benefited from the distribution of resources under the condominium and who would design government policy whilst lacking the good will to improve the socio-economic performance of the country at large. Their attitudes and practices have marginalised people, especially those of periphery regions, from decision-making, and perpetuated regional inequalities between the north and the south, among northern constituency and their social structures (see 3.4.2; 3.5.1; 3.5.2; 4.5.1).
The process of marginalisation and inequalities inflicted upon periphery regions have paved the way for regionally-oriented political parties, groups and movements to emerge. They include groupings such as the Beja Congress (from the Red Sea), the Darfur Development Front, the General Union of Nuba Mountains and various southern Sudanese parties e.g. the Sudan African National Union (SANU) in addition to the most recent political insurgent movements from Darfur e.g. SLM (Sudan Liberation Movement) and JEM (Justice and Equality Movement). Most of these emerged in the 1960s, promoted, by and large, by educated people from African tribes in the remote and the least-developed areas, to address the vulnerability of remote regions to unfair distribution of power and wealth and to lobby and challenge the central government/hegemony and the economic, political and socio-cultural domination of the Riverine elites (e.g. Shaddad 1987; Kurita 1994; Miller 2005). They advocated for equality and non-discrimination for all Sudanese (see 3.2; 3.3.4) and for plurality in power sharing.

Their perceived needs and peaceful struggle were, however, persistently denied for decades and the only option left for them was therefore to resort to armed struggle that overwhelmed Sudan since 1990s to date. The position of the ruling and governing elites in Sudan conforms to what Thomson (2004: 118) portrays as ruling ‘by confiscation rather than conciliation’

There are also the Sudan Communist Party (SCP) and the Islamist National Islamic Front (NIF) which have followers among urban middle and working
classes. The NIF have been dominating the government since 1989 after overthrowing the democratic regime (1985-1989) through a military *coup d'état* to assign themselves the mandate of transforming the secular state in Sudan into a Muslim state (see 3.4.2.3).

### 3.4.2 State System of Governance: Domestic Politics and Neopatrimonialism

It is argued that (e.g. Thomson 2004) the inability of legal-rational institutions in post-colonial Africa to enforce law and justice resulted in transforming the politics of independent Africa into personal rule through adopting neo-patrimonialism political order which is a combination between legal-rational institutions and patrimonialism. The latter, derives from tradition where patrimonial leaders manipulate power and distribute offices as patronage to kin, friends and clients in exchange for personal loyalty to the leader. Neo-patrimonialism as such, is the political order in which private interests are accomplished through a political structure.

Patrimonialism and neo-patrimonialism, Francis (2008: 9) explains, are part of the new political economy interpretation emerging in the 1980s to explain the social, economic and political problems and crises of civil wars and armed conflict in contemporary Africa. It examines the ‘inner workings of power politics within Africa’ and how small ruling and governing elites have made the state
and its institutions subservient to their private interests, through exercising personal rule in retaining monopoly over public resources (patrimony) and political activity, rather than achieving public interest and reform as also maintained by Medard (1982). Patrimonialism and neopatrimonialism are therefore perceived by scholars (e.g. Medard 1982; Thomson 2004; Francis 2008) as extensions of the politics of patron-clientelism and political patronage as they constitute an instrumental political contract of trading mutual benefits between patron and his/her client whilst the authority remains with the patron, that is, support traded for loyalty.

The neo-patrimonialism politics and its embodiments, that is, personal rule, clientelism and political patronage, have also permeated, as in other African countries, the political contexts of post-independence Sudan. This is because, during the colonial period, the rulers co-opted and mainstreamed the local traditional tribal system of governance into the native administration system (see 3.4.2.2; 4.4.1; 4.4.2) as a cost-effective mechanism to rule the vast area of Sudan. Equally, they incorporated the riverine elites in their office and to whom they handed over the ruling power at independence (see 3.4.1). Given the nature of the Sudan state as being amalgamated from different, often warring, kingdoms (see 3.2), as Medard (1982) perceives, it is not unexpected that the belief in public interest has not been accommodated. Thus, instead of creating a national society, following independece, the riverine ruling elites have adopted the colonial ‘suppression and exploitation’ as described by Medard (1982: 180) by continuing to be more devoted to reinforcing their own position of power and wealth through using their legal authority (see 2.2) in forging alliances,
expanding and reinforcing their existing patron-client reciprocal networks and by co-optation of rural communities and grassroots structures e.g. tribes, tribal militias, al-Hakkamat … etc (see 4.5.3; 4.5.1.4; chapter 7).

This enabled them to exploit the state’s human and material public resources to serve their self-centred interests, amongst which, is to remain in the seat of power at the expense of the welfare and security of others. These neo-patrimonialists’ approaches to domestic politics, have created severe social and economic inequalities and widened schism and polarisation of people along ethnic and tribal lines. As the personal nature of the system is obstructive to claims of discontent and frustration, as Bayart (1993) asserts, and to positive responding as well, devastating armed conflict and civil wars ensued. The neopatrimonialism manifestations of domestic politics in Sudan are revealed largely through the political economy and administration approaches, Islamisation project, and how the state’s governing and ruling elites have interpreted the resulting conflicts and armed struggle and responded to them, as discussed below.

3.4.2.1 Political Economy of Sudan: General Overview

The condominium social (education) and economic development policies and efforts were concentrated in Khartoum and along the riverine centre whilst in other parts of the country, their main concern was to maintain law and order and
the status quo. As the main source of economic investment and wealth in central Sudan was agriculture, the condominium collaborated with the economically dominant groups which composed of merchants, tribal leaders and religious leaders. The last category comprises the two families of al-Mahdi and al-Marghani (see 3.4.1) who became closely connected, through political patronage, to the British whereby the latter allowed them to consolidate their wealth by various economic inducements e.g. land grants and agricultural facilities in return for loyalty and support to the rulers. With independence, these three categories came to dominate the politics of government office and political parties and have become the neo-patrimonial leaders of the country (Sikainga 1993). Their social, economic and political policies have therefore dealt a blow to the people’s welfare and security as could be understood from the discussion below.

Agriculture comprises a cash crop mass-production mechanised sector (both irrigated and rainfed) and the subsistence sector. The latter constitutes the largest sector as it is relied on by more than 80 percent of the rural population. The capitalist economic form of cash crop production, of mainly cotton, was adopted since the 1920s by the Anglo-Egyptian government (1898-1956) in Sudan whereby they established large-scale irrigated agricultural schemes along the River Nile in central and eastern parts of the state e.g. Gezira, Gash and Tokar deltas (e.g. Agabawi 1968; Kursany 1984; Elhassan 1988; Abdelkarim 1987; Mohamed-Salih 1990). In addition, by 1943, the colonial authority also initiated mechanised large-scale rainfed grain (millet and sorghum) production schemes in Gedaref in eastern Sudan in the central
rainland - the Savannah Belt that was usually inhabited by pastoral and agro-pastoral communities. Soon, other schemes followed in the Blue Nile, South Kordofan, Kassala and Upper Nile provinces.

In order to legally seize large areas of land for these projects, it is maintained that (e.g. Runger 1987; Mohamed-Salih 1990) the authorities introduced the Land Settlement and Registration Ordinance 1925 (LSRO) which provides that all unregistered land is deemed property of the government, followed by the Limitation and Prescription Ordinance, 1928, and the Land Acquisition Ordinance, 1930.

The rapid expansion of the mechanised sector has resulted into incursion into the land previously used by farmers for growing subsistence crops and as animal routes and grazing areas for their herds. Not unexpectedly, this resulted in confrontations and thereafter conflicts among and between pastoralists, subsistence agropastoralists and the owners of the mechanised schemes (e.g. ILO Report 1987). This situation was intensified during 1978-85, especially in the remote regions e.g. Nuba Mountains, Darfur and the South, when the state government, in response to the economic crisis and increased debts, appropriated lands of rural people and established large-scale mechanised farms for riverine individuals’ government- sponsored private sector to the disadvantage of the local inhabitants (e.g. Elhassan 1988; Markakis 1990; Kurita 1994). As a result, the original rural land owners were transformed into wage labourers in these schemes in lands for centuries they called theirs. This
caused, in 1986, southern Sudan SANU (the Sudan African National Union) and the General Union of the Nuba Mountains (regional political organisations) (see 3.4.1) to rise up against this feudalistic policy and to demand its abolition.

On the other hand, the peasant rainfed agriculture subsector is completely overlooked by the country’s economic support system e.g. credit and equipment, that are facilitated by Sudan’s Agricultural Bank, the Bank of Sudan and other commercial banks as it is not considered as a reliable economic resource whilst these institutions focus only on their own irrigated and mechanised agriculture (Yongo-Bure 1993). Given the backgrounds of those who dominate public policy and the neopatrimonial politics that permeates the power structure of Sudan, this situation prevails all over the country.

Hence, as the growth of mechanised schemes was made at the expense of the subsistence sector, mass migration of rural farmers from many areas of Sudan, Darfur in particular, to work as wage labourers in these schemes, was experienced. Some women also migrated with their families but considerable numbers remained behind to take full survival responsibility of caring for children and the elderly and the subsistence production (see 5.3.2; 5.3.2.2). Given the nature of agricultural policies that generally allocate land titling and agricultural facilities to the head of the household – usually perceived as a man, women were overlooked and as a result, the subsistence sector has suffered extreme deterioration and, subsequently, poor production (e.g. ILO 1976, 87; Oesterdukhott and Wohlmutth 1983). Combined with the prevailing conflict and
war situation, persistent food insecurity has become a reality in many parts of Sudan and particularly in Darfur.

In addition, since the 1960s, and given its location as drought prone, Sudan has suffered recurrent drought that had stricken Africa in the periods of 1968-73 and 1984-85 (Clay 1995). The impact of the second wave of drought was a brutal famine especially in Darfur where the crude death rate trebled to 40 per thousand and destruction of between 60 to 65 percent of the country's livestock resources, displacement and mass migration from rural areas into big towns and the mechanised agriculture areas in search for wages and survival (de Waal 2005b). This obliged many pastoralist groups in Darfur to settle in a process that eventually led to armed conflicts with the settled agropastoral communities (see 4.5.1).

On the other hand, it is argued that (e.g. Shepherd 1984; O'Brien 1988) the 1968-1973 drought did not cause famine in western Sudan as it did along the west African Sahel despite the fact that, in 1973, the rainfall in Darfur, de Waal (2005b) claims, was the lowest on record compared to that in the Sahel and that the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC) identified 85 percent of Darfur population as 'drought affected'. According to de Waal (2005b), the impact of this drought on people's sustainable livelihood systems, combined with intermittent decline in rainfall, desertification and reduction in yield, have all compounded the famine of 1984/5. Nonetheless, researchers perceive that rural economies are often habitually coping with drought and that generally they attribute African
famines to the negative influences and processes of external political and
economic forces that weaken rural peoples' coping mechanisms and subject
them to famine as Walker (1985) postulates:

 whilst drought can act as a trigger to the phenomenon we call 'famine', the causes lie
elsewhere; the process, in fact, has much more to do with social and domestic
behaviour, with markets and the economy, with prices and wages, than it has with
nature, or what used to be called 'an act of God (1985: 167).

Walker's proposition could be seen as safely applicable to Sudan. This is
because the dynamics of economic crises experienced in Sudan in late 1970s
combined with increased debts, had reflected negatively on public service and
commodity for people and was devastating for the market economy of Darfur
(de Waal 2005b). Yet, Walker (1985: 170) asserts that the misuse of resources
by African governments in armed conflicts contributed largely to this dilemma as
evidenced by the fact that in 1984, the cost of arms imports into Africa
exceeded the cost of grain imports for the first time in history worsening thus the
situation and leading to economic and political instability. In Sudan, the 1983
insurgency in the south marked the beginning of the second stage of the civil
war when the government directed huge resources into waging war against the
SPLA/M instead of addressing the deteriorating conditions of its citizens.
3.4.2.2 State Administration System

In contemporary history of Sudan, it is widely claimed (e.g. Asad 1970; Ahmed 1972, 1974; Fruzzetti and Ostor 1990; Morton 1992; Kurita 1994; El Zain 1996; de Waal 2005b) that the condominium rulers adopted, as did the Turko-Egyptians (1821-1881) before, the policy of “Indirect Rule” through tribally-based native administration as an economical method to rule by proxy the vast rural Sudan (see 4.4.1). Between 1919 and 1931, this system was further consolidated through issuing a series of ordinances that extended the area coverage of tribal leaders and enhanced their executive, financial and judicial power and authority in administering people and land. This led to tribes being geographically assembled\(^{24}\).

Alongside the native administration, the condominium government, later, superimposed modernised local government institutions through the enactment of the Local Government Ordinances (1937-8) in order to widen public participation in the local government town and village councils. Indeed, this was mainly influenced by Milner report of 1921 which advocated for handing over administration to “native authorities” for “economy and efficiency” (Morton 1992: 30) and to establish a form of modern local institutions to take part in the

\(^{24}\) For instance the Dar Hamid tribe in Bara province, north Kordofan, is composed of more than thirteen clans of various ethnic origins – some are from Darfur e.g. Zaghawa, some were immigrants from west Africa mainly Nigeria e.g. Fellata, and some are from the White Nile area in central Sudan e.g. Abu Ammaar who were displaced from their lands as a result of building agricultural irrigated schemes e.g. El Gezira scheme. They all lived together within the territory of Dar Hamid (El Zain 1996: 526).
independence processes. Nevertheless, Kurti (1994) contends that this change did not pose a threat to the position of tribal chiefs as their Dars and authority were preserved in the rural areas in parallel to the newly established government councils as was obvious in Darfur (see 4.4.2).

Following Sudan independence during the 1950s and the 1960s, (e.g. Bechtold 1976; Morton 1992; Kurita 1994; El Zain 1996; de Waal 2005b), the efficiency and legitimacy of the native administration were reviewed and consequently, the whole system was abolished in 1971. The practicalities in managing the vast area and diverse population of Sudan necessitate administrative decentralisation which was pursued through the enactment of the People’s Local Government Act in the north of the country in 1971 by the Nimeiri regime (1969-85) whereby a new system of elected administrative councils was introduced at village, rural and provincial levels.

The paradox is that while efforts were made to form these elected councils, they were neither adequately supplied with financial and/or human resources e.g. police, nor were they given judicial powers. The indigenous tribal courts therefore maintained their own tribal policing power and continued functioning informally. Subsequently, tribes and tribal institutions have become powerful and seemingly sovereign, especially in Darfur (see 4.4.1; 4.4.2), and later, they served as instruments for the riverine governing and ruling elites through patron-client relationships in which they traded benefits in such a process that
has compromised the peaceful coexistence among tribal and ethnic communities.

This was followed by the introduction of the Regional Government Act in 1980 which was meant, apparently, to devolve power to the regions whilst in fact, it was applied to divide and control. Reminiscent of what was stated in the 1973 constitution, it was claimed that, again, the power of the local councils was overseen and controlled by national authorities, and the province commissioners were appointed by and made accountable to the president (e.g. Diraige 1987; Markakis 1990). The regional governments were made accountable to the ministers in Khartoum and were deprived of adequate resources to perform their responsibilities. It could therefore be argued that these local and regional neo-patrimonial domestic politics and policies (see 3.4.2) were in fact intended to perpetuate centralisation and firm control of the state over its people rather than to share power and/or respond to people’s perceived needs. They were merely designed, Khalid (1985) charges, as a ploy by the Nimeri’s military regime to divert people’s rising unrest against the legitimacy of the central regime, to local competition in their own regions.

These neo-patrimonial attitudes had clearly unfolded in the processes that preceded the famine in 1984/5 in Darfur when in October 1983, Diraige (1987) proclaims, the national government refused to admit and or acknowledge what the Darfur governor had reported as serious famine indicators, as were also not
keen to ensure food and aid provided by international humanitarian agencies reach the victims of famine in the western parts of the country.

When the NIF took power in 1989, they divided Sudan into 26 states, and Darfur for instance, was split up into three states (see 4.4.2). This was apparently intended to enable the ideological imposition and recasting of the Sudanese into the NIF Muslim model and as well to weaken people’s loyalty to traditional political parties e.g. the *Umma* Party. As far as the south is concerned, it was a unified region before it was split into three regions when Addis Ababa agreement was violated by Numayri in 1983. The NIF were initially against federal system in Sudan that might give authority and autonomy to the southerners. In recent years, however, they appeared to support the idea not because it functions as a solution to the cultural diversity and political problems of power and wealth, Sikainga (1993) argues, but because it would enable the north to implement *shari’a* and would reduce the influence of the southern SPLA on national affairs. The Islamism divisive ideology has prompted some NIF members to publicly proclaim their support to southern secession. Islamic *shari’a* in Sudan is thus being used by the Islamists neopatriomalists as an agent of manipulation; hatred and divisiveness that permeated all aspects of people’s lives (see 3.4.2.3).
3.4.2.3 Islamisation in Sudan

Despite the fact that religion is a private matter between an individual and their God, Thomson (2004) argues, religion has been deployed for political manoeuvring by rivals and led to disastrous conflict. In Sudan, the Mahdist revolution (1881-98) resorted to religion in mobilisation of people against the Turco-Egyptian regime (Daly 1993), and since Sudan’s independence, it is maintained (e.g. Wakoson 1993; Burr and Collins 2008) that all state governments in Khartoum attempted to impose Islamic rule on the whole country but were deterred by fear of opposition from southerners, some anti-Islamic political entities and the public at large. It was only in September 1983, when the Numayri regime (1969-85) imposed Islamic shari’a law, known in Sudan as the September laws, on the whole country, that the attempt to hegemonise the culturally and religiously diverse country into Islamised and Arabised Sudanese community finally took place.

Thomson (2004: 69) asserts that shari’a law constitutes the primary code of ethics for Muslims in both private and public life and in their relation with God. Nonetheless, the Quran, the source of shari’a, does not provide concrete laws or constitution for government and the shari’a stands as a debatable interpretation of Quranic verse by individual male Muslims. Moreover, An-Na’im (1993) proclaims, in the Islamic state, full citizenship was only granted to male Muslims whilst it was limited to women and non-Muslims, a discrimination that denied
them the right and capacity, and limited their access, to fully take part in the state institutions and public office (see 3.5.1; 5.4).

Yet, incorporating religion into politics is not often made for sacred or ethical reasons; there are often political, economic and social instrumental motives, too (Thomson 2004). For instance, Numayri’s implementation of shari’a laws was merely an attempt to escape the growing crisis in the country and to earn political support from northern political forces and traditional religious leaders with whom, as a result of the country’s economic crisis and regime’s dictatorship, he was now in hostile relationships (e.g. Daly 1993; Harir 1994; Burr and Collins 2008). Muslim Sudanese politicians e.g. Sadiq al-Mahdi, a descendant of the Mahdi, Burr and Collins (1995) maintain, perceive the September laws as purposely introduced to ensure and enforce the dictatorial personal rule of Numayri rather than to conform to Islam. Sadiq al-Mahdi was famously quoted to say that these laws were not even equal to the (price of) ink with which they were written.

Paradoxically however, but conforming to the ruling elites’ support for each other (see 3.4.1), following the overthrow of Numayri in 1985, Daly (1993) charges that the third parliamentary regime (1986-1989) led by Sadiq al-Mahdi engaged actively in a process for enacting shari’a despite his prior opposition to Numayri’s initiative. Apparently, shari’a is used just as a political means by the neopatrimonial political elites to subjugate people and to pursue vested
interests at the expense of the national unity and the welfare of the entire Sudanese. For the NIF, Sikainga (1993) charges, shari’a is a fundamental issue and they would label any opponent as anti-Islamic – a label they use to full effect to coerce sectarian parties to follow suit lest they might be abandoned by their Muslim followers.

Upon seizing power in 1989, the NIF adopted an Islamist ideology and domestic politics based on neo-patrimonialism (see 3.4.2) in order to recast the Sudanese into an NIF Islamic model. This was primarily pursued through allegedly conforming to shari’a, and by introducing comprehensive ideological measures around all aspects of life in the Sudan. Furthermore, Burr and Collins (2008: 245) charge that they also replaced skilfull and experienced personnel with their loyal or sympathiser employees so that civil service is comprehensively and gradually modelled as they wished. Their ideology also encompasses militarisation of the community, out of which the Popular Defensive Force (PDF) constitutes the most sinister political and combat instrument formulated to be ethnically, racially and religiously in the lead of the efforts ‘to convert’ and tame the society.

Furthermore, while they reluctantly agreed on the “right of belief” spelled out in the Sudan Charter of 1987 – ‘freedom of choice of religious creed and practice’, the NIF tended to believe more on the phrase that says ‘Islamic jurisprudence shall be the general source of law,’ because, it is claimed, ‘it is the expression
of the will of the democratic majority’ (Sikainga 1993: 87). Thus, to enable their domination, they endeavoured into Islamisation and Arabicization of the south in aspiration to solve the north/south conflict through subjugation and to accomplish their intent of transforming Sudan into an Islamic state.

Subsequently, Sikainga proceeds, they established numerous mosques and khalawi (Quranic schools) in the south through Munazamat al-Dawa al-Islamiya (the Islamic Dawah Organisation), and recruited hundreds of southerners to the NIF. But to the dismay of the NIF, these efforts have not culminated into mass conversion of southerners into Muslims.

The NIF Islamic-oriented neopatrimonialism domestic politics pursued in Sudan in forcing people’s loyalty look similar to what Bayart (1993: 245) observes elsewhere in Africa which includes assemblage of villages, obligatory participation at demonstrations and rallies of solidarity, obligatory attachment to the government party – the National Congress Party (NCP), co-optation of local grassroots structures e.g. tribes, tribal militias, al-Hakkamah (see 4.5.1.5 and chapter 7), introduction of new rituals of political submission out of which the ‘the wedding of the martyr,’25 could be perceived as the most contemptuous (see 5.2.1; 5.4).

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25 A ritualistic, religious innovation introduced by the NIF to celebrate, by chanting, the death of their combatants who die in the civil war in south Sudan, calling them martyrs, in anticipation of them being joined in matrimony to virgin Houris in paradise.
Since 1983, the cost of this alleged Islamic intervention on national security was initially the abortion of the Addis Ababa peace agreement of 1972 that ended 17 years of civil war (1955-1972) (see 3.5.2; 4.5.4.2) and the 1973 constitution which granted people the right to believe, leading thus the southerners to resist the policy politically and via armed struggle which triggered the second civil war (1983-2005) in south Sudan by the SPLM/A led by Colonel Dr. John Garang de Mabior.

3.5 Conflict Analysis

3.5.1 Interpretations of Wars and Armed Conflict in Sudan

As explained above, the discriminatory domestic policies pursued by neo-patrimonial ruling and governing leaders have perpetuated inequalities and led to the emergence of anti-government regional insurgencies and armed conflict between tribes and ethnic groups (see 4.5.1). Rather than sensibly attending to the underlying causes of these conflicts, the Sudan government was inclined to deny the root causes and instead label them ethnic, racial and/or religious. These conflicts are however, as Dragadze (1999) suggests, ‘rationally motivated struggle’ and that the term ‘ethnic conflict’ is a political term deployed to mask the underlying causes of these conflicts. This is because, the conflicts and civil wars experienced in Sudan are not primarily motivated by belief among ethnic groups (see 3.3.4) that they are at variance with other groups in cultural and historical attributes and should therefore fight them; rather, they are usually triggered by factors of power struggle over economic and political resources.
By interpreting the causes and consequences of the armed conflict in entirely discriminating ethnic terms, the state government meant, on the one hand, to mobilise and use ethnic consciousness as an instrument for confronting and challenging political movements and rival groups that rose against its legitimacy and in demand for just share in power and wealth; and on the other, to force tribes and ethnic groups to confront each other on ethnic basis thereby diverting their attention away from challenging the government’s domestic policies that are based on neopatrimonialism political order as the prime cause of their vulnerability (see 3.4.2; 4.5.1; 4.5.3). This is because, Wolff (2006) asserts, when ethnicity is placed both as the prime source of identity and as a reliable mechanism to achieve desired ends, it becomes more powerful and appealing in mobilising people's ethnic consciousness.

The mechanisms that the riverine governing and ruling elites pursued to mobilise ethnic consciousness include, instituting a culture of labelling the Sudanese people by their geographical locations, tribes and ethnic groups e.g. southerners, westerners, Dinka, Fur, Arabs, zurga, etc., portraying thus the Sudanese as different and conflicting and not as equal or rightful citizens. This is because whilst these ethnic labels are normally used by individuals and groups in their daily activities and interactions, they however, as Nagel (1998) postulates, acquire a rather powerful and important political position when the state uses and emphasises them through politically ethnic-oriented and discriminatory policies to polarise its subjects and manipulate power. Such a political reconstruction of ethnicity by the state has resulted in spoiling the social harmony among ethnic and tribal communities (see 3.3), serious tensions and
eventually violent conflicts against the state (see 4.5.1; 4.5.2) or against one another.

This destructive role played by national governments against their citizens in Sudan, proves the falsification of the presumption of the 1950s and 1960s which suggests that, Vail (1989) explains, modernisation would bring advanced forms of social, economic and political means of communication, production and relationships which would pave the way for national consciousness and nation-building processes to flourish in which tribalism, ethnicity and cultural divisions would fade away. Yet following independence, nationalist movements in Africa mostly failed to achieve unity among people and/or improvement in their lives. Instead, they were transformed into means of domination and control over resources through neopatrimonialism and clientelism (see 3.4.2) that co-opted ethnicity and tribalism as viable means for achieving personal ends. The resulting disadvantages - discrimination and oppression, and sensing the failure of the state to provide people with justice and equality, have forced people to seek support of their tribes and ethnic groups in challenging each other or the state.

For instance, the civil war in south Sudan was initially induced when deliberate ethnic and racial discrimination was obviously exercised in the process of power and wealth sharing between the northerners and the southerners at the inception of the Independence. Out of 800 vacancies available in the process of Sudanisation, only six posts were allocated to southerners despite the fact that
the south constituted 25 percent of the total population. For the southerners, this amounted to an internal colonisation by their Northern compatriots (Malwal 1981; Khalil 2000). The war therefore broke out four months (August 1955) before 1\textsuperscript{st} January 1956 Independence Day and continued but for a brief lull\textsuperscript{26}, till 2005 when a comprehensive peace agreement (CPA) was reached which conceded the right to self-determination for southern Sudanese to be held in January 2011.

The ethnic and racial attitudes of the northern Sudanese ruling and governing elites went on to further exacerbate the peaceful living among the Sudanese by calling for the country to be identified as an Arab state rejecting thus any attachment with Africanism despite the fact that the country’s largest population is African (e.g. Bechtold 1991; De Waal 2005a; Prunier 2005). This in turn has widened the schism more than ever before and brought the Sudanese “identity crisis” to the public fore when the identification with the Arabs was strongly opposed by the southerners and some other indigenous African groups who may have aspired for an African identity for the Sudan state.

Yet, despite the obvious causes of the civil war in south Sudan, the state government, precisely, the northern Arab Muslim governing and ruling elites projected and propagated ethnic and racial perceptions on the war and placed the blame on the southern Sudanese people. This strategy, Ibrahim (2007)

\textsuperscript{26} The first civil war began in 1955 and ended in 1972 when Addis Ababa Accord was signed. In 1983, war restarted again led by the Sudan People’s Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M).
postulates, seemed to have been based on racial and ethnic contemptuous perceptions of the northern Arab politicians of their southern Sudanese Africans as primitive *Negroid* ‘race’ and inferior non-Muslims who are not equal citizens and whose aspirations to full citizenship should not be met (see 3.4.2.3). Apparently, this alleged racial and cultural superiority is being constructed by the historical processes of enslavement of the southern people by the northerners during the nineteenth century. Subsequently, whilst the underlying cause of the war as related to power and wealth was obvious, its racial and ethnic interpretations enabled the ruling elites to mobilise the northerners, mainly the Arabs, against the southern insurgency, yet with the ultimate aim of legitimising their domination.

As the fight continued in the south in the 1980s, the parliamentary elected government (1986-1989) carried on with anti-insurgency strategies that were already launched by the previous regime (1969-1985) during the second wave of the civil war that started in 1983. These strategies included forming and arming Baggara Arab tribal militias\(^\text{27}\) in Darfur, *Kordofan* and the Blue Nile provinces – the so-called *Murahaleen* of *Misseriyah* and *Rezeiqat* tribes in particular, as paramilitary forces to fight against the SPLM/SPLA and who were

\[^{27}\] The government endorsed some of these militias following the Gardud, in southern Kordofan region, massacre in 1985. The second episode was in Ed Diein (in south Darfur) massacre committed by armed Baggara, the Rezeiqat, on 27-8/3/1987 where hundreds of Dinka were burnt to death and others abducted into captivity. In 1989, 214 Shilluk from the south were massacred and 2,000 displaced by Rifa’a militias in Al-Jabalein, in the Blue Nile region, at the borders of the white Nile and the upper Nile. Many others are not recorded (Mohamed Salih and Harir 1994: 186-7). At the end of 1987, a series of massacres were committed by militias and the army in Wau, south Sudan, in which thousands were killed (Verney *et al* 1995).
organised as Popular Defence Forces (e.g. O’Brien and Gruenbaum 1991; Harir 1994; Mohamed-Salih and Harir 1994; Flint and de Waal 2005; Haggar 2007). These Arab militias were mobilised on racial and ethnic basis of Arabism and Islamism to fight those other Sudanese identified as Negroid black African ‘abeed’ (i.e. slaves) and non-Muslims. Ethnic and tribal militias have henceforth become part of the state’s military apparatus and its political rhetoric (see 4.5.1.5).

Nonetheless, the fight continued without the government reaping any anticipated dividends of subjugating and/or destroying the SPLA/M. The NIF regime, from 1989, further reinforced the ethnic and racial perception and mobilisation by officially declaring, in 1990, the civil war in the south as holy war and called for Jihad (legitimised Muslim fight against non-Muslims). Thus, having a religious dimension being added in mobilising Arab ethnic militias (see 4.5.1.5), the brutality of war against the southerners entered a new era of economic and social devastation to the whole country. Tribal and ethnic militias have as well been used by the government against Darfur insurgencies, first in 1991/2 and then in the current war that erupted in early 2003 (see 4.5.2; 4.5.4.2).
3.5.2 Civil War Peace Settlement in Sudan

Whilst their domestic policies have created wars and armed conflicts, the ruling and governing elites have showed lack of good faith to negotiate settlement as could be seen from the processes involved in handling these conflicts, especially the civil war in south Sudan. Efforts to manage the north-south relationships started before independence when in 1947, Juba Conference was held in which northerners and southerners agreed on keeping the country united after independence and emphasised the obligation of the state government to accelerate socio-economic development in the south and foster the southerners’ participation in the state’s ruling institutions (Malwal 1987; WakoSon 1993). Yet, between 1947 and 1955 all indicators were revealing that the government had blatantly overlooked the terms of agreement leading thus to the outbreak of the first phase of civil war in Sudan (August 1955-1972). The war continued for seventeen years and was initially resolved on 27 February 1972, when the Addis Ababa Peace Agreement was ratified between the government of Sudan and the southern rebels.

The agreement gave an autonomous administration to the southern Sudan to be ruled as a single administrative region (e.g. Malwal 1987; An-Na’im 1993; Daly 1993; Sikainga 1993; WakoSon 1993; Burr and Collins 1995, 2008). The issue of religion, Malwal (1987) explains, was resolved in the national constitution of 1973 by article 16 that gave recognition to Islam, Christianity and
traditional religions and halted religion to be used for political purposes. Nevertheless, though the agreement was perceived as a solution to the south-north conflict, it seems not to have been based on good faith on the part of the dictatorial military regime of Gaafer Numayri; rather, it was merely pursued as negative peace (see 2.7) to consolidate his power that was facing political opposition at the time.

This was revealed in that, Wakoson (1993) argues, the regime was challenged by deteriorating socio-economic and political context of the country that left it with no choice but to make peace. This included, first, the state’s failure to respond to the striking military forces of the southern fighters - the Anya-Nyya1, coupled with the President’s loss of the major military support he had been receiving from the Soviet Union. The latter resulted from Numayri’s terminating all relations with the Soviets following a failed attempted coup in July 1971 allegedly by elements of the Sudanese Communist Party. Second, unrest and adamant political opposition from all the political factions in northern Sudan were on the rise. Numayri was therefore in need for political support from the south.

For the NIF, the issue of shari’a was a matter of life or death on which they could not make any compromises and therefore rejected all peace initiatives that were undertaken by other political groups following the overthrow of Numayri in 1985, as they perceived them as submission to the south on the issue of the
shari’a (Daly 1993; Burr and Collins 2008). In particular, the *Merghani-Garang* agreement in November 1988 which suggested the freezing of the shari’a, was opposed by the NIF who considered it as apostasy. When they took over in 1989, shari’a was still a stumbling block on the way to peace.

Nevertheless, the process of seeking peace continued alongside war until finally a peace process, mediated by regional and international institutions and organizations – led by the IGAD (Intergovernmental Authority on Development) and a consortium of donor countries, launched in 2001, succeeded in ending the Africa’s longest civil war in January 2005 by signing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) - also recognized as Naivasha Agreement. The agreement was intended to create democratic governance in the whole Sudan, secure for the southerners fair share in power and half share of the revenues of oil located in south Sudan. Most crucially, however, it conceded the right to self-determination for southern Sudanese through a referendum for the southern Sudan. By responding to most of the demands of the southerners, the CPA constitutes a project for positive peace and not just a negative ceasefire peace agreement (see 2.7). Yet, while it resolves the north-south conflict, the CPA falls short of a really comprehensive solution to the problems of the whole country, thus once again highlighting the failure of the northern ruling and governing elites to create a national and just society and maintain the country as united.
On the other hand, there are other armed confrontations pursued by regional insurgencies against the government for similar causes and aspirations to that of the southerners, e.g. Nuba Mountains, where the Nuba people fought alongside the SPLA against the government for more than 18 years. Yet, Rahhal (2007) protests that it was not resolved by the CPA or any other agreement. Other fragile negative peace agreements ratified between insurgencies and national government included Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) signed in May 2005 (see 4.5.4.2); the Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement (ESPA) signed in October 2006, in Eritrea, with the Eastern Front which rose up a decade ago in eastern Sudan. These disjointed processes suggest that, peace resettlements are not a genuine pursuit for the ruling northern elites and are often forced through international pressure.

3.6 Conclusion

The chapter shows that Sudan is a large country and characterised by diverse tribes/ethnic groups, cultures and ecological zones which reflected in the livelihood pursuits of people making the majority of its population farmers and agropastoral communities. Since independence in 1956, however, the national riverine ruling and governing elites failed to manage this diversity with justice and equality by persistently adopting domestic politics based on neopatrimonialism and clientalism political order in which they informalised and subverted the state’s institution to serve their vested interests.
This domestic politics is played out through the political economy and administrative approaches to the distribution and management of resources that surround the life and livelihoods of different communities creating thus advantaged riverine regions and disadvantaged and exploited remote regions. To further subjugate the citizen and consolidate their personal rule, they introduced the Islamic project since 1983 which dealt a blow to the peaceful coexistence between the populations, created and widened regional polarisation and cleavages especially with the NIF seizing power in 1989. This situation eventually resulted in overwhelming the country with armed conflicts between tribes and ethnic groups and civil wars between government and regional insurgencies; the latter emerging, after having exhausted peaceful means to demand equitable share in power and wealth of the country and to end discrimination and cultural hegemony.

Instead of sensibly responding to the demands of these political movements, the ruling elites adopted a neopatrimonialism political approach and a trend to problem solving by arbitrarily denying such demands and interpreting the movements as racial/ethnic and religious which exacerbated and sustained dire situations and reduced prospects for peace as evident by the failure of all negative peace (see 2.7) initiatives pursued to end these wars. The CPA for instance, stands as evidence of this failure by granting the right to the southerners to either remain united with the neopatrimonially oriented north Sudan, or to have their own independence when all indicators showing the latter would inevitably be the choice.
These issues are explored and discussed in detail in chapter 4 to show how they have unfolded in inter-tribal/inter-ethnic conflict in Darfur on the one hand, and insurgencies against the government on the other, and which constitute the setting of the study. Also, this is the setting that has become a lively scene for the active pro-conflict and pro-peace role of *al-Hakkamat* Baggara women poets who constitute a social actor of marked agency and influence as will be shown later in this thesis.
Chapter 4: The Case of Darfur
4.1 Introduction

As the investigation of al-Hakkamat is carried out in the context of armed conflict in Darfur, it is necessary to state first what this context is. Conflicts between tribes and ethnic groups have been witnessed in Darfur before independence but have become widespread afterwards especially from 1980s onwards. From 1924 to 2003, 39 tribal dispute settlement conferences were held in Darfur which involved more than fifty tribes (Bashar 2003). The trend of these conflicts was increasing every decade from the 1960s as is evident from the reconciliation conferences held: one conference during 1960-1969, four during 1970-1979, thirteen during 1980-1989 and fourteen conferences during 1990-1999 (Mohamed 2003: 41). With the start of the second Darfuri insurgency against the power centre in Khartoum in March 2003, a new, and particularly savage cycle of violence has engulfed the region of Darfur.

In this chapter, the nature of domestic politics, played out in Darfur by the ruling and governing riverine elites, based on neo-patrimonialism and its relevance to the conflict in Darfur is discussed. I begin by arguing that the history of relationships between different groups is significant and therefore I address this in section (4.3) as well as the conceptual complexity of defining these groups. I take the reader through the analysis of the political economy of Darfur in section (4.4) from an historical perspective. Finally I turn to the analysis of the conflict in Darfur in section (4.5) in which I present an historical account of conflict in Darfur showing that it is such a long, old history with relevant factors which go
back to pre-colonial times. Yet, I have challenged the interpretations casted on them by the post-independence Sudanese ruling elites by presenting what I perceive as the main triggers of these conflicts, that is, the domestic politics based on neo-patrimonialism political order adopted in responding to problems in Darfur. The analysis also includes the formal and informal peace and reconciliation mechanisms pursued by different actors in Darfur to resolve these conflicts in section (4.5.4). Sections 4.1 and 4.2 introduce the chapter and section 4.6 concludes.

4.2 Location

Darfur is the westernmost and biggest region of the Sudan and is separated from the Nile Valley by the large state of Kordofan (see Map 1). Its total area is approximately half a million square kilometres (150,000 square miles). The region is divided into three climatic zones: semi-desert in the north, Savannah in the central zone and rich Savannah (semi-humid) in the south and southwest. At its centre stretches the series of Jebel Marra hills, a mountainous zone that was the base of the early Fur kingdom (O'Fahey 1980; O'Fahey and Abu Salim 1983; Prunier 2005).
4.3 Identity in Darfur: Tribe, Ethnicity and Race

The population of Darfur is estimated at 7.5 million which comprises more than 100 tribes. These tribes constitute two main ethnic groups: claimants of Arab descent and indigenous Africans (see 3.3.3; 3.3.4). Among the latter ethnicity, the Fur constitutes the largest tribe which lives together with other tribes e.g. Daju, Tunjur, Masalit, Zaghawa, Gimir and Berti. There are also some other tribes of West African origin such as Fellata. The Arabs include tribes such as Rezeiqat, Bani Helba and Ta’aisha.

According to their socio-economic livelihood systems, the tribes of both ethnicities are organised as Baggara28 (cattle herders), Abbala (camel herders) who are mainly pastoralists, and sedentary farmers or agro-pastoralists. These tribes are roughly geographically distributed according to the climatic zones that foster their livelihood patterns. Hence the mobile Abbala inhabit the dry north, the Baggara pastoralists in the south and south west, whilst the agro-pastoral sedentary farmers are found in the centre. The Abbala and Baggara are mainly from the Arab tribes/ethnic group whereas the sedentary farmers or the agro-pastoralists who practise animal husbandry in addition to farming, mainly belong

28 The name ‘Baggara’, cattle herders, is a collective name used to describe a variety of cattle-raising tribes of “Arab” origin who live in southern Darfur and Kordofan. They are nomads and their grazing areas range into the southern Sudan province of Bahr–el-Ghazal and at times as far south as the Central African Republic (Prunier 2005: 166).
to the African tribes/ethnic group (e.g. Haaland 1972; O’Fahey 1980; Morton 1996; Haggar 2003; Prunier 2005). Darfur therefore contains more than one third of the country’s livestock. However, with the recurrent drought and desert encroachment, it is claimed that (e.g. Mohamed-Salih 1990; Harir and Tvedt 1994; Morton 1996; Haggar 2003) large pastoralist populations lost their herds and were transformed into agro-pastoral sedentary farmers. This change in livelihood system influenced changes in the socio-cultural and political aspects of tribes and created more demand for land for settlement (see 4.5; 4.5.1.1; 4.5.1.2).

Individuals and groups can also establish themselves among other tribes or ethnic groups and adopt their ethnic culture and labels but not the tribal identity (Haaland 1972); for instance a Furawi (belongs to Fur tribe) can be economically absorbed among a Baggara Arab tribe and become Baggari but cannot be a Hilbawi, that is, a member of the Bani Helba Arab tribe. Thus, whilst some ethnic labels are flexible and accommodating, ‘tribe’ is a comparatively more rigid identity that has very little flexibility to accommodate anyone outside it because it is substantially associated with blood (see 2.6.2; 3.3.1; 3.3.2). It follows that the people of Darfur can be *ethnicised* when the ethnic determinant is economic and cultural but may not be *tribalised*.

Both the Arabs and the Africans ethnic groups share religion (Islam) but each African and/or Arab tribe has its distinct cultural attributes that are associated
with its ethnic identity e.g. original language\textsuperscript{29}, style of house\textsuperscript{30}, marriage rituals and ceremonies and traditional weapons\textsuperscript{31} (Haaland 1972). Nonetheless, the language remains the only marked indicative of cultural difference: the mother tongue for the Baggara is Arabic while the indigenous groups have got their own languages (referred to locally, perhaps pejoratively, as vernaculars) (Morton 1992) though new generations may have already lost contact with these unwritten mother tongues and become Arabic speakers. Where two tribes live together within the same territorial boundaries or as neighbours, they often have a form of mixed cultures and flexible social and economic boundaries. Therefore, and despite the fact that all tribes favour kinship marriages, intermarriages are common between the Baggara Arabs and the indigenous tribes. These intermarriages have resulted in the Baggara losing their imagined distinct Arab (racial) physical features as widely noticed (e.g. Yunis 1922; Lampen 1933; Haaland 1972; O’Fahey 1980; Hall and Ismail 1981; Morton 1992), and most of them have now become undifferentiated from the indigenous tribes.

Yet, despite the difficulty of differentiating from physical appearance between who belongs to what race, the differentiation is based on what people believe as their racial backgrounds as Barth (1969) postulates that those features that

\textsuperscript{29}The Baggara speak only Arabic whereas the Fur speak their own native language and many speak Arabic as well.

\textsuperscript{30} Villages of huts made from mud and grain straw for Fur and camps of mat tents arranged in circles for Baggara (Haaland 1972)

\textsuperscript{31} A throwing-spear versus the Baggara lance
count are the features that the actors themselves place as signs of differences not necessarily the objective differences (see 3.3.3; 3.3.4). Thus, in Darfur, race is a belief more than a reality and has become a cultural attribute that together with other attributes e.g. language forms an ethnic group. With the prevailing domestic politics based on neopatrimonial political order played out vigorously in Darfur since 1980s (see 3.4.2), ethnic and racial divisions have been emphasised by the riverine ruling elites to create tensions and exacerbate armed conflicts between tribes and ethnic groups and to subdue and humiliate the Africans (see 4.5.2; 4.5.1.5). This is signified by racially and apparently pejoratively describing the Africans as “Zurug or Zurga”\textsuperscript{32}, that is, the blacks.

Ibrahim (2007) asserts that the differentiation between the Arabs and the Africans in Darfur may be merely cultural as it is still hard to establish any alleged cultural superiority as perhaps may be possible, erroneously indeed, in the case of the relationship between north and south Sudan. This is because in Darfur the Africans were both the rulers and land owners to whom the Arabs were subjects for hundreds of years and they had good relationships with each other based on a shared religion contrary to the history of enslavement and exploitation embodied in the relationship between the southerners and the northerners (see 3.3.4; 3.4.2.2; 3.5.1).

\textsuperscript{32} in standard Arabic, the word means blue but in local Sudanese Arabic it denotes black, i.e. African (Prunier 2005: 167)
4.4 Political Economy of Darfur

4.4.1 Political History of Darfur Before 1917

Darfur had existed (e.g. Theobald 1965; Haaland 1972; O'Fahey 1980; Shugyr 1981; Morton 1992; de Waal 2005b; Tanner 2005; Prunier 2005) as the independent Fur sultanate for more than four centuries (1445-1916) until defeated by the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium rulers in 1916 and eventually annexed to the Sudan in 1917. The sultanate is believed to be the inheritor of the kingdoms of Daju and Tunjur African tribes that today represent minor ethnic groups in terms of both population and political weight. In the mid-seventeenth century, the Keira Fur sultanate was established by sultan Suleiman Solung (1445 – 1476) who came down from Jebel Marra allegedly from a Fur mother and an Arab father. The state stretched over fertile and relatively densely inhabited land. The sultanate was also recognised as powerful and as a place where security and services were granted to individuals and tribes irrespective of their ethnic origin – Arabs or indigenous Africans, as people were treated equally as equal citizens.

According to the historical administrative system, most of these tribes are allocated their own defined territories called dars\(^{33}\) that hold their tribe’s name, maintain their social, political organization and tribal identities. Some of these tribes were granted Dars by the Fur Sultans (e.g. Theobald 1965; O’Fahey 1980; Prunier 2005).

\(^{33}\) *Dar* literally means homeland in Arabic, for instance, *Dar*Fur means the homeland of the Fur tribe.
Morton 1992, 1996) and some were granted by the condominium authorities, but many others were not. The tribes have rules, codes and values that maintained reciprocity of interest, cooperation and security among them. People from different tribes were therefore allowed to move across these Dars freely, for grazing or watering purposes, provided that they would abide by the customary regulations agreed on by traditional leaders (e.g. Theobald 1965; Haaland 1972; O’Fahey 1980; O’Fahey and Abu Salim 1983). Thus, the association between the pastoral people - the Baggara and Abbala - and the sedentary agro-pastoralists was characterised by mutual interaction and exchange of farm and animal produce that are connected to their different, yet complementing subsistence livelihood styles. Haaland (1972) claims that the economic and ethnic boundaries between the Baggara and Fur tribes, for instance, were flexible and open in ways that would preserve rights over productive resources to the people involved. Thus, a person from Fur could hand over his cattle to someone from the Baggara tribes to raise according to mutually agreed conventions.

The people of Darfur were generally administered by a seemingly centralised administrative system of the Fur sultanate but power was devolved to the villages for administering people and land, as was the custom in many African kingdoms (Mair 1974). People therefore were ruled by their own chiefs and were distributed along four divisions – provinces called Dars\(^\text{34}\) (O’Fahey 1980).

\(^{34}\) Dar aba diima, in the south-west; Dar abbo umo in the south-east; Dar Dali (or Dar al-Sabah), in the east; and Dar al-Takanawi (or Dar al-Rih), in the north (O’Fahey 1980: 70)
Within these provinces different tribes have their own tribal territories\textsuperscript{35} or Dars. Through the Dar system (Runger 1987), tribes enjoy their own identity and some administrative autonomy. In each tribal Dar, sheikhs were in charge of land allocation to individuals and settlement of disputes over land.

The value of land in Darfur and its distribution system constituted a pivotal social, political and economic constituent of the power of the sultanate. It was offered (e.g O'Fahey 1980; Runger 1987; Tanner 2005) as hawakir (singular hakura\textsuperscript{36}, meaning an estate landholding) to individuals, groups and tribes through land specific charters. These hawakir were granted for administration purposes either as land tracts or nomad communities and were mainly for the purpose of collecting taxes, fines, access to labour … etc. Land was also granted as ‘estates of privilege’, referred to as ‘hawakir al-jah,’ which are often exempted from tax, to Sultans’ close relatives especially females and to Muslim holy men, ‘fugara’, who would come from West and North Africa, riverine areas and Arab countries to propagate the Islamic faith. The Dar system was also maintained as an administrative unit for the Turco-Egyptian (1875-1881) and the British-Egyptian condominium rule (see 4.3; 4.4.1).

\textsuperscript{35} The most permanent of these territories are the Gimir and Tama in the west; Kobe and other Zaghawa chieftains, the Meidob, Zayadiyya and Berti forming an arc across the north; the Birgid, Tunjur and Mima of the centre and east, and the Daju and Beigo of the south, beyond whom lay the Baggara and the Fertit peoples (O'Fahey 1980: 83)

\textsuperscript{36} ‘as estate, comprising usually a number of villages, less often a group of nomads, granted by the sultan to a member of his family, a title-holder or a faqih’ (O'Fahey and Spaulding (1974: 157).
Under Ali Dinar, the last Sultan of Darfur (1898-1916), it is widely established (e.g. Theobald 1965; O’Fahey 1980; Harir 1983; O’Fahey and Abu Salim 1983; Harir and Tvedt 1994; Grawert 1998; Takana 1998) that the previous land distribution charters were preserved together with the administrative system and which was efficient in managing people’s affairs and maintaining stability.

On the other hand, while most tribes have had their own tribal land, there were some tribal groups that have not held land titles since the Fur kingdom due to the mobile nature of their livelihood (e.g. O’Fahey 1980; O’Fahey and Abu Salim 1983; Takana 1998; Mohamed 2003; Tanner 2005; Prunier 2005). These are mainly camel herding Abbala in north Darfur state who were guaranteed access to water and pasture resources within and around other tribal territories according to agreed conventional terms and so did not at the time need titles to a specific land (e.g. Haaland 1972; O’Brien 1979; Haggar 2003). This could be thought of as being facilitated by the availability of abundant land, relatively small population and therefore lack of competition over resources. During their seasonal movements, the Abbala and the Baggara would come under the authority of the (tribal or provincial) administration of the respective Dar or region. This clearly indicates that the Fur administrative system was flexible

\[37\] The 1955/56 First Census estimated Sudan’s total population at 10.25 million, 8% were urban and 92% lived in rural areas; the population density was less than 30 persons per square kilometre (Davies 2007: 32-34). Darfur Information Centre website gives Darfur population estimates as follows: 750,000 in 1911; 1,328,000 in 1955/56; 1,869,000 in 1973; 3,093,700 in 1983; 5,352,000 in 1993 (http://www.darfurinfo.org/dialup/mainFrameset-4.htm).
(apparently *de facto* decentralised) to the extent that all diverse ethnic and tribal needs were not only accommodated and provided for but also respected.

### 4.4.2 Political History of Darfur After 1917

Following Sudan's independence in 1956, Darfur remained as it was during the condominium, a province of the Republic of Sudan. With the enactment of the Unregistered Land Act (ULA) in 1970 which provides that all unregistered lands are the government's, followed by the abolition of the tribal native administration system in 1971 along with the authority and influence of tribal leaders over land distribution, the ownership of the majority of land used for subsistence agriculture in rural areas reverted to the state (e.g. Runger 1987; Morton 1992; *Takana* 1998; Prunier 2005; Tanner 2005). Rural people could not register land or keep title documents because of their illiteracy and lack of awareness as verbal contracts were the norm and therefore became the most deprived of their historical land rights (see 3.2.5).

Moreover, as a result of the incapacity and inability of the newly introduced local government administration (e.g. Morton 1992; Harir 1994; Grawert 1998; *Takana* 1998) (see 3.4.2.2), the *hakura* system and tribal *Dars* and related institutions continued functioning as people would usually resort to their tribal constituency if, for instance, they experienced animal or asset theft in which case the tribe calls for *faza*, a ‘communal solidarity activity’, normally to track
down and recover stolen animals. The informal tribal administration, Tanner (2005) suggests, enabled people mainly from Zaghawa, Gimir, Fur and others, who were forced to flee their *Dars* during the famine and the environmental crisis experienced in the 1970s and 1980s, to be accommodated in others’ *Dars* and to gain access to land, whereas governmental support was very minimal or entirely absent.

To purportedly enable effective administration, in 1974, Darfur was divided into two provinces - north Darfur and south Darfur, with *al-Fashir* and *Nyala* as capitals respectively. With the introduction of regionalism in 1980, which was hailed by regional elites, hoping to enable their political participation, Darfur was again made one administrative unit, a region (Mohamed 2003). Yet, in keeping with the trend of previous policies towards Darfur, it is claimed (e.g. Diraige 1987; Harir 1994; Takana 1998; de Waal 2005b; Daly 2007) that the regional government was unable to carry out its obligations as to delivering services, enacting and/or maintaining law and order due to lack of sufficient resources. This clearly unfolded in the incapacity of regional governments to pursue the reconciliation agreements reached for resolving conflicts among and between tribes and/or to combat armed robbery that overwhelmed Darfur in late 1980s and early 1990s. To pursue the bandits, however, the regional police would often resort to, for instance, commandeering vehicles and fuel from aid agencies e.g. Oxfam and Save the Children (personal experience in Darfur, see 1.1.2). This deficiency in the performance of the regional ruling system, as asserted by Mohamed (2003), has contributed to keeping the tribal
administration institutions and their affiliates e.g. *al-Hakkamat*, dynamic and reliable in people’s consciousness and collective activities.

In 1994, the NIF regime re-divided Darfur into three states: north, south and west Darfur, the capitals of which are *Al-Fashir, Nyala* and *Al-Geneina* respectively. This redivision, Flint and De Waal (2005: 21) charge, was tactically inspired by *Ali al Haj*, a Darfuri Islamist, who was Minister of Federal Affairs in the NIF regime. *Al Haj* was defeated in the 1981 governorship elections in Darfur by his rival, secularist Fur candidate, *Ahmad Diraige* who was heavily supported by his tribe and ethnic group. Subsequently, when *Al Haj* assumed power as a Minister, in what appears to be a reprisal for being rejected at elections, he redraw internal administrative boundaries of Darfur and split the region into three administrative states aiming at splitting the Fur population, thus weakening their tribal and ethnic solidarity and influence. This re-division also cuts across other tribal *Dars* and weakened their influence, too. For instance, part of *Dar Zaghawa* in northwest Darfur was annexed to West Darfur state of the *Masalit* tribe whereas previously it lies entirely in Northern Darfur along with the rest of the Zaghawa Dar.

To influence tribes and ethnic groups even more, it was widely maintained that the NIF regime has formalised the tribal hierarchy and postulated that tribal administrators be elected by those from the ranks below (e.g. Takana 1998; Haggar 2003; Flint and de Waal 2005; Mohamed and Badri 2005; Tanner 2005). This was combined with introducing a new system of land distribution
and chieftainships called *Imarat* (singular *Imarah*, meaning an estate\(^\text{38}\)), in which a patch of land, "*Imarah*", was granted to a tribe and administered by the so-called tribe *Amir* (chief). The *Imarat* and the *Amirs* constitute a new clientism policy and a form of a political contract (see 3.4.2) that built a strong tribal loyalty among the beneficiary tribes for the state ruling and governing NIF which has proved to be disastrous to ethnic and tribal relations as would come later in the discussion (see 5.5.1.6).

Ironically, however, whilst extensive administrative measures were pursued by various national regimes in Darfur since Sudan independence in 1956, no parallel serious attempts have ever been made to develop Darfur in terms of social services, economic activities and human resources. Darfur is deliberately, being kept as a reservoir of cheap labour recruits for the mechanised farms in the riverine Sudan, as soldiers in the regular army or as para-military tribal militias to fight along with the army in the civil wars fought in the country (see 5.5.1.5) and more recently as *janjaweed* in the current war in Darfur. This trend of military absorption and exploitation of Darfur community by riverine elites, Burr and Collins (2007: 285-6) suggest, has its historical roots in the *Mahdiya* where the troops of the *Mahdist* armies (see 3.4), usually come from the periphery - Nuba, the Denka of the southern Sudan and Fur and Baggara from Darfur.

\(^{38}\)The estate constitutes a patch of land granted and administered along ethnic lines; the name *imarah* is reminiscent of the Arab and Islamic system of government.
4.4.3 Economy of Darfur: Agriculture and Natural Resources

Since 1920s, the state enacted several laws to enable its confiscation and appropriation of land for its economic cash crop irrigated and rainfed mechanised schemes that were established along the River Nile and in east and central Sudan (see 3.2.2). Where they had no economic interest, as in Darfur, the government, Mohamed-Salih (1990) claims, maintained the customary land law together with the authority of the sheikhs as a general rule in administering land distribution.

It was only in 1943 when the state embarked on launching mechanised rainfed cash crop production schemes in western Sudan – southern Kordofan and southern Darfur – in areas inhabited by sedentary agro-pastoral farmers and cattle owners - the Baggara, that the force of these laws was felt. In 1956, the state encouraged private ownership by adopting a leasehold system of privately holding commercial schemes (Agabawi 1968; Kursany 1984; Mohamed-Salih 1990). This system granted individuals 1,000 feddans, and groups and companies 5000 feddans or more for each scheme with a nominal price of one piaster per feddan, renewable annually. The criteria set for distribution dictate that:

...the applicant must satisfy the Board that i. he is a Sudanese, ii. He has or can obtain necessary agricultural machinery, iii. He has sufficient capital to finance the scheme, iv. He has sufficient agricultural knowledge and experience and v. has the managerial ability and time to run the scheme (Agabawi 1968: 78).
Given the limited subsistence production capacity of Darfur rural people, combined with the unpopularity of mechanised schemes at the time, suggests that these criteria were apparently intended for wealthy riverine elites who had the financial capacity and sufficient knowledge and experience to carry out with such projects.

The trend of allocating Darfur agricultural land to riverine elites (see 3.4.1; 3.4.2.1) continued (though needs further research) and was further worsened since 1968 when foreign capital e.g. the World Bank, Arab millionaires and European companies, was introduced to support this form of production. The leasehold system was therefore, extended to eight years instead of one year and the scheme size per farmer was doubled to areas of between 1,000 to 1,500 feddans. As a result, the area used for dura production increased from 33,000 feddans in 1943 to 6,329,000 feddans in 1979/80. This has led to loss of huge lands of the indigenous pastoral and sedentary communities whose land was seized and granted to private schemes; for instance, one million feddans in western Sudan allocated to a West German company, AGRAR, for cattle production in addition to another five million feddans allocated to the Arab Development Fund (Kursany 1984: 188-189). The impact of these policies on the social organisation of the pastoralists and agro-pastoralists communities was enormous (see 4.6.2; 5.3.2.2).

This is because, normally, the Baggara adopt north south seasonal movement between the wet and the dry seasons, through specific routes (Maraheel), as a coping strategy for grazing and watering and against environmental and
ecological hazards e.g. insects. Having the capitalist private schemes set up on
these lands, these routes and the herds' space and scope of movement were
narrowed leading to unfavourable readjustment for pastoralists. For instance,
the Hawazma pastoralists in south Kordofan used to spend about four weeks in
the north-south journey before joining their home villages to help in harvesting
(Mohamed-Salih 1990a). Now they would need to reduce their journey time and
to avoid their herds encroaching into these schemes. Similar to what
experienced elsewhere in Sudan, this process proved to be difficult to manage
and has therefore resulted in violent conflict among and between the herders
and between them and the scheme owners (see 3.4.2.1; 4.5.2).

Moreover, Kursany (1984) maintains, having their land taken by the state, huge
numbers of the local population were forced out of their fertile land and,
ironically, given infertile land; practices that obliged large groups of them to
migrate to urban areas where they were transformed into wage labourers in
irrigated state's and privately owned schemes in riverine Sudan.

While the consequences of these exploitative policies were depletion of the
pastoralists' herds, increased vulnerability to poor wages, lack of education and
income generating skills, they served the government unproclaimed strategy of
keeping Darfur as a reservoir for cheap labour recruits for the irrigated
mechanised schemes\(^3\), ready recruits in the military forces (see 4.5.2; 4.5.1.5)

\(^{3}\) For example, in 1973, 18,000 workers were recruited through the Gezira Labour Office in Nyala, the
capital of south Darfur (Abdelkarim 1987: 143).
or in the informal government paramilitary militias in the war in the south, Nuba Mountains (Kursany 1984, Mohamed-Salih 1990) (see 4.5.1.5) and most recently, in 2003, for the so-called Janjaweed militias, in Darfur (see 4.5.1.5; 4.5.1.6).

4.5 Conflict Analysis

Armed conflicts experienced in Darfur are widely labelled by Sudan government, politicians and scholars (e.g. Wadi 1998; Ahmed 1998; Salih 1998; Takana 1998; Mukhtar 1998; Mohamed 2003) as "tribal and ethnic" which are triggered mainly by local tribal and ethnic consciousness. While ethnicity and tribe are part of the overall urge to exclude, and thus confront, the other, their impact seems to be exaggerated and to offer them as the only explanation for this devastation in Darfur also seems to be hugely off the mark. The acknowledgement of causes thus falls short of the statement to which I subscribe that these conflicts are primarily rooted in the neopatrimonial political system of governance in Sudan (see 3.4.2) as will be discussed below.

4.5.1 Armed Conflict between Tribes and Ethnic Groups

The context suggests that conflict between tribes is not a new phenomenon in Darfur. Browne (1799), who visited Darfur during 1793–1796, states that while he was there, a conflict erupted between the Mahriya and the Mahamid Arab
tribes (Abbala/Jammala, i.e. camel owners). As they were not able to settle their differences themselves, sultan Abd al-Rahman (1787-1801) terminated the conflict by sending an expedition to bring the situation under control and confiscated half of both tribes’ camels. Similarly, O’Fahey and Spaulding (1974) maintain that in order to prevent the pastoralists from intruding into the farms of sedentary people, it was recorded that since the sultan Tayrab’s era (1768–1787), disciplinary expeditions were often deployed against the Baggara tribes. When Ali Dinar revived the Fur sultanate in 1898, he also resorted to punitive expeditions to force pastoral communities out of settlers’ land that they encroached upon during the Turco-Egyptian rule (1974-1881).

On the other hand, sometimes, some tribes also got into conflict with the Sultanate but the latter often brought the situation under control. It is claimed that during the reign of Sultan Abd al-Rahman (1787–1801), the Abbala pastoralists of north Darfur were often a potential source of trouble to the state either by fighting each other, conflicting with other sedentary tribes or revolting against the state (O’Fahey 1980; Shuqayr 1981). The Baggara of South Darfur also used to be in conflict with the Fur and the Fur Sultanate. The latter case is partly because the slave trade constituted a potential source of income for the sultanate and slaves were mainly raided from south Sudan which neighbours the Rezeiqat Dar. The Rezeiqat were therefore controlling the routes to the south, manipulating the slave trade and were preventing, not benevolently, the Sultan’s expeditions from raiding slaves. Sultan Tayrab (1768–1787) therefore campaigned against them. Similarly, in the 1780s during Sultan Abd al-Rahman’s era (1787-1801), Browne reported that (cited in O’Fahey 1980: 89)
the Sultan sent an expedition against the Baggara who refused to pay one-tenth of their herds in tribute and seized 12,000 animals instead of the annual tribute of 4,000 heads of cattle and as a fine for two years default.

Other Baggara tribes, e.g. the Bani Helba and the Rezeiqat also revolted against Sultan Muhammad al-Fadl (1801-1839) who, whilst bringing the first two tribes into submission, led a fight against the Rezeiqat, who were very strong warriors and disobedient to the Sultan, and defeated them. The conflict between the Baggara Rezeiqat with the Sultanate intensified during the 1840s and 50s leading eventually to the people from riverine Sudan, the so-called Jallaba - the slave traders, and who later became part of the governing elites (3.4.1), to easily access the south of Sudan through South Darfur (Shuqayr 1981). These events reveal that the Baggara and Abbala Arab tribes were often resistant to the Fur Sultanate and challenging to its authority as they tend to perceive themselves as politically independent tribes in Darfur.

