Interethnic conflict in Jonglei State, South Sudan: Emerging ethnic hatred between the Lou Nuer and the Murle

Yuki Yoshida*

Abstract

This article analyses the escalation of interethnic conflicts between the Lou Nuer and the Murle in Jonglei State of South Sudan. Historically, interethnic conflicts in Jonglei were best described as environmental conflicts, in which multiple ethnic groups competed over scarce resources for cattle grazing. Cattle raiding was commonly committed. The global climate change exacerbated resource scarcity, which contributed to intensifying the conflicts and developing ethnic cleavage. The type of conflict drastically shifted from resource-driven to identity-driven conflict after the 2005 government-led civilian disarmament, which increased the existing security dilemma. In the recent conflicts, there have been clear demonstrations of ethnic hatred in both sides, and arguably the tactics used amounted to acts of genocide. The article ends with some implications drawn from the Jonglei case on post-conflict reform of the security sector and management of multiple identities.

* Yuki Yoshida is a graduate student studying peacebuilding and conflict resolution at the Center for Global Affairs, New York University. His research interests include UN peacekeeping, post-conflict peacebuilding, democratic governance, humanitarian intervention, and the responsibility to protect. He obtained his BA in Liberal Arts from Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo, CA, in 2012.

Introduction

After decades of civil war, the Republic of South Sudan achieved independence in July 2011 and was recognised as the newest state by the international community. However, South Sudan has been plagued by the unresolved territorial dispute over the Abyei region with northern Sudan, to which the world has paid much attention. Less attention has been paid to the country's instability and frequent intertribal clashes, especially in Jonglei State. Traditionally, clashes between the two ethnic groups, the Lou Nuer and the Murle, have been observed in Jonglei. The conflicts occurred when one ethnic group entered territories of others to compete over scarce resources, such as land and water necessary for cattle grazing. The migrations due to the influence of climate change were a trigger of those clashes. Although some human casualties were occasionally observed, cattle raiding was the main objective of the conflicts because cattle were sources of wealth and sustenance for many pastoralist communities in Jonglei.

The type of warfare, however, has significantly changed after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed in 2005, and the government of South Sudan (GoSS) and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) conducted a disarmament campaign solely targeting the Lou Nuer. This uneven disarmament destabilised the country, sharpening the ethnic cleavage and security dilemma between the Lou Nuer and the Murle. The security dilemma eventually led to armed clashes, which fuelled ethnic hatred. The recent clashes are evidently more than just cattle raiding. Rather, they are characterised by indiscriminate killing of civilians with a clear demonstration of mutual hatred. Despite longstanding interethnic clashes between the two tribes, the emergence of ethnic hatred is apparently a recent phenomenon.

The questions this article attempts to answer are the following: How can existing theories explain the occurrence as well as the recent escalation of conflicts between the Lou Nuer and the Murle in Jonglei? To what extent can this conflict be regarded as an 'ethnic conflict'? The first section discusses theoretical frameworks relevant to the selected case. The second part presents the application of the theories to the Lou Nuer-Murle conflicts. Finally, the third part examines the recent emergence of ethnic hatred by considering both

groups' perspectives. I argue that conflict between the Lou Nuer and the Murle has experienced a drastic shift from pastoralist war to ethnic conflict motivated by an increasing security dilemma and mutual hatred.

Theoretical frameworks

Environmental conflict

Libiszewski (1992:3) defines environmental conflict as the 'struggle for scarce natural resources'. Natural resources that are sources of wealth as well as prerequisites for sustenance directly or indirectly contribute to producing food and energy, providing living space, and maintaining one's health (Bob and Bronkhorst 2004:12). Scarcity of resources can be divided into several different categories: 1) physical scarcity (the available amount is finite), 2) geopolitical scarcity (unequal distribution of resources on the earth), 3) socio-economic scarcity (unequal distribution of wealth gained from natural resources), and 4) scarcity caused by human-led environmental degradation. Bob and Bronkhorst (2004:15) further argue that perceived or actual scarcity of natural resources, such as water and land, plays an essential role in environmental disputes because resource scarcity would be a direct threat to human security. The worst-case scenario would be an outbreak of interethnic/intergroup conflict over existing resources for survival (Libiszewski1992:14). Several scholars also agree that 'the more scarce the resource, the more bitter the fight' (Le Billon 2001:564).

