INTER-DISCURSIVE DYNAMICS AND DARFUR: ANALYZING NARRATIVE
COMPLEXITY BEHIND RESPONSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND AFRICAN
UNION, 2003-2006

by

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A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty
of
George Mason University
in Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for the Degree
of
Doctor of Philosophy
Conflict Analysis and Resolution

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Date: _____ Spring Semester 2015
George Mason University
Fairfax, VA

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DEDICATION

This is dedicated to all of the people of Darfur, who deserve to write their own story, as well as my father, the original Dr. Crewe.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

African Union ....AU
African Union Ceasefire Commission .... AU CFC
African Union Mission in Sudan .... AMIS
African Union Peace and Security Council ....AU PSC
African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur............................... UNAMID
Comprehensive Peace Agreement ....CPA
Darfur Peace Agreement... DPA
Doctors Without Borders/Médecins San Frontières .... MSF
European Union .... EU
Government of Sudan .... GOS
Internally displaced person ....IDP
Justice and Equality Movement..JEM
League of Arab States.. AL
Sudan Armed Forces... SAF
Sudan Liberation Movement/Army .... SLM/A
Sudan National Congress Party ....NCP
Sudan National Islamic Front .... NIF
Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army .... SPLM/A
United Kingdom..UK
United Nations ....UN
United Nations Department of Peacekeeping....................................... UN DPKO
United Nations Department of Political Affairs ....UNDPA
United Nations General Assembly..UNGA
United Nations Mission in Sudan ....UNMIS
United Nations Office of the Coordinator for Humanitarian Assistance............ UN OCHA
United Nations Security Council Presidential Statement .... UN PRST
United Nations Security Council Resolution... UNSCR
United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary General.........................UNSRSG

ABSTRACT

INTER-DISCURSIVE DYNAMICS AND DARFUR: ANALYZING NARRATIVE COMPLEXITY BEHIND RESPONSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND AFRICAN UNION, 2003-2006

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George Mason University, 2015

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International intervention, most visibly represented by the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), has failed to resolve the conflict in the Darfur region of Sudan. Respected scholars have claimed that the "subordination of peacemaking to peacekeeping" in Darfur was driven in part by a western advocacy campaign, which set the international narrative for the crisis (Flint, 2010; De Waal, forthcoming). This dissertation innovates a method of inter-discursive narrative complexity analysis to assess how one simple storyline about Darfur hegemonized the discursive space around international intervention. It argues that a discourse coalition, enabled by discursive affinity among many outside narratives and their resonance within existing social and institutional discourses, rather than coordination by any particular actor from above, marginalized what could have been more lasting political and diplomatic responses with implications for other cases.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

More than ten years have passed since the conflict in Darfur became front-page news. For a brief moment, Darfur was the subject of church sermons, a rallying cry for student groups, and the inspiration for marches and sit-ins across the United States. More than ten years have passed since that moment began, but the region of Darfur is no more peaceful in 2015 than it was in 2005. In 2014 alone, some 450,000 people were newly displaced from their homes in Darfur as a result of various types of violence, contributing to a total of 2.5 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and nearly 370,000 Darfuri refugees in Chad (UN OCHA, 2015; "UN: Almost Half," 2015). In total, these figures represent almost twice the number of people who were displaced in Darfur as of mid-2005 and are consistent with levels of civilian displacement as of late 2008 (UN, 2008). Yet, Darfur rarely makes headlines these days.

Darfur's current absence from the news is at least partly a function of more recent pressing humanitarian disasters created by ongoing conflicts elsewhere in the world, not to mention in nearby South Sudan. Even the massive scale of Sudan's humanitarian suffering has been dwarfed multiple times over by a succession of violent conflicts in the Middle East. These conflicts include the war in Syria, where some 7.6 million people are internally displaced and from whence 3.8 million refugees have fled to neighboring countries (IOM, 2015; UNHCR, 2015). In addition, conditions in Darfur appeared to

improve, or at least not worsen significantly, for a period of time from about 2005

onward as the conflict morphed from one characterized by active armed combat between

government and rebel forces into what some have described as a post-conflict state of

lawlessness with more diffuse sources of low-intensity violence, including intra-rebel

fighting, inter-tribal clashes, and sporadic attacks on civilians by various parties (Tanner,

2005; De Waal & Flint, 2007; Fadul & Tanner, 2007; Weissman, 2008; De Waal,

forthcoming). Until a renewed government military campaign and inter-communal

violence in 2014, civilian displacement figures in Darfur had remained relatively steady

or even decreased since 2010 (IDMC, 2014). So, it is not entirely surprising that Darfur

lost the limelight—the situation seemingly became both less acute and more confusing to

outside observers as other emergencies pulled focus.

Darfur's recent obscurity is notable, however, for its continued high level of

insecurity relative to the massive attention it once received from an unprecedentedly

powerful advocacy movement and the large amount of international resources

subsequently invested in the region from 2004 to present. These resources included

billions of dollars spent on humanitarian assistance and what was, until a few years ago,

the world's largest peacekeeping mission, the African Union-United Nations Hybrid

Operation in Darfur (UNAMID).[1] That is to say, Darfur's recent obscurity is notable,

because as these investments in Darfur continued year-to-year, they were not matched by

marginal improvements in either security or living conditions for Darfuris, as evidenced

by a recent uptick in violence and resulting civilian displacement. Ostensibly "taken care

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[1] UNAMID's current budget is $1.15 billion per year (UNGA, 2015). The US Government alone spent $1
billion on humanitarian assistance for Darfur between 2007 and 2014 (Sengupta & Gettleman, 2014).

of" by the international community for the past several years, the conflict in Darfur has been anything but, according to many observers (Mills, 2009; Flint, 2010; Niam, 2010; Raghavan, 2014; Lynch, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c, 2014; Elbasri, 2014; Sengupta & Gettleman, 2014; Giddo, 2015).

Much of the relatively little press attention Darfur has received in recent memory has focused on the peacekeepers deployed there as part of UNAMID since 2007. A December 2014 article in the *New York Times* described plans by UNAMID, once authorized to deploy 26,000 personnel in the region, to reduce its current presence of 16,000 soldiers significantly in the coming months under pressure from the Government of Sudan to withdraw (UNAMID, n.d.; Sengupta & Gettleman, 2014). The article also noted persistent criticism of the peacekeeping mission from many corners disparaging the force's either inability or unwillingness to enforce its mandate of civilian protection (Sungupta & Gettleman, 2014). Other news features, including a series of articles in *Foreign Policy* in spring 2014, accused UNAMID of much worse, from standing by and watching atrocities take place to covering them up (Lynch, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c, 2014; Elbasri, 2014). The *Foreign Policy* series culminated in the primary author positing that UNAMID, under severe limitations by its host, including Khartoum's requirement for only African and Muslim troop contributing countries—meaning few trained, experienced, and well-equipped Western militaries—was set up to fail (Lynch, 2014c).

More generously, others have argued that UNAMID, perhaps like many peacekeeping forces in Africa, has likely shouldered expectations well beyond its means. A January 2014 article in the *Washington Post* cited the views of various pundits, from

both UN and advocacy circles, as well as Sudanese civilians, that peacekeeping should not be considered a panacea for solving African conflicts (Raghavan, 2014).[2] In particular, the article quoted Sudan human rights activist John Prendergast of the Enough Project, in concluding that the international community's slow diplomatic and political response to Africa's conflicts "has put more pressure on peacekeeping missions to fulfill objectives for which they are totally unprepared" (Raghavan, 2014). Indeed, the 2006 Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) signed between the Government of Sudan and only one of Darfur's two main rebel groups—whose 2003 insurrection sparked the current imbroglio—has never been fully implemented, nor was it given the support by the international community that previous successful peace processes on the continent had received, putting UNAMID in the spot of having no peace to keep (Flint, 2006; Nathan, 2007).

Perhaps the most conclusive measure by which UNAMID has failed, however, is from the perspective of the Darfuri population.[3] According to a recent study of narratives collected from Darfuri IDPs, Suliman Giddo found that the beneficiaries of peacekeeping in Darfur collectively considered UNAMID to be "ineffective and inefficient" in protecting civilians (Giddo, 2015). Moreover, UNAMID has failed in the eyes of the Darfur rebels, whose families and kinsmen have been among the targets of brutal counterinsurgency tactics by the Government of Sudan (Niam, 2010). The rebels have

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[2] Even the title of the article, "Record number of U.N. peacekeepers fails to stop African wars," intentionally or not, implied an expectation by the author that stopping wars is what peacekeepers do.

[3] According to Séverine Auteserre's (2014) definition of a successful peacebuilding intervention: "A peacebuilding project, program, or intervention is effective when a large majority of people involved in it—including both implementers (international interveners and local peacebuilders) and intended beneficiaries (including local elite and ordinary citizens)—view it as having promoted peace in the area of intervention" (p. 8).

seen the peacekeeping force as being aligned with Sudanese security forces since not long after its deployment (Niam, 2010). This is an accusation contested by UNAMID officials who report routine obstruction by government forces and regular attacks on peacekeepers by government-backed militias (Sengupta & Gettleman, 2014). In either case, the peacekeepers have become targets not shields. (Mills, 2009; Flint, 2010). According to a recent newswire article, UNAMID is the third "most deadly" mission for peacekeepers in UN history and at least 215 members of UNAMID have been killed since 2007 ("UN Moves Closer to Pulling," 2015).

So, did the international community believe that peacekeeping would be a panacea for Darfur? The response, while complicated, is probably "no," at least not at the outset. Many other types of international intervention were undertaken in Darfur starting in 2003. According to Darfur researcher Julie Flint (2010), the international community deployed an unprecedented array of "instruments" in Darfur, including "peacekeepers, peacemakers, special envoys, mediators, sanctions, embargoes, and criminal prosecution" (p. 8). These instruments also included an enormous and initially successful humanitarian aid operation, which stabilized malnutrition and mortality rates in Darfur by early 2005, only to see them rise and fall episodically for years following the collapse of the 2006 DPA, the fragmentation and in-fighting of rebel groups, and spikes in inter-tribal conflict ("UN warns of," 2006; De Waal, 2007b; Abdul Jabar & Tanner, 2007; Tanner & Tubiana, 2007; Weissman, 2007, 2008). Moreover, humanitarian organizations have remained on the ground in Darfur for more than a decade, despite the serious logistical challenges of operating in an area the size of France with few paved roads and daunting

security threats, including government and rebel harassment as well as criminal hijackings, assaults, and kidnappings-for-ransom (Weissman, 2006). The ongoing efforts of international aid agencies in Darfur have, no doubt, continued to be life saving (Weissman, 2008).