With the downfall of Darfur Sultanate in 1916 and its annexation to Sudan, as a result of neopatrimonial domestic politics (see 3.4.2) played in Darfur, the tribal conflicts that were sporadic during the sultanate (Morton 1992), became more widespread especially from 1980s to date (2006) in which almost all tribes of Darfur took part. It led to devastating the once firmly established principles and standards of coexistence and social integration. This situation has eventually culminated in the emergence of the Darfuri insurgency groups who revolted against the Sudan government in 1991/2 and in March 2003 in demand for just
share in power and resources. This neo-patrimonial politics could be seen through the following manifestations.

4.5.1.1 Degredation of Natural Resources

Darfur had been stricken by the African and Sahelian drought during the 1970s and 1980s which forced large sections (still needs further research) of tribal groups, pastoralists in particular, e.g. Zaghawa, the northern Rezeiqat, the Zayadiyya, Gimir, Meidob and others to migrate with their remaining herds from the affected north Darfur areas and become settlers around south and west Darfur areas. As this situation coincided with the abolition of the native administration system (see 3.4.2.2; 4.4.2), combined with lack of land reform policies, lack of development projects and legislation to organise power relations between the immigrants and land owners, the customary laws that used to organise the passage routes (*maraheel or masarat in Arabic*) for the pastoralists and their relationship with the sedentary agropastoral communities were overlooked (e.g. Ibrahim 1985; Mohamed-Salih 1990; Suleiman 1997, 2001; Takana 1998; Mustafa 2000; Haggar 2003; Mohammad 2003; Tanner 2005). The pastoralists therefore, tend, in their search for land and water, to encroach into the land of sedentary farmers and demand, non-negotiable, equal access and permanent rights to land use. These challenging demands were resisted from the indigenous people and eventually resulted in violent armed conflict especially around *Jebel Marra* (Dar Fur) and *Al-Geneina* (Dar Masalit) – areas known for their rich grazing land and water sources. The above authors
therefore, attribute more than 80 per cent of the conflicts experienced in Darfur to competition between tribes and ethnic groups over land and common resources (water and grazing land).

Moreover, as a result of launching agricultural mechanised schemes (see 4.4.3) especially in south Darfur since 1960s, it is claimed (e.g. Mohamed-Salih 1990; Takana 1998; Haggar 2003; Mohamed 2003) that the recognised animal routes were narrowed and the grazing land shranked thus leading to unavoidable encroachment of pastoralists' herds into farmers' land. This was worsened by the intervention of the Fur and their adjacent neighbours e.g. Bani Helba who, in order to protect their land and wealth from the pastoralists, adopted a (conflict provoking) practice of extensive establishment of Zara‘ib al-Hawa (air enclosures) (Harir 1994: 179-80), thus, further narrowing the previously secured traditional animal routes and depriving the pastoral groups from adequate grazing.

Subsequently, this resulted in bloody confrontations between and among the pastoral and the sedentary communities for instance the conflict between Gimir and Fellata in 1984; the Bani Helba and Mahriya 1976; 1978; the northern Rezeiqat Arabs (Mahriya) and Zaghawa in Kutum province, North Darfur in 1994; and the Ta‘aisha and Salamat in 1979. These conflicts were even more vicious round the Fur land in southern and western areas of Darfur which constitutes rich pasture and water sources for the pastoralists most of the dry season. Yet, at its inception, some of these conflicts involved tribes of same
ethnic group e.g. Arabs versus Arabs as the case, for instance, of the bloody conflict between the Mahriya Abbala of north Darfur and the Bani Helba agro-pastoralists in south Darfur in 1976 as well as between African tribes such as between Zaghawa and Symiayat; and Zaghawa and Marareet in north Darfur during the 1980s. But generally, inter-ethnic conflict has become more prevalent than intra-ethnic tribal conflicts thereafter. As these conflicts appeared to be more ethnicised, al-Hakkamat took on a more active and devastating role (see 6.6).

4.5.1.2. Land Laws and Legislation

Ali (1996) contends that in Northeast Africa, ethnic groups are strongly attached to their habitual homeland which acts as a significant motive for the functioning and sustainability of an ethnic community as well as fostering unity and cohesion among ethnic and tribal groups. In Darfur, as elsewhere in Sudan, the Dar constitutes economic, social and political boundaries for tribes and which served as an administrative unit for the Fur sultanate, the Turco-Egyptian and the British-Egyptian condominium rule (see 4.3; 4.4.1). Following Sudan's independence in 1956, however, regional and central governments have adopted a trend of introducing land administration laws and legislation that often affected tribal territories without due consultation with the respective communities. With the introduction of the Land Registration Act (LRA) of the 1970, the state government has transformed the historical ownership rights over land and established itself as the sole owner who could offer or deny it. For
tribal and ethnic groups in rural areas, this law was interpreted as a deliberate intention of the state to mess with historically respected boundaries of identity (see 4.3), culture and autonomy. The intervention of the state in tribal territories has therefore resulted in tribal tensions between the original owners of Dars and the tribes who are newly dispersed in the territory leading eventually to violent confrontations.

This has clearly become the underlying cause for, for instance, the conflict between the Gimir and Fellata\textsuperscript{40} in 1984 of South Darfur when the Gimir were offered area councils within the Fellata Dar without the latter’s consent. Similar conflict also erupted between several tribes from the Abbala Arabs and indigenous Masalit in Western Darfur in 1996 when in 1995 the government, through the Imarat system (see 3.4.2), divided Dar Masalit into 13 Imarah (e.g. Ahmed 1998; Mohamed 1998, 2003, Takana 1998; Haggar 2003; Tanner 2005) (see 4.4.1; 4.5.1.6). They offered eight Imarat to the newcomer Abbala pastoralist Arabs – most of whom are accused by the Masalit as Chadians, and only five Imarat to the Masalit\textsuperscript{41}, the indigenous land masters and whose sultan was still nominally in charge and supposed to preside over land distribution in their Dar according to custom. The response of the Arabs to this policy appeared in the testimony of Mohamed al Amin Salih Baraka, a Sudanised

\textsuperscript{40} Gimir hosted large groups of Fellata and provided them with land for farming/grazing. When the rural council was introduced, it was confusing for the Fellata as to where to vote i.e. at the Gimir council in Katila or at the Fellata’s in Tulus. The confusion and grievances led to a vicious conflict that broke down the tribes’ mutually advantageous relations as it compelled the Gimir to get rid of their herds by selling and the Fellata to have a long route in their seasonal movement (Haggar 2003).

\textsuperscript{41} Dar Masalit – homeland of the Masalit African ethnic group was the most recent kingdom (1870-1930) in Darfur to be annexed to Sudan (Kapteijns 1985).
Chadian Arab politician who became a member (an MP) of the national parliament:

‘...the government owns all the land ... much of it is empty and not used, and things have changed since the hakura system was set up. The hakura is not a Bible, and it should be replaced by a new law to organise the land’ (cited in Flint and de Waal 2005: 59).

This government’s policy was interpreted by the Masalit - the African Dar holders - as prejudiced and deliberate intention by the government to weaken and displace them from their homeland in favour of the Arab ethnicity. As a result of the Masalit resistance, a devastating war broke out between 1996-98 which caused hundreds of civilian casualties and thousands to seek refuge in Chad. Most of these atrocities were claimed (Haggar 2003; Flint and de Waal 2005) to be committed, in support of the Arabs, by government official and unofficial forces, such as the PDF, the Janjaweed Militias and Peace Forces (quwaat al-salaam)\(^\text{42}\) (see 4.5.1.5; 4.5.1.6; 6.3.1).

Apparently, consistent with its tribal and ethnic discriminatory policies, the government refrained to do in Dar Rezeiqat (Arabs) what they had done in Dar Masalit though both Dars were host to large settler/newcomer groups, Zaghawa in the former and Abbala Arabs in the latter. In Dar Rezeiqat, despite the fact that members of the African Zaghawa tribe had settled there since 1970s, the

\(^{42}\) These were organised and brought to the area in 1999, by Mohamed Ahmad al Dabi, a shagiyya general in military intelligence, who was appointed as personal representative of President al-Basher to deal with the matter (Flint and de Waal 2005: 59)
government did not attempt to allocate them any *Imarat* within *Dar Rezeiqat* as they did for the Arabs in *Dar Masalit* and left the entire issue to be managed by the *Rezeiqat* tribal administration (e.g. Bashar 2003; Haggar 2003). The latter, adamantly, refused sharing the *sovereignty* over their land with any other tribe. Hence, government policies\(^43\) have not only promoted ethnic (and racial) discrimination, polarisation and tribalism; thus creating tension, hostilities and violent confrontations between tribes, but also provoked resentment of the African tribes against the state regime which eventually led to the emergence of the Darfuri Rebel groups in 2003.

When people started fighting each other following the enactment of these neopatrimonial discriminatory ethnic policies, the government typically did not take measures to redress these ethnic misgivings. Whilst the preservation of tribal homelands was often recommended in government sponsored reconciliation agreements (see 4.5.3.1), the government neither contested, nor did they implement such recommendations and/or stop peddling in impartial and inconsistent ethnic policies. It could therefore be argued that the *Dar* system stands as a major obstacle to the cause of citizenship and equality for all people

\(^{43}\) Similar cases were also experienced in other parts of Sudan; for instance, tribal conflict was experienced in the 1980s between the *Abd Ad-Dayyem* faction of the *Nawaahya* clan of *Dar Hamid* in North *Kordofan* and another tribe. The reason was that in 1980s this faction claimed that their own *Omodia* (small administrative district) was taken from them and they themselves were made subordinate to an *Omda* who was not from their tribe. Therefore, they claimed their *Omodia* back as a historical right even though they had no documents to verify such a right (El Zain 1996). In *Nuba* Mountains the *Birgid Awlad Hilal* were hosted by the *Omodia* of *Dar Bakhota* for more than 30 years but when their population increased, they attempted to form their own *Omodia* in *Dar Bakhota*. This was strongly resisted by *Dar Bakhota* on the grounds that the *Dar* belongs to them and consequently bloody conflicts ensued between the two groups. When the government interfered, it approved an *Omodia* for the *Birgid* in the *Ajanj Dar* which also created another conflict (Rahama and Elhussein 2005).
of Darfur, if not for the whole Sudan. Whether or not citizens have sovereign rights to a territory on which they resided for many centuries, and whether all people should have equal rights as equal citizens remains a controversial issue in Sudan. A comprehensive land reform policy may be already overdue to address these issues in a manner that would command peoples’ respect and at the same time respond to the current pressures on the economy and land use.

4.5.1.3 Mobilisation of 'Race' and Ethnicity into Electoral Politics

As mentioned in 4.5.1.1, the settlement of drought affected groups within Dars of sedentary communities had not been responded to through necessary administrative policies which could have organised their power relationships. The new arrivals therefore demanded share in power and authority with the land owners when the latter denied them such rights. This is because, Ali (1996) argues, assuming control over political power and authority by an ethnic group enables it to preserve and defend its territory and maintain its solidarity and monopoly over natural resources. Without such power the reliability, autonomy and the very existence of an ethnic homeland is endangered. Violent conflict over power, therefore, ensued between the two groups (e.g. Haggar 2003; Mohamed 2003); for instance, between Ta’aisha and Salamat Baggara tribes in 1979/80 and 1982/3, when some Ta’aisha men murdered a Salami man who was elected to the position of a councillor in the Ta’aisha Dar in protest against the introduction of the elected Local Councils (see 3.4.2.2; 4.4.2). Similar
conflict also erupted in Dar Rezeiqat in 1987 and 1996\textsuperscript{44} when the Rezeiqat refused to accept the councillor election results for ed-Daein (the centre of Dar Rezeiqat) which showed the winner to be from Zaghawa.

Yet, instead of enacting law and order, the government left the whole matter to the conflicting tribes to deal with, unresourced and unwilling, whilst they left the respective Ta’aisha area council with no local administration/council for several years afterwards (e.g. Takana 1998; Haggar 2003). During the data collection for this research, it appeared that al-Hakkamat (see 6.6.2) of both tribes were behind inciting the reciprocal revenge series of atrocities committed by these two tribes against one another. Conflicts for similar reasons also took place between the Habbania and Abu Darag and Fur and Tergam, to mention just two more examples.

In some instances, some smaller tribes attempted to establish their own tribal administrative institution parallel to that of the hosting community and allegedly within the hosting community’s Dar leading also to violent conflict as evident by the conflict between the Ma’aliya\textsuperscript{45} and Rezeiqat and between the Gimir and Fellata.

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{44} The Rezeiqat rejected this victory and denied the Zaghawa this position on the pretext that it is their Dar and shall be represented by one of theirs only.

\textsuperscript{45} Ma’aliya’s Nazir was deposed by the British and were then subordinated to the Rezeiqat (Morton 1992). The Rezeiqat therefore believe that dar Ma’aliya is actually theirs while the Ma’aliya are still in pursuit of their Dar generations later.
\end{footnotesize}
This competition and conflict over power at local level soon expanded to encompass the highest administrative post in Darfur state, the *Wali* (Arabic for Governor), in 1981. Many Darfuri scholars (e.g. Ahmed 1998; Mohamed 1998, 2003; Takana 1998; Bashar 2003; Musa 2009) assert that the year 1981 signalled the beginning of the entry of race and ethnicity into the political battlefield when a Fur was appointed as the Governor of Darfur based on the 1980 Regional Government Act. It was claimed that this first Darfuri Governor, *Ahmed Ibrahim Diraige*, a Fur himself, granted the Fur people more units and councils from which political and administrative leaders and candidates were recruited which resulted in Fur candidates winning the elections and assuming powerful political positions in the region.

For the Arabs (Baggara and Abbala), the historical adversaries of the Fur sultanate, this was interpreted as an intention to revive the Fur Sultanate and was therefore strongly resisted as it constituted, in their opinion, a threat to sharing power, authority and participation in political decision making. In a counter movement, some Arabs initiated the so-called ‘*al-tajmuʿ al-ʿarbi’*, the Arab congregation, in the 1980s and openly approached the central government demanding power and wealth based on what they claimed as their distinct competence and highest population numbers, proclaiming that, Flint and de Waal (2005) claim, it was time for them to rule and change the name of ‘Darfur’. This development of ethnic and racial perceptions among the Arabs in Darfur, is being reinforced by the NIF since 1989 by co-opting ethnic and tribal institutions.
of the Arabs such as *al-Hakamat* and armed militias in the state’s military corporation (see 7.2).

### 4.5.1.4 Intervention of Political Parties

As a result of the geopolitics that involved Sudan with Libya and Chad, and which were played out in Darfur land (see 4.5.1.6), the security situation was made all the more worse throughout the 1980s by extensive armed conflicts between tribes and ethnic groups and bandit activities. Yet, instead of enacting law and order, again, the ruling and governing riverine elites took active role, through formal office and their affiliated political parties (see 3.4.1; 3.4.2), in influencing the processes and outcomes of these conflicts leading thus to their transformation from conflicts between tribes, to ethnic conflicts when a collectivity of Arab tribes, launched a devastating ethnic war against the African Fur between 1987 and 1989 (see 4.5.1.6). It is thus claimed that (e.g. Harir 1994) in order to secure their political and electoral support, the eventual winner of the parliamentary election in 1986, the *Umma* Party, allied themselves to the Arabs whilst its partner in the resulting coalition government of 1986-1989, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), were allied to the Fur. The third largest party, the National Islamic Front (NIF), was also meddling in tribal and ethnic politics. As the *Umma* party were the dominant partner in the government from July 1986 to June 1989, they exploited the central state’s institutions to serve the Arabs whilst the regional government put their weight behind the Fur
exacerbating thus tension and belligerency between the conflicting tribes throughout the 1980s.

By adopting this strategy, the government neopatrimonial ruling elites and riverine political parties have acknowledged and consolidated tribe and ethnicity as political instruments to gain votes which are necessarily ‘ethnic votes’. Having realised their political value, tribes and ethnic groups exercised a form of mutual political patronage as well as ‘communalism’ (Smith 19981), as a strategy which could enable the group to tactically trade its voting and political support for political compromises and to influence the direction of policies to their own advantage. This situation was prevailing in the majority of sub-Saharan African states where allocation of positions of power and resources were often decided on an ethnic basis (Smith 1981: 16). In line with Smith’s proposition, it could be argued that the favouritism shown by the government towards the Rezeiqat (see 4.5.1.2) appeared to be a return of favours rendered by the latter to the government by acting as a buffer zone against any expansion of the SPLA into the North through the Rezeiqat Dar in South Darfur.

Thus, since the 1980s to date, these policies and the neopatrimonial domestic politics exercised against Darfur, have contributed to reinforcing ethnic consciousness and polarisation of Darfur community along politically hostile ethnic lines - as Arabs and indigenous black Africans (Tanner 2005; Prunier 2005). The term ‘Zurga’, used derogatively, is thus being constructed to include
all the indigenous Africans and which has become one of the tools of the ethnic verbal war in Sudan and Darfur in particular.

**4.5.1.5 Tribal Militias**

It is claimed that (e.g. Harir 1994; Mohamed-Salih and Harir 1994) the active emergence of tribal militias in Sudan, dates back to the second civil war in 1983. This was caused by many factors, de Waal (1993) explains, the most prominent of which included, first, local disputes among and between tribes and ethnic groups that become phenomenal as a result of weakening and dismantling the local conflict-resolution mechanisms (see 4.5.3.1). Second, poverty, deprivation and lack of reliable income generating opportunities in rural areas which were worsened by the economic crisis of the late 1970s and the drought of 1980s (see 3.4.2.1) – circumstances that encouraged raiding and looting. Third, the role played by Sudanese governments in using the militias as para-military forces against the SPLA as a result of insufficient manpower of the military (see 4.5.1); and finally, the political aspirations of riverine political elites and the Islamists (see 3.4.2.3) who tended to believe that their vested interests needed to be served through more controlled loyalty which could not be entrusted to the national army and therefore an alternative force was needed. These factors were enhanced by the availability of guns (see 4.5.1.6). Among the militias, the *Murahalin* of the *Rezeiqat and Misseriyah* were the most powerful.
The military connection with this militia was formalised in 1985 during the Transitional Military Council (see table 1) by General Fadlallah Burma Nasir (de Waal 1993: 147; Flint and de Waal 2005: 24) and its position was reaffirmed in 1989, by the Umma-NIF coalition government, as ‘Popular Defence Forces’ under the army control. The government also extensively recruited similar Arab militias from South Kordofan, southern Darfur and Rufa’a of the White Nile to fight the SPLA throughout the 1990s (e.g. Harir 1994; Verney et al.1995; Flint and de Waal 2005; Burr and Collins 2008). Moreover, during the 1980s the government also used tribal militias from the south to fight the SPLA e.g. Fertit of Wau, the Nuer (Anya Nya II) of Bahr el Ghazal and the Upper Nile, the militia of Mandarin and Toposa of the Equatoria region and the Murle.

The Arab militias were heavily armed by the government and given free hand, with full impunity, to commit inhumane atrocities which included looting, raiding, razing and burning hundreds of villages, killing thousands of people and thousands more were made internally displaced, refugees and abductees. The notoriety of these militias (e.g. Harir 1994; de Waal 1995; Verney et al. 1995) came to be known publicly in 1987 when, in retaliation against the SPLA’s defeat of the Rezeiqat militia men, thousands of Denka people were shot or burnt alive in ed-Da’ien town, the centre of Dar Rezeiqat, in southern Darfur, where they were taking refuge.

When it seized power in 1989, the NIF military regime legitimised and legalised these militias through the enactment of the Popular Defence Act of 1989. In
1991, Darfur witnessed an anti-
Khartoum military campaign led by Daud Bolad, a Fur and a former NIF activist (see 3.4.1) and who was supported by SPLM/SPLA. The campaign failed, however, and Bolad was captured and killed by the government in Jebel Marra, the Fur heartland, using mainly Arab horsemen from the Bani Helba tribe (Tanner 2005) (see 4.5.3.2). This victory has reinforced the government strategy of relying on tribal militias as counter-insurgency in Nuba Mountains in 1992-95, in the south, 1998-2003 and in Darfur (Flint and de Waal 2005: 24) where the militia were supported by aerial bombardment of villagers.

With the intensification of rebel activities after 2003, for the first time the so-called ‘Janjawiid’46 Arab militia emerged on the scene as a brutal paramilitary ethnic force that operated under government command and impunity (Haggar 2007), fighting its proxy war. The underlying reasons for the Sudanese government recruiting and heavily using the Janjawiid in the Darfur conflict were perceived by many (e.g. Haggar 2003; de Waal 2005; El-Hag 2005; Prunier 2005) as by and large induced by shortages in human resources for the military. This shortage had resulted from the young men, mainly from Kordofan and Darfur, and who usually constituted the majority of the army forces, refusing to join the military that had been fighting their own people and bombing their own

46 Janjawiid (also written as Janjawid and Janjaweed) is a local term from west Sudan (Darfur and Kordofan) familiar to Baggara Arabs and indicates a group of rowdy outlaws who commit violence and inhumane acts against others. It is believed to be derived from G3 (a rifle) and Jawad (a horse), ‘a man with G3 on a horseback’, but the word existed even before G3 was a feature of war in the region. These outlaws, predominantly from Arab tribes but also include some non Arabs, have been organised as brutal militias by the NIF regime and used in the current Darfur war as a para-military force (El-Hag 2005; De Waal 2005; Musa 2009).
locales; not to mention the high risk of them being killed in fighting. Their fear is clearly revealed in the data presented in the anonymously published book in Sudan in 2000, The *Black Book*, which shows the breakdown of numbers of the so-called *martyrs* in Sudan’s war by region (see Table 2 below):

**Table 2: Number of “Martyrs” during First Half of NIF’s Reign**

(Source: The Black Book 2000: 33)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area/State</th>
<th>No. of Martyrs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Darfur</td>
<td>1923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Darfur</td>
<td>1212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Darfur</td>
<td>713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River Nile</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Kordofan</td>
<td>1796</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The brutality and atrocities of the Janjawiid were internationally condemned and their disbandment was lobbied and campaigned for internationally. In negotiating ceasefire and peace resettlement, Darfur insurgents often demanded the *Janjawiid* disarming. Ironically, however, instead of disarming or removing the *Janjawiid*, the NIF government, unremorsefully, reaffirmed, through their foreign Minster *Mustafa Ismail* in May 2008, that disarming the
*Janjawiid* is conditioned by the rebels laying down their weapons (www.sudanile.com, 14 May 2004).

### 4.5.1.6 Geopolitics

Since the 1960s, the involvement of successive national governments in Sudan in the local affairs of countries that neighbours Darfur, has made Darfur suffer social and political consequences of the political events and turmoil experienced in these countries which mainly include the Libyan-Chadian conflict, the Libyan-Sudanese conflict in 1976/747 and the never ending Chadian internal conflict.

The involvement with Chad is partially facilitated by the open and extended borders between Chad and Sudan and the presence of shared tribes and ethnic groups e.g. Zaghawa and Arabs. Communities in Darfur and Chad therefore tend to reciprocate mutual benefits where the war victims of each country, would often seek refuge and find sympathy and a helping hand from the other including fighting alongside ethnic affiliates (see 3.2).

The geopolitics pursued by national governments in Sudan and which had severe impact on Darfur include, first, the involvement of Sudan government, the *Umma* Party and the Muslim Brothers, in forming and arming Chadian Arab opposition parties since the 1960s, e.g. *Frolina*, in Nyala, the capital of South

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47 This conflict was between the Nimeiri regime and the Sudanese National Opposition Front sponsored by Gaddafi.
Darfur on the pretext of supporting Muslims against Christians (e.g. Harir 1994; Takana 1997, 1998; Mohamed 1998, 2003; Muhammad 2002; Haggar 2003; Flint and de Waal 2005: 50-51; Prunier 2005; Burr and Collins 1999, 2008; Musa 2009). These Chadian Arab opposition groups constituted part of a regional Arab opposition movement called the ‘Arab Gathering’ that were hosted and supported by Gaddafi\textsuperscript{48} to serve his dream of building an Arab state across the Sahara.

Second, the authors cited above provide that when Numayri seized power in 1969, he normalised Sudan’s relations with Chad. This in turn, led to Gaddafi, in retaliation, to host the Sudanese opposition ‘National Front’ which was a coalition of the DUP, the Muslim Brothers and the Umma Party led by Sadiq al-Mahdi, and to sponsor their unsuccessful military invasion to Sudan in 1976. To realise his reckless dream, Gaddafi targeted Chad; he annexed Aozou Strip in northern Chad in 1975, invaded N’Djamena in 1979, defeated Chadian President Hissene Habre and declared unity of Chad and Libya in 1981. The Sudanese president, Numayri, in turn, duly hosted Habre’ in Darfur in 1981-83 and supported him until he reclaimed his authority in Chad in 1983.

Third, upon the overthrow of President Numayri, Gaddafi’s adversary, in 1985, contrary to the previous Sudan’s external politics of supporting Chad against

\textsuperscript{48} Gaddafi’s instruments for his dream included the Islamic Legion (al-Failiq al Islamiyya), the Organisation of the Islamic Call (Munazamat Da’awa al Islamiyya) and the ‘Arab Gathering’ (Flint and de Waal 2005: 50).
Libya, politics turned upside down when Sudan stepped in to facilitate Libya’s ambitions in Chad. This time, Darfur was made to serve as a rear base for Gaddafi’s military operations against the Chadian regime. This had involved hosting a coalition of thousands Libyan troops – the Islamic Legion, al-Failiq al Islamiyya, and Libyan-sponsored Chadian Arab opposition groups. The latter was led by an Arab supremacist warlord Acheikh Ibn Omar Saeed (Burr and Collins 1999, 2008; Flint and de Waal 2005: 50-51; Prunier 2005). This unimpeded access to Darfur land for Gaddafi, was made as a result of the perceived needs of the Sudanese parliamentary government (1985-89) to Gaddafi’s oil, economic support and money for their civil war in the south, and as well, in return for personal favours Gaddafi had rendered to the National Front and Sadiq al-Mahdi in the 1970s. Yet, Ibn Omar and Gaddafi’s troops were attacked in their camps in north Darfur, chased and defeated by Chadian forces.

These wars and political turmoils experienced in Chad in the 1980s, forced over 37,000 Chadians refugees, most of whom were Ibn Omar’s followers and Arab pastoralists, to migrate with their herds and settle temporarily or permanently in Darfur, mainly around the Fur mountainous land which provided the opposition with safe haven from attacks by the Chadian army infiltrating into Sudan (e.g. Harir and Tvedt 1994; Burr and Collins 1999, 2008; Haggar 2003; Flinit and de Waal 2005: 54-5) as well as enabled them to launch counter attacks. This situation was facilitated by the presence of ethnic affinities in Darfur (see 3.2) and further enhanced by the alliance Ibn Omar had built with his Darfuri ethnic
affiliates, the Salamat, together with the Mahamid Abbala, Um Jalul and Bani Helba Baggara and Abbala tribes of Darfur.

This situation has resulted in two main disastrous consequences on Darfur community: first, the settlement of more than 27 Chadian Arab tribes, Takana (1997, 1998) counts, around al-Geneina, Dar Masalit in Western Darfur; to which Mohamed (2003) attributes the 4.14% unexpected increase in population that appeared in the 1993 population census in West Darfur state. Second, the proliferation of illicit automatic small arms among individuals and tribal groups in Darfur especially among Ibn Omar allies and those affiliates of Chadian tribes. The interplay of these factors, led to overwhelming Darfur with violent armed robberies and conflicts between tribes and ethnic groups throughout the 1980s and 1990s (see 4.5.1.2; 4.5.1.3).

This was because the new comers demanded access and rights to land and natural resources (water and pasture) and political power (e.g. Ahmed 1998; Takana 1998; Mohamed 1998, 2003) - demands denied by the indigenous settlers. Armed conflict therefore erupted between the new arrivals and Fur and Masalit indigenous sedentary communities around al-Geneina and Jebel Marra areas that are historically recognised as homelands of these indigenous communities. The Chadian Arabs formed an ethnic coalition with their allies which included 27 Arab tribes in which the Bani Helba, the historical Fur

49 A similar increase in the population of south Darfur in the 2009 census was also attributed to new arrivals.
neighbour, took active part together with Um Jalul of Musa Hilal, the notorious Janjaweed leader in Darfur (Flint and de Waal 2005: 54-5; Burr and Collins 2008). The coalition launched systematic violence against the Fur, killing, burning villages and farms and forcing hundreds to flee their homes. The Fur responded by burning pastures in order to force the immigrants to leave and formed their own defensive militias (see 4.5.1.4; 4.5.1.5).

Subsequently, with supply of armament to the Arabs flowing from Libya and that for the Fur from Chad (e.g. Harir 1994; Muhammad 2002; Haggar 2003; deWaal 2005; Flint and de Waal 2005; Punier 2005; Musa 2009), a devastating war started in mid-1987 and ended in May 1989 resulting in thousands casualties and burning of hundreds of villages, though it was persistently denied by the Khartoum parliamentary government. In this conflict, al-Hakamat appeared to have played an active role in mobilising ethnic consciousness of their tribes as will come later (see 6.3.1; 7.3.1). The war was finally ended by a peace agreement between Fur and the Arabs in 8 July 1989; with reconciliation processed and signed a week after the NIF seized power on 30 June 1989.

Nonetheless, and conforming to the norm of the riverine neopatrimonial leaders in dealing with Darfur, the NIF was apparently, not keen to risk their vested interests and bring peace and stability to Darfur. This was evident by the fact that despite the disastrous consequences of these geopolitical relations on Darfur people, not surprisingly however, the NIF followed suit, and peace in Darfur was, again, compromised, in return for economic and financial support.
from Libya. This was made through cooperation plans announced by President al-Bashir and Gaddafi which stipulated free movement of the citizens of both countries between the two countries. This could be understood as implying free movement of Gaddafi's war allies no matter what the impact would be on Darfur and its people.

The discontent with this situation prompted Bolad unsuccessful Darfuri insurgency in 1991 (see 4.5.1.5; 4.5.2) which was met by government-mobilised racist zeal already built into the social context of Darfur, pioneered by, among other actors, al-Hakkamah (see 6.6.4), under the auspices of the riverine governing elites, e.g. the Darfur governor (see 4.5.3; 4.5.2).

These Chadian Arabs are those whom the NIF, later, in 1996, favoured by offering them, through allegedly land reform policy, the majority of Dar Masalit without the latter's consent and which resulted in a bloody war between Masalit and the Arabs (see 4.5.1.2; 4.5.1.5). Recently, it has been claimed that these Arab groups (www.sudanile.com, accessed 10 Jan. 2010) have been formally organised by the state government under the so-called haras ‘al-hudūd – Border Intelligence Guards - which now constitutes the backbone of the Janjawiid militia. Even today, in 2010, the Khartoum government were supporting and hosting Chadian opposition groups in Darfur and have recently agreed to disperse them away from the borders into north Darfur heartland in exchange

for Chadians’ withdrawal of their support from anti-Khartoum Darfuri insurgency groups, most notably the JEM. Incidents reveal that those armed opposition have been committing intolerable atrocities around the Medob area of north Darfur and threatening the peace of residents (www.sudanile.com, 13 May 2010).

4.5.2 Darfur Insurgencies 1991 & 2003-2006

As explained previously (see 3.1.3), the alliance building of elites in the riverine Sudan excludes those who come from the remote regions no matter what competence or commitment they made to the ideologies and aspirations of these governing elites. This was evident by the widely recorded (e.g. Haggar 2003; de Waal 2005; Flint and de Waal 2005; Prunier 2005; Tanner 2005; Flint 2007; Burr and Collins 2008) case of Daud Yahya Ibrahim Bolad, a Fur candidate from Darfur and a prominent leader and politically dedicated Islamist who in the 1970s became the first president of KUSU (Khartoum University Student Union) who was not from the Riverine elites. In time, he was alienated ethnically and racially and eventually left out altogether from the national Islamist and political elite fusion when he showed concern about the persistent trend of inequalities exercised by the NIF in the distribution of power and wealth. Frustrated and disillusioned, in November 1991, supported by SPLA, Bolad led an unsuccessful military expedition into Darfur which was destroyed by the NIF regime. Bolad was arrested and killed in January 1992 by the very person who was his bodyguard at Khartoum University, et-Tayeb Mohamed
Khair, the then governor of Darfur. This was accompanied, in retaliation, by burning of dozens of Fur villages.

The feeling of neglect, discontent, ethnic discrimination and polarisation of people in Darfur through domestic politics and geopolitics based on neopatrimonialism and divide-and-rule approaches, was further aggravated by the wreckage and humiliation committed by the Janjaweed (see 4.5.1.6) and have, again, materialised, in February 2003, in the emergence of Darfuri insurgency groups - the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) led by a Fur lawyer, Abd al-Wahid Muhammad al-Nur, and, the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) that followed shortly after led by Dr. Khaleel Ibrahim. The SLA states that:

... ‘Since Khartoum government systematically adhered to the policies of marginalisation, racial discrimination, exclusion, exploitation, and divisiveness” the SLA oppose the policies of Arabization, political and economic marginalisation, and the “brutal oppression, ethnic cleansing, and genocide sponsored by the Khartoum government” (cited in Burr and Collins 2008: 289)

SLA and JEM began an armed struggle against the Sudan government demanding a just share in power and wealth of the country, the ending of economic and cultural domination of the riverine elites and the lifting of marginalization of the Darfuri people generally (e.g. Flint and de Waal 2005; Burr and Collins 2008). They were initially organised from tribal militias that were set up to guard against the Arabs’ attacks. They succeeded in launching several attacks on government positions and installations in Darfur especially
police stations. The government responded brutally in a fully blown war especially after the insurgents' bold raid on al-Fashir airport (see 4.5.3). In this war, al-Hakkamat played a dual role of promoting conflict and advocating for peace (see 7.3.1; 7.3.2).

4.5.3 Interpretation of Armed Conflict in Darfur

Despite the obvious role played by the riverine neopatrimonial ruling elites in the armed conflict experienced in Darfur since 1960s as discussed above, the governing elites used to deny the actual facts behind citizens' taking up arms since the 1980s, by interpreting the conflicts fought between tribes and ethnic groups as primarily ethnic and racial in the sense that people fight each other just because they belong to different tribes, ethnic and racial backgrounds (see 3.3; 3.3.4; 4.3; 4.4.1); masking thus the real causes that drive people to confront one another.

They also reproduce and apply similar interpretations in responding to Darfur armed insurgencies against national regimes and who have exhausted peaceful means in communicating with the central government. These include Daud

51 Police stations and posts being used for military purposes, as well as police taking an active part in the hostilities, are valid military targets under international humanitarian law and may be attacked (though armed rebel attacks remain violations of Sudanese law). http://www.hrw.org/backgrounder/africa/darfur1104/7.htm. accessed on 14.08.08
Bolad’s insurgency in 1991, supported by SPLA/M, followed, more than a decade later, by SLM and JEM in 2003 (see 3.1.3; 4.5.1.6; 4.5.3). Both movements aimed to influence the state’s government to change its neopatrimonialism based domestic politics of tribalism, ethnicity, oppression and economic (see 4.4.2; 4.4.3) and cultural domination by the riverine elites.

As Bolad’s movement was supported by SPLA (see 4.5.2), the governing elites interpreted and publicised the insurgent as anti-Islamic and anti-Arabist attack (see 3.3.4; 3.4.2.3) by Fur against the Arabs, Bani Helba in particular, in what was portrayed to be the intent of the former to exterminate the latter (e.g. Ibrahim 2000; Haggar 2003; de Waal 2005; Prunier 2005; Tanner 2005; Flint 2007) – a portrayal sufficient enough to drive Darfuri Arabs, to fight along the government. This instance therefore demonstrated to the government the deadly, and from its point of view, efficient, and in the short term, cheap utilisation of local rivalries.

In recognition of the significant contribution of the Bani Helba horsemen in the defeat of Bolad and the destruction of the surrounding Fur villages (Bashar 2003; Flint and De Waal 2005), the centre of Bani Helba, Idd al-Ghanam (the Wells of Goats), was re-named by the government as Idd al-Fursan (the Wells of Horsemen). Apparently, this was done to honour the fursan who had fought off and defeated the insurgency thus creating a permanent schism in the tribal relations. But the vested interests of the ruling elites have obviously been served regardless. Those Fursan/horsemen were in turn, celebrated by their
Hakkamat who also played a significant role in their mobilisation (see 7.2; 7.4.5.3).

Upon the emergence of Darfur insurgencies in 2003, Ibrahim (2000) asserts, the riverine Khartoum governing elites were unable to employ ‘religion’ as an added raison d’être for mobilising people against the insurgents as they had done in the civil war in south Sudan (see 3.5.1). This is owed to the fact that the insurgents were all Muslims and native Darfurians. Thus, to lessen their worth, the state government, initially, refused to label them a resistance movement (Burr and Collins 2008) and dismissed them as “gangsters” and “highwaymen” (ibid.: 291), disparaged their attacks on government’s points, commanded them to surrender and threatened that the army could “solve the situation in twenty-four hours” (Daly 2007: 281). This interpretation and its political rhetoric did not work, however, as the following incidents of the insurgency against the governments testify e.g. attacking al-Fashir airport, burning helicopters and Antonovs, seizing weaponry and capturing air force Major General Ibrahim Bushara (Burr and Collins 2008: 292), revealing thus the misconception of the government.

This agonizing defeat prompted the riverine ruling elites to return, once again, to use the ethnic card whereby they dubbed and publicised the movement as an ethnic conflict by Darfuri Africans against the “Arab race” as the latter constitutes the very social and political foundation for the Islamist government in Darfur. Subsequently, they mobilised and unleashed the Janjawid militias (see
4.5.1.5), leading thus, as widely reported (e.g. UN Report 2004; Amnesty 2004), to inhumane atrocities such as rape, razing villages, over two hundred thousand casualties and over two million internally displaced and refugees in the neighbouring countries e.g. Chad.

4.5.4 Conflict Resolution and Peace Resettlement

4.5.4.1. Indigenous Reconciliation Mechanisms

It has been widely observed that (e.g. Mukhtar 1998; Bashar 2003; Mohamed and Badri 2005; Kamal El-Din 2007: 93-4) historically, the people of Darfur have their own indigenous mechanisms for conflict resolution and dispute settlements referred to as the Ajaweed (single: Ajwadi, a mediator) council which functions as a native arbitration institution that deals with conflict at individual and tribal levels. The Ajaweed is a local group of voluntary elderly wise people who are experienced and knowledgeable on various aspects of the community. They are necessarily peace advocates who act instantly and impartially, as mediators, to resolve conflicts between tribes. The council runs its activities through a meeting board called judiyah (people-based Judiya) which usually uses as the main reference, the local customs, regulations and norms which collectively referred to as ʿaʿrāf, conventions, or the rākūbah - the shelter.

These regulations and customs have the Canon of Dali (Qanoon Dali) or Dali Code as a common legislative reference adopted during the Fur sultanate, in
which local customs were incorporated with the Islamic shari’a commandments. These legal, social and cultural institutions enabled a form of socio-cultural diversity and richness of Darfur society and served as a foundation for coexistence (Kamal El-Din 2007). The nature of power relationships among Darfur tribes and ethnic groups is hence, habitually respectful and conciliatory.

The effectiveness of the Ajaweed, therefore, stems from its nature as being an indigenous locally constructed institution which usually incorporates people’s socio-cultural and political norms, customs, moral values and meanings of justice as Murithi (2008: 27-8) asserts. It is entirely formed of local people and controlled by them and has no demands on external actors and resources. The members are committed to addressing root causes of conflict through mediation and reconciliation processes and to accomplish reconciliation and sustainable peace no matter how long it takes. The Judiyya therefore used to settle issues before they could develop into communally devastating incidents as their outcomes were respected and binding to the community.

During the colonial period (1921-1933), however, Mohamed and Badri (2005) maintain that the government introduced the so-called ‘government sponsored Judiyya as part of the native administration system and in which the Nazir, the omda and the sheikh were included as members. Yet, the Ajaweed remained by and large local in structure and in content with only nominal governmental presence and it carried on in that manner until the 1970s when the Judiyya was
weakened and became ineffective in addressing conflicts between tribes and ethnic groups.

This is primarily attributed to the arbitrary policy that abolished, in 1970, the native administration system (see 4.4.1) which had been the foundation for inter-tribal reconciliations. Alternatively, since the 1990s, the government has reformulated and transformed this local mechanism into a casual government sponsored mechanism (e.g. de Waal 1993; Bashar 2003; Mohamed and Badri 2005). Disputing partners would therefore sign conciliatory agreements just as lip service to peace as conflict soon erupts afterwards. This government mechanism could, however, plausibly, be labelled as a ‘hybrid approach’ (Murithi 2008: 29) which could have been more effective in providing long lasting resolutions and peace as a result of accumulated knowledge, skills and experience of the indigenous and the official practices to conflict resolution and peace-making.

Paradoxically however, and given the neopatrimonialism politics of the riverine ruling elites who do not take into account local people’s welfare, the performance of the new government mechanism reveals to be partial and lacks the skills and experience of the traditional Judiyah and the Ajaweed. It is presided over by culturally less immersed riverine officials who are managed and controlled by the central ruling elites and are required to play to the government tune and direct actions to serve government interests rather than balance out tribal and ethnic power relations in Darfur. Hence, when
agreements are reached, no resources for implementation, monitoring and/or evaluation are ever made available by the government to ensure sustainable peace could take place. With this clientelism and neoptrimonialism approach to conflict resolution and peace building, the failure of the (repeat) reconciliations attempted to achieve positive peace (see 2.7) was not unexpected as shown (Mukhtar 1998: 263-4 and Bashar 2003: 94-5) by the pattern of the conferences held between 1916-1956 (three) and 1957-2000 (thirty four, of which twenty eight were held from 1980 to 2000, and within the latter group, six took place between 1990 and 1991).

Mohamed and Badri (2005) further provide that upon observing and being discontent with such domestic politics and the disastrous social situations it has created on tribes and ethnic relationships in Darfur, in 1990, in Nyala, a group of peace advocates emerged from Darfur aiming at playing a mediating role between conflicting groups and pledged to bring an end to the conflict situation. This initiative was, however, obstructed by the government. This was because neither the group nor its members were politically identified with the government ruling NCP, and according to the latter’s policies; no one is allowed to achieve any prominence in Darfur unless they were clients associated with the government.
4.5.4.2 Civil War and Peace Resettlement

The north-south war and peace processes do not count much as a learning experience for the Sudanese ruling elites as they adopt the very same scenarios to negative peace (see 2.7) they had in the civil war in south Sudan (see 3.5.2).

Thus to settle the war in Darfur early on before it could develop into a devastating situation, an initiative was initially solicited by Darfuri influential s in early 2003 proposing for the government to peacefully negotiate with the insurgents and not to respond militarily. Not heeding the advice, the government responded in kind thus sparking off a brutal civil war since March 2003 to date (see 4.5.2). The resulting humanitarian crisis was unprecedented that it brought Darfur cause at the Security Council, when in May 2004, Mukesh Kapila, the UN’s own representative at Khartoum described the situation in Darfur as the ‘world’s greatest humanitarian crisis’ (Burr and Collins 2008; Flint and De Waal 2005: 126). The crisis invited the UN to pass a raft of UN resolutions which whilst contributed to lessening humanitarian grievances of Darfuri war victims, they have not stopped the war.

Eventually, a peace process was initiated through international mediators e.g. the US and the African Union. It led, after a number of talk rounds and venues, to the signing of the Abuja Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) in May 2006.
Regrettably, however, only one faction, the Minawi faction, of the SLM/A, which by then split into two, was able, albeit reluctantly, to sign the deal.

It may be legitimate to believe that for the riverine ruling elites the agreement represents no more than a partial ceasefire agreement for negative peace than a herald of positive peace to Darfuri people. This is because, as Burr and Collins (2008: 292) charge, the ceasefire and the agreement would enable the state government to first, reorganize its military forces in the south and in Darfur; second, to shift the attention of the army to the fighting in Darfur rather than to planning a coup d’etat from Khartoum and to use it as a ploy to clean the army of Darfurian officers by accusing them of conspiring against the Khartoum regime.

Not unexpectedly, the DPA did not succeed in bringing peace and stability to the people of Darfur. This is because instead of seeking a conciliatory position to bring the insurgents on board, end the war and achieve peace by the mediators and the government, the unilateral signing led to several complications, the most disasterous of which was the irresolvable fragmentation among Darfuri insurgents into many factions; and as the government carried on fighting, the conflict and humanitarian situation in Darfur got even more complicated, making it difficult to accomplish reconciliation and/or effect peace.
On the other hand, indicators point to the government obstructing the implementation of the DPA which led to the resignation, in 2009, of the chief SLA/M negotiator and chief member of the SLA implementation team (personal contact, 2010). The situation invited further initiatives by Chad, Libya and Qatar mediated by the African Union (AU) and the US to resume negotiations, but as yet, no signs of peace agreement are forthcoming.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter reveals that differences between tribes and ethnic groups in Darfur, whether perceived or real, appear to constitute no differentiation between these polar groups to justify on their own waging war onto each other (4.3). The chapter illustrates the complexity of the meaning of tribe, power relations and the situation of conflict in Darfur and reveals that the underlying causes are complementary and mutually influencing, i.e. they feed into, and incrementally give momentum to each other. It nevertheless, emphasises, as the main stimulus of the polarised situation in Darfur, is the neo-patrimonial political approach to domestic politics played out in Darfur, since Sudan independence, by the riverine state ruling and governing elites in attending to their vested interests, through ethnically oriented and discriminatory policies on power and resource issues (see 4.5.1.1; 4.5.1.2; 4.5.1.3; 4.5.1.4; 4.5.1.5).
Such politics was expanded over geopolitical relations with countries that neighbour Darfur, Libya and Chad in particular, in which Darfuri people’s peace and land were made scapegoat for the elites’ vested interests (see 4.5.1.6). The emergence of Darfuri insurgents in 1991/2 and in 2003 against the state ruling elites can therefore be considered just a culmination of the dire situation that engulfed the people of Darfur and which prompted the insurgents to demand, via armed struggle, just share in power and resources and the ending of policies that threatened the relatively peaceful and conciliatory co-existing environment among the Darfur community.

The chapter highlights, too, the fact that these conflicts have therefore not arisen just because of perceived ethnic differences between these groups as widely portrayed especially by government politicians (see 4.5.2). Rather, ethnic consciousness or tribal spirit can be called upon to support or withstand aggression induced by reasons other than ethnic or tribal affiliation. Given the lack of "trustable" state institutions to act as a just arbiter, people would resort to their own primordial defensive institutions, that is, their tribes and ethnic groups to respond to what they may have considered a threat to their very existence. The government have thus, tactically and opportunistically, resorted to mobilising tribalism and ethnicity (see 3.3.1; 3.3.2) to serve their wars and patronage system no matter what consequences they might inflict on their citizens.
The case of Darfur also reveals that lessons from north-south war and peace resettlement processes (see 3.5.1; 3.5.2) were not heeded. The very same issues that tend to divide the northern and southern Sudanese into irrelevant dichotomy were being reproduced and mainstreamed in dealing with conflict resolution and peace resettlement in Darfur (see 4.5.3.1; 4.5.3.2). This is because the Khartoum ruling elites have failed to advance a credible internal initiative, other than the military solution, to resolve the war and have left it entirely to the international community e.g. African Union and the USA to mediate since 2005, yet, with no looming sustainable solution.

Within the defensive institution of the Baggara tribes, the main partner in the armed conflict and the war in Darfur is the institution of *al-Hakkamah* which embodies an active role for women, especially *al-Hakkamat* women poets who appear to constitute a vocal ethnic voice and who have influence over men's fighting decision. In the context of this study and to set the scene for exploring the case of *al-Hakkamat* rural women, we shall now go on to review the context of gender power relations in Sudan (chapter 5) and to explore the attributes that make rural women in Darfur enjoy a unique status and power to exercise identity, agency and public political influence (see 2.2; 2.6.1; 2.6.2; 2.6.3) against the vast majority of rural women across north Sudan as manifested through *al-Hakkamah*. 
Chapter 5: Gender Relations and Rural Women’s Political Role in Sudan
5.1 Introduction

This chapter highlights, with an historical perspective, some relevant characteristics of gender power relations in Sudan as reflected in the formal and informal political participation of women in Sudan, in general, and in rural Darfur in particular. It highlights how this context has unfolded in the participation of women in processes of conflict resolution and peace resettlement pursued by communities and government's institutions. It argues that despite historical political fluctuations in Sudan and the patriarchal context governing gender roles and relationships (2.4), Darfuri rural women continue, relative to their counterparts in other parts of northern Sudan\textsuperscript{52}, to hold some positive place in their communities which enable them to exercise power (2.4), agency (2.6.2), personal identity (2.6.1; 2.6.3) and political influence. The role played by \textit{al-Hakkamah}, which would be explored in detail in chapter 6 and 7, constitutes a testimony and a mirror to this unique role of rural women in Darfur.

5.2 Rural Women and Political Influence in Sudan

5.2.1 Women's Political Movement in Sudan

The need for women to influence political decisions is substantial because women’s needs and interests are often transformed through political decisions

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\textsuperscript{52} O’Fahey and Spaulding, writing in 1974, also recognise this with reference to a certain section of Darfuri community: “… even today Fur women have markedly more social and economic independence than their counterparts in the modern northern Sudan” (1974: 151).
\end{flushleft}
that are either directly influenced by women themselves or indirectly through influencing individuals and institutions that have power and access to influencing political decisions. The diverse cultures and social contexts in Sudan suggest that different communities have different norms, customs and gender power relationships that dictate different modes for women to exercise agency and influence. Yet, beside local cultures, the political order of the state also influences, through policies and institutions, these power relationships especially at a formal level. Reviewing the policies that are pursued by the state necessitates taking a look at when and how the Sudanese women got involved in influencing policies and the impact, if any, of these policies on rural women in Darfur.

Similar to African and Muslim countries, Sudan is characterised by a context of patriarchal gender power relations that subordinate women and confine their role to private-domain reproductive activities (see 2.5). This situation was, however, challenged by the Sudanese women political movement that was launched before independence, in the 1940s, as a result of some Sudanese women, mainly from the urban centres of Sudan, receiving education and becoming integrated in the civil service. The movement was pioneered by *Jamaiyat al-Fatayyat al-Muthaqafat* (the Society of Young Educated Women) as the first women organisation in Sudan formed in 1947 by women school graduates (Badri 1984; Al-Bakri and Kameir 1990; Hale 1992, 1996), followed shortly after by the Sudanese Women Teachers' Union in 1949 and the Sudanese Women's Union (SWU) in 1952 and many others at the centre of
Sudan. The movement demanded equality with men and an end to their domination.

By exercising agency and identity (see 2.6.1; 2.6.2), they were able to challenge the status quo and succeeded in influencing progressive changes in civil laws that affected women’s status and gender power relations, the most prominent of which was suffrage in 1965 and civil service rights. The latter included equal pay for equal work in 1968; a right to pensions in 1975 and paid maternity leave. Women are made equal to men in rights and duties in the 1973 constitution, and offered equal opportunities and access to services e.g. education and employment (e.g. Hale 1996; Mohammad 2001). Women were also granted freedom of organisation, speech and movement. These rights are, surprisingly, reaffirmed by even the more Islam-oriented constitutions introduced successively in 1983 and 1991 (Hale 1996) (see 3.4.2.2) which allow women’s participation in formal government institutions to become more common.

Khair (2001) argues that despite many aggressive measures that are taken against working women at the start of the current NIF Islamic regime such as systematic dismissals from employment and limiting their opportunities as also reported by Africa Watch (1990), (also see 5.4), the 1994 Labour Act, adds one hour for breastfeeding for working women and to consider health and social circumstances upon transferring employees; accompanying leave for both husband and wife upon working outside the country in addition to maternity and
motherhood leave. Nonetheless, it could be argued that this positive discrimination is primarily intended by the Islamist regime to consolidate the reproductive role of women (see 2.2) in the family as a private domain (see 2.5). Superficially and selectively, however, the NIF regime appears to be 'empowering' NIF female members (currently, 2009, there are four women cabinet ministers\(^53\)).

Nonetheless, assuming governmental positions by women, for instance, ministerial positions, was indeed, an approach of promoting participation of women in policy formulation and political influence of state bureaucratic machineries which is supported by international development approaches such as GAD (gender and development), WID (women in development) and the United Nations' concerned institutions (Goetz and Hassim 2003). Paradoxically, in many African countries, when women assumed such positions, their roles often shrank and instead of challenging the status quo, their interests on women's issues, if any, were often mainstreamed in legitimising the state’s projects (e.g. Callaway and Creevey 1994; Tripp 2000; Goetz and Hassim 2003) and also to add, promoting the state’s neo-patrimonial system. It is therefore not surprising to notice that those female Ministers in Sudan have actually contributed nothing to the cause of women in general and rural women’s in particular, especially during their wartime ordeals as currently witnessed by Darfuri rural women.

\(^{53}\) They are the health Minister, the social affairs Minister, two advisors to the President for law and for women and children affairs.
Based on the nature of these gains, the riverine women organisations which pioneered the women’s movement in Sudan are being described as belonging to "elite" women and playing just to their own interests as shown in the account of Al-Bakri and Kheir (1989):

The basis of these {elite} organisations lay largely in the urban middle classes, which meant a general lack of understanding of the real needs of rural women or even, of poor urban women, let alone women in remote parts of the country … (1989: 169)

This is because the gains and privileges achieved are only meant to enhance the position of the educated and employed women in the urban formal sector and have no relevance to rural women in the traditional subsistence agriculture and animal husbandry, and those who are forced to migrate to urban areas and get involved in unskilled labour (e.g. petty trade such as tea selling, housekeepers or servants) under complete exploitation by the urban population (e.g. House 1988; Khair 2001). Apart from agriculture, rural Darfuri women also continue to do most of the sustainable livelihood work that elsewhere in the Sudan is recognised as men’s, e.g. butchers, construction labourers, etc. (Grawert 1998; Muhammad 2002). Rural women’s perceived needs are therefore, ignored both by the state and the Sudanese women’s political movement. This may be because, as Goetz and Hassim (2003) assert, they lack education, organisational skills and access to political decision-making structures that are often found in urban areas as there is no apparent lobbying on their behalf by the privileged educated few.
No doubt that, as Fruzzetti and Ostor (1990) argue, the lack of, or poor, education among rural women could be cited as the prime factor for their isolation and political exploitation. Although educated women in urban areas have better access to influencing political decisions through effective organisation, rural women’s voice remained unarticulated as those who could articulate their concerns appeared to be engrossed in their own urban-based interests.

5.2.2 Rural Women and Formal Political Participation in Sudan

It could be seen that out of the gains realised by the Sudanese women’s movement, the only one that could benefit rural women and enable them to influence state's political actions is the right to vote that was granted to all women in 1965 (previously granted by the colonial authority to only women graduates of schools and colleges in 1953) (e.g. House 1988; Hale 1996; Mohamed 1998). But despite the fact that rural women continued to vote whenever elections are organised, this has not been translated in their representation being increased, their political power (see 2.4) promoted, and/or their needs addressed. Apparently, rural women's votes are merely used for legitimising male dominated state projects and policies as used to be observed in many African and Muslim settings (e.g. Callaway and Creevey 1994; Tripp 2000; Goetz and Hassim 2003). The democratic notion of “one woman, one vote” (Shilling 1980: 103) therefore, did not effectively translate into women's
welfare and Darfur rural women have remained vulnerable to adverse political decisions of the state formal institutions, thus undermining their cause perhaps irreparably.

Yet, states are still encouraged (e.g. by UNDP, 1995: 109) to include women as decision-makers and promote their effective political participation through group representation in political and bureaucratic constituencies, as ‘numerical goals and timetables and affirmative action by states can provide a critical take-off point for accelerated progress’.

In line with this recommendation, in 1971 the government of Sudan had introduced the 1971 Local Government Act (see 4.4.2) that institutes participation of local people in rural development with 25 per cent of seats reserved for women in all rural councils' institutions. Nevertheless, instead of promoting better participation of women, the current NIF regime reduced women’s seats in the Salvation Committees to ten per cent (Osman 2001). In either case, women were not able to stand for election to fill their seats for reasons partially attributed to illiteracy, lacking political awareness, lacking skills and lacking support from men (El-Arifi 1978; Al-Bakri and Kameir 1990). This is because quotas do not assure women’s role in influencing political decisions unless accompanied by a process of skill upgrading and extensive awareness-raising both among the community and among women themselves on how to negotiate and influence decision-making processes and outcomes.
In Sudan, the quotas of parliamentary seats for women continue to be allocated and a 25 per cent has recently been approved as quotas for women in the national and regional parliaments in the most recent 2010 elections. Whether women in rural areas are made aware and/or involved in these processes, is being debated and contested by educated Sudanese women (Journalist Sara Jimaya'abi, Sudanile.net 20.08.08).

Whilst rural women often do not have formal authority in exercising power (see 2.4) and participating in formal decision-making processes as a result of social and political challenges presented above, they nevertheless have their own informal means to influencing courses of action in favour of their own aspirations and their community interests (Rosaldo1993; O'Barr 1984). These power exercising means deployed by women vary considerably and may include such things as their sexuality, their reproductive role and guardianship of children, domestic skills, spiritual means, kinship, solidarity and economic contribution (Randall 1982; El-Bushra 2000) as also influencing influential relatives e.g. husbands, fathers, sons, brothers, etc. (Dupire 1963; Strobel and Johnson-Odim 1999). This situation is noticed (e.g. Cunnison 1966; Mohamed 2003a) as exercised by the Baggara community of Kordofan and Darfur where, even though women do not participate in men's public meetings, men do not take decisions that they know would not please their women.

Rural women in Darfur continue to be integrated in the subsistence agricultural economy where they enjoy historical and cultural access to ownership of land
and animals, autonomy in production and wealth as men do and as granted to
them by the customary law (e.g Susan 1987; O’Brien and Gruenbaum 1991;
Grawert 1998). It is plausible therefore to investigate, with historical perspective,
the context of the political economy that enables this position for rural women in
Darfur relative to the vast majority of rural women in north Sudan.

5.3 Political Economy in Sudan and Rural Women

5.3.1 Women and Land Tenure System in Sudan

It is being pointed out (e.g. Babalola and Dennis 1988; Bernal 1988; Tsikata
and Whitehead 2003) that the enormous contribution of rural African women to
subsistence agricultural production is enabled through their access to land and
control over their labour. Historically, this access was made through customary
laws which were, in time, replaced by statutory land reform and agrarian change
policies and legislation initiated by the colonial rulers as Mbilinyi (1997: 341)
states '(c)olonial land policy has been described as a form of gender and race
apartheid in which Africans were deprived of credit and individualised ownership
of land on grounds of custom,' and later reinforced by national governments.
This change in local land tenure, Tsikata (2003) charges, eroded women’s land
access and rights and weakened the flexibility in maintaining negotiated
relations in resource allocation.
In Sudan, this disadvantage in rural women's access to land did not affect rural women in most of the riverine areas of northern Sudan where participation of women in agricultural production is regarded as shame (Abdalla 1987) and often disputed (Bernal 1988) as clearly conveyed by the villagers of Wad al Abbas\textsuperscript{54} irrigated scheme in the Blue Nile province in their account: “\textit{Niswan al Arab ma yemshiin al khulla}” (women of the Arabs do not go to the fields) (Bernal 1988: 136). This widely conceived cultural belief of ‘shame’ and ‘disgrace’ attached to female agricultural work, in the riverine Sudan, had contributed to the failure of the irrigated schemes that were planned to be primarily dependent on household labour (Abdalla 1987) - for instance the Rahad\textsuperscript{55} Agricultural Scheme established in 1973, at the centre of the country and the Suki Scheme\textsuperscript{56}.

This is because in riverine northern and Sudan, Gruenbaum (1979) claims, agricultural work is locally perceived as linked to slavery and the females allowed to work are either girls of age less than 12 years old or women of age 50 years old or above (Abdalla 1987: 64; Bernal 1988). Obviously, these age categories represent an economically inactive group and their involvement therefore will generate less power and have little production value.

\textsuperscript{54} It was established in 1954 on the east bank of the Blue Nile in the Blue Nile Province by the colonial rulers in the riverine part of Sudan and later nationalised by the Sudanese government in 1969. Its population was approximately 7,000 and inhabitants comprised \textit{Ja’aliyiin}, pastoralists \textit{Kawahla} and the \textit{Sharifa} (Bernal 1988: 132).

\textsuperscript{55} It was established in the Blue Nile province for resettlement of 16,000 families and was planned to depend on family as a production unit.

\textsuperscript{56} It was established in 1971 with similar ethnic groups as those of Wad al-Abbas Scheme.
The weak performance of women in these state's owned schemes, coupled with the prevailing context of gender roles and power relations in the riverine Sudan, might have further reinforced the state's anti-women land allocation policies earlier pursued in al-Gezira in 1924 by the colonials. Hence, the state's authorities adopted a policy whereby tenancies are allocated to men who are considered household heads (e.g. Bernal 1988; O'Brien 1988). The women who had owned land before are being either deprived of tenancies or represented by their male relatives (see 4.3; 4.2.4)

The only way thus remained for women in the riverine Sudan for land acquisition is through inheritance (4.2.4). Thus, in the 1960s, that is, after nearly forty years from its inception, women's share in the the Gezira57 tenancies mounted to only 10% (O'Brien 1988: 232). Their share in other irrigated projects, e.g. New Halfa Scheme, constituted 12.7% (129 out of 1,009) (Sorbo 1977) and 15.9% (seven women out of 44 tenancies) in Wad al-Abbas in 1982 (Bernal 1988: 139). These shares, nonetheless, were either rented or handed over to male relatives (Sorbo 1977; O'Brien 1988). Hence, through land tenure system, national governments have further eroded rural women's land ownership and consolidated the men's.

57 Established in 1925
Having these prevailed customs and cultural backgrounds of the riverine north in mind, it would not be surprising that national policies did not grant women access to land. Just in line with this, the state authorities, driven by such trends, have generalised same policies evenly on all rural women in Sudan with no due consideration to the localised socio-economic contexts of communities and gender division of labour. Rural Darfuri women therefore became the most disadvantaged as will be discussed later.

5.3.2 Women and Land Tenure System in Darfur

5.3.2.1 Customary Land Tenure in Darfur

In contrast to the general scene in most of north Sudan rural areas, in Darfur, rural women's agricultural labour is deemed an historic practice and right that is never denied or contested by men or the community (Umbadda and Abdul-Jalil 1985). It is in fact acknowledged and respected as it has significant contribution to maintaining people's lives and livelihoods which makes them, as with other African women, recognised as the main subsistence agricultural producers. It is estimated that (Susan 1987: 19-20) between 80 to 90 per cent of women are involved in agricultural activities and 90 per cent of those are involved in millet (main staple food) production in Darfur. Their overall contribution to agricultural production in Darfur has been estimated at 80-85 per cent. This production role is indeed facilitated by the access granted to them through customary laws that had persisted for centuries as the main reference of distributing land in the vast majority of rural Darfur despite the statutory gender discriminating laws that
have been introduced by the successive colonial and national governments. These customs and laws include the following:

Firstly, the customary laws of Fur (Barth 1988; Grawert 1998) and Masalit (Tully 1988) communities, for instance, grant usufructuary and land possession rights on common land (used to be called *hawakir*) (see 4.4.1) to every man and woman in need and a person could acquire titling to land if continued cultivating for a period of 4-8 years (Barth 1988). While this common practice will access women to land ownership, their access has also increased as a result of men’s migration to mechanised agricultural schemes in riverine Sudan and abroad. For instance, in *Dar Masalit*, Tully (1988) finds out that women who are left behind continue to cultivate the absentees’ lands that eventually enable them to acquire land ownership rights according to custom.