The impact of global climate change on people's lifestyle has been recognised as an accelerator of environmental conflict. Climate change threatens human security by making issues of resource scarcity more 'complex and intractable' (Brown, Hammill and Mcleman 2007:1142). In particular, less precipitation and extended drought as a result of warmer temperature have accelerated degradation of water and land resources (Raleigh and Urdal 2007:677). In 2007, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), an intergovernmental body that provides scientific assessment of risks of climate change, identified Africa as the most vulnerable region in the world to climate change because of its rudimentary capability to adapt (Brown, Hammill and Mcleman 2007:1145).

The Christian Aid charity also estimates that the negative effects of climate change would kill more than 184 million people in Africa before the end of the twenty-first century (Nordås and Gleditsch 2007:629).

Facing resource scarcity in their areas, pastoralists have to decide whether they stay home or leave arid land in search for better resources. Reuveny (2007:658) argues that pastoralists in the less developed countries (LDCs) tend to leave the affected areas, believing that the net benefit from migrating is greater than that for not doing so. Leff (2009:189) identifies lack of pastoralists' capacities in LDCs to adjust themselves to climate changes as a rationale for migration. Such migration is common in Africa during dry seasons or periods of drought (Leff 2009:192).

Climate change-induced migration has the potential to erupt into communal conflicts.[1] Nordås and Gleditsch (2007:633) argue that the likelihood of conflict increases when the migrants enter the territories of other tribal groups that might also suffer from resource scarcity. The increase of competition between the hosts and migrants is inevitable as the population within the area increases, while resources available decline (Young and Sing'Oei 2011:19). Such a tense situation commonly results in various forms of violence, such as looting and killing (Nordås and Gleditsch 2007:634). In addition, resource competition can develop into ethnic animosity if the hosts and migrants belong to different ethnic groups (Reuveny 2007:659). Several exacerbating factors include longer droughts, which make migrants stay longer in hosts' territories, leading to more frequent clashes (Leff 2009:192). Unclearly defined land boundaries and ownership also prolong conflict by allowing the hosts and migrants to make claims to justify their rights (Bob and Bronkhorst 2004:18). Brosché and Elfversson (2012:38) argue that although such conflicts do not typically produce large-scale human casualty and are often solved by non-violent means, they occasionally turn into violent conflicts.

1 Brosché and Elfversson (2012:35) define communal violence as '*violent conflict between non-state groups that are organised along a shared communal identity*'. The communal identity is often associated with ethnic or religious identity.

Realism – 'Intrastate' security dilemma

Realism, one of the international relations (IR) theories, can be used to explain the dynamics and potential consequences of an intrastate security dilemma. Realists believe in the anarchic nature of international politics, where there is no overarching government that provides security to all (Jackson and Sørensen 2010:59). The anarchic situation inevitably motivates states to ensure their own security by reinforcing defensive capabilities, which is likely to threaten the security of others (Posen 1993:28). In response, those who are threatened in turn develop their own defensive capacities, eventually threatening the security of those who initiated the reinforcement. This endless round of arms race is referred to as the security dilemma.

Once trapped into a security dilemma, it is difficult for states to manoeuvre outside of it. Uncertainty about others' intentions creates mistrust and fear of being cheated and harmed (Roe 1999:184). Hence, being fearful of others' malign intents, cooperation on disarmament is unlikely in the anarchic international system. An increased security dilemma can motivate states to initiate pre-emptive measures based on the assumption that a first offensive strike would be more effective than defensive operations to survive and achieve greater security (Posen 1993:29). Under the anarchic situation where no state is guaranteed its security and others are perceived as potential threats, 'the occurrence of security dilemmas always remains a possibility' (Roe 1999:186).

