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ETHNIC POWER RELATIONS (EPR) VERSUS REGIONAL POWER RELATIONS (RPR): A CASE STUDY OF SUDAN AND SOUTH SUDAN

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The EPR Core Dataset identifies politically relevant ethnic groups, defined as groups that are politically represented by at least one organization at the national level. However, in the cases of Sudan and South Sudan, the relevant ethnic groups have learned that the best strategy to advance their interests, avoid marginalization, and get access to the government's patronage system is through building multiethnic political coalitions at the regional and national levels. In regions with demographically dominant ethnic groups, the central government can mobilize the peripheral ethnic groups through its system of patronage to create inter-group rivalry and divisions. Hence, it is often in the best interest of ethnic groups to advance a decidedly regional agenda to politically mobilize against the agenda of the central government rather than pressing for specific ethnic group demands. This is clearly reflected in the creation of regional political parties and armed movements composed of different ethnic groups to demand power-sharing along regional lines. All armed movements or political parties, throughout their

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struggles, have advanced demands for power-sharing as regional political actors. They have demanded economic development for their regions, as well as some level of autonomy.

Given the histories of Sudan and South Sudan, this paper introduces an alternative view of the power distribution in these two countries, deviating from the Ethnic Power Relations (EPR) dataset based on a Regional Power Relations (RPR) framework. In the literature, until 1999, Sudan was divided into the Eastern, Northern, Central, Southern, and Western regions. Using secondary data from various sources, including mainly *The Black Book* (2004), these regions' access to national executive power can be assessed based on the percentage of their ministerial positions. Time periods are marked by the change in the head of state. This analysis at the regional level will help to identify the regional imbalances in political power and economic well-being. In addition, the regional analysis will also help academics and policymakers to provide policy recommendations to rectify the historical marginalization of specific regions by facilitating a discussion on resource allocation across regions as well as on how to remedy issues of historical marginalization. It complements the EPR data in cases where a regional majority ethnic group accommodates other groups in the region.

THE CASE OF SUDAN

Throughout Sudan's history, there were many instances in which regional affiliation played a more important role than ethnic affiliation. For example, the first spark of the conflict in Darfur was lit on 26 February 2003, when a rebel group attacked the military garrison at the town of Golu in East Jebel Mara. The rebels' political manifesto and agenda were perceived as a regional protest against economic marginalization. The rebels demanded increased economic development and the creation of employment opportunities in Darfur. The two main rebel movements, Justice and Inequality Movement (JEM) and Sudan Liberation Army (SLA), are composed of the major ethnic groups in Darfur, including the Zagahwa, Fur, Berti, and Massalite groups of African origin, as well as some Arab tribes. It is clear that the rebel demands are all about economic development and power-sharing in the central government in the interest of the region. While the EPR data focus on ethnic groups' access to power in the executive body, in reality, the individuals were appointed to the government based on their political parties' agreement with other parties in power. Thus, the ethnic identity of the main political actors was a sufficient but not a necessary criterion in the distribution of power.

As for the case of Eastern Sudan, there are regional parties, such as the Beja Conference and the Eastern Front, both of which have made demands for regional power-sharing and economic development in Eastern Sudan. The same sort of regional power-sharing demands were advanced by political entities in the Nubia Mountains, including by the General Union of the Nuba Mountains in 1965, the Sudan Rural Solidarity Front, which brought together people from Blue Nile, Darfur and Beja, the Sudan National Party in 1986, and the Free Sudan National Party in 2002, all of which have called for the self-determination of the Nuba people. The All Nuba Conference held in Kauda in 2002 included the following political parties: Free Sudan National Party, the Sudan National Party-Collective Leadership, the Sudan National Party, and the General Union of the Nuba Mountains. As a result of this meeting, these parties agreed to dissolve themselves as parties and merge into a new party called the United Sudan National Party. This coalition did not survive due to the general political environment and the competition among

the leadership within the SPLA. Later, the SPLA became the dominant armed movement that represented the interests of the Nubia and South Kordofan. The organizational evolution of these political actors shows that they have focused more on regional grievances, rather than ethnic group demands.

Using data from the Black Book, we applied a relatively simple scale to determine a region's access to executive power:

SHARE OF MINISTERIAL POSITIONS	CORRESPONDING STATUS ASSIGNED
100 %	*Monopoly*
100 % > X > 50 %	*Dominant*
50 % > X > 30 %	*Senior Partner*
30 % > X > 20 %	*Junior Partner*
20 % > X > 0 %	*Powerless*
0 %	*Discriminated*

Table 1: RPR Framework

The different ethnic groups in the EPR dataset were grouped according to the regions, as follows:

ETHNIC GROUPS	REGION
Shaygiyya, Ja'aliyyin and Danagla	*Northern*
Beja and Rashaida	*Eastern*
Nuba and Fur	*Central*
Masalit and Zaghawa	*Western*
Bari, Latoka, Shilluk, Dinka and Other Southern	*Southern*

Table 2: Grouping of Ethnic Groups According to Regions

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There is a difference in the time intervals as the EPR intervals are characterized by conflict periods, whereas the RPR periods are solely determined by changes in the head of state.