Secondly, Women can obtain land as gifts from parents and others. Grawert (1998), for instance, finds out that in *Kutum* rural areas in North Darfur a woman is usually offered her own field and a garden upon marriage (Grawert 1998); whereas in *Dar Masalit*, Tully (1988) also discovers that, since the British conquest, as a result of increased population in the *Masalit* land, land has become scarce and the main source of land control and ownership become the parents. As a result of the elderly, customarily, taken care of by their daughters, the daughters have taken over the land as gifts from parents.

Thirdly, females can also inherit lands from their relatives where according to shari’ā; they get half share of the males (Mustafa 1987; Barth 1988).
Apparently, in Darfur, the customary law seems to have overridden the shari’a law in dealing with land to the benefit of women contrary to the norm in other northern regions of Sudan, for instance among the Bedairiya community in north Kordofan. Mustafa (1987) points out that whilst Bedairiya women have the right to farming; customary law has overruled the shari’a law to the detriment of women by instituting a patrilineal system to land inheritance which grants land merely to males. This looks similar to the Gedaref area in eastern Sudan where women are not allowed to work in agriculture (Abdelkarim 1987) as also cannot the Hadendawa women (Salih 1987). When women in the northern region owned land through inheritance, Habeeb (1997) asserts, their male relatives would often confiscate their shares.

The access to land ownership rights for rural women in Darfur, seems to have been part of the state policy as it was consolidated by Sultans themselves who used to grant females (sisters, daughters and female relatives) estates of land (hawakir) at various occasions e.g. marriage or shaving of baby girl hair\(^{58}\) (Shuqayr 1981; O’Fahey and Abu Salim 1983) (See 4.4.1). For instance, it’s recorded that Sultan Muhammad al-Husayn (1839-74) granted an estate (in al-Dor) to his daughter, mayram (princess) Fatima Umm Dirays and issued a charter to confirm his offer:

> I have assigned and donated it to my daughter, mayram Fatima Umm Dirays. I have relinquished [lit, forgiven] to her all its Sharia and customary revenues … and all [the

\(^{58}\) It is a custom to shave baby hair on the fortieth day of her birth which was an occasion where presents are given (O’Fahey and Abu Salim 1983: 102).
revenues] accruing from [the estate] and its inhabitants, to her and her descendents after her with rights of sale, presentation and inheritance. Let no one interfere with it or dispute with her.\(^{59}\) (cited in O’Fahey and Abu Salim 1983: 106).

Other Fur Sultans also did the same. For instance, Sultan Tayrab (1764-1768) offered his daughter, Mayram Zaynaba, a similar estate (O’Fahey 1980).

Offering land as a present to daughters in their early days was quite a common custom as al-hajj Ahmed Isa, the son-in-law to Sultan Muhammad al-Husayn, offered the estate that the Sultan had granted him, to his daughter, Zahra, in the occasion of “the shaving of her hair” (O’Fahey and Abu Salim 1983: 102).

These offers were confirmed by charters issued by the Sultan themselves (Shuqayr 1981) and were used as references to defend sole rights of ownership of the recipients. When Ali Dinar restored the sultanate in 1898 (see 4.4.1), he re-confirmed all the charters and used them as a basis of land rights arbitration (O’Fahey 1980). Kapteijns (1985) highlights a similar pattern of ownership and offers existed in the Masalit Sultanate (1870–1930) where females\(^{60}\) were often granted estates of privilege\(^{61}\).

Moreover, women did not only have ownership rights to land, but royal women (mayrams and habbobas) are found to have owned and administered large estates and lands (hawakir). For instance before the Turkish conquest in 1874, Mayram iiya basi, Zamzam, the sister of Sultan Muhammad al-Husayn (1839-

\(^{59}\) Written in the month of Shawwal, 13, in the year 1273 (O’Fahey and Abu Salim 1983: 106)

\(^{60}\) Sultan Abbakr granted estates to his sister Khadam Allah (Amm Shibayha), his wife, Iiya Sandukka, and his mother, Habiba (Kapteijns 1985: 145-46).

\(^{61}\) It was a small area of land usually one to three villages granted by the sultan to a faqih or close female relative, so that the grantee could maintain himself/herself and his/her dependents from its revenues (taxes, fines, labour services, etc.). The estate was exempted from government taxes and its Islamic and customary dues could be collected and kept by the grantee (Kapteijns 1985: 144 - 45).
74) was famous for wealth and power and she was recognised as having authority of distributing lands as hawakirs to people (O'Fahey 1980; Shuqayr 1981), an authority that was normally exercised by the sultan himself.

During the Fur Sultanate, ownership and control of land would often serve as a vehicle for authority and consolidation of power (O'Fahey 1980; Berry 2001) and granting female land by both the Sultans and the customs, indeed, implies the state's explicit intention to consolidate female's wealth, authority and legal rights and to institute a gender equality trend to access, control and ownership of resources which would reflect back in their capacity to exercise identity, agency and influence (see 2.6.2; 2.6.3).

Thus, as shown above, customary practices in Darfur appear to acknowledge the significant subsistence production role of women by granting them individual rights to land use and ownership irrespective of their relationships to men, their age, marital status or social position. This stands at odd with the lot of those in northern Sudan and in many African societies (e.g. Nigeria (Babalola and Dennis 1988), Zaire (Schoepf and Schoepf 1988), Kenya (Davison 1988) and Tanzania (Rwebangira 1996) where land is assumed as a man’s property and managed on patrilineal basis (Davison 1988) whilst women are only allowed usufruct rights and portrayed as, Goheen (1988: 93) puts it, they “own the crop, not the fields”.
5.3.2.2 Statutory land Tenure in Darfur

As mentioned in (4.4.3), with the enactment of agricultural policies since 1920s, the government influenced a trend of gender discrimination in resource allocation that stand at variance with the customary laws prevailed in Darfur which gave women equal rights and access to land use and ownership. This could be clearly seen from the criteria set for the leasehold system in 1968 for allocating land, which was used by pastoral and agro-pastoral communities, to foreign and private capitals and which suggest that women were not considered to have a share in these schemes (see 4.4.3).

This is because, pragmatically, women neither need such large-size farms for subsistence farming, nor do they see the benefits of moving away from subsistence farming to a more advanced and productive agricultural activity. Besides, the criteria did not consider women’s limited wealth, knowledge, skills and time. On the whole, it was obvious that these criteria were not set to include rural women, either, but discriminating against them, instituting their subordination and perpetuating their dependency.

Moreover, as mentioned in (4.4.3), these policies, which are further enhanced by land laws of the 1970 and the abolition of native administration in 1971, and through which huge lands used by pastoral and agro-pastoral communities were taken, have impacted negatively on the social organization of pastoral and
agro-pastoral communities. Rural women in particular seemed to be hit the hardest.

First, reducing the time set for the seasonal journey as a result of limited grazing land explained in 4.4.3, has created additional burden on women in continuously pitching their tents, a task now being accomplished at the expense of dealing with milk\(^2\) processing that constitutes the main source of the household income performed and controlled by women resulting thus in a shortfall in household income. Second, the short journey combined with limited area for grazing suggests that more household labour is required for administering the herds than used to be. Coupled with the availability of wage labour\(^3\) at the schemes, have drained the household labour from the household subsistence farming and placed it entirely on women’s shoulder (Mohamed-Salih 1990a) which often results in a shortfall of household grain surplus. Third, the continuous cutting of trees leads to degradation of firewood sources and fruits that are available freely for women to collect from forests and thus entails they travel longer distances in search of forest products.

Fourth, the anti-women land allocation, registration and titling policies enacted in riverine areas, are also applied on government’s agricultural development

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\(^2\) Milk sales contribute up to 60% of household food expenditure and about 20-30% of expenditure on clothes, shoes, education, medicine, social obligations and others (Salih 1990: 70). The rest is met by proceeds from animal sales and grain surplus.

\(^3\) To perform manual work of weeding and harvesting processes. Weeding often requires 45 days for a crop and 300 labourers for a scheme of 1000 feddans (El Hadri 1978: 78 quoted in Kursany 1984: 195).
projects in South and West Darfur in the 1970s and 1980s, for instance, Western Savannah Development Project (WSDP) and *Jebel Marra* Rural Development Project (JMRDP) which were aimed for resettlement of the 1970s and 1980s drought affected pastoral and sedentary communities. Based on the riverine culturally oriented policies (see 4.5), the projects identified men as the heads of households and were allocated land and agricultural extension services e.g. credit (El-Arifi 1975) whereas women were ignored, their customary historical rights denied and their socio-economic contribution devalued (see 4.6.1) (Joekes 1991). These projects therefore failed to achieve their targets as a result of the riverine planners overlooking the dynamics of the socio-cultural characteristics and gender roles and relationships of Darfur rural community (El-Arifi 1975). In this regard, Mackenzie (1993) observes rightly that the modern land reform manifested in registration and individual titling has increased women’s vulnerability of lacking a substantial asset of secured livelihood and perpetuated the patrilineal heritage of the prevailed customary men’s control over resources leading thus to further worsening of the imbalanced gender relationships.

Fifth, depriving women of their customary rights through policies continued throughout national regimes as Grawert (1998: 105-106) finds out in his study that the application of land registration law in *Kutum* rural council in North Darfur resulted in ownership of 90 percent of land allocated to men and only 10 per cent to women. Despite this, the use of land remains predominantly women’s who in 1988 represented 90 per cent of the agricultural labour. But because the community still applied local customary land law, women's rights to land use
have been maintained. Otherwise, if the law was strictly applied, subsistence production and sustainable livelihoods of the community would probably be at serious risk because of this factor alone.

Seventh, these processes have also transformed social values associated with female ownership of livestock as Mohamed-Salih observed in 1986 that there was not a single woman in his village who owned cattle whereas when he was young there were many women owners of large herds. Eventually they became vulnerable to men’s dominance over them and over production resources e.g. land, labour, cattle (Mohamed-Salih 1990a). These findings are very likely to be found in the Baggara communities in south Darfur as well. Yet, despite this negative consequence, the point illustrates that women’s ownership rights of herds and wealth remains intact and is confirmed by the accounts of al-Hakkamat who also confirm that each Hakkamah is in a position to accumulate animals and that there are some Hakkamat who actually owned large herds and camps (see 6.2.3).

5.4 Women’s Personal Freedoms in Sudan

5.4.1 Women in Sudan: General Overview

At a Women’s Conference, in January 1990 in Khartoum, the Sudanese President, al-Bashir, said, ‘…the ideal Sudanese woman… took care of herself and her reputation, cared for her husband and her children, did her household
duties, and was a devoted Muslim’ (Africa Watch 1990a). His proclamations clearly define the expectations the currently ruling Islamist regime designed for women since 1989 (see 3.4.2.3) ending thus an era when women experienced a proactive movement which resulted in significant institutional reform that promoted their effective participation, agency (2.6.2) and personal freedom.\footnote{Freedom is defined in terms of greater possibilities of moving about without a male escort and the fact that they no longer hesitate to make their voices heard in significant matters, not only within the restricted family circle but sometimes in public as well (Ginat 1982: 162).}

It could be argued that despite the fact that women’s position had deteriorated with the introduction of the shari’a law in 1983 (Hale 1992), this deterioration reached its culmination with the current Islamist regime that identified gender roles and relationships as central objects in its ideology and therefore targeted them for strict regulation and Islamic transformation (Moghadam 1994; Collins 1997; Charrad 1998). The 1990s therefore experienced an active campaign against women in formal and informal constituencies with much focus on women’s dress, movement, relation between sexes and employment.

In Islamic culture, a focus is made on women’s dress as a doctrine that enables constructing specific gender roles for women. Thus, while the Qura’n urges both women and men to dress and behave with modesty, this is turned by the Islamists into a requirement merely for women (Verney 1995). Women’s religious identity, behaviour and morals are therefore being reduced to their wearing the veil or the hijab as a form of Islamic dress intended to define
women’s space and place in society (Tohidi 1994) and their position as necessarily private and domestic. It also indicates Muslim perceptions of women as sexually seditious objects that society needs to be protected from their *fitnah* (sedition) (e.g. Moghadam 1994, Tohidi 1994; Kabeer 1988; Mernissi 1987). In Iran for instance, the veil is viewed by the political Islamic discourse as a 'vaccine against the virus of Westoxication’ [65] (Tohidi 1994: 125).

In Sudan, the *Mahdia* (1882-1898) (see table 1) had instituted wearing of the *tobe* [66] for Sudanese women (Hale 1992; Fluehr-Lobban 1987) as an Islamic dress that has since become the formal national Sudanese Islamic *modest* dress.

The current Islamic regime in Sudan has introduced a dress Code for female students, government employees and female petty traders e.g. tea sellers in which a characteristic *hijab* is imposed (Khair 2001; Idrees 2001). This is interpreted by Sudanese women as an indication of seclusion and restriction of movement and is therefore strongly resisted (Hale 1992). Recently, in 2009, al-Garai (2009) asserts, women were arrested, beaten and tried, in accordance with article 152 of the 1991 Penal Code, for wearing trousers conveniently described by government operatives as indecent which mobilised women’s agency and consciousness as revealed in protests organised in Khartoum.

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[65] Culturally constructed as a negative image of the modern-minded woman (Tohidi 1994: 124).

[66] A sari about nine meter long worn over and round another shorter dress.
Through the 1991 Public Order Act, the Islamist NIF regime curtail women’s freedom of movement and condition their travelling, especially abroad, by the presence of a male blood relative as an escort (mahram, in Islamic culture/jurisprudence) (Burr and Collins 1995). Restriction of women’s movement which is against constitutional Code (32) of freedom of movement for all - appears to be condoned and promoted by women supporters of the Islamist regime. This restriction on women is believed to be derived from Islam where the Quran urges women to 'remain in your houses' and never come out unless it is absolutely necessary (Abdalla 1987: 341). This belief influences the cultures of Muslim communities where they tend to disapprove of women’s participation in activities outside the domestic domain including economic activities (Hale 1996; Azari 1983). The Public Order Act also outlaws all types of mixing between women and men, labelled as leading to adultery. In universities, therefore, a meter-distance is being enforced between male and female students in classes and activity areas. The criteria of this women harassment code is so loose that many scholars (e.g. Africa Watch 1990a; Verney 1995: 21; Collins 1997; Idrees 2001) state that women are simply punished for such matters as appearing to be seen walking in a ‘provocative manner’.

Historically, in Sudan, the Mahdia also prohibited women from walking outside their homes, prevented their mixing with men, and women were beaten if seen in markets or shaking hands with men (Abu Salim 1979; Hale 1992; Fluehr-Lobban 1987; al-Khawwaad 2001). During the successor Anglo-Egyptian rule, female slaves, originally captured from Nuba Mountains and south Sudan who were freed, together with large numbers of widowed, deserted concubines and
servants, broke the *Mahdia* restrictions and entered into self employment in the informal sector in order to earn income for supporting their families (Sikainga 1996; Zahir 2002). This, I would argue, could be designated as the inception of the female working class outside the domestic sphere in contemporary riverine Sudan which eventually, contributed to launching the women’s movement in Sudan in the early 1950s, though not highlighted by research.

On the other hand, the 1998 Sudan Strategic Estimation found that male migration from rural drought and war torn areas in western and south Sudan to urban areas had increased the percentage of women headed households to 26 percent (Khair 2001: 92). Being unskilled, most of those women ventured into petty trades and joined the informal sector in order to generate income to sustain their families (Idrees 2001). Instead of supporting them and alleviating their suffering, however, the government introduced prohibitive regulations and measures e.g. preventing women from selling food and tea and destroying or confiscating their equipment and utensils, allegedly to reform and protect the community against vice and antisocial behaviour. Women were beaten and arrested specially those engaged with brewing beer (Africa Watch Committee 1990; Verney 1995; Idrees 2001). El Zain (1997) charges that these practices drained these poor women’s income source and exposed them to unavoidable forms of exploitation, including prostitution.
5.4.2 Personal Freedoms in Darfur

The policies mentioned above are likewise being applied in Darfur. However, the historical differences in the socio-cultural context of Darfur that had granted women some autonomy and freedom and access to exercising agency, have influenced the way these policies are applied. Historically, al-Tunisi who visited Darfur during 1803-1811, attests that he was quite surprised by the level of women’s mixing with men and that men would not do anything in the absence of women including public activities (al-Tunisi 1965); an observation also noted by Cunnison (1966). The most extreme form of assimilation between the two sexes was their performing the ‘Azkar’ which are religious rituals that in north Sudan are performed by men only and women never attend. This freedom of movement is also documented by O’Faheey (1980) who contends that during the Fur sultanate (1640-1916), women were more visible as young mayram67 and as elderly ‘habboba’ (grandmother) and that visitors to the sultanate were often surprised by the level of freedom granted to women both royal and common.

This could be attributed to the application of Dali Code (see 4.5.3.1). Women’s dress, movement and behaviours were therefore not focused on by the community or the state and continued as dictated by tradition rather than religion; a culture that is still prevailing in rural Darfur as I noticed during my work in the mountainous villages of the Fur people in and around Jebel Marra.

67 is the name of the daughter of a king or malik. It is also given to daughters of the royal house and may be used by others as a form of courtesy (Arkell 1952: 129).
and Jebel Si, that old women often go with the upper part of their bodies uncovered; an appearance contradicts with the Shari’a hijab advocated by the current regime; the Baggara women were even more famous for appearing with their top 'uncovered'. Besides, a woman can farm, fetch water, collect firewood and handle economic transactions in the market place on her own and that most of these activities require travelling long distances within and outside her village boundaries; a situation appeared to haunt a Minister of the current NIF regime (see 1.1.2) and incur his anger.

As far as economic autonomy is concerned, it is indicated that among Darfur agro-pastoral and sedentary communities, most women possess and farm their own agricultural plots, and control their produce and income (e.g. Musa 2002 and Susan 1987). They are independent of their husbands in resources and decisions and marriage does not alter such practices. Besides, women are the majority who attend the weekly markets68, bargaining, buying and selling (e.g. Haaland 1972; Kapteijns 1985; Barth 1988; Musa 2002). Barth (1988) asserts that the pattern of economic organisation prevailing among the Fur society was at variance with that of other communities, namely the riverine Arab dominated communities. Fur women are thus set apart from other women in other parts of Sudan and could be singled out to be proactive in production, exchange and other engagements outside the domestic domain. He states:

68 Trading outlets for rural villages and districts where trade takes place in a regular day of the week and organised in an open yard. Various agricultural produce are brought in fairly large quantities Usually attended by 200-400 persons and regulated by the rural council district authorities (Barth 1988: 30; Musa 2000)
the initiative and independence, and the relatively progressive character of Fur women, considering the isolation and backwardness of the area, can reasonably be connected with this domestic organisation and could probably not be sustained without the economic independence of married women … it seems important to emphasise both the economic advantages, and the general cultural worth, of such a high level of relative enlightenment and progressiveness in the female half of the population (Barth 1988:19).

Similarly, the women of the Masalit sedentary tribe enjoy a similar structure of autonomy in production, consumption and distribution (Kapteijns 1985: 35).

Women of pastoral agro-pastoral communities also have control and management of income gained from selling milk and milk products (Mohamed-Salih 1990a) and also it is not uncommon for them to have control over animals or herds that they own. This, Schoepf and Schoepf (1988) assert, appears to be similar to the practices of some African societies, e.g. Kabare in Zaire, where husbands and wives have separate budgets and income sources.

I would argue therefore that the basis of such social and economic freedom of women's pursuits might have derived from their imperative production role and maintenance of families and communities. Besides, since Darfur was recognised as a war-torn region (O'Fahey and Abu Salim 1983), this could be considered as a coping strategy adopted for so long against any setbacks that might affect men's contribution to families' livelihoods e.g. men get killed in wars. Elsewhere in Sudan, e.g. Sennar, Blue Nile province, it is noticed that (e.g. Al-Bakri and Kameir 1990; Kenyon 1991) women's economic work outside the home is often disapproved of and undervalued by the community as home and domestic work is perceived as women's primary work.
Thus, despite the fact that in Darfur Islam is being adopted since the early days of the Fur Sultanate in the fifteenth century, customary laws and local culture, which accredit women more personal freedom to access and exercise autonomy and agency (see 2.6.2), dominate over the shari’a. The lack of recent state’s institutions to enact and regulate laws and policies in Darfur has enabled rural women in Darfur to continue to relatively enjoy more social and economic space compared with rural Sudanese women in general.

5.5 Rural Women and Political Participation in Darfur

5.5.1 Historical Overview (Before 1917)

As already noted above, in Darfur, historical accounts of al-Tunisi show that women had actually exercised greater power and autonomy before Islam and that such power was clearly maintained in the Book of Dali or Dali’s Code (e.g. Arkell 1952; O’Fahey 1980, Shuqayr 1981) (see 4.5.3.1). The involvement of women in political decisions was formally acknowledged and maintained by including them among the sultan's powerful officials as could be noted from the writings of Sultan Ali Dinar with regards to serious political matters such as land distribution:

to the presence of everyone to whom this charter comes and (who) examine its truthful contents, namely, amirs, wazirs, maliks, sons of the sultans, mayrams, habbobas, qadis, jabbays, sharatys, dimalij and others from among the people of this state in positions of authority and power (O’Fahey and Abu Salim 1983: 43).
The attention paid to women in Darfur and their involvement in formal political decisions did not come from just courtesy and favouritism, rather, it was seen (e.g. Al-Tunisi 1965; Cunnison1966) to have emanated from their wisdom and for that reason men in Darfur would not discuss and decide any issues in a manner that does not please their women. These historical precedents about women in Darfur suggest that the ideology of male public domination and female subordination (see 2.5) was not instituted in the political machineries of the state; rather, the state could be seen to be empowering women and strengthening their position by giving women titles of power such as *iiya kuur*

(Queen mother), the powerful mother or the queen, for the mother of the sultan and *iyya baasi*, the royal mother, for the sultan's favourite sister and *habboba* (grandmother). *Iiya kuuri* and *iyya baasi* are, however, the most influential politically.

For instance, Zamzam Umm al-Nasr, *iyya baasi* to Sultan *Muhammad al-Husayn* (1839-1874), was a powerful woman who was the actual leader of the state and who took over the ruling post upon her brother's loss of his sight. She was described as:

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<td>69 <em>iiya Kuuri</em> is the first lady or the Queen mother and was the most powerful position given to women in the royal palace. She is the beloved woman for the Sultan as she can be the Sultan's mother, his eldest sister or the widow of the deceased sultan. She had privilege of owning large <em>hawakir</em> from which she collects taxes and manages through powerful men who follow her instructions. Among those, was <em>iiya Kuuri Kinanah</em> who was a talented woman and famous of wisdom and was very intimate to Sultan Mohamed Tairab (1768-1787) (al-Tunisi 1965: 93).</td>
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Moved around the country at the head of her armed men, plundered the districts placed under her control, and easily got from the weak king those hawakir she particularly liked…. Riding her horse like a man with her skirt hitched up, as the royal women customarily do; issuing charters in her own name; appointing qadis to judge in her name, Zamzam was a formidable figure (O’Fahey 1980: 34-35).

The role played by Zamzam Umm al-Nasr is not exceptional but experienced in other parts of Africa as well (see e.g. Hoffer 1993; Berger 1999, Johnson-Odim and Strobel 1999: 1; White 1999) and exercising political power and authority in Africa was not only confined to elite women but equally available to ordinary women who had the agency and ability to establish themselves in the public domain.

This influence of women may expand over the warfare as the most serious political activity among ethnic and tribal groups in rural settings. Thus, women may encourage and incite their men to pursue serious political actions and conflict through various means which include demeaning the men who do not participate in wars. This could be exemplified by the speech of a later iiya baasi, Taja, to the Sultan Ali Dinar who, upon observing the reluctance of the Sultan, incited him insultingly to fight the British - 'If you don't fight, give me your trousers and take my kanfus {a type of woman's skirt}. You are no man' (O’Fahey 1980: 33). Thus the Sultan fought the British, unprepared, only to meet his death and ensure the downfall of his sultanate. Through their speech, rural women in Sudan also encourage and incite men to valiantly take action;

70 The downfall of the first sultanate was in 1874. It was then restored by Ali Dinar in 1898 until 1916 when Darfur was eventually annexed to the Sudan.
for instance (El-Bushra 2000), the Hadandawa women in eastern Sudan desert their husband’s beds as the last resort if the men did not behave as desired.

5.5.2 Rural Women’s Political Participation After 1917

When Darfur was annexed to Sudan in 1917 (see 4.4.2), the new administration system mainstreamed men's titles of power in the native administration, but it ignored the formal titles and positions of women and weakened women's legacy of publicly exercising agency, power and influence (see 2.4; 2.6.1; 2.6.2). This is similar to what was experienced among the Igbo communities in Nigeria and Ghana (see e.g. Hafkin and Bay 1976; Okaonjo 1976), as while the British acknowledged the male monarch – the Obi and salaried him, they ignored its counterpart, the female monarch, the Omu.

Moreover, as the new state’s modern political structures in which women, mainly educated women are involved, are poorly founded in rural Darfur, rural women have poor access to formal state decision making institutions (Grawert 1998). My own observation while working in Darfur rural areas suggests that the 10 percent of seats reserved for women in the Salvation Committees in rural areas, is often offered to elderly women whose task is often domestic and exploitative - to mobilise other women to vote for men and to do such other tasks as to serve patrimonial and neo-patrimonial leaders' agendas and activities (e.g. serve meals for visiting officials) (see 3.4.2). Rural women’s
formal representation in Darfur has therefore remained numerical and inert rather than substantive and meaningful.

Adversities in Darfur such as wars, drought, famines and male migration of the 60s, 70s and 80s (O’Brien and Cruenbaum 1991; Grawert 1998; de Waal 2005b), have functioned as critical avenues for rural women to recruit their agency (see 2.6.2) and exercise identity (2.6.1) to cope with, challenge victimisation and to position themselves, as historically recognised, as influential actors in their societies. The role they played is acknowledged and proclaimed by a sheikh of Manawashai, a village in South Darfur, during 1984-5 famine in Darfur: 'it was our sisters who worked for our survival during famine time; without them we could have perished' (Muhammad 2002: 13). However, it is questionable whether this translates or has translated into their having more power.

Some of these agency experiences (see 2.6.2; 2.6.3) of rural Darfuri women in the aftermath of the famine of 1984/85 in Darfur, was also shown through forming, in solidarity with men, effective grassroot organisations in north Darfur e.g. Kutum; al-Malha, Dar as-Salaam and Kebkabiya rural councils in which they had equal gender representation. They succeeded in addressing their communities perceived needs and in delivering the most needed services such as income generation for women, skill upgrading, awareness raising, agricultural equipment, etc. Kebkabiya Smallholder Charitable Society (KSCS) formed in 1986 stands as a good example (Strachan; 1997; Musa 2000). Where
forced to leave their homes to Khartoum squatter areas, Darfuri rural women formed groups e.g. Dar as-Salaam Community Development society in 1994 with 75 per cent representation of women in the executive committee and also succeeded to respond, collectively, to their needs. In more or less similar crisis situations in other parts of Sudan, notably east Sudan also experienced drought in the 1980s, the scene appears to be at odds with that experienced in Darfur as Al-Fadl (2001) maintains that rural women there were not able to take part in decision making processes for the welfare of their community.

5.6 Women in Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding in Sudan

Women are at the affected end of the armed conflicts that overwhelmed Sudan (see 3.5.1; 3.5.2; 4.5.1; 4.5.2) and are at the same time among the notable searchers for peace in order to maintain the welfare of their families (see 5.3.2), especially in Darfur, as already mentioned, where Elhussin (2008) states that nearly 70 per cent of the households have become women headed.

Women generally contribute to conflict resolution and peacemaking especially at grassroots level (see 2.7). In south Sudan for instance, women’s contribution ranges from dissuading male relatives from fighting as shown by actions of the wife of a Dinka Chief who persuaded him to make peace despite his reluctance, through inter-marriages across conflicting groups, singing peace songs, etc. (Itto 2006; Elhussin 2008; Mathiang 2008). Women in Darfur also did the same.
At a local level, for instance, in some areas of south Sudan, women threatened to appear naked (a curse in most Sudanese customary beliefs) to protest ethnic conflict (Itto 2006). They also mediated in resolving inter-ethnic conflict through creating reconciliatory forums such as people-to-people processes which led to reconciliation accords among grassroots e.g. the Wunlit Covenant between the Nuer and the Dinka and the Lilir Covenant between Nuer groups.

At national level, women on both sides of the country got organized into activist groups, networks and NGOs e.g. the Sudanese Women's Voice for Peace, New Sudan Women's Federation, and New Sudan Women's Association. In 1995, Sudanese women took part in the Beijing Platform for Action and agreed to work together which resulted in them pursuing a global peace movement advocating peace and lobbying the international community to pressure Sudan's warring parties to end the civil war in the south and reconcile.

Yet, their role was not merely positive and innocent as they also took active part in helping the fight through serving as combatants and/or providers of support to fighters, the sick and wounded (Itto 2006; Mathiang 2008). In north Sudan, Itto (2006) charges, women advocated for jihad by contributing gold and food and by encouraging their sons to enlist as also did women in the south, the Nuba Mountains and southern Blue Nile who would encourage their sons to join the SPLA (see 2.7). Among the Baggara of Kordofan, the women of the Humr tribe used songs and poems to incite tribesmen to act (Cunnison 1966, Mohamed 2003a) as also did the Baggara women in general. The powerful role of
women's songs in inciting conflict is also a cultural feature among the Nuer of south Sudan. Svoboda (1985: 79) states that the Nuer used to sing war songs - *diid koor* - which were insulting, rousing and explicit and that a woman may be divorced if she expresses her husband's abuse by well articulated singing.

Despite this proactive dual role of women, that is, settling peace and igniting wars, they are persistently stereotypically portrayed as passive victims. Apparently, this portrayal reflects negatively on their participation both in the informal conflict resolution and peace negotiations pursued at grassroots (Badri and Mohamed 2005) e.g. the *Ajaweed* in Darfur (see 4.5.3.1) and the formal reconciliation and peace resettlement initiatives pursued by the state's institutions (Mohamed and Badri 2005; Rahama and Elhussein 2005). The latter is evident by their absence, except in a token fashion, for instance, from the negotiating tables held for producing peace agreements e.g. the CPA (comprehensive Peace Agreement started in 2001) (see 3.5.2) and DPA (Darfur Peace Agreement) (see 4.5.3.2) signed between the government and insurgencies in Sudan to reconcile civil wars in South Sudan and Darfur, respectively (see 3.5.2; 4.5.4.2).

As far as the CPA is concerned, Mathiang (2008: 14) contends that ‘during the negotiations, women resorted to passing recommendations on pieces of paper under the doors of closed negotiation rooms’ and also organised protests to raise issues that they believe to have been overlooked or poorly considered e.g. disabled persons and gender. The SPLM/A women, Itto (2006) asserts, also
demanded a minimum of 25 per cent representation of women in the civil service, legislative and executive organs of the government but was reduced by the SPLA negotiators to 5 per cent and again raised to 10 per cent by the SPLM/A Chairman, as a compromise. Ironically however, it was eventually dropped altogether as a result of the Sudan government insisting that power sharing should be based on participation as combatants and women were not identified as so! Indeed this reflects the NIF Islamist ideology that subordinates women and isolates them from formal decision-making processes and political office (see 5.2; 5.4.1).

This experience of southern Sudanese women was again repeated in the DPA negotiations. Darfuri women therefore only got involved in the seventh round of the negotiations held in Abuja, Nigeria, in December 2005 (DPA signed in May 2006) as a result of pressure from the international mediators, as gender consultants, not as negotiators (see 4.5.3.2). The twenty women, nonetheless, succeeded in raising women’s perceived needs, their concerns for peace and advocated for a gender-sensitive language to be reflected in the final Accord.

Their participation brings the word ‘women’ to punctuate many clauses of the DPA. In particular, Article 1–15 clearly calls for ensuring women’s equal and effective participation in decision-making bodies (e.g. committees, commissions) and in pursuing and monitoring the implementation of the agreement. Nevertheless, though the women participants represent diverse tribes and ethnic groups, apparently, the participants represented only Darfur
urban-based community and civil society organizations of educated urban women. As such, rural women’s views were neither solicited nor were they included and ironically, the most influential rural women who are directly involved in these conflicts positively and negatively, al-Hakkamat, were not involved! On the other hand, despite the fact that both CPA and DPA emphasise women’s inclusion in all decision-making institutions, noticeably, neither southern women, nor Darfuri women were effectively involved in the implementation.

Thus, even when women were consulted about gender issues in the CPA and DPA, their views and experiences in peace building and negotiation were not sought and/or considered (also Itto 2006; Mathiang 2008). This exclusion therefore is not owed to their lack of experience and skills to take part in negotiations; rather, it is owed to an historically prevailing patriarchal culture and gender division of labour, both in north and south Sudan, as also in Africa at large, which exclude women from public-decision making and perpetuate their allegedly private-domain position (see 2.2; 2.4; 2.5). This is despite recent advocacy of the UN (Resolution 1325, 2000) and human rights organisations which emphasis women’s participation and mainstreaming gender equality in peace and reconciliation decision-making processes.

This exclusion from politics, decision-making and peace negotiations, as charged by 44% research participants in a study conducted by Mageid (2002), left Sudanese women less prepared to assume an effective role in negotiations.
The need therefore calls for consolidating rural women’s advocacy and negotiating skills and promoting their effective participation in reconciliation and peace resettlement activities at local, regional and national levels and in challenging the Islamist patriarchal culture. In Darfur, the focus, should, however, be on incorporating those partners who are directly involved such as al-Hakkamat. This is because their agency, power and influence are far reaching and effective as I shall go on to show later (see 6.8).

**5. 7 Conclusion**

This chapter shows that historically, as in some other African communities, the political economy of Darfur community enable the Darfuri rural women, in general, to enjoy favourable gender roles and power relations (see 2.2) that grant them access to greater autonomy and enable them to exercise agency, identity and influence (see 2.4; 2.6.2; 2.6.3) relative to that of rural women in the vast majority of northern Sudan or the stereotyped African women, especially rural women. Despite retrogression encountered in their social and economic status influenced by the state's policies and legislation since 1917 (see 5.3.2; 5.5.1; 5.5.2), rural Darfuri women appear to have been able to maintain some form of participation and active agency that are promoted by local institutions of tribe, ethnicity, and culture (see 3.3.4; 4.3). The continuance of this situation could be perceived as being enabled by the weak representation of state decision-making institutions in rural areas as revealed in the following:
Firstly, the prevailing of customs over statutory law in Darfur rural areas following the annexation of Darfur to Sudan in 1917 led to preserving historical gains for women that they had during the Fur Sultanate in areas of access to land, wealth and freedom of movement … etc. (see 5.3.2; 5.5.1). Secondly, the fact that the gains for women achieved in civil service through riverine women’s political movement in Sudan did not benefit rural women of Darfur as a result of their lack of education and employment (see 5.2.1) apart from voting which did not count in enhancing their political participation and/or improving their livelihoods as being the case for the whole rural community. Darfur communities therefore continue to adhere to their primordial decision making institutions and the involvement of women is therefore maintained even against the most gender oppressive Islamist regime of the NIF (see 5.4.1; 5.4.2). It is thus this political economy in Sudan and Darfur that has maintained, in combination with the prevailed gender power relations, customs and values, the culture, identity and agency of al-Hakkamat women as unfolded in the midst of the sweeping armed conflict that beset the region.

There is a need therefore to comprehend the motivations behind the riverine neo-patrimonial governing elites in Darfur that despite disempowering women’s political participation and restricting their personal freedoms (see 5.2.1; 5.4.1; 5.4.2), they tend to enhance al-Hakkamah’s agency and political influence, their reconstruction and co-optation into the powerful state’s military corporation. Have they gained more power and influence as did women historically in Darfur (see 5.5.1)? Have they acquired and nurtured any agency and if so how have they used it? Have they maintained same identity, acquired new ones or
changed? Are they able to dominate their liaison with the government or got dominated? How did they interface with other powerbrokers in their community? These are some of the questions that will be investigated in the next two chapters (6 and 7) and resolved in the conclusion (chapter 8).
Volume 2
Chapter 6: Identity, Agency and Power of *Al-Hakkamah*
6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the analysis of the fieldwork data collected from Darfur (al-Fashir and Nyala) through asking a research study population of seventy-two informants, in semi-structured personal and group interviews, the main research questions (see 1.1.5 and 10.2 Appendix 2) designed to explore, investigate and identify, with an historical perspective as well as functionally, the phenomenon of al-Hakkamat. This should respond to ‘what’, ‘how’ and ‘why’ this category of women poets took on the roles they did, focusing intensely on how their identity, agency and power have unfolded onto the scene of conflict in Darfur from 1980s to 2006, thus testing the research hypothesis that:

... in spite of the political fluctuations in Sudan and the adverse plight women experience under circumstances of war, there has been some continuity in the positive place that women hold in Darfur rural communities which is manifested in the access women have to exercising agency, personal identity, power and political influence. In particular, al-Hakkamat women have been in the forefront in setting the pace of morality and ethics of their communities and when armed conflict erupts, they would enlist their agency, power and ethnic consciousness to enthusiastically influence political actions, thus aggravating and/or alleviating conflict situations.

The chapter has eight sections. Section one introduces the chapter and revisits the research hypothesis (see 1.1.6). Section two discusses the personal and social identities of al-Hakkamat and the significance of their agency and influence (see 2.6.2; 2.4) within their communities to warrant such a study; sections three, four and five deal with the relevance of al-Hakkamat to the conflict institution of tribe and the aspects of this significance and its
manifestation and operationalisation in real acts of igniting conflict or promoting peace that make al-Hakkamat what they are: feared and revered. The interaction between their conscious ethnic intervention and conflict is outlined and demonstrated. Section six details the modes of exercising identified roles and the power and agency that accompany the realisation of those roles. Section seven investigates the role that shouldn’t have been: the official absence of al-Hakkamat from official conflict resolution mechanisms and platforms and the consequences that, along with other factors, translate directly into failure by default of the intended conflict resolutions. Section eight concludes.

6.2 Meaning of al-Hakkamat and its Cultural Origin

The term al-Hakkamat can be defined literally and also technically/culturally. The two definitions seem to coalesce but it is useful to present them in two separate sections.

6.2.1 Literal Definition of al-Hakkamat

The term al-Hakkamat (al is the definite article in Arabic) is the feminine form derived from the Arabic root word ‘hukm’, which literally means ‘judgement’, ‘ruling’, ‘governing’ or ‘condemnation’, and ‘hakam’ or ‘hakim’ meaning a male
'arbiter'. Kamal El-Din (2007: 93) claims that the historical unique political characteristics of Darfur and its community is expressed in Darfurians’ common vernacular as they used to describe themselves as 'hukkam (singular, hakim), meaning people with a sense of ruling canon and etiquette'. The word Hakkamah, denoting a local female poet whose popular verse focuses on words of wisdom, also has a similar meaning. Sixteen of the research respondents provide more or less a similar meaning, quoting just three statements:

\[\text{Hakkamah means 'hukum' – 'ruling'; if she ordered you to go to offer help, you would go otherwise she would dub you a coward person (R14, 29.05.06).}\]

\[\text{Hakkamah is derived from the word "hukm"- 'ruling'. She is a person of wisdom and has the ability to judge others (R41, 21.05.06).}\]

\[\text{Hakkamah is one of the women in the village or the camp who has a specific form of authority of arbitration. This form of authority lets people call her a Hakkamah (R48, 23.05.06).}\]

On the other hand, R22 (2006) explains that the term Hakkamah, contrary to common belief, is not a feminine form in the Arabic language; rather, it is a neutral form of exaggeration (having more of a something) derived from ‘hukm’ just like the Arabic words ‘\text{allāmah}’ (meaning outstanding knowledgeable (male/female) person) from ‘\text{ilm}’ (meaning knowledge) and ‘\text{fāhāmah}’ (a person with outstanding insightful understanding) from the noun fahm

\[\text{Hans Wehr (1961) A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic.}\]
(comprehension/understanding). In this sense, the term may denote a person who is empowered to excel in ruling, judgement, condemnation and arbitration. The label, however, is given by the Baggara community to a female actor and not to a male actor, thus emphasising her legitimate authority to exercise agency and express her identity within the tribal community either through her songs and poems or any other form of agency that she uses to influence people’s actions (see 2.6.2).

6.2.2 Cultural Definition of al-Hakkamah

Fifteen respondents state that al-Hakkamah (pl. al-Hakkamat) is a term used by Arab tribes to denote a gifted female folk poet\(^{72}\) who, by evidence of such gift, wields power and authority to exercise passing positive or negative rulings and arbitrations and exert influence, through composing and reciting poems and songs, on individuals and groups in their tribe and across tribes. This woman folk poet possesses unique characteristics and agency that she exercises, motivated in essence by her identity and ethnic consciousness, in achieving social and political roles for the welfare of her tribe. These roles reinforce her power, authority and influence and enable her to properly fit in and meet the demands expected of her as Hakkamah.

\(^{72}\) Historically poetry was known to have a significant role in orientating and socialising the community (YO 2006).
Thirteen respondents emphasise that the position of *al-Hakkamah* is well established in the culture of the Darfuri Arab tribes. This is also observed by many scholars (e.g. Ahmed 1998; Musa 2003; Mohamed and Badri 2005). R72 (2006) states that the culture of *al-Hakkamah* has come with the immigration of Arab groups into Darfur centuries ago, and that before their arrival, such a culture was not known and therefore considered a unique cultural characteristic of the Arab tribal groups. This is because, he says, if you went to African groups, you would find female poets and singers who sing songs of chivalry and love but are not classified as *Hakkamat* in the sense implied among Arab groups despite the fact that composing and reciting are means deployed by women of other tribes in exercising agency and influence. Three respondents, however, claim that the term *Hakkamah* is shared by all tribes in Darfur. R41 (21.05.06), for instance, maintains that, 'I think *Hakkamah* in Baggara or non-Baggara has the same meaning as the common ground for both is composing poems.'

### 6.2.3 *Al-Hakkamah’s* Skills and Talent

Communities have their traditions, cultures, norms and values and no one can become a prominent person or leader in their community unless they acquire certain characteristics that are based on these values. This is quite in keeping with the forceful statement made by Coppersmith (1982):
Every society must somehow ensure that people follow certain essential social roles; must arrange for the arbitration and settlement of conflicts among its members or groups; and must organize activities concerned with collective action, whether they are related to internal or external affairs. In fulfilling these functions, a number of institutional agencies, such as political parties, courts, government units, and legislatures, represent settings for the playing of relevant social roles: politicians, civil servants, judges, police, and citizens (1982: 342).

Al-Hakkamah can certainly be considered one of these institutions in the understanding of the majority of informants. Twenty respondents claim that al-Hakkamah is an illiterate female poet who in addition to talent and confidence is also well versed in community matters, possesses considerable other skills and competence in spontaneously composing and reciting poems and songs. She is an outspoken, insightful woman who understands the situation around her and reflects what she sees or feels in elegant rhymed poetry that has value for her people/audience, especially the youth. Respondent R6 describes her in the following manner:

*Al-Hakkamah* is a woman like other women in the community but characterised by having talent and skill that enable her to describe social events that influence people’s reactions in ways that other people cannot do. She describes people by words and sentences that are familiar but not attainable by the general public. She has the ability to express the events in rhymed words combined with a musical tone which is a gift from *Allah* [God] (R6, 20.05.06).

She uses her composing and singing talent to respond to events in order to bestow or deny virtues onto individuals or groups of her tribesmen focusing mainly on celebrating horsemanship, bravery, heroism and generosity; and defaming otherwise. Yet her composing also addresses other aspects such as celebrating wealth, natural environment and beauty. Her diction is based on the
local environment and her poems follow certain templates and patterns. In the words of R12 (18.05.06), she is 'like the ambassador of her tribe who has an eminent diplomatic skill in addressing and conversing with people'; a Fur woman, R28 (14.05.06), also describes her as having 'a strong ability of communication and information gathering and has a sound grasp of events in addition to her intelligence and ability of incitement'.

She is also invariably described by twenty seven research respondents including eight Hakkamat, as being an all round woman, skilful cook, organised and tidy (see Diagram 1; 6.2.3). I was actually able to see skills of organisation and tidiness firsthand when I interviewed six Hakkamat at their homes and visited their office in Nyala town which is located within the premises of the Ministry of Culture and Information and where they are organised under the Union of al-Hakkamat and al-Sheikhat (UHS).

In addition, al-Hakkamah is knowledgeable and possesses handicraft skills of making horse equipment e.g. water containers, sword sheath, bridle … etc., and other cultural horse ornaments which are highly demanded by the tribe's horsemen. Among women, however, she has to appear neutral in her views, less radical and less controversial. Combined with her integrity and solemnity, her strong personality and charisma enable her to courageously and confidently speak out in public without fear. Besides, she has to be friendly and welcoming, polite and respectful in order to earn the respect of others. Respondent R10, who is the supreme leader of his tribe, confirms that:
She is a very respectable person in our community especially in rural areas where everyone from the Nazir down to the smallest one respect her because of her conduct. She did not have any shameful character that could have invited people to reject her. She should be a respectable person (R10, 01.06.06).

The meaning and conditions of respect are set out by the community and while twenty seven respondents agree that respect is a necessary attribute for al-Hakkamah, it is R10 who outlines what the essence of this respect is:

... For al-Hakkamah to be a respectable person, she has to be virtuous and clean-handed. Clean and tidy and maintain a particularly nice appearance. Must have tongue purity and abstinence; respect the people and possess strong personality that generates respect from whoever sees her. The genuine Hakkamah does not speak up out of whim or say nonsense. Therefore when she rules, her arbitrations are strong and valid. When she marries, she does not marry any man; her husband is necessarily a brave man, a generous or a prestigious man. If she is not married or she is a widow, she will maintain her virtues and purity and will never get messed up in affairs or suspicious relationships. As any misbehaviour from her, would demean her image in the community and would lead to her removal. She has to be a model of a respectful woman (R10, 01.06.06).

Similarly, respondent R17 asserts that:

... We cannot find a Hakkamah who calls for ethics, virtues, generosity and bravery while she or her family are at odds with these qualities (R17, 02.05.06).

R14 also confirms the same sentiments:
... She also keeps herself away from vice because when a woman falls in vice she becomes cheap and not respected by the community. She often marries a prominent person and if she is not married, she will have a strong character and opinion that oblige people to respect her (R14, 29.05.06).

Whether or not *al-Hakkamat* are wealthy, the twenty seven respondents maintain that they must certainly be generous and hospitable to people and people are also munificent to them. Manifestations of their generosity are exemplified by slaughtering bulls for guests and inviting prestigious community men and those in power as well as everyone else for meals or tea parties ... etc and they would come out afterwards and sing to commend men. These invitations are often made during public occasions such as *Eid* and also when she receives gifts e.g. a bull from the *Nazir* or any other notables. This way she becomes able to connect well with both leaders and ordinary people, which reflected the powerful social position and charismatic authority she enjoyed and strived to maintain. She would also extend such generosity, respondent R14 (2006) claims, to government officials.

*Al-Hakkamah* normally brings food to the Nazir’s sitting council as a sign of courtesy and loyalty. But this could also be interpreted as more of a method of building institutional alliances than just a sheer act of generosity or an expression of loyalty. While the twenty seven respondents suggest that the financial position has no bearing on the emergence of a woman as *Hakkamah*, they all agree that most of *al-Hakkamat* possessed, subsequent to their identification as *Hakkamat*, considerable wealth in terms of herds of animals and farms that they had accruing from gifts they received from the community.
They assert that this in turn has helped them to establish their own social and economic autonomy as well as to take the lead in the expression and exercise of generosity. H.R32 seems to partially disagree when she attests that:

*Al-Hakkamah* is a poor woman and she receives gifts from the Nazir, the Omda, etc. We had only one rich *Hakkamah* called *Um Dalal Bit Dagal* who became rich from singing and acquired cattle herds. I was given lots of animals because of my nice songs but I lost them all because they either died or I got cheated by my relatives who I asked to look after them (H.R32, 07.05.06).

Of course, admitting that were it not for her cheating relatives, she might still be rich. They do not become *Hakkamat*, though, because they are rich or work to be rich. H.R32 also says:

... But we don't sing or compose to remove our poverty; we like singing from our heart. I am a poor person but my heart is rich (H.R32, 07.05.06).

When it comes to the physical appearance of *al-Hakkamah*, the twenty seven respondents agree that even though the majority are nice-looking, *al-Hakkamah* is not necessarily noticed because she is beautiful or dresses in fashionable style. Nonetheless, they all agree that she dresses smartly, wears perfumes and also adorns jewellery made of ivory that a powerful horseman offered her at some stage in the past. But ultimately, they explain, her appearance does not count, what counts is her talent, her ability to compose and recite.
The twenty seven respondents agree that there is no specified social status required for a woman to become *Hakkamah* but generally they agree that she normally comes from a family that is both knowledgeable and experienced in handling the responsibilities of *al-Hakkamah*. Respondent R14 (29.05.06), however, maintains that many *Hakkamat* appear to come from families that at least have one of their members as a prominent leader:

... She often comes from a family where the great father or grandfather had a prominent role in the tribe. This position has added value to *al-Hakkamah* and to her strength and power (R14, 2006).

This is supported by what *Hakkamah* H/S.R4G4 claims:

*al-Hakkamah* used to come from a family where her father, brother or grandfather was either a horseman (i.e. a brave man), a generous man, a community leader or a prestigious man; because she would reflect and present her own way of socialisation in her speech and behaviours; or, alternatively, she had a *Hakkamah* in her family or extended family (H/S.R4G4, 11.06.06).

Reviewing the family status of fifteen *Hakkamat* interviewees, it appears that eleven of them have at least one family member as either a soldier (soldiers wield considerable power in the Baggara tribal communities) and/or had assumed a position of power and prestige which may have contributed to construct herself as *Hakkamah* as in the table below:
Table 3: Power-Associated Hakkamah Family Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hakkamah</th>
<th>Family background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 H/S.R4G4</td>
<td>Her father was Omda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 H.R58G4</td>
<td>Her father was Omda; her husband a horse raiser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 H. R20G4</td>
<td>Three brothers were Augada (tribal military leaders)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 H. R19</td>
<td>Father was a worrier horseman and admired by her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 H/F.R51</td>
<td>Her mother was Hakkamah and her husband a soldier.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 H.R30G4</td>
<td>Grandmother Hakkamah; her husband was a soldier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 H.R37G4</td>
<td>Mother was Hakkamah; her husband was a soldier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 H.R31</td>
<td>Aunt was Hakkamah; her husband was a soldier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 H.R26</td>
<td>Her Husband is a soldier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 H/S. R25</td>
<td>Grandmother was Hakkamah; husband was a soldier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 H.R34</td>
<td>Her aunt was Hakkamah; her husband is a horseman</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.2.4 Types of al-Hakkamat

According to eleven respondents and fifteen Hakkamat, there are two types of Hakkamat, al-khail (Arabic for horses) Hakkamat, who are also known as Hakkamat of soja or boshan, and Hakkamat of mada (public dance yard) who perform in chorus in the open dance yard. Usually at the beginning al-Hakkamah emerges as a skilful woman performing in a specific folk dance e.g. sanjak, gaydoomah, iraij … etc, at the mada and they come quite naturally through the ranks to be recognised and acknowledged as Hakkamat sanjak,
Hakkamat gaydoomah, Hakkamat iraij, Hakkamat katim … etc., before they fully develop into Hakkamat Khail (or horse Hakkamat) who do not sing at the mada, but extol the outstanding (in some respect, e.g. bravery) in individual performances.

Hakkamat mada are reputed for their skilful enthralling dancing that they perform while singing e.g. al-Katim, al-Nuggarah (the drum) such as Jamal Ragad (a camel lied down), Umm Jekkay, al-Harimah (a Habbania folk dance); al-Iraij, al-Murhakah\(^{73}\) (grinding stone), al-Gidairee\(^{74}\), … etc. The latter involved a dance called Cadal and songs such as the one recited by respondent R6 (24.05.06):

\(^{73}\) It is a solo indoor performance by al-Hakkamah while grinding grain on the Murkhakah (a flat stone used by women for grinding/milling grains). It has disappeared however, as a result of introducing mechanical grinding mills to rural areas. The songs of Murkahah are very important and influential in mobilising people for fighting. These are sung by al-Hakkamah when a woman experiences serious events that touch her or her family deeply e.g. if she is humiliated and is therefore seeking protection, sympathy and/or support (R6, 24.05.06).

\(^{74}\) The dancers of al-gidairee are usually young people whose songs and poems are emotional, romantic and about their future dreams … eg al-Gaydoomah.
Box 1

English:
The drum is beaten at the wedding parade [marching off of a bridegroom to his bride]  
She who did not beget a boy, had an unfair deal

Arabic\textsuperscript{75}:

النقارة بكت قدومة
المجابت ولد مظلومة

Transliteration:

\textit{Al-nuggārah bakat gaydūmah}
\textit{al-mā jābat walad maẓlūmah}

R6, furthermore, explains that all these dance types present emotional songs but the songs performed in \textit{al-Katim} dance are often provocative and inciting such as when a \textit{Hakkamah} describes a man by saying:

\textsuperscript{75} Unless otherwise stated, Arabic in boxes refers to \textit{Darfuri Baggara Arab}'s dialect.
Box 2

English:

- The medium sized five year old [i.e. an ox/camel, at its prime strength]
- He who doesn’t sit idly and exchange gossips
- He who carries a Kalashnikov, and [answers the call]

Baggara Arabic:

المربوع الخماسی
المما قول جلاسي
شنابل الكلاش مائي

Transliteration:

Al-marbūʿ al-khumāṣī
Al-mā gawāl, jalāsī
Shāyyil l-klāsh, māshī

Here *al-Hakkamah* aims to positively set the eyes of her tribesmen on the example she sets out: a fully fledged male (a camel/Ox at its prime age and peak of masculinity) who holds onto his AK47 weapon ready to fend off danger rather than to sit and gossip idly, unable to defend the honour of the tribe. R6 appraises this composing as strong, effective, with meaningful reflective words and therefore the higher the quality of her performance is, the more outstanding *Hakkamah* she would be.

The *khail Hakkamat*, in the views of respondent R6 (20.05.06), have actually proceeded from their position as recognised *mada Hakkamat*, especially *katim Hakkamat*, from whence they initially built reputation and prestige. The horse *Hakkamah* is the ultimate prestigious, powerful position of *Hakkamah* that requires skills, experience and dedication and by the time one reaches such
At the beginning I was singing al-Itaireenha, al-Jilaihah, al-Dabe, um-Piteete (names of dances), then I gave up singing and became a chief Hakkamah (H.R32, 07.05.06).

I grow up as Hakkamah of Katim and I was invited from place to place but because my tribesmen were horsemen I became a khail Hakkamah, but purposely for the sake of my father and his brothers who were horsemen (H.R19, 30.05.06).

First I became a singer of hussain then Hakkamah of sanjak, then developed into Hakkamah of katim, then Hakkamah of boshan (i.e. khail Hakkamah) - as an individual singer and borday; I am now skilled in the five of them (H.R30G4, 11.06.06).

The khail Hakkamah must be nominated from among the mada Hakkamat based on general consensus within the community as to her suitability for this position with regards to possession of a strong agency, strong personality and charisma, experience, knowledge, diverse skills, and an outgoing and outspoken stature. Her nomination is usually administered by Ageed al-Augada\textsuperscript{76} or the war leader of the tribe who is akin to the chief of its defence institution but not clearly indicated in the native administration hierarchy. This is because the role of this Hakkamah is largely connected to the role of the Ageed as she would be required to undertake a heavy responsibility in helping the ageed and his horsemen to achieve security missions that may involve fighting,

\textsuperscript{76} Augada is plural (sing. Ageed) and stands for the tribe's supreme military commander; also Ageed is the Arabic word for the army rank of Col.
or social missions such as horsemen’s ‘zaффah’ (a parade) during happy occasions e.g. weddings, circumcision\textsuperscript{77} ceremonies … etc (see 6.5).

Nevertheless, her nomination should be endorsed and backed up by a group of women. While her selection is always celebrated in a big ceremony attended by tribe’s leaders and elites, as also stated by Ahmed (1998), four Hakkamat maintain that recently these celebrations no longer attained that same importance they had in the past. Following her selection, the horsemen will make no move unless al-Hakkamah is informed.

Following her nomination, the Ageed would offer al-Hakkamah the tribe’s flag but sometimes she holds the flag of Sudan. It was maintained by twenty two respondents including eight Hakkamat that if you saw a woman looking smart in her dress or wearing the flag of Sudan as a scarf, she must almost certainly be a khail Hakkamah. Also, she usually carries a (staff-like) stick made from giraffe tail and adorned by expensive and valuable pieces of jewellery which she holds as a sign of authority as the horsemen entourage must stop when she waves it at them and listen to her commands; and if she chooses to play host to them they must oblige.

\textsuperscript{77} Male circumcision is recommended by the Shari’a and it is practise all over Sudan. The notorious Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), however, is controversial. The British attempted to ban in 1946 but was confronted with Sudanese protests on the pretext that FGM is a cultural matter and it should not be addressed by colonials (Althaus 1997). There are many tribes in rural Darfur e.g. Fur, who do not practice FGM but have picked up recently as a result of urban influence. This was indicated by the 2006 Sudan Household Health Survey which reveals that FGM is practiced on 75 to 80 percent of females in the northern parts of the country, whereas in Darfur, 40 to 60 percent are affected and it is more prevalent among the more educated and wealthy families.
When a military mission is in the offing, she has to inspect the *Ageed* and his horsemen in order to ensure that they are well prepared – that their weapons are ready, their horse’s equipment e.g. saddles, water and food containers are also ready and that nothing of vital importance is missing. She manages and controls the behaviour of the horsemen and disciplines those who violate community codes of conduct by for instance, not joining a *faza’* campaign (see 6.3) or those whose horses are poorly equipped or are scared to fight in the cause of the tribe. She can mock, fine, isolate or impose social boycott or a ban on violators of dearly held community (ethical) codes (see 6.3.2.2; 6.7.4).

Therefore, the eleven respondents and the fifteen *Hakkamat* all maintain that in a community there usually are many *Hakkamat* - as many as the number of the clans in the tribe as each clan must have an *Ageed* and therefore a *Khail Hakkamah*. So whereas both types of *Hakkamat* are required to possess the talent of composing and singing, the *khail Hakkamat*, who by far the most important during conflicts, have added responsibilities that require added skills of organisation, cultural awareness and general knowledge - for instance, she must know how to delicately describe and praise horses, ‘dress them up’ and obviously feed them as well as feed their masters. These obligations entail that she must be of an age that would keep her energetic and at the same time command the respect of all including horsemen, the *Ageed*, sheikh or *Omda*.

While the eleven respondents and the fifteen *Hakkamat* concede that both types of *al-Hakkamat* composed and sang on various issues e.g. peace, war,
beauty, chivalry and at various occasions such as famine and starvation, they all however maintain that the *khail Hakkamah* comes out as the most prestigious and feared *Hakkamah* who in addition to her other roles also performs the *Boshan* type of poetry which focuses exclusively on describing horses and horsemen and which is otherwise performed by a single male performer – the *Hadday*, who is a male counterpart of al-Hakkamah (also see 6.3). However, eleven respondents maintain that both *khail* and *mada Hakkamat* retain the same right of ruling but in a capacity that may differ depending on the power and agency of each to see their rules and arbitrations imposed.

Thus, it appears that the term *Hakkamah* serves both as an institution which can be defined as ‘a set of norms centring around one or more major social functions (Rosenberg and Kaplan 1982: xiv)’ and as an identity of a peculiar woman who enjoys power and authority based on natural and nurtured talents that she now possesses. In the latter sense, *Hakkamah* is open to whoever woman that meets the criteria and therefore gain communal acceptance to undertake the role of the former.

R22 goes even further to suggest that, in Darfur, the term *Hakkamah* has become so much like a symbol for good quality female performance, denoting a position of power and prominence and therefore it has covered a wide range of women especially those who have the ability of organizing and supervising women in various occasions. Two respondents mention (also mentioned by
Masajid 1995) that there have been Hakkamat of folklore who are not necessarily composers, singers and dancers but only expert with collecting and looking after the folkloric heritage of the tribe which they will then exhibit during organised tribal Zaffahs (parades) such as Zaffat Sibdo in the 1960s.

6.2.5 Public Recognition of al-Hakkamah

It is agreed by twenty two research respondents including eight Hakkamat that al-Hakkamah is constructed by her milieu and that she emerges naturally. She shows her talented unique social characteristics and abilities of composing, reciting, singing and performing from the time when she was an adolescent without formal training or induction except for the collective tutoring she receives from her co-partners (see the first quote below). It thus appears that the emergence of al-Hakkamah is initially noticed, admired, and endorsed by female relatives and peers in her clan or village/camp who encourage and support her to proceed in showing up her talent and skills through listening to her songs and recitations and by accompanying her as a chorus, correcting her compositions, if necessary, until her poems get applauded and admirably responded to by a wider audience before she is recognised as a prospective Hakkamah in the village. Through time she acquires more knowledge, skills and experience and becomes a famous Hakkamah. Women also play a significant role to publicise her by singing her songs that eventually spread and become known to all. She assesses her abilities and discovers herself as a potential Hakkamah from the signs of astonishment and admiration shown in women’s
At the outset, she presents herself in dancing parties. When we were very young, we would meet in the evening in groups of three to seven young girls and similar number of youngsters and would go and organise a party in order to train ourselves and practice singing; and other sisters in the group would correct you until we have become Hakkamat. When we become known in the camp, people would soon start inviting some of us to sing for them (H.R31, 09.05.06).

We would go out to the mada where we clap and dance and then I would sing my song; people would hear it and would know that I am a good singer and a Hakkamah and my tribe would identify me as their Hakkamah. The Sheikah is chosen by the people of the locale, but al-Hakkamah is chosen by her own tongue, her nice voice and words (H/S.R71, 06.05.06).

I have started singing in 1955; when I saw good men I started singing for them as my brothers were cattle owners and horsemen. They were generous men and I started praising them; then I became Hakkamah of Khail (Boshan) which means I sing as an individual for the brave men who kill the elephant and for men who solve problems for the community and the generous men; my father was a horseman (H.R20G4, 11.06.06).

I started singing when I was very young taking care of goats and going with them to the grazing yard. I was singing in ‘Harrim’ which is a dance; and thereafter developed myself into Khail Hakkamah also known as Boshan Hakkamah (H.R58G4, 11.06.06).

They liked me in the dancing yard; at wedding or circumcision (see footnote 121) occasions people set great fires and al-Hakkamat come and sing. First I would tell al-Hakkamat singers that I also have two songs ‘short poems’ that I would love to sing and would ask them to let me have a go. They would let me sing by saying ‘good, go on and sing them out’; I would sing them and eventually, I became a recognised Hakkamah (H.R32, 07.05.06).
Seasoned *Hakkamat* organize themselves in singing occasions and allow new aspirants to display their talent. Thereafter, social events such as wedding, circumcision (see footnote 77) parties, arrival from travel, and communal events experienced by the community, for instance, *faza'* , all constitute opportunities for her to test her abilities and put on show her performance to the wider community.