A security dilemma can also occur in the intrastate context, if, as Posen argues, 'conditions are similar to those between states in the international system' (quoted in Roe 1999:188). The hard rationalist approach suggests that, under the circumstance where there is no functioning government that can provide security to its citizens, anarchy is likely to emerge (Kaufman 2001:19). Anarchy, together with a group's tendency to associate the identity of others with a danger (Posen 1993:31), often compels the groups to mobilise their security measures, including pre-emptive war, which aim to threaten the security of others but, in turn, undermine the security of those who first mobilised. The real dilemma conflicting parties face is between maintaining the status quo that makes them

insecure and developing armament that consequently makes them insecure as well. An intrastate security dilemma will thus emerge through similar processes as those seen in international security dilemmas.

An intrastate security dilemma is often associated with groups' identities, such as ethnicity or religion. Kaufman (2001:19) illustrates how an 'ethnic security dilemma' precipitates violent conflict among ethnic groups. An ethnic security dilemma often indicates groups' fear of extinction, which justifies 'hostile attitudes toward the other group and extreme measures in self-defense …' (Kaufman 2001:31). Young and Sing'Oei (quoted in Kaufman 2001:26) elaborate that the hostility toward 'them' increases the unity of the group and encourages group members to view every incident through the ethnic lens, which solidifies ethnic hatred. Horowitz (quoted in Kaufman 2001:29) stresses that 'emotions … are what drive ethnic violence'. Diamond (1987:121) also highlights that those who are fearful of extinction and tend to strike first are often marginalised in society. Once the marginalised group initiates an attack on the other, a perceived threat becomes a real threat (Roe 1999:191), which exacerbates an existing security dilemma. The worst-case scenario would be that ethnic groups are trapped into a spiral of an 'action-reaction process' (Roe 1999:196). As Kaufman (1996:157) puts it, ethnic animosity and fear of extinction seemingly activate the security dilemma, which can erupt into 'mass-led violence'.

In the post-conflict context, disarmament campaigns led by a state or external actors can engender or aggravate an intrastate security dilemma. Armed factions are often unwilling to disarm because the security sector of the fragile state is not trusted and often incapable of providing common security. In this case, disarmament makes the parties vulnerable to potential attacks by a rival (Walter 1999:134). The parties often view even a slight possibility of being attacked as an extremely grave risk (Walter 1997:340). Some groups might see others' disarmament as a 'window of opportunity' to initiate a war because they perceive their military capabilities as superior to those of others and believe that relative security will be greatly enhanced by pre-emptive operations (Posen 1993:33). This consequently worsens the existing security dilemma. Moreover,

a weak state often uses coercive measures on certain ethnic groups to maintain social cohesion (Roe 1999:197), which engenders an ethnic security dilemma.[2] Post-conflict disarmament could thus be a source of an intrastate security dilemma.

Application of theories

Background

Jonglei State, home to about 1.3 million people in 11 counties, is the largest and most populous state in South Sudan (United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan [UNMISS] 2011:5). It is a multiethnic state inhabited by several ethnic groups, such as Dinka, Nuer, and Murle (International Crisis Group [ICG] 2009:28). Most communities depend on agriculture, including agropastoralism and pastoralism, which provides more than 80 percent of domestic employment (Food and Agriculture Organisation [FAO] 2010:3).

Jonglei is also known as one of the least developed regions in the world, lacking basic infrastructure due to decades of civil war and being marginalised by the central authority. Because Jonglei lacks functioning roads, most of its parts become inaccessible during the rainy season, which hinders timely security response (ICG 2009:16). The underdevelopment has also made poverty persistent in the region. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, about 48 percent of the population in Jonglei is living below the poverty line (Omondi 2011:2). The level of food insecurity has also been significantly high. According to FAO (2010:7), since 2008, approximately 39 percent of the population faces food insecurity, and 30 percent faces severe food insecurity.