Still, the full array of instruments deployed in Darfur has fallen short of ending conflict (Flint, 2010). Repeated attempts by joint AU-UN mediation teams to help the parties negotiate a more inclusive and sustainable peace agreement since 2006, generally speaking, have floundered without sufficient international support or understanding of local dynamics (Flint, 2010; ICG, 2015). International sanctions imposed by the United Nations on the Government of Sudan, its militias, and the Darfur rebel groups since 2004, as well as pending arrest warrants by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for Sudanese President Bashir, other Sudanese government and military officials, and some of the Darfur rebels on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity also have failed to discourage fighting (Flint, 2010). More recently, the ICC even suspended its investigation of Bashir given serious challenges in gathering evidence to support a trial ("Sudan President Bashir Hails," 2014; Sengupta & Gettleman, 2014). Thus, peacekeepers have remained one of the only visible signs that the outside world was doing *something* about Darfur, despite how little UNAMID is seen by its critics to have actually done.

Thus, it is fair to say, UNAMID was not seen as a panacea. However, even the focus of recent press reporting on Darfur—examining UNAMID's withdrawal and the suspension of ICC investigations, as opposed to the absence of a viable peace process— would suggest that international attention has been disproportionately focused in one

direction, toward peacekeeping as the solution for the conflict. So, how did we get here? This is not the same question as, what went wrong with UNAMID—that might be a relatively easier question to answer—but how did peacekeeping, which is so widely seen to have failed, become the biggest tool in the international community's toolbox in Darfur? While some readers might consider such an inquiry moot under the current circumstances—what's done is done—the answers could actually yield clues for what might be done differently now to improve the situation in Darfur and in other cases of intrastate conflict.

The Positivist Approach to Decision-Making Analysis

On the surface, it may seem obvious that deploying peacekeepers in Darfur was the most rational choice—and perhaps the moral imperative to do something other than support slow moving peace talks—given conditions at the time. Through this lens, a traditional positivist decision making analysis might focus on the different phases of the decision-making process in Darfur: agenda setting, policy formation, adoption, implementation, and evaluation of policies within various governmental and inter-governmental bodies (Fischer, 1993). The decision to deploy a Darfur-based peacekeeping force was not taken, however, until three years after the height of violence there, indicating it was something other than a rational response to an agreed upon problem. A more complex version of such an analytic approach might then account for more than just rational choice by factoring in organizational behavior and bureaucratic politics (Allison & Zelikow, 1999). These additional models might point to standard

operating procedures of the institutions involved or the particular negotiating skills of

charismatic figures engaged in backroom discussions as proving explanatory of outcomes

(Allison & Zelikow, 1999).

Standard operating procedures could not, however, explain why peacekeepers

were dispatched even though many permanent UN staff did not believe a peacekeeping

force was appropriate for the situation in Darfur without a broadly supported peace

agreement (Guéhenno, 2006a, 2006b). Similarly, they could not account for why

UNAMID was deployed even after representatives of humanitarian organizations warned

that the presence of an armed force not welcomed by the Government of Sudan would

worsen access for aid workers (Weissman, 2006, 2008).[4] Bureaucratic politics might

explain the joint AU/UN nature of the force—UNAMID was not authorized to deploy

until the Chinese Special Envoy for Darfur convinced the Sudanese Government to

accept a hybrid force based on shared interests in 2007[5]—but the model could not explain

the emphasis on getting peacekeepers deployed in the first place (De Waal, 2007b, p.

1042; CHD, 2008, p. 39). And even less easily would any of these models explain the

role played by a burgeoning western advocacy movement that was fixated on pressuring

the UN Security Council to deploy peacekeepers in Darfur at the time (Flint, 2010).

More than that, however, a traditional approach to decision-making analysis

would be lacking in at least one critical dimension. A positivist analysis would assume

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[4] Indeed, the Government of Sudan, fearing that UN peacekeepers would enforce arrest warrants issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) in July 2008, later evicted 13 NGOs and accused them of spying for the Court in March 2009 (Lauria, 2009).

[5] As the Chinese Government and the Sudanese Government were aligned in their respect for the principle of sovereignty, or noninterference, Dan Large of the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue has argued that the Chinese Government was helping Khartoum as much as it was helping itself (rather than supporting R2P) by ensuring the deployment of a weak peacekeeping force (CHD, 2008, p. 39).

that international decisions regarding Darfur were made based upon universally accepted

facts—or "truths"—that is, knowledge obtained through objective, empirical observation

about the situation (Yanow 2000, p. 5; Klotz & Lynch, 2007). Under these circumstances,

the analyst might be inclined to conclude that any less-than-desirable decision-making

outcomes were based on either incomplete or incorrect information available at the time

of the decision. But, certainly that could not be the case in Darfur. The objections of the

various parties to a peacekeeping force, including the Government of Sudan, were likely

well known to members of the Security Council at the time. In fact, UN Security Council

Resolution 1706[6], which, in 2006, first authorized a small number of peacekeepers

intended for South Sudan to deploy in Darfur, explicitly invoked the Principle of the

Responsibility to Protect (R2P)[7], not despite, but in rebuke of the Government of Sudan's

wishes, because Khartoum was seen as failing to protect its own citizens (Mills, 2009).

Paradoxically, this move put the Security Council squarely at odds with UN

doctrine and the 2000 Brahimi report dictating that peacekeepers "operate under clear,

credible and achievable mandates" (UN, 2000). By the time of the Chinese-negotiated

compromise for a hybrid AU-UN force in 2007, the international community was well

aware of the obstacles the Government of Sudan could put in its way. Even apart from

reported logistic challenges, equipment shortfalls, and training or experience gaps—not

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[6] In August 2006, UN Security Council Resolution 1706 authorized expansion of the UN Mission in Sudan UNMIS), a peacekeeping force intended to help implement a peace agreement signed between the governments of Sudan and southern Sudan in 2005. In July 2007, UN Security Council Resolution 1769 officially created UNAMID. (Also see Mills, 2009, p. 551).

[7] Responsibility to Protect (R2P) was the concept developed by The International Commission on Intervention and State Strategy, which met between 2000 and 2001, to agree upon international norms regarding the conditions under which principles of human rights should trump principles of state sovereignty, including, for instance, the deployment of peacekeepers to protect civilians and deliveries of humanitarian assistance.

to mention weak political will by certain troop contributing countries—it is hard to see

how UNAMID's mandate to protect civilians, derived from Chapter VII of the UN

Charter, would be "achievable" when the host government's own forces, regular and

irregular, were one of the groups attacking civilians and they did not want the

peacekeepers there (Flint, 2010). From this perspective, forging ahead with a

peacekeeping mission in Darfur was not necessarily a rational choice—the product of

good negotiating skills, maybe—but there were other variables at play. Consequently, an

alternative to the positivist decision-making analysis model is needed to understand why

so much emphasis was placed on UNAMID's deployment.

Taking an Interpretive Approach to Decision-Making Analysis

In contrast to traditional decision-making analysis models, post-positivist

scholarship tells the analyst that knowledge is *not* universally accepted truth (Fischer,

2003; pp. 123-124). Rather, knowledge is socially constructed through both subjective

and inter-subjective interpretation based on past experiences, that is, derived from shared

meanings—including values, feelings, beliefs—surrounding a problem (Yanow 2000). In

the post-positive world, "language is recognized as a medium, a system of signification

through which actors not simply describe, but create the world" (Hajer, 1993, p. 44).

Moreover, narratives, which both frame our understanding of a problem and tell us how

to react, are central organizing units of knowledge, i.e. "conveyors of meaning" (Bruner,

1990; Roe, 1994; Yanow, 2000, pp. 57-58; Abbot 2008).

In addition, the social constructionist perspective maintains that these meanings, encapsulated in narratives, are derived from broader social and institutional discourses, each similar to what Pierre Bourdieu (1977) would call the "habitus" attached to particular fields of practice. The decision-making analyst's job in a post-positivist world, therefore, is to interpret these narratives as conveyors of meaning in policy settings, referred to by Maarten Hajer as "argumentative story-lines,"[8] and in this process, to uncover the relevant discourses from which they were derived (Hajer, 1995; Yanow, 2000). "Discourses," according to Hajer (1993), "frame certain problems; that is to say, they distinguish some aspects of a situation rather than others," and "storylines are the medium through which actors try to impose their view of reality on others" (pp. 45, 47). According to Hajer's social-interactive discourse theory (1995), the goal of a researcher or analyst is to identify the discursive order around a debate and analyze the process by which one storyline "gains dominance and is seen as authoritative, while other understandings are discredited" (pp. 43-44).

The habitus under examination in this case would consist of the shared practices, history, social relations, and disposition of international conflict resolution actors who share a common language about conflict and conflict intervention (Bourdieu, 1977; Pouliot, 2010, p. 33; Adler & Pouliot, 2011). The operative languages would be those of diplomacy, international institutions, and conflict analysis (Prosser, 1997). In a new, but important piece of research, Séverine Autesserre (2014) has referred to the habitus in

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[8] While Hajer inserts a hyphen between "story" and "line" in his original works, the author will use the word "storyline," with no hyphen, interchangeably with Hajer's concept throughout the draft except when citing original references written by Hajer.

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question here as belonging to a field of action, or virtual place, called "Peaceland." In

fact, "Peaceland" likely contains not just one habitus, but many of what Dvora Yanow

would call "communities of meaning," for example, made up of humanitarian aid experts

and human rights specialists, among others (Bourdieu, 1977; Yanow, 2000; Autesserre,

2014). As such, Autesserre's (2014) ethnographic study of the field of international

peacebuilding, writ large, provides a usefully broad site of study for investigating

decision-making around Darfur.

Through observation and interviews in multiple conflict zones around the world,

Autesserre found that international peacebuilders' dominant modes of practice, habits,

and narratives lead to inaccurate understandings of conflicts and, as a result,

inappropriate interventions (Autesserre 2014, pps. 29, 33-35). Autesserre (2014)

determined that these actors' tendency to value technical proficiency over country-

specific expertise and reliance on habits and security procedures that separate them from

local populations leads them construct knowledge about conflicts with counterproductive,

ineffective, and inefficient consequences (pp. 3, 12-13). Specifically, she found that, "to

make sense of their environments, they tend to use prevailing but overly simplified

narratives as substitutes for more nuanced explanations of dynamics on the ground"

(Autesserre, 2014, p. 12). Autesserre (2014) defined a "simplified narrative" as "an

uncomplicated storyline, which builds on elements already familiar to the general public,

and a straightforward solution" (p. 131). In addition, "narratives dominant in Peaceland,"

she explained, "include views about the primary causes, consequences, and solutions to

violence in the country of intervention" (Autesserre, 2014, p. 33). Echoing the research of

Deborah Stone (1989), Autesserre also emphasized that narratives "resonate" more when they assign cause or responsibility for harm and include well-defined "good" and "evil" individuals or obvious perpetrators and victims (Autesserre, 2014, p. 131).