Thus, the composing and performing quality of *al-Hakkamah* is the decisive factor in introducing her to the community and establishing her wider social recognition. Yet, there is no limit to the number of *Hakkamat* in the village or the clan as any woman can establish herself as a *Hakkamah* if she can demonstrate a strong agency, talent and outstanding abilities of composing, reciting and singing and prove to possess socially enabling qualities e.g. knowledge, skills, experience, social relationships, etc., for addressing the community-centred moral values and ethics of bravery, generosity, good behaviour, solidarity and help, etc., and beauty values. Anyone from among wannabe female singers who compete in singing and performs so well in accordance with these set community parameters of excellence will eventually be identified as *Hakkamah*. In a village of two hundred households, for instance, there is usually at least one *Hakkamah* but there can be many more *Hakkamat* depending on the talent available. The ranking of *al-Hakkamah*’s excellence would be based on firstly, the quality of expressions used and their succinct brevity, the number of stanzas, the musical tone and the coordination and performance among the chorus.
Secondly, al-Hakkamah’s spontaneous reactions to live occasions or incidents and her ability to immediately compose on the spur of the moment e.g. describing a smart man on a smart horse, an instance of bravery, generosity, etc must all crucially maintain her as active and creative throughout her career. 
*Al-Hakkamat* would therefore compete for the best performance during various social occasions that inspire them to compose, recite and perform and where people appraise and identify their favourite *Hakkamah*.

Following her social acceptance, al-Hakkamah would be promoted and her position and prestige enhanced through different ways, the most significant of which is receiving financial rewards called ‘*tangeet*’ or ‘*showbash*’ (money put on her forehead to take home) as an expression of admiration mainly from men, but occasionally from women too, and which constitute a vital promotion for her prosperity in the career. It follows that those attending her performances would start praising her poems and songs and then news spread together with the songs which eventually become well known at the village level and ripple outside of it. Subsequently, she begins to receive, as *Hakkamah*, special invitations to go and sing in various social occasions e.g. marriage, circumcision (see footnote 77), etc. Thus, through this informal referendum, her reputation becomes enhanced and she eventually becomes a celebrity in the community.

78 While singing brings listeners to enthusiastic or zealous state, a man comes forward and say *‘abshuree’* (literally stands for cheer up) and puts some money on her
Al-Hakkamat are also resorted to for mobilising women during officials' visits to villages and pastoralists' camps. This is because, their appeal to the women is often more responded to than if they are summoned by any women organization such as the Women Union which has branches in rural areas, revealing thus that the position and value of al-Hakkamah in her own setting is very difficult to challenge by recently government sponsored women established bodies.

6.3 Social and Political Significance of al-Hakkamah

Thirty six respondents including eighteen Hakkamat generally agree on the significance of al-Hakkamah for her community in both peace and war times and her role in contributing to the protection and maintenance of the tribe’s heritage and welfare. This is made through mobilisation of tribesmen and women for communal activities which include nafir, faza and zaffah (tribal parade) in addition to social occasions of individual such as child naming ceremonies, weddings, and agricultural operations. Appeals for these activities, especially the faza are compulsory for men who should attend upon hearing the appeal, usually made through an ‘Ambaya’ (an ox horn used as a trumpet), playing nuggarah (a locally made drum) or by certain number of gunshots. As clearly spelled out by H.R37G4 (11.06.06), ‘he has to come up quickly irrespective of what might happen to him, i.e., even if it means that he would be killed’; and if he delayed, he would then be subject to defamation by al-
Hakkamah. These communal roles of al-Hakkamah are summarised in Table 4 below.

### Table 4: Summary of al-Hakkamat Roles at Three Main Communal Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communal activity</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Role of al-Hakkamah</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nafir</strong></td>
<td>1. Nafir literally means gathering of a group of people to voluntarily perform charitable activities within the area in favour of a person – a man or a woman e.g. planting or harvesting a farm, building a house; or in favour of the whole community e.g. digging a well, building a school, a mosque, etc., 2. Can be organized as separate gender or mixed and usually quite widespread during harvest season, 3. It is entirely voluntary, 4. Takes place a few times in a year.</td>
<td>1. <em>Al-Hakkamah</em> may either be invited on her identity and capacity as <em>Hakkamah</em> to stir the participants’ enthusiasm through singing and reciting, or may participate as a social obligation for the community members, 2. Her presence in the nafir would expedite successful completion of the task because people would join the occasion irrespective of whether they were invited or not as they would come just because they had learned that <em>Hakkamah</em> so-and-so would be there and as such, this would enhance the prestige of the inviter(s)/the beneficiary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Faza</strong></td>
<td>1. Faza is a voluntary communal campaign to recover stolen assets e.g. cattle, camels, etc., or in search for a missing person(s) but it can also be the way through which war is declared against another tribe, 2. Its appeal is more or less the same as that of the nafir.</td>
<td>1. In <em>faza</em> occasions, <em>al-Hakkamat</em>, usually accompanied by the <em>Sheikhah</em>(^79) would move around encouraging and inciting the horsemen to join in and to ensure that all men would take part in the mission, physically or financially, 2. Prepare fodder for the horses and sustenance for the horsemen by mobilising women’s contributions of food stuff e.g. grain, (millet) flour and sauce</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^79\) There is no *Sheikah* without a Hakkamah but there is a Hakkamah without a *Sheikah* (Respondent A’aishah, 2006).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communal activity</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Role of <em>al-Hakkamah</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>less compulsory.</td>
<td>3. Jointly with the <em>Sheikhat</em>, would gather at the Omda's house and inspect the horses, the horsemens and their equipment including the weapons, in order to assess and ensure that each horseman has got the full equipment for the mission and his horse is fit. If something was missing or in a bad condition, <em>al-Hakkamah</em> would provide a replacement, but if the horse was weak or the equipment are miserable, she might bar the horseman from participating in the mission and later, arbitrate him.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is normally quite frequent.</td>
<td>4. Bid farewell to them with songs and ululations and prepare their reception.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingredients e.g. butter and dry vegetables.</td>
<td>5. Prepare for the horsemen reception and celebrate their victory in a party by composing and singing either in praise of the brave men or in mockery of the coward who for no acceptable reason did not join, thus making and breaking reputations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### *Zaffah*[^80] (tribal parade)

| 1. Collective gathering of Baggara tribes to parade their wealth and power (horses, horsemens, poetic quality). | 1. In collaboration with the *Sheikhat*, would take full responsibility for preparing food sustenance e.g. sweet kissrah (like pancake), dry vegetables for the participants and fodder for the horses. |
| 2. It is an intermittent occasional activity. | 2. Singing, reciting and performing. |
| 3. Also same as point 3 above. | |

Examples of songs that *al-Hakkamat* sing to egg on men to join the *faza* as recited by respondent R14 (2006), are:

[^80]: The first tribal parade was organized by the *Nazir* of the Rezeqat (*Ibrahim Musa Madibo* 1920-1940) in 1960 at *Sibdo* where tribes presented their high quality horses and the leaders were praised by the tribe’s poets. This parade was attended by the former Egyptian president *Jamal Abdel Nasir* as maintained by the twenty two research participants and also by *Masujid* (1995: 9-10)
Box 3

English:

Oh, my brothers, the thorn of palm tree branches,

Ambaya horn is blown (cried) in the south [call for war]

Death of [or in] a group is a festival [i.e. don’t fear death, for dying in such circumstances is but an honour].

Arabic:

أخوائي شوك الجريد
أمبايا بكت صعد
موت الكثيره عيد

Transliteration:

ʾakhwānī shawk l-jarīd,
ʾammbāyā bakat šaʾīd
Mawt l-katīrah ʾīd

She urges men to swiftly join the fight (for faza or war) on the south and not to be scared of death – as, if all of them died, they would be celebrated in a festival like Eid.

The significance of the role of al-Hakkamah in faza, twenty two research respondents including eight Hakkamat argue, is that all men would respond positively to her appeals irrespective of their personal relationship with the person for whom the faza was called for. This role suggests that al-Hakkamah constitutes a focal point for maintaining unity and solidarity among the tribe especially at times of crises when people need to manage their differences and unite for a common cause. She was therefore identified as a leader and a poet.
as through her tongue she could often lead people and the people would often submit to her will in peace or war times.

By the evidence of these roles, she is rightly described as ‘representing a symbol of unity for the community’ (R14, 29.05.06), or as ‘a shadow of a big tree for the whole tribe’ (R43, 29.05.06); thus proving that al-Hakkamah has the power to bring people together to help resolve disputes, firing up individuals to rise above their differences and act in accordance with the morals of communal solidarity. Most important is that al-Hakkamat use these events to emphasise and reinforce certain values in the community and as well to teach children about these values. R22 describes her in similar terms:

She represents an element of organization and social connection to the community; she also represents a source of traditional powerful authority against those who try to spoil or overlook the tribal norms. She represents an element of unity among her tribal group and therefore at a certain point al-Hakkamah becomes the one who possesses the greatest power and authority in the whole tribe (R22, 01.05.06).

One Nazir, however, disagrees:

Al-Hakkamah … has no social or political significance apart from praising and defaming, but not in making decisions at tribal level. She is just respected as a woman, a wife who looks after kids and as a Hakkamah who composes and sings for men during occasions but nothing more (R42G1, 12.03.06).

But despite attempting to underrate their role, the Nazir has to admit that al-Hakkamat have power in influencing the youth especially in conflict situations and he therefore appeals to the government to target them for awareness.
raising and reorientation. Twelve respondents including seven Hakkamat think al-Hakkamat do what they do driven by love for their people: she ‘... raises the head of the tribe and maintains its pride’ (H.R32, 07.05.06) and ‘she is there for the tribe all the time because the tribe is the source of pride and glory for her’ (R43, 29.04.06).

The social and political significance of al-Hakkamah is therefore undeniable despite the account of one tribal leader to the contrary. Thirty seven confirmed the significance and influence of al-Hakkamah and that she could stir people to an adventurous outcome, to say the least, as also stated by respondent R17 (02.05.06) that they used to hear about someone who stabbed himself with a knife as a reaction to al-Hakkamah’s song and that when he was a child, one of his grandparents threw himself into the fire as a result of al-Hakkamah’s singing at the occasion of his grandsons’ circumcision (see footnote 77). He added that there were also those who held fire with their hands. To this point, respondent R65G1 (12.03.06) maintains that young men who are well-off used to become excited by al-Hakkamah’s songs and would leave their money in her hands and go away. The offerings to al-Hakkamah would sometimes include camels, a prize property to offer so readily.

Similarly, twenty seven research respondents including sixteen Hakkamat maintain that in the past horsemen would bring tusks of an elephant that they had hunted and killed to al-Hakkamah from which she would make a necklace as in the accounts of H.R19:
they brought ivory for us and also rings for al-Hakkamat, I myself have received five pieces of ivory and four rings ... they brought butter for women to use for their hair and body and also 'dagam', which is like 'gadah' which is the small curved bony part of the elephant knee that our women used for grinding incense which was important and valuable for women (30.05.06);

and R14:

She often has fancy jewellery made of ivory. She would tell you that this ivory was offered to her by a powerful horseman in the tribe (29.05.06).

On the other hand, two respondents whose tribes had conflicts with tribes from south Sudan, claim that the horsemen also used to bring in captives (abductees) from fighting other tribes, as also reported by Masajid (1995). These abductees were usually exploited in domestic and economic activities e.g. farming operations until reconciliation is reached when they would be returned to their tribes as part of the resolution deal. The respondents charge that the Ageed and his horsemen would usually offer the Hakkamah the strongest and youngest captives to serve her domestic and farming activities.

Typical reaction of the horsemen to the influence of al-Hakkamah is what stated by fourteen of the respondents including six Hakamat that in search for praise from al-Hakkamah, some horsemen would cut off ears of those they killed and present to al-Hakkamah upon their return as evidence of their heroism as in the accounts of respondent R14 (29.05.06) that ‘... whenever you found a man’s
ear was cut, make sure that it was brought to *al-Hakkamah*. This was confirmed by H.R19 (30.05.06) who witnessed the government campaign against *Bolad* insurgency in early 1990s:

Yes, to tell the truth we saw with our own eyes men organs brought by the horsemen; they brought ears for us to see; they were big and anyone who sees them will cry. I myself saw many ears as every horseman had brought as many as he could from the bodies of the persons whom he had killed as evidence for his bravery … I just saw them and left them to their owners who might have buried them or not I have no idea … In this case we praise all the men collectively and do not merely praise the one who did bring them. But in fighting elephants we identify the individual brave man and praise him alone.

Yet these same fourteen respondents maintain that *al-Hakkamah* would not request this but the fighters would commit these atrocities (acts of triumph in their eyes) to satisfy their own sense of triumphalism. Tribal leaders, however, claim to principally reject this behaviour as emphasised by one respondent (R10; 01.06.06) who is a tribal chief himself. R10 maintains that even though *al-Hakkamah* would usually stay (a king witness) close to the battlefield watching the performance of the horsemen, and may indeed be in a position to see this happening, some horsemen would do this despite the fact that they are often advised against it but there are often those who would not heed the advice.

Nine respondents claim that cutting some of the casualty’s organs and presenting them to *al-Hakkamah* is an old practice that is well known and
widespread and that has hitherto been practised in the conflicts between tribes in Darfur especially during this regime’s era and in the most recent battles between the Janjaweed and Darfur rebels. It constitutes an intolerable humiliation and severe sedition than if homicide is committed and would often lead to war and/or intensification of already raging conflict situations as a similar treatment would be sought in revenge.

Two respondent, nonetheless, tend to cast ethnic dimension to the practice of cutting the victim’s ear when contending that the Arab used to kill people from al-zurga, cutting off their ears and showing them to their Hakkamat. Yet, despite this ethnic interpretation to the practice, there are also accounts that suggest it is a practice all warring tribes used against one another irrespective of their ethnic background. For instance respondent R45 (17.05.06) claims that in 2004 a group of men from an Arab tribe attacked a camp, stole the herds and killed four men; but to humiliate the Bani Helba, the victims, even more, they also cut one ear of a man, who is now surviving with one ear, and took it to their Hakkamah. This was one of the most serious offences that led to a vicious war between the two tribes because this is a practice that is never forgotten or

81 Sultan Husain who ruled Darfur (1839-1874) offered his daughter - Mayram Arafa - a clan of Ta’aisha called Um Ribda as hakura of estate and was a large population. She used to go and collect taxes by herself and they used to welcome her by organising big dancing ceremonies in appreciation of her gentle treatment. During one of her visits, the people refused to pay the taxes and instead killed her, cut her hands and used them to play the Nuggara while dancing. The Hadaleel clan of the Ta’aisha rejected this inhumane conduct of killing a woman and mutilating her body and subsequently, cooperated with the sultan and defeated Um Ribda in fighting. Their remaining men were divided into three portions two were killed and the third was allowed to live (Mohamed 1982:40-41; narrative of an old sheikh Mohamed Awad who was an informant in the interview (tape number mdaa/1971, diary number 2, page 83-84).
forgiven. Similarly, R22 (06.06.06) recounts that two or three years ago, conflict erupted between northern Rezeiqat and Fur in Tuwal village in southern Darfur as a result of two Fur got killed by the Rezeiqat. The Fur retaliated, killing a Rezeiqi man and cutting his ears. Persistent hostilities between the two tribes continued since then and subsequently Tuwal is destroyed several times by the northern Rezeiqat.

Eight respondents assert that the association of this practice with al-Hakkamah, to their dismay, however, reflects the powerful impact of al-Hakkamah in influencing evil conduct of tribalism, ethnicity and racial hatred (see 3.3.1; 3.3.2; 3.3.3; 4.5.2). However, it could also be seen as reflecting social and political significance of the agency, identity and influence of al-Hakkamah (see 2.4; 2.6.2; 2.6.3) and the respect rendered to her roles in the village/camp.

Moreover, the most significant participation of al-Hakkamah in faza activities is escorting the horsemen and her complicity with them in raiding other villages allegedly in pursuit of thieves and or counter-attacking aggressors in which case she would ride a horse and might be armed, participate in the fight and might get killed or taken captive as maintained by twenty of the research participants including ten Hakkamat. They recounted a recent example experienced in south Darfur in 2006 when a Hakkamah was captured with a group of horsemen looting, burning and killing people in a Fur village. She was prosecuted and sentenced to death. In addition, two Hakkamat were also arrested around the village of Giraida, south Darfur while escorting thousands of Janjawid troops.
who stole over six hundred cows and killed thirty people from Umm Balola on Friday 27/01/06 and eleven from Ibdoos village on Saturday 28.01.06.

In investigating these incidents at South Darfur Court records in Nyala, it appears that during 2002 and 2003, several cases of Hakkamat involvement in incidents of conflict were brought before the court and the accused were all prosecuted. Here are three documented cases tried at Nyala Court:

Table 5: Hakkamat Tried at Nyala Court, South Darfur

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Court Case No and Trial Date</th>
<th>Name of Accused</th>
<th>Legal Codes of Prosecution</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>66/2002</td>
<td>Mariam Adam Azrag</td>
<td>26/42/21/175/69/68/130</td>
<td>The claimant was Ahmad Ali Osman from Fur tribe who lives in Jabra village which is located in the outskirts of Mirshing district. Fur and Sa’ada reside in the Village for a long time. Unknown group of people stole 65 cows of Hajj Osman Dorain from Sidaa (Arab) and Fur people were accused. Sons and relatives of Dorain went out for Faza on Thursday raiding and burning Jabra village, and killing its people. 14 were arrested among them was Hakkamah, Mariam Azrag, nicknamed Mariam Zakheerah (literally munitions) who was riding a horse ululating, inciting the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27/7/2002</td>
<td>Age: 30yrs</td>
<td>21: criminal complicity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social status: married and mother</td>
<td>26/42: possession of weapons and arms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tribe: Sa’ada</td>
<td>175: banditry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>69: nuisance and threatening of peace</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>168: participation in violent conflict</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>130: homicide</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sentenced to death</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Court Case No and Trial Date</td>
<td>Name of Accused</td>
<td>Legal Codes of Prosecution</td>
<td>Remarks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26/2002 10.3.2002</td>
<td>Fatumah Musa Abdel-Rahim</td>
<td>168/130/107 168: involvement in conflict 130: homicide 107: concealing crime</td>
<td>No detailed information was found</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/2003 30.12.2002</td>
<td>Fatma al-Doom Adam</td>
<td>Prosecuted under the criminal codes: 21/42/175/139/130. 21: criminal complicity 42: possession of weapons 175: bandit activity 139: causing severe harm 130: homicide</td>
<td>Together with horsemen from various Arab groups most of whom were from Ta’albah and Tergam, she accompanied her horsemen in raiding Singita village of Fur, killing forty one and burning the entire village; she was ululating, inciting her attacking companions. Thirty eight of her group were sentenced to death by hanging.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 5, it could be understood that *al-Hakkamah* was punished by law when she had acted either alone, or in group to pursue individual or tribal interests outside the government umbrella as their victims have the right to sue her. Ironically, however, her participation in inciting the government army to commit similar acts, is perceived by the neopatrimonial elite leaders, as part of
her role in serving the goals and interests of the state and is therefore sponsored and celebrated by the government as would come in chapter 7.

_Al-Hakkamat_ have also contributed, through mobilising women and raising contributions, to providing food, clothes, etc, for thousands of Darfur war victims who fled their homes and sought refuge in neighbouring Baggara villages e.g. _Kubum_ rural council of the _Bani Helba_ in South Darfur State as recounted by respondent R6 (20.05.06). This incident might be a learning lesson and a confirmation for _al-Hakkamah_ that war is destructive and that she is also prone to similar circumstances of suffering and fear as she already confirmed in her recitation (‘I am scared of (receiving) bad news that would make one break down’, see Box 4 below) as portrayed by one _Hakkamah_:

**Box 4**

**English:**

My Habban folks, I advice you so strongly
Ride the (strong) young horse that can do the job at night
Get powerful weapons; leave the simple rifle for (shooting) birds
Those on foot are many, but these days, the situation is precarious
I am scared of (receiving) bad news that would make one break down
(H.R20G4, 11.06.06)

**Arabic :**

بوصييكوا يا هبان بالحين
آركيو المهر يغتصب الغرض بالليل
أسعدوا السلاح لتقلل خروطوش للطيور
Transliteration:
Bawasikā yā ḥabān bil-hayn
ʿarkabū al-mihayr, al-bidaḏ al-gharad bi-l-layl
ʿasʿū l-silāḥ al-tagīl, khalā al-khartūsh l-ṭayr
Al-dārjāt fīha, fī sinānā da guʿādā biga shayn
ʿanā khāyfa mīn l-khibayr al-bibarrīd l-ḥayl

As also appeals another Hakkamah:

Box 5

English:
Oh, victorious Taʿaisha, you are always winners over other men
If war broke out, I would wish you present beside me
Ali Adam, the right hand of me
You are like Jebel Marra that cannot jiggle and unrelenting
(H.R37G4, 11.06.06)

Arabic :
انتو جبل مرة، بالاما بالهر، بأيام الله.
أكان يفت الحسه بلهناكو لحضاير
على آدم يا أدي اليمين
أنتو جبل مرة، بالاما بالهر، بأيام الله.

Transliteration:
Al-taʿaishah al-fāyziyn, al-fī l-rijjal bārziyn
ʿakān bigat al-hayyah, bil-hanâkū layyah ḥādrīn
ʿAli ʿAdam, ʿiddī l-yāmiyn
ʿintū jabal marra, yal-ma bihazz, yal-ma bi-līn.
Although these Hakkamah’s utterances may suggest that she was aggressively urging her tribe to arm and get ready for wars, in fact, it seems to suggest a fear of a likely victimization that she wanted to head off in the uncertainty of situations (see 2.7; 5.6).

Al-Hakkamah, in the assessment of thirty respondents, is also believed to have maintained, through songs and poems, various forms of traditions, folklore and heritage of the tribe. For instance, R14 states that among the Rezeiqat they have al-Katim, al-Hasees, Iraij, Muberadat forms of folk dance that are essentially performed in the presence of al-Hakkamah and had there been no Hakkamah, these dances could have disappeared entirely. During the fieldwork of this research, I had been to a big folkloric dancing party organized by the Ministry of Social Welfare in which more than fifteen tribes performed songs and dances. Performers observed were men and women of more or less equal numbers (20-25) and there was a Hakkamah in each folklore team who led the singing and dancing. Also, al-Hakkamah used to undertake the responsibility of folkloric decorations during marriage and circumcision (see footnote 77) ceremonies and tribal exhibitions and parades and must take part in the meetings of the Baramkah forum (AYB 2006). The Baramkah, sing. Barmaki, also commonly called haddayyin (sing hadday), are the male counterparts of al-Hakkamat. They are the men poets of the tribe, and though powerful indeed, they appear to be less influential than al-Hakkamat, especially at times of war. It is generally accepted that the haddayyin are more temperate in their tone than al-Hakkamat are, and also that al-Hakkamat are readily responded to, especially by the youth, than are the haddayyin.
This social value and political significance is emphasised by twenty three respondents including the eighteen Hakkamat who argue that if al-Hakkamah was not there, there would be some people who would misbehave and would not heed verbal warnings; with al-Hakkamah, however, they would succumb to arbitrations and punishments meted out by her and thereby uphold the tribe’s morals and become self-censored in tune with the accepted morality. This implies that al-Hakkamah plays a role in maintaining and enforcing a gender division of labour within the community as spelled out clearly by three Hakkamat:

By Allah, if there was no Hakkamah, the tribe’s people would be somehow rude and lowly; for instance if there was faza, the men might not care and might not hurry swiftly to chase the thieves; if disaster strikes, they may not wake up to help people (H.R26, 30.05.06).

... When men prepare their horses, ride on and carry their guns and we bid them farewell and entrust them to Allah, there will be those who are scared of fighting, but then get reminded by other men of al-Hakkamah’s secret overwatch over them ... If there were no Hakkamah, men, especially young men, would come back in fear of fighting. But if there was Hakkamah who would praise her tribe, her men would never come back unless they either restored their stolen things or get killed. Also they wouldn’t leave their deceased behind for birds to eat (i.e. they stay until they bury them) as they would be asked about where they had left them (H.R71, 06.05.06).

... Today if there was no Hakkamah at all, it means that men would disappear/hide. They would become like women, eat with women in the same dishes and would become unable to protect their families. But in the presence of al-Hakkamah, men would fear her tongue and therefore wouldn’t run away from their responsibilities or become coward persons. Even in the physical absence of al-Hakkamah, men would fear doing things that she might hear or learn about and would make their life difficult (H/F.R51, 20.05.06).
The social value of her role has thus been stated, iconically and symbolically, as in the account that:

A community without a Hakkamah is a community without endowment, without an orientator, without feelings and without taste as she is the moral orientator of the tribe for virtues and good conduct’, and ‘if a tribe has no Hakkamah, it is deficient … it will be … weak and not respected (R17, 02.05.06).

Twelve respondents maintain that the roles and value of al-Hakkamah would sorely be missed following the absence (retirement or death) of a Hakkamah. R55 (21.05.06) states that, ‘when we lost more than one Hakkamah, people felt sad and we realised how important they are as working without a Hakkamah in so many occasions, was so pale’. He explains that al-Hakkamah is the “leading agent” for mobilisation, main “stimulant of urgency and enthusiasm” and can be an “avid hell raiser/maverick”, too. The death of the famous Hakkamah Kaltoum bit Hassaan in 1983 was widely mourned by the Ta’aisha who used to receive her in al-Rihaid, the centre of their tribal dar, with the entire accolade with which they would normally only welcome important officials and renowned religious men. R18 spells out how communities appreciate al-Hakkamah:

For us I think because our Hakkamah is the one who presents and counts all the virtues and positions of the tribe and sides with the tribe in all circumstances, and because she plays a communication and dissemination role, she is respected and appreciated by us. We think she is one of the women who communicate strong messages that push the tribe to so many varied decisions and acts … (R18, 30.04.06).
6.3.1 *al-Hakkamah* and Ethnic Consciousness

Given the rationale of constructing *al-Hakkamah* as an institution for the survival and security of the tribe (see 4.3), thirty six respondents including the eighteen *Hakkamat* claim that the songs, poems and speeches of *al-Hakkamah* and her symbolic acts and proactive activities are further enhanced by being authorised by custom to undertake whatever measures that she would think might contribute to the welfare of the community. The main drive of *al-Hakkamah* is therefore her ethnic consciousness which motivates the presentation of her pride in her tribe as claimed by thirteen respondents. In the words of R47 (2006), she is ‘a form of tribal self-centred institution’ that differentiates between ‘we’ as the powerful and the best and ‘they’ as weak and vulnerable (see 3.3.1; 3.3.2; 3.3.4). This ideology explains the persistent advocacy and popularisation of the fighting culture in the discourse of *al-Hakkamah*. H.R58G4’s recitation below attests to this:

**Box 6**

**English:**

Oh, my salamat people, the seas of religion
Our camp has the Quran and our camp has its religious disciples
Its large dishes offered and its sheep slaughtered
Unless be it from *allah*, Oh, nothing would dare come near us!
(H.R58G4, 2006)

**Arabic :**
The Habbania are people of pride whose seas are not dark. They are men who are nails for the whole country. If the enemy said, look, there they are. They would chase the close to al-Jurra, and the far away to al-Kurra; if he jumps over the [fence of] thorns and suddenly meet face to face. With three thousand pounds worth of ammunition, only those whose day has not come will survive. (H.R20G4, 11.06.06)

H.R20G4 from the Habbania praises her tribe, revelling in their pride:

**Box 7**

**English:**

The Habbania are people of pride whose seas are not dark. Their strength is divine and their business’s perfect. It is not a rope of authority, those pull (this way) and the others pull (the other way). They are slaughterers of bulls [generous] and owners of good horses [rich]. They are men who are nails for the whole country. If the enemy said, look, there they are. They would chase the close to al-Jurra, and the far away to al-Kurra; if he jumps over the [fence of] thorns and suddenly meet face to face. With three thousand pounds worth of ammunition, only those whose day has not come will survive. (H.R20G4, 11.06.06)

**Arabic:**

الهبانية العزاز هم بحورهم ما ضلما
قدرتهم الهيبة وشغلههم حرة
ما حبل حكم دا بجرأ ودا بجرأ
She celebrates the power, wealth and generosity of her tribe and that their strength and power can protect the whole country. Their enemy is scared of them because they are brave and possess weapons that no one else can afford to buy. The language is embedded in their culture and comes loaded with symbols that emphatically captivate the audience.

While *al-Hakkamat* elevate their tribes to such highs, they often remember to emphasise their own position and importance as in the poems of H.R20G4:

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Transliteration:

*al-habbāniyya al-ʿuzāz, humm buḥūrhum mā ḍullumah*

*Gudrat-hum ʿilāḥiyyah wa shughlut-hum ʿurrah*

*Mā ḥabīl ḥukum, da bjurra ,wad a bjurra*

*ḍabāḥīn abu kurjummah, siyyād l-khaṣī abu juljummah*

*masāmīr l-rujjāl humma, li-balad ṣurrah*

*kan al-ʿadāwah ṣalat daylāk, humma*

*al-garīb bi-l-lahīgū al-ṣurrah, wa-l-baʿid bi-wāṣṣilā l-kurrah*

*kan naṭṭa barrah l-shawk, wa ʿitgābalan ghurrah*

*al-ẓakkīra ṭalātālāf, gāsī lay yawmah*
I speak out, lifting my head up, I know how to extol on them

Their guests are hundreds sitting on chairs

You’ve caused troubles to the shepherds with the abundant cattle you have

Your weapons are heaped ready for miserable days;

For when our Dar may experience troubles

(H.R20G4, 11.06.06)

**Arabic :**

بالكلّم رافعّة راسي، بعرف القول، فيهم بواسي
ضيفاهم ميه فوق الكراسي
عليتو الرواعة بكتر المواني
سلاحكو مردوم لي يوم الماسى
كان الدار بقي لبيا الفاني

**Transliteration :**

bal-kallam rāfʿa rāsī,
baʿaraṣa al-gawl, fiham bawāṣī
dīfānhum mīyah fawg al-karāṣī
ghalabtu l-rawāʾiyya bey-kutr l-mawāṣī
silāḥku mardām lay yawn l-maʾāṣī
kān al-dār biqā layha l-qāṣī

According to the thirty two respondents including the ten Hakkamat, praising of tribes during conflict situations prevails among al-Hakkamat and this may inevitably exacerbate the conflict situation and push the tribe to violent wars. In any case, however, fourteen respondents, including five Hakkamat, point out that, in her praising of the tribe, al-Hakkamah usually praises the tribe’s leaders especially the Nazir and the Augada. H/S.R4G4 remembers that:

*Al-Hakkamah used to be invited to social occasions where she would sing and praise the inviter and include with him the generous man, the horseman and the tribe’s main*
leader. These three characters are always praised by her anytime and everywhere she sings (H/S.R4G4, 11.06.06).

This is perceived by R55 to indicate respect bestowed on the tribe through the elevation of its leaders to heights of venerability:

We do respect our leaders and rulers and al-Hakkamah should put them in a special position and present their good characteristics to the public to make them convincing for others inside and outside the tribe (R54, 21.05.06).

Not a single research respondent, therefore, mentions that al-Hakkamah had defamed a Nazir or even an Ageed, which is fairly understandable in the ethnic polarisation being witnessed in the area at the moment (see 4.5.1; 4.5.2; 4.5.3). No Hakkamah would choose to be seen to undermine the authority of her tribe no matter how low those in charge might descend. But Lampen’s (1933: 115) anecdote about the three nazirs who gave bribes to a Hakkamah to avoid being debased (see 1.1.3), seems to be one of the rare occasions and our research respondents generally claim that part of al-Hakkamah’s respect for her tribe is embodied in her endorsement of its leaders.

Conflict between tribes (see 4.5.1;4.5.2; 4.5.3) also casts shadow on relationships between the Hakkamat themselves and prompts them to trade insults with one another during dancing and singing occasions in pride or defence of their tribes. H/F.R51 (20.05.06) claims that the deceased Hakkamah bit Hassaan from Ta’aisha had exchanged insults with Hakkamah A’aiyasha al-
Austowania from the Bani Helba tribe and that the women of both tribes were organised as competing teams called (perhaps humorously) Mareekh and Hilal respectively, the two most popular and rival football teams in Sudan. At a social occasion, women of both tribes were invited together with their Hakkamat. In the dancing party, Hakkamah Bit Hassaan, by then advanced in age, insulted the Bani Helba women first by singing:

**Box 9**

**English:**

My girls are calves (i.e. young and desired)

Women of al-Hilal (the Crescent) do not come near water streams [i.e. do not wash, are dirty]

You show the trail (of bad smell)

Vaccinate them with bandawr, before their infection spreads out (i.e. you’re infected and rotten)

(H.Bit Hassaan)

**Arabic**:

بناتي انا عجول
عرفين الهلال ما يتحفن الرجال
تحبين الآثر
اطعنهم بندور قبل الجر، ما انتشر

**Transliteration:**

Banāṭīʾ anā ’ujūl
‘awīn a-l-Hilāl, mā bit-ḥifan a-l-rijāl
Tajīban a-l-’attār
‘att anhum banadawr, gabl al-bajar ma-ʾintashar
She boasts of her beautiful and young women and loathes the filthy and undesired women of Bani Helba who can transmit diseases warning that they should be inoculated before they could pass them to their men.

Boiling with anger, A’aiyasha al-Austowania hit back:

**Box 10**

**English:**
Oh, you are as bitter as the grasshopper of calotropis
I found the shallow barnoog but did not find its roots!
I strongly reject intermarrying with you as you are not of a good pedigree
You are but brought by wad Birli’s first flood froth [wad birli is a wadi, dividing nyala into two]
I ask the water and sanitation department to come and clean the nasty rubbish

(H. A’aiyasha al-Austowania)

**Arabic :**

المرة جراداة العشر
انا لقيت البرنوق وما لقيت له قعر
إبيت نسيكو كثير ومااعدكو أهل
الجابكو ود برلي في أول الحشر
بلاغي فوق الصحة بجي يشيل الزفر

**Transliteration:**

Al-murrah jaratt l-’ushar
‘ana ligīt al-barnūg wa ma ligīt layya ga’ar
‘abayt nisbitkā katīr, wa ma ‘indukā ’ahal
Al-jābkā wad Birli fi’ awāl l-hashar
Balāghī fawq al-ṣāḥah, yajī yashīl al-zafar
She describes the Hakkamah’s tongue as nasty and sour just like the locust of calotropis; and that her folks are like bamoog grass, have no roots and no origin and would therefore be refused intermarriage with her people, and that they are just like the nastiest froth brought by the first floods of wadi Birli water stream. So, we see here even female beauty is iconised in this poetic dual in order to emerge victorious and superior in every respect; a confrontation that exudes tribal passion as well as an endorsement of ethnicity, though it should not be taken personally.

6.3.2 al-Hakkamah and Maintenance of Culture, Virtues and Ethics

Forty seven respondents including the eighteen Hakkamat state that al-Hakkamah play an important social role in maintaining the tribe’s norms, culture, traditions, values and the characteristics of its social life and would urge the people towards good conduct and noble behaviour. This role, respondent R72 claims, would reflect positively in the valuation of all women in the community; as in critical occasions, a man would proudly label himself as ‘the brother of so-and-so’ woman, pointing to his sister who he would never dare disgrace by any act of his whatsoever.
6.3.2.1 Socialization/Indoctrination

Socialization in this research is used in its broadest sense which is defined by Schwartz (1976: ix) as the process through which individuals become identified as members of a society based on their practice and behaviours that necessarily reflect its cultural characteristics. *Al-Hakkamah* is presented as a model of socialisation in her community as everything about her exemplifies the maintenance of good virtues and conduct as shown in the way she dresses, behaves and engages in social transactions, the organization of her house, in the way she receives guests ... etc. This has important impact in the socialization of the community and children in particular as it is widely believed that, Schwartz (1976) maintains, the experiences of early childhood set the foundation of individuals for constructing their personality and building their cognitive ability as made clear in the accounts of our respondent R17:

> Her role in maintaining the virtues of the community is crucial. She reflects the community’s virtues in her house. Outside her house and in public, she has direct impact in influencing children’s behaviours … (R17, 02.05.06).

Different examples are presented by different respondents to indicate the role played by *al-Hakkamah* in the socialization process of the community; for instance, circumcision (see footnote 77), whether for males or females, is a very important social occasion in the life of the family and the community, and is usually celebrated with a big ceremony. Both the rituals and the ceremony are critical events as *ritue de pass* for boys and girls for entering the stage of gender
recognition: as men and women (see 4.2.1). It is a painful operation especially for girls and therefore courage of the child is required and tested especially for boys. Therefore, respondent R14 (29.05.06) highlights that al-Hakkamah would sing for the girl inciting her not to cry and reminding her of the prestige of her father who is a strong horseman:

**Box 11**

**English:**
Oh little girl, don’t fear the sharpness of the blade
Your father is the bull of a buffalo (as brave as a buffalo)!

**Arabic :**

يا بنية ما تخاف من شار الموس
ابوك فحل الجاموس

**Transliteration:**
Yā binayyah, ma tkhāfī min sharār l-mūs
‘abūkī faḥal l-jāmūs

And for the boy she sang:

**English:**
Look brother, if you cry,
I won’t greet you.

**Arabic :**

خينا هيا، كم بكيت
ما بسلم عليك

**Transliteration:**
Khayyānā hey, kam bakayt
Mā basallim ‘alayk
In wedding ceremonies, al-Hakkamah sang for the groom urging him to be strong and generous.

Box 12

**English:**

You are the lion, the ribs smasher [brave and strong]
A calf is nothing for you [rich and generous]
A sheep, is just a hen for you [rich and generous]

**Arabic :**

دَارِجٍ، كُسَّار الصُفُف
ولد البار ما حاجة ليك
قولة خروف جدادة ليك

**Transliteration:**

Dārjī kasār l-ṣufūf
Wald al-bār mā hājah layk
Gawlat kharūf, jidādah layk

She describes him as strong as a lion that kills its victims by breaking their ribs, and as wealthy and generous that he slaughters and offers calves and sheep in hospitality. It is an urge and a reminder to the man of the responsibilities he must take on as a family man - to be brave, wealthy and generous.

I observed that young girls in rural Darfur used to undergo traditional local cosmetic surgery of initiation to their cheeks, gums and lips. Among the
Baggara, tattooing of the upper gum and the lips\textsuperscript{83} is quite a common practice especially among young unmarried women. Nine \textit{Hakamat} explain that in doing the lips or gum initiation, the girl’s friends would strike her delicately on the chest and sing songs that are composed by \textit{al-Hakkamah}, one of these songs as recited by H/S.R4G4 (11.06.06) says:

\begin{center}
\textbf{Box 13}
\end{center}

**English:**

Today this way, tomorrow the other way  
You whose lips are as soft as the first milk of cows  
And tomorrow you will receive people with a lovely smile  
Today’s hard and tomorrow’s hard too, but tomorrow is a joyful laughter with the youngsters

**Arabic :**

اليوم كي، وباكر كي  
ام خشماً بي  
ويكزة نباهري بي  
اليوم حار وباكر حار، بكزة ضحك فرقر مع الشباب

**Transliteration:**

\textit{Al-yawm} key, \textit{wa bākir} key  
\textit{ʾumm} khishayman libbey  
\textit{Wa bukrah tabāshri} bey  
\textit{Al-yawm} ḥār \textit{wa bāKir ḥār}, \textit{bukrah dihjik gargar} ma’a l-ṣubyān

\textsuperscript{83} This is carried out by jabbing the gum or the lips by a small bundle of green thorns and rubbing it with cow or goat’s dung (sometimes it is done several times). The mouth is kept shut until it is healed. This will make the colour of the gum and the lip darker so that teeth look whiter and shiny thus making the smile nicer and more attractive (my own observation).
This song encourages young girls to tolerate the pain from the process in return for the beauty that results and the wonderful outcome which is love and joy.

*Al-Hakkamah* also encourages the girls to maintain their virginity intact until they are married which would then be celebrated in a large ceremony as in the accounts of H.R71 (06.05.06). This is because in their culture the girl's virginity constitutes the honour of her family and if she messed with it, it would destroy the prestige of her family and stigmatize them. H/S.R71 reminds them of the family honour that they should protect:

**Box 14**

**English:**

Her fathers are good men, who never been disgraced {of their girls' behaviour}

Her mothers are good women, who never resort to holy witch to hide their disgrace

She is a filly that outraces other horses upon seeing men

And her mouth (i.e. her words) is as pure white as milk {i.e. honest}

H/S.R71 (06.05.06)

**Arabic :**

زنين إبئاتا الما كسروا ديبه

زينات إمئاتا الما جلس فقر

هي مهية تسب الخيل لي شفقة الرجال

خشومها حليب لي عفت الشرفة

**Transliteration:**

Zaynīn ʾabahāta al-mā kassarū dabbūla

Zaynāt ʾummahāta al-mā jalasan fagārā

Hī mihayrah tasbug al-khayl lay shawfta l-rijjāl

Khashumhā ḥalīb lay (missing words)
Obviously, the examples above are all concerned with critical occasions and moments in the lifecycle of the social upbringing of children to become adults and responsible persons at both the family and the community levels.

Observance of the Baggara lifestyle is one area where *al-Hakkamah’s* eye is so critical to the total adherence of members to the code of conduct. For instance, men are required to wear round their arms a complete set of a knife and its accessories. Twenty six respondents including eight *Hakkamat* suggest that *al-Hakkamah* urge and, in many cases, would enforce this adherence by consistently checking that men carry with them necessary tools and dress within accepted norms.

However, Respondent R14 claims that paying attention to the style of men’s dress has become less focused on by *al-Hakkamah* especially in the rural areas which become largely influenced by urban style of life such as *Tullus (Fellata centre), Buram (Habbania centre)* and *Rihaid al-Birdi (Ta’isha centre)*. People have been to schools and men have been wearing trousers, shirts and modern shoes. As *al-Hakkamah* is being able to adapt to the changing situations, she praises and celebrates this new development in men’s style of dress adopted by educated persons who become ‘*afandiyyah*, or government employees. A *Hakkamah* appraises someone called *Abu Hajra* - the father of *Hajra*: 
This way, *al-Hakkamah*’s message is picked up straightaway and interest in education and subsequent government employment and prestige is encouraged and reflected in more children going to school and more parents sending their kids into education.

**Box 15**

**English:**
Abu Hajrah, who is like him!
He holds his pen, holding his notebook,
And heading towards his office

**Arabic:**
ابو هاجر، يبتكر المعاد
شاي قلمه
مسك دفتره، وغام مكتبه

**Transliteration:**
Abū Ḥājrah, yāṭī l-maʿa
Ṣāyyīl galamah
Māṣik daftarah, waʾānī maktabah

R14 also maintains that she might issue some social regulation, for instance:

The *Omad* and the *sheikhs* are strictly prohibited from drinking tea in the market place otherwise they would be subject to her censorship. They would abide by this rule and wouldn’t drink tea in the market place. This is why she is called *Hakkamah* as her regulations and arbitrations are immediately responded to and strictly respected by her community (R14, 29.05.06).

Respondent R55, too, indicates that she might also issue more or less similar regulations in organising women’s behaviours and practices such as that a
woman should not eat in public and should be modest in what she wears, and would fine them upon breaching these and similar rules.

6.3.2.2 Make or Break Reputations

As already mentioned, al-Hakkamah could compose poems and songs either in praise to make reputation or in mockery to break reputation. She is therefore liked by those who became subject of her praising and disliked by those who became objects of her censure. But as stated by nearly all respondents, both fear her as can be seen below.

6.3.2.2.1 Making Reputations - Praising

Al-Hakkamah praises good behaviour in order to present good examples and models in the community and emphasises the tribe’s composite legacy of attributes, values, virtues and behaviours. Thirty seven respondents including ten Hakamat maintain that when she was invited to any social occasion, al-Hakkamah would sing and praise the host and would include with him the generous man, the Ageed, the horseman and the tribe’s main leader as these are the community leaders who symbolise the power and good virtues of the tribe. For instance, H/S.R4G4 praises the Ageed who is the most courageous and generous horseman in the clan:
Many greetings to you, o ageed (commander of horses) [a tribe supreme military commander]

Day and night, on the horseback off you ride

The ageed sang that he was so eager to be on his horseback, and aspires

To see youngsters, on the saddles, he sang

(H/S.R4G4, 11.06.06)

In a specific incident of fighting, H.R31 recites in celebration of a brave horseman:

The son of a lion, the most talented
He who was fighting the enemy
He who attended the wounded, and waited
Until soldiers arrived next morning.
She meant that he went in a *faza*, fought with the enemy and won the fight and recovered the stolen herd. Then he waited with the wounded until soldiers arrived to rescue them.

Generosity is also one of the attributes that *al-Hakkamah* emphasises in her community and celebrates by poems and songs as in the accounts of H.R37G4:

Of course I’ve praised the generous person because a generous person is a person who welcomes guests and who says to any person who comes in ‘step inside, step inside’. His food dishes and tea facility are placed in the yard where people can easily have access to. He does not commit a mistake of shame against his guests. This is the person that we as *Hakkamat* praise (H.R37G4, 11.06.06).

Also in the views of *Hakkamah* H/S.R71:
If a man is generous and has wisdom and always gives good advice, we will like him and praise him … If a generous man hears that there are guests coming, he will come with his food dish, tea and milk and anything he can afford to receive guests; this is the generous man who we praise (H/S.R71, 06.05.06).

Respondent (20.05.06) claims that *al-Hakkamah* would choose a specific person and cast over him, by praising, a number of commendable qualities and attributes (of generosity, bravery and care) which would inspire other men to follow suit as in the recitation of H.R20G4:

**Box 18**

**English:**

Oh, it’s said people named you *Gasim*, I call you the talented
You are the one who rides his horse every morning and gives out in generosity
*Gasim’s* generosity is so common among the tribe
Oh, you are so prominent in the crowds of heaven and from there you contribute

If I didn’t praise you *Gasim*, I must be a loser
People go bragging, you usually ask people their needs, you’re of good ethics
The *Sheikhat* name after you, in hope, not despair
Your father’s talk is sensible and valuable
You are so smart and of prestige; I see heaven close to you

And *Gasim*, the *Sheikhat* named [their son’s] after him and *al-Hakkamat* sang for him
Your generosity is but inherited from mother and father
God offered you smart look and smart morals.
The provider of dinner for guests in hard times;
The resolver of men’s problems when they are in dispute with one another;
If ‘*aak*’ is shouted, you are the rider of a saddle;
You are the six years old bull [i.e. at the prime of its strength] which broke the fence
I hope your days last long with joy

(H.R20G4, 11.06.06)

Arabic:

قال الناس سموك قاسم، سميك الفاهم
يا الكل صباح جديد فوق اللبد يتزاحم
قاسم جودا عم فوق الفينة
ظهار فوق الجنان فوق يتساهم
كم ما شكرتك يا قاسم ما أنا شاعي خيبة
والناس يتدعي التفاخر، انت تجالب اخلاءك طيبة
الشيخات بيسمن ليك، من منيات ما خيبة
ابوك حديثا مركز، مقيم
عندك هيبة، يشوف الجنة ليك قريبة
قاسم سمى عليه الشيخات وغنى عليه الحكامات
انت الكرم والجود ورئة ليك من أمك لي ابوك
انت رينا اناك الحلقه والاحلاق
عئتي الضيفان يوم السنين شبابات
حات مشاكل الرجال يوم القسم الضريبات
كان قال أت انت للسروج ركاب
المسيس الكرر العراض
واليهنا انيمك زัยادات

Transliteration:

Gāl al-nās sammawk Gāsim, sammaytak al-fāhim
Yal-kulla sabbāh jadīd fawq l-lubad bitzāhim
Gāsim jūdah 'amma fawq l-gabīlah
zāhir fawq l-jinān fawq bitsāhim
kin mā shakkartak yā Gāsim ma 'ana shughli khaybah
wa l-nās bitada'ī al-tafākhor, 'intā bitas'al 'akhlaga; ātabah
al-shaykhāt bisamman layk min munyūt mi-khaybah
'abūk hadithah mur rakaz muqayyam
'indak haybah bashūf al-jannah layk garībah
Wa Gāsim samman 'alay l-shaykhāt wa ghannan 'alay al-ḥakkāmāt
'ıntā al-karam wa l-jūd warathā layk, min jiddak lay 'abūk

'ıntā rabbanā 'adāk al-khilga wa l-akhlāq

'ashshā l-dayfān yawn l-sinīn shaynāt

halāl mashākūl l-rijāl yawn il-gassaman l-dīrāt

kan gāl 'āk 'ıntā li-liṣrūg rakāb

al-sadiš l-kassar l-arād

wa bi-l-hannā 'ayyāmāk zāydāt

Celebrating generosity and bravery of men by al-Hakkamah is an old practice as explained by H/S.R50 who recites her mother's poems:

Box 19

English:

He who has sugar stored in al-suwaybah

He who has honey as al-rahad ʿardaybah

Liar who would say he didn’t taste it

And liar, too, who would say, he left displeased by him.

(H/S.R50, 02.05.06)

Arabic :

اب سكرً في السويبه
واب عسلً في الرهد عربية
كضاب البقول ما ضاقه
وكضاب البقول مشي ب عيبه

Transliteration:

ʿabb sukkrān fi l-suwaybah

84 A container made locally from clay and in which grains and sugar are stored

85 Name of a village that is famous of a big water stream called 'al-rahad ʿardaybah' in south Darfur.
Al-Hakkamah often praises men she admires as in H.R37G4’s recitation below:

Box 20

English:

I got men, brave men

Al-Tijani al-Ghali, my heart is full [satisfied]

Were there an issue requiring men, leave it to him!

Ali, a ferocious tiger; Abu Ibrahim, the unfaithful spear

The one who says to all, ‘hello, welcome inside’

While shaking hands [with your guests], your mat is spread out [for them to sit]

Your good deeds are heavy on the scales

You are the successor of al-Timān who holds his gun

(H.R37G4, 11.06.06)

Arabic:

انا عندي لّ رجال، عندي لّ جسار

التجاني الغالى، قلبي منلان

كان بي كلام الرجال، التجاني الغالى فضوا ليه مجال

على نمير حممان، ابن ابراهيم الكبك الغدار

سيد انفصلوا وسيد تعلوا حاي

ايك في السلام وبرشك وقع قدم

حسناتك رجوهن بالميزان الدودل الليشان

انت خليفة التيمان الدودل الليشان

Transliteration:

'anā 'indī laya riǰāl, 'indī lay juṣṣār

al-tigānī al-ghālī, 'anā galbī malān

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Al-Hakkamah extends her praising over her neighbours presenting thus to the community the value of being good neighbours as shown in the poetry of H.R37G4:

I got neighbours, that I will not be humiliated so long as I stay with them

They never say, what brought you, should take you away

Al-Fadil Mohamed Bakhit, the Ox of the crowd

Salah al-Din Osman, the wild buffalo bull

Mohamed Adam, the father of al-Amin, does not care about money [spends freely]

You always hold your knife [slaughter animals to feed guests] and your guests always well fed.

(H.R37G4, 11.06.06)

Arabic:

انا عندي لي جيران كان فيهم ما يهان
الجابو بفكرو، ما يتنقل
الفاضل محمد سعود تور الزحام
الجاموس الأكيب جيب صلاح الدين عثمان
محمد آدم أبو الامين، ما يحسب للمال

296
Transliteration:

ʾanā indī laya jīrān, kān fīhum mā bīhāh
al-jābkā yasaffirku, mā bitingāl
al-Fāḍil Muḥammad Saʿīd, tawr l-zihām
al-jāmūs l-ʾakayb, jayb Salāḥ l-dīn ʿUthmān
Muḥammad ʾAdam ʿAbū ʾAmīn, mā bahassib lī-l-māl
bay sakkīnāk rāʾa, wa ḏayfak dāyman gāyim shabʿān

5.3.2.2.2 Breaking Reputations – Defamation

It is agreed by thirty seven respondents including twelve Hakkamat that whilst al-Hakkamat praise the brave, they also ridicule and sing in mockery of those who wouldn’t behave according to the accepted social norms. Thus, bravery constitutes a noble attribute for al-Hakkamah and her community and therefore she praises and celebrates; in contrast, cowardice constitutes a major shame and therefore she rejects and defames those on whom it shows up. According to seven research respondents including four Hakkamat, among the community, cowardice ranges from being greedy, unable to participate in communal activities e.g. faza, being a gossip to physically running away from fighting. Any of these and other demeaning acts are legitimately considered a subject of al-Hakkamah’s ridicule.

Signs of cowardice are rejected outright as in the recitation of respondent R22 (2006) to ridicule a man scared of responding to a tribal SOS call:
### Box 22

**English:**

A cry for help [i.e. SOS] was heard, and brave horseman promptly responded

But the coward was still wearing his charms [and staying behind]

Till the crisis was over!

**Arabic:**

الكروراك ضرب، الفارس مرق
والخوف قعد ليبس الورق
لما الحال ابرد

**Transliteration:**

al-karawrāk ḍarab, al-fāris maraq
wa l-khawwāf ga’ad li libis l-waraq
lamma l-ḥāl ‘inbarad

The greedy would also incur their wrath. H/S.R71 mentions that they sang in mockery of someone who failed to receive guests arriving at his house:
Box 23

English:

Oh! The greedy, the mean
When guests came to you
And men called for you
You said you are upset [i.e. failing to host guests]

Arabic:

البخيل الهوان
لما جوك الضيافان
وأيطوا ليك الرجال
قلت انا زعلان

Transliteration:

al-bakhîl l-hawān
Lamma jawk l-dîjûn
Wa ʾayyatū layk l-rujāl
gultaāʾ anā zaʿlān

Sometimes, defaming the greedy, rather than being generic, is made on specific families and names that are drawn to the attention of al-Hakkamah. A man who failed to host guests but his wife did was reported to al-Hakkamah as claimed by H.R51 (20.05.06). Al-Hakkamah insulted not only him, but his clan, too:
Oh, sons of Jamʿān, your sea’s dried up
I will put a claim to the court, and will blunt the spears
Alas, al-Musmār (the nail) – the noble of birds, has now turned into a crow

H.R.51 (20.05.06).

The offender was reportedly the brother of al-Hakkamah; who subsequently admitted his guilt and apologised at which stage he was fined by her. Ten Hakkamat claim that submission to al-Hakkamah and acceptance of her arbitration (see 6.7.4) implies clearance of the shame on the offender and according to the norms, no one would be allowed to sing that defamatory song anymore and/or recount the story. In some occasions, to forcefully clear the offender’s case, al-Hakkamah would sing in praise of him. In other words, al-Hakkamah’s fine resembles a complete absolution of offense - and behaving contrary to her ruling might also constitute another offense.

86 ḥurr-l-ṭuyūr was locally called wild al-Mayram - the son of the princess.
It was also stated by seventeen respondents including six Hakkamat that in some cases the defamations of al-Hakkamah had caused some offenders to leave the area for good. An example of a man who left his area as a result of al-Hakkamah’s intervention is what recounted by respondent R48 (Box 28 below):

Box 25

During a battle in a place called Al-Radam in South Darfur in 1982, they (Bani Helba) were fighting with the Rezeiqat and weapons were extensively used. A man was unable to endure the fighting and therefore escaped from the battlefield and went back to the Farrājah village. It was war times and all the men were camping outside the village in standby position and only women and children and the elderly were staying in the villages. When he arrived in Farrājah, he found the women who were eager to know the news of the war and the position of their tribesmen. They asked him about specific names and he told them that they’d all died. The women were doubtful but grieved and consequently questioned whether he was telling the truth? He promptly replied back, ‘the truth also died!’ … An elderly man, who was listening to their conversation, called the women in and asked the m if they had given the man water to drink? They replied by no; he asked them to give him water and a cup of tea and not to ask him anymore. After the battle was over and the flight of the man from the battlefield was confirmed, the women … decided to punish the man in public in order to give a lesson to others not to follow his example. They organized a dancing party and al-Hakkamah recites:

English:
The Nissan stirred dust (i.e. he ran as fast as a Nissan vehicle)
Heading from al-Radam towards Farraja (places, i.e. from the battleground to the safe village)
(R48, 23.05.06)

Arabic:

Transliteration:
al-nisān ṭalaʿ ʿajājah
Min al-Radam āni Farrājah87

87 Farrājah is a forest between Ar-Radum and the village in which he arrived.
R48 claims that the man could not cope with the shame this song inflicted onto him and left the area for good. Other acts of immorality would also meet the same fate. Respondent R14 (29.05.06) recounts that a man had an affair with the wife of another man and dated her in her husband's house. When the husband came in, the lover ran away leaving his *merkoob* (local shoes made of leather) behind. The husband took the shoes to *al-Hakkama* and told her the man’s story. *Al-Hakkama* invited the village women for tea and organized a dancing party where she recited in mockery of the runaway culprit (Box 29 below):

**Box 26**

**English**:

What is the news of the terrified?

His footprints were seen in the yard

As if he’s planted *ʾangārā* (hibiscus, a crop that is planted deep and far a pace)

**Arabic**:

المرعوب خيابه

دربي في الخلا

تيرب انفارا

**Transliteration**:

*Al-marʿūb khabārah*

*Darbah fī l-khala*

*Tayrāb ʾangārā*
Thus indicating not only that he committed an immoral act but also he was so coward that he couldn’t face the consequences and that the traces of his paced out footprints on the ground suggested how scared he was whilst running away.

The respondent charges that this man’s act would disgrace and stigmatize the whole family and would obstruct any member in the family from assuming a communal responsibility or position in the future because the community would keep reminding them of what their family member had committed in the past. In this regard, H/S.R4G4 (22.05.06) narrates that while a man called Dugul was grazing his cow with her calf a lion attacked them and killed the calf which he could not defend. The cow returned to the camp alone. Al-Hakkamat realised what had happened and documented Dugul’s disgrace:

**Box 27**

*English:*

I realised what happened to Dugul, as if I had a telephone call

The cow moos saying, ‘my daughter was left in [the bushes of] the water yards’

Al-Dugul, ran away to escape his grave

But when I asked the cow, she told me that her calf was left in the grazing yard

*Arabic:*

للدقل بحسها تلفون

البقرة بتكلي بتقول انا بتي في الرجول

الدقل جرى لى قبره حولها

يوم سالت البقرة، قالت لي انا بتي في الخلا

*Transliteration:*

li-l-dugul bay hisah taylafūn

al-biγayrah bitabkī bituqīl’ anā bitī fī l-rijūl

al-Dugul jara lay gaburha ḥawalha

yawm sa’alta al-bagarah, gālat lay anā bitti fī l-khala
H/S.R4G4 relates that Dugul passed away a long time ago and his grandson got married. In a dispute between the latter and his wife, the husband hit the woman. The woman warned him not to touch her again; but he tried hitting her again, when she stopped him by saying, ‘roarrrr!’ reminding him of the incident of his coward grandfather. He felt ashamed and divorced her immediately.

**Hakkamah** H/S.R4G4 sums up their attitudes towards whoever not conforming to the norms of the community:

**Box 28**

**English:**

The coward, son of a woman, isolate him from men [an insult to be called son of a woman]

If he comes to you from the front, spit on him

And if he comes to you from behind, kick him with the heels of your shoes.

(H/S.R4G4, 11.06.06)

**Arabic:**

البطال ولد المنورة من الرجال افرزنه
كان جاكم من قدام، بي بزافكن رشله
وكان جاكم من ورا بالحجل سكنه

**Transliteration:**

al-batţāl wad l-marah, min l-rujāl ʾafurzannah
kān jākum bay gudām bay buzāqkan rashshannah
wa kān jākum min wara bil-hijil sukkannah
More than half of the research respondents including ten Hakkamat agree on that the defamation by al-Hakkamah is intended to effect reformatory actions in the conduct of offenders and to provide lessons for the community not to repeat such offenses. Respondent R6 (24.05.06) however, guards that al-Hakkamat are always weary of defaming the men of their tribes and advertising their imperfections lest it might be adversely publicised by Hakkamat of opponent tribes. They would become less self-censored only in cases of extreme seriousness when would feel necessary to teach offenders from their own tribes unforgettable lessons. It is also quite evident that what they might not wish to achieve through poetry, they could achieve through symbolic acts, which might, perhaps, be less repeatable and and/or amenable to abuse by their opponents. The symbolic behaviours and figurative expressions of al-Hakkamah to convey messages as explained by twenty respondents including nine Hakkamat include the following examples:

Firstly, al-Hakkamah can wear a merkoob (man’s shoes) to indicate that a man ran away and left his shoes behind. Secondly, if there was a thief in the village and he stole grains or groundnuts from somebody’s farm, al-Hakkamah would tie a grain head or a bundle of groundnuts to a handkerchief and tie the handkerchief to the edge of her tobe so that it could be clearly seen by everyone as she wandered around in public places to publicise the matter (R5). Thirdly, two respondents claim that al-Hakkamah would resort to darb al-marowb (the footprints of the terrified) in which case she would instruct females of her clan to braid their hair in two plaids in the middle of the head to resemble the path of a terrified runner and would ask them to leave their heads
uncovered in public places. This symbolises a well known meaning among the locals that someone has cowardly ran after committing an anti-social behaviour and who would then be known without even his name being mentioned.

The regulatory aspect of the role of *al-Hakkamah* is quite transparent in these narrations. Respondent R70 speculates that this role of *al-Hakkamah* is even more powerful and effective than the role of the law in influencing people’s behaviours. This is because upon committing a shameful act, the offender must leave the area either for a short period of time, or for good, until the matter is erased from the collective memory of the community. It is a heavy price to pay and therefore constitutes a deterrent and also an incentive to conform to the accepted code of conduct.

### 6.4 Conflict Institution of Tribes

Fourteen respondents admit that tribes have inherited their own military system that deals with war and fighting. Five of them state that the role of the native administration is to administer people’s affairs and calm down the anger of the tribe upon eruption of disputes with other tribes. In cases of theft, counterattacks, raid or war with other tribes, normally the *Nazir* does not order the people to chase the thieves or the attackers because this is the responsibility of another tribal institution, the *Ageed* (pl. *Augada*, a supreme or chief commander) institution; which operates in parallel to the *Nazir*’s native
administration, representing the military wing of the Baggara Arab tribes. The Ageed consists of a group of Augada and their horsemen. Each Ageed represents a clan (khashum bait in Arabic) and commands one hundred horsemen. The number of the Augada therefore depends on the number of the clans or khashum bait that are affiliated or allied to the tribe. A group of Augada is chaired by ‘Ageed al-Shoosha’, also called ‘Ageed al-Augada’, who is the chief Ageed just like a commander general in modern armies and the Augada represent the military council and its executive organ. This structure is illustrated by R55 from the Ta’aisha tribe:

When conflict is experienced, there is the so-called Augada who are responsible for the fursan (horsemen). Each Ageed is responsible for one hundred Faris (horseman). Ageed al-Augada is responsible for ten Ageed. In Rhaid al-Birdi, we have three Ageed al-Augada which means we have three thousands horsemen in the district (Mahaliyah) who are well organised, well equipped and standby. This is a traditional tribal organisation and is not only used to deal with conflict but also to maintain and protect the Ta’aisha Dar - protect its honour as well as to deploy for faza purposes (R55; 21.05.06).

The Ageed institution thus appears to be responsible for a number of tribe-centred activities such as tribal parades, wars, etc., as well as manage and monitor the tribe’s seasonal movement with regards to grazing locations, water

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88 Shoosha in Sudanese Colloqial Arabic is the forefront hair of the head crown. According to respondent R22, the position of legend of Ageed al-Shoosha among the Bani Helba comes from a claim that some three hundred years ago, ‘nahas’ (a huge drum made from cobber and symbolises the power associated with ruling families within tribes) was seen in the water stream about to sink. A man called Zantoot jumped into the water and kept the drum afloat. Later, tribesmen came and together, they pulled out the drum. Thereafter, Zantoot was, honourably, appointed as the top Ageed al-Shoosha of the tribe and since then this position has become inherited by Zantoot’s family and even those who have obtained higher education in military studies are not entitled to assume this position unless they come from Zantoot family. Women are not represented in the Ageed system.