2 Roe (1999:197) identifies four common features of a weak state: 1) lack of ability to satisfy the basic economic needs of its citizens, 2) a weak state identity as well as absence of social cohesion, and 3) internal instability caused by the two preceding elements as well as inability to effectively manage ethnic differences.

Environmental conflict

Cattle grazing

Environmental conflict provides an appropriate lens to explain the traditional aspect of interethnic conflicts in Jonglei. In South Sudan, cattle are crucial assets for all ethnic groups because cattle are 'a primary currency for these groups, representing wealth and social status, and are used for compensation and the payment of wedding dowries' (Rands and LeRiche 2011:7). Roughly 80 percent of the population depends on cattle grazing to survive, and the livestock industry has been one of the largest sources of employment (Ferrie 2012:5). Because cattle are directly related to the survival of these groups, people often enter territories of other ethnic groups and loot cattle. Not only are looted cattle used for sustaining people's lives, they are also sold in exchange for small arms (Rolandsen and Breidlid 2012:54). Although the primary targets in these clashes were cattle, use of such weapons as protection has increased the human lethality of conflicts.

Although cattle grazing requires water and pasture land, not all ethnic groups in Jonglei have access to those resources due to physical as well as geopolitical scarcity. Hence, during dry seasons or periods of drought, those who inhabit arid land migrate with their cattle to territories of other ethnic groups to compete for resources, often resulting in violent conflicts (Richardson 2011). The lack of clarification on ownership has often deadlocked disputes.[3] Additionally, the Transitional Constitution of South Sudan has not yet stipulated the legal framework for pastoralists' grazing rights (Agbor and Taiwo 2012:14). Cattle raiding and interethnic clashes have historically been observed in Jonglei, particularly when the Lou Nuer whose land was often affected by droughts migrated to territories of other ethnic groups, such as the Dinka and the Murle,

3 The boundaries and ownership of land in Jonglei are not clearly defined. The International Crisis Group report states, 'Contested borders have been redrawn and the counties and payams renamed so frequently that it is difficult to find a map that is an accurate representation of the state. Many disputes were exacerbated following the 1991 SPLM split and the dual administration of the area that ensued. These issues are further complicated by refugee return, violence-induced displacement, and the demarcation of constituencies ahead of the elections' (ICG 2009:17).

in search of water and pasture for cattle grazing (Rands and LeRiche 2011:7). The empirical observations also suggest that the areas where the migrants and the hosts confront each other often became conflict sites (Omondi 2011:6). Migration of the Lou Nuer has thus been a trigger of interethnic clashes in Jonglei for centuries.

Impact of climate change

Climate change has been an exacerbating factor of resource scarcity in Jonglei, which resulted in the frequency and intensification of interethnic clashes. Little annual rain and extended drought caused by climate change have 'reduced the number of accessible water points and other vital resources, forcing pastoralist communities to travel further into neighboring tribal areas for sustenance' (Small Arms Survey 2012:6). While average temperature increase of the earth since the 1950s is about 0.1°C per decade (Reuveny 2007:657), the temperature in South Sudan has increased 0.4°C per decade, which is the most rapid increase in the world over the last 30 years (United States Agency for International Development [USAID] 2011). Additionally, rainfall during summer has decreased by 10-20 percent since the mid-1970s. As a consequence of higher temperature and little precipitation, the frequency and duration of droughts increased, which has reduced the number of water points and turned lands arid. Within an environment gravely affected by climate change, it is safe to assume that the likelihood of conflicts is high. Due to extended droughts, the migrating Lou Nuer would sometimes have to stay longer in lands of the Murle or Dinka, where more people compete over declining resources to survive at the expense of others. Thus, migratory practices dictated by the environmental degradation 'bring communities with long-standing relationships of animosity into closer proximity', contributing to the frequent outbreak of conflicts (Richardson 2011).