As one example, Autesserre (2012) has previously argued that three narratives dominated the public discourse around international intervention in the Democratic Republic of Congo: one focusing on illegal exploitation of mineral resources as a primary cause of violence, one focusing sexual abuse of women and girls as a main consequence, and one focused on extending state authority as a central solution to the conflict. The intent of these simplified narratives was not malicious, according to Autesserre, but rather, practical. Based on her research, Autessere (2014) has explained that, "Practices, habits, and narratives enable human beings to function in the social world. Dominant narratives help us sift through and interpret the massive amount of information we perpetually receive, sparing us the need to analyze each occurrence a new" (p. 37). Thus, Autesserre (2009, 2012) has singled out simplified narratives as important, because of the frames they carry and the way in which frames orient action:

> Narratives include a central frame, or a combination of frames. Frames are essential to the social world since problems are not given, but have to be constructed. Frames shape our views on what counts as a problem (for example, the illegal exploitation of mining resources) and what does not (for instance, land conflicts). Frames also affect which events will be noticed (sexual violence) and which will not (non-sexual torture), as well as how they will be interpreted (as worthy of international response or as domestic problems). Thus, frames and narratives do not cause action. Instead, they make action possible: they authorize, enable, and justify specific practices and policies (such as regulation of the mineral trade) while precluding others (such as resolution of land conflicts). These actions in turn reproduce and reinforce both the dominant practices and the meanings, embodied in frames and narratives, upon which they are predicated. Over time, the narratives and the practices they authorize come to be taken as natural, granted, and the only conceivable ones. (Autesserre, 2012, pp. 5-6)

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In her study of "Peaceland," Autesserre (2014) defined "international peacebuilders" as: "diplomats, other government officials (such as defense officers), personnel of non-governmental agencies, academic experts serving as advisors or consultants, employees of private subcontractors or for-profit development firms, and staff of international organizations—both military and civilian" (p. 10). The inhabitants of Autesserre's Peaceland were, therefore, largely field-based and did not include advocacy groups abroad, but in a case where advocacy figured strongly into decision making about how to intervene in a conflict, one might argue that it should. For instance, at least one Darfur scholar, Alex De Waal (forthcoming), has argued that, "The Darfur conflict was highly unusual in that the international narrative for the crisis was set by a western advocacy campaign that *framed the problem as genocide* and the challenge as international intervention, military and judicial" (De Waal, 2007b). While there is much more to be said about exactly what the "genocide narrative"[9] entailed, its causal explanation, implied consequences, and focus on outside intervention, as opposed to locally owned responses, as well as an emphasis on military and judicial tools, as opposed to political processes, emerged quite possibly to either the neglect or, at the expense, of a lasting negotiated solution.[10] Others, including Flint (2010), have concluded as much, referring to the "the subordination of peacemaking to peacekeeping, driven in

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[9] Use of the phrase "genocide narrative" here is not intended to refer to the legal definition of the crime of genocide under the Genocide Convention, but rather genocide as a discursive construct.

[10] When one former UN official interviewed for this project was asked whether the "peacekeeping solution" overshadowed other solutions in Darfur, he answered, "It's a fact that it did, it's a fact that it did."

part by advocacy campaigns to 'save' Darfur through military intervention and/or robust peacekeeping" (p. 12)

Of course, the advocacy narrative around Darfur, which argued for international intervention to stop genocide, was by no means the only information available to UN Security Council and AU Peace and Security Council members making decisions about how to intervene in the region at the time peacekeepers were deployed. These organizations' own bureaucracies, as well as news media and multiple humanitarian, human rights, conflict prevention, and other types of advocacy organizations beyond the Save Darfur movement, were vocal reporters on the conflict. Still, applying Autesserre's paradigm, the Darfur advocacy narrative, according to De Waal and Flint, emerged as the "dominant" one, crowding out other descriptions and prescriptions for action. De Waal has further investigated how the advocacy narrative of worsening conditions in Darfur resisted change over time, despite the introduction of evidence that conditions in Darfur were both changing and improving. According to De Waal (forthcoming), "A tabulation of 134 statements from a number of the most prominent activists and advocacy groups between April 2005 and August 2007 found that variants of this refrain—assertions or predictions of deterioration—accounted for all but seven statements. Just six identified an actual or possible improvement. These statements did not correlate with increased violence of most monitorable indicators (De Waal & Rosmarin, 2007). Rather, they tracked the campaign's own mobilization efforts, reaching a peak with the international day for Darfur on 17 September 2006."

De Waal (forthcoming) went on to claim that Save Darfur's narratives were outdated from at least 2005 onward, noting that UNAMID data between 2008 and 2009 painted a picture, at that time, of a "low intensity conflict." De Waal (forthcoming) himself assessed that that conflict had evolved from a centrally directed "Schmittian" conflict to a diffuse "quasi-Hobbesian" conflict resulting from a breakdown in central authority. He additionally highlighted how Darfuris' own perceptions of the conflict were at odds with the international community's narrative, citing data from a 2009 public consultation by the African Union Panel on Darfur, of which De Waal was a member.[11] De Waal (forthcoming) concluded that solid data based on patterns of violence and local understandings of the conflict, rather than stock narratives, should be most influential in designing intervention strategies (p. 16).[12]

Sara Cobb (2013) has described the phenomenon in which a dominant narrative becomes almost immovably resistant to change as "narrative compression." She defines this concept as: "the condition in which (a) the dominant narrative in a given location/community consolidates and compacts itself, compressing nuanced differences or variations that could otherwise provide opening for inquiry, thus leading to destabilization [of the dominant narrative]; and (b) the possible 'openings' are not only closed off but their denial and erasure have been ritualized in interaction such that any effort by a speaker to open the narrative to inquiry triggers 'routines' that thwart the

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[11] In discussions with 3,100 representatives of communities, including displaced persons, tribal authorities, civil society, women, youth, and political parties and armed groups, De Waal
 (forthcoming) found that Arab communities described the situation as "war " (harb), and "troubles" (mashakil), while Fur and Masalit respondents used the term "uprooting" (ibada); Darfuris of all backgrounds used the phrase "anarchy" (fawdha) (p. 10).
[12] For comprehensive survey data on the views of Darfuri refugees in Chad regarding the best approaches to conflict resolution in the region, see 24 Hours for Darfur (2010).

development of a subordinate storyline" (Cobb, 2013, p. 267). The more complex

alternative to the dominant narrative, according to Cobb (2013), is "a better formed

story." In contrast to the type of simplified narrative described by Autesserre, Cobb

(2013) has explained that, a "better formed story" is more complex in at least three ways:

there are more events in the plotline, all parties share some responsibility for the conflict,

and events in the past logically lead to events in the present and the future, rather than the

narrative just focusing on the past or the future; moreover, the characters are complex—

they are mutually acknowledged as legitimate in their actions, but also imperfect—and,

instead of relying on binary and simplistic moral constructs of "good" versus "evil,"

morality in the better formed story is also complex, allowing for multiple "ways to be

good" (p. 221).

Cobb's concepts of narrative compression and better formed stories are intended

for application to parties in conflict with each other, but could just as easily be applied to

third party conflict narratives as a means of analyzing relative simplicity or complexity.

Cobb's concept of the better formed story adds dimension to Autesserre's definition of a

simplified conflict narrative—explanations of causes, consequences, and solutions—by

considering the plotline, the depiction of characters and their morality, the logic of

violence, and the connection between past, present, and future. Thus, coupled with

Autesserre's explanation of a simplified narrative, Cobb's definition of a better formed

story allows the analyst to construct a framework for comparative analysis that can be

used to investigate the dynamic interplay between simple and complex storylines in the

discursive space over time. Such an approach provides precisely the analytic tools needed

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to accomplish the task of identifying the discursive order around Darfur and the simple storyline that ultimately informed the decision to deploy peacekeepers there.

Research Questions

Taking Autesserre and Cobb's definitions of "simplified narratives" and "better formed stories," respectively, as a basis for understanding variation in argumentative storylines in the intervention debate surrounding the Darfur conflict, this dissertation innovates a method of inter-discursive narrative complexity analysis to answer the following questions:

- How did a simple advocacy narrative or "storyline" function and/or become dominant in African Union and United Nations responses to the Darfur conflict?

  ➢ Which social or institutional discourses (communities of meaning) were operative in the debate and how did they interact with each other?

  ➢ What were the other discursive constructs available to AU and UN decision-makers, how did they interact, and were/how were some marginalized over time?

What follows in the examination of these questions is not a discussion about whether or how the endeavor of peacekeeping has failed in Darfur or what conditions might have enabled it to succeed. Rather, it accepts many of the above critiques of UNAMID and seeks instead to analyze the decision-making behind it by focusing on an overlooked dimension of analysis: *meaning*. This dissertation also does not aim to tell the story of the Darfur advocacy movement. That story has been told by authors active in the

campaign (Cheadle & Prendergast, 2007; Hamilton, 2011). This study is, instead, an attempt to explore how peacekeeping, and to a lesser extent, accountability-focused solutions, came to dominate international decision-making regarding Darfur, possibly overshadowing diplomatic and political solutions. The findings reveal discursive processes at play not only surrounding Darfur, but in many international debates regarding intrastate conflicts, yielding insights that might help uncover marginalized, but potentially useful, courses of action. Finally, this is not a contribution to the debate over whether violence in Darfur constituted the *crime* of genocide, which has also been covered by others with legal expertise (Hagan & Rymond-Richmond, 2009).

This research was also not intended to result in an exposé or a "finger pointing" exercise aimed at critiquing individual people, governments, or organizations and their response to the Darfur conflict. Hindsight is 20/20. This is, rather, a reflection—a learning exercise—to understand a process that everyone in the international community involved in responding to the Darfur conflict was either consciously, or more likely unconsciously, a part of. In fact, the process of identifying the discourses that both enable and constrain international action in conflicts such as Darfur is intended not to blame anyone, but to shed light on opportunities to create new shared meanings, which might enable more effective discourses to be constructed. It, thus, entails a process of tracing the storylines that emerged and became dominant. It is, in the end, an account of the war of words between "activists," "experts," and "bureaucrats" who all were deeply engaged in the struggle over what was to be done about the violence in Darfur.

As a final note of introduction, the author recognizes that the idea that conflict narratives become oversimplified is not news to most conflict resolution scholars or practitioners (Autesserre, 2010, 2014). Widespread critiques of the "Kony 2012" experience, in which a You Tube video condensing northern Uganda's decades long history into 30 minutes went viral on the Internet, is evidence of that awareness (Cage, 2014; Autesserre, 2014, p. 148). Similarly, the hundredth anniversary of the Armenian genocide has recently prompted warning that "black and white narratives" hinder genocide prevention (Danforth, 2015). In the case of Darfur, the notion that western advocates' version of events in Darfur lacked a sophisticated understanding of the region's history, as well as the perspective of Darfuris themselves, also has been acknowledged and well written about (Anderson, 2004; Blayton, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c; Flint, 2010; De Waal, forthcoming). This is also not, therefore, an effort to establish the claim that simplified narratives orient international action, generally, but rather, to explore the narrative landscape around Darfur where policy alternatives coalesced around a central storyline, blocking off counternarratives as alternatives. The findings of this research were not necessarily expected to be generalizable, but they almost certainly yield insights for current and future conflict interventions, including in Darfur.