89 A town in south Darfur and capital or centre of Dar Ta’aisha.
resources and the whereabouts to encamp (see 4.5.1.5). Its main task, however, seems to be to exclusively maintain the security of the tribe as also highlighted by some Darfuri scholars (e.g. Takana 1998; Masajid 1995).

The Augada are knowledgeable, experienced, strong and skilful horsemen but Ageed al-Augada is usually chosen based on certain other criteria which include, but not restricted to, talent, insightfulness, negotiation skills, persuasiveness, good perceptive and strategic skills, planning and organizational skills and a strong personality and charismatic authority. He is necessarily a brave and courageous horseman. Masajid (1995) maintains that the Ageed al-Augada should possess the qualities that would qualify him to fit into the position of a war leader. Thus, he should be one of the owners of good quality horses and a wealthy man in order to be able to meet the demands for running his job. He is usually selected and his selection is made through a meeting of the Augada at clan level to choose an Ageed for the Omodiya (plu. Omodiyat); then the Augada of the Omodiyat would meet to choose Ageed al-Augada for the whole tribe and who would then be the supreme war leader. Masajid (1995) postulates, as also five respondents, that Ageed al-Shoosha is the one who possesses great power and his instructions, during war, encompass, and surpass, even the Nazir’s and all tribe members have to abide by them.

It is surprising that, I would argue, whilst the Nazir, Omda and Sheikh are formalized and acknowledged by the Condominium and subsequent national
governments of Sudan, through the native administration system, the *Ageed* institution, even though firmly built into the tribe’s (military) hierarchy, has hitherto remained unincorporated in the system, nor has it received any focus in discussions of conflict in Darfur (se 4.5.3.1; 4.5.3.2). Ten powerful Baggara tribal leaders\(^90\), who were respondents in the research, have also masked this fact, or in the least tried to. While acknowledging the fact that each tribe has its own inherited defence system, they avoided going into any detail about the roles being played by the *Ageed*. Apart from Masajid (1995) and Takana (1998), there seems to be very little mentioned about the institution of the *Ageed* in the literature of conflict between tribes in Darfur.

### 6.5 *Al-Hakkamah* and the *Ageed* Institution

Five respondents claim that in addition to the *Ageed* institution, the other institution that is independent of the native administration is *al-Hakkamat*. But *al-Hakkamah* and the *Ageed* are closely related. This is because the role of *al-Hakkamah* is to ensure that the tribe is well protected and it is usually the tribal institution of the *Ageed*, not the government, which undertakes the responsibility for protecting the tribe’s honour, property and *dar*. *Al-Hakkamah*, especially the *khail Hakkamah*, who appeals, suggests and incites the *Ageed* and his

\(^{90}\) Two Nazirs, a Nazir’s son, and four tribal elites who were politicians and government influential officials.
horsemen to plan and execute wars and therefore they work closely together\textsuperscript{91}. R5 suggests that the horsemen and \textit{al-Hakkamat} have their own shared language of communication and shared understanding and interpretation of events even though \textit{al-Hakkamah} does not attend the discussions of the \textit{Augada}. And although five respondents emphasise that whilst the presence of the horse \textit{Hakkamah} is necessarily connected with the presence of the ‘\textit{Ageed}, \textit{al-Hakkamah} is always seen as an independent institution and she exercises her own judgement whether or not to slander the \textit{Ageed} and/or try him, whereas the institution of the \textit{Ageed} is hugely influenced by \textit{al-Hakkamah} as in the accounts of one \textit{Hakkamah}:

\begin{quote}
While the \textit{khail Hakkamah} is usually attached to the \textit{Ageed}, it does not mean that she is part of the \textit{Ageed} institution; she is in fact independent of him and their relationship is coordinatory and/or complementary, and that the \textit{Ageed} could be a subject of her scorn and judgement were he to behave unacceptably (H/F.R51, 20.05.06).
\end{quote}

Nevertheless, despite the fact that the \textit{Ageed} is the decisive institution which has the authority in launching wars, \textit{al-Hakkamah} is so incisive in directing and influencing the course of the armed conflict and so her role is akin to military psychological operations department (\textit{al-tawjīh al-ma’nawī}). Paradoxically, however, those who execute and dominate wars whilst they are raging, that is, \textit{al-Hakkamah} and the \textit{Ageed}, are not being involved quite sufficiently when

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{91} For instance, \textit{al-Hakkamah} makes the horse’s ornamental decorations, called the ‘\textit{zihbah}’ which is made from leather and consists of a ‘\textit{labab}’ which is a leather stripe put round the neck of the horse and contains mirrors sewed by fine leather strips, making it quite splendid to look at. She also makes the ‘\textit{ghurdah}’ which is the leading rope of the horse and offers it to the leading \textit{Ageed} (respondent R5; 22.05.06).
\end{quote}
settlement is negotiated and enforced through government. Respondent R22 concludes that because tribal war in Darfur is managed on the ground by the Augada, tribal administrative leaders are, in the majority of cases, unable to influence and/or negotiate any effective settlement as the power and obedience of the people, at war time, rest with the Ageed and the Hakkamah.

6.6 al-Hakkamah and Conflict: General Overview

All seventy two research respondents concede that al-Hakkamat are powerful and have authority and agency (see 2.6.2; 2.6.3; 2.7; 2.8) that enable them to actually influence serious actions even though they may not be involved in the decision-making institutions of their tribes. They are often described as a double edge sword indicating that they may calm down matters or explode them. Their strong voices have influenced conflict and tense situations quite evidently in most of the devastating conflicts experienced in Darfur between 1980s and 2006 (see Table 6 below):
Table 6: Some Conflicts with Which al-Hakkamat were Involved

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tribes involved</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ma’aliya and Rezeiqat</td>
<td>1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rezeiqat and Denka</td>
<td>1975, 1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bani Helba and Mahriyah</td>
<td>1976, 1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salamat and Ta’aisha</td>
<td>1978/80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fellata and Gimir</td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fur and Arab</td>
<td>1987/9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fur and Tergam</td>
<td>1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zaghawa and Northern Rezeiqat</td>
<td>1994; 1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab and Masalit</td>
<td>1996, 1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habbania and Abu Darag and Habbania and Darfur insurgency</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bani Helba and Tergam</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The extreme exercising of al-Hakkamat's agency and power can be seen in her provocative words that, as recalled by respondent R41 (21.05.06), reflect her trust in her tribe's power and readiness for aggression and counter aggression:

Box 29

English:
He who has death,
I will buy it from him for a lactating cow [ie so valuabe to sell away, but in this case, she will]

Arabic :
العندب موت،
بي بقرة شايلي ببيعه لن

Transliteration:
al-‘indah mawt
bay bagarah shaylay bab’eal lay
The intention of this song is simply to agitate and provoke the tribesmen to act in the defence of the honour of the tribe irrespective of the consequiencies. This is a form of charismatic authority (see 2.2) which, in the view of twenty three respondents, has seriously influenced conflict incidents and tense situations experienced between tribes of Darfur. R41 claims that this kind of utterance has a convincing drive to act, and in times of conflict it translates directly into aggression; twenty six respondents including six Hakkamat agree on that the interference of al-Hakkamah was instrumental in turning tame threats and mobilisation into dreadful retaliation or fully blown out wars.

The concept of retaliation or revenge in the perception of al-Hakkamah and her community is based on an assumption that, two respondents suggest, in the culture of tribes in rural areas, where loyalty to tribe and family is paramount, any infringement against your own should not be allowed to go unpunished – and thus simple disputes would transform into wide-scale conflicts. Al-Hakkamah, as a member of her community, is expected to play by the rules of this rural tribal community and side with her group regardless of whether they are right or not. It is thus only normal for her to get involved in the fights between tribes in Darfur during the late 1970s throughout 1980s, and 1990s to 2000s. And whilst her support is often enlisted, the respondents still describe her as a source of trouble, affliction and a curse in their communities and that generally, she has played a negative role in most of the conflicts experienced in Darfur.
From the viewpoint of the tribesmen, however, she is perhaps just another member undertaking her full responsibility in supporting the tribe in a time of need. I shall outline in the sections below only four instances of al-Hakkamah’s involvement in conflicts in Darfur, during four decades, that is, 1970s, 1980s, 1990s and 2000s.

6.6.1 Conflict between Bani Helba and Mahriyah - 1975/6

The conflict between the tribes of Bani Helba and the Rezeiqat Mahriyah in 1975/6 represents the most devastating conflict that was ever experienced up to that time between two parties of the same Arab ethnicity (see 4.5.1). In this conflict the agency and influence of al-Hakkamat of both tribes were played out so powerfully. Five respondents maintain that the Abbala Rezeiqat Shamaliya – Mahriyah - were hosted by the Bani Helba in the latter’s land/Dar and on 15 April 1975 a conflict over a water resource - a well - erupted between the two tribes. At that time, the Rezeiqat were armed with automatic weapons such as G3 whilst the Bani Helba were using traditional weapons (swords, spears ... etc.). In order to calm down the situation, the government ordered the Rezeiqat herdsmen to move outside the land of Bani Helba until the matter is resolved. The conflict could have been contained smoothly, but for the intervention of al-Hakkamat of both tribes who contested and insulted each other’s tribes, and incited their men by recitations that transformed the dispute into a violent wide-scale conflict that lasted for months and resulted in many deaths. The following
constitutes typical instances of enticing and inciting poems and songs of al-Hakkamat. For instance, upon the intervention of the government, respondent H.R31 who witnessed that conflict and who belongs to the Mahriyah admitted that she was so angry that she recited poems inciting her men to fight for the right of their camels to graze by force in the prohibited grazing land of the Bani Helba (Box 33 below):

**Box 30**

**English:**

Where is the compassionate wide-chested camel?  
The one's denied its grazing land [pastures]  
I need the man to fight for it  
Before reconciliation is achieved

(H.R31, 09.05.06)

**Arabic:**

الحنانة أم زور، وديثها  
الائمون مراها  
انا داره البارز فيها  
قبل الصلح ما يجيها

**Transliteration:**

al-ḥanānah ʿumm zawr, waynah  
al-ʾimanaʾ an marakah  
ʿanā dāyrah al-yabāriz fiḥa  
gabal l-suluh mā yajihā

In the meantime, a Bani Helba Hakkamah, who was married to a Mahri and was residing among the Mahriyah community, was grinding grain on a murhaka (grinding stone) in her house. A Mahri Hakkamah, deliberately and
provocatively led her camel near to the house of the Hilbawiya Hakkamah so that she could be heard. She then praised her camel, reciting loudly:

**Box 31**

**English:**

Graze freely, you whose tooth clefts are like routes

The Helbawi wouldn’t repent! (i.e. learn the lesson)

This year you will graze by (the force of the) gunpowder

**Arabic:**

ارتعى يا ام فليجتن دروب

الهلباوي ما بتوب

السنة ترتعي بالبارود.

**Transliteration:**

ʾartaʾīyāʾ ʿumm filaygan durūb

al-hilbāwī mā bitūb

al-sanah tartaʾī bil-barād.

She meant that the Mahriyah would graze their camels by force on the pastures of the Bani Helba and would prevail over them with the use of their automatic weapons.
The Hilbawiyya Hakkamah hit back in support of her tribe by reciting:

**Box 32**

**English:**

(They are) riders on animals’ backs [horses in this case, implying ferocious power]

The ones who cause the young girl to grieve [implying the killing of their husbands in battles]

The camels had gone thirsty since early afternoon! [i.e. prevented by force from water sources]

**Arabic:**

ركابٌن الدابة
وحزّانٌن الشابة
ام قُجّة من العصر
طلعت غابة

**Transliteration:**

rakkābin l-dabbah
wa ḥazzānin l-shābbah
ʾumm guggah mīn l-ʾisayr ʿalaʿat ghābbah

She boasted that her Bani Helba horsemen are famous for bravery and strong on horsebacks that they would kill the Mahri men and make their young women grieve. She warned them; too, that tomorrow their camels would be forced to leave the well thirsty – which meant they have to move out forcibly.

The Hilbawiyya Hakkamah was a mother of five sons and according to the local patriarchal system; her sons would be affiliated to the tribe of their father, i.e. the Mahriyah, and would side with him, not with the mother’s tribe. As a result of this, the Mahriyah men wanted to kill her as she was accused of provoking them and demeaning their horsemen; but her five sons who were strong horsemen
protected their mother and sent her back home to her own tribe, the \textit{Bani Helba}.

This proves that \textit{al-Hakkamah} usually maintains and exercises her own tribal identity and wouldn’t be influenced by the identity of her husband and/or sons (see 2.6.1; 3.3.1; 4.3). She would remain loyal to her tribe and that she would, fearlessly, stake her own life for this choice. Furthermore, this incident suggests that the tribesmen acted in response to \textit{al-Hakkamat} provocation and that \textit{al-Hakkamat} might not have started the conflicts initially but no doubt they had certainly sustained fuelling the passions on both sides.

\textit{Another Mahriyah Hakkamah} felt angry upon hearing this and wanted to warn the \textit{Bani Helba} of their power and the danger embodied in fighting them. She recited insulting and warning the \textit{Bani Helba}:}
Box 33

English:

[Oh Bani Helba]

You are but dancers of 'umm digaynah and 'gum Arabic producers!

If 'Abu Tamūnga sets his eye to the rifle point,

You will all die like simmayn [ant-like flying insects that die in hordes when grow wings]

Arabic:

دقّاقٌن ام دقٌنة، طقّاقٌن الجنٌنة

ابو تمونقا، كان صرٌ عينها

تموتوا موت السمٌنة

Transliteration:

daggāgīn 'umm digaynah, Taggāgīn l-jinaynah

Abu Tamūnga kān șarra 'aynah,

tamūtā mawt l-simmaynah.

She pointed at Bani Helba as transformed settled agro-pastoralists who rely on harvesting gum Arabic fields and therefore lack the strength and skills of horsemen. In general it reflects the dislike and scorn the abbala reserved for settled farmers.

92 A folk dance, Bani Helba are among the tribes that are famous for dancing it.

93 It is natural product from Acacia tree found in semi-desert areas like Sudan and used in several industrial products.

94 A Mahri militia leader
Angrily, a Hakkamah from Bani Helba responded:

Box 34

English:

Yes, these dancers of ʾumm digaynah are my right-hand
When their Ageed came out with his crude spear,

Al-ʾabālī [camel herder] saw him, why did he throw away his automatic rifle?

Arabic:

دقاقين ام دقيقه، هنن ايدي الزينة
عوهم مرق بي حريته الخشنة
الابالي شافه، ما لا زقل بريته

Transliteration:

daggāqīn ʾumm digaynah, humma ʾidī l-zaynah
ʾagīḏhum maraq bay ḥiraybtah l-khishaynah,
al-ʾabālī shāfah, mālā zagal biraynah

Suggesting the Mahri was scared from Bani Helba despite carrying an evidently superior weapon.

While these Hakkamat of both tribes were exercising their agency and influence (see 2.4; 2.6.2) to trade such incitement, another Mahriyah Hakkamah called Zarga\(^{95}\), who upon learning that next morning they would leave the area which

\(^{95}\) Currently lives in ʾUmm Ḍawwan Bān in south Darfur.
they were ordered to evacuate, contested the decision and incited her brother, Ismail Abdellah Jami, not to obey the order by reciting:

**Box 35**

**English:**

Saying 'get up, pack and leave', upset me

Oh, you - the solid armour, the spoon of poison

How many out of these pests would you kill for me?

**Arabic:**

قولة قوموا وسروا، سوّت لي هم،

يا الدرع الاصم، معلقة السم

من الحشرات ديل، بتكتل لي كم.

**Transliteration:**

*gawlat gūmū wa sīrā sawwat lay hamm,*

*yā l-dirʿ l-ʾaṣamm, malʾaqtā l-summ*

*min al-ḥasharāt dayl bitaktul li kam.*

Influenced by his sister's inciting, Jami swore the oath of divorce⁹⁶ that he would not allow anyone to approach the house of his sister unless on his dead body. He then armed himself and attacked the *Bani Helba* until he was killed.

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⁹⁶ The oath of divorce is a very strong oath that if a man swore, his wife is automatically divorced unless he commits himself to what he had sworn to do. It is a man-specific oath and while it is used in prattle in north Sudan, it is serious and binding in Darfur.
Part of the culture *al-Hakkamah* subscribes to is that any individual get killed would be avenged by killing someone comparable to him in status and stature. Following the death of her brother and driven by grief, anger and desire for revenge, *Zarga* asked for the heads of the *Bani Helba Nazir*, *Issa Dabaka*, and his beloved daughter, *Hawwa Tummah* and his cousin *Ahmed Ismail* explaining that she would want to make from the three of them a ‘*ladaya*’ (a fire pit) on which she would cook. This was because these were the only people, in her view, whose killing would compensate for losing her strong and brave brother. Her demands escalated and intensified the conflict further as her tribesmen wanted to appease her.

A similar incident was also recounted by Slatin Pasha (1930: 72-73) as happened during the time when he was Darfur commissioner. He recounts that *sheikh Ali Wad Hegeir* of the *Ma’aliya* tribe accompanied by his father-in-law and a group of men were attacked by a group of *Ma’aliya* and *Rezeiqat* led by *sheikh Belal Nagur*. *Hegeir* and his companions escaped, and when arrived at his home, his wife, received them by singing (Box 37):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 36</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>English</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My husband is but a male of ostrich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And my father a female ostrich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They made two days journey in just a moment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

97 The Nazir’s nickname was *Abu Hawwa* – the father of Hawwa in Arabic, and on the dancing court people would sing for him by naming him as the Nazir Abu Hawwa, Abu Tummah.
As they were chased by the attackers, this time, smarting under his wife's mocking diction, Hegeir determined to fight, though against his friends' advice, by saying, 'I shall never fly to save my life. Better is it to fall under the sword than to be laughed at by a woman.' And true to his words, he defended himself to his death and that of his father-in-law, too (1930: 73).

Respondent R48 (23.05.06) from Bani Helba also recounts that in 2005, years after the earlier conflict with the Mahriyah, he was invited together with a group of young men by a Mahri friend to a wedding in a camp belonging to the Abbala Mahriyah. They went to the occasion and were received nicely. At the dancing party, however, al-Hakkamah was singing and the Mahri men were shooting their G3 and Mengisto assault rifles in the air expressing their joy and pleasure. In the meantime, the Bani Helba invitees were carrying Kalashnikovs. Five or six of them entered the dancing ground and fired in the air, too, in an expression of appreciation to their inviters. When they did it for the second time, immediately the Mahriyah Hakkamah, quite displeased, sang:
The informant had recognised what this could be leading to and immediately asked his companions to leave to avoid a possible imminent confrontation. This was because, he claims, *al-Hakkamah*'s description of the guests’ guns as *fartūk* was degrading and was implying, too, that their presence was not desired. He says that they left the place promptly to avoid further consequences that might be caused by recalling the grief and anger that were caused by the conflict of the 1970s and 1980s.

### 6.6.2 *Ta’aisha* and *Salamat* Conflict - 1979/80

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98 *Fartūk* is a rope made from palm leaves and it is used to scare away birds that come to eat grains during harvest. When it is folded and then stretched out, it makes noise like that of guns which scares birds and forces them to fly away.

99 *Jalistū* is a leather container used for carrying guns on camels.
Twenty three respondents including seven Hakkamat maintain that it was the songs of al-Hakkamat that fuelled the dispute between Salamat and Ta’aisha to develop into a wide-scale conflict (see 4.5.1.2; 4.5.1.3). Two respondents and two Hakkamat provide detailed accounts of the incident by saying that when Hassan from the Salamat tribe won the village council election for the councillor of Id al-Igoor village council in Rihaid al-Birdi, the centre of the Ta’aisha dar, he was murdered by four Ta’aishi men as the election result was not accepted by the Ta’aisha Dar owners. One of the killers confessed to the murder and was sentenced to death. While awaiting execution, a Hakkamah from Wolad Kawoon, which was small khashum bait, clan, of the Ta’aisha tribe, was upset and composed songs presenting the murderer as a hero and lamenting that he would be punished for killing a ‘puppy’:

**Box 38**

**English:**

Alas! The planted flowers (of the tribe) is imprisoned For the sake of the puppy that was killed.

**Arabic:**

خسارة، الزهور المنشول مسجون عشان الكلب المكتول

**Transliteration:**

khasārah, al-zīhūr al-maṣḥūl masjūn 'ashān al-kilayb l-maktūl

Then she encouraged her tribesmen to harvest the gum Arabic field of the prisoner and to use the money earned from the produce for hiring a lawyer to
defend him. Subsequently, fifteen men started working in the field and organised, together with al-Hakkamat, a dancing party as an initial celebration of the due harvest and the anticipated release of the prisoner.

Incited by such apparently blatant provocation, two months later, at a Katim dance party during Eid days, the Salamat Hakkamah instructed young girls to dance with men from other tribes but not with their Salamat men who she considered cowards and unable to take revenge against the Ta’aisha. When the dancing finished, the Salamat men, feeling embarrassed and humiliated, decided to retaliate against the Ta’aisha. They attacked the Ta’aishi men in a gum Arabic field and killed eleven.

The Ta’aisha retaliated more brutally when one of their horsemen, called Ab-Karank, ambushed some Salamat near a small water stream and killed over thirty of them. The Ta’aisha Hakkamah was pleased and celebrated such retaliation and insulted the Salamat by reciting:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 39</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>English:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ab Karank is dangerous, he cannot be tracked down (i.e. for fear of death at his hands)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And the ostrich flew by (meaning the coward Salamat fled running fast like ostriches) his wings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Arabic:**
She describes the *Salamat* as cowards who ran away like ostriches in fear of confrontation and challenges them to dare tracking *Ab Karank* down.
Then again *al-Hakkamah* insults the *Salamat* by reciting:

**Box 40**

**English:**

*Salamat* have become rats and hid in holes

The sons of *kāwūn* (i.e. *kāwūn* clan) have orphaned the children

And there is no one to take revenge

**Arabic :**

السلامات بقوا فاقد، وخشوا في النقار

ولاد كاون انموا العيان

مافي زول بشيل النار

**Transliteration:**

*al-*salāmāt bigāw fār wa khāshū fī l-nuğgār

wulād kāwūn, ʾattamū l-ʾiyāl

māfī zawl bishīl l-tār

Respondent R48 maintains that the *Taʿaisha Hakkamat* also escorted their *Augada* while raiding *Salamat* villages. Thus the cycle of violence continued and the elders and leaders of the tribes, who might or might not have wished these events to spiral out in the way *al-Hakkamat* provoked, found themselves with little actual influence on the course of escalation and the management of its direction. Tension between the two tribes endured for more than a year before reconciliation was reached (see 6.8).

The respondents state that most of the recitations are performed by the powerful, now deceased, *Taʿaisha Hakkamah, Bit Hassaan*, and who was
acting as a tribal zealot. She was recognized as having strong agency and authority (see 2.2; 2.4; 2.6.1; 2.6.2; 2.6.3; 2.8) and was famous and well respected by all the community members. In the latter days of her life, she moved to Nyala and when visiting the Ta’aisha dar, she was usually received as they would an important official and her visits were publicly celebrated (see 6.3).

6.6.3 Conflict between Arab and Masalit - 1996

The conflict that erupted in 1996/7 between the Masalit and a group of Chadian Arab immigrants as result of the government in 1995 granted the latter most of the Masalit100 land through the Imarah system (see. 4.5.1.2; 4.5.1.6), involved an active participation and a devastating role of al-Hakkamat who sided with and upheld their ethnic groups, six respondents maintan. During the conflict, the Masalit invited a group of Omad (sing. Omda, local chiefs) from Arab tribes to peace negotiations but were all killed by burning the Kirainik mosque where they were meeting. We have seen a Hakkamah from the Mahriyah inciting her tribesmen against the Masalit by describing them as abeed (slaves) as cited by Mohamed (2003a: 2-3) (Box 41 below).

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**Box 41**

My tribesmen! Hit hard the slave who misbehaves in this place
His women are but slaves, busy with their Jangal dancing

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100 *Dar Masalit* – homeland of the Masalit African ethnic group was the most recent kingdom (1870-1930) in Darfur to be annexed to Sudan (Kapteijns 1985).
I want him here to cut firewood for me.
And I want his sister to wash my cloths.

A tribal chief, firing his gun in the air, answered her:

Oh! Hakkamah, feel good.
What is wrong with the Nuba.
Regarding their wealth, they accumulate it for us to take a way.
Regarding their crops, they plant them for us to take by force and eat.
Oh! Hakkama, feel good.
There is nothing wrong with the Nuba. (meaning they are our servants/slaves).

(Mohamed 2003a: 2-3)

Calling Africans ‘abid (ibaid, diminutive i.e. a slave) and Nuba is a racial insult embodied in the culture of the Arab groups in Darfur (see 3.3.4; 4.5.1.3).

Another Rezeiqat Hakkamah celebrating the victory of her tribe over the southern Dinka and the occupation of their land in south Sudan also echoed the same perception:

Box 42

English:

The slave, the stupid, he would have no rest
As we farmed his land. [i.e. we took it over]

Arabic:

 العبٌد، بلٌد، ما جاته راحة
 بلدها حشنه زراعة

Transliteration:

As mentioned in (4.5.2) the Darfur insurgency that emerged in March 2003 launched attacks on government’s installations in Darfur especially police stations. The role played by al-Hakkamah in the mobilization of horsemen of Arab tribes, against the insurgents was indeed powerful and influential, even though it’s ignored by scholars describing and documenting these turbulent events.

Eight respondents and Four Hakkamat broadly maintain that in 2004, for instance, a group from the rebel insurgency attacked the police and the post stations in Buram – the centre of Dar Habbania. They went to the Habbania Nazir afterwards and explained their cause to him and to the public emphasising that they are fighting the government not the tribe or the people as the government has propagated. The rebels left with an agreement with the Habbania that the latter would not fight them in support of the government. However, the interference of al-Hakkamah encouraged the Habbania to break the word of mouth they had offered to the insurgency group and fought them (Box 45 below):
Immediately after the rebels had left Buram, and having received the news, a blind Hakkamah called Kaltoum Bit Gawindah, came to the Nazir’s meeting place wearing a pair of different shoes - a black shoe on her left foot and a white shoe on her right foot (in the Arab local culture the black colour symbolises bravery and the white colour symbolises cowardice), putting on a local man’s dress (called ʿarāgī) and tying a bed sheet around her waist. The appearance was so strange; it invited the six men who were there to ask her why she was wearing in that way. She said that the Toro Bora - which was a local label for the rebels, took her right shoe and left her the left one and that she would like to go to the Rezeiqat (another Arab tribe) to protect her. By this expression and the white colour of her right shoe, she meant that the Habbania were coward because they were not able to confront the brave rebels who, irrespective of their cause, had attacked the police and the post stations at the centre of Dar Habbania and in the very presence of the Nazir, the Ageed and his horsemen and their authority. This was a very intolerable insult by al-Hakkamah for the men among them was a brother of the Nazir, a university graduate, a politician and was an Attorney General in Nyala. Thus influenced by the inciting speech and symbolic behaviour of al-Hakkamah, and despite the fact that the Nazir had an agreement just one day before with the rebel group, immediately, the six men who were present armed themselves and accompanied by other horsemen, chased after the rebels and attacked them. Sadly, the Attorney General was killed together with many omads, sheikhs, and horsemen. Fifteen members from the Nazir’s family died. The SLA team was surprised by this unexpected move which they interpreted as a betrayal and conspiracy by the Habbania.

Respondent H.R32 (07.05.06) comments on this disastrous incident, ‘she killed these men because had she not made that expression, they would have never chased the rebels and died’.

Obviously, al-Hakkamah was motivated by ethnic consciousness and tribalism (see 3.3.1; 3.3.2), the consciousness that suggests that the tribe should be able to protect its Dar from any attackers irrespective of their cause and therefore, albeit the attack did not target the tribe, it was conducted within its territory which was, in the perspective of al-Hakkamah, a severe breach of the tribe’s sovereignty and a humiliation that should not be condoned.
Similar intervention of *al-Hakkamah* in conflicts is also witnessed in the neighbouring Kordofan region in which the Baggara pastoralists are largely present as recounted by two respondents (Box 46):

**Box 44**

A dispute emerged between the *Humur* and the *Zurug* Misseriyah groups in Kordofan region in 1991 when a man from the Blue Misseriyah got married, through a judge in Khartoum, to a woman from the Red Misseriyah group against her family's consent. After being blessed by two or three children, they came back but the woman's cousins killed the husband. Incited by their Hakkamah, the husband's relatives retaliated by killing eight men from the Red Misseriyah and a vicious cycle of revenge was provoked by the Hakkamat of the two tribes with death toll reaching over sixty in three days before a reconciliation, mediated by the neighbouring Rezeiqat of Darfur, was reached.

Reviewing the relevance of *al-Hakkamah* to these conflicts, it appears that in almost all of them, *al-Hakkamah* was not usually the direct cause but was instead a trigger for simmering causes, thus moving acts quickly to devastating and destructive ends. From her viewpoint, she was doing so as a catalyst or safety measure for the survival of her tribe. This was partially explained by respondent R10’s statement that *al-Hakkamah* has a duty to express the tribe’s collective wisdom which other official tribal institutions might not express so vigorously and so openly. Where pacification undertaken by those institutions jeopardises the tribe’s dignity, *al-Hakkamah* steps in to rally for the restoration of that dignity, no matter what the price might be.

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101 The *Misseriyah* is a Beggara tribe mainly lives in Kordofan and is divided into two sections, *Humur* and *Zurug* (literally Red and Blue i.e. fair-coloured and blacks respectively).
Consequently, most research respondents, except al-Hakkamat, accuse al-Hakkamah of playing an evil role to the relationships between tribes through inciting conflicts and tense situations and encouraging ethnic entrenchment. They state that al-Hakkamat have currently become more powerful and developed stronger agency and influence than they had before as in the accounts of respondent R65G1 who is a Teacher and Nazir:

> At the moment they have direct influence on events even though they are not considered in discussions and decision making … after the conflict of 2003, al-Hakkamat have become like a horse without a bridle; now they are adding more fuel to the fire. I hope that the state, the native administration or any institution of authority will try to reduce their influence on the youth and stop them inciting the youth for conflict as is the case nowadays (R65G1, 12.03.06).

However, such a role is seen by some respondents as justified given the harsh nature and uncertainties that have engulfed and characterised the life of the Baggara. Respondent R22 who is from a Nazir’s family asserts that al-Hakkamah would not encourage fighting unless situations became tense in which case she would dedicate all her poems and energies to war and fighting. He adds that generally, women should not be blamed on this because unless they sharpened their men’s enthusiasm and incited them to fight, they are the ones who would face dire consequences (see 2.7). Consequently, al-Hakkamah would push her men to stay put and fight hard even though she knew that in war they might lose a son, a husband, a brother, a father and other loved ones. A typical example is what recounted by respondent R10 that in one conflict between tribes in 2003, some women were taken captives and their men were reluctant to trace and rescue them. Al-Hakkamat of the affected tribe incited the
lactating women not to breastfeed their male babies. Moreover, they incited women to refuse their husbands marital contact (sexual) and not to cook for them. The men submitted to their wish and led a violent counter attack and freed the hostage women. R10 (01.06.06) asserted that had al-Hakkamat not exercised such pressure on men, the women captive would not have been rescued.

From the discussion above, it is reasonable to conclude that al-Hakkamat have power and agency (see 2.2; 2.6.1; 2.6.2; 2.6.3; 2.7) that they have powerfully exercised in the recent past to influence and direct actions of people, of the powerful Ageed institution (6.4; 6.5) and also to affect the processes of conflicts in Darfur and their development into fully blown wars. They might not be the underlying cause; however, they have been and can be the powerful agent that induces others to act in these times of armed conflict.
6.7 Power and Agency of *al-Hakkamat*

6.7.1 Power and Agency of *al-Hakkamah*

In line with the concept of power and agency presented in 2.2 and 2.6.2, the respondents generally conceive the power and agency of woman as contained in her personality and her ability to present her cause, impose her will and or persuade and succeed in achieving her targets. In Darfur, the position of women is associated with a complexity of social norms and customs and the nature of gender roles and power relations (see 2.2). Assigning the woman the task of caring for the welfare of people must have therefore, historically, embodied an acknowledgement of a degree of legitimate exercising of power and agency that the respondents did not deny but would try to link to the capacity of women themselves (see 2.6.2; 2.6.3) exercising them and challenging obstructions to achieve desired ends as in the following respondents' statement:

A powerful woman is the woman who is economically self dependent, has her own autonomy … and has dedications to society (R61, 26.03.06).

A powerful woman is the woman who assumes a leadership position, has agency and capable to achieve her ends without fear (R68, 26.03.06).

Individuals vary in their power irrespective of their sexes; a powerful person is the person who possesses unique characteristics and abilities, insight and perception and has the agency that would enable them using these abilities to achieve their targets (R64G2, 26.04.06).
Any person can create his or her own power if he or she has self confidence in the first place, clear insight of purpose, faith, commitment ... to his or her values and as well has ability to impose his or her will over others. These characteristics form the basis of the person’s agency that he or she exercises without fear or hesitation, to persuade others to support her position and to do what she likes (R62G2, 26.04.06).

Thus, respondent R14 suggests that people may describe a woman as powerful because she succeeded in raising, say, seven children in the absence of their father and who all became good members in their community. Similarly, al-Hakkamah is considered powerful as she proactively nurtures in her people the adoption of what she perceives as communally acceptable code of conduct. Thus despite being labelled as masculine, power is not absolutely so but distributed relatively between men and women (Stacey and Price 1981; Miles 1985) (see 2.2). Additionally, these respondents’ perceptions on power also suggest that it’s ‘related to energy, capacity and potential’ (Hartsock 1981: 210) which al-Hakkamah evidently possesses.

Al-Hakkamah therefore has undisputed influence (see 2.4; 2.6.2) even though she is not normally included in the decision-making institutions of tribes. Thirteen respondents concede that al-Hakkamah’s skills and qualities (see 6.2.3) enabled her to acquire legitimate authority that bolstered her power, agency and autonomy (see 2.4; 2.6.2). Respondent R5 (22.05.06) states that ‘just as a governor is a chief of a group of people; al-Hakkamah is also a chief in her group and she is the one who has authority over her tribe according to local customs’ (see 6.7.4). The totality of al-Hakkamah’s charisma and personality is
ultimately what elevates al-Hakkamah to the higher position she assumes.

Respondent R14 spells this out precisely:

\[\textit{Al-Hakkamah} \text{ also has a personality that she can impose her choices on men, and men just follow what she chooses or decides. This is because she fights against vice and things that degrade men’s gallantry and strives to maintain quality conduct among the community, men in particular (R14, 29.05.06).}\]

In exercising her own choice, \textit{Al-Hakkamah} embarks on processes of self-realisation which enables her to assume this position of power and influence and to accomplish her aspirations. This power and agency, respondent R6 (24.05.06) claims, would often invite men with power and authority e.g. Omdas and Sheikhs, to admire her and to choose marrying her especially if the candidate realised his own weaknesses in handling administrative matters. This is because she would cast, through her power and agency, a sense of power and authority around him and therefore would consolidate his position. Such acknowledgement of the power and agency of \textit{al-Hakkamah} is clearly stated by respondent R18 - who himself is Omda when he says:

\[\text{For us, I think because our Hakkamah is the one who presents and counts all the virtues and positions of the tribe and sides with the tribe in all circumstances, and because she plays a significant communication role, she is in a position of respect and appreciation from us. We think she is one of the women who communicate strong messages that push the tribe to make so many decisions and actions … (R18, 30.04.06).}\]
While tribal leaders acknowledge the power and agency of *al-Hakkamah*, they fear it, too. This is exemplified by an incident experienced in 2004 in *Kutum* area of north Darfur as recounted by respondent R70 (2006).

**Box 45**

This happened when the terms *Tora Bora* (a nickname for Darfur insurgency) and *Janjawiid* (Arab horsemen) emerged in the Darfuri scene during the conflict that erupted between Darfuri rebel groups and the government in March 2003. During a social occasion, one of *al-Hakkamat* despised her tribe’s men through a song when she described the *Tora Bora* as brave because they go out and bring cars and weapons whilst her own go out and bring goats and hens which implied that her tribesmen are cowards. Immediately a tribal leader emerged from among the crowd and shot *al-Hakkamah* dead. A close relative of *al-Hakkamah* responded instantly and shot the man dead …. The tribesmen swiftly contained the matter lest it might cause further escalation among the tribe 102.

The respondent explains that *al-Hakkamah* might have been discontent with raiding incidents that had been committed by her tribesmen - the *Janjawiid*, who used to raid villages, burning and killing people and looting trivial spoils that, in her view, did not warrant the atrocities committed. Apparently, she might have attempted to influence a change in her tribe’s lot by seeking higher and more valuable, rather than trivial, rewards in exactly the same manner as the rebel groups who had raided *al-Fashir* airport in early 2003 and taken government weapons and vehicles (see 4.5.4.2). Yet, her message was politically very obvious: she condoned the raids but did not appreciate the rewards which may further encourage her people to be more lethal. On the other hand, having a leader shot her suggests that he might have felt that the opinion of *al-Hakkamah* could create a serious conflict among the tribe which would

102 The informant declined to mention the tribe, but other sources suggested it was one of the northern Rezeigat tribes.
constitute a big threat to the tribe’s leader and his agendas, hidden or known. The shooting back suggests that al-Hakkamah’s power also rests on an inner circle of supporters and relatives who spring to her defence, or revenge, when feeling such is required. This incident confirms the unprecedented powerful position and agency of al-Hakkamah in these communities and her strong social value and backup (2.4; 2.6.2; 2.6.3).

The fear of the people from the power, authority and agency of al-Hakkamah, two respondents maintain, overrule that of the Nazir’s despite the fact that the the power and authority of the Nazir are beyond those of al-Hakkamah. They justify this by claiming that if you committed a fault, the governor would prosecute you and his prosecution would be time-bound; but al-Hakkamah’s would be with you as her defamation would accompany you, as your shadow, for a long period of time; let alone that the whole tribe might get attacked for a couple or more words from her.

On the other hand, the agency of al-Hakkamah could be perceived as a mechanism for challenging the gender subordinating elements that normally obstruct females from thriving and prospering (see 2.6.3). Respondent R22 (2006) asserts that unless al-Hakkamat sharpened men, as you do a blunt implement, and incited them to act according to the conventional sets of rules and values that formulate manhood, they might be defeated, and women might be victimized and therefore they would push their men to win so that they should not be objects of victimisation by other men (see 2.7).
With the deterioration of the security situation in Darfur and the escalation of conflicts after 2003, *al-Hakkamah* exercised her power and agency as unfolded, for instance, in the dramatic conflict incident that was experienced between the *Ma’aliya* and *Rezeiqat* in 2004 and which reflected the obedience and non-negotiable loyalty of people to their *Hakkamah* as recounted by respondent R10 (01.06.06):

**Box 46**

In 2006, a commissioner in south Darfur had organised formal religious sermons for a village tribal community in order to raise awareness for rural people who were believed to be involved in serious and frequent conflicts. The sessions were focusing on the issue of homicide and killing of people and emphasising that it is a sin, and how it is impermissible to commit a crime of homicide, raiding, looting and burning people's assets. A large number of participants were attending. During these sessions, however, the tribe was attacked by another tribe and many people were killed. The horsemen of the tribe who were attending the sessions quickly left and got prepared for a counterattack. When the commissioner learned about this, accompanied by the religious teacher, immediately arrived at the horsemen’s meeting place where he found out they were about to go on the counterattack. He stopped them and asked them to listen to the teacher. When the teacher finished his preaching, the *Ageed al-Augada* asked the teacher/Faqir if he has finished. The teacher said yes. He then said to the horsemen, ‘did you hear what the Faqir said?’; they answered yes; ‘and did you hear what al-Hakkamah had said?’, they answered yes. Then he said to them ‘akufru’ (literally means disbelief); they said ‘we’ve’. Then ‘let us go and fight,’ he commanded them and off they set to fighting.

The power and influence of *al-Hakkamah* demonstrated by the above incident could be perceived as clearly built on, and reinforced by, an ideological and belief system that is already there and which is resistant and challenging to any outside intervention.
6.7.2 Autonomy of al-Hakkamah

Six respondents including three Hakkamat claim that al-Hakkamah is autonomous and independent in her pursuits and that neither the authorial hierarchy of the tribe (Nazir, Omda or sheikh) nor can anyone else influence her if what they suggest is not what she entertains. The freedom of speech she enjoys invites a respondent to describe her as ‘kasrat qaid’, a term meaning a ‘shackle breaker’ and also a label implies her emancipation from the gender constraints that usually obstruct the females from raising their voices and or speaking out confidently in public arenas. It embodies the very essence of the idea of human agency that identifies individuals ‘as autonomous, purposive actors, capable of choice’ (Lister 1997: 36) (see 2.6; 2.6.2). This could be demonstrated by a recitation of a Zayadiyya Hakkamah from North Darfur who had apparently opposed a 1998 government campaign to confiscate small arms that were privately owned by people in rural areas.

Box 47

English:

Oh, Welcome, the government has come!

Omer al-Bashir - the commander of the forces

(You’re) the Red Sea that throws out the pests

You’ve confiscated our weapons, leaving our boys just like girls

Whilst other tribes are attacking us

Killing twenty of our boys

And girls too!

(Musa 1999: 71)
Thus clearly speaking out against the authority’s policy when it conflicted with her tribe’s interests and was not afraid, when others were, to address the president of the country, directly protesting his actions that brought misery to her tribe.

6.7.3 Accountability of al-Hakkamah

The question would be then who is al-Hakkamah accountable to? Six respondents and four Hakkamat maintain that by the nature of her roles and
connections, al-Hakkamah is accountable to her audience i.e. her community and its institutions. In Diagram 1 (see 1.1.3), these are shown on the right hand side and they include those social actors with whom she is associated in a variety of contexts. Some may order her (e.g. the Ageed), others may censure her (e.g. her guardian family), some others may try or arbitrate her (youth groups or baramkah council (see 6.7.3) or boycott her performances leading eventually to her retirement (women chorus; her audience). Some, although may not have a huge sway on the way she reflects matters, can still punish her (government officials). Offences that may necessitate holding al-Hakkamah to account include behaving anti-communally, or irrationally insulting someone, or indeed unnecessarily inciting young men to initiate raid or breach an accomplished settlement.

If al-Hakkamah’s case is brought before the baramkah council, and she is condemned, then she might be warned initially, or fined or socially boycotted, or, if a khail Hakkamah, the Ageed might even sack her. An example of the latter case was experienced by Hakkamah Kaltoum bit Gawinda in the Habbania Dar who incited the conflict between the rebel group SLA and some Habbania in 2005 (see 6.6.4). This Hakkamah was ordered to leave the area immediately. But these cases where punishments were meted out against al-Hakkamah are rare and far between, and apart from this recent case, eighteen respondents including ten Hakkamat claim that since they were born, they never heard of any Hakkamah being rejected by her tribe.
However, respondent R6 (2006) mentions that, in late 2005, a *khail Hakkamah* was deposed from her position in *Idd al-Fursan* rural council (see 4.5.3) because she did not fulfil her obligation towards the *Ageed* and his horsemen when they arrived from a mission, which upset the men and therefore complained to the *ageed* who in turn deposed her.

### 6.7.4 Authority of *al-Hakkamah* Arbitration

Sixteen respondents including six *Hakkamat* concede that *al-Hakkamah* is recognized by her community to have a legitimate right to exercise power and authority of arbitration and to demand compliance with her rules and commands. It’s a form of both charismatic and traditional authority defined by of Max Weber (see 2.2) that is conferred on her based on her exceptional qualities as in the words of the respondents R15G2:

*Hakkamah* is one of the women in the village or the camp who has a specific form of authority and arbitration. This form of authority let people label her a *Hakkamah* (R15G2, 26.04.06).

The essence of the authority and rules of *al-Hakkamah*, in the views of sixteen respondents including six *Hakkamat*, is her dedication to maintaining the security of the community. She therefore forces actions that embody their collectively internalised values of generosity, bravery, gallantry and courage. These are embodied practically in attitudes such as carrying a knife, a weapon,
a spear, acting bravely, generously … etc., (see 6.3.2). Therefore her target of arbitration used to be the men who would fail to abide by these rules and/or violate community values and customs and therefore subject themselves to disciplinary measures by al-Hakkamah – measures that the whole community would uphold. To achieve such a role, the respondents maintain that al-Hakkamah would not go out chasing people, but would learn about any breach of the norms and morals through her secret eyes in the community who would monitor and pass to her detailed information about any serious breaches. Her arbitrations include warning, boycotting and fining which may include giving a bull or a horse.

Similarly, in events that require participation and solidarity of all men in the village, e.g. faza or war (see 6.3, table 5), al-Hakkamah would apply her punishment on those who, for instance, escaped from the battlefield. Thereafter, she might fine him for instance by forced hospitality for a group of women, buying dresses for some women or Hakkamat or providing grain as fodder for the horsemen’s horses. Such improbable punishment therefore, would influence men, including the Nazir, to fear her and to instantly respond to any communal appeal. A striking example of this is cited by two respondents as follows:

Box 48

In 2005, in Idd al-Fursan rural council, following a cattle theft, men went out on a faza campaign to chase the thieves. A man in the village did not join the faza for no legitimate reason. When the faza came back, al-Hakkamat, led by the khail Hakkamah, composed in mockery of him and held a compulsory dinner invitation at his house as a punishment for him. He was upset and consequently raised a claim against al-Hakkamah at Nyala court accusing her to have had caused him severe harm by composing insulting poems in defamation of him and by hosting a host of people in his house forcing him thus to
slaughter cows and serving them with food and drinks which caused him tremendous financial losses. He emphasised that he had nothing stolen and therefore had nothing to do with the faza.

Escorted by a large number of the tribe’s people led by the Ageed, al-Hakkamah reported to the court. She admitted her acts but when the judge asked her if she knew the man, she confirmed that whilst adding: ‘but he is no man’ because he acted against our values of manhood and did not join the faza, without a reason, as he should have done. She defended herself by emphasising that she did not commit any guilt because this was their custom and she acted according to what she was assigned to do for the community. Yet, she accepted to pay the fine ordered by the judge but added that ‘Mawlana103, if this man died, you must come and bury him’. Upon hearing these words the man begged the judge and dropped his claim; but the Hakkamah demanded that should they accept his repentance, he should have to pay them all their travel expenses to the court and which amounted to two hundred thousand Sudanese pounds (equivalent to 50 GBP), which he, dully, accepted.

A claimant demanding nearly two million SDP (equivalent to 500GBP) as damages, in the last minute in court, following the intervention of al-Hakkamah, a threat indeed, of boycotting, he had to withdraw his claim and buy the silence of al-Hakkamah by accepting to pay for expenses incurred not only just by her, but that by her entourage, too. In individual cases, there could really be no better example for al-Hakkamah’s power, agency and influence than this.

In some instances, the Ageed would set arbitrations against the horsemen. In this case, respondent H.R20G4 (2006) maintains that among the Habbania for instance, the Ageed had to first seek the consent of al-Hakkamat and after he set the arbitrations, he would ask the offender to submit to them. If he did, al-Hakkamat would fine him half of the fine decided by the Ageed and if he refused, al-Hakkamat would force him to pay the full arbitration or even more. However, the Ageed would also be subject to the arbitration of al-Hakkamah if

103 Honorific title of judge – your honour!
he committed a transgression and/or if a claim against him was raised to *al-Hakkama*. She has the right to judge him and fine him and or withdraw a voice of trust (withdrawal of confidence) from him and push for nomination of another *Ageed* instead.

In setting arbitrations against offenders, five respondents including three *Hakkamat* explain that *al-Hakkama* doesn’t act on her own; she is often helped with an arbitration council consisting of selected five women and four men. If the *Ageed* was accused and he resisted the judgement of the *Hakkama*'s council, the *Hakkama* could raise the issue to *Ageed al-Ugada*, the chairman of the *Augada*. The latter would invite the council of *Hakkama* and other five men to make a council of fifteen, including the offender, and would solve the problem otherwise the offending *Ageed* would be deposed. But if the problem was with ordinary community members, she would deal with it alone. These arbitrations, the five respondents postulate, are informal but morally binding and usually intended to address social control and cohesion and to provide lessons to the community against anti-social behaviour.

6.7.5 Source of Power and Influence of *al-Hakkama*

Eighteen respondents including eight *Hakkamat* maintain that *al-Hakkama* extracts her power and agency (see 2.6.1; 2.6.2) from attributes inherent to her and from a social value with which she is contextually endowed.
The former include her skills and talents which pave the way for building her agency and identity (see 6.2.1; 6.2.2; 6.2.3 and 6.3). The latter involves the local social context and its institutions in which she is constructed and thrived. These institutions conform to the very concept of tribe and tribal boundaries, in terms of cultural attributes, norms, values and beliefs, discussed in (3.3).

*Al-Hakkamat* are therefore invariably identified by their tribes such as *Hakkamat Rezeiqat, Bani Helba, Fellata* … etc., as proudly announced by respondent H.DA when she proclaims; ‘as a *Hakkamah*, I represent my tribe people who like me very much and support me and my opinion, and I like them’. This relation between *al-Hakkamah* and her tribe is also envisaged by respondent R72 as:

> *al-Hakkamah* is like the fuel that gives light to the lamp of the tribe … The tribe … gives the momentum to *al-Hakkamah*, first to appear as *Hakkamah* and second to recite for them in the way they like … expressing thus, as her role suggests, the events of her tribe whether through praising or defaming; in a way that would build their enthusiasm and enable them to accomplish their agreed purpose (R72, 10.06.06).

Such valuation of *al-Hakkamah* is indeed invaluable source of her power. Respondent R17 (2006) also emphasises the solid bond between the tribe and *al-Hakkamah* to have earned them mutual respect and solidarity. Respondent R72 asserts that this common purpose both united them and allowed *al-Hakkamah* to translate the accolade of her position into power and agency, consolidated by a close collaboration with the community as well as moral and material support. That kind of support is rendered by the community since the
early stages of the process of constructing the would-be *Hakkamah* up until her very last activities (see 6.2.5).

As she extols the virtues of her community, according to respondent R22, her community, the horsemen in particular, would sometimes also reciprocate in kind:

**Box 49**

**English:**

Oh, *Hakkamah*

whose hair is so long that it reaches her waist

She does not ride public trucks,

Nor does she crowd with passengers

**Arabic:**

الحكامة!

ام شعراً للحزامة

ما ركبت ام دورور وما زاحمت ركاب

**Transliteration:**

*al-ḥakkāmā*

‘umm sha’aran li-l-ḥazzāmā

mā rikbat ‘umm dawarwar wa mā zaḥamat rukāb

The community also rewards their *Hakkamat* by labels and nicknames that would remain part of her identification throughout her life. Most popular *Hakkamat* interviewed had nicknames and four of them said that all the
prestigious *Hakkamat* hold nicknames as a form of recognition of the worth of their *Hakkamah*, often glorifying *al-Hakkamah* in return for the services she delivers to the community/tribe. They are in some ways a representation of the power and agency she has and expressed. The table below shows the nicknames of some *Hakkamat* and the meanings they represented, actually or symbolically:

Table 7: *Hakkamat* Nicknames

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Hakkamah</th>
<th>Nickname and its suggestive meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fatma Omer Gadim</td>
<td>ḥidīqā – literally garden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mariam Mohamed Ahmad</td>
<td>ʾumm shīʿayr- literally has nice hair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaltoma Ali al-Rasheed</td>
<td>ʾumm gilayban nār- literally hot hearted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawwa Mukhtar at-Tigani</td>
<td>kassū – literally stay away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dahab al-Madina Ahmad Adam</td>
<td>dahab al-madinā – literally the gold of the town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At-Toma Adam Mohamed</td>
<td>al-gāsh – literally the water stream</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Daggash 2006: 34)

Respondent R43 (2006) asserts that the Baggara love two things: woman and cow. Hence, being a female poet assigned such a significant role also constitutes a source of power. Respondent R17 claims that among the pastoralist Arab community, women’s poems usually touch the inner feelings of her people which endear her to them so much. For some this is a historical legacy of the culture of of poetry and female poets that prevailed in the pre-
Islamic era in the Arabian Peninsula from which most of the Baggara Arabs of Darfur claim their descent.

The impact of poetry in these Arabian communities cannot be overemphasised. Roded (1999), for instance, maintains that since before the advent of Islam, in Middle Eastern societies, poetry was normally used as a significant cultural means of communication as it enabled dissemination of information and construction of attitudes, feelings and perceptions especially those concerned with battles and wars. Among the camel-herding nomadic Bedouins, Lichtenstadter (1939) charges, women were not isolated from public life despite the clear gender division of labour that associates women with domestic activities and childcare and men with the herds and public tribe's responsibilities. Women were valued as sensible and reliable persons and were usually consulted in serious matters affecting the tribe. As poetry constituted a vital component of the socio-cultural and political aspects of the tribe, women’s judgement of poetry is often sought and they were famous of composing the best poems. They would escort the men on their fighting campaigns and build up their enthusiasm to fight and persist. To many, al-Hakkamah’s, seen from this viewpoint, looks no different.

Last but not the least, is the surrounding natural environment which has strong influence over the tribe’s social, economic and political transactions, three respondents claim. They envisage that women fear hunger and poverty that ensue from drought and demolition of herds and fear humiliation, suffering and
grievances that ensue from armed conflicts with other tribes. These adversities constitute a driving force for al-Hakkamah to hone her people’s determination to resist and fight and also enough reason for her tribe to look up to her for inspiration.

This environment suggests that her audience are sons of tribes who share with her the same natural and cultural environment that demands values and respects al- Hakkamah and therefore her appeals are responded to swiftly and her influence is undeniable and unquestioned as asserted by respondent R5 (2006), they would never let her down.

Besides, as the majority of young men in Darfur rural areas dropped out of education beyond the primary school, most of them have become combatants either in the tribe or the state army as the latter is the only available source of employment for them (see 4.4.3; 4.5.1.5). Given the unique position of al- Hakkamah thus far outlined, she can recreate in the army the same enthusiasm she normally arouses in her tribe/village. Even though the addressees are the army, individually and together, they would perceive the voice of al-Hakkamah as the embodiment of the faith of the tribe in them, along with all the other cultural and motivational attributes.

To sum up here, it appears that these sources of power of al-Hakkamah, i.e., her personal talent and skills and her social and natural contexts, go hands in
glove in enabling her agency to initially construct her identity and further reconstruct it in response to the dynamics of changing circumstances (see 7.4).

6.8 *Al-Hakkamah* and Tribal Reconciliation and Peacebuilding

Fifteen respondents including six *Hakkamat* concede that Darfuri rural women, including *al-Hakkamat*, are neither included in the *Ajaweed* forum (see 4.5.4.1), nor are they included in the government reconciliation institutions, a practice they attribute to the culture and local customs that exclude women from public decision-making forums (see 2.5). *Al-Hakkamat*, however, used to play an informal discreet role, perhaps in keeping with the typical women role, by undertaking the domestic role required for these conferences e.g. preparing the venue, organizing the reception of the participants and serving them with food and drinks. On the other hand, in some conferences, *al-Hakkamat* were invited to celebrate the agreements by addressing the participants. This was experienced when reconciliation was achieved between *Daju* and *Bani Helba* and the surrounding tribes in ‘*al-Hijair al-Abyad’*, H.R32 from *Habbania* addressed the participants with the following recitation, presumably propagating a governmental view to divert their energy and fury elsewhere:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 50</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>English:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace be upon you, brothers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You disputant among yourselves, I've come to you from Buram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You better sharpen your long spears and wear your spiritual charms</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There is an enemy tribe far away – lurking in waiting to hunt you down.
(H.R32, 07.05.06)

Arabic:

السلام عليكم يا اخواننا
انا جيتك من برام، يا أبلغوا في بعضك
انتو سنو شلكو، والسوا وركوك
في قبيلة عدو بعيد هناك ترا بتحكو

Transliteration:

al-salāmū ‘alaykū yā ‘ikhwān
anā jītkū min Burām, yā l-bi-tanghashshū fī ba’dākū
‘intā sinnū shalakū, wa ʾalbasū warakū
fī gabīlah ʿadū bā ṭīd hīnāk tarā bi-talḥakū

She warns them of the threat looming from south (indicating SPLA) and encourages them to put aside their internal disputes and get prepared for the real enemy from the south.

In some other events, three respondents maintain, al-Hakkamah was asked to address the conference at the beginning of the proceedings where she appealed to participants to maintain unity and solidarity and encouraged them to achieve reconciliation as experienced in the conferences held in 1986 to resolve disputes among the Habbania tribe, in 2004 between the Habbania and Fellata, and recently, in March 2006 to resolve disputes between Birgid, Dajo and Misseriyah in Nittaigha village in south Darfur. In the latter conference, ten Hakammat were invited by the Ageed of the Misseriyah. At the beginning of the
conference, they recited and sang for the participants urging them to arrive at a consensus and achieve peace. H.R32 recites the following:

**Box 51**

**English:**

Should water become turbid, it would purify

The Misseri rode the blue-eyed strong-chested male (i.e. his horse), holding a loaded gun

The Birgidawi said: oh look brother, he was enticing us

And the Dijawi said: oh, you will not be hosted by us, never again

Tell them: companions, “Oh, dear, why did you destroy your land and your heart bang [from fear].”

H.R32 (07.05.06)

**Arabic:**

المً كان عكر، بصفّى
المسٌري ركب الضكر ابَو عيناً زرقاً، ابَو ترس، ابَو لوزات، الخاتي الجبخانة
والبرقداوي قال بت يا اخواني دا فوقنا خمه
والديجاوي قال دا بتن معانا هنا دا ما يننا
قول ليهم سيد الرفق
ما لكو خريتو بلكو وقليكو خفًا!

**Transliteration:**

al-mi kān ‘ikr bil-ṣaffā
al-miṣrī rikib l-ṭakar ‘abb ’aynān zargā, abū tīris, ‘abū lūzāt, al-khāṭīl-jabakhānah
wa-l-bir gidāwī gāl batty ā ikhwānī dā fawgnā khassāh
wa-l-dīgāwī dā battan ma’ānā hinā dā mā bi-tindassā
gāl layhum siyyūd l-rafāq, mālkū kharabtā balakā, wa galkū khaffā

She claims that following her recitation, the participants swore the oath that they would not cause any body to grieve as a result of losing a beloved one in
fighting; and a man stood up and swore, ‘by divorce, we will not let the enemy to come between us any more.’

Outside these conferencies, through singing and composing, *al-Hakkamat* would often set in motion peace between and among tribes as could be shown by the following recitation of one *Hakkamah* (Box 52 below):

---

**Box 52**

I have a message for Jebel Marra, *(Marra mountain is the heartland of the Fur and one base of the rebellion)*

And for its men *(inhabitants i.e. the Fur)*

Its entire people are our relatives

Lay down your guns and stop shooting and firing

War is fire – Arabs move about, *(ie displaced)*

Villages are burnt

And citizens displaced

Come on! Let’s forgive *(each other)* and forget the past.

(Umm Shi’ayr, a Ta’aiishi hakkama, recorded material, 2003)

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So why is women’s participation in reconciliation conferences so rare, if not entirely non-existent? And why is *al-Hakkamah*, who is so heavily involved in conflict, so rarely involved more meaningfully in these conferences? Five respondents attribute this to her lack of negotiation skills and knowledge necessary for participation and which they perceive to have arisen from the
pattern of gender division of labour that deprives women from acquiring such skills. Also to blame is the idea of public and private domains which suggests that women activities are indoors and men’s are outdoors and that the latter is necessarily masculine (see 2.4; 2.5; 2.7) as in the accounts of respondent R17:

... because men are the gender responsible for managing these problems as they are the one who either attack or being attacked and women are seldom attacked or being attackers. Even if they were attacked or being attackers, it is customarily known that in our communities the role of women is confined in space and type because they are less educated and therefore they participate less. But no doubt that after awhile when she acquires some kind of education, there will be no barrier for them to be part of these councils or committees. At present, her involvement is nil (R17, 02.05.06).

The importance of this argument is that it is presented by an influential politician and government official who is the chairperson of one of the NCP legal committees in Darfur region and who could influence decisions and policies on women in the state. Apparently, he does not appreciate the socio-economic and environmental context of Darfur which hardly strictly embodies the concept of private women and public man (see 2.5; 5.4.2; 5.5.1; 5.5.2) in the roles and activities of women – roles and activities that identify rural women in Darfur as the main economic producers and social actors (see 5.3.2.1). Moreover, the lack of education by rural women does not mean lack of skills, knowledge and ability to choose and influence courses of action and to participate in public matters as evidenced by the presence of an illiterate Hakkamah as an outstanding figure in rural community. It is therefore ironic to learn that there are some men who tend to construct a position that does not conform to the historical and contemporary social reality of Darfuri women as portrayed by the
informants. But it is not surprising, too, to realise that this particular argument is presented by an Islamist politician and a member of the NCP who might perhaps prefer to bring women indoors and subordinate them (see 5.4.1; 5.4.2). Paradoxically, he would not refrain from using *al-Hakkamat* if they were to serve objectives he agreed with:

She is one of the natural leaders of the community especially in instances of enthusiasm where she is needed most. Her speech would incite men to go at top speed and be solid in fighting. Also in maintaining good virtues e.g. generosity, vigilant care or concern and therefore she had received great response and reaction from the community … *Al-Hakkamah* therefore can be exploited to serve good things for the community and can be exploited to serve evil things that bring disaster to the community (R17, 02.05.06).

Thus admitting her worth in one respect based on her *ability* and denying her any worth in another respect based on *lack of ability*. While our respondent acknowledges the power and agency of *al-Hakkamah* in serving good or bad deals for the welfare of her community, he denies her the right of participation in these conferences.

However, the most interesting reasoning for the exclusion of *al-Hakkamah* from these conferences is envisaged by three tribal leaders that firstly, the negotiation used to go through a process of give and take in which strong language is often used that unless controlled it could threaten the progress of the whole process. As *al-Hakkamah* is full of passion, she might speak unacceptably frankly that might influence people’s reactions negatively and thus solidify positions required softening up for bridging gaps. Secondly, in the
conflicts that are partly triggered or escalated by *al-Hakkamah*, the very presence of *al-Hakkamah* in these meetings could create an obstacle to the negotiations and discussions. This perception is shared by H.R31 (2006) who adds that ‘because *al-Hakkamat* wouldn’t agree on compromises and would insist on revenge, they might incite new war if they attended the discussions’. R18 therefore comments that tribes normally choose this position in order to reach outcomes that when communicated to the tribes; they would likely absorb their bitterness and solicit the acceptance of the deals reached. Because of this negative expectation on the *Hakkamah*’s reaction, the *Salamat* and *Ta’aisha* *Hakkamat* were excluded from the reconciliation conference held for their tribes in 1980 (see 6.6.2).

Furthermore, three respondents, who attended most of the reconciliation conferences held, assert that the conventional pattern of the government sponsored reconciliation conferences (see 4.5.4.1) focusses on the statistics of casualties and the assets destroyed and on resolving the conflict by mainly paying the blood money and financial compensation. They never addressed the underlying root causes. Consistent with this, the role played by *al-Hakkamah* in conflict is usually discussed insufficiently and when thoroughly discussed, some ‘silly bureaucrats’ simply suggested that these *Hakkamat* be put on trial as acknowledged by *Ali Jammaa* (personal communication 2009), who is himself a *Baggari* and at one time a Commissioner of Southern Kordofan. He comments that these 'alien and naive ideas were simply met with scornful laughter from both sides to conflicts.'
The absence of *al-Hakkamah* from reconciliation forums has had many implications. Four respondents postulate that this absence made her unaware of what was discussed and how it was resolved. In addition, she would receive confusing information from secondary sources and not exactly as it was communicated in the meeting. So, if she was not satisfied with the agreement, she would undermine the authenticity of the process including the agreement reached. Moreover, two respondents claim that she might influence the negotiations by passing erroneous information to the *Ageed* and/or the *Ajaweed* council (see 6.4; 6.5) which might change the entire proceedings and influence the continuation of the conflict. This was exemplified by the case of the *Bani Helba* and *Mahriyah* in 1976 (see 6.6.1) and *Salamat* and *Ta’aisha* in 1980 (see 6.6.2). In the first *al-Hakkamah* advised her tribesmen not to accept the agreement reached under the government’s coercion as recited by a retired teacher, respondent R22 (06.06.06):

**Box 53**

**English:**

The government chases,

But the *Hilbawi*, [ignoring government’s intent], went out riding his horse

[And fighting with his] long spear that stabs in cold blood

It separates the back and breaks up the ribs (from its speed and sharpness).