Ethnic security dilemma

Disarmament

The series of recent interethnic clashes beginning in 2009 can also be viewed through the lens of the ethnic security dilemma that was gravely exacerbated after the civilian disarmament conducted between December 2005 and

May 2006. Based on the authorisation of disarmament in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), the government of South Sudan (GoSS) and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) conducted a civilian disarmament campaign in Jonglei, targeting the Lou Nuer first (Young and Sing'Oei 2011:21). However, this group refused to surrender arms as they believed the targeted disarmament to be a concerted attempt by the central authorities to weaken their fighting capabilities. This would increase the Nuer's relative insecurity as compared to that of other ethnic groups (ICG 2009:11). After negotiations between the GoSS and the Nuer failed, the state authority turned to coercive disarmament, in which the White Army[4] and SPLA soldiers engaged in a series of fights (Rands and LeRiche 2011:11). As a result, while over 3 000 arms were collected, approximately 1 600 soldiers and hundreds of civilians were killed (Garfield 2007:17). The GoSS and SPLA were planning to disarm Murle militias as well, but the plan was not implemented due to concerns of the international community regarding potential casualties following the disarmament (ICG 2009:11). Subsequently, another round of disarmament, led by the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) and targeting Murle militia, resulted in the collection of a small amount of arms, suggesting that people were successfully hiding some of their weapons to prepare for potential armed conflicts (Leff 2009:197).

The fact that the GoSS and SPLA failed to simultaneously disarm all ethnic groups in Jonglei made the Lou Nuer extremely vulnerable to the Murle which regarded themselves as the Nuer's victims and claimed to have the right to retaliate against the Lou Nuer (Rands and LeRiche 2011:8). Uncertainty between the Lou Nuer and the Murle regarding their fighting capabilities exacerbated the security dilemma. After the completion of the first round of the disarmament

4 The White Army was a 'loosely organized' Lou Nuer youth militia that operated mainly in Jonglei state up to 2006 (Rolandsen and Breidlid 2012:51). The army was originally created to protect community property and cattle but at times it fought in the civil war. Since the CPA allowed only the SPLA and SAF to continue operations in South Sudan, and because of the forcible disarmament, the White Army started dissolving. However, it has been said that the White Army, comprising both Lou Nuer and Dinka youth, has revived in Jonglei and has been involved in the killing and displacement of Murle (Rands and LeRiche 2011:10).

campaign in 2006, the Lou Nuer gradually rearmed themselves by looting collected arms (UNMISS 2011:6). However, viewing the situation of the Lou Nuer remaining weakened as a window of opportunity, the Murle attacked them in Akobo County in January 2009, killing about 300 Lou Nuers (Small Arms Survey 2012:3). This was followed by retaliation of the Lou Nuer in March, which resulted in the deaths of 450 Murle. The clashes in 2009 were the most fatal in the post-CPA period (UNMISS 2012:6), and there is no doubt that the two ethnic groups are trapped in the spiral of an 'action-reaction process'. Although another disarmament campaign targeting both the Lou Nuer and the Murle was conducted between August 2009 and March 2010, both groups resisted and apparently succeeded in hiding some of their weapons. The security dilemma was clearly an essential source of resistance to disarmament. Thus, the 2006 disarmament is the primary reference point of escalation of the security dilemma between the Lou Nuer and the Murle, which erupted into a cycle of brutal attack and revenge.

State's lack of capacity

The lack of government capabilities to provide security to its citizens, which created a state of anarchy within the country, also made the ethnic groups resist disarmament and feel responsible for their own security. The UNMISS (2012:26) reported that both the national police and the security forces lacked capacities to provide security because of inadequate logistical, human and financial resources and the difficulty of accessing many of the regions which lack functioning roads. The absence of a formal justice system has also created a lawlessness situation and resulted in a culture of impunity, in which perpetrators of violence are rarely prosecuted (ICG 2009:15).