EPR	RPR
1956-1971	*1954-1964*
1972-1982	*1964-1969*
1983-2002	*1969-1985*
	1985-1986
	1986-1989
	1989-1999

Table 3: Temporal Differences between EPR and RPR

The following tables summarize the power statuses of each region over time:

PERIOD	MPS	NORTHERN	EASTERN	CENTRAL	WESTERN	SOUTHERN
1954-1964	73	*Dominant (79.5%)*	Powerless (1.4 %)	*Powerless (2.7 %)*	Discriminated (0 %)	*Powerless (16.4 %)*
1964-1969	81	*Dominant (67.9 %)*	Powerless (2.5 %)	*Powerless (6.2 %)*	Powerless (6.2 %)	*Powerless (17.3 %)*
1969-1985	115	*Dominant (68.7%)*	Powerless (3.5%)	*Powerless (16.5 %)*	Powerless (3.5 %)	*Powerless (7.8 %)*
1985-1986	30	*Dominant (70%)*	Discriminated (0 %)	*Powerless (10.0 %)*	Powerless (3.3 %)	*Powerless (16.7 %)*
1986-1989	116	*Senior Partner (47.4 %)*	Powerless (2.6 %)	*Powerless (14.7 %)*	Junior Partner (24.4 %)	*Powerless (12-9 %)*
1989-1999	202	*Dominant (59.4 %)*	Powerless (3.0)	*Powerless (8.9 %)*	Powerless (13.9 %)	*Powerless (14.9 %)*

MPS: Ministerial positions. The numbers in parentheses reflect the share of ministerial position accrued to a given region.

Table 4: Power Status According to RPR by Regions

The RPR framework also suggests that, in a few instances, some regions were politically discriminated. This deviates from the assessment in the EPR data, which categorizes the corresponding ethnic groups as powerless. In these instances, they had no representatives at the level of ministerial positions. Nevertheless, in most time periods, the northern region exhibits the same power status in RPR as the corresponding ethnic groups in EPR.

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THE CASE OF SOUTH SUDAN

In South Sudan, the first civil war occurred from 1955 to 1972, led by Anyanya I and II with the aims of achieving political representation at the level of the central state and more regional autonomy for the country's south. From about 1969, the Nuer, Lotuko, Madi, Bari, Acholi, Zande, Dinka, and other ethnic groups from the southern region of Sudan waged a war against the Sudanese government. Later, under the umbrella of the SPLA, they achieved the objectives of secession and the formation of an independent state in South Sudan. The organizational evolution of the rebel movement again shows that the ethnic identities and the quest for ethnic group power were less important than a common regional agenda. Ethnic group leaders realized that it was not in their interest to advance narrow ethnic or tribal political interests if a joint regional political vision might pave the way to gaining full control of South Sudan. However, in 2015, this regional vision disappeared and ethnic interest resurfaced, resulting in a civil war along ethnic lines. In fragmented societies, the dominant ethnic group tends to forge coalitions to mitigate inter-ethnic conflict.

CONCLUSION

One of the weaknesses of our regional power-sharing framework is that it obscures the power balance between ethnic groups within the same region. This may be particularly relevant, for instance, when a single ethnic group controls political power by itself in a region that, as a whole, can be considered "dominant" in our regionally-based framework. In such cases, the ethnically-based analytical framework is better placed to capture such within-region power imbalances by focusing on the actual ethnic groups.

However, studying regional inequalities helps us to better understand the processes that preceded conflict onsets in Sudan and South Sudan, especially due to regional inequalities in the level of economic development. Such regional inequalities could be thought of as early triggers that lead to the aggravation of horizontal inequalities and the polarization between ethnic groups within regions. In fact, one could argue that inter-regional inequalities are the base determinants of inter-group inequalities. In addition, the arguments regarding collective grievances also apply to regional groups, and not only to ethnic identities. Finally, separatist movements are often the result of regional inequalities rather than ethnic inequalities, as a regional base provides potential rebel groups with more resources than those available to purely ethnically-based movements.

Undoubtedly, in order to depart from the ethnically-based framework, it is vital to carry out measures and tasks to raise political awareness and promote the culture of unity, understanding, and good governance. In a society with less dominant ethnic groups, the RPR data can be used as an additional device to promote the common good to the best interest of society as a whole in order to reduce economic and political inequality. The regional imbalances can be corrected in the long run by setting up proper institutions at the regional level to reduce political inequality, while the access of ethnic group leaders to political power could be short-lived and without any lasting impacts, as ethnic group representatives enter and usually again exit the political system.

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