**Arabic :**

الحكومة بتطارد، والهلياوي شدة مارق

مركدي إم طعناً يارد

بتفصل الضهر، ويتكسر التوارب
Furthermore, the point is emphasised quite eloquently by same respondent:

Yes, their absence from the peace conferences had negative consequences because women are left to continue their songs and they are not committed to the resolutions as they are often not part of them. Their songs lead the youth to raid and take revenge. Most of these conflicts were influenced by this situation that al-Hakkamat were not involved in the reconciliations achieved (R22, 06.06.06).

The case of the Salamat and Ta’aisha indicates that when reconciliation agreement was reached through government in 1980, it soon failed as a result of being contested by al-Hakkamat leading thus to resumption of hostilities. When, for the second time, the government attempted reconciliation between the conflicting tribes, in order to eradicate their supposedly adverse influence, the government authorities in Nyala issued an embargo on all Hakkamat to stop talking about the conflict and/or singing and put them under control (akin to house arrest), as also reported by Mohamed (2003a). This incident suggests that unless al-Hakkamat ceased composing and singing, no progress would ever been possible. It could be argued therefore, that if al-Hakkamat had been involved, they could have become committed and could have acted in a more positive way. Yet, rather than learning from the first lesson, preparing them through training and awareness-raising (see 2.7) aiming at their inclusion in the subsequent rounds, the government coerced them to stop talking about the issue, an approach that eventually backfired. Resisting this approach,
respondent R14 claims that *al-Hakkamat* recorded their songs and poems on tapes and circulated them in the rural areas where they would have the most effect.

Nevertheless, whilst *al-Hakkamah* is denied participation in reconciliation conferences allegedly for lacking awareness, insight and negotiating skills, there were instances when *al-Hakkamat* used their agency and faith to pursue peace and reconciliation on their own terms. Two respondents and one *Hakkamah* maintain that *al-Hakkamah* had interfered in resolving disputes among women and families e.g. between husbands and wives. But more strikingly, they recount two incidents that illustrate how *al-Hakkamah* had exercised her agency and pursued her own strategy to influence peace:

**Box 54**

When the reconciliation between the *Rezeiqat Mahriyah* and *Bani Helba* in 1976 failed to stop the conflict, two *Hakkamat* from both tribes sat together and decided to stop the conflict and bring peace. They invited the *Nazir of Bani Helba*, all the sheikhs and *omad* of both tribes and the *Augada* to a meeting in a place called *Bala Furash*. In the meeting, *al-Hakkamat* appealed to the men to swear an oath that they will do what *al-Hakkamat* would ask them to do before they would disclose it. They swore the oath; then the two *Hakkamat* asked them to immediately give up fighting and reconcile. They agreed and celebrated reconciliation that lasted long (H/F.R51; 20.05.06).

Similarly, three respondents recount that a violent conflict was experienced between *Khuzam* and *Rezeiqat* long time ago when a camel of ‘*Awlad Rashid*’, a clan of the *Rezeiqat*, encroached into the farm of the *Nazir of Khuzam* causing severe damage to the crop. The *Khuzam* demanded the camel in compensation for the damage but the *Rezeiqat*, arrogantly, refused leading thus to violent conflict between them which involved even the affinities of both tribes.
in the neighbouring Chad. Fed up with killing and destruction, a Hakkamah decided to kill the camel, the source of the trouble, and so, she did and the war stopped!

These are few but meaningful examples which reveal an historical experience of al-Hakkamah and her faith in handling disputes, convincing people to accept choices she believed to be beneficial to the respective communities and achieving effective and sustainable peace and reconciliation. They also indicate that it was the initiative of al-Hakkamah, not the government sponsored conferences (see 4.5.4.1), as formally publicised and documented, that brought about real peace and stopped the fighting in disastrous conflicts. But these proactive experiences have never been properly documented, acknowledged by local and national respective institutions let alone incorporated in reconciliation strategies.

6.9 Conclusion

The analysis shows that Al-Hakkamah is a term identifying individual women and as well denoting a unique female institution of power, agency and influence that has social and political significance among the Baggara community of Darfur. She derives her power and influence from her unique personal characteristics such as her talent, skills and charisma, bolstered by her social context which embodies gender power relations and values enabling for women
to construct their own identity and exercise agency. Her identity and agency are legitimised and promoted by her community as they reflect on its welfare and security. In attending to her role in enhancing this welfare, she chooses and adopts various means and strategies that she feels responsive to the needs of her community. She composes, recites and sings, commands, arbitrates and performs symbolic acts in order to realise her role. In adopting these methods, she exercises both her personal and social identities in addressing moral standards among her tribe.

Thus whilst she is in continuous process of peacefully maintaining cultural and social boundaries of her tribe through socialisation, indoctrination … etc, she is also well prepared, in consummating her role, to move to extremes, i.e., honing ethnic consciousness of her people for war and fighting when she feels her community or tribe is threatened. Thus, by choosing to act in pro-peace or pro-conflict capacity, *al-Hakkamah* reveals her power and agency to influence all situations.

She is therefore described by the majority of research respondents as a double edge weapon, who can promote good or evil conducts. As a result of natural and political turmoil encountered by tribes in rural Darfur since 1980s to date (2006), her mobilisation ability appears to have overwhelmed Darfur community with conflict and devastated the relationships between tribes and ethnic groups. Yet, the role she played in these conflicts represents, in the least, the power,
authority and agency that are embodied in the significance of the social value attached to *al-Hakkamah* by her community.

The essence of *al-Hakkamah*'s influence therefore, lies in her agency and power to influence, explicitly or implicitly, tribesmen’s actions despite her noticeable absence from men’s tribal public decision-making forums. Her position looks similar to the historical royal example in Darfur that is clearly exemplified by, to mention just one example, *Taja*, the sister of sultan *Ali Dinar* (1899-1916) who pressed him to fight the British to which he succumbed against all odds (see 5.5.1). So, this current status of power, agency and influence *al-Hakkamat* enjoy, appears to be not without a precedent. Furthermore, the case of *al-Hakkamah* suggests that such power, agency and political influence (2.2; 2.4; 2.6.2; 2.6.3) are not historically merely restricted to royal women in Darfur (5.5.1) but are equally exercised by other women.

It is quite paradoxical, however, that an institution with so much influence in the execution of armed conflicts is formally excluded from active participation in pursuit of peace and isolated from developing the knowledge of the ‘what, how and why’ of formal conflict resolution and reconciliation processes (see 2.7; 6.8). On the other hand, this position allowed her and her war counterpart, the *Ageed*, to maintain their power, agency and authority (see 2.2) intact in exercising their own choices that in many incidents appeared to be incompatible with the agreements reached.
This position of *al-Hakkamah* could be seen as plausibly reflecting the social and political attributes of the context of gender power relations in Darfur which suggests that rural women's place is not restricted to in-door domestic and reproductive activities but their public presence and influence (5.3.2; 5.4.2; 5.5.1), either in the field or other forums, are undeniable in contrast to the majority of other parts of rural north Sudan where 'women do not go to the field' (see 5.3.1). This position of *al-Hakkamah* fits the assertion of Nelson on how women in pastoral communities construct their power and force men's recognition:

> From the ethnographic literature on nomadic societies there is ample evidence to support the idea that the woman defines herself and her position in terms of values centred about the man. She then uses the male-centred value-system to attain her own ends by way of manipulative techniques that force man to recognise female power without losing his self-esteem (Nelson 1973: 56).

The role and influence of *al-Hakkamat* exhibit signs of rural women powerfully exercising their agency and influence in the pre-colonial Africa … e.g. *Mikiri* (see Hafkin and Bay 1976; Okonjo 1976; Van Allen 1976). The difference is that while other African institutions are weakened and may have disappeared from the political scene, the culture of *al-Hakkamat* is being politically strengthened so that the institution of *al-Hakkamat* has now been re-established powerfully within rural, especially war-ridden, Darfur. This is because, given the intensity of conflicts in Darfur and the political turmoil, tribes and ethnic groups in rural areas, would resort to their *Hakkamah* to build their resolve, by acting as an ethnic zealot, against other tribes and ethnic groups.
All in all, the proactive involvement of *al-Hakkamah* in conflict could be perceived within a framework to suggest that despite the stereotyped identity and gender roles that define and confine women's actions and movements, women could exercise other forms of social identities e.g. ethnic, and can invest on sources of power available to them such as the culture, the community and their own qualities that enhance their agency and lead them to utilise their full capacity in choosing their actions. In so doing, they are usually driven by interwoven factors but the most significant of these is that, should their tribes be defeated, women would suffer unpleasant consequences of humiliation and atrocities as could now be observed in the Darfur conflict: where as men get killed, women are raped and displaced. *Al-Hakkamah*’s role is therefore a coping mechanism which incorporates both pro-peace and pro-war activities, depending on the surrounding situation and therefore her pursuits in conflict situations are not just because she is a violent woman (see 2.7). The model of *al-Hakkamah* is thus perhaps similar to that set by Runciman:

is not the affectionate daughter, hard-working wife, or loving mother who gets into trouble while trying to make the best of a difficult situation, but the cold, calculating female who uses all available resources to control the world around her. My model woman seeks power: the capacity to determine her own and others’ actions (Runciman 1968 cited in Coller 1989: 90).

except that *al-Hakkamat* who I met and interviewed are certainly warm, intelligent, ambitious and community conscious all-round actors who have power and agency that they exercise publicly to influence actions for the wellbeing of their people. It’s interesting therefore to see why and how *al-
*Hakkamah* is being co-opted by the patrimonial riverine ruling elites into the military institution and the resulting impact of this on the community and *al-Hakkamah* herself.
Chapter 7: Change of Agency and Identity of *al-Hakkamah*
7.1 Introduction

The analysis presented in chapter six reveals the processes that accompanied the construction and manifestations of the identity; agency and influence of *al-Hakkamah* and how and why her exercising of these attributes is firmly established in the social and political domain of her tribe. Since early 1990s, the institution of *al-Hakkamah* has come under the attention of the NIF government which recognise the unquestioned agency and influence of *al-Hakkamah* that can readily be translated into leverage the government require in its mobilisation campaigns.

This chapter continues to present the findings drawn from the data analysis on the questions around the processes that underpin the liaison of *al-Hakkamah* with the government and the outcomes impacting on her identity, agency and influence.

The chapter is organized in six sections. Section 2 highlights and presents the processes that accompanied the liaison of the government with *al-Hakkamah* and the co-optation measures taken by the government to appropriate her to serve certain obligations on war and peace fronts. Section 3 thoroughly explores these obligations in both war and peace interventions. Section four hypothesizes the underlying rationale of the influence of *al-Hakkamah* in both rural and urban contexts. Section 5 outlines the impact of such co-optation
process on the agency and identity of al-Hakkamah, extending beyond the village, but perhaps shrinking in terms of creativity and tribal acceptability.

Section 1 introduces the chapter and Section 6 concludes.

7.2 Government Liaison with al-Hakkamah

Following their coup d’état in 1989, after initially appointing a riverine army commander, Lt Col Abuelgasim Ibrahim, as Governor for the Darfur region, the NIF regime replaced him in 1991 with a fundamentalist Islamist who was also a military and security expert, al-Tayeb Ibrahim Mohamed Khair, nicknamed ‘al-Tayeb Sikhah’ (the Iron Bar), who was notoriously reported to routinely attack student demonstrators with an iron bar during his university times (Flint and de Waal 2005). At the time of his appointment, the security situation in Darfur was precarious and people would risk their lives to travel from place to place. This was because since 1980s, the region was overwhelmed by banditry attacks, made all the more vicious by the illicit weapons that had flooded the region as a result of wars mainly in Chad (4.5.1.6). On the surface, the scene seemed to have just calmed down after a bloody fight between the Fur and an assembly of twenty-seven Arab tribes in 1987-9 came to an end. A reconciliation conference (see 4.5.1.6) started a few months before the NIF coup was concluded within a week after they took over to end the fighting between the two groups.
Nine respondents including six *Hakkamat* maintain that the engagement of *al-Hakkamah* with the government commences during Governor *Al-Tayeb Sikhah*’s era in Darfur (1991-1995). Soon after *Sikhah* assumed office in Darfur, he organized the Creative Popular Arts Festival (CPAF), *mahrajān al-‘ibdā’ al-sha‘bī*, in *al-Fashir* where all people associated with folklore were gathered from all over rural Darfur in early 1991. Having realised the influence of folklore in the hearts and minds of the people, the governor deployed it as a potential tool to remedy social and political problems he was facing in Darfur.

Subsequently, he launched, in October 1991, a process whereby all the folklore activities (including the poets and *al-Hakkamat*) become co-opted in an institution called Popular Information and Media (PIM), *al-‘i‘lām al-sha‘bī*, founded in the four main urban centres in Darfur, namely *Nyala*, *al-Geneina*, *Zalingi* and *al-Fashir*. Respondent R20G4 claims that the PIM was directly annexed to the governor’s office and overseen by him personally as it has also received national support and blessed by the President *al-Bashir* and his vice president, the deceased, General *al-Zubair Mohamed Salih*. This co-optaion is however, rejected by employees working in the Culture and Information unit. The initial recruitment of *al-Hakkamat* by the government could be illustrated by the accounts of *Hakkamah* R32 that:

This was in 1991 when *Al-Tayeb Sikhah* was the governor of Darfur; I was invited to *al-Fashir* by the governor who had a list of all *al-Hakkamat* and the *Haddayyin* in all over Darfur. Before this we never know the government (H.R32, 07.05.06)
Through the PIM, folklore practitioners were directed to campaign against al-nahb al-musallah (armed robbery) for Arms Repossession and Confiscation Campaign (ARCC), ḥamlat jamʿ l-silāh, through songs and slogans such as “sallim nārak, tahmī diyārak” (give up your weapons, (in order) to protect your homeland) to encourage rural people to voluntarily hand over to the government their privately owned illicit small arms. This was followed by an Adult Literacy Campaign (ALC) which led to celebrating the district of Um Keddada in north Darfur as illiteracy-free district. In these campaigns, especially the ARCC, from among the folkloric campaigners, al-Hakkamah’s performance and effect appeared to be the most influential and for the governor the impact on weapons’ recovery was miraculous compared to his previous failed approach that entirely relied on the force and power of the military and the police.

An example of a Hakkamat sung ARCC poem is cited by respondent Fawziya Abbas, who was the governor’s Advisor for Women and Children Affairs in North Darfur since 2005 to date (2008):
The performance of *al-Hakkamah* reinforced the perception of the riverine Governor about the practicality, efficiency and the utility of folklore as a means for enhancing the regime’s advocacy and propaganda projects that had just been launched under the *Comprehensive Advocacy Project* (CAP), *mashrūʿ al-daʿwah al-shāmlah*, which was intended to transform the Sudanese people into advocates and supporters of the Islamic regime especially its civil war against the SPLA in the south of the country (see 3.4.2.3). In order to achieve this target, and having realised the power and influence of *al-Hakkamat*, the government extensively utilized the PIM to enable effective mobilization and recruitment of Darfuri youth, especially from Arab tribes, as combatants. Thus, the nine respondents all assert that *al-Hakkamat* were being used by the government in extensive tours all over Darfur provinces and rural areas. The campaign generated huge success and an unprecedented mobilisation of youth.
who joined the *Jihad* campaign that was launched against the SPLM/A-backed 1991 insurgency led by the Fur *Daud Bolad*\(^\text{104}\) and the SPLM/A military commander *Abdel Aziz Adam al-Hilu* (see 4.5.2; 4.5.3).

Thereafter, from among the PIM groups, *al-Hakkamat* become highly focused on and favoured. This favouritism is interpreted differently by different respondents. Firstly, six respondents assert that the ruling elites have focused on *al-Hakkamat* as an effective means to communicate with people in rural areas as she has demonstrated beyond doubt that she could. *Al-Hakkamah* has thus dully been enlisted and incorporated in the government’s information and communication system that target rural people, the Baggara communities in particular, disseminating its political rhetoric and discourse to the rural public and influencing their opinions. This was by and large made through the radio, which constitutes the most widely owned information device by rural people in both rural and urban areas, and which together with the TV represent the government’s voice and their means to manipulate information and influence people’s opinions. Two media presenters maintain that there had been so many programmes in the radio and TV e.g. ‘*jalsat Inbisatah*’ (sitting of entertainment/cheerfulness), and ‘*murhakt al-gol*’, (grinder of speech) that are being purposely set for public mobilisation in which *al-Hakkamat* were prominently figured and where they would usually speak out in tune with the

\(^{104}\) *Daud Yahya Ibrahim Bolad* was a Sudanese politician and NIF disillusioned Islamist from the Fur tribe who later became a rebel leader. He was the president of the Khartoum University Students Union in 1970 and his deputy and bodyguard was *Al-Tayeb Sikhah*. He joined SPLA in 1990 and received military training. He led a SPLA military campaign into Darfur in November 1991 (Prunier 2005).
government’s politics, that is, if the government’s call is *jihad*, they will call for *jihad* and so on.

This role in effect, in the accounts of the respondents and radio and television presenter R14 (29.05.06), was extended even to counterattack the economic embargo imposed on Sudan by the Security Council in 1994 when the riverine governing elites in Darfur used *al-Hakkamah* to mobilize the public against these American-led sanctions through organizing public singing parties (for example, see Box 70, section 7.3.1.1).

Secondly, two respondents postulate that the governing elites have realised the value of *al-Hakkamah* as representing an institution that is created and supported by the community and not the state or any other institution outside the tribal setting. Thus, being a community owned institution, would certainly generate greater acceptance among the local constituency and therefore taking care of *al-Hakkamah* would be interpreted by the community as caring for them, too. What *al-Hakkamah* says, would inevitably be adhered to, respected and trusted by her community. Hence, the presence of *al-Hakkamah* as part of the state institutions is an added value and an effective tool through which the state could win rural people’s support and gain their endorsement.

Thirdly, two respondents charge that the most crucial dimension of this co-optation is that it would ensure that *al-Hakkamah* would not defame the regime
but instead, the regime would gain her publicly announced support and thus, the acceptance of *al-Hakkamah* of the regime would certainly mirror the acceptance of the tribe *per si*. The riverine ruling and governing elites have realized that both *al-Hakkamah* and the *Nazir* represent the power of the native administration and the key to the tribe’s endorsement and its beating heart. Manipulating this power and influence is indispensable to obtain the loyalty of rural tribal communities as spelled out by a journalist respondent in his accounts that:

She is the key to the tribe and therefore it is necessary to focus on her which means that the regime has hold the keys to tribes and tribalism and has consolidated tribalism in Darfur … *Al-Hakkamah*, the *Nazir* and the *Dimingawi* are the persons who have power and authority to gather and influence all sectors of their communities. When the government restrained them, it would mean they restrained the whole tribe; this way, they have maintained the silence of the tongue of *al-Hakkamah* not to speak out against them … (R43, 29/04/06).

Fourthly, respondent R47 believes that the regime also meant to raise and maintain the morale of the soldiers, most of whom are from the Baggara Arabs, by organizing extensive singing parties for them in south Darfur in which *al-Hakkamat* admired by these communities are brought in to sing. In doing so, they have further identified and reinforced the incredible impact and influence of *al-Hakkamah* (see 2.4) in mobilizing and recruiting soldiers into the military institution.

On the other hand, at least one respondent R72 (10.06.06) strongly thinks that the use of *al-Hakkamat* in this way must have led to the entrenchment of
tribalism and the destruction of social relations at such pace that the whole process would eventually lead to polarisation, rather than nurturing of a common ideal national character that can act as an embodiment of the Sudanese as a nation. In his view, such national character could be achieved by such endeavours as might be represented by the more or less national voice expressed in the following poem:

Box 56

English:
Oh, my country, my country, I sacrifice my blood for you
I have offered my life in sacrifice, so rest in peace
Your love is the first feeling I experience in my heart
The last I say in my mouth is your intimate talk to you
I will repeat your name so long as I am alive; ‘Long live my coutry and long live the nation’.

Arabic (standard):

بلادي، بلادي، فداك دمي
وهبت حياتي فدى لك فاستمي
غرامك اول ما في الفواد
ونجـواك اخر ما في فمي
سأهتف باسمك ما قد حبيت، تعيش بلادي ويهيـا الوطن

Transliteration:

bilādi, bilādi, fidākī damī;
wahabtu ḥayāfi fidan laki fa′-aslamī;
gharāmik `awwal mā fī al-fu′ād
wa najwākī `akhir mā fī famī
sa′ahtif bismik mā qad ḥiyyit, ta′ish bilādi wa yahyā l-watān
But the ruling elites, adamantly pursuing their goals outlined above, geared the focus on, and recruitment of, \textit{al-Hakka\textperiodcenteredmat} towards getting \textit{al-Hakkama\textperiodcenteredh} enabled in a new role in town to effectively meet those government demands on her. Thus, the neopatrimonial governing elites have adopted some measures to appropriate the identity of \textit{al-Hakkama\textperiodcenteredh}, as an individual actor and as an institution, to precisely sing to the tunes of these new political, yet opportunistic demands. These measures included: militarisation of \textit{al-Hakkama\textperiodcenteredh}; re-orientation; re-constructing the institution of \textit{al-Hakkama\textperiodcenteredh}; organizing \textit{al-Hakkama\textperiodcenteredh} and financially motivating her as discussed below.

7.2.1 Militarisation of \textit{al-Hakkama\textperiodcenteredh}

Nineteen respondents including four \textit{Hakka\textperiodcenteredmat} state that since the government began the organization of \textit{al-Hakkama\textperiodcenteredt} under the PIM, it also carried out organized military training for them in and outside Darfur which resulted in offering military identities and rank titles to \textit{al-Hakkama\textperiodcenteredh}; for instance, the chief of the Union of \textit{Hakka\textperiodcenteredmat} and \textit{Sheikha\textperiodcenteredt} (UHS) in south Darfur is offered the rank of \textit{Naqeeb} (a captain). From my working experience in Darfur, such militarisation of \textit{al-Hakkama\textperiodcenteredh} was introduced following the introduction, in 1990, of the policy of compulsory military training by the Popular Defence Forces (PDF) for all government female employees and as a required condition for every female who would aspire to find employment with government institutions in Sudan. In Darfur, it was carried out with more vigour and coercion. In my observation as a government employee in the Ministry of Agriculture and
Natural Resources in al-Fashir at a time, the implementation of this policy led to the firing of female employees from their jobs as a result of them refusing to receive such training. Hakkamah R71 reports that she was searching for work as ‘Farrashah’ (an office caretaker) in government offices and because of this condition; she had to join the PDF in 1996. She never found a job, however, and subsequently joined the Union of Hakkamat and Sheikhat where she was forced to attend and register at the PDF every Saturday.

Noticeably, the female civil servants who had received military training in Darfur were not militarised by being given military titles, uniforms and/or annexed to military institutions as it has been the case for al-Hakkamat who become part of the military institution. Besides, it may seem paradoxical that while the regime offered military training to those who did not actually need it, they denied it for those who apparently need it most - those rural women who have been direct victims of war in Darfur. The militarisation of al-Hakkamah is viewed by thirteen respondents as has worsened the dividends of both war and peace to al-Hakkamah’s local community in favour of the regime’s, and that where her power was enhanced; her community’s welfare was undermined. This implicitly embodies a message that the governing elites only care for their own vested interests no matter what happened, or might happen, to their subjects.

Thus, four Hakkamat maintain that they have received military training several times by different military or para-military institutions such as the PDF, the Popular Police Force (PPF), and al-Salam Forces (ASF). Their training with the
PPF lasted for almost nine months. Their training included shooting, assembling and disassembling of weapons, standard military manoeuvres … etc.

Thereafter, they had been annexed to the PPF for almost seven years and given lots of identity Cards of the membership of, for example, the NCP and the UHS.

Trained militarily, the chairperson of the Union of Folklore in South Darfur maintains that *al-Hakkamat* are appointed as office caretakers in the brigades, made to wear uniform and have been introducing themselves as ‘*Hakkamat of the brigades*’ e.g. *al-Hakkamah* of the Sixth Infantry Brigade. Three of them became appointed as *Hakkamat* for the Moral Orientation Unit (Psychological Operations) of the military corporation in *Nyala*, south Darfur. Yet, receiving military training seems to have raised the expectations of *al-Hakkamat* that they would be employed but given their large number, and perhaps the lack of a plan, they become disappointed as could be understood from the views of four of them that they never benefited from the training and complained that they were not offered any formal office jobs as they had expected; yet they maintain that they would be ready to carry guns if or when circumstances called for doing so.

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105 *Hakkamah* R32R32 showed me her Popular Police Card issued on 30/05/2003. It shows her blood group; and her rank of ‘Areef’- corporal. There was no expiry date shown on the card. She wears scarf and tobe. The Card is signed by the Commander General of the Popular Police Force. On the back of the Card is written: *(the holder of this card has full authority as that of a policeman based on the 1992 Police legislation on arresting, searching and initial interrogation and to seize stolen and suspicious goods).*
Table 8: Examples of (Nominal) Military Ranks Given to Some Hakkamat

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Military Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mariam El-Gheereh</td>
<td>Private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatma Hussain (chief of UHS)</td>
<td>Naqeeb (captain)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatma Gadim</td>
<td>Areef (corporal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatma Mishawir</td>
<td>Private</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondent R47 (07.06.06) observes that the militarisation of al-Hakkamah and her involvement in the military corporation is being phenomenal and observable by everyone in Nyala; which suggests that all al-Hakkamat in South Darfur are more or less part of the military corporation. This proposition is supported by the accounts of respondent R41 (21.05.06), a prominent official, who maintains that at the moment, all these Hakkamat are militarised and there is a plan which suggests that from now onwards, they would no longer be part of the PPF or PDF as they would be annexed to the Military Corporation (MC) and the United Police (UP). Not unsurprisingly, however, he himself personally rejects this plan and advised al-Hakkamat, when they sought his opinion, not to join these forces as it would be disastrous for the community.

This militarization of al-Hakkamah is further strongly opposed by fifteen more respondents for other different reasons. For instance, five respondents argue that, despite the fact that military training teaches and instils discipline, by subjecting women and al-Hakkamat in particular to military training and their involvement with the PDF, the Inghaz regime has actually weakened women’s peaceful role. It thus deliberately transformed them into aggressive, violent tools.
to incite for war and advocate for conflict; thus contradicting a commonly held claim that it is not of woman’s nature to fight and kill. Therefore, we ought to fight such attributes if found and to encourage women to advocate for peace, love and unity (Berkman 1990). In their view, the state ought to direct *al-Hakkamah* to uphold and promote good values of cooperation, peace and social cohesion and not to direct them to fight or campaign for fighting and killing and polarising people. They maintain that the military training is meant to contain and incorporate the institution of *al-Hakkamah* in the military institution as a state war propaganda machine when really all should work for peace. This sentiment is clearly expressed in the accounts of respondent R41:

Now among those *Hakkamat* … three *Hakkamat* … are made *Naqeeb* and who are meant to be used in inciting and encouraging people for war. They are militarised and made to escort troops to *Raja* during the war in the south and were pushed among the combatants to sing and to make utter cries of joy (ululation) to encourage soldiers to fight with courage. I myself think this is an abnormal phenomenon in the society and in human life as well because promoting war has no advantage at all (R41, 12.03.06).

Similarly, even though respondent R5 accepts the justification for the military training for women if it is commonly set as a condition for their employment in the army or the police, he nevertheless rejects the militarisation of *al-Hakkamah*:

What is the purpose behind training *al-Hakkamah* at the age of over 40 years old? … This is not acceptable for us … but the government has imposed this – it has trained the salvation committees, *al-Hakkamat*, the omad, the Sufi sects … etc. and unless it had been imposed on them, they wouldn’t have done it; they approached them by a threatening language: ‘You *Omda*, unless you are trained, we will depose you; you
In addition, ten respondents assert that they do not see any rationale behind this military training and/or any benefits accruing from it to \textit{al-Hakkamat}. This is because a young man at the age of twenty may tolerate by virtue of the masculine nature of his body, but a woman of an age of fifty years old or over, inevitably, cannot tolerate the physical strenuousness required by military training let alone to consider her as an active contributor in the battlefield. They maintain that given the current reality in Darfur, if the government was serious about protecting women, then all women should receive training in the use of firearms in order to defend themselves and not only a selected few. Respondent R6 (25.05.06) argues that this government’s approach in training \textit{al-Hakkamat} might provoke the women who were affected by the war in Darfur to ask why they were not offered such training by the government as offered to \textit{al-Hakkamat}? It is widely understood, however, that the whole process was no more than a form of government political propaganda and as a false message that they did care for and value rural people, the Baggara in particular.

On the other hand, ten respondents in addition to sixteen \textit{Hakkamah} nevertheless perceive such training as useful for \textit{al-Hakkamat} in the sense of enabling them to act as community police and in contributing to learning methods of self-defence. In the meantime, in support for militarisation of women as a government policy, respondent R17 who is the chairperson of the legislative committee at the state National Council (state parliament) in south
Darfur, argue that ‘the policy targeted all women and that women are trained and incorporated in the PPF, PDF, UP and AF institutions; al-Hakkamat, too, should be trained and incorporated because they are no different (R17, 02.05.06).

According to a feminist perception on women and the military, Feinman (2000: 1) maintains that there are two different approaches to women in the military and that both of them deploy women’s empowerment and equal rights discourses but differ in their perspective of the approach to empowerment. The feminist antimilitarists reject the military on the bases that it is associated with the culture of masculine violence and that its social, political, and economic attributes lead to women’s oppression. Therefore they perceive military culture as at odds with women’s culture and feminist goals, and obstructive to justice and peace. On the other hand, the feminist egalitarian militarists perceive military service as part of women’s rights and responsibilities and part of the rights of full citizenship. Yet, they emphasise the fact that for a long time women have been engaged with military assignments without being acknowledged or rewarded. Engagement of al-Hakkamah with the military can thus be seen as occurring against the backdrop of the central principle of the two feminist approaches; first, by being part of the violence culture that resulted in mass killings and inhumane atrocities committed by the military institution or the militia horsemen; and second, by not being formally incorporated in the ranks, acknowledged and/or respectfully rewarded, but exploited.
7.2.2 Reorientation

*Al-Hakkamat* had been exposed to a process of awareness-raising through activities such as literacy sessions, meetings, conferences, workshops etc., as claimed by thirty three respondents including the eighteen *Hakkamat*. The literacy programme is described as extensively drawn from Quranic teachings and preaching with emphasis made on the position of women in the Islamic *shari’a*. The teachings emphasise that *al-Hakkamat* must abstain from inciting conflict which is perceived by the *shari’a* as temptation and therefore forbidden. Yet, they were advised to direct their poems to serve the NIF and its successor, the NCP, who advocate for an Islamic state. Fifteen respondents and fifteen *Hakkamat* perceive these sessions as the most useful initiative this regime made to the benefit of *al-Hakkamat* as it is anticipated that they may lead to reducing their *harmful* influence in inciting conflicts. *Al-Hakkamat* in particular seems to appreciate these activities:

Now, thanks to Allah, I can write my full name –my name, my father’s and grandfather’s names. The literacy sessions taught us how to pray, to bathe a corpse … etc., that we were unaware of before (H.R32, 07.05.06).

Yes, I have benefited from the religious teachings; they teach us how to pray – what to read, the praying actions, preparation for praying, etc., and how to clean a corpse (FFM, 15.05.06).

We learned the Quran that we did not know before because we were preoccupied by composing, singing and causing troubles; now we can read ten to fifteen Sura (chapter of the holy Quran); is it not plenty? … we learned how to pray and were sent to Allah’s
sacred House (went to *hajj* in Makka); now we are headed towards Allah and if we die, we will not regret, thanks to Allah (H/S.R71, 06.05.06).

My own observations of *al-Hakkamat* poetry before 1990s, suggest that, as also noted by respondent R72, the songs and poems of *al-Hakkamat* were almost entirely grounded in rural settings and did not include religious expressions. As a result of these teachings, the diction of *al-Hakkamah* has become permeated with religious words such as could be seen in the following recitations of one *Hakkamah*:

---

**Box 57**

**English:**

Saying 'In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful'

Expels Satan and builds faith

In the *Religious Affairs Office*, I have insightful holy scholars

I got holy religious scholars who are well versed in the Quran

The officials of the Comprehensive Advocacy believe in Allah, the sole Subduer

They worship and fast

The religious scholar opens his book

In the big mosque, “Allah says this, the prophet says”

Oh, my dear *Hakkamat*

I withdrew my forces from singing (i.e. I give up singing)

As I would like to join *al-khalwa* [religious school], to differentiate between *halal* and *haram* [the allowed and forbidden]

(H.R32, 07/05/06)

**Arabic:**

قوله بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

هي بتطرد الشيطان، بنزل الأيمن
في مكتب الشؤون الدينية، عندي فقرا علام
عندى فقرا حاملين شهادة القرآن
ناس الدعوة الشاملة متيقنين بي الله الواحد الدين
ماسكين العبادة والصيام
العالم فرأ كتابه
في المسجد الكبير الله قال ده الرسول قال
هي يا حكاني
من الغنا سحب قواتي
دايرة انفس في الخلوة عشان الفرز الحلال من الحرام

Transliteration:
Gawlit bismi-llāh al-raḥmānī-l-rahīm
Hī bitrudd al-shaytān wa bi-tanazzīl al-ʾīmān
Fi maktab al-shūʿūn al-dīnīyyā ʾindi fugarā ʿullām
ʿindi fugara ḥāmīn shiḥādāt al-qurān
Nās al-daʿwa al-shāmlah mitiyāqinīn bay ʾallah al-wāḥid al-dayyān
Māṣkin al-ʾibādāh wa-l-ṣiyyām
Al-ʾālim farā kitaḥbā
Fi al-masjīd al-kabīr, ʾallah gāl dā, al-rasūl gāl
Hey yā ʾḥakkāmātī
Min al-ghūnā saḥāb quwātī
Dayrā ʾandas fī al-khalwā ʾashān ʾafruz al-ḥalāl min al-ḥarām
The following recitation shows how H/S.R4G4 is influenced by government religious slogans, e.g. *Takbeer, Tahleel*\(^{106}\), at the beginning of a poem praising president *Omer al-Bashir* in his visit to *Nyala*.

**Box 58**

**English:**

Peace be upon you, *Takbeer, Tahleel*,

Peace be upon you, *Omer al-Bashir*

Oh, you are the autumn [the rainy season] the flood of which raised the orphans

He who rules by shari’a and holds at bay its detractors

I’ve recited the poem and apologise that I am illiterate

Thanks to *Omer al-Bashir* and his delegation

He opened a door for me to combat illiteracy that we study in the evening

We represent the heritage as in erecting *al-shibriyah*\(^{**}\)

Who he meets her in the morning, realises her aspiration

Who he meets her in the evening, the kids of the organization draw her picture

(H/S.R4G4, 11/06/06)

\(^{**}\) Mobile women carriage hoisted on a camel back when moving around.

**Arabic:**

سلام عليك، تكبير تهبل،
سلام عليك يا عمر البشير

دا انت الخريف ابو نيل الرئي الاتماني

الحاكم بالشيرعة وكلف ظلمها

قدمت القصيدة ويعتنى اميه

مشكور عمر البشير والوفد المرافق ليًا

106 Shouting and exclaiming, “*Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar*”, ie *Allah is Great; Allah is Great*, during rallies in order to express Islamic solidarity and loyalty.
Transliteration:

Salām `alayk, takbīr, tahfīl,

Salām `alayk, yā Omer al-Bashir

Da´inta al-kharīf `abū nīl al-rabbā al-`attāmā

Al-ḥākim beyl-sha'īr`a wa kaffā zullāmā

Gaddamtdī al-gasīda wa bā`tazir `umiyyīa

Mashkūr Omer al-Bashir wa al-wafīd al-murāfīq lāyā

Fatah lāyā bāb, fī maḥwa-l-`umiyyya, nagrā mā` al-`uṣriyyā

Namaththil al-tūrāth al-kawwā`an al-shibriyyā

Al-gābalhā ma` al-ṣabāḥ, `ajabat al-`umniyyā

Al-gābalha ma` al-`asfiyyā, rasamūhā `awlād al-jam`iyyā

The recitations above show how cultural religious expressions and NIF slogans (bil-jalalah wa al-takbeer; Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar) have crept into al-Hakkamah’s poetic diction as a result of this regime-oriented induction.

In addition to the literacy sessions, eight Hakkamat mention that in 2003, the government organized a one-day meeting for over thirty Hakkamat along with government officials, most of whom came from Khartoum, led by a judge accompanied by other judges, holy men and high ranking military officers. The
Hakkamat were asked to perform and to answer questions about their capabilities and influence.

This and similar workshops could be interpreted to have several dimensions: firstly, it was meant to understand, analyse and explore, or perhaps to review, the state, the dynamics and the effectiveness of agency and influence of al-Hakkamah and the mechanisms of her power from al-Hakkamah herself and from her experience. Secondly, organizing such a workshop for al-Hakkamah by people from outside Darfur without involving their gatekeepers, that is, the Ministry of Culture and Information (MCI) of south Darfur, is a bit suspicious, at least from the viewpoint of the locals, especially when we realise that this happened shortly after the start of Darfur insurgency in March 2003. Thirdly, the involvement of judges with al-Hakkamat could also be interpreted as that the judiciary in Sudan is part of the government political institutions that work in tandem with its war machinery, for the neopatrimonial ruling elites’ vested interests, and not as an independent institution.

7.2.3 Re-constructing the Institution of al-Hakkamah

The process of the initiation and inauguration of al-Hakkamah as originally made in her tribal setting, was paid little attention by the government when they embarked on utilising al-Hakkamah, in town, to meet their advocacy plans. This is testified through firstly, twelve respondents including five Hakkamah maintain
that through the PIM, the government recruited over one hundred and fifty
Hakkamat and Sheikhat who constituted almost all the emigrant Hakkamat and
Sheikhat from rural areas and those who were already resident in Nyala town.
Given the limited number of rural-based, truly locally baptised Hakkamat
residing in Nyala, every woman who can sing or recite had a chance to join the
campaign as a Hakkamah. Consequently, many women from the Baggara
residents in Nyala took their tribe’s flag and joined the campaign in pretence
that they were Hakkamat despite the fact that they were lacking such poetic and
unique skills that may identify them as Hakkamat in the eyes of their tribes. This
posturing of the latter group might have been encouraged by the desire to
benefit from government incentives or rewards. An example of the town
Hakkamah who claims both the positions of Hakkamah and Sheikhah is
H/S.R50 who admits that:

my tribe does not identify me as Hakkamah because I have just recently become
Hakkamah in Nyala … if any woman composed nicely and in meaningful words and
recorded them in the media, people would identify her as a Hakkamah … In Nyala, we
were introduced to the media by the chairperson of the UHS and were considered
Hakkamat from thereon (H/S.R50, 02.05.06).

In their testimonies, the respondents concede that these newly emerging town
Hakkamat made the bulk of the membership of the UHS when it was formed in
2003. Therefore, it is not surprising that the attitudes of this town Hakkamat are
considered as at odds with their rural tribal communities because they either did
not emerge from within the rural setting or had long left it. Thus, two Hakkamat
assert that in actual fact there are only four Hakkamat in the UHS while the rest
merely carry the label *Hakkamah*. They do compose or sing in public on their own but may recite songs and poems of other recognized *Hakkamat*. They affirm that the majority are *Sheikhat*. Nevertheless, this government approach of encouraging women to become so-called *Hakkamat* and forcing their acceptability within their communities could be interpreted as part of their strategies in exploring viable routes and entry points to influencing and monitoring tribal communities residing in town and imposing their policy on them. This may well be true as we could see whole tribes pledge their political support to the ruling party (NCP) which could only reflect what the government have attempted with every other access point to the tribal community; tribal chiefs for instance, were either coerced into compliance or removed to be replaced by ones that would comply (see 4.5.1.2).

Secondly, as the term "*Hakkamah*" is socially more influential among its target communities, the government have also assigned the label *Hakkamat* to women from African tribes e.g. *Fur*, who assume recognized positions in their communities but who nevertheless are not called *Hakkamat* nor are their roles relevant to those of *al-Hakkamah*. This could be exemplified by the case of H.R27 from Forogay, a south Sudanese tribe, and who registers as *Hakkamah* in the UHS and speaks an Arabic dialect different from those spoken by the people of the Baggara. She explains that:

... in my Forogay tribe I used to sing in circumcision and wedding parties ... we don’t have horses and horsemen to sing for them and do not sing for the youth ... we do not have people going to war with other tribes and have no culture of singing for men going
to war or encouraging them to fight. Also we do not sing for hunters who kill lion or an elephant. We only sing for happiness – wedding and circumcision parties (H.R27, 07.05.06).

Thus, from the Baggara’s point of view, the term *Hakkamah*, which has traditionally been associated with them, is now being extended by the intervention of the government to encompass women singers of other tribes, thus violating a sacrosanct cultural tribal legacy (see 7.2.3). This is not to be confused with the extended use of the term to ordinarily describe any woman of excellence in attitude or appearance (6.2.4).

Thirdly, five *Hakkamat* who are members in the UHS, claim that they are both *Hakkamat* and *Sheikhat* and explain that *al-Hakkamah* may also be a *Sheikhah* but not the opposite. It could be observed that the position *‘Sheikhah’ is genuinely found among African tribes and was quite influential during the Fur Sultanate as it was associated with female initiation and domestic activities. But it is not common among Baggara communities in rural areas, or at least not for a woman to exercise the dual role, as three respondents claim that where existed, the two positions are kept separate. It could thus be seen that the governing elites’ concern is not to differentiate between *al-Hakkamah* and *al-Sheikhah*, so long as both are manipulated to secure monopoly over access to the community.

Fourthly, four respondents claim that the authorities have also created a new type of Hakkamah, *‘al-Hakkamah of heritage’*, as confirmed by respondent
H/S.R63G4: 'I have joined the union of *al-Hakkamat* this year 2006; there had been a *Hakkamah* of heritage and I am appointed as an assistant' (H/S.R63G4, 11.06.06).

The policy of the NIF regime of Sudan requires women to wear the *hijab* should they appear in public places including their workplace (see 5.4). Thus, respondent R14 claim that one of the serious mistakes committed by the government is its attempt to recast *al-Hakkamat* into their ideological subordinate female model. This change in the appearance of *al-Hakkamah* has affected the very essence of the art of folklore as could be indicated by its impact on one of the famous Baggara folklore dance called *Iraij* or *al-Gidairee* as described in an informant’s account below (Box 60 below):

**Box 59**

In *al-Gidairee* dance, the dancing woman throws her tobe off her head on her shoulders, imitating a ‘*gimriyah*’ (a beautiful gray pigeon-like bird with a black circle on his neck), dancing and landing slowly and gradually onto the ground while making a certain sound ‘*kareer*’ (*Kur, kur, kur*) like that of the *gimriyah* (a bird) and moving her head on both sides letting thus her hair fall aside on both shoulders whilst her male dancing partner hits the ground with his feet, ‘*takah, takah*’, in a very beautiful and exciting pattern and tune resonant with her movements. When the comprehensive advocacy was projected in 1990, *al-Hakkamah* was ordered to wear the *hijab* (scarf and long dress). In wearing the *hijab*, the moving of the hair that is the very soul of *al-Gidairee* dance and its indispensable component can no longer be performed and the meaning and value of the entire dance is distorted. In the past the dress was ‘*mukashkash*’ (literally like ballerina) but wearing a long dress does not fit the women dancers. This change forced many people to abstain from performing so many folklore dances and negatively affected rural people’s enjoying cultural values and heritage. This is just like the ‘*shubbaal*’ (a woman dancer’s affectionate touch of her male dance partner with her hair/head) which necessarily requires the hair to be uncovered and which has disappeared, too, as a result of the regime’s intervention by banning men and women dancing together in this way.

( R14, 07.05.06 )
Thus, the identity of al-Hakkamah, as an individual actor and as an institution of folklore, power and influence, as well as her role, have become recast in deeds and in appearance, to fit the Islamic female model of the the neopatrimonial NIF governing elites and their fundamentalist ideology; a model that is incompatible with the whole culture of the Baggara community and their historical legacy.

7.2.4 Organizing al-Hakkamat

Despite the apparent different roles of al-Hakkamat and al-sheikhat, in 2003 the authorities in South Darfur assembled both under the Union of Hakkamat and Sheikhat (UHS). Fifteen respondents including eight Hakkamat maintain that al-Hakkamat and the Sheikhat are linked together because they constitute prominent actors in their tribes and even though the Sheikhah does not compose as does al-Hakkamah, she is recognized as skilful in mobilizing and organizing women for various social occasions including receiving officials and cooking for them. So, incorporating the Sheikhah in a unit in which al-Hakkamat is the main target, could be seen as merely for courtesy, or perhaps appeasement, to African tribes more than a serious attempt to garner support from them as could be observed from the accounts of Hakkamah FFM:

If there is a circumcision, wedding or death we pay contributions and go together as Hakkamat and sheikhat; but al-Hakkamat do not tell us about the things that are concerned with the government. It is very rare the instances that we both went together to receive government officials. They wouldn’t give you a chance to sing as al-Hakkamat dominate the presentation (H.R27, 15.05.06).
Thus, for the second time al-Hakkamah become a target for the government as was the case in 1991 when they were targeted by the riverine Governor of Darfur through the PIM (see 7.2), but this time they were sponsored by the riverine Governor of South Darfur. To this end, fourteen respondents, twelve of whom are Hakkamat and Sheikhat, maintain that their organization was primarily initiated and endorsed by the governor of south Darfur - Atta al-Mannan (2002-2006) soon after he assumed the position of governor. Since then, the union has become under the administration of the Ministry of Culture and Information. Yet, twenty one respondents, of whom eighteen are Hakkamat, establish that the union is deemed an informal voluntary organization meant for including women who perform prominent communal roles in their tribes in order to serve certain objectives which include: firstly, communicating a message to all tribes that they are united. Secondly, to expose those women to awareness raising activities aiming at transforming their harmful conflict-inciting attitudes into acts of mending, healing and restoration of social fabric that has been torn apart by wars and hostilities. In this regard, it is an opportunity for reformulating and orientating the institution of al-Hakkamah to, hopefully, gets involved in peace processes and dispute settlement. In order to realise this vision, and ensure the conformity of al-Hakkamah, the UHS issues regulations and laws that organise its work and relationships for its members to abide by; for instance public participation of al-Hakkamah should be made either through the Literary and Artistic Standards Unit (LASU), qism al-muşanafât al-‘adabiyyah wa-l-faniyyah, or through the union and that the participation of the members in any event should always be in a group. Besides, no Hakkamah will have the right to act on her
own or make individual contacts with officials or prestigious people without the authorisation of the union.

On the other hand, in order to enhance their role in peace and for restoration of social fabric, respondent R41 maintains that *al-Hakkamat* themselves have drawn their own regulatory measures to arbitrate their colleagues who would commit antisocial behaviours e.g. defaming tribes, encouraging hostilities, etc., by socially isolating the accused *Hakkamah*, fining her and or boycotting her in all commemorative occasions which is more or less similar to the arbitrations they used to exercise against offenders back in their villages.

The Ministry of Culture and Information makes joining the UHS compulsory for any *Hakkamah* who moves from the village and settles in Nyala and would like to perform in public in the locale or at government public events. This control over *al-Hakkamat* is made clear by *Hakkamah* - H/F.R51 who maintains that unless you were a member in the UHS, you would not participate in any official event as was the case previously:

Before this you had your own freedom of choice and once you learned that there is something happening, you would call for your women and do things independently. But now you have to join the union, otherwise you will have no identification. On the other hand, you can affiliate to the tribal folkloric team of dancing and singing as all tribes have their own folkloric teams and each team has a *Hakkamah* (H/F.R51, 20.05.06).
Respondent R17, the chairperson of a regional legislative committee in south Darfur, states that organization is a crucial condition for performing any public activity and *al-Hakkamat* have had to be organized as in his precise expression below:

> There is social change and transformation … organisation in town is indispensable as no one can arrange a singing party without permission and no one can make a public mass congregation without permission and there are certain bodies that are authorised to invite people. Consequently, there is no choice for *al-Hakkamat* in this respect unless it comes through the organization (R17, 02.05.06).

In order to oversee the number of *Hakkamat* in *Nyala*, respondent R41 maintains that the MCI has counted all *al-Hakkamat* and *Sheikhat* present in each neighbourhood and assembled them under a committee. According to the government local administrative system, in each neighbourhood there is a popular committee which is responsible for monitoring other committees in the neighbourhood. Thus, in *Nyala* town there is 39 neighbourhoods and 39 committees of *Hakkamat* and *Sheikhat*. This system suggests that *al-Hakkamat* have become under firm control and monitoring by the government.

*Al-Hakkamat* have thus become organized with an initiative that is both male and government driven, with apparently a very little initiative of their own. Similarly, in *al-Fashir*, the capital city of north Darfur state, respondent R33 explains that a more or less similar association of *al-Hakkamat* was formed and is under the full command of a government male official who is responsible for all the folklore groups in the region. *Al-Hakkamat* would not attempt any move
without his consent. She perceives this as a negative transformation because *al-Hakkamat* should be left to exercise their own autonomy and lead their own activities.

Thus, six respondents charge that the UHS is founded to serve overt and covert government objectives. The overt one is to organise *al-Hakkamat* and present them as transformed, ‘reformed’ peace advocates who have shied away from defaming, igniting and inciting conflict. Its hidden dimension could however be envisaged as, firstly, to be a forum affiliated to the National Congress Party (NCP) and to identify *al-Hakkamat* as ‘*al-Hakkamat* of the NCP’. The importance of *al-Hakkamat* to the NCP stemmed from the fact that *al-Hakkamat* are many in numbers and each *Hakkamah* has tens or hundreds of admirers who would promptly respond to her call. As such, they could constitute one of the key actors to influence the political direction her tribe would take, especially during election campaigns, wars, propagandas, etc.

In a more critical view, a journalist respondent charges that the whole idea of the UHS is created by the *Inghaz* regime as a result of its policies and political rhetoric that promote ethnicity and tribalism among Darfur people and which contributed to drastically exacerbating the already existing ethnic polarization and conflict among tribes and ethnic groups (see 4.5). The UHS has thus effectively become one of the regime’s mechanisms for heightening ethnic divisions, no matter what the original intent was. The mobilisation of *al-Hakkamat* in the PIM in 1991 during *Bolad*’s insurgency was but an antecedent
to the current re-alignment and co-optation of al-Hakkamat so long as the portrayal of the armed conflict continued to be labelled ethnic and tribal.

Yet, though the official guardians of the UHS claim that the union has assimilated all Hakkamat residents in Nyala, the respondent journalist claims that it is not because al-Hakkamah whose tribes are affiliated to opposition parties e.g. the Umma Party or the Popular Congress Party are excluded. He supports his claim by pointing out to that he met four Hakkamat who denied their membership to the union. This claim is equally shared by the chairperson of the union of Folklore in South Darfur who confirms that there are many Hakkamat including famous ones not registered in the UHS. Thus, the journalist charges that this is the underlying rationale behind forming the union that it does only involve follower tribes to the NCP and the advocates of its policies.

Secondly, through their organization, the government could impose and guarantee loyalty and support which would largely imply the endorsement of the tribe per se and mainly the Baggara Arab ethnicity as claimed by six respondents.

On the other hand, thirty three respondents also identify some advantages and disadvantages for al-Hakkamat being under the UHS. The advantage in their views is it being a positive step to organise the folklore composers and their
activity which might help in developing the art of folklore and its contribution to maintaining and propagating positive values in society. Twelve respondents postulate that it is an opportunity to develop the institution of al-Hakkamah through training, rehabilitation and reorientation and enhance her agency and ability in peace building. Yet, this requires that initially, she must not be politically manipulated and to be left to exercise her own choice. Eight respondents argue that the union constitutes a means through which al-Hakkamah, as a person, can maintain her survival and obtain some gifts e.g. ‘tobes’; but most importantly is that it acts as an umbrella for the al-Hakkamah to maintain her public presence in town and to be linked to the state institution of power, the military and the NCP, which constitutes significant source of her power in town.

Yet, from the viewpoint of twelve Hakkamat, the advantage of being organized in the UHS is that it constitutes a form of a coalition through which al-Hakkamat and Sheikhat come together and build their own social bonding, collective support and solidarity. For instance, last year (2005), through peer group sharing, they donated food (e.g. ligaymat (doughnuts), Ageenah (processed millet mixed with yogurt) and tea to the religious sects who were performing religious rituals at the Prophet’s Birthday Yard in Nyala, during the annual commemoration ceremony of Prophet Muhammad’s Birthday. This is viewed by five respondents as a new development in the charitable activities of al-Hakkamah, an obvious form of coping with the town environment.
The disadvantages, however, in the views of eight respondents rests in that if it is meant to create an organized female institution of power to be mainstreamed in promoting government policies and to be exploited for official public ceremonies and receptions, it will certainly demean the value and meaning of *al-Hakkamah* as a cultural icon. In addition, respondent R70 (04.05.06) contends that the way *al-Hakkamat* were recruited has transformed them into demanding and dependent women poets and subsequently their poetic produce became less genuine, and less passionate, if not less artistic altogether.

However, respondent R70 maintains that being an odd female organisation for a large number of rural women in town, the UHS is needed to be enhanced and empowered through training, awareness raising and orientation to enable it to contribute to effecting positive change in society. Moreover, indications point to active emergence of grassroots organisations in Darfur that might be involved in the processes of conflict resolution in Darfur. Subsequently, and given the powerful position and roles of *al-Hakkamat* in both rural and urban areas, indispensably necessitates for the UHS to dissociate from being one of the state’s political institutions and/or from being politically manipulated by the state and to grow as an independent rural-based female organization dedicated to peace, culture, female creativity and social change.

On a different level, eleven respondents state that while the UHS become well recognized in *Nyala* and involved the majority of *al-Hakkamat* who had moved from their villages to *Nyala*, it has no presence and/or impact in the village
where the truly tribally-oriented *Hakkamat* live - in the camp and the *Murhal*107.

These rural *Hakkamat* have hitherto maintained their original cultural and social
classification values and they practise their recognized roles and rituals on their
own volition without interference from outsiders. Thus, respondent R28
emphasises, that ‘it is this distant village *Hakkamah* who constitutes the real
danger’ (R28, 14.05.06) which importantly implies that they are the ones who
still wield real power and influence to sway the balance of events.

### 7.2.5 Incentivisation of al-Hakkamah

Three respondents maintain that among all other folklore performers al-
*Hakkamat* are favoured by the government and promoted by being offered
incentives in money terms as well as in kind such as sugar, sheep and by
organizing meal parties for them inside the premises of the main NCP Regional
Office. Yet, thirteen *Hakkamah* concede that they have no salaries apart from
irregular trivial incentives (sugar and some money that rarely exceed
10,000SDP - equivalent to 20.0GBP) that they may receive from individual
officials in return for their performance at public events and that once they were
given *tobes* by *Nafi Ali Nafi*108, to quote just one statement of a *Hakkamah*:

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107 *Murhal* is a social and administrative migratory route for the mobile pastoralists to navigate their paths
through lands of settled farmers (Kahaif 2004: 197).

108 *Hakkamah Hajja Fatimayah* maintained that they received fifty tobes as gifts from *Nafi Ali Nafi*, an
influential advisor to President al-Bashir.
... Once, Issa and Daggash brought me a sac of sugar and 20,000SDP. When the president came we received him at the airport and when we came back we were registered and were given sugar from the Wilayah (the state office). But since then we were not given anything. A few days ago they gave us a sack of sugar to drink tea at the Itihad [Union] office (H.R27, 15.05.06).

Despite the humble material value of these incentives, outside the Hakkamat group, three respondents consider them ‘haram’ (forbidden in Islam) and perceive the act of giving these incentives as criminal. They argue that these resources could have been better directed to feed the vast numbers of the vulnerable poor, especially the victims of government’s wars e.g. orphan children and widows. The claim that the regime got its priorities wrong here came from respondents who are from African tribes and their argument could be seen as reflecting a schism already widening in perception between African and non-African (Arabs) tribes. But, respondent R28 from Fur emphasises that these roles of al-Hakkamah ought to be valued, appreciated and compensated for by the government and whoever else benefitting from them.

These incentives, albeit trivial, have, however, disappeared, following Raja Battle when the UHS was annexed to the Popular Police and the officials withdrew their attention away from al-Hakkamah as claimed by H/S.R71. This could be interpreted as such that the government was no longer interested in using al-Hakkamah, because Raja of Western Bahr al Ghazal state at the boarders with south Darfur, is the last decisive battle fought between the SPLA and the government on the western front after which the process of peace was enhanced and progressively forced by the international community leading
eventually to the signing of the CPA between the SPLA and Sudan government in 2005. Seventeen Hakkamah maintain that they have eventually turned to pay the cost of attending the UHS office and the military registration from their own pockets. Yet, while the government did not give them regular financial support, nor offered them reasonable amounts when it did, the Ministry of Culture and Information, which should have stood as the guardian of al-Hakkamah, has been profiting from the presence of al-Hakkamah and Sheikhat and their initiatives. Seven Hakkamat recount that following a meal and a reception party for the governor, organised by the UHS at the premises of the Culture and Information unit, the governor granted the UHS five million SDP (equivalent to 1250 GBP) but fourfold that amount to the Culture and Information office.

Ironically therefore, al-Hakkamah in town has deployed her agency and power to inadvertently enable her own exploitation to take place. But she has to learn fast the wheeling and dealing of those official gatekeepers. She is now demanding employment and unless she is promised incentives, she will not perform for the government and can effectively force the officials and authorities to fulfil their promises. Her dreadful efforts in chasing these promises are unjustly viewed as begging and undignified and that al-Hakkamah herself has become, in return, less authentic and more prosaic in her performances.

This change in the behaviour of al-Hakkamah surprises her old rural audience who might want to see al-Hakkamah in town but otherwise with the characteristics typical of her in the village. If those people who moved into town
questioned *al-Hakkamah’s* attitude, perhaps in themselves they would see a similar change, interpreted as a coping mechanism or survival strategy in the new environment.

### 7.3 Obligations of *al-Hakkamah*

As *al-Hakkamah* is being coached, goaded and co-opted into the government’s domain, she is required to undertake the following obligations.

#### 7.3.1 Advocacy and Mobilization for War and Peace

##### 7.3.1.1 Military Recruitment

Twenty six respondents state that since the 1990s, the ruling riverine elites have been using *al-Hakkamat* extensively in mobilising and recruiting the youth to join its *Jihad* campaign for its wars in the south of the country, Nuba Mountains, Blue Nile and Eastern Sudan and in the war in Darfur since 2003 against Darfur insurgency which they interpret as ethnic wars (see 4.5.3). Indeed the entry point of *al-Hakkamah* to the government formal mobilization campaign was through the role that PIM played in the mobilization led by Darfur riverine governor *Al-Tayeb Sikhah* in December 1991 against *Bolad* insurgency (see 4.5.2).
Their contribution was very obvious; for instance H.R37G4 confirms that she composed and recited during Bolad’s campaign when most tribes of Darfur were mobilised:

**Box 60**

**English:**

*Omar al-Bashir* warns me, passes to me what the men said
Tell him I got men too who tolerate fighting
Darfur possesses tigers and lions
My kinsfolk, the *Ta’aiasha*, your flags out there,
Your history is well known for a long time
Your history is in *Um Dibaikrat*\(^{109}\), in *Shaikan*\(^{110}\)
*Bani Helba*, the strong Oxen of *Batran* pedigree
*Fellata* are holding Kalashnikovs (AK47s) in hot weather
The sons of *Bani Helba*, the attacking cannon
The *Rezeiqat*, the lions of the jungle who powerfully defend Ed-Daein
This is the *Messyri* with a hot heart, saddled the horse and pulled the bridle
The *Furawi*, the folk of *Ali Dinar*
The day the outlaws came, you get united and ambushed them in the coves
The country have got men who put up with smoke (of firearms)
(H.R37G4, 11.06.06)

**Arabic:**

عمر البشير اذى إنذار، اذى الكلام القالو الرجال

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\(^{109}\) A battle fought by the *Mahdi* against the British.

\(^{110}\) A battle fought in *Kordofan* in 1883 by the *Mahdi* against the British and led to the *Mahdi* capturing Kordofan (al-Gaddaal 2002).
قول ليه بي رجال حاملين القتال
دارفور عندها نمور، عندها ديان
اهلي التعبيشة تاريخكو من زمان مدققين اعلام
بي تاريخكو في أم ديكرات، تاريخكو في شيكان
بني هلا تيران الزحام تركة بطاران
فلاته شابلين كلاش شاف سما حار
اولاد هينان المدفع الهمام
الرزيقات ديوان القائم الدافعو عن الضعين تمام
ده المسيري بي قلين حار، شد الحصان جيد اللجام
الفوراوي اهل على دينار
يوم جات الخوارج، وحدن الكلمة رقدو في الخيران
البلد بي رجالها بالحملوالثيران

Transliteration:

Omer al-Bashir ʾaddānī ʾinzār addānī kalām-l-gālaw –l-rijjāl
Gūl layā bey rijjāl ḥāmfin al-qīṭāl
Darfawr ʾindaha nimūr wa ʾindaha ʾdidān
ʾaḥāfī al-taʾaʾiysha, tāriḥkhū min zamān muḍḍaḡiḡin ʾalām
Bay tāriḥkhū fī ʾumm dubaykrāt, tāriḥkhū fī ʾshaykān
Banī helbā tīrān-l-ziḥām tirkat baṭrān
Falāṭa shāyfin kilāsh Šā ʾaḥr
ʾawlād habbān, al-mudfāʾ al-hajjām
Al-rizaygāt ʾdidān al-famm, nadhḏāfīn al-dhī ayn tamām
Da al-masīrī bī gabān ḥarr, shaddā al-ḥišān, jabād al-lūṯām
Al-fawrawi ʾahāl ʾaflī dīnār
Yawm jāt al-khawārij wahdē al-kīlmāh, ragadṭū fī al-khayrān
Al-balad bey riįjālha bilḥammālū al-dukhān
Hakkamah H/F. R51 also maintains that she had contributed to mobilising the youth and students to join the army against Bolad who she labels as ‘Khawarig’ (outlaws) and recited her poems before the returning army troops who they received at the airport:

**Box 61**

**English:**

The judgment of Allah is accepted, the human submits to it

Our Popular Defence Force, shouted, “God is Great”

And our armed forces swore the oath, “we will die till the last one”

The police and legal authorities all said “who target us should stay away, our, country be guarded”

Our students tore off their notebooks, threw their pens away

They said to me, Oh Hakkamah, your ears would hear the news

From hand to hand we would collect the shroud

Until we liberate the country.

(H/F.R51, 20.05.06)

**Arabic:**

حكم الله راضٍ المخلوق بيا يقبل

دفاع شعبنا، قال الله أكبر

وقواتنا المسلحة حلفت القسم قالت نموت نعدم

الشرطة ورجال القانون قالو الجابينا يقفف بعد هكاك يا الوطن نسلم

طلبتنا شرطو الكرام، زقلو الظلم

قالو للحكامة، اضاف ان تسمع الخبر

من ايد على ايد نسلمو الكفن

عشان نحررو الوطن
H/F.R51 incites all tribes of Darfur to join the fight against *Bolad* by reciting:

**Box 62**

**English:**

Enough, John Garang! You never get it!