There are two major security apparatus in South Sudan: the South Sudan Police Service (SSPS) and SPLA. The quality of SSPS is 'abysmal', however (ICG 2009:19). Because the SSPS was often outnumbered and outgunned by armed pastoralists, it failed to stop interethnic clashes. Lou Nuer youth have expressed their grievances against the SSPS, which always failed to arrest the Murle, who conducted cattle raiding, murder, and abduction (UNMISS 2011:9). Most of the SSPS personnel are former SPLA soldiers, 'who were not asked to join the

post-CPA army and thus are mostly second-tier quality or worse' (ICG 2009:19). In addition, many personnel are old and lack proper training and education. The absence of police stations in Jonglei also prevents the SSPS from responding timeously to communal violence. Moreover, because police is not seen as an attractive occupation for qualified youth in South Sudan, recruitment of young people will continue to be a challenge.

The credibility of the SPLA has also been questioned. Although the SPLA as a national army of South Sudan is responsible for dealing with external threats, it is often mobilised to halt domestic incidents due to SSPS's lack of ability to do so (ICG 2009:20). However, the SPLA does not intervene in every interethnic clash, which creates 'confusion among communities about its role and mandate' (2009:21). Ethnic identities of SPLA soldiers explain the inconsistent responses. A local journalist interviewed by the International Crisis Group revealed that soldiers tend to abandon their original mandate and 'often stand with their tribe', when the interests of their groups are at stake. Recently, some SPLA personnel were arrested and punished due to their heavy use of force in the local conflicts in which they intervened, which discouraged the SPLA from further involvement. Corruption within the SPLA has also undermined the legitimacy of the organisation (Leff 2009:194).

UNMISS's lack of capability

The presence of international actors in South Sudan has also not successfully improved the security situation or consolidated peace. In July 2011, the United Nations Security Council in Resolution 1996 established the UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) with a civilian protection mandate. However, due to lack of personnel and equipment, UNMISS often failed to provide security in a timely and effective manner (Saferworld 2011). When thousands of Lou Nuer youth were mobilised for a retaliatory attack against the Murle in December 2011, UNMISS was able to deploy only half of its troops due to a lack of helicopters (Small Arms Survey 2012: 9). Locals also criticised UN peacekeepers for not being able to reach places that are inaccessible by helicopter. Furthermore, UNMISS was silent about obvious human rights violations committed by the SPLA during the disarmament campaigns. UNMISS thus far

has not helped the parties overcome the security dilemma by assuring them of security. In sum, ethnic groups in Jonglei are reluctant to disarm because 1) they need arms to protect their communities and cattle from other ethnic groups, 2) disarmament has not been conducted to all ethnic groups simultaneously, making disarmed groups insecure, and 3) in Jonglei, there is virtually no security apparatus that can equally and effectively protect citizens and maintain internal stability. All three reasons were the causes and effects of the security dilemma.

Characteristics of recent clashes

Intensification of conflicts

Since the series of lethal attacks and revenges between the Murle and the Lou Nuer in 2009, which changed a perceived ethnic security dilemma to a real threat, the objective of the attacks is no longer merely cattle raiding, but also massive civilian killing. In February 2011, the clash between the two groups was initiated by the Murle's attacks on the Lou Nuer in Uror County, resulting in the deaths of 8 people including local chiefs (Ferrie 2012:2). In April and June, the Lou Nuer conducted retaliatory attacks, in which 600-700 people were killed, hundreds of thousands were displaced, and children and women were abducted. In August, Murle retaliation killed more than 600 Lou Nuer (UNMISS 2011:11). The most fatal clash in 2011 was the attack of 8 000 Lou Nuer youth on the Murle communities in Pibor County between 23 December 2011 and 9 January 2012 (2011:12). The attack resulted in more than 1 000 deaths (Small Arms Survey 2012: 3). This was immediately followed by retaliation from Murle youth, which lasted until 4 February. Although a large number of cattle was looted through these conflicts, there is no doubt – in light of the significant increase in human casualties – that the aim was not only cattle raiding.