By shedding light on the types of discourses operative in debates over third party interventions in conflict, more broadly, the findings of this paper also contribute to the field of conflict resolution. While dominant discursive structures are likely to vary from conflict to conflict, and debate to debate, it may be possible to recognize patterns or familiar narrative features of outsiders' storylines surrounding conflicts that tend to

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prejudice action in one direction or another. In addition, the simple awareness that

discursive structures limit thinking around both problem definition and the range of

options available to conflict resolution actors may encourage them to open their minds to

the possibility of other problem definitions and to redefine the discursive space in real

time. In other words, merely reflecting on the way in which the reality of a conflict is

produced and reproduced through the use of overly simplified discursive constructs might

lead to an awareness of alternate discourses that would frame the conflict differently.

This reflection, in turn, might create the space for and perhaps comfort with, more

complexity—and understanding of the need for multidimensional responses—to enter

into discussions and policy debates.

Organization

This dissertation is organized in five chapters following the introduction. Chapter

2 lays out a short history of the Darfur conflict to provide the reader with a baseline

understanding of dates, places, names, and contributing factors that may be referred to

later in the findings. The author made every attempt to craft this history objectively,

while acknowledging the limitations of doing so in reliance on secondary sources. A wide

variety of materials and views were consulted and incorporated into this history, which is

organized thematically, so as to avoid single author or causal bias regarding the causes of

violence in Darfur, the sequencing of key events, and the roles of various players.

Chapter 3 provides a brief review of literature related to carriers of meaning in the

field of post-positivist decision-making analyses, borrowing generously from the field of

interpretive or discursive policy analysis. This review consists of an overview of concepts

and key definitions related to frames, narratives, and discourse to provide the reader with

a theoretical grounding for a post-positivist decision-making analysis. It also points to

possible corresponding tasks of an analyst, landing on Hajer's method of social-

interactive discourse analysis as a guiding reference for the methodology that follows.

Chapter 4 lays out the methodology used by the researcher drawing broadly from

Hajer's method of social-interactive discourse analysis and incorporating elements of

Dvora Yanow's method of interpretive policy analysis, specifically "communities of

meaning." It offers a new and innovative method of inter-discursive narrative complexity

analysis drawing on Autesserre's definition of a "simplified narrative" and Cobb's

definition of the "better formed story" to differentiate among and analyze the dynamic

interplay between various storylines in the discursive space over time.

Chapter 5 presents the first piece of the researcher's findings, which assesses the

discursive structure of the debate around Darfur by mapping a static architecture of the

primary communities of meaning relevant to decision-making and the deployment of

peacekeepers in Darfur based on an analysis of interviews and relevant documents.

Chapter 6 presents the second, more dynamic component of the researcher's

findings as a chronological account of key events and turning points—or positional

shifts—in the debate around Darfur with supporting information based on interviews and

textual examples to explore how one storyline came to dominate the discourse

surrounding intervention.

Chapter 7 provides a discussion of the significance of key findings for the case of Darfur and research and practice in the field of conflict analysis and resolution, generally, as well as methodological takeaways and potential research questions for further exploration.

CHAPTER TWO: THE DARFUR CONFLICT

Conflict in the Darfur region of western Sudan has dragged on since early 2003 with no clear resolution in sight. The conflict is commonly perceived to have started as an armed uprising by two rebel groups, which were drawn primarily from three of Darfur's non-Arab speaking tribes. The conflict is also frequently characterized by the fierce and indiscriminate counterinsurgency waged in response by the Government of Sudan and its armed, primarily Arabic-speaking proxy militias ("*Jinjaweed*"). Today, however, the conflict has devolved into a mess of disparate actors, localized violence, and general insecurity, leaving nearly 2.9 million Darfuris displaced from their homes (UN OCHA, 2015; "UN: Almost Half," March 2015). No one knows exactly how many people have died as a result of the Darfur conflict, but at least 200,000, and as many as 400,000 or more, people have perished, probably more as a result of malnutrition and disease caused by displacement than direct violence (Depoortere, et al, 2004; Guha-Sapir & Degomme, 2005; US GAO, 2006; Nielsen, 2009; Degomme, 2011). The largest number of these deaths occurred in 2003 and 2004, yet some experts believe the persistent displacement of Darfur's civilians from their home areas is evidence of ongoing genocide, or at a minimum war crimes and crimes against humanity, by the Government of Sudan (Reeves, 2015).

It would be impossible in the space allotted here to provide a complete accounting of events that led up to the Darfur conflict as it is commonly known to have started, or

perhaps more accurately, escalated in 2003. Indeed, as will be discussed in this paper, the conflict in Darfur is, and was, extremely complex, with overlays of national level identity politics, historical grievances, and central government predation on top of local environmental pressures, changing migratory patterns, and inter-group competition for resources. On top of that, much of Darfur's conflicted history can be credited to its location in the middle of a war torn neighborhood with a seemingly endless supply of small arms. What follows, therefore, is only a brief, but thorough enough, overview of the conflict to provide a backdrop for the chapters that follow.

To lay the background for this study, the below history of the Darfur conflict is broken into several themes. These themes include territory and local governance, ethnic and tribal identity, regional conflict and racist ideology, political Islam, environmental and demographic pressures, central government neglect and oppression, and the Darfur rebellion. A short description of the international response through mid-2007 follows. While the themes below inevitably comprise only a partial history of the region, they are factors widely accepted as critically important to understanding the Darfur conflict by a variety of scholars (Johnson, 2003; Flint & De Waal, 2005; Prunier, 2005; De Waal, 2007; Burr & Collins, 2008; De Waal, 2007a; Daly, 2007; O'Fahey, 2008; Tubiana, 2010; Mamdani, 2010; Hastrup, 2013). More elaborate histories compiled by these scholars can, and should be, sought by the reader to enable a full picture of the region. The sheer complexity of even this simple account, however, demonstrates the temptation to summarize the conflict by singling out particular aspects as fully explanatory and to present a multidimensional problem as a simple one—a temptation to be resisted.

Territory and Local Governance

The geographic area called Darfur, now an administrative region of Sudan about the size of Texas, historically refers to the Fur Sultanate, which traces its history back to the mid-1600s (O'Fahey, 1980; Abdul-Jallil, Mohammed & Yousuf, 2007; De Waal, 2005b). The Fur, a sedentary agriculturalist tribe hailing from the central mountainous region of Jebel Mara and the largest ethnic group in the region, ruled the area independently until 1874 when the Ottoman Empire expanded into Sudan (Abdul-Jallil, Mohammed & Yousuf, 2007). Following multiple uprisings, Darfur was subsequently taken over and ruled by Mahdist regimes from 1883 to 1888, which were in turn replaced by the leadership of a Fur loyalist following Britain's capture of Omdurman, just outside of the Sudanese capital of Khartoum, in 1898 (Abdul-Jallil, Mohammed & Yousuf; De Waal, 1989, p. 65). That loyalist, Ali Dinar, now known as the last Fur Sultan, was killed by British forces upon their annexation of Darfur in 1916 (Abdul-Jallil, Mohammed & Yousuf 2007; De Waal, 2004b).

From 1916 to 1956, Sudan was ruled jointly by the British and Egyptian Governments under the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium (Abdul-Jallil, Mohammed & Yousuf, 2007). During this period, Darfur was economically neglected by the central government in Khartoum (Daly, 2007; Burr & Collins, 2008), as it remains today (UNRHC, 2010), but underwent significant changes in political administration (Abdul-Jallil, Mohammed & Yousuf, 2007). British colonial rulers applied a model of indirect rule in Darfur that endowed local traditional rulers—paramount chiefs at the tribal level, *omdas* at the sub-tribal level, and *sheiks* at the village level—with administrative,

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judicial, and policing authority over their respective *dars*, or traditional homelands (De Waal, 2004b, 2005b; Abdul-Jallil, Mohammed & Yousuf, 2007). Among these local leaders' responsibility was management of natural resources and settlement of disputes, for example, over land (De Waal, 2004b, 2005b; Abdul-Jallil, Mohammed & Yousuf, 2007).

While the Native Administration, as it is known, had the effect of demoting the Fur tribe to equal standing with all of Darfur's other tribes, its restoration remains one of the key demands by modern-day Darfur rebel groups of the Government of Sudan (De Waal, 2005b; Abdul-Jallil, Mohammed & Yousuf, 2007). What the Native Administration did not do was grant about a half a dozen of Darfur's migratory herding tribes the same power as sedentary farming tribes, because in practice, Dar ownership became based on land usage, and herding tribes moved from season to season (De Waal, 2004b, 2005b, 2005c). Thus, the existing system of land management and taxation called *Hawakir*, granting plots of land, or *Hakura* (estates), to Darfur's tribes, which dated back to the 1700s, had the effect of politically disenfranchising nomadic groups (O'Fahey, 1980; De Waal, 2005c; Tubiana, 2007). Under the Native Administration and before, nomadic tribes were allowed to graze on other groups' Dars through a system of mutual benefit—landowners provided access to grazing land and water wells in lean months to herders and migrating cattle and camels that fertilized farmers' soil—but such informal agreements eventually broke down along with the Native Administration after Sudan's independence in 1956 (Tubiana, 2007; Abdul-Jallil, Mohammed, & Yousuf, 2007).

In 1971, following episodic central government interference in Native Administration rule, which nationalist groups, including the still active Umma Party, opposed as a colonial legacy, Sudanese President Jaafar Neimeiri's regime replaced the system with local government councils (Abdul-Jallil, Mohammed & Yousuf, 2007). Tribal competition and conflicts increased dramatically in Darfur, as the new system of local government allowed a member of one tribe to rule over the territory of another, and politics became seen as a zero-sum game in which political representatives protected the interests of their own groups (Abdul-Jallil, Mohammed & Yousuf, 2007). The Native Administration was reestablished briefly between 1987 and 1989 by the democratically elected coalition government of Umma Party head Sadiq al-Mahdi, but subsequently was Islamicized following Mahdi's ousting by the National Islamic Front (NIF) in a military coup (Abdul-Jallil, Mohammed & Yousuf, 2007). In the period that followed, traditional Darfuri titles—sultan, *shartai*, and *nazir*—were replaced by *amir* with the expectation that each of Darfur's leaders would take on a religious role in maintaining Shari'a values within their group and, after 1995, become a *mujahid* prepared to fight rebels in the non-Muslim region of South Sudan (Abdul-Jallil, Mohammed & Yousuf, 2007). Ownership of territory and governance within Darfur, however, remained contested.