The men of Darfur are the pegs of the four directions

*Al-Rizaigi* swore the oath and said we would bathe in blood.

*Al-Messiri* in *Niyyam Leil* told him "you won't find a country".

And *al-Habbani* patiently defended his homeland
Al-Fellati was carrying sword and holding a Magnum gun

Al-Hilbawi rode on his horse, swearing not to dismount until the promise is fulfilled.

Al-Ta’aishi told him, “you ignorant, enough, you never get it!”

Half of my land is Sudanese, half French, you will never get it

Al-Khuzami, the country protector

Al-Furawi swore to Faney Keway the oath of divorce

And warned him the jebel is prohibited for you.

You won’t eat its orange and you won’t hide in its caves

Your desire for Darfur, is as the desire of an orphan for a mother

Your desire for Darfur is as the desire of the paralyzed for shoes

Your desire for Darfur is as the desire of a blind for sight

Oh, the men of the country; by soul and blood

I want it liberated before sunrise

(H/F.R51, 20.05.06)

Arabic:

جون قرنق كفاك انجم
أولاد دارفور أونتاد الفيل
الرزقي حلف قال نلبرد بالدم
المسريي فوق نيام ليل قال ليا متابقي وطن
والهجاني في داره هم وصير
الفلاتي شايل ليا سيف ومساس المقم
الهلياوي عصر دوائه حلف قال ما أندل الا الوعد ينتم
التعيشي قال ليا يا جاهل كفاك انجم
داري نصها سودان ونصها فرنسا ما بتفها ابدا
الخزامي دفاع الوطن
الفوراوي حرم لفاني كوي
قال له حرم عليك الجبل
لا ينكل فيها بركان و لا يقلب في كركر
شوفك لدارفور شوق الام لام
شوفك لدارفور شوق المكحض لجزم
شوفك لدارفور شوق العمي للشوف
H.R32 maintains that when the army were leaving to fight Bolad, she composed in celebration of an anticipated victory of the government and recited at the departure of the army to the battlefield:
Box 63

English:

I got some speech to deliver
The army men and the police are lions and tigers
I would like to make the speech on them,
You stopped Abdel Aziz and Bolad
You lied down in trenches and ensured victory
For Bolad and Abdel Aziz, be careful in saying we’re winners
As you hoisted the flag upright
(H.R32, 07.05.06)

Arabic:

انا عددي لي كلمة أقويلا
رجال الدش و رجال الشرطة هما ديدان و نمورا
حدثن فوقهم أنا داره أقويلا
وقفتو عبدالعزيز وبولاد على طولا
رقدتو فوق الخنادق، جبت النصر مضمونا
بولاد و عبد العزيز، قول افازين يمسك قانونا
وقفتو العلم على طولا

Transliteration:

ʾanā ʾindy layyā kilmah ʾagūlā
Rijāl al-daysh wa rĳāl al-shurṭā didān wa nimūrā
Ḥadithan fawghum ?anā dāyrā ʾagūlā
Waggaftū ʾabdalaziz wa bawlad ʾalā ṭūlah
Ragdtū fawg al-khandag jibtū al-naṣur madhmūnā
Bawlād wa ʾabdalaziz, gawlat fāyžīn yamsik qānūnhā
Waggaftū al-ʾalamʾalā ṭūlā
Similarly, H.R19 maintains that she had witnessed the fight between the government and *Bolad* insurgency in 1992 and she was hearing the ‘noise’ of guns; and when she saw the enemy were so close, she composed and recited the following:

**Box 64**

**English:**

Those are the sons of Habban who face the crisis head on
Our people fastened their belts, our soldiers’ skin scratched
Carrying G3 rifles and AK47s; Oh, Bishari, hurry up!
I could see a non-believer enemy waylay my land
I’m scared that the effect may separate me from my children
Oh my clan, hit them with your rifles

(H.R19, 30.05.06)

**Arabic:**

دول عمال هبان المتلقين الحامي
شعينا انتركب جندينا جيدة مشرط
شارئ الجم والكلاشنكوف الحق يا بشاري
انا شاهقة كافر عنو بالعهد لداري
خائفة للعقال يفرقي من عيالي
بالرينجة يا عشاري

**Transliteration:**

Dawl ʾiyyāl habbān al-mitlagiyyīn al-ḥamī
Shaʿbīnā ʾil-karrab, jundīnā jildā musharraṭ
Shāyill al-jīm wa al-kilāshinkūv ʾalḥag yā bishārī
ʾānā shāyyafā kāfīr ʾadu bi-l-jammad li dārī
Khāyyafā līl- ʿuğbal yafrugni min ʾiyyāfī
Bi-raynjāh ya-l-ʿushārī
Respondent R16 from the *Habbania* claims that he had participated in the militia force that fought *Bolad* and that when they were marching out of the town of *Buram* towards the battlefield, the now deceased *Hakkamah Azzah Gaidoom* composed and recited in encouragement:

**Box 65**

**English:**

My horsemen whisked away, never fear death

They left the coward behind to guard houses

Die for your dignity, other brave sons will be born after you've gone,

Capture *Bolad* and make him your goats' shepherd

The youngsters set out and turned back the elderly

Oh, share the death on the back of your horses

shoot with guns and stab with your spears

Oh, don’t come back in disgrace, as tribes would gloat at your misdeed

No one dies but on their day

Dignity is precious and doesn’t have limits

*Bolad* is a non-believer who defied [the legacy of] the ancestors

*Buram* is beloved, we’ll defend it till we die

Hakkamah Azzah bit Gaidoom as recited by R16 (24.06.06)

**Arabic:**

فرساني انتحركو، والموت ما يخافو

الخواف للبيت حرسو

موتوا في شرفكوا، وراكم الفارس بلدو

بولاد امسكوا، بي غنمك سرحو

الصبيان انتحركو، والكبر رجو

الموت في ضهور خيولك اقتسمو

البنديقية ضربت وبالحرية طعنو
When the government won the fight, *al-Hakkamat* celebrated this victory with poems insulting *Bolad* and his colleagues. For instance H.R32 recites the following:

**Box 66**  
**English:**  
Would you like to be told the truth?  
*Omer Hassan al-Bashir* either wrote with his pen or directed with his hand
Whoever gets in conflict with Omer al-Bashir, gets himself in trouble

Al-Zibair Mohammed Salih, you whose head is full and whose speech is useful

Whomever opposes him, the governor of Darfur destroys

Bolad left the universe, John Garang would like to shake hands

And Abdel Aziz is just sitting over there, we didn’t know his destiny

I said to him ‘common Abdel Aziz, let me console you’, If you don’t hit the male goat, it will castrate you.

(H.R32, 07.05.06)

**Transliteration:**

Dāyyir yawarūka al-ḥaqīqāh

ʿumar ḥasan al-bashīr, walla katab bi-galamah walla ʾashshar bey-īdā

Al-baʿādi ʿumar ḥ al-bashīr waga layya fi muṣībāh

Al-Zibayr Muhammad ʾṢāliḥ, yā ʾabū rāsan malyān, ʾabū kilimtan mufridāh

Ḥākim wilāyat darfawr, gawltta al-biʿādi kan gatṭa ata ʾalayyā al-ʾishāh

Bawlād tarak al-dinyā, jawn garang dāyyir yassallim bi-īdā

Wa ʾabdalaziz gaʿad daykan ma ʾirifinā layya jihā, Gulit lu taʾāl law ʾabdalaziz, khafīnī ʾawaṣīka

ʿinta tays al-ghanam mā dagaytā bakhaṣṣikā

The contribution of al-Hakkamat in Bolad’s campaign as mentioned earlier was very convincing to the government military personnel and to the Governor in particular, that they identify al-Hakkamah as the missing link to bolster their
military strategy to defeat insurgency and also to gather political support. Consequently, they were used in the mobilization of the youth to join the civil war in the south. Twenty six respondents including six Hakkamat maintain that through their tongue in celebration of the bravery of the mujahidin and the martyrs, al-Hakkamat enabled the recruitment of thousands more people, most of whom were youth from the Baggara community, into the PDF as clearly reflected in the testimony of a respondent:

... I have witnessed two battles; al-Hakkamat of the Rezeiqat of Ed Daein province inciting their men to go to the south and to bring wealth, cows and weapons and this is an overt truth that is not hidden. The second thing is that when the train would come to collect the youth from south Darfur to join the war in the south, the boys of our relatives used to run away and hide refusing to join the Popular Defence or the army forces; surprisingly, their mothers some of whom were Hakkamat used to come out and sing for them to go and consequently they will go (R43, 29.04.06).

The accounts of respondent R14 suggest that while in the battlefield in the south, the image al-Hakkamat evokes would remain dynamic in the minds of soldiers and combatants:

While in the battlefield, the fighters would remind themselves of al-Hakkamah by saying ‘hooy, remember al-Hakkamah’. A friend of mine who was fighting in the civil war in south Sudan recounted to me: ‘we had a colleague called Haroon and he was a son of al-Hakkamah Bit Hassaan. In the war, Haroon used to stand on his feet carrying an (artillery) gun (doshka) and would shoot and remind his colleagues not to lie down and to keep remember Bit Hassaan. Upon his reminding words, those hiding in the trenches would come out and carry on attacking aggressively. This is because they were pretty sure that their news would swiftly reach Bit Hassaan, al-Hakkamah, and they would end up in either their heroism being celebrated or their cowardice being defamed and publicised (R14, 29.05.06).
Two respondents suggest that this reminding is sufficient enough to stir the soldiers fighting spirit. Yet some also conclude that while the mobilization effort of al-Hakkamat was beneficial for the government, it was detrimental to the Baggara community. This is because, a journalist respondent charges that while hundreds of men used to join the fight, only thirty or twenty would come back. This conclusion could be supported by the figures reported in the Black Book (see Table 2) which shows that the number of martyrs of the civil war in south Sudan and who came from south Darfur region represented the highest among the three regions of Darfur and the rest of Sudan. Having the Baggara population constituting the largest single block of south Darfur population, the largest number of deaths suggests that the largest number of recruits in the army forces from south Darfur had actually come from the Baggara ethnic background compared to other tribes in Darfur. These conclusions are also observed by three respondents out of whom two are from the Baggara ethnicity.

It seems that al-Hakkamat are aware of the fatal consequences of their mobilization on sons of the tribe which they acknowledge in their recitations, even though they appear to unremorsefully encourage it, as indicated in H.R37G4’s recitation:

**Box 67**

**English:**

You are the fillers of the gap (there when needed),
the leader of the company, your shoulders are fully decorated with your men
The day you opened fire, *al-Hakkamah* joyfully ululated

Oh, the victorious soldiers, thanks Allah you’ve arrived safe

You never panicked, you just said we are ready

You rolled up your kit-bag and rode with Israel

Oh, the day you went out in hundred, only fifty returned

You’ve been through a night when you eat bullets and drink benzene

(H.R37G4, 11.06.06)

**Arabic:**

سِدْدَّائِنّ الخَانَة، قَانَدّ السَّرِيّة، بِيٍّ رَجَالٍ كَتَفَكَّ مَلَانَة

يَوْمُ سْرَفَتَوْ الجِبْخَانَة، الحِكْمَة زَغْرَدتْ فَرَحَة

حَمْدُ اللَّهِ بِالسَّلَامَةِ، بَيِّ الجَيْشَةِ بِآَا فَازِيْن

يَوْمُ مَا هَمْوَكَ، قَلْتُوُ اِنَّيْ حَاضِرِين

لَيْتَوْ النُّمَرَة، رُكِبْتُوُ مَعُ عَزَّرَائِل

يَوْمُ مُشْيَتَوْ مِيْة، فِلَتُوُ لِيْ خَمْسِين

عَنْدَكُو لَيْلَةُ بِتَنْكُلُو ذَخْيَرَة، شَراَكْوُ مِنَ الْبيْنِ

**Transliteration:**

Saddādīn al-khānā, qāyid al-sirriyā, bay rījālak katfak malānah

Yawm šaraftū al-jabakhānāh, al-ḥakkāmah zagrhadat farḥānah

Ḥimdillah ʾbil-salāmah yā al-jayyāsha yā fayz ʾin

Yawm ma hammākū gultū ʾānīnā ḥāḍrīn

Laffāytū al-nimrah, rikibtū maʾ ʾīsrāʾīl

Yawm mashaytū miyyah, gabbaltū khamsīn

ʾindaku laylah bi-tāklū min al-banzīn

Some recitations of some *Hakkamat* in mobilizing the youth to join the civil war in the south are illustrated below:
Hakkamah R20G4: ‘I compose for the army who were leaving to the war in the south’, an example of her recitations:

**Box 68**

**English:**

Tell him that the panic of women is little and mine is massive
The soldiers changed tyres and poured benzene
They loaded the gun and donned the G3
They are the sheep of sacrifice who donate their souls
Those are men of women [husbands] who uphold their reputation and return victorious
(H.R20G4, 11.06.06)

**Arabic:**

قول له هم العوٌن شِّا وَانَا هَمٌّ كَتٌر
الديش غَر عِجلات وَكَبِن البنزين
شحنو المدفع، اتَوَشحوا الجِم
كباش ضحٌة بالروح مَتِبَعٌ
دول رجال عوٌن شاٌلٌن السمعة جو فاٌزٌن

**Transliteration:**

Gūl-lah hamm al-`awīn shtyyā, wa `annā hammi kātīr
Ad-daysh ghayyaran ʿajalāt wa kabban bānzi>n
Shahānu al-mudtā', 'itwashshhū al-jīm
Kubāsh dāhiyyāh bi-l-rūḥ mutbari ʾīn
Dawl rijjāl `awīn, šāylyīn l-sīm ah, jaw fāyzi>n

Hakkamah H.R32 admits her participation, saying: ‘we participated when the war was with John Garang. We encouraged men to join the army and we escorted the army when leaving to the south. This is one of her recitations:
I miss you soldiers

The day you got into tanks, armed with bombs

I would love to see the force ready for tomorrow

Oh, soldiers, when would your month (time) arrive

Peace be upon you soldiers, Oh, welcome

I said welcome, for you have to protect my gates

If a Habbani committed a fault, I know how to defame him

The Habban's word is powerful and have got well known holymen

I'm so pleased with the soldiers

They shouted al-jalalah [ie ready to engage], and get armed

Their speech provokes the horseman

And embarrasses the coward

I would like to go to the soldiers to sing for them overnight

Oh, speeches that I am giving are plenty not few

[People of the] Comprehensive Advocacy and the Popular Police and;

The United Police are fighting the bandits

Omer Hassan al-Bashir, you received a telegram

“Islamic development and the religious revolution

The one who take part in the holy war, volunteering his life, is a sheep of sacrifice”

They shall deliver victory, hundred percent

(H.R32, 07.05.06)
السلام عليكم الجيشه مرحببا
مرحببا قلنا جاية تحمل سدادة
هاني كان سوا الشين، بعرف بعيها
هيان كلمتهم قوية، وا فقرا بيئة
مسبوطة من رجال الجيش
هم شالو الجلالة، و بينها
حديثهم لفارس بهينبا
ويلبطن بحيرا
مRARYATI نمشي للجيش نحي ليا ليل
والحديث القول كثير، ما شيا
الدعوة الشاملة والشرطة الشعبية
الشرطة الموحدة، للتهب يتكاثل فيها
بسم حسن البشير، جائك برقة
التنمية الإسلامية والثورة الدينية
الجهاد مثير بيه عمر كيش ضحية
جابين النصر مية في المية

Transliteration:

Garmānah laykū, yā al-ʿāsākir
Yawm rikibtu ad-dabbāt, silāḥku qanābil
Badūr ʿāshūf al-ʿāqubah lay waKitāh yawmān bākir
Al-dayyāshā mitayn sharakū yagābil
Al-salāmū ʿalaykū, al-jaysh marḥabābā
marḥabābā gultah jāyyah tahmī sidādah
habānī kān sawā al-shayn, baʿarif baʿaayyirah
habān kilmithum gawwiyyā, wā fugarā baynā
mabṣūṭā min rijāl al-daysh
humm shālū al-jalālah, wey al-biaynāh
Hakkamah H.R58G4 says, ‘I composed for the horsemen who were going to fight in south Sudan’:

**Box 7**

**English:**

Early in the morning, I was hearing the sound of guns moaning

‘O’ horsemen who are my kinfolks, I advice you

Close the ranks and do not let America colonize us!

(H.R58G4, 11.06.06)

**Arabic:**

مع شقة الشرحان بسمع حسيس الورين رَتَّا
بوصيكو يا الفرسان أولاد اهتنا
لما بعضكو ما تخلوا أمريكا تستعمنا

**Transliteration:**

hadithum lil-faris bihinah
wā lil-baṭal biḥayyirah
marādī namshī lil-jaysh naḥayyī layyā laylāh
wal-hadith al-bagūlah katīr, mā shīya
al-daʿ awah al-shāmlah, wal-shurṭah al-shaʿ biyyah
al-shurṭah al-muwwaḥadah lil-nahab bitkātil fiyyā
ʿumar ḥasan al-baṣḥīr, jātak barqīyyah
al-tanmiyyah al-ʿislāmiyyah wal-thawrah al-dīniyyah
al-jihād mutbarriʿ bayʿ umrah, kabish dāhiyyah
jāyybin al-naṣur miyyah fī al-miyyah

Hakkamah H.R58G4 says, ‘I composed for the horsemen who were going to fight in south Sudan’:
While it was easy for the government to use *al-Hakkamah* to mobilize recruits, on religious grounds for its civil war in south Sudan, this turned to be unconvincing in Darfur as all Darfuri rebels are Muslims, some are even linked to the same Islamist ideology as the government’s. Therefore the government had to resort to another equally devastating attribute of ethnicity in Darfur by conceptualising the conflict as a war of the zurga (Africans) against the Arab, a discourse adopted by the Islamist NIF government (see 4.5.3). Thus, two respondents charge that, through this discourse the government has used *al-Hakkamah* through the media and other public forums and gatherings, in mobilising the youth, a fact that was uncontested by any one in Darfur. In an ambivalent support of this argument, H.R37G4 admits her participation in this governmental media campaign by, on the one hand, inciting recruits from Darfur to fight southern Sudanese, describing them as ‘slaves’, and on the other hand, appealing to Darfuri rebels, as ‘sons of the land’, to settle differences through dialogue as it was a shame to fight one another:
Box 71

English:

Come on, men, go into the jungle of the Anya Anya [southern rebels]

From the blood of the slave, feed the hawk in the sky

If you are oppressed, come, sit down and negotiate

If you have right, you will get it

Shame on you, the sons of the region, to revolt

Those who took arms have formed forces

When we investigated, they said they are sons of the land

Darfur is in summertime (i.e. drained), it needs fervor

Life in this world can be delusive, its sweetness never complete

He who enters the jungle [ an insurgent] will only kill his, brother, uncle and cousin,

Will strike his neighbour and be covered with his blood

Oh, people, return and repent, the unjust boasts with his mother.

(H.R37G4, 11.06.06)

Arabic:

هيا رجالات السيدات خشيوا غابة الانانو
من دم العبد، للطير في السما غدو
كان مظلمين تعالوا اعدوا تحت التحاسو
كان بي حكو بمثلقو
جرام عليه عيسى البلد تتمردو
الشتاتيين السلاح عملتو ليكو قوة
يوم سانينا واستفسرنا، قالوا لنا عيسى البلد جوه
دارفور صفقت دايره مروة
الدني داررة حلوها ما بنتمًا
العلماء الغابة بكشلا اخوه، بكشلا عمه، بكشلا ولدمها
ضرب جارا وقتا مخلوط بي دمه
Similarly, as the government accuse the Darfuri people of being complicit in the conflict (see 4.5.3), some Hakkamat likewise reproach Darfuris for what the government claim and demand they comply with peace-building and reconciliation processes. H.R31 typifies this trend when she says:

**Box 72**

**English:**

You, the men of Darfur who invented heresies and horror

Before the war in Darfur, we – both the Arab and Fur

Our (good) situation [relation] has never been experienced by anyone else
We have our customs and traditions
Those connect with these and these connect with those
And those go to these and these come to those
We have the hoe and we have the plough
And we have the farms, and we have the gardens
And we have the male and the female camel
And we have the cow and the ox
And Allah balanced it for us with oil
We don’t differentiate between Arab and Fur
Weapons Down! For I don’t want anyone to kill anyone anymore.

(H.R31, 09.05.06)

Arabic:

يا رجال دارفور العمَّلتو البَدع والحَول
انحنا قبل الحرب في دارفور، انحنا العرب والفور
حالتنا ما ضاقها زول
عندنا عادات وتقاليد
دول ووصلوا دول، و دول ووصلوا دول،
ودول بمشوا في دول، ودول بجوا لي دول
عندنا الجراة وعندنا الطورية
والناقة والجمل
عندنا المزارع وعندنا الجناين
عندنا الناقة والحَول
عندنا البقرة والثور
وربنا تماها لينا بالبترول
ما عندنا فرز بين العرب والفور
اررضن سلاح، انا ما دايره زول يكلل زول

Transliteration:

Ya rijāl dārfūr al-ʾamāltū al-bīdaʾ wa-l-haww
ʾanīhnā gabl al-ḥarib fī dārfū, ʾanīhnā al-ʾarab wa-l-faww
Hāltnā mā ḏag-hā zawl

ʿindanā ʿādāt wa taqāfid
Dawl yawāšlū dawl, wad dawl yawšlū dawl
Wa dawl yamshū lay dawl, wa dawl yajū lay dawl
ʿindannā al-jarrāyyah wa ʿindannā al-ṭurriyyah
Wa ʿindannā al-mazāriʿ, wa ʿindannā al-ṭanāyyin
Wa ʿindannā al-nāgah wa al-jamal
Wa ʿindannā al-bagarah wa-l-ṭawr
Wa rabbī tammāḥā laynā bi-l-bitrawl
Mā ʿindannā ṣariz bayn al-ʿarab wa al-ṭawr
ʿarḍan silāḥ, ʿannā mā ṣāyyrah zawl yaktul zawl

In the same vein, *Hakkamah* H/S.R71 composes to blame the rebels and to remind them of the consequences of their stance:

**Box 73**

**English:**

Peace be on you, *Torra Borra*

Peace be on you, *janjaweed*

Peace be on you, *Justice and Equality Movement*

Peace be on you, *Beshmirga*

Wars are destructive, they destroy the whole Sudan

Wars are destructive, they kill our men

Wars are destructive, they turn our women widows

Oh, they displace our kids
Oh, they raze down al-Khalawi [religious schools] and overwhelm our minds

Common brothers, Oh, common old men

Set the hearts in quiet mood

Sit in at home for us

And don’t cause us wars

And don’t block the roads

If you find a brother in the countryside, don’t fight him as you would the Jews

Anything God brought onto us, would heal with time

(H/S.R71, 06.05.06)

**Arabic:**

السلام عليكم يا تورا بورا

السلام عليكم يا جنجهيد

السلام عليكم يا عدل ومسالاة

السلام عليكم يا بالمرفة

الحروب دمار دمار لينا السودان عام

الحروب دمار كان لينا الرجال

الحروب دمار أرملن لينا النساء

وي شدمن لينا الบาล

وي تششتن لينا الخلاوي شالن لينا البال

تعالوا يا اخوان، وي تعالوا يا الرجال الكبار

حروا لينا القلب

اقعدوا لينا فوق البوط

وما تسبوا لينا الحروب

وما تسكوا لينا الطرقات

أخوكو كان لفيو فوق الخلا ما تجاهدوا مجاهدة اليهود

اي شيء رينا جايب بي زمانا بفوت

**Transliteration:**

Al-salāmu ʿalaykum yā ūṭrā bawrā
Al-salāmu ‘alaykum yā jānjawīd
Al-salāmu ‘alaykum yā ’adāl wā musāwāh
Al-salāmu ‘alaykum yā bāshmirgā
Al-ḥurūb damār, damaran laynā al-sūdān ʿāmm
Al-ḥurūb damār katalan laynā al-rijāl
Al-ḥurūb damār ʿarmalan laynā al-niswān
Wey sharradan laynā al-ʿiyyāl
Way tashtashan laynā al-khalāwī, shālan laynā al-bāl
Taʾālū yā ʿakhwān, way taʾālū yā al-rijāl al-kubār
Khuttu laynā al-gulūb
ʿag ʿudū laynā fawq al-biyūt
Wa mā tasabbibū laynā al-ḥurūb
Wa mā tamsikū laynā al-ṭurūg
ʿakhuku kan ligītū fawg al-khalā mā tajāḥdu mujāhadat al-yahūd
ʿayyi shayʿ rabbannā jābah bi zamānah bi-fūt

Al-Hakkamah’s rhetoric now mirroring the government’s and is loaded with the same religious sentiments in challenging even the world at large as could be exemplified by H.R32’s song:

Box 74

English:

Oh Darfur, peace be upon you
I’ve got to say a word to you, think of it carefully
Darfur has gone astray, bring it back
Let calm down, unite your word
It has got criminals who would destroy the land
By jalala\textsuperscript{111} and takbeer\textsuperscript{112}, we protect Darfur
From nonbelievers to get in (referring to intervention by the international community)
(H.R32, 07.05.06)

\textbf{Arabic:}

سلام عليكو يا دارفور
عندى كلمة بقولها، اعقلوها
دارفوركانت سابحة، دارفور فيلها
قعدوها تحت، كلمتك وحدوها
فيها مجازمة للبلد بخربوها
بالجلالة والتكبير البلد بنحميها
من الكفار ما يدخلوها

\textbf{Transliteration:}

Salāmū alayku yā Dārfawr
ʾindi kilmah bagūlha, ʾaʾglawhā
Dārfawr kānat šāyha, Dārfawr gabilūha
Gayudūha tihīt kilmitkū wahḥidūhā
Fīhā majārmah, lil-balad bikharbūhah
Bil-jalāhah wal-takbir Darfur bi-naḥmūhah
Min al-kuffār mà yakhushūhah

\textsuperscript{111} A religious word which means saying ‘jalla jalalah’ repeatedly in belief of Allah as the most powerful

\textsuperscript{112} A religious word which means saying ‘Allahu akbar’.
7.3.1.2 Escorting the Army

Fourteen of the respondents state that *Hakkamat* performance has become a regular feature at departures of army troops. Eight *Hakkamat* also maintain that they had actually accompanied the army commanders and troops outside the city of *Nyala* for either receiving army forces going to or returning from battlefields in order to celebrate government victory and heroism of the combatants over the SPLA. This is exemplified by the testimonies of two *Hakkamat* as shown below:

**Box 75**

We received the army, the PDF and PPF when they came back from fighting with *Bolad* in a place called *Sineetah* at the edge of a *wadi* (seasonal water stream) under large trees. In the name of *al-Hakkamat*, we donated them two cows and stayed for two days in the village; the men brought empty barrels and filled them with water from the nearby *‘Id*’ (water wells). The men also slaughtered the animals and cooked meat while women cooked other food – the sauce and the *‘Aseedah*’ (porridge).

We also went to *Raja* to congratulate *Kakoom* – the army Brigadier General, for his victory over the SPLA. We travelled by two aeroplanes; *Bit al-Husain* (chairperson of UHS) went in the first trip and I went in the second trip. We were taken to see those who were killed from the SPLA and after that we left *Raja* because there were landmines and the situation was still in war. When we came back, we went to *Kakoom*’s house and sang in his house … where I sang to glorify his heroism:

(H.R32, 07.05.06)
Box 76

English:

Oh, tell Kakoom [name of military commander] that tonight I will chit-chat about him

You who plugs the gaps of disgrace with the palms of your hands

You, the horseman who gives dinner to birds, I wish I would sing for you

Manhood and generosity are linked to you

Oh, Kakoom my desire is to sing for him

This is a strong male, the nobility is but a gift for him

The day the horses raced for him, The horseman kills as a lion does its victim on caltrops

(H.R32, 07.05.06)

Arabic:

قول ليا الليلة يا كاكوم انا بالونس بيك

سدا نفار العيب، بي كفات ايديك

الفارس البغدي الطير، مرادي اغني ليك

الرجالة والجود نسبة ليك

وي كاكوم مرادي اغني ليك

دا ضكر المعتب الحسب ليا هدية

يوم الخيل افكاردن ليه، الفارس بكول قريب لي شوك دونن لي

Transliteration:

Gūl layyā al-laylāh yā Kākūm ʾannā ba-l-wannas bayk

Saddād nugār al-ʾayb bay kufār ʾidayk

Al-fāris al-bi-ghadī al-ṭayr marādī ʾaghanī layk

Al-rajjālah wa al-jūd nisbah layk

Way kākūm marādī ʾaghanī layyah

Dā ʾakar miʿaytīb, al-ḥasab layyā hadiyyāh

Yawm al-khayl ʾitṭārdan layyā, Al-fāris baktul garīb fl-shawk düdan layyah

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I had accompanied the army in two occasions: one was to Raja for five days after it was liberated from the SPLA; and another visit to Juba during the Torit battle. We were four Hakkamat and when we were about to go to Torit, we learned that Omer al-Bashir had instructed that we should have to return and therefore we returned from Juba. In these visits we were accompanied by large numbers of army forces and high ranking officers of the Popular Police to whom we were affiliated. The aeroplane was full of us and all of us had departed from Nyala; our army commander was called Muddaththir. When we arrived in Raja, I composed and recited for the army:

**English:**

The forces marched out and the owner of two feet (the hawk) is hovering

The hawk pointed to al-Hakkamah, saying ‘I don’t like lean bodies

I’d like to have the obese body whose fat leaks’

The Moral Orientation [psychological Operations] distributed its brigades and Muddaththir marched with his troops

Oh, Don’t bother the army of the West [army stationed in Darfur];

They kick their enemy as they do a volley ball

**Arabic:**

القوة مرقت وام قدمين حاميه
كندق شاور الحكامة قال ليها الباطل ماني دابره
انا بندور السمين ابو دهنه سايده
التوجيه المعنوي وجه السربات
ومدترقدم فصايبه
جيش الغربية ما تسائه
بلغ بالدعو كورة طابيرة

**Transliteration:**

Al-quwwah maragat waʾamm gadamayn ḥāyymā
Kilding shāwar al-ḥakkāmah gāl layhā al-bāṭil mānī dāyrah
ʿannā badūr al-sāmin abū dihnan sāylah
Al-tawjiḥ al-maʾnawī wajjah al-sirayyāt
Wa Mudathir gaddam faṣayylah

Jaysh al-gharbiyyah mā tasaʿīlah, Bilab bil-ʿadu kūrā ʿāyrah

When we came back at the airport I praised Hafiz who was the commander of the army forces by composing and reciting:

**English:**

Oh, Commander Hafiz, the lion of the meadow

You’ve inherited generosity and open-handedness from your father

You are but the one-week moon that sparkles up in the sky

The autumn [rainy season] that filled up the water streams

Oh, tonight my conscience is so pleased. (H/F.R51; 20.05.2006)

**Arabic:**

جنابو حافظ اسد القردود

الكرم والجود شئهما من ابوك

انت قمر السبوع الفوق السما موجود

الخريف الملا الرهود

الليلة الضمير مبسوط

**Transliteration:**

Janbū Ḥāfiz ʾasad al-gardūd

Al-karam wa-l-jūd shiltahum min ʾabūk

ʿintā gamar al-sabūʿ al-fawg al-sama mawjūd

Al-khařīf al-mala al-riḥūd

Al-laylah al-ḍamīr mabšūṭ
According to the unpublished literature of the Union of Art and Folklore (UAF) in south Darfur, forty Hakkamat took part in Raja battle and they all marked their unprecedented participation with songs similar to these cited above.

7.3.1.3 Preparation and Provision of Sustenance (Rations)

Given military training and PDF identity, al-Hakkamat are requested to support the government’s wars by contributing to the popularly and religiously so-called ‘Zad al-Mujahid’ (rations for a Muslim fighter) campaign that was launched by the government in 1991. This is confirmed by seventeen respondents, thirteen of whom are Hakkamat, who all maintain that they supplied sustenance to the government combatants – the army and horsemen who fighting in Raja and South Sudan and also provided food for the soldiers who were recruited from Darfur towns of Fashir and al-Geneina and were encamped in Nyala on their way to the battlefield. Their contribution included food ingredients such as dried Kisra (pancakes), dry vegetables, damsoro (dry ground kisra mixed with groundnuts and sugar, a small portion of it can make a whole meal to which you only need to add water), grain, millet, tea … etc. They also maintain that sometimes the PPF would provide them with ingredients such as flour to make kisra for the combatants. Contribution to Zad al-Mujahid was made compulsory on the community members by the PDF which instructed that each ‘Harah’ (a neighbourhood) had to offer a sac of grain and al-Hakkamat and Sheikhat were made responsible for raising these quantities as claimed by H/S.R71.
Al-Hakkamat are also made responsible by the government for supplying rations, food and accommodation for both the horsemen and their horses, who are often invited from rural areas to formal occasions in Nyala. Those thirteen Hakkamat also maintain that they used to make their contributions through peer group collection of money and food ingredients and would often jointly cook in their office meanwhile some would prefer to prepare their contribution in their own houses. Thus, five Hakkamat claim that in the year 2006 alone they received the horsemen several times in Nyala and that these horsemen seem to have settled for good. These assertions of al-Hakkamat suggest that al-Hakkamat are not actually happy with at least some of the added roles that they have now been required to undertake.

It is claimed that some of al-Hakkamat guardians are also disaffected by some of the obligations imposed on al-Hakkamat. Respondent R41 (21.05.06) charges that some of al-Hakkamat activities are indeed pursued against the will of so many staff members in the Ministry of Culture and Information although the degree to which they are asked to conform to the government is well defined for them as outlined by Hakkamah R71:

We are the people who offer help any time; if there are wounded, we will attend to them; if there was an occasion and people asked us to cook, we would cook for them; and we become part of the government. Wherever the government wants to go, we will go and won’t argue with them - we are at their disposal. If they ask us to vote for them, we will do and if they ask us to side with the government we will do. We will do everything for our government (H/S.R71 (06.05.06)
Obviously, the government must have realized, too, that this generous and Samaritan soul of *al-Hakkamah* is something to be exploited; to which *al-Hakkamah* has reacted positively and situated herself within the formal political system where she has exercised political manoeuvre that other women in their context, whether individuals or groups, have not yet been able to.

### 7.3.1.4 Mobilization of Women

The role of *al-Hakkamah* in mobilization does not only confine to military recruits but also extends to other government activities such as election campaigns in which people are needed most. Thus, three *Hakkamat* maintain that since the 1990s, they have been contributing through the PIM to the election campaigns organized by the government and were able to influence the political opinion of people in rural areas to the advantage of the government especially during the presidential elections in 1999. The efficiency of *al-Hakkamat* in mobilizing people for government activities was also shown, respondent R41 (2006) claims, when in September 2005, the Governor of south Darfur appealed to the Youth Union and *al-Hakkamat* Union to call for a public meeting for all women in Nyala, in order to explore their role in mending the social fabric. Within two days, *al-Hakkamat* succeeded in gathering more than three thousand women, thus revealing their enormous capacity for mobilization.
7.3.1.5 Attending Official Events and Praising Officials

The obligations of *al-Hakkamah* include attendance at government public and official events such as prominent officials’ visits. Together with *al-Sheikhat*, they would cook, organize receptions and compose in praise of those officials as clearly stated by Hakkamah H/F.R51, ‘we organize receptions for official guests; we cook for the authorities at their official and other ceremonies e.g. mass circumcision (see footnote 77), national celebrations e.g. *Eid*, *Ramadan*, etc.’

Ten respondents maintain that *al-Hakkamat* have the lead in formal public occasions that are usually organized in open public yards. This is because, in public receptions, *al-Hakkamah* and her presence will contribute to sustaining powerful public appearance of the regime as through singing she will cast a number of good qualities over officials and her presence will mobilise audience, at least the Baggara, to attend. She usually performs accompanied by the *Sheikhat* who carries the flag of the neighbourhood and ‘*dallookah*’ (a drum made locally from wood, mud and leather) and accompanied by females of the neighbourhood who act as a chorus singing and dancing at the reception.

Below are some recitations of some *Hakkamat* on some government ruling officials. For instance, H/S.R4G4 praises *al-Tayeb Sikhah*, the then governor of Darfur region:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 78</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>English:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace be upon you, the Governor of the state</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
You who fought against bullet firing [armed robbery] and pub sitting [alcohol drinking]

You took care of the widow and the orphan, from the very beginning

But your Sheikbah is hard done by and your Hakkamah’s freedom is suppressed

Your Sheikbah raised up the flag and received the visitor without him knowing

And your Hakkamah has a role, she elevates some and degrades some

She elevates the horseman who got poisonous teeth and spear covered with blood (i.e. striking force)

When crisis was experienced, he boasted about the tribe of his female cousins (i.e. swore to fight head on)

(H/S.R4G4, 11.06.06)

Arabic:

سلام عليك يا انت وعلي الولاة

الحاربت ضربة الرصاصية وجلسه البداية

نظرت للارمل و الابن في أول البداية

لكن شيختك مظلمة و حكامتك حريتها مكتومة

شيختك رفعت العلم قابلت الزائر غيرما يعلم

حكامتك ليها دور رفعت زول و رمت زول

رفعت الفارس أبو فاطر بسمه و أبو كوكب بسمه

يوم جات الحارة ابهر بفيلة بنات عممه

Transliteration:

Salām ’alayk yā `intā wāfī al-wilāyyah

Al-ḥarbta, ādarba al-rusṣāḥah wa jalsat al-ʿinda yyah

Naẓarta lil-ʿarmal wā al-ʿatīm fī `awwal al-bidāyyah

Lākin shaykhtak maẓlūmah, wā ḥakāmtak ḥurriyyathā maktūmah

Shaykhtal rāfaʿah al-ʿalam, gābalat al-zāyir ghayr mā yaʿlam

Ḥakāmtak layha dawr, rafʿat zawl wā ramat zawl
Similarly, H.R32 praises the Governor of south Darfur, *Atta al-Mannan*:

**Box 79**

**English:**

Peace be upon you, *Atta Abdel Mannaan* [the worshipper of the Giver]

He who came in and found Darfur a boiling pot, some stoking its firewood

And found it as a cow fighting, while its owners with their sticks, watching over

Now the poor fellow picked up his pumpkin from over there, sat under and milked her

I said to him, son of my mother, if you milked your cow, give me some milk to drink

He told me it is *Atta Abdel Mannan* who tamed the wild cow

And calmed down the land

Oh, tell him that I hold up the stick, broke it and threw it away

*After Atta al-Mannan*, I praise no one!

(H.R32, 07.05.06)

**Arabic:**

سلام عليك يا عطا عبد المنان

جا لقي دارفور برمه فائره بتقولب و زادو حطبها

بقرة تقوها بداوس سيدوها وافقين لها بحطبها

المسكن شال قرعته من هناك فعد تحتها حلبها

قلت لو ولد امي بقرتك دي كان حليتها أدنى أشرب من لبنها

قال لي دا عطا عبد المنان للبقرة النكورة قيئتها

و البلد بردتها

قولي انآ شلت العود كي كسرتها جدعتها
Their poems so sung, presumably, would raise the profile of the regime and the governing elites, the officials, such that they have been sent several times to Khartoum to sing at federal government official events e.g. conferences as claimed by eight *Hakkamat*.

### 7.3.2 Advocacy for Peace

The engagement of *al-Hakkamah* with the government, seven respondents argue, necessitates for her to sing in tune with the government’s wishes, that is, to support its policies and advocacy campaigns for either war or peace. This was clearly exemplified following the signing of *the Nefasha* 2005 CPA and *Abuja* 2006 DPA agreements. As since then, she has been advocating for
peace, social integration and patching up relationships. For instance, John Garang, now deceased, who was invariably portrayed in her songs as a slave and a kafir has now become a cousin who shares the concerns of peace:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 80</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>English:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hi John Garang; the hero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I came to you as a cousin;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To adorn your hands [fingers] with rings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Recited by R28 (14.05.06))</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Arabic:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>هي يا جون قرنق، البطل</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>انا جيتك كبت عم</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>عشان املا ايديك بالختم</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Transliteration:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hey yā John Garang, al-baṭal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘ana jītak ka-bit-‘amm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘āshān ‘amlā ‘idayk bil-khatam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eleven respondents and eighteen Hakkamah, however, propose that this change of focus occurred not because of the government influence on al-Hakkamah, but rather, it has developed from her own choice and agency in transforming situations in which she suffered, like anyone else, the loss of dear
ones and is left as traumatised as anybody else. Among the Hakkamat interviewed, ten of them had at least one family member either killed, wounded or maimed as a result of these wars. This is spelled out in the accounts of H.R31:

We are only for peace; we call the people in rural areas that we are for peace and call for them to join us and be compassionate because we are the losers and the enemy has not come from outside; we are the ones who get killed, the orphans are our children and the widowed are us and those who get burnt are us … if some people from the opposition group are killed, our tears will drop and if some from the citizens are killed we will cry and so if our soldiers are killed. Now, no one ought to die in this conflict as those who died were our sons … who are educated and graduate youth and army officers … they are brought here to die. We would think that our son or brother was in the south or the east or north, but we were usually surprised when we would receive a message that he was killed in Darfur; this should not happen and we don’t want it to happen again (H.R31, 09.05.06).

This reality forces them, particularly when the government’s rhetoric is also conciliatory, to capture the moment and play a proactive role in rejecting wars and advocating for peace through the means that are at their disposal.

For respondent R48, this was evident in the aftermath of both the CPA and DPA agreements, when al-Hakkamat gathered by their own choice in the public yard - ‘Sahat al-Mawlid’ (the Prophet Birthday Yard) and celebrated the signings with their songs, dance and speeches that were recorded and broadcasted by radio and TV. Inevitably, R48 postulates, this would have a positive influence on mobilisation for peace and in disseminating the news (see 2.7; 5.6; 6.8). Below are some examples of these recitations of some Hakkamat during various events that accompanied conflict in Darfur:
1. H/S.R4G4 appeals against the war and its disastrous consequences:

**Box 81**

**English:**

War is destruction, it is loss for the country 
It killed the male of cows and the mature ox 
And killed the Omdah and orphaned his kids 
And killed the shartay and destroyed his homeland 
I wish reconciliation was achieved; it would be development to the country 
Our land is so beautiful and has plenty of resources 
It has female teachers, male teachers and ministers 
And our oil is there in large quantities 
We wish we had peace with jalalah and takbeer. 

*Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar* (God is Great) 

(H/S.R4G4, 11.06.06)

**Arabic:**

الحرب دمار، للبلد خسارة 
كل فحل البقر والتلبب أب حداره 
 وكل العمد وائم عبائه 
 وكل الشرتاي وخراب داره 
 اتمنى السلم للبلد عماره 
 بلننا جميله وخيراتها كثير 
 فيها معالمة وفيها معلم وفيها وزير 
 بترولنا ظهر بشمكة كثير 
 نتمنى السلام بالجلالة والكبير 
 الله أكبر، الله أكبر
2. H.R31 calls for all people of Sudan to appeal for peace:

Box 82

English:

Peace be on all of you, men of Sudan
And peace on you, peace is welcome and peace is indeed welcome
He who approaches us with peace, we let them in
The cheat is an enticer
Who stirred antagonisms among all Muslim countries
He should retreat and not move a foot towards us
I want peace everywhere, I want peace prevailing all over Sudan
West Sudan aspires for peace, and so does East Sudan
And south Sudan aspires for peace and north Sudan aspires for peace too
And inside Darfur, too, I want peace
You militias who climb up the mountains, I call for peace
And to the armed bandits in caves and wadis, I appeal for peace
I want a well managed peace with discipline and respect
I want consolidated security, so we can rebuild the wrecked
I want serious peace, peace with no cheating

(H.R31, 09.05.06)

Arabic:

السلام عليكم يا رجال السودان جملة،
و عليكم السلام ومرحب بالسلام، ومرحبين بالسلام
الجابينين بالسلام بنفسه قدم
الخائن فقان
سبب لينا خصم في كل دول الإسلام
يرجع خلفي دور ما يرفع لينا أقدام
انا داهير السلام في كل مكان، وداهير السلام يعم السودان
غرب السودان داهير السلام وشرق السودان داهير السلام
و جنوب السودان داهير السلام و شمال السودان داهير السلام
وجوه دارفور كمان أنا داهير السلام
يا الملايش الطالع فوق الجبال، أنا بنادي بالسلام
والله الحمد في الكركرة الخيران أنا بنادي بالسلام
انا داهير سلام بنظام ويثاد واحترام
انا داهير الامن يكون مستمب ونعم الخربان
انا داهير سلام تمام ما فيه لف ولا دوران

Transliteration:

Salām ʿalaykā yā rījāl al-Ṣūdān jumlaḥ
Wa ʿalaykum al-salām, marḥāb bi-l-salām, wa marḥābāb al-salām
Al-jāyyīnā bi-l-salām, bi-nafaḍīlah gudām
Al-khāyin fatān
Sabbāb laynā khisām fī kul duwal al-ʿislām
yardaʿ khalīfī dār mā yarfāʿ layāʾ agdām
ʿanā dāyrā al-salām fī kul makān, wa dāyrāh al-salām yaʿumm l-sūdān
3. Similarly H/S.R71 calls for the people of Sudan, and particularly those of Darfur, to reconcile so that they are able to farm and produce and get rid of dependency on relief and aid agencies:

**Box 83**

**English:**

Peace be on you, all Sudanese!

I’m telling you something, I hope it won’t bother you

Oh! Just look and see what happened to Saddam!

Clear up your hearts and give up wars

Oh, let awful things not happen in our country again

*Al-jarrāyah* [the hoe] and *al-kadankah* [the hoe]113 were here since the days of our forefathers

Let the khawwaja take his aid and leave us

(H/S.R71, 06.05.06)

**Arabic:**

113 *Al-jarrāyah* and *al-kadankah* are types of a hoe, the former symbolising the Baggara Arabs, the latter the African tribes.
4. Meanwhile, H.R37G4 also appeals to the people of Darfur to seek negotiation and reconciliation and warns them that Darfur is targeted by external forces:

**Box 84**

**English:**

I got an advice for all the men of Darfur

*Arab and Zurga, please.* Listen to me

*Sharati, Nazirs, Sultans and holymen who know religion*

Go back to the wisdom of our great grandparents

Sit under trees,

Study your position whilst your mat is spread out and your food tray is served big

The country is targeted

I advice you, my men – don’t be drowsy and inadvertent
Your country is devastated and you are still mindless
(H.R37G4; 11.06.2006)

Arabic:

عندي وصية لرجال دارفور بصفة عامة
عربي و زرقاوي تكونو لي صانتين
الشرائط والنظام والسلاطين والقروء قارين الدين
ارجعوا لراي الجذور القديم
أقدعوا في فطور الشدر
أدرسو رايكم، برشكو مرفوش والقح الكبير
البلد فوقها طموح
بوصيكو يا رجالي ما تكوون دافسين
بلكو خربت وانتو غفلانين

Transliteration:

ʿindī wašiyyā li-rijāl Darfur biṣīfah ʿāmah
ʿarabī wā zurgāwi, tukūnū laya šāntūn
Al-sharāṭī wa al-nuẓār wal-salāṭīn wal-fugara gāryyīn al-dīn
ʿarjaʿū lay rāy al-juḍūd al-gadīm
ʿagʿudū fī guʿūr al-shadar
ʿadursū rāyūkū, birshūkū mafūrūsh, wa al-gadaḥ al-kaḇīr
Al-balad fawg-ha ṭūmūh
Bawaṣṣīkū yā rijālī mā tukūnū dāgsīn
Baladkū khirbat wa ʿintū ghaiflānīn

5. Similarly H.R58G4 appeals for peace but holds out that as Darfuri people are responsible for the war, they should now contribute to peace:
The war in Darfur is our own responsibility
Come on, let us put our ideas together
Let us be proactive
Rehabilitate our khalawi and repair our schools
The son of al-Bashir, I want you to be our witness
Oh, brothers, give up fighting, this is our witness
And live like what we used to be, passionate and compassionate
Darfur is the land of religion, the land of faith
Let our holymen enchant and hold their Quran
Our soldier rests from carrying the gun
Our army officer confirms the register, and meets his beloved
We, the women, our hearts are miserable and our livers are burnt (heartbroken)
Our hearts rejected the voice of gloating over our grief and being widowed
How many a youth left his kids orphans
How many a responsible person laid out his plates
A land with no youth is in ruins
I advise you, men of Darfur, to stay united
Enough, put away your G3 and Ak47
And let the tank rest from snoring
Enough, stop the running tears
My horsemen, throw away your spears and knives
Life has got something to offer, why disturb it
Let the weak taste its sweetness

(H.R58G4, 11.06.06)

Arabic:

آنينا في دارفور الحرب دي مسؤوليتنا
ندافع فكرتنا
نرجع نسيو لجدتنا
نعمر خلاونا ونصلح مدارسنا
ولد البشير، داريه تودي شاهدنا
خينا هاي، خلو الدواس، دا شاهدنا
وعيشعو لينا زي زمان وحنه وحنانه
دارفور بلد الديانة ودارفور بلد الأمانه
خلو قفوينا بدوس مسلح و يمسك قفانه
جددينا ينجمه من شيل اب حمالة
ضابطنا ياخذ تمامه، يقبل لحيانه
أنيا العين، القلب نحضاه و الكبد حرقانه
قلنا أبي صوت شماته و تربية اتامه
 قوله صبي جلده خله أتم عيانه
 قوله مسؤوله ظيق قحانه
دار بلا شباب خريانه
بوصيكو يا رجل دارفور كملتكي وحدودها
الجي و الكلاش كفاوكو تقلوها
الدبابين من الشخير ريحها
الدموع السالبة كفاوكو وقووها
الحربه والسكن فراسي جدعوها
الدنا هي بكر زي مالكو جهجوتها
خلو المسلمين يضوق حلوها

Transliteration:
‘anînâ fi Dârfawr, al-ḥarib dî mas‘ûliyatnâ
Nadaggig fîkratnâ
Narjâ nasawwî lây jiddattnâ
Na‘ ammir khalâwînâ, nasallîḥ madârisnâ
Walad al-bashîr dâyyrah shâhidnâ
Khaynâ hûy, dâ shâhidnâ
Wa ʿishū layna zay zamān, ḥinnā wa ḥannānā
Dārfawr balad al-dīyānāh, Dārfawr balad al-ʿamānah
Khallū faqīrna yadūs …. Wa yamsik qurʿānāh
Junḍīnā yanjamānah min shayl ἁbū ḥammālāh
Dābīṭnā yākhud tamānāh, yagābil ḥībānāh
ʿanānā al-ʿayyīn, al-gulūb nājdānāh wal-kubūd ḥargānāh
Gālibnā ʿabbā gawlit shamṭānā, wa tarbiyyat ʿattāmān
Gawlat šābī ʿattam ʿiyālah
Gawlat masʿūl ṣul tābān gudhānāh
Dār balā shabāb kharbānāh
Bawāsī yā rijāl Dārfawr kilmīkū wahidūhā
ʿal-ṣīm wal-kīlāsh kafākū tagīlūhā
ʿal-dabbābah min al-shakhīr rayyiḥuḥa
ʿal-damʿah al-saylah kafākū wagīfūhā
Al-ḥarbāh wal-sīkīn furāṣī jadīʿuḥa
ʿal-dunnyā hiyya bikayriyyah mālkū jahjahtūhā
Khallū l-miskīn yaḍūg ḥulfūhā

When the DPA was signed, H/S.R71 called for the fighters to hand over their weapons and submit to the peace agreement:

**Box 86**

**English:**

Peace be upon you guys who left for the wilderness (i.e. they rebelled)
You’re Sudanese, not outsiders
Oh, in the wilderness there is hunger, there is thirst
You abandoned your beds and lied in the damp
Give up your weapons as our peace is now accomplished
Give up your weapons as our peace has now prevailed
Let us live in peace in our country
Those *Dajo* are our relatives
The *Masalit* are our relatives too
The *Tama* are our relatives too
The *Erenga* are our relatives too
*Zaghawa* are, our relatives too
*Rezeiqat* are our relatives too
And so are *Misseriyah*,
Oh, come on and let’s live in our country
Oh, let’s sit under our tree
Oh, let’s make our mind
Oh, let’s live [together] in our country
Who would deny us this?!
(H/S.R71, 06.05.06)

**Arabic:**

السلام عليكم يا الرجال الشلتو ليو خلا
انتو من السودان ما جيتونا من بره
وي الخلا بجوعها الخلا بعطشها
خليتو السراير رقدتو فوق الدي
اجمعو السلاح انحنا سلامنا تم
أجمعو السلاح انحنا سلامنا عم
خلو نعيش في وطنا
الناجو ديل أهلينا
هم مساليت ديل أهلينا
هم تامة ديل أهلينا
هم اريينقا ديل أهلينا
هم الزغاوة ديل اهتنا
الرزقات ديل اهتنا
المسيره ديل اهتنا
وي تعالو نعيشو في وطنا
وي نعشو في شدرتنا
وي نعشو في وطنا
وي نعشو في وطنا
ياعو اليبجي بساتنا

Transliteration:

Al-salām ʿalaykū, yā al-rijāl al-shiltū laykū khalā
ʿintū min al-sūdān, mā jītūnā min barrā
Wayā al-khalā bay jūʿah, al-khalā bay ʿatashah
Khallaytū al-sarāyyir, ragadū fawg al-nadā
ʿajmaʿū al-silāh, niḥnā salāmnā tammā
ʿajmaʿū al-silāh, niḥnā salāmnā ʿammā
Khallū nāʿish fī watnā
Al-dajū, dayl ʿahalnā
Humm masūlīt dayl ʿahalnā
Humm ?ayringā dayl ʿahalnā
Humm tāmā dayl ʿahalnā
Humm al-zaghāwā dayl ʿahalnā
Humm masūlīt dayl ʿahalnā
Al-rizaygāt dayl ʿahalnā
Al-masāriyyā dayl ʿahalnā
Way taʿālū nāʿishū fī waṭnā
Way nagʿadū fī shadrtnā
Way nadaggigū fikratnā
The examples above reveal that *al-Hakkamah*’s interest has widened to encompass boundaries that are outside those previously tribally and ethnically demarcated. This is an evident transformation/change in the identity and agency *al-Hakkamah* had assumed previously as it also convincingly proves her ability to meet the challenge of the urban context in which she now finds herself enmeshed. Her character could thus be described as being a regional and national icon and fits the views of the five most powerful *Hakkamat* in *Nyala* when they describe themselves as ‘national *Hakkamat’.*

On the other hand, respondent R70 (04.05.2006) suggests that advocating for and celebrating peace by *al-Hakkamat* does not mask the fact that they are part of the destruction that affected Darfur either by the government, tribes or the insurgency and this fact alone, he argues, necessitates their involvement in maintaining and implementing the DPA and in maintaining peace generally. This is because while they were used to embolden and incite warriors to pursue wars, a job they do very well, they were actually excluded in the pursuit of negotiated peace, but, paradoxically, they were also mobilised later, to naively celebrate peace that they did not know how it came about.
As their role and impact on conflict and peace resettlement become recognised and acknowledged by Darfur community, the Darfuri women participants in Abuja negotiations between the rebel groups and the government (see 5.6), proposed that *al-Hakkamah* and *Sheikhah* should be part of reconciliation activities and processes of healing the social fabric with emphasis made on those *Hakkamat* who have hitherto been confined to their village, the camp and the *Murhal* as maintained by respondent R28 and as appeared in the DPA documents. While calling for incorporating rural women and their institutions in reconciliation activities and forums in Darfur, respondent R70 suggests that people ought to go to rural areas and explore the local institutions that have influence on their societies, to investigate their power relationships and as well, to seek the opinions of local constituency and withdraw lessons from their experiences on how to realise sustainable peace and reconciliation.

7.4 Transformation of the Identity of *al-Hakkamah*

Eight respondents contend that, upon moving to *Nyala*, *al-Hakkamah* is being manipulated by the *Inghaz* regime to advocate, support and sing for its policies, strategies and ideology. The political ideology therefore plays a greater role in changing the identity of *al-Hakkamah* as a result of her acquiring other attributes and sources of identity to that previously known in rural areas.
Obviously, the *Hakkamah* enjoys both forms of identity: social and self- or personal identity (see 2.6.1). The former is her belonging to her tribe and ethnic group and the rural habitat in which she is constructed and developed; the latter is her own self development and qualities and her agency-aided relentless negotiation with the surrounding social and cultural contexts to enhance and sustain her self-identity against a complex set of gender power relations and patriarchal beliefs that often subordinate women (see 2.2). The identity of *al-Hakkamah* is indeed being dynamically transformed as a result of her moving from the village to town and through being associated with the government at a new social milieu and with a new source of power.

Subsequently, aspects of personal change are observed about *al-Hakkamah* as a result of certain, chance or regulated, critical incidents that constituted turning points in her voyage to the extent that herself and others have recognized that she has not been the same as the one she once was. According to the evidence of thirty three research respondents, these aspects and critical incidents are many and could be summarised below:

Firstly, eleven respondents maintain that before coming to town, *al-Hakkamah* used to be confined to rural areas where her tribe or clan lives and her experience was limited to the village, camp or the *murhal*. After moving to town and getting engaged with the government, she was made to address, on different occasions, a large tribally and ethnically diverse community. Through the regional and national media *al-Hakkamat* have become socially well known
to both rural and urban communities and tribes. Specific radio programmes that introduced *al-Hakkamat* to the general public and promoted them were *murhākt-al-gawl* (the grinder of speech) and *al-mughrāfah* (the ladle/scoop i.e. the distiller of wise and good sayings) broadcasted from *Nyala* radio as mentioned already.

This way, they become exposed to a large rural audience especially from pastoral and agro-pastoral *Baggara* and *Abbala* communities not only in Darfur but also in other parts of Sudan. This signals a critical factor in deliberately transforming the identity of *al-Hakkamah* from being local, tribal and rural into regional, national, ethnical and urban.

Secondly, respondent R48 (23.05.06) maintains that *al-Hakkamah* in the village used to perform her activities as an individual or when they perform in a group, they are usually from the same tribe. When moved to town, she became connected to other *Hakkamat* from diverse tribal origins and obliged to perform her activities in groups e.g. official receptions, *Zad al-Mujahid* … etc.

Subsequently, the perception of *al-Hakkamah* in town has differed from that of hers in rural areas as the latter, though genuine and respected, was indeed confined and limited by her tribal context and boundaries.

Thirdly, the autonomy of *al-Hakkamah* in town is being restricted as a result of being militarised and controlled by others, namely, government authorities and by also being under direct control of other *Hakkamat* - the chairperson of the union, for instance. Thus, in the accounts of eighteen *Hakkamat* interviewed, any *Hakkamah* is required to take permission and to abide by certain
procedures in order to compose or sing publicly. It is the first time for *al-Hakkamah* to be chaired and closely monitored by another *Hakkamah*, a situation that was now new to *al-Hakkamat*:

*Al-Hakkamah* is an important person and has an important role. In the past her role was important and highly supported by the system of the *Ageed* and had full freedom of choice in singing, doing, where and when and why ... Now she has become controlled by others. She has to take permission and has to abide by certain regulations in order to compose (H/F.R51, 09.05.06).

We obey and follow the instructions of the chairperson of the union because she is the one who goes to the government offices and we follow her like the ‘blind in the parade’ ... it is the first time for me to be chaired by a person (H.R31, 20.05.06).

Yet, in the views of eight *Hakkamat*, this control is also a positive transformative deal and that they are now more in tune with the required compliance, as claimed by the H/S.R71:

Now is better than the past because in the past, unless we were controlled we would incite conflict as everyone speaks out her own ideas. Now, we are controlled and have limits – you cannot insult and cannot praise; we just talk about the government and about Allah and the prophet sayings. But in the past we were not good with Allah, nor were we good with people. Now I have less freedom but it is better because in the past I was like a horse without ‘sareemah’ (a bridle/harness) and now I have found a ‘sareemah’ that fits the size of my mouth; now the government knows me and the citizen knows me and I have a prestige (H/S.R71, 06.05.06).

So, controlling and exposing *al-Hakkamah* to a reorientation process (see 7.2.2) seems to have contributed to restraining *al-Hakkamat* in town who were free agents before. However, to the detriment of the government, *al-Hakkamah*
appears to have developed a perception against war in Darfur and learning from her own experience of losing a beloved person (husband, son or brother), she is now less readily mobilizable and or mobilizing, and certainly, latterly, it was difficult for the government to make her explicitly mobilizing against Darfur insurgencies as H.R31’s account seems to suggest:

... For instance, at the moment, this opposition and rebel groups are our sons; they are not outsiders. If al-Hakkamah says ‘you government shoot the opposition, you the Janjawid shoot the opposition’, this is an enticement that we don’t accept as also we don’t accept to say to the opposition shoot those people because they are all our sons (H.R31,20.05.06).

While the changes above are perceived by the respective respondents as positive, there are as well some changes experienced by al-Hakkamah that are viewed by some respondents as negative transformation. These include, eighteen respondents argue, the fact that al-Hakkamah lost her conventional income sources (see section 7.4) and became dependent in her survival on what she may receive from government authorities in return for her recitations in support of the regime’s policies. This has led to them adopting a style of composing in praising ruling officials and advocating for the government which differs in sincerity and authenticity from their previous spontaneous composing whilst they were in their rural areas and which was focusing on familiar highly-held themes and values of virtues, generosity, bravery and the beauty of nature as well as her rural community as stated by respondent R14:
When al-Hakkamah describes a person as like formidable lion, ‘dood’ or like a jumping lion, it will give a meaning that has its strength, symbol and sweetness and she will attract the attention of the community to him and they will like him. But when she is asked to use words that she does not grasp their exact political implications but just repeating, ‘peace is good for you, peace is good for you’, they are empty words that do not show the nice, effectual and operative meanings that deeply touch people’s feelings as she used to do when addressing, in her own way and language, things in the village (R14, 29.05.06).

*Hakkamah* H.R19 who still resides in the village and only occasionally comes to *Nyala* town, identifies the difference between themselves as villagers and those in town by saying, ‘but they do not compose on cows like us and the kind of poetry they compose is like what they compose in praising *Omer al-Bashir*’ (H.R19, 30.05.06). *Hakkamah* R26 also concurs that, ‘when I arrived in Nyala, I heard women singing in *Katim* but did not understand what they were singing’ (H.R26, 30.05.06), eventually insinuating that their singing is less genuine and natural, more manufactured and adulterated.

Consequently, eighteen respondents accuse the trend *al-Hakkamat* followed in the town as a departure from, and an insult, to their tribal tradition in getting more associated with the regime than with their rural communities. Also, nine respondents claim that they have observed that there are many Hakkamat who are just repeating the same recitations with just slight changes in some words, usually the name of the official or elites without attempting any innovation or generating new ideas as could be illustrated by the accounts of respondent R47:
Many people have observed that al-Hakkamat have been transformed to the extent that they lost creativity and spontaneity, as before they used to react to matters in their village environment through spontaneous composing without imposition and or dictation from any one; but when you are dictated or influenced to speak out about things that you don’t react to, you will lack the authenticity and honesty of what you say. This led to her losing the spontaneity spirit of folklore that she had and on which she based her role as a Hakkamah (R47, 07.06.06).

Thus, the new social and political context in town has eroded the very essence of the attributes of Hakkamah's identity, i.e. her creative poetry.