The proliferation and availability of high-powered small arms in Jonglei is one of the exacerbating factors for casualties in these conflicts. Historically, primitive tools, such as sticks, spears, and machetes were used to carry out cattle raiding and violence (ICG 2009:1). However, in the recent clashes, the use of sophisticated weapons, including AK-47s, rocket launchers and machine guns, has increased the lethality of the conflicts. The ethnic groups often gain weapons

from the SPLA and the Sudan Armed Force (SAF) who sell their arms to local communities for profit (ICG 2009:9). The Sudanese government, in particular the National Congress Party, also provides arms to pastoralists in South Sudan 'to destabilize the government of Southern Sudan's power base, and to challenge the authority of the SPLA' (Leff 2009:194).

Emerging ethnic hatred

In the recent clashes, it is important to investigate the emerging ethnic hatred between the Lou Nuer and the Murle and its application to actual tactics. For instance, when a large number of Lou Nuer youth attacked Murle communities in December 2011, they did not only loot cattle and kill some Murle, but also destroyed churches and a clinic, which turned out to be the only functioning medical clinic in the county (UNMISS 2011:18). In addition to their large scale, organised and systematic attacks, Genocide Watch (2012) also reported that the Lou Nuer indiscriminately killed women, children and the elderly in Murle communities. In fact, before entering Murle communities, the Lou Nuer announced 'their intent to commit genocide' by stating, 'We have decided to invade Murle land and wipe out the entire Murle tribe on the face of the earth' (Genocide Watch 2012). After Lou Nuer youth retreated from the Murle communities, the walls of schools and other buildings were covered by hate messages that explicitly showed their intent to destroy the Murle as an ethnic group, such as 'We come to kill all of Murle' and 'We come again don't sit again in your payam' (UNMISS 2011:15). The Lou Nuer also expressed their hatred against the Murle through the mass media (Rands and LeRiche 2011:12). In short, the mobilisation of a large number of youth, attacks on infrastructure in the communities, indiscriminate killing of non-combatants, and verbally expressed ethnic hatred suggest that Lou Nuer actions can be best interpreted as genocide against the Murle.

In contrast, fear of extinction and grievances due to decades of marginalisation have led the Murle to initiate strikes against the Lou Nuer. Historically, the minority Murle have been marginalised socially, economically, and politically. Other ethnic groups in Jonglei discriminate against the Murle, view the Murle

as '"backward" or "hostile"…' and always label them as perpetrators of violence and cattle raiding (Rands and LeRiche 2011:12). Additionally, the Murle are often 'harassed in town and insulted when they are heard using their own language' (Young and Sing'Oei 2011:18). The Murle were not even allowed to receive development funding, which made their communities remain underdeveloped and entrapped in the cycle of poverty (Ferrie 2012:6). Moreover, the Murle have been politically marginalised. On one hand, most of the senior governmental positions are occupied by either Dinka or Nuer – including the presidency (Dinka) and the vice-presidency (Nuer) (ICG 2009:2). The Dinka and the Nuer are also well represented in state government, including the governorship (Dinka) and the deputy governorship (Nuer) (ICG 2009:12). On the other hand, the Murle are underrepresented at all levels largely because the elections tend to be voted along ethnic lines (Ferrie 2012:7). Hence, their voices are hardly reflected in both national and state policies, which led to their grievances and ethnic animosity against dominating groups. Furthermore, because the Lou Nuer enjoy better access to technology and communication networks than the Murle, they are able to promote their own narratives of each event domestically and internationally (Small Arms Survey 2012:6). In fact, international actors have only responded to the clashes initiated by the Murle because the Lou Nuer utilise their connections with humanitarian non-governmental organisations (NGOs) who are only aware of the narratives of the Lou Nuer (Ferrie 2012:7), which also fuel Murle animosity against the Lou Nuer. This is how the Murle have developed their identity as victims and have come to regard the Lou Nuer as aggressors (Rands and LeRiche 2011:8).