Ethnic and Tribal Identity

Disputes over the unequal distribution of land and power in Darfur also became inextricably linked to ethnic and tribal identity. For centuries, the Fur ruled over an area home to at least 30 ethnic groups in Darfur, often violently absorbing and sometimes

enslaving other tribes, much as the Abyssinian Empire had done in what is now Ethiopia (De Waal, 2004b, 2005b). Like the Ethiopian tradition tracing ancestry to King Solomon, the Fur creation myth similarly traces its roots to ancient times, claiming Arab descent from the Prophet Mohammed (De Waal, 2005b). As a result, the Fur identity was as much political as it was ethnic, as out-groups both assimilated into the in-group and adapted the Fur language as it spread (De Waal, 2005b). To the north and west, some nomadic Bedouins, mostly camel herders (Aballa), resisted assimilation and were not awarded Hakura, while semi-nomadic tribes with both herding and farming traditions, such as the Zaghawa, intermarried with Fur families and were closely connected to the sultanate (De Waal, 2005b). To the south, semi-nomadic cattle herders (Baggara) also remained independent, but cooperative with the Fur and did receive land grants from the Fur Sultan (De Waal, 2005b, 2005c).

Thus, the "Arab" and "African" (or "non-Arab") labels one reads about today, were not historically part of the Darfuri identity construct (De Waal, 2004b). While the Fur themselves claim Arab roots, today the term "Arab" is generally applied by the outside world to both the descendants of Bedouin desert camel herders, such as the Aballa Rizeigat in northern Darfur, and the semi-nomadic cattle herders of southern Darfur, including the Baggara Rizegat, who also farm the more fertile land south of Jebel Mara (De Waal, 2005c). These tribes are not, it should be noted, recent arrivals. For instance, the Aballa Rizeigat, from whence the Government of Sudan has recently drawn recruits for various paramilitary forces and irregular militias (often referred to as *Jinjaweed*), migrated from the Libyan desert to the region before the establishment of the

Fur Sultanate in the 1600s (De Waal, 2007a). The dozens of other ethnic groups in Darfur, many of whom also migrated from the West centuries ago, include the Masalit, Berti, Birgid, and Tama—all considered "non-Arab"—and Ereigat, Misiriya, Beni Hussein, and Beni Halba—all considered "Arab" (De Waal, 2005c). In the past, conflicts between these groups had more to do with livelihoods than race.

Regional Conflict and Racist Ideology

Many scholars attribute the more recent salience of non-Arab and Arab identities within struggles over land and governance in Darfur to regional dynamics. The historically war torn triangle located between the Chari River to the West in Chad, the Nile to the East in Sudan, and the Mediterranean to the North in Libya has seen many episodes of conflict in the last century alone (Burr & Collins, 2008). Former Libyan President Muammar Qaddafi's forays into Chad under the banner of Arab nationalism from the late 1970s to the mid-1990s were perhaps the most influential of these episodes in recent history (De Waal, 2005c; Burr & Collins, 2008). The Chad-Libya war between roughly 1978 and 1987 had multiple spillover effects in Darfur. This period led to the crystallization of Arab and non-Arab identities among some Darfuri tribes and the arming of a number of Darfuri Arabs (De Waal, 2005c; Burr & Collins, 2008).

During this period, Qaddafi's forces and Chadian rebel groups, facing off against the French-backed Chadian military, drew recruits from migratory tribes spanning the Chad-Sudan border. Among these tribes was a small section of the Dar-less Aballa Rizeigat—the *Mahamid* (*Um Jalul*) (De Waal, 2005c). The Um Jalul, who regularly

migrated across the Sudan-Chad border to the desert areas bordering Libya, had long been at odds with a rival section of the Abbala Rizeigat tribe—the *Mahariya*—over who should be paramount chief (De Waal, 2005c). Over several decades, leaders of the *Um Jalul*, with more clans than the *Mahariya* on the Chad side of the border, had attempted to enlarge their power base by attracting followers from this area. In the 1980s, a Libyan military commander named Ahmat Acyl organized and armed members of these communities as part of the "Arab Gathering" in support of Qaddafi's Islamic Legion (De Waal, 2004b, 2005c; Haggar, 2007; Burr & Collins, 2008).

In October 1987, the Arab Gathering wrote a letter to the Sudanese Prime Minister outlining its militant, racist philosophy of Arab supremacy (De Waal, 2004b; Prunier, 2005; Burr & Collins, 2008). The group subsequently attracted followers from Darfur's disenfranchised "Arab" tribes, racially no different than Darfur's other ethnic groups, and attacked permanent settlements in the Jebel Mara region (Burr & Collins, 2008). These attacks elicited a response from "non-Arabs," who, in turn, politically aligned themselves along "African" lines with the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), a Ugandan-backed rebel movement fighting against the Sudanese Government in South Sudan (Harir, 1994; De Waal, 2004b). A peace conference between the Fur and Arab tribes organized by then Governor of Darfur Tijani Sesei[13] in 1989 led to a reconciliation agreement, but racist propaganda calling for the elimination of *zurga* (meaning dark/slaves) by 2020 continued to circulate (Burr & Collins, 2008). "Land grabbing" also recurred sporadically, leading to the formation of

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[13] Now head of the Transitional Darfur Regional Authority (TDRA).

Fur and Massalit self defense forces around "non-Arab" villages, which would eventually provide a loose architecture for the rebel Darfur Liberation Front (DLF), later known as the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A), fronted by a Fur lawyer and SPLM/Community party member named Abdel Wahid (Burr & Collins 2008, p. 288).

At the same time, members of the semi-nomadic Zaghawa tribe, much more populous in Chad than in Darfur, were engaged in fighting across the border (De Waal, 2004b). In 1988, a Chadian Zaghawa military commander named Idriss Deby defeated Libyan-backed forces in eastern Chad (Burr & Collins, 2008). In 1990, Deby turned on the Chadian regime and ousted then Chadian president Hissène Habré in a Sudanese backed coup widely seen as being launched from the Zaghawa areas of Darfur (Burr & Collins, 2008). By this stage, regional dynamics had both hardened ethnic identities in Darfur and left the region awash in small arms (Burr & Collins, 2008).

Political Islam

In addition to the racist ideology espoused by the Arab Gathering, another force in national Sudanese politics emerged in the late 1980s that would change the course of local inter-group relations in Darfur. The NIF's takeover of the Sudanese Government in 1989 brought with it an opportunistic marriage between a military man, now Sudanese President Omar El-Bashir, and a religious ideologue, Hassan al Turabi, who sought to expand the party's Islamist base throughout Sudan (De Waal, 2005b). Turabi saw an opportunity in Darfur with its history of Mahdist political claims, having served as the base of the *Mahdiyya*—a violent, messianic movement defeated by British forces in 1898

(De Waal, 2005b; El-Din, 2007, p. 105). In the intervening hundred years since the

Mahdi's rule, Darfuris had come to practice a more gentle form of Sufi Islam than the

orthodox practice of Khartoum's elite riverine (*Ja'aliyyin*) Arabs, who looked down on

both Darfuri "Africans" and descendants of Bedouin migrants from the West (De Waal,

2004b, 2005b; Burr & Collins, 2008, p. 283). Turabi did not discriminate, however, and

turned his sights on Darfur, broadening the movement to Arabs and non-Arabs alike (De

Waal, 2005b).

The NIF's meddling in local Darfuri politics during the 1990s was less

egalitarian, as traditional Darfuri leaders in the Native Administration were not only

renamed with Islamic titles, but administrative districts were redrawn to disempower Fur

and other non-Arab populations, including the Massalit, whose settlements, like the

Zaghawa's, span the Sudan-Chad border of western Darfur (Burr & Collins, 2008, p.

279). The division and redistribution of the traditional Massalit homeland to Dar-less

tribes in 1995 set off an escalating cycle of conflict with local Arab tribes that lasted until

1999, when government-backed Arab militias crushed Massalit forces, killing more than

2,000 people and displacing 100,000, many of whom fled to Chad (HRW, 2000; Johnson,

2003; Prunier, 2005; Mamdani, 2009; Flint, 2009). The map below shows a

magnification of Dar Massalit. (Figure 1. Darfur ethnic groups.)

Figure 1. Darfur ethnic groups (Human Rights Watch, Darfur Destroyed: Ethnic Cleansing by the Government and Militia Forces in Western Sudan, 7 May 2004).

Turabi was jailed and ousted from what became the current ruling National

Congress Party (NCP) when the Sudanese Islamist movement split in 1999, but he

retained Zaghawa supporters in Darfur, including many already armed by the Chadian

government to fight Libyan forces a decade earlier (De Waal, 2005b, 2005c). In May

2000, a small group of Darfuri Islamists opposed to the NCP's elitist Arabism secretly

published a "Black Book" critical of the security cabal in Khartoum, eventually leading

to the formation in August 2001 of a group called the Justice and Equality Movement

(JEM), led by a Zaghawa figure named Khalil Ibrahim, who was at that time studying in

the Netherlands (Burr & Collins, 2008, pp. 290-291; De Waal, 2005c; El-Din, 2007, p.

104). Khalil Ibrahim himself had been an ardent NIF supporter, even fighting with the

Sudanese military in South Sudan, but became disenchanted with the party's

marginalization of Darfur in the mid-1990s, as similarly minded Darfuri university

students began organizing themselves in Khartoum (Burr & Collins, 2008, p. 290).

These dissidents also drew inspiration from a failed SPLA-backed rebellion by a Darfuri

named Daoud Bolad in 1991 (Res Publica n.d.; Hastrup, 2013).

The NCP, on the other hand, retained the support of Islamist Aballa Rizeigat and

Ereigat tribe members, which it empowered in positions of political and military

authority to counter a growing opposition threat in Darfur (De Waal, 2005c). This

alliance was based far more on security interests than common interpretations of Islam

(De Waal, 2005c). Among these individuals was Sudanese Air Force General Abdalla

Safi el Nur, who became Governor of North Darfur in 2000 and assisted with the staffing

up of the Popular Defence Force (PDF) (De Waal, 2004b). The PDF were an Islamist

paramilitary force formed of cattle herding tribes from southern Darfur and South

Kordofan in the late 1980s to fight the SPLM/A in southern Sudan (Salmon, 2007; Flint,

2009; SAS, 2011). In 2001, Safi el Nur supplemented the PDF with an amalgam of

militias drawn from the Chadian Mahamid, or *Jinjaweed*, loosely translated as "devil on

horseback" (De Waal, 2005b, 2005c; Flint, 2009; SAS, 2011). The Government of Sudan

would later use these forces, which included the son of a *Jalul* Rizeigat Arab paramount

chief named Musa Hilal, to suppress the Darfur rebellion that emerged in 2003 (De Waal,

2005b, 2005c; Flint, 2009; SAS, 2011). Members of these militias were susceptible to

recruitment for more than just racial or ideological reasons, as their own livelihoods were

also under threat.

Environmental and Demographic Pressures

Contributing to the long list of ingredients in Darfur's history of conflict above, was the progressive degradation of the region's fragile ecology in the past century. Declining rainfall levels and human activity—such as over farming, over grazing, and brick-making—led to rapid desertification in Darfur, which, combined with dramatic population growth, increasingly put Darfur's various livelihood groups into conflict over natural resources (Clift-Hall, 1986). According to one United Nations report, Darfur lost an average of just over one percent of its forest cover each year between 1973 and 2006, while the population of Darfur grew at an average rate of 2.8 percent in the same timeframe (UNRHC, 2010). Without sufficient forest cover, the surface area of arable land in Darfur began noticeably shrinking in the 1980s and 1990s. As the Sahel desert encroached further and further south, so did nomadic tribes in need of grazing space, often on to other tribes' land.

In the worst of times, lack of rainfall led to drought and drought led to failed harvests and famine. While the outside world was watching children starving in Ethiopia on their television screens in 1984 and 1985, Darfur also saw humanitarian catastrophe unfold with a mortality rate of 40 per thousand persons (De Waal, 1989, 1997). It was during this period that Darfuris saw the first arrival of USAID-provided relief in the form of sorghum, which they called, "Reagan" (De Waal 1989, 1997, 2004b). Even in better times, environmental pressures that brought changes in migratory patterns created shortages and hardship, as nomadic tribes from the north, which usually travel southward with their livestock in the dry months of February and March, and again northward when

the rains arrive in May and June through September, began traveling south earlier and

earlier in the year (Kuznar & Sedlmyer, 2005). (Figure 2. Darfur migration routes.)
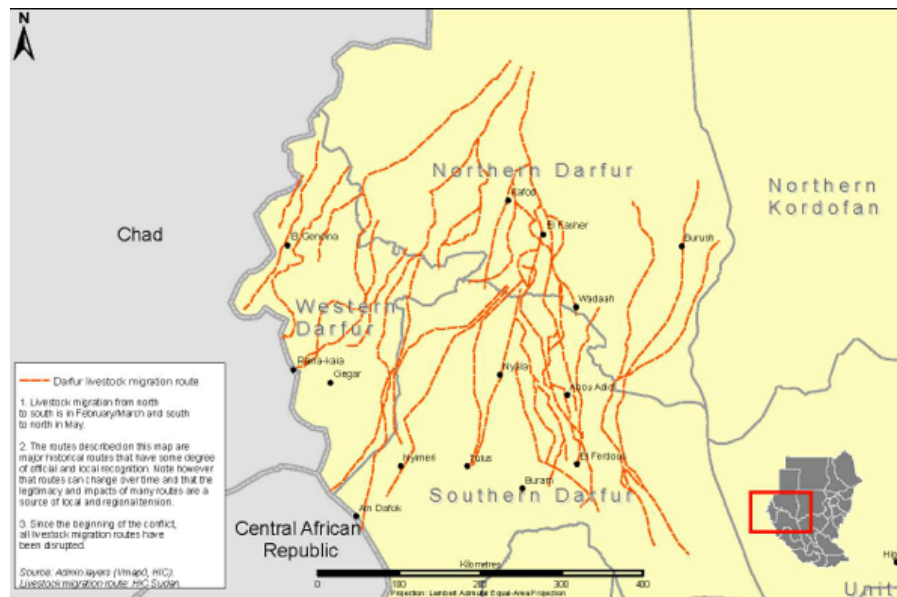
Figure 2. Darfur migration routes, UN Humanitarian Information Center (HIC), 2005.

On the theme of natural resources, it is worth noting here that Darfur has not

historically been the site of substantial oil or mineral wealth. While the prolonging of

conflict in South Sudan can, in part, be attributed to the discovery of oil reserves by

Chevron in the 1980s, only one active oil block touches on South Darfur and it has not

been the focus of government or rebel interest in the conflict or negotiations. Darfur is the

world's foremost source of gum Arabic, drawn from Acacia tees, which is used by

companies such as Coca Cola to make soft drinks, but the trees have been the source

more of inter-tribal fighting in South Darfur than between the government and Darfur

rebels ("Sudan clashes over…," 2013). Similarly, more recent inter-tribal fighting over gold mines in North Darfur have contributed to hundreds of deaths among Aballa Arab tribes since 2012 (ENOUGH, 2013).

Central Government Neglect and Oppression

Detracting from the regional government's ability to manage natural resource problems, Darfur has long received the lowest amount of federal spending of any of Sudan's northern peripheral regions (UNRHC, 2010). In addition, with the breakdown of traditional dispute resolution mechanisms previously employed by traditional officials in Darfur, also known as *Judiyya*—which commonly involves payment of *diya* or blood money for past wrongs—tribal conflicts over land, such as those involving the Massalit in 1998 and 1999, rapidly escalated after the failure of reconciliation conferences in 1995 and 1996 (De Waal, 2004b; HRW, 2004b; Mamdani, 2009). Neglect often morphed into active oppression, for instance when the NCP sealed off Dar Massalit in the belief that Massalit tribe members were acting on behalf of southern rebels, the SPLM/A (HRW, 2000). Thus, the government in Khartoum not only did nothing to alleviate environmental and demographic pressures, it frequently fanned the fire of inter-group conflict and grievance. Still, Darfur remained out of the international spotlight as Khartoum's much more public war with the SPLM/A in southern Sudan, a separate neglected region, pulled focus.

From 2002 onward, the US Bush administration, under significant pressure from American evangelical groups who had long championed the anti-slavery cause in South

Sudan, made a concerted effort to end the civil war in Sudan by supporting peace talks between the NCP and SPLM/A under the auspices of a Kenyan mediator (Hamilton, 2011, p. 18). As northern and southern Sudan looked to be on the cusp of a peace agreement after 20 long years of conflict in 2003, the Darfur rebel groups—the DLF and JEM—who had, until then, put their faith in SPLM/A leader John Garang to negotiate a deal on behalf of all of Sudan's marginalized groups, realized that door might be closing (Flint, 2007; Burr & Collins, 2008). Whether the SPLM/A of that time, which initially provided counsel, training, and arms to the Darfur rebels (Burr & Collins, 2008), would truly have represented the interests of all marginalized people in Darfur once it joined a unity government with South Sudan two years later will never be known. SPLM/A leader John Garang died in a helicopter crash in July 2005, just months after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between northern and southern Sudan was signed. Garang did live to see the height of the Darfur rebellion, however, and he probably did not expect it to capture international attention the way it did, nearly derailing north-south peace talks in the process.

The Darfur Rebellion

Against the above backdrop, two armed political movements based in Darfur, and drawn primarily from the Fur, Massalit, and Zaghawa tribes, formally launched a rebellion against the Government of Sudan in early 2003.[14] That February, the secular DLF (largely Fur and Massalit), which subsequently changed its name to the SLM/A in

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[14] Alex De Waal and Julie Flint place the origin of Darfur rebellion in 2001 (Flint & De Waal, 2008).

March, began attacking government targets, starting with police station in Gulu, the

capital of Jebel Mara (Burr & Collins, 2008, p. 288). The SLM/A's attacks, launched

with "Technicals"—Toyota trucks equipped with machine guns, just like the ones

Chadian militias had used to fight Libyan forces—spread to other police stations and

army posts from which the rebels amassed additional weapons and resources (Burr &

Collins, 2008, p. 288). On 25 April, the Islamist JEM (largely Zaghawa) joined the

SLM/A in an attack on the airport outside of El Fasher, the capital of North Darfur,

destroying Antonov bombers and helicopters on the airfield, occupying and army

headquarters, and taking Sudanese military officials hostage (Burr & Collins, 2008, p.

288). These types of attacks by the SLM/A and JEM, loosely in coordination with each

other, and based on similar, yet eventually incompatible goals, continued into the summer

(Burr & Collins, 2008, p. 292; Flint 2007).

The Government of Sudan, caught off guard, responded slowly, as the majority of

its military forces remained engaged in southern Sudan (Burr & Collins, 2008, p. 292).

However, by Summer 2003, the Government of Sudan had mobilized its army, air force,

and local militias—both PDF and *Jinjaweed*—to a level not previously seen in the region

(Flint & De Waal, 2005). These forces, which already had begun attacking civilian

villages on horseback in October 2002, responded with indiscriminate and systematic

village cleaning operations, in coordination with Sudanese air support, targeting the

ethnic homelands of the SLM/A and JEM fighters (Burr & Collins, 2008, p. 292). This

pattern of attacks, well established through interviews with Darfuris by groups like

Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and others, continued intensely for nearly

two years and sporadically after that to this day (AI 2003a, 2003b, 2004a, 2004b; HRW 2004a, 2004b, 2004c, 2005a). By early 2005, some 1.5 million people had already been displaced from their homes in Darfur by violence or lack of food, with nearly 200,000 fleeing across the border to Chad, and at least 150,000 people had died as a result of the conflict (Guha-Sapir & Degomme, 2005).

International Response

Reports by humanitarian and human rights organizations operating in Darfur began to attract the attention of donor governments, the United Nations, and the African Union in mid- to late 2003. Sensing the potential threat of unrest in Darfur to his own regime, Chadian President Deby, loosely under the umbrella of the African Union, mediated a 45-day ceasefire between Government of Sudan and Darfur rebel forces, which was signed on 3 September 2003 (Slim, 2004, p. 813). Later that month, the UN also launched its first appeal for $139 million to provide humanitarian assistance to Darfur (Slim, 2004, p. 814). A second 45-day Chadian brokered "humanitarian ceasefire" was signed in N'Djamena in April 2004 and the African Union—under the rubric of "African Solutions to African problems" (Murphy, 2007)—was given the task of monitoring the agreement's implementation as well as continuing with negotiations to reach a political settlement, while the UN maintained the lead on coordinating humanitarian assistance and human rights monitoring (De Waal, 2007b, p. 1041; Slim, 2004, p. 817; Lanz, 2011). The UN Security Council did not hold a major discussion on the Darfur conflict until 7 July 2004 (Slim, 2004, p. 811), although the UN's

humanitarian coordinator Jan Egeland briefed the Security Council on the situation in April 2004[15] (UN, 2004a).

Public pressure on donor governments to enhance the mission of the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) to incorporate civilian protection, and to reinforce it with western resources, mounted from late 2004, when the US Government publicly referred to the situation as in Darfur "genocide" (Hamilton, 2011). This pressure continued into 2006, the height of what became the Save Darfur advocacy movement in the United States and Europe, a full year after a massive influx of international humanitarian assistance stabilized malnutrition and mortality rates in the region in early 2005 (Hamilton, 2011). (Figure 3. Crude Mortality Rates in Darfur as Reported in 81 Surveys.) An AU-brokered peace agreement between the Government of Sudan and one faction of the SLM/A, the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA), signed in Abuja in May 2006, paved the way for a robust peacekeeping force with a UN Chapter VII civilian protection mandate. However, DPA negotiations were rushed to such an extent that the agreement fell apart within weeks.

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[15] According to Rebecca Hamilton, Egeland had tried to brief the UN Security Council in March, but Pakistan kept it off the agenda (Hamilton, 2011).
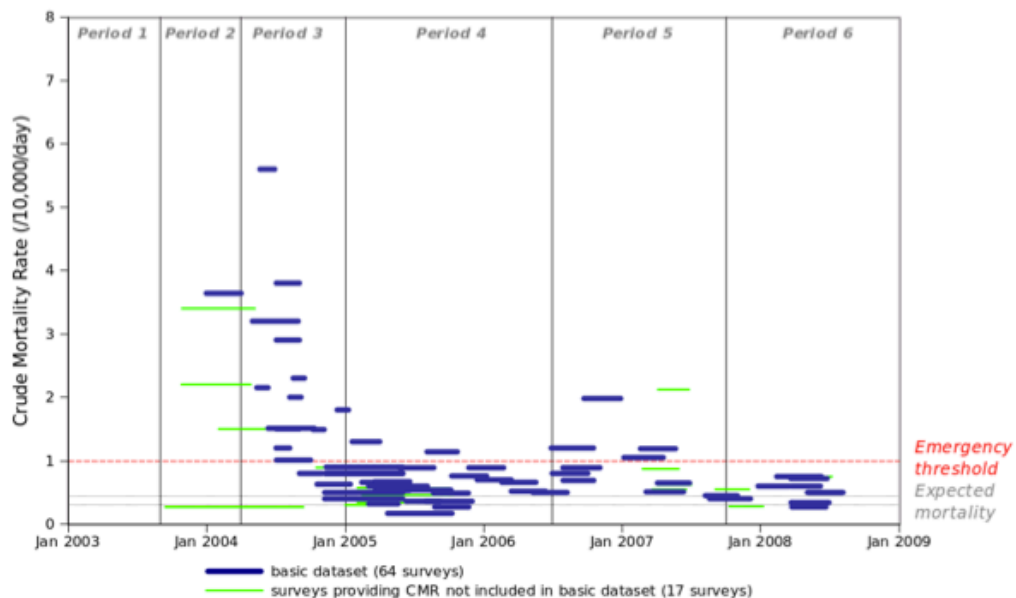
Note: The length of each line corresponds to the recall period covered by the survey.

Figure 3. Crude Mortality Rates in Darfur as Reported in 81 Surveys (Degomme, 2011).

The DPA had been negotiated under pressure from the UN Security Council to quickly conclude talks, in part to heed the UN Department of Peacekeeping (DPKO)'s advice that there be a "peace to keep," but more indirectly as a result of pressure from advocacy groups on international envoys to the talks to get peacekeepers deployed (Guéhenno, 2006a; Toga, 2007, p. 239; Nathan, 2007, p. 253). It was also limited in scope by what the CPA, which already had created a power-sharing government between Sudan and southern Sudan, would allow, according to an interview with a former AU official. The DPA, therefore granted Darfur one assistant to the president and created a regional governing authority in Darfur, but, unlike the internationally celebrated CPA, provided few international guarantees of implementation and was relatively unknown to

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the broader Darfuri population (DPA, 2006). While the agreement also provided for AU and UN officials to facilitate a series of conversations in Darfur to raise awareness and build support for its implementation, Abdel Wahid, leader of the SLM/A faction that did not sign the agreement, beat the AU and UN to the punch, according to the former AU official, quickly spreading the word—along with money and threats of violence—among Fur supporters in Darfur's IDP camps that the agreement did not merit their support (Fadul & Tanner, 2007; Weissman, 2008).

Meanwhile, many Zaghawa members of Minni Minawi's SLM/A faction that did sign the agreement flocked to JEM, which had stronger national ambitions than the SLM/A's vision of regional autonomy (Tubiana & Tanner, 2007). Violence both between the rebels and the Government of Sudan and amongst the rebel forces themselves escalated. This escalation of violence re-displaced civilians and worsened access for aid workers in what, by then, had become the largest humanitarian operation in the world ("UN warns," 2006; De Waal, 2007b; Abdul Jabar & Tanner, 2007; Tanner & Tubiana, 2007; Weissman, 2008). According to the UN charts below, displacement figures, which had steadied around 3 million in mid-2005, began to rise, and the percentage of the population accessible by humanitarian aid workers dropped from just over 80 percent right after the DPA was signed to just above 60 percent a few months later. (Figure 4. Estimated Number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and Total Conflict-Affected Populations in Darfur (UN Estimates Since April 2004). Figure 5. Percent of Affected Populations Accessible to Humanitarian Aid Since April 2004.)

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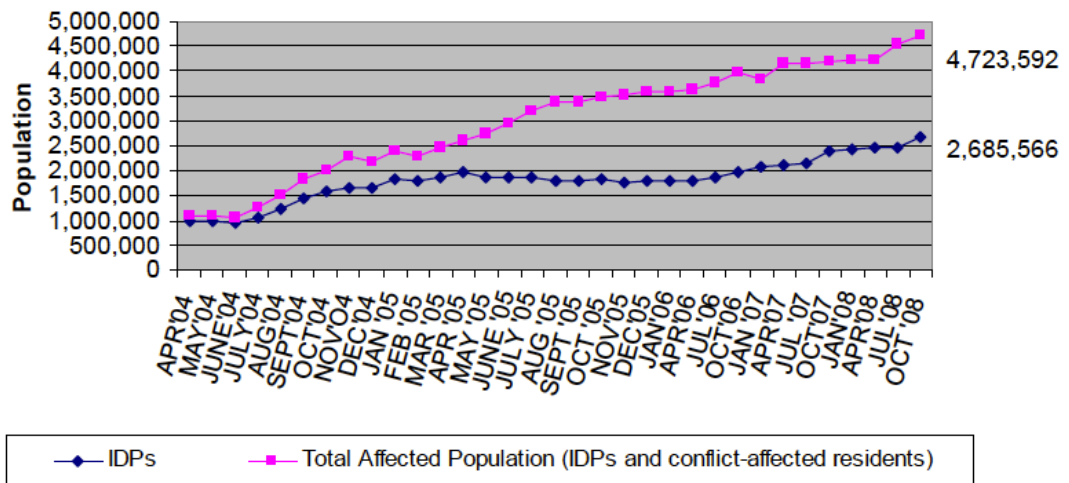
Figure 4. Estimated Number of Internally Displaced persons (IDPs) and Total Conflict-Affected Populations in Darfur (UN Estimates Since April 2004), UN Humanitarian Profile No. 33.
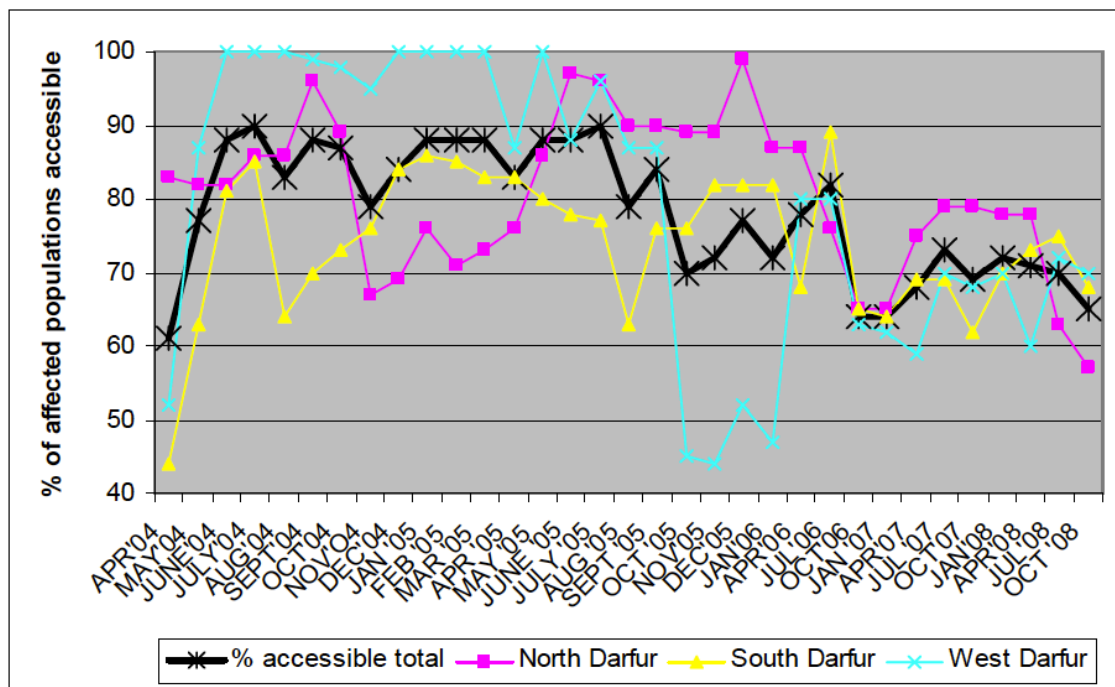
Figure 5. Percent of Affected Populations Accessible to Humanitarian Aid since April 2004, United Nations Humanitarian Profile No. 33.

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The UN Security Council's decision to convert AMIS into a hybrid AU-UN Chapter VII peacekeeping force (UNAMID) finally came in July 2007, after much negotiation with the Government of Sudan about the composition of the force (De Waal, 2007b, p. 1042). The actual conversion and deployment of nearly 26,000 authorized personnel ultimately took several years to complete (UNAMID, n.d.). The force has widely been criticized for lacking either the will or the ability to enforce its chapter VII mandate (Lynch, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c; Elbasri, A., 2014; Sengupta & Gettleman, 2014). More recently, advocacy groups have written to the UN Security Council recommending changes to the force's mandate and focus in order "to address the growing protection threats the people of Darfur experience" (ENOUGH, 2014).

Summary

An outside observer could attribute Darfur's current problems to any single one of the preceding themes—land, ethnicity, warring neighbors, religion, the environment, structural inequality, or rebellion—and he or she would be correct. These are the "facts" of the region that would inform any technical debate about how best to respond. What this complex history allows the reader to see, however, is how policy narratives about a conflict can be constructed on the basis of many different interpretations of these facts depending on what they mean to the observer—some aspects of the story may become more salient than others in the telling, depending on their resonance within a given discursive field. In other words, outside observers often look for the problems they expect to see. All of the above history is, therefore, important for understanding the which aspects of a problem remain hidden, while others some to the fore.

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

Mainstream policy decision-making analysis has long been guided by a positivist theoretical tradition, which assumes that policy problems are objectively defined and agreed upon, rational actors debate and choose amongst available policy options, and then logical policy choices are pursued. One formative example of this tradition is John Kingdon's explanation of how policy issues reach government decision-making agendas (Kingdon, 1984). Kingdon pioneered the concept of "policy windows," which, he said, occur when three "policy streams"—"problems," "proposals," and "politics"—converge, creating the conditions for consensus (Kingdon, 1984). Kingdon's epistemological world was one in which policy problems are known and solved through empirical observation and research. The following analytic endeavor operates under quite different assumptions.

The social constructivist view of the world, contrasted with the positivist approach, says that knowledge is produced through interpersonal interaction and shared meanings, as opposed to representing an objective truth that can be known or revealed through empirical research (Gergen, 1985). This approach to social science has deep roots in longstanding debates between positivist and post-positivist schools of thought, with seminal contributions by Kenneth Gergen and Jerome Bruner in the field of social psychology (Gergen, 1985; Bruner, 1990; Steinmetz, 2005). "Constructionism,"

according to Gergen, "asks one to suspend belief that commonly accepted categories or understandings receive their warrant through observation" (Gergen, 1985, p. 267). Bruner, in that vein, advocated for an approach he called "cultural psychology"—considering meaning as a function of culture—in any study of man. Bruner described how "folk psychology" forms the "system by which people organize their experience in, and knowledge about, and transactions with the social world" (Bruner, 1990, p. 35). The organizing principle of folk psychology, Bruner explained, is narrative, which structures both experience and expectations, making narrative a central focus of investigation for any social scientist (Bruner, 1990). "An assumption shared by all practitioners of [this] 'new psychology,'" according to Rom Harré, "is that psychology is the systematic study of the creation and management of meanings" (Harré & Slocum, 2003).

From a social constructivist, or constructionist, perspective, policy problems are not objectively defined, but rather socially constructed. The way in which policy actors describe problems is both subjective and inter-subjective—in other words, characterizations of problems are based on shared meanings or understandings within certain social or professional realms. Apart form Séverine Autesserre's work cited in the introduction to this paper (2009, 2010, 2012, 2014), it is difficult to find existing literature explicitly examining international decision-making about third party interventions in conflict, particularly in specific institutional settings, from a social constructionist perspective. According to at least one source cited by Autesserre in *Peaceland* (2014), focus on "meaning" as an explanatory variable in the field of peacebuilding went out of vogue in the 1960s and has only recently resurfaced (Miller &

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Rudnick, 2010, p. 64). However, the field of discursive and interpretive policy analysis (Fischer, 2003; Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003; Yanow, 2003), provides a helpful starting point for understanding the following:

1) how cognitive frames define problems and delimit individuals or institutions' fields of action (Goffman, 1974; Entman, 1991, Laws & Rein, 1999, 2003; Schön & Rein, 1994),

2) how frames can be uncovered through analysis of problem setting stories, or narratives, which reduce uncertainty and complexity by fixing assumptions for decision-making, but can also marginalize more complex counternarratives, giving rise to the need for "better formed stories" in the process (Roe, 1994; Nelson, 2001; Bamberg, 2004; Fischer, 2003; Cobb, 2013), and

3) how actors use narratives as argumentative tools—storylines—to appeal to social and institutional discourses and other strategies, such as narrative positioning, to maintain discursive dominance in the struggle over meaning. (Stone, 1989; Hajer, 1995; Harré and Langenhove, 1999)

A short discussion of these theories will set the foundation for a focus on Maarten Hajer's method of interactive-social discourse analysis as the basis of an approach to analyze international decision-making on Darfur. The next chapter will present this method and the researcher's own additions in more detail, marking a unique contribution to existing scholarship in the fields of both discursive and interpretive policy analysis and conflict analysis and resolution more broadly.

Frames

Research on framing as a cognitive and social mechanism for structuring and

organizing information about a given phenomenon (van Gorp, 2001) lies at the

intersection of several fields of study, including communications, political theory, and

social psychology. The study of framing in journalism, for instance, focuses largely on

the effect of news frames in mass media on public opinion, attitudes, and political

agendas (Entman, 1991; Johnson-Cartee, 2005). The study of framing in politics and

history, on the other hand, looks largely at the role of framing in the mobilization of

social movements and is associated with the study of contentious politics (Benford &

Snow, 1988; Tarrow, 1998). Finally, the study of framing in social psychology relates to

dynamics of political decision-making and behavioral economics (Kahneman & Tversky,

1981) as well as negotiation and conflict resolution (Putnam & Holmer, 1992; Gray 1997,

2003; Rothman 1997; Tannen, 1979; Neale & Bazerman, 1985; Lewicki, Saunders &

Minton, 1999; Elliot, Gray & Lewicki, 2003). This study is concerned primarily with a

variant of the latter application of frames—namely third party interventions in conflict,

specifically in the vein of social constructionism, as outlined above.

According to Frank Fischer, "The metaphor of the frame in interpretive social

science can be traced to the work of [Erving] Goffman (1974), who defined frames as a

principle of organization 'which governs the subjective meaning we assign to social

events'" (pp. 10-11, cited in Fischer 2003, p. 144)[16]. Goffman (1974) began his inquiry

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[16] Fischer also borrows van Gorp's definition of a frame as an 'organizing principle that transforms
fragmentary information into a structured and meaningful whole'. (van Gorp, 2001, p. 5 in Fischer 2003).

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into frames by assuming that any individual, when faced with a given situation, will ask him or herself, "What is going on here?" (p. 8). The description of "what is going on," he argued, will differ from individual to individual, from event to event, and from the time period during the event to the time period after the event (Goffman, 1974, p. 9). He sought primarily to make the point that a person's perception of reality is shaped by their culture and underlying belief system at a given moment in time (Goffman, 1974, p. 27). Goffman (1974) summarized that, "definitions of a situation are built up in accordance with principles of organization which govern events—at least social ones—and our subjective involvement in them" (p. 10-11).

Frames not only define a situation by describing what it is, however, they also define what it is not, and they crowd out alternative explanations. For example, Robert Entman (1991) has written about the way in which news frames influence the public's understanding of an event, "by providing, repeating, and thereby reinforcing words and visual images that reference some ideas but not others" (p. 7). News frames shape a reader's initial impression of an event, Entman (1991) argued, and provide the "schema" for every subsequent encounter with, and interpretation of, it (p. 7). For example, Karen Cerulo (1998) has written about the way media and other cultural frames shape our understanding of violent phenomena by structuring headlines in predictable sequences to denote guilt. Frames also link situations to meaningful cultural symbols—like metaphors or shortcuts for communicating with an audience—based on available "discursive domains" and social practices, while suppressing information that would contradict prevailing understandings (Entman 1991, pp. 7, 11, 22; Fischer 2003, p. 144). The

"rhetorical construction of the problem," Entman (1991) explained, launches a certain type of discourse by making some elements more salient than others, for example emphasizing the intentionality of an act in one case and the accidental nature of the same act in another case (pp. 14-15).

Entman (1991) additionally connected frames to action, by hypothesizing that dominant media frames affect political outcomes (p. 8), but he stopped short of demonstrating the effect. Entman (1991) and William Gamson (1995) both argued that frames, through the act of diagnosis, generate questions about "cause, responsibility, and remedy," as well as a set of "acceptable or possible" interventions to address a "problematic situation" (Fischer 2003, p. 144). Frames also have been likened to, or defined as "problematizations," which represent familiar notions of a problem, pointing to familiar solutions (Foucault, 1983; Bacchi, 2014, pp. 2-3). Frames, in that sense, have the tendency to function like path dependent scenarios. Donald Schön and Martin Rein (1993) more explicitly demonstrated through public policy case studies, how a frame "provides conceptual coherence, a direction of action, a basis for persuasion, and a framework for the collection of data—order, action, rhetoric, and analysis" (p. 153, cited in Fischer 2003). Schön and Rein have shown, in practice, how frames are both interpretive and prescriptive, determining, according to Fischer (2003), what the "facts" of a situation are and making a normative assessment of what should be done about them (pp. 144-145).

Rein and David Laws (2003) similarly have shown how frames function in practice. They defined "framing" as "a particular way of representing knowledge, and as

the reliance on (and development of) interpretive schemas that bound and order a chaotic situation, facilitate interpretation and provide a guide for doing and acting" (Laws & Rein, 2003, p. 173). Laws and Rein (2003), for example, have looked at the way disparate frames between health officials and residents at Love Canal near Niagara Falls, NY led to a conflict over how to respond to environmental waste disposal (p. 180). Laws and Rein (2003) drew on the work of Bourdieu to explain how frames limit policy options in practice:

> Practice is built on these taken-for-granted assumptions that provide a self-evident foundation on which action can proceed. Doubt about these implicit beliefs would inhibit spontaneity that action in concrete situation requires. Moreover, these self-evident habits and dispositions 'naturalize their own arbitrariness.' A distinctive feature of practice is the way it limits and constrains both thought and action through the development of a 'sense of reality' in which the natural and the social worlds correspond. This crucial dimension of practice defines what is discussable, what is realistic, what is natural, without the recognition of the arbitrary foundations on which these judgments are based. (p. 179)

Lest one develops an entirely negative opinion of frames because of their constraining function, it is important to highlight their dynamic nature. Goffman (1974) suggested the potential for "breaking frame" when one's perception of a situation no longer applies. Linda Putnam and Majia Holmer (1992) proposed "reframing" as a tool for recasting the basis of negotiations between two opposed parties. Frames can also be useful tools for breaking deadlocks in times of disagreement. Schön and Rein (1994), and Laws and Rein (2003), have focused on "frame reflection" as way to move decision-making forward when diverging descriptions of a problem lead to conflicting policy prescriptions about the proper course of action (Fischer 2003, pp. 144-145). They also emphasized the need for relevant actors to jointly participate in the reframing of a

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problem to move forward in agreeing upon the steps required for its resolution (Schön &
Rein, 1994; Laws & Rein, 2003 p. 179). Tracing the evolution of a frame and helping to
reframe it is one possible task of the policy analyst, but basic frame analysis would be
insufficient for understanding their origins or the interaction of frames with each other
over time (Fischer, 2003, p. 144).

Narratives and Counternarratives

The link between frames and action is essential for understanding how decisions
are made and acted upon in a multiperspectival world. The concept of frames alone,
however, tells us little about where to find the various perspectives that inform them. In
other words, people rarely speak in frames when asked about why they approached a
decision in one way versus another. People do, on the other hand, tell stories. The
narrative approach to policy analysis directly associates frames with narratives on the
assumption that frames are premised on stories about how a problem began, whose
responsibility it is to solve it, and how it should end (Fischer, 2003; Roe, 1994; Schön &
Rein, 1994; Rein & Laws, 1999, 2003). Moreover, stories, like frames, provide a window
into an individual's or institution's underlying perspectives, beliefs, and values about a
situation and the world (Schön & Rein, 1994). Laws and Rein (1999) have argued a
frame is, in and of itself, a narrative: they defined a "policy frame" as a "normative-
prescriptive story that sets out a problematic policy problem and a course of action to be
taken to address the problematic situation" (p. 3 cited in Fischer, 2003, p. 144).

Indeed, according to Fischer (2003), the "decision-making process is generally driven by narrative accounts of problems and their causes" (p. ix). Drawing from Rein and Schön's work (1977), and in an approach adopted by this author of this paper, Fischer (2003) argued that frames can be "uncovered" through analysis of "problem setting stories," which simplify and bound a complex situation (p. 145). In particular, he emphasized the inherently normative character of narrative, which reveals not only how a person sees the world but also how he or she believes the world *should* be (Burner, 1990, pp. 60, 95). People live their lives, Bruner said, through stories and the stories they tell say something about how they interpret events based on their own moral values (Bruner, 1990, pp. 50-51). In a policy context, "problem-setting stories, frequently based on generative metaphors," according to Fischer (2003), "link causal accounts of policy problems to particular proposals for action and facilitate the normative leap from 'is' to 'ought'" (p. 145; Rein & Schön, 1977).

Much of this social constructionist understanding of narrative structure derives from the fields of literary theory and socio-linguistics, which