Moreover, eight respondents describe the engagement of the government with al-Hakkamah as damaging to the work and prestige of al-Hakkamat. When al-Hakkamat are selected by their community, their tribes will provide them with every means of help and support to enable them attend to their role. But when the Inghaz came, driven by their need for public support, they initiated the idea of women coming out in parties to receive visitors and officials by singing in return for money and sugar. Al-Hakkamat are left to come afterwards, with humiliation, begging officials to fulfill promises they made to offer them rewards, indignity they were spared before. Four respondents argue that al-Hakkamah is thus being transformed to just a performer in return for money or other incentives and whenever she was invited, she would firstly ask about what she would be paid. Respondent R14’s comment appears to be a typical view of this aspect of al-Hakkamah’s engagement with the government:

This is a new thing and a tremendous change from what is usually known about al-Hakkamah. In the past, she represented certain values; she sang about the value of man to the community and to herself; now it has become a paid job ... in urban
areas they form a union that assembled all al-Hakkamat; they do many things that are paid for; therefore they lost their values and originality and have become masnajiyah, i.e. manufacturers and their role declined (R14, 29.05.06).

Moreover, the eight respondents claim that giving incentives (see 7.2.5) has encouraged many women in town who even lacked the talent and the skills to pretend to be Hakamat by holding the flag of the tribe and wandering around government offices in search for money and sugar. The behaviours of those women, for those who know the morals of al-Hakkamat, are at odd with those attitudes of the genuine Hakkamah in rural areas. Those false, or opportunist Hakamat, claim the respondents, are currently in the forefront and ironically, people especially government elites deal with them even though some of these officials know that they are short of talent and, more importantly, short of tribal endorsement, too.

There is further evidence that al-Hakkamat’s interests are never being genuinely considered in the officials’ agenda. Hakkamah R31 declares that:

"We just attend workshops. We were invited to many other workshops in al-Fashir this year (2006) and they offered us Buses to travel. I said to them that if you can offer us aeroplane ticket, I will go otherwise I will not risk my life by using other means of transport because you know that there is no security (H.R31, 09.05.06)."

But in general, the promise that al-Hakkamat will be well taken care of is not being fulfilled by the government and even when their wish to perform the hajj was fulfilled, it merely came as a result of a direct appeal to the wife of president
al-Bashir when she visited Nyala. This appeal was made by Hakkamah R32 after which twenty five Hakkamat were sponsored to go to hajj:

**Box 87**

**English:**

Oh, my mouth is set free as speech needs a key

*Omer Hassan al-Bashir* is like *Jebel Marrah* that is seen from far away

*Al-Zubair Mohamed Salih*, the flooding autumn that pleased the farmers

*Al-Tayeb Ibrahim*, the Governor of Darfur states

As pure as the certified gold of *Bani Shangool*,

I will wear you on the day of the congregation there

Hey, my rulers, the least I want is for you to issue me a certificate

For, I would like to visit Saudi Arabia (i.e. for *hajj*)

(H.R32, 07.05.06)

**Arabic:**

وي خشمي انفك للحديث مفتاح

عمر حسن البشير جبل مره المن بعيد برأ

الزبير محمد صالح الخريف النبت البسط الزراعا

الطبيب ابراهيم حاكم ولايات دارفور

الصابي دهب بني شقول, الطالع بشهاده

بليسك بقابل بيك يوم الزحام هناك

حي يا حكامي بالابخس دابره تطلعو لي شهاده

gpu أزور السعودي هناك

**Transliteration:**

Wey khashmi `infakkā, lil-ḥadīth muḥtaḥā

Omer Hassan al-Bashir, jabal marrā al-min baʿīd birāʾā
On the other hand, a tribe that once had a *Hakkamah* speaking on its behalf found itself with a *Hakkamah* extolling virtues of a political party, the ruling NCP and governing elites, to which many if not all of its members, were opposing. These attitudes undermined the credibility of *al-Hakkamah* even when she was truly one. It follows that *al-Hakkamah* in town has lost a large number of her rural audience and supporters. This has resulted in isolating *al-Hakkamah* who the government had recruited and used in town from her local and rural constituency, especially women, where she used to express herself freely and independently. Talking about this type of *Hakkamah*, R5, a university graduate from a tribal community asserts that:

This is just a government’s discourse which we don’t care about … and therefore as a tribe, we no longer care about her … because we do care about encouraging the horseman, glorifying and singing for the generous man and for the genuine fighter, who protects us, protects our heritage, our wealth and our land. But this *Hakkamah* sings for the state which does not concern us as a tribe and therefore, she finds herself isolated. They just used her to strengthen their information system and to show their power in influencing people but do not care about the wellbeing of the community and how they survive (R5, 28.05.06).
As a result of variation of issues and audience in town from that of the village, respondent R48 postulates that the role of *al-Hakkamah* and her songs become of less power and influence in town than they are in the village. *Al-Hakkamah* in rural areas thus remains more genuine and maintains the custom, the attributes of her identity and agency and her social and political significance more than the one who moved to live in town. This could be attributed to the fact that the society in town is tribally and ethnically diverse, some of whom may believe in *al-Hakkamah* and some may not, and *al-Hakkamah* may impact her ideas on some people, mainly from her tribe, and may not on others.

However, despite the relatively less significant position and influence of *al-Hakkamah* in town than in the village, *al-Hakkamah* in town is being able to adapt herself to the town environment and establish herself in its urban context as is observed by respondent R14:

> From working through the media, I observed that *al-Hakkamah* has experienced a form of development and transformation in the sense that she has realised the differences between her old and her new environment and has attempted reflecting this awareness in creativity, new production. She developed herself by adapting and adopting new words and expressions that are used in people’s every day activities and social transactions in the town e.g. computers, mobiles, cars’ names. That is how there has been some development in her presentation (R14, 29.05.06).

Four respondents maintain that she is being transformed into a publicly recognized political entity that is associated with the state’s institutions of power, as in the account of respondent R12 that
The exploitation of the state to al-Hakkamah by taking her away from her past history, away from the tribe and away from the village and away from speaking out about the beauty of nature and about the values of generosity and open-handedness, has killed the nice picture by which al-Hakkamah is described. She is just seen as a political person who plays a political role (R12; 18.05.06).

The above evaluation of the change experienced in the identity of al-Hakkamah in town with regards to the attributes of her identity, agency, power and influence, suggests that the power and agency of al-Hakkamah generally remain intact but consolidated in favour of the government and the ruling elites, whilst her tribal standing might have suffered as she became more urban. Whilst she preserves most of her cultural characteristics and identity, she is being transformed and urbanised, perhaps as a coping mechanism, as could be summarised in the following table:
Table 9: Change Effects of Government Liaison with *al-Hakkamat*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attributes of <em>Hakkamah</em></th>
<th>Before Change (Rural)</th>
<th>After Change (Urban)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>Rural and tribally oriented</td>
<td>Has become town, ethnically regionally and nationally oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement/mobility</td>
<td>Restricted within her geographical and social boundaries of tribe</td>
<td>Has access to movement all over the country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Militarization</td>
<td>Was collaborating with the <em>Ageed</em>, the horsemen and the youth of the tribe</td>
<td>Collaborating with the government military institutions, military forces and elites, soldiers, tribal militias</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Acting as individuals or groups of same tribe</td>
<td>Acting in diverse tribes and ethnic groups, building solidarity and networking with other NGOs, got an office to organize their work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connection with Sheikhat</td>
<td>They were independent of each other and might collaborate</td>
<td>They share the same organization (the UHS), must work and appear as a group in public forums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target audience/public</td>
<td>Entirely the community of her tribe - the <em>Ageed</em>, horsemen and the youth, women and children.</td>
<td>All Arab tribes and the whole society of the region especially the youth and the state army forces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public avenues and communication means</td>
<td><em>Faza, nafir, raids, dancing yard, social occasions in the village</em></td>
<td>Town public yards, airports, the radio and TV, official receptions, workshops, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discourse of <em>Hakkamah</em></td>
<td>Mobilizing, addressing and inciting the horsemen and youth of the tribe for tribal conflict and escorting them to battlefields; advocating tribe’s good virtues and values and combat otherwise</td>
<td>Mobilizing, addressing and inciting formal army forces and other tribal militias for wars sponsored by the state; escorting the army to national battlefields; advocating government’s policies and supporting state’s campaigns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attributes of Hakkamah</td>
<td>Before Change (Rural)</td>
<td>After Change (Urban)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composing:</td>
<td>Focusing primarily on the tribe’s unique people – the generous man, the well-behaved man and the brave horseman, tribe’s leaders; praising the good people whom she knows quite well</td>
<td>Praising government institutions e.g. army, police, PP, PDF, etc.; and governing and ruling elites and officials, politicians and whom she doesn’t know their qualities well as she used to in her rural setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspirations</td>
<td>Tea, sugar, bulls and money</td>
<td>Demanding salaries and incentives, employment, going for Hajj, tea and sugar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>To the tribe’s community</td>
<td>To government and their representative authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source of power</td>
<td>Her agency, personal identity and the tribe</td>
<td>Her agency, social identity and the government</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Together with three other respondents, R17 maintain that apart from al-Hakkamah in town, the rural Hakkamah who moves with the murhal, the one who stays in the camp or village and who constitutes the majority of al-Hakkamat in the region, are neither militarized nor are they being incorporated in the government’s advocacy campaign. It therefore seems the further from the machinery of government al-Hakkamat are, the more independent and locally respected they become and thus the more intact is their rural, tribal and ethnic identities.
7.5 Deviant Cases and Reformulation of Hypothesis

The data analysis reveals three deviant cases. Firstly, consistent views of respondents suggest that al-Hakkamah constitutes a typical example of moral and ethical model behaviour among the community and which earns her the respect of her people and the power to exercise her agency (See 6.3). This is however challenged by perceptions held by two respondents; R8 describes al-Hakkamah as:

… A woman who has no values and no ethics, uncontrollable person and morally deficient and that she only composes for money, like a beggar, begging officials for tea and sugar (R8, 06.05.06).

Whereas respondent R72 lessens her value by saying:

The majority, I would say up to 99, 9 per cent of rural women, are seldom inspired to be Hakkamat, only the remaining percentage are inclined to be Hakkamah because of certain circumstances. Consequently, the incentives, the obscurities, the conducts, the surrounding media and environment are the main factors that create al-Hakkamah. You would never find a Hakkamah, with my due respect to you, from respected powerful families - for instance the Nazir’s (R72, 10.06.06).

Thus, denying al-Hakkamah any virtuous background, decency or ethical rectitude. Obviously, while these adverse descriptions are mainly levelled at al-Hakkamah in town since the two respondents derive their knowledge and experience of al-Hakkamah from the town context only, it does, however, stand
at odds with the moral commitment recognized of al-Hakkamah and which generally reinforces her public acceptance and respect of her community, not only in town but in the rural areas as well (see 6.2.5). Besides, the Islamic project launched and advocated by the NIF government was meant, as mentioned elsewhere (see 3.4.2.3), to reconstruct the Sudanese citizen according to the regime’s ideological model of Islamism, women more so than men, through enacting the shari’a law more strictly and conservatively. So, it could be argued that if al-Hakkamat prove and or are perceived to be morally deficient, certainly, the regime will not stake out their central political strategic project and social campaign by incorporating and reinforcing the position of al-Hakkamah. Moreover, most of al-Hakkamat come from prestigious families that are famous of power and horsemanship (see Table 3). It could therefore be perceived that these appear to be views held based on value judgement on ideologically divisive issues rather than on the actual social value and effects al-Hakkamat have in their receptive communities (see 6.2.3 and 6.3).

Secondly, while research participants identify the role of al-Hakkamah as political, only one respondent, ironically, a pastoralist supreme tribal leader, underrates her social value and denies her any linkage to politics as is generally conceived that women’s acts are irrelevant to politics (see 2.3; 2.4). He describes her pursuits as merely local and domestic and as isolated from the recognized men’s formal political domain as shown in his accounts:
Al-Hakkamah … has no social or political significance, let alone decisions at tribal level, apart from praising and defaming. She is just respected as a woman, a wife who looks after children and as a Hakkamah who composes and sings for men during occasions but nothing more … if we have visitors we call for al-Hakkamah to mobilize women to do something like cooking … She keeps focusing only on the very local issues of pastoralists (Bedouin) that is, singing for the brave man and the generous man (R42G1, 12.03,06).

Yet while denying her any significant social and political role, he, in contradiction, attests that:

*Al-Hakkamah often plays a role as she is a weapon with two sharp ends, i.e. for good and for evil things. Definitely they had a role in the conflict experienced but we instructed them not to say anything about the conflict because she has a strong influence on the youth and used to have negative effects on inciting men for war … Because in our culture woman is under the responsibility of her guardians; we admit that she has influence but when her guardians interfere, this influence will be halted* (R42G1, 12.03,06).

Furthermore, he explains the fact that the issue of al-Hakkamah is taken seriously by the regional government by saying:

In the reconciliation conferences, we discussed the issue of *al-Hakkamat* and we agreed that they have influence over communities and that there should be guidance for them but the practicalities did not enable reaching *al-Hakkamat* in distant rural areas like ours (R42G1, 12.03, 06).

First, the informant denies an explicit political role for *al-Hakkamat* and identifies her with merely domestic work in what seems reflecting a perception of politics as an exclusive men's activity and a domain where women have no presence and roles. He betrays the true state of affairs when he mentions that they ‘agreed that they have influence over communities’. Second, trying to establish
for al-Hakkamah a subordinate position to men (her guardians) stands at odds with the perceived autonomy and authority of al-Hakkamah that might only be questioned if she adopted anti-social behaviour against her community as shown previously (see 6.7.2 and 5.7.3). Third, whilst the latter views are expressed by the respondent, the most powerful tribal leader among his group, research participants admit that powerful men stand to lose the most in the love/hate relationship with al-Hakkamat which could explain these extreme views (see 6.3). Last, it could also be observed and understood as well, from the context of the group interview in which the respondent presents his views before tribal leaders of different tribes, that from his position as a supreme tribal leader, he could not say what might be interpreted by others as an admission that women could have influence within his tribe and on him particularly.

These accounts are presented in the interviews conducted in the first week of the fieldwork and are continuously crossed checked with other respondents' accounts in the later interviews when another respondent, a retired soldier, disgracefully, expresses his disagreement with the presence of al-Hakkamah in both social or political domains let alone to be actively engaged with the military office. This is because, he argues, during the second civil war in south Sudan in 1983, tribes, tribalism and al-Hakkamah were introduced extensively into the institution of the military force and consequently, al-Hakkamah has emerged as an indisputable military icon and become involved in conflict and formal politics at regional and national levels. He perceives her as a symbol of illiteracy and ignorance, and this approach as extremely unjust, humiliating and stigmatising for people and the military institution (6.2.1, p.15) as in his comments:
... Today al-Hakkamah wants to play a national role which is impossible because it is just as if you promote the institution of illiteracy and count on it. In our time, I am quite sure that no formal national institution was associated with al-Hakkamah or anything like her and elevated them to national or patriotic entities. The institution of al-Hakkamah has emerged in the 1980s and has become a sign of stigma and disgrace for people and the military institution (R72, 10.06.06).

Yet, the point is to realise, against their disagreement or dissatisfaction, that the identity and agency, power and influence of al-Hakkamah (see 2.4; 2.6.1; 2.6.2) are so sufficiently convincing for the military institution to acknowledge, incorporate and manipulate. Besides, the engagement of al-Hakkamah with the military in such circumstances in Darfur in 1991 (see 7.2), suggests that the dynamism and process of wars in Sudan have changed with the NIF seizing power in 1989 and with new circumstances than it was a decade ago. It could be seen therefore that, it is this dynamism of change at individual, groups or institutional levels that has enabled the Hakkamah to situate herself in the urban town domain and to maintain a dynamic performance and agency, which is essentially part of exercising her personal identity as Hakkamah who is able to respond to different situations.

These accounts therefore, suggest that there are those who may deny the agency of al-Hakkamah, her role and influence. To incorporate these views in the initial hypothesis, I have slightly reformulated the hypothesis by adding the phrase "... even though this agency and political influence might be denied" at the end and which I believe to be satisfactory (see 1.1.5).
It has to be mentioned though that *al-Hakkamah*, as a social icon, is more associated with communities of south Darfur than with those of North Darfur as evident by what could be indicated as modest amount of information volunteered by respondents in *al-Fashir* compared with that collected from *Nyala* – south Darfur where *al-Hakkamah* is a cultural icon and a public figure.

Secondly, while the powerful tribal leaders in South Darfur proudly acknowledged their respect and appreciation of the role of their *Hakkamat* and their influence, in *al-Fashir* (North Darfur), this was contested by a powerful tribal leader whose pastoralist tribe was involved in several conflicts in which *al-Hakkamat* were involved. Thirdly, the group interviews conducted in south Darfur were active and interesting and the participants, who were mixed Baggara and African tribes, were active, checking accounts and adding information, whereas those in the group conducted in *al-Fashir*, who were all tribal leaders, were reluctant to challenge each other's input about *al-Hakkamah*. Generally, the interviews' dynamics show the level of esteem accorded to *al-Hakkamat* in either side of Darfur Arab tribes: the camel herders in the north (*Abbala*) and the cattle herders in the south (*Baggara*); the latter who are more settled are generally showing a lot more public deference to their women than the former.

### 7.6 Summary and Conclusion
The analysis above attempts to demonstrate how the identity and agency of al-Hakkamah is being reinforced by the NIF regime since 1991 when both their military and civil institutions were in a frenzied search for viable means to influence the political opinion to advocate for and support their wars in the region of Darfur. This was initially launched by Darfur riverine Governors and commanders, who viewed some cultural and folkloric practices, rather instrumentally, as tools to be utilised to serve their own political interests, no matter what the consequences might be. This started with the Creative Popular Arts Festival (CPAF) in August 1991 when al-Hakkamah proved them right as she skilfully fulfilled their anticipation of a successful mobilisation. From thereon, they used al-Hakkamah in mobilization campaigns, most notably against Bolad insurgency in Darfur in 1991, which marks the first successful counter-insurgency in Darfur in this regime’s era.

Subsequently, the government publicly acknowledged and reinforced the socio-cultural and political value and position of al-Hakkamat through various public information and communication means especially radio, TV, workshops, etc. Hearing their Hakkamah on radio, for instance, tribesmen would become elated and their Hakamat elevated to even higher esteem. With al-Hakkamat being co-opted and catapulted into the spotlight, the government went on to implement measures to appropriate them into a government sponsored and controlled body in order to enhance the regime’s war mobilization campaigns and advocacy projects e.g., ‘the Comprehensive Advocacy’, which they designed to transform the whole Sudanese people to fit the NIF-conceived Islamic model. For al-Hakkamah, these measures include militarization,
reorientation, organization and reconstructing the institution of *al-Hakkamah* (see 7.2.3).

Militarization of *al-Hakkamah* involved military training, wearing uniforms, acquiring military identity cards and titles/ranks … etc. Whilst they played their military part in serving and blessing the violence during war time, they might subsequently be called upon to denounce violence when peace was sought by the regime or forced on it.

Apparently, the purpose of the militarization of *al-Hakkamah*, even though of over forty years old, is to replicate with the army the same bond *al-Hakkamah* maintained, or used to maintain, with her tribe’s *Ageed* institution (see 6.4; 6.5). An initial consequence of this is that *al-Hakkamah*’s tribally-held prestige somehow faded out. Her militarisation therefore suggests that it was a form of compensation as it, presumably, could sustain her connection to yet another powerful institution of authority, in this case the government and its military (see 7.2.1).

In addition, because of her background and experience rooted in rural areas, the chance and the experience of being associated with powerful military forces may encourage her and provide her with an impetus to reside in town where she becomes a crucial part of the military psychological warfare. On a personal level, this may in turn upgrade her career through which she will have the
opportunity to transform from a rural *Hakkamah* to a *Hakkamah* who now performs in urban and wider contexts, and still reaches out to the countryside, a change that can enhance her agency, but may degrade her skill and authenticity. Her transformation is thus seen to have affected her concerns, her community and the language she uses in addressing them. This is because instead of voluntarily encouraging her tribe’s horsemen to stand firm in events such as *faza’* and celebrating their heroism in the village or the camp, for instance, she is called upon to incite her tribe and ethnic group, in rural areas, in town and nationally as well, to join the government military forces waging large-scale wars. Besides, instead of praising the generous, the brave, the gentle; the tribal leader and the good virtues in the tribe, she is now praising government elites and officials e.g. the minister, the president, and casting on them quality virtues that she has no way of knowing that those people possess! (see 7.3.1.5; 7.4)

Thus, as Malkki (1997) postulates, changing place and identity are closely related; for, as people move, they process their needs and identities according to the environment they now settle in. In line with this proposition, the process accompanied the movement of *al-Hakkamah* to *Nyala* has served in establishing a new social and political identity for *al-Hakkamah* within the urban context and enabled her to maintain her agency in fulfilling her new obligations. This course of action is in line with the postulation that identity, community, territories and culture are not natural and static orders that are taken-for-granted but are discursively and historically constructed through certain modes of power relations and resistance of the subjects to establish their identity (Ferguson and
Gupta 1997; Malkki 1997). Resistance in this respect is a form of power ‘which categorises the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity … a form of power which makes individuals subjects’\textsuperscript{114}.

\textit{Al-Hakkamat} also become subjected to religious teachings through workshops, meetings … etc - an indoctrination process intended to cast them into the projected Muslim women model and image. However, the most serious message passed to them is that the regime’s pursuits are legitimate and rooted in Islamic \textit{shari’a} and as such they should heed these calls for building an Islamic state as well as an Islamic community. It is only just inevitable therefore that their conformity with these religious messages should figure in their composing/recitations as shown in this and the previous chapters (see 7.2.2).

As a measure of control and manipulation, the government, represented by the Ministry of Culture and Information, sponsors and administers the organization of \textit{al-Hakkamat}. This was initially launched by the Governor of Greater Darfur in 1991 through the PIM that was used in the government advocacy and mobilization campaigns against \textit{Bolad} insurgency in 1991/2 and again in 2003, by the Governor of south Darfur, with the emergence of the current Darfur insurgency when both \textit{al-Hakkamat} and the \textit{Sheikhat} were organised in the so-called the Union of \textit{Hakkamat} and \textit{Sheikhat} (UHS) in Nyala town. By

\textsuperscript{114} There are two meanings of the word subject: subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge (Foucault 1983: 212 cited in Ferguson and Gupta 1997: 18).
incorporating both al-Hakkamah and al-Sheikah, the UHS combines the mobilization and cooking skills of women; skills that are usually demanded by the government, free of charge, from rural women in its campaign activities. Thus, through this organization, the government appear to be able to manipulate and address large numbers of Hakkamat of various tribes and therefore have the leverage to influencing many tribes in a single event or activity (see 7.2.4).

This organization is viewed by the majority of respondents as basically intended to deal with the current Darfur insurgency in the sense that it could enable the government to sway tribes' opinions against the Darfur insurgency. Yet, despite the manipulation of al-Hakkamah by the government and her enforced accountability to the UHS, the analysis shows that she has to some extent maintained her personal autonomy, agency and ethnic/tribal identity and also acquired other sources of identity such as urban, NCP, military, police … etc. (see 7.2.4; 7.4).

On the other hand, given the lack of rural-based women organizations in towns of Darfur, UHS is viewed as representing a female institution of power for rural emigrant women based in town which could be identified as an indication of relatively continued legacy of power and agency of Darfuri women in adapting to different contexts and challenges, thus defying female stereotyped expectations of behaviour and subordinating statuses (see 5.5.2).
Moreover, the government have created a new title of *Hakkamah – Hakkamat al-Turath* (*Hakkamah of heritage*) and offered the label/title *Hakkamah* to any woman who could masquerade as *Hakkamah* without necessarily possessing the talent, skills and the rural-based conventional characteristics that enable the construction of *al-Hakkamah*. It also offered the term to women outside the Baggara community in such a way that led to cultural confusion about the meaning of the term *Hakkamah* and, in the view of some, degrading to it (see 7.2.3).

Despite the obligations and dedication made by *al-Hakkamat* to the state’s regime, they are not properly financially compensated nor are they awarded regular incentives or gratuity for the service they render as members of UHS. Thus, as their movement to town caused them to lose their conventional moral and material sources of support, they have now found themselves in the spotlight when needed, but otherwise only half heartedly supported (see 7.2.5).

The changes in the identity of *al-Hakkamah* who has moved to *Nyala* suggests that her capacity, accountability and influence are largely shifted from the village/camp and exclusive local tribal boundaries to the wider tribal community and ethnic group in *Nyala* and elsewhere in Darfur and Sudan. In addition, she maintains and further reinforces her power and agency by acquiring other sources of identity outside her territorial, ethnic, tribal, physical and social
boundaries. As well, she shows signs of significant agency in managing her multiple identities and power to oversee and exercise her own choices in the new domain of formal government politics. Alignment with political institutions necessitates both her accountability and adaptability to the rules, customs and discourses of these institutions as she has now become in business with other actors in an urban political and social environment. Yet, although this change is indeed influenced by the government, it also has to be chosen and acquiesced into by al-Hakkamah (see 7.4).

Obviously, in either context, al-Hakkamah proves herself as a potential political actor in light of the development of her relationship with government institutions of power and with ruling elites in a context overwhelmed by war and violence. It could be seen that this new political actor in town is more or less both the cause and product of the change and as such is a critical component of the map of armed conflicts and military war strategies in which Darfur people took part as active combatants.
Chapter 8: Thesis Conclusion
8.1 Introduction

As stated in Chapter 1, the overall aim of this thesis is twofold: first, to contribute to the knowledge and understanding of modes, patterns and experiences of rural women’s agency and identity and their access to exercising power and political influence; and second, to contribute to the analysis of politics behind the armed conflict in Darfur. The objective is to use the case of *al-Hakkamat* women poets among the Baggara tribes in Darfur as a lens through which I could explore, analyse and establish how and why rural women in Darfur acquire agency, power and access to political influence in the public domain, especially in pursuit of armed conflict and peace resettlement.

The study is therefore mainly informed by the concept of women's agency (see 2.6.2), personal identity (see 2.6.1) and political influence (see 2.4) which altogether, I conceive, to have enabled rural women in Darfur to enjoy a relatively unique status than those in rural north Sudan and other stereotyped communities in Africa. This is despite their apparent absence from men's public domains of politics including conflict resolution and peace resettlement processes (see 2.5; 2.7) and the Islamic oriented policies pursued by the state neo-patrimonial riverine ruling and governing elites which tend to subordinate women and relegate their presence to the domestic domain (see 3.4.2; 5.3; 5.4; 2.5.2; 5.6). The conclusion therefore relates to this dual aim of exploring the politics of armed conflict and analysing gender relations played out in the exercise of power by *al-Hakkamat* in this context.
8.2 Domestic Politics and Neopatrimonialism in Sudan

The thesis shows that Sudan is both a large and culturally diverse country (chapter 3). Since independence in 1956, however, the national riverine ruling elites failed to manage either of these aspects with justice and equality as they simply followed the conventional colonial model that favours and empowers the riverine central regions and elites resulting thus in many cultural and structural inequities and an inexusable neglect of the peripheries in the areas of authority (see 3.4.1; 3.4.2.2), economic development and wealth sharing (see 3.4.2.1). By adopting domestic politics based on clientalism and neopatrimonialism in the distribution and management of the country’s resources, the whole apparatus of the state appears to have been hijacked to only serve the vested interests of these elites (see 3.4.2).

This monopoly of power is further consolidated by adopting an Islamic doctrine to hegemonise citizens and secure personal power through introducing shari’a law all over Sudan in 1983. The NIF regime since 1989 adopted a comprehensive Islamic project to cast the Sudanese into their unique Islamic model (3.4.2.3). With inequalities already in place, the Islamisation politics dealt a blow to the relatively peaceful coexistence among the population and widened the regional polarisation and cleavage (see 3.4.2.3) which eventually resulted in overwhelming the country with armed conflicts between tribes and ethnic groups at local levels (e.g. Darfur) and civil wars between government and
regional insurgencies at national level (e.g. South Sudan) in demand of the
latter for justice and equality.

However, these demands were vigorously denied and systematically resisted by
the riverine ruling elites who instead of peacefully addressing the causes,
responded by casting ethnic and religious interpretations on these armed
movements (see 3.5.1; 4.5.3) in preparation for co-erced solutions (see 4.5.1.5;
4.5.1.6). This is revealed by the failure of all peace initiatives pursued to end
these wars until the CPA was signed, with heavy pressure from the international
community, in 2005 and DPA in 2006 (see 3.5.2; 4.5.4.2). In these wars al-
Hakkamah Baggara women poets in Darfur took an active role, as an ethnic
zealot of Arab tribes, in mobilizing Arab horsemen and militias to fight either for
their own tribes’ interest, or for the interest of the national riverine ruling elites
(chapters 6 and 7).

8.3 Armed Conflict in Darfur

In analysing the conflict in Darfur and its causes, I have basically shown that it
is more complicated than some commentators suggest, and that its historical
roots are very important (see 4.5). Most of this history has to do with the
relationship between tribes and ethnic groups and the political economy
approach pursued, by the state, in administering land and people. Thus, during
the Fur sultanate (1640-1916), power seems to be decentralised and most
tribes, especially Arab tribes, appeared autonomous, exercising power within their own Dars, and only asked (or forced) to account when the nominal allegiance they profess to the sultanate comes into question (see 4.5.1).

With the downfall of the sultanate, the introduction of tribal-based native administration system by the condominium regime, led, contrary to what was experienced in most African countries including elsewhere in Sudan, to maintaining and further mainstreaming and instituting the belief in tribal territories even though the intention was primarily to consolidate the power of the colonial administration in those areas by creating a proxy administration (see 4.4.2).

From thereon, this state policy saw tribalism and tribal centrism reinforced, as tribes appear to claim tribal sovereignty over the territories onto which they laid hands. These now appear to be mini–states, especially in times when the state seemed to be either unwilling or unable to maintain law and order (see 4.5.2). Nevertheless, this situation enabled tribes to safeguard and preserve the customary laws and conventions that govern their mutual respect of resources and tribal boundaries and settlement of disputes (see 4.5.4.1). This situation continued after independence in 1956 when, through the state launching extensive rainfed mass production mechanised schemes, huge lands were granted to foreign capitals and private riverine elites resulting thus in narrowing land and water resources for pastoral and agro-pastoral communities (see 4.4.3). This was combined with the abolition of the native administration system
in 1971 and its replacement with an administration system dysfunctional in both human and financial resources (see 4.4.2). With the drought of the 1970s and 1980s, large populations were forced to flee their homelands with their remaining herds in search for sustainable livelihoods, i.e. water, pasture and land for settlement. The ineffective administration, along with a weakened local dispute settlement mechanism, combined with the absence of adequate policies and legislation to respond to this new development and to manage the administrative and power relations between the sedentary and the new (previously pastoral) arrivals constituted the key trigger for other resident factors to the Darfur conflict to come to the fore (see 4.5.1.1; 4.5.1.2; 4.5.4.1).

The ethnic intervention and interpretation of riverine neo-patrimonial ruling and governing elites in these conflicts in Darfur must bear the lion’s share for the proliferation of these tribal and ethnic wars (see 4.5.1.4). We have seen state legislation implemented in areas where the local explosive nature of the consequences was not addressed proactively. For instance, land and other related laws introduced successively in 1925, 1928, 1930, 1970 and 1971\(^\text{115}\) (see 4.4.3; 4.5.1.2) deprive local people of their indigenous systems of resource utilisation and management that they used to, and set in nothing in place as alternative survival source. As the state throughout its most recent history has not been seen as a just arbiter, tribal and ethnic entities in Darfur appeared to

\(^{115}\text{The Land Settlement and Registration Ordinance 1925, the Limitation and Prescription Ordinance 1928, the Land Acquisition Ordinance 1930, the Unregistered Land Act 1970 and the Local Government Act 1971 (LGA).}\)
have more faith in their sovereignty and power than to hand it over to the government!

Their suspicions were borne out by the actions of the state especially in its most recent interventions. The introduction of the *Imarat* system of cheiftainship to grant more than half of the land of Dar Masalit to the Arab Chadian immigrants whilst they shied away from doing the same for the Zaghawa, who settled after the drought years in the *Rezeiqat Dar* in southern Darfur, can only emphasise those suspicions further (see chapter 4).

So for the African tribes, the favouritism of the state to the Arab tribes needed no further proof and the resulting polarisation has only one outcome: the *ethnicisation* of conflict that broke out in the first place because of the failure of the state to manage the utilisation of resources among tribal entities. While tribal entities were seen to be reluctantly ready to compromise on issues of resources, they showed uncompromisingly stubborn aggressiveness when the issues of conflict were projected as matters of tribal sovereignty (see 4.5.1.2; 4.5.1.3; 4.5.1.4; 4.5.1.6). Thus the more ethnicised and politicised the conflict is, the more viciously it is fought.

Indeed the neopatrimonial domestic politics played out in Darfur resulted in situations that eventually led to the emergence of Darfuri insurgencies in 1991/2 and 2003. With ethnicisation already having its toll on the conflict situation, the
NIF government saw it effective to incorporate it in its counter-insurgency strategy when dealing with the SLM and JEM (see 4.5.3; 4.5.1.5). The *Janjaweed* militia, controlled by the government, and mostly, but not exclusively, drawn from Arab elements wreaked havoc in the region, driven by apparently racist zeal, which by then is already used to interpret the conflict even though the professed reasons for the insurgency are political.

From the evidence thus drawn, it could be said that differences between tribes and ethnic groups in Darfur, whether perceived or real (see 4.3), do not appear to match the profiles of these groups sufficiently to justify their waging war on one another if the state political system was set to accommodate and manage differences with justice and equality. It is obvious that the interlocking underlying causes of the complex conflict situation in Darfur are primarily related to the domestic politics played out by the neo-patrimonial riverine ruling and governing elites (see 4.5.1) and that ethnic identity could only be called upon to support or withstand aggression merely because that aggression may have taken place already or about to take place for reasons other than ethnic or tribal affiliation, and given the lack of ‘trustable’ state institutions, support will have to be galvanised by any means possible.

### 8.4 Gender Relations and the Exercise of Power

The analysis of gender relations in Darfur shows that women’s position is historically similar to some other parts of Africa where women are able to
exercise agency and power - more than in northern Sudan or in other parts of Africa, or in the stereotype of African women – particularly rural women. The analysis also shows, nonetheless, that the sweep of history has brought changes which have undermined women’s rights over time.

Historically, the public political participation of rural Darfuri women was made obvious during the Fur sultanate era by granting women female titles of power e.g. *mayram*, *iyya basi* and their inclusion among the sultanate powerful officials. A women’s ceremony was an important ritual of the inauguration of the sultan. Whilst this position of women was quite prevalent in Dar Masalit and in Darfur during Ali Dinar’s time (1898-1916), the analysis shows that it was indeed an extension of a prevailing culture since early days of the Fur sultanate. This was evident by the role of the powerful *iiya kuuri*, the wife of Sultan Mohamed Tayrab (1768-1787), whose opinion was often sought in serious ruling matters and also Zamzam Umm al-Nasr, *iyya basi* of sultan Mohamed al-Husain, who was the *de facto* leader of the state and who eventually took over the ruling position when her brother turned blind (see 5.5.1).

This legacy of recognised female autonomy, agency and political influence (see 2.6.2; 2.4) in the sultanate, was powerfully verified in the very last days of the sultanate history to be the decisive move that led to the termination of the sultanate when Sultan Ali Dinar’s sister, *iyya basi*, Taja, incited him to fight the British otherwise she would take up his position. Moved by her words and unable to bear the insult were he to act otherwise, he fought unprepared only to
see himself killed and his sultanate destroyed (see 5.5.1). Women’s agency (see 2.6.2) seems to have the last word even when the outcome is measurably going to be disastrous. While these remain historical incidents involving royal female figures, such practices were reflected back on the general community as indications of the gender policy of a state that tended to consolidate the position of women in general and therefore ordinary women also enjoyed relative position of agency and autonomy to the extent that they were not differentiated from men in matters as important as access to land use and ownership (see 5.3.2.1).

This is because there existed in the Darfur sultanate a system of gender roles and power relations that acknowledged a position of autonomy, agency and influence for women. Through the *Dali* Code, a compromise between shari’a and local customs, this position of women was sustained after the state was converted to Islam and adopted, in the Sultanic court, the patriarchal *shari’a* law that often appears to relegate women to a subordinate position (see 5.4.2). Out of the key women’s rights that remained untouched was the equal access women had to land use and ownership in sedentary and agropastoral communities that was consolidated through Sultan’s charters, and the favourable gender roles that recognised women's rights to authority and agency (see 5.4.2; 5.5.1).
Cast into the wider Sudan after 1917, Darfuri women seem to have gone through the pull and push of historical and contemporary social and political circumstances which have reflected on their capacity to exercise agency and personal identity to influence public political actions. This was largely brought about by the fact that whilst the male formal titles of power and influence offered during the sultanate reign e.g. Shartai, Dimlig, Nazir, Sheikh, etc are maintained and mainstreamed along with the power built into them in the political system of the native administration and later by national governments that followed in their footsteps, those of females e.g. iyya basi, mayram, were dropped and where survived, they are rendered devoid of power. This situation looks similar to those experienced in some other African countries, for instance, when among the Igbo in Nigeria, the colonials favoured and formalised the male monarchy, the Obi, and ignored the female, Omu.

The analysis also reveals that there are noticeable variations in the general position of rural women in Sudan especially in north Sudan where women’s activities outside the household are described as limited: “Niswan al Arab ma yemshiin al khulla – women of the Arabs do not go to the field” (see 5.3.1). This engagement of rural Darfuri women in socio-economic activities, in contrast to others in north Sudan, allows them to exercise greater agency and power than women whose activity is limited to the household.

I established in chapter five that the agency and personal identity of women are often influenced by the state’s gender policies and legislation which either
promote women to exercise agency and influence or restrict their capacity to act in this way. After Darfur was annexed to Sudan in 1917, the economic and political policies enacted in Sudan, especially those that affect women’s economic and political roles, are not strictly operationalised in rural areas as a result of poorly funded state’s institutions and rural women’s position therefore inadvertently continues to be dictated by local customary laws (see 5.5.2).

Moreover, the gains achieved for women by the Sudanese women’s political movement that started in the 1940s (see 5.2.1) seem to be associated with educated and employed urban(ised) women and have no relevance to Darfuri rural women who have no or little access to education. Those rural women therefore continue to be associated with subsistence farming, animal husbandry and the maintenance of food security situation within increasingly unequal state capitalist and patriarchal land tenure and agricultural policies. These policies are based on riverine gender roles and culture that does not allow women to go to the field and which identify men as the main head of the household (see 5.3.2.1; 5.3.2.2). As such, they influence gender roles and power relations in Darfur by denying rural Darfuri women their historically entrenched customary rights and equality in access and ownership of land and herds which constitute the very source of their power and social and economic autonomy and agency (see 5.3.2.2). Moreover, the establishment of large state owned and private schemes in Darfur (see 4.4.3), has decreased the amount of common land used to be available to rural communities, especially women, who are recognised as the main subsistent farmers. This situation put food security at risk in Darfur and
may have also weakened the power women possessed relative to their position previously.

In addition, adversities such as famines, and the migration of men within and outside the region since the 1980s, have paradoxically strengthened the agency of women who out of necessity, have had to fend for themselves socially and economically, thus influencing social attitudes to their advantage. Subsequently, to counteract these policies, the contribution of Darfur rural women to sustainable livelihoods and the valuation of their communities to this role, enable them to continue to preserve their customary rights to wealth, land use and ownership. They are therefore able to respond to the crises of drought, famine and wars that have engulfed Darfur since the 1980s to date (2006) as acknowledged by a sheikh from Manawashi village who confirms that without women's agency, the people could have perished (see 5.3.2.1), thus proving the worth of their social value as ‘a shadow of a big tree for the whole tribe' (R43 2006), (see 6.3).

The application of shari’a and Islamic laws since 1983 by the neo-patrimonial riverine ruling and governing elites, constitute the most oppressive laws that curtail women’s personal freedom, autonomy and agency let alone their participation in public (political) decision making (see 5.4.1). Darfuri rural women by contrast remain able to exercise personal freedom and autonomy e.g. travel unaccompanied and ‘uncovered up’ whilst pursuing their livelihood activities to the dismay of visiting NIF officials (see 5.4.2; 1.1.2).
As with the formal engagement of rural women with the state formal political structures, the data analysis shows that despite the fact that rural people are usually involved in casting their votes for the government party, their votes have never counted in making a difference to their lives nor has their representation in rural councils promoted them to influence decisions concerning their sustainable livelihood. This situation also safely applied to rural Darfuri women and as a result, rural people continue to administer their own affairs through their own primordial decision making mechanisms and the newly established community based organisations such as KSCS in which women and men are equally presented and their opinions and efforts are counted on. Where men were absent, women would usually take the lead (see 5.5.2). This situation could be clearly seen from how and why the Baggara communities have hitherto maintained and enhanced the position of their Hakkamat women.

8.5 Identity, Agency and Influence of Al-Hakkamat

The historical context of a relatively favourable position of rural women in Darfur appears to be the right environment for al-Hakkamat, who have a very long history of engagement with politics and have had influence at the highest level of their tribes, to sustain, or even prosper, as champions of agency which, at times, surpasses that of men within the Baggara community.
Al-Hakkamat are skilful and talented female folk poets who possess personal characteristics (see 6.2.3) which enable them to exercise *agency*, motivated by ethnic consciousness, in achieving social and political roles for the welfare of the tribe’s people. As their name indicates (see 6.2), they wield power, both traditional and charismatic, (see 2.2) to exercise passing rulings and arbitrations and exert influence in the social and political domains of the tribe. To young people, they appear to constitute a coaching mechanism for their orderly initiation into socialisation activities (see 5.3.2) that are intended to nurture the spirit of being a member of a tribe. For the adults, they pass social and political messages and reassert cultural pride and tradition as well as reinforce ethnic consciousness and strengthen people’s resolve to excel in deeds deemed required by the tribe, most notably, fighting for the tribe and maintaining its boundaries (social, geographical and political) (see 6.2.8.1). An important mainstay of their role is to instil and preserve the virtues of generosity, courage, horsemanship and tribal solidarity and otherwise reject and avoid vices.

They achieve these self-set objectives through various means which include direct commands, speech, and symbolic acts whilst their socially charged mesmerising recitation of poems and songs on individuals and groups, within their tribes and across tribes, that they perform in chorus or singly, at communal activities, ceremonies, dancing parties and other domestic chores, constitute the most significant and influential manifestation of their influence. The strategies they use, the diction of their songs and their symbolic acts (such as dressing in male costumes or wearing different pair of shoes) are so rooted in the culture of the tribe that their effect is always immediate and effective. Their
poetic skills and unique personal qualities (see 5.2.3) enable them to acquire a unique identity, strong agency and influence that they exercise to achieve significant roles (see 6.6.4).

The performance and influence of al-Hakkamat are strong and emotional and their social demands on people are sometimes not only just desired, but also obligatory as whether she glorifies or vilifies, it is guaranteed that her intentions will be heeded, and more importantly, that those intentions are always seen to be embedded in her tribal values and therefore held dearly and respected. This is because they are devoted to maintaining the ideals of their value system and elevate the tribe's position of power, respect and prestige. That is why their agency expands into the right to punish and arbitrate and for their people to obey and comply. They are therefore of high social value and status among their communities as they could make or break men's reputation (see 6.3.2.2) thus forcing individuals to flee neighbourhoods in disgrace. They are therefore respected and feared both in war and other times as their wisdom usually engenders a sense of courage and elation. Nevertheless, their authority is not absolute; it is a shared practice and constitutes a set of values that reminds community members of, and inspires, their renewed commitment to their jointly nurtured customs, values and ethics (see 2.2) and autonomy (see 6.6.2). She is therefore accountable to her community and its institutions who oversee her deeds and from whom she extracts her power (see 6.6.3; 6.7.6).
Among the Baggara tribes of Darfur, two powerful institutions, seemingly as independent of the native administration as of each other, are the institution of *al-Hakkamah* and the tribal war institution of the *Ageed*. In war times, *al-Hakkamah* institution would usually forge a strong alliance with, and become an integral part of, the *Ageed* where the former would mobilise and incite for war to take place, whereas the latter mobilise and execute those wars. A relationship of common purpose, the welfare of the tribe, seems to unite these two institutions, the one inciting, and the other fighting (see 6.4). To borrow Nelson’s (1973) terminology (see 2.8), by these deeds, *Al-Hakkamat* are therefore able to dominate both the *tent* and the *camp*.

The analysis also shows that *al-Hakkamat* seem to have derived their power of influence and agency from their own personal identity - their skills and talent and the social context which comprises the people and the institutions of values and customs that people have constructed, respected and authorised to control their lives and to which *al-Hakkamat* belong. Thus, the tribe as a whole constitutes the main source of her power as all her deeds are linked to the sustainability of the tribe and its sustainable livelihoods (see 6.6.6).

The reputation of *al-Hakkamat* has taken off quite dramatically since 1970s when they used their influence both to encourage violent responses and to end them in some instances. This is clearly unfolded during the conflicts experienced between Arab tribes in the 1970s (see 6.5.1; 6.5.2) and thereafter become an integral part of the local conflicts experienced in 1980s, 1990s to
date (2006) between tribes and ethnic groups (see 6.5.3; 6.5.4) as well as in government sponsored wars such as the civil war in south Sudan and the current insurgency in Darfur (6.5.4 and 7.3.1).

Their influence include exercising personal, tribal and ethnic identities in mobilising men, youth in particular, to fight, as tribal combatants and as government soldiers, by extolling the virtues of those who join and defaming those who do not. Their role also involves contributing to arming them and providing food sustenance and sometimes escorting the fighters to the battlefield where their presence would encourage the horsemen to fight till their death or that of their enemies (see 7.3.1). Their identity and agency would therefore often enhance the momentum and scale of violence. In seeking the recognition of al-Hakkamat, fighters would sometimes return the complement in kind and compose poems to remind al-Hakkamat that they would not disappoint them. More importantly, to guarantee this recognition, the fighters may bring al-Hakkamat gifts in the form of ivory from hunting raids, and more recently, captives/abductees from the battlefield. Some may even go to the extreme of cutting off organs of their victims, notably ears, and give them to al-Hakkamat as proof of their participation and bravery. Humiliating and provocative, these acts normally intensify cyclic violence and perpetuate animosities (see 6.3.1).

Al-Hakkamat are therefore described by many people as a double-edged sword or 'could drive people for good or evil conducts'. This valuation of the dual role of al-Hakkamah as perceived by some research informants is a form of agency
and urgency that women exercise against anticipated harm that defeat in war usually brings to women; the worst of which is rape and inhumane atrocities, a perception similar to feminists' (see 2.7). Al-Hakkamat therefore expressly support their kith and kin regardless of what atrocities they may inflict on their enemies. They are not blood-thirsty individuals; they see it as a duty to uphold their tribe’s integrity even if this has to be maintained through bloodshed. It is therefore plausible to deduce that this is what makes wars between tribes in Darfur devastating and frequent. Agitation and counter agitation bring the weight of al-Hakkamat to bear on events, being made all the more sinister by government actions of short-termism that saw in al-Hakkamah only the immediate benefit but ignored the strategic social harmony a government should have sought and maintained among its subjects.

8.6 Change in the Identity and Agency of Al-Hakkamat

Since 1991, the institution of al-Hakkamah is being co-opted and manipulated by the neopatrimonial NIF regime in order to serve political and military projects at the heart of conflict in Darfur and in Sudan at large (see 6.6 and 7.2). This process was endorsed by the NIF government soon after they took power in 1989 as they discovered the potency of the agency and influence of al-Hakkamat as shown in sections 6.6 and 7.2. Using their powerful mobilising ethnic consciousness was manifested in the government's counter-insurgency against Bolad in south Darfur in 1991/2 (see 4.5.4.2), in south Sudan and Nuba Mountains against the SPLA (7.3.1.1, 7.3.1.2 and 7.3.1.3) and more recently,
after 2003, in Darfur against Darfuri insurgencies (see 4.5.3.2). Ultimately the co-optation and transformation of \textit{al-Hakkamat} into a government affiliated institution is almost complete, both organisationally (the Union of \textit{al-Hakkamat} and \textit{al-Sheikhat}) and tendentiously.

Thus they received military training, Islamic reorientation and indoctination, expanding this category membership to ethnicities not known to have historically possessed this culture of \textit{al-Hakkamah} and also eventually by paying them incentives. Whilst they were primarily used to promote this government’s war, they were also made to advocate for peace when the government so wished (see 7.3.2).

Apperently, the militarisation and association with the army is meant to compensate for the loss of their previous equally prestigious association with the \textit{Ageed} (see 6.4) which is broken off or weakened as they move or become displaced into urban centres. In liaising with the government, \textit{al-Hakkamat} who could be seen as being acquiescent with the government politics in Darfur; may actually see themselves as serving the wellbeing of their tribes. Moreover, they may also appear to lose their prestige and support of their tribes who might not be willing to accept the engagement of their \textit{Hakkamah} with a government that they do not trust fully. Some \textit{Hakkamat}, on the other hand, still shy away from being heavily involved with the government against Darfur insurgencies, contrary to her wholehearted endorsement of the civil war in south Sudan (see
Boxes 62 - 69) and against Blolad’s insurgency (Boxes 63-66), maintaining thus a language full of advocacy for peace (see Boxes 84-86).

These changes in space and in the roles of al-Hakkamat involved changes in their social identity from being exclusively local, rural and tribal, to becoming urban, national and ethnically oriented Hakkamat. This entails that they acquire new skills and qualities to match the new setting and the new roles and therefore their agency has changed from exclusively focusing on the village and rural matters, people and horsemen, to an all-encompassing focus on soldiers, the military, government officials and urban matters and advocating for national government policies and wars through television and radio (see 7.4). To this influence and agency of al-Hakkamah in recruiting more of their kith and kin into the army could in part be attributed the highest recorded number of casualties (martyrs) in the civil war in south Sudan (see Table 2). Yet, the paradox is that while the government forbid war songs among tribes in south Sudan for instance, among the Nuer, on the pretext that they are insulting, provocative and inciting, they propagate and reproduce war songs and culture and promote singers in south Darfur through the national media to commit precisely these very offences they, allegedly, wanted to guard against in the south.

Also, while the government uses the agency, identity and influence of al-Hakkamat in its recruitment, mobilisation and advocacy for their war policies, in reconciliation conferences, the same government persistently excludes them despite evidence that al-Hakkamat also have experience in settling disputes.
Yet, it is not only *al-Hakkamat* who are excluded, allegedly to prevent the tension their presence might bring to negotiations, but so too is the *Ageed*, the tribe’s war leader. It appears that as a result of this omission, most of the conflicts would erupt again soon after agreements are reached, as evidenced by the sequential numbers of conferences held with the same tribes for the resolution of the same conflicts (see 4.5.4.1).

Failure of resolution settlements could also partially be attributed to the fact that *al-Hakkamat* are often neither made aware of the processes involved, nor are they briefed or persuaded to accept the outcomes of these conferences. Thus, when they were not satisfied with the agreements, and they usually were not, they would call for the resumption of fighting; and having their agency and influence more appealing to the youth and the *Ageed* than those who conclude the agreements, conflicts would erupt and a vicious circle of failed reconciliation agreements therefore becomes regular (see 4.5.4.1). For instance, in one of these conflict incidents, when the government censored the songs of *al-Hakkamat* that were identified as a trigger of conflict, *al-Hakkamat* publicised these same songs by tape-recording and distributing them to the surrounding villages and towns where they easily spread to their intended audience; proving thus that their agency and influence are far reaching and that *al-Hakkamat* are determined against all odds to realise their agency (see 6.7). Conflicts therefore would more likely be determined by the consent of both the *Ageed* and *al-Hakkamah*, and only when they are interested in actual peace, they may join efforts and influence their communities to accept the deals made (see 6.8)
On the other hand, liaising with the government in town does not come without cost. This is because by moving into town, *al-Hakkamat* lose the main source of their power in terms of the social support, respect and passion from their own community and their partnership with the *Ageed* institution from which they used to extract financial resources and moral strength. Yet, their engagement with the government army forces and the military ranks offered to them, are seen as prestigious and therefore an incentive in themselves which could be interpreted as compensating for the power they may have lost as a result of migrating to town. Their needs which are usually satisfied by their community whilst they are in the village (or the camp), to their dismay, are not so automatically provided for in town as they are neither employed, nor are they being offered regular incentives and are left to seek, by their own designs, the means for their survival. The incentives they used to receive are often unsatisfactory and they would only receive them as a reward for performing e.g. singing for soldiers, receiving governing elites and praising officials. Most of the time, these incentives are offered as promises but not fulfilled by officials until *al-Hakkamat* are made to beg at government offices as described in section 7.2.5.

*Al-Hakkamat* thus stand as a testimony to women's identity and agency in rural Darfur, and no matter what other restrictive circumstances that may prevail, they speak up and act, when they choose, almost certainly with no censorship other than what those very choices they made would dictate. They are able to firmly establish themselves in the town environment and astonishingly prosper.
as powerful rural women with strong agency and political influence despite
denial by some tribal members (see 7.5), a position that even educated women
in town are not being able to achieve. Hence, *al-Hakkamat* have retained and
further developed their capacity as an independent female agency and a
symbol of power and influence that ought to be celebrated. *Al-Hakkamah* could
therefore be perceived as a mechanism for challenging the gender
subordinating elements that normally obstruct females from thriving and
prospering. In the fluid and dangerous context of Darfur, the future of the
institution of *al-Hakkamat* may be uncertain. They might continue to perform but
the measure to which they would maintain the same level of influence, might as
well be intertwined with that of women generally in a Sudan whose future is yet
to be determined.
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10. Appendixes
### 10.1 Appendix 1: Anonymised List of Respondents

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<th>NO.</th>
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**Gender and Ethnic Representation of Respondents:**

1. Distribution of respondents per gender: 33 Female and 39 Males
2. Number of Respondents per ethnicity: African: 28; Baggara: 36; Southern tribes: 1; unidentified: 7
3. Number of Hakkamat interviewed: 18
4. The number of tribes to which the respondents belong: 15 African (including the southern Forogay tribe) and 13 Baggara (This data also shown in Diagram 1: Distribution and Representation of Respondents)
### 10.2 Appendix 2: Key Research Questions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Data/Information required</th>
<th>Method</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What are the main factors that influence gender roles and relations in Darfur?</td>
<td>The socio-economic, legal and statutory factors that shaped the existing gender roles and relations in Darfur from historical perspective.</td>
<td>Secondary sources</td>
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<td>2. How did conflict arise/start in Darfur? How did it evolve? Who are the main actors? And how is it being politicised?</td>
<td>The history of conflict, how it started and what processes and forms it involved that led to its transformation from small-scale locally managed disputes into a large-scale armed conflict with political dimension and who are the key players.</td>
<td>Secondary sources</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. What are the key roles played by women in Darfur armed conflict?</td>
<td>The roles that women played in inciting conflict or supporting ongoing conflict. Women's contribution to resettlement of local disputes, participation in reconciliation conferences, conflict resolution and realisation of peace.</td>
<td>Secondary sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>The accounts of Baggara community members, academics, key players to conflict (political and armed actors), Hakkamat songs, will reveal what roles identified and what value system associated with them</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
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<td>Open group discussions</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Secondary sources</td>
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</table>
5. What is the position of *al-Hakkamat* in the armed conflict since 1980s to date?

The accounts of *al-Hakkamat*, IDP men and women, tribal leaders, army personnel, NGOs, political actors, will reveal the history and the forms of involvement of *al-Hakkamat* women in armed conflict. Besides, poems and songs of living (practising and retired) and deceased *Hakkamat* will be collected.

**Interviews**

*Open group discussions*

*Documentary analysis*

---

6. Do *al-Hakkamat* poets pose as ‘spokespersons’ for their respective tribal male community, female community or both or are they exercising their own choice? What level of agency do they possess?

The accounts of *al-Hakkamat*, ordinary men and women, community tribal leaders will reveal whether *al-Hakkamat* act on their own or mobilised and coerced into these roles by others.

**Interviews**

*Critical analysis of *al-Hakkamat* poems and songs*

---

7. What are the government policies, political institutions and agendas that are associated with *al-Hakkamat*? And what are the modes and patterns of interaction with *al-Hakkamat*?

The accounts of *al-Hakkamat*, government officials, political actors, NGOs will reveal the policies and institutions that are relevant to *al-Hakkamat*. It will also show the specific ways and methods of *al-Hakkamat* involvement and interaction with government’s institutions and policies. It may reveal reasons and ways, patterns and trends these institutions support (or withdraw support from) *al-Hakkamat* and whether or not the majority of women count. It will reveal whether *al-Hakkamat* are given prominently instituted roles and exaggerated political weight or are just exploited. It will also indicate to what extent *Hakkamat* are aware of these processes.

**Interviews**

*Documentary analysis*

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116 A) Data: Poems and songs of existing, retired or deceased Hakkamat, B) Cases from courts documenting the involvement of Hakkamat, C) Reconciliation conferences and government reports and statements
10.3. Appendix 3: Topic Guide

Interview Topic Guide

Date: Time: Location:
Number of participants: Name:
Sex: Age:
Ethnic group (tribe): Position:

Informants (in categories)

1. Al-Hakkamat (Active and retired)
2. Ordinary people from Baggara and non-Baggara communities (men and women)
3. Tribal leaders
4. Politicians (men and women)
5. Government (army authorities)
6. Academics
7. NGOs (relevant)

Q1. Who are Al-Hakkamat?

How is al-Hakkamah identified (what processes and criteria required in terms of age, skills, financial position, family status, personality, strength, power, etc),

Is there any competition process among women for this position? Or is she imposed to the community, by whom?

Has the community the right to accept or reject her?

What challenges that she may encounter from community members (men and women)? And how does she respond to them?.

How is she introduced to the community and by whom?

For how long she continues to perform as Hakkamah?

Does she retire on her own choice or by influence and/or decision from others, who?

Is she of importance to the community, why? What would happen if there has been no Hakkamah in the community?
Q2. What is their position/status in the community?

Once the Hakkamah has been identified, what roles does she play in the community?

How does she identify these roles?

Are these roles of benefit to the community, how?

Are these roles fixed or changing?

Does the Hakkamah report to any person in the tribe, who? and if not, to whom is she accountable?

Does the community respect her, why?

Is she feared or likened by the community? Why?

Do the community members resort to her, when and why?

Why her poems/songs have the effect they have on those affected by it?

Are there other women in the community who share the same position and roles with the Hakkamah?

How does al-Hakkamah define herself? How is she seen by the men and women of the community?

If there is a retired Hakkamah, how her relations with the new Hakkamah and with the community look like?

Q3. How are they involved in conflict?

Is there any institution in the tribe for administering conflict, how does it work?

Are women including al-Hakkamat included in this institution, who are those women and how do they participate?

Are the Hakkamat involved in conflict (local disputes, tribal conflict), how?

What do they do in the community for both men and women to achieve their role?

What is the effect of their doings on both men and women?

Do they do what they do on their own or in coordination and with support from others (who are these ‘others’)?

A part from songs and poems, do they have any other forms/mechanisms of influence, what are these forms?

How does she develop them?
Q4. What is the position of al-Hakkamat in the armed conflict since 1980s to date?

Have you witnessed any tribal conflict from 1980s to 2002? What are these conflicts and for how long did they last?

Did the Hakkamat play any role in any of them? What did they do, and how?

What was the effect of their doing?

Did they play any role in local/tribal and regional reconciliation initiatives, what did they do?

What was the effect of their doing?

If they were not involved in these initiatives, why didn’t they?

What was the effect of them not participating in these reconciliation conferences/meetings?

Q5. Do al-Hakkamat pose as ‘spokespersons’ for their respective tribal male community, female community or both or are they exercising their own choice? What form of power and agency do they possess?

Does the Hakkamah normally consult others in her acts (songs/poems)?

Is the community has the right to impose its decisions on the Hakkamah?

What is her relationship with women and men in the community?

Is she more inclined towards one gender than the other?

Does she represent women, reflect their views/voices and support them? Or does she represent herself?

Are there any one in the community has influence and control over the Hakkamah?

When does she respond to the community?

What does the Hakkamah think of herself?

Is she an independent person expressing her own views?

Is she expressing woman/female worldview that is uniquely theirs?

Is she representing other women and reflecting their views?

Is she doing what she thinks is expected of her by the male community in the tribe?

What power and agency does she have to perform her roles?

How does she acquire them?

What do the terms power and agency mean for the Hakkamat; for the community and for government institutions?
Are other women have the same power and agency, if not, why?

In general, how are the Hakkamat roles viewed by other sections of the community? What are the motives behind what she composes and recite?

Q6. Al-Hakkamat relationships with the government

When did the Hakkamat come in contact with the government for the first time and who initiated this and why?

Did they mobilise people to join the government military forces, popular defence forces and tribal Para-military militias for the civil war in south Sudan?

What did they do?

What was the effect of their actions?

Was it their own initiatives or were they mobilised by others, who?

What are the government institutions that developed relationships with the Hakkamat and for what purpose?

Did they consult their tribesmen and women about this?

Do they continue to do what they used to do for their tribes or does their involvement in tribal matters has become a second priority?

What do these government institutions do for the Hakkamat and why?

What do the Hakkamat do in return?

Are the Hakkamat committed to specific role for the government?

Do they receive any rewards e.g. incentives, what kind of incentives and how often?

Did they receive any training, if so, in what areas?

Did they benefit form the training, how?

Can they withdrawn from cooperating with the respective government institutions any time they wish?

Are there any risks for them not to fulfil their commitment with the government? What kind of risks?

Why did the government focused on the Hakkamat and not other groups of women?

Do the government perceive them as women with power and agency?

What does power and agency mean for the community, the Hakkamat and the government institutions?

Is the power of women is the same as that of men?
How do the Hakkamat differ in terms of the power they have from other women?

If they wield so much power, why is it that women are not represented in making peace (reconciliation conferences)?

What impact does their relations with government has on their tribal roles and relations?

Q7. Al-Hakkamat as a civil society organisation

When and where did Hakkamat set up their organisation and who initiated this idea?

How did they come together and what tribes their group/organisation includes?

What is the objective and activities of the organisation?

What is their organisation do with regard to conflict and Peace at local and national levels?

Did they consult their tribes people on the formation of this group, who? How do their tribesmen and women perceive this organisational development of al-Hakkamat?

Do they have any partnership, networking and cooperation with other Hakkamat and other civil society organisations in Sudan, where and for what purpose? What did they achieve together?

Before setting up this group, was there any form of cooperation, support or liaison between some Hakkamat in Darfur and in what occasions?

If conflict erupts between their tribes, how are they going to react individually and together?

What changes do they think the formation of this group will bring to their role?

What are their future prospect and their vision of the group and at individual level?

Have they received any funds so far, from where and for what purpose?

Q8. What form of power and agency al-Hakkamat possess?

Does al-Hakkamat acts on her own or in coordination and with support from others? If so, who are those ‘others’ and how do they support them?

Apart from songs and poems, does she have any other forms/mechanisms/strategies of influence? What are these forms?

How does she develop them?

What effect do her poems/songs have on her community (audience)?

Why do her poems/songs have such effect?

How does she see herself while performing? While in women's atmosphere and while doing her routine life activities?
What do the terms power/influence mean for the Hakkamat; for the community and for government institutions?

Do other women have the same power and agency, if not, why?

How does/in what way or ways does the government recognise the power al-Hakkamat have? And how does it manipulate this power?

In what way or ways is the power of al-Hakkamat the same as, or different from, that of other women and men?

How do al-Hakkamat differ in terms of power from other women?

If either al-Hakkamat and or all women wield so much power, why is it that women are not represented in making peace (reconciliation conferences)?
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10.5 Appendix 5: Four Main Categories

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