Their victimisation effectively served as a justification for the Murle to commence war against the Lou Nuer, which made the Lou Nuer highly insecure and exacerbated the ethnic security dilemma. Looking at the recent fighting features of the Murle, their targets were not only cattle, but also civilians, implying that they were motivated by ethnic hatred and grievances against the Lou Nuer. In the most recent clash of February 2013, initiated by heavily armed Murle youth, 103 people were killed, most of whom were the elderly, women, and children who failed to escape (Gettleman 2013). This suggests that Murle

grievances against the Lou Nuer oppression have developed into ethnic hatred, changing the original objectives of the assault and intensifying the brutality of the conflicts.

Moreover, considering Lou Nuer hate messages and their intent to eliminate Murle communities, the clashes might develop into greater-scale mass killing or genocide. The inhumane acts and tactics undertaken on both sides, and particularly the repeated Nuer expression of 'intent' to destroy the Murle communities, led Genocide Watch to categorise Lou Nuer-Murle conflicts as Stage 7 (Extermination) of its eight-stage indicator of genocide (Genocide Watch 2012). 'Extermination' can quickly become a mass killing, namely 'genocide'. Perpetrators of genocide often regard their enemies as subhuman to justify the use of any inhuman tactics against them. In the worst-case consequence, genocide could be followed by counter-genocide, in which those who were attacked retaliate, and the genocide eventually becomes a cycle. Needless to say, extermination has been happening in Jonglei.

Conclusion

The characteristics of Nuer-Murle conflicts have changed over time from resource-driven to identity-oriented conflict. The conflicts in the pre-CPA period are well explained through the lens of environmental conflict, in which the two ethnic groups fought over scarce resources. The level of competition was heightened by the negative effects of climate change. More frequent climate change-induced migration increased the likelihood of conflicts. The lethality was also exacerbated due to the proliferation and use of small arms. Considering that both ethnic groups already possessed weapons for cattle raiding, a security dilemma was already in place in the pre-CPA period. The transition from resource-driven communal conflict to security dilemma-driven conflict occurred when the GoSS failed to simultaneously disarm all ethnic groups in the post-CPA period. In the absence of reliable security apparatus, the uneven disarmament made disarmed Lou Nuer highly insecure, whereas armed Murle who had been oppressed by the Nuer viewed the situation as an opportunity to pre-emptively strike their enemies. The 2009 Murle attack changed a

perceived security dilemma into a real threat and crystallised ethnic hatred. The culmination of ethnic hatred is evidenced through the intense brutality of following attacks involving indiscriminate killings against non-combatants and destruction of the communities. At this point, the clashes are beyond the scope of the environmental conflict. They are now fighting an ethnic conflict, in which both parties are trapped in the security dilemma.

Implications

One of the lessons learned from this case is in fact not about the role ethnic identity plays in this conflict, because the mere presence of ethnic hatred does not necessarily cause armed clashes. Rather, it is about the potentially devastating effects of security reforms in post-conflict states. Under the circumstances where there is mistrust between different ethnic groups, they are highly sensitive to their relative fighting capabilities, which engenders a security dilemma and sometimes leads to ethnic hatred, as observed in Jonglei. Disarmament can alleviate such a dilemma only if all parties concerned are disarmed around the same time and in a similar manner, and if the information is accurately communicated to them through legitimate institutions to remove uncertainty. To make ex-combatants cooperative with disarmament, the state institutions should adequately reform their security sectors so that ex-combatants' security after they abandoned their weapons is ensured. An even disarmament and drastic improvement of domestic security apparatus in South Sudan can alleviate the interethnic tension.

The other lesson would be the way in which post-conflict states manage multiple identities in their societies. Although it is challenging to completely eliminate inter-group inequalities, the governments should still avoid overtly inequitable and discriminatory practices and effectively respond to and contain grievance among those who feel relative exploitation once it emerges. Also, the governments should be able to take legal measures against hate speech targeting specific groups because it could easily influence people's sentiments and create an environment conducive for mass mobilisation. One way to promote interethnic coexistence would be that the governments in collaboration with civil society organisations (CSOs) provide a forum for intergroup dialogue with the aim of lessening mutual tension and mistrust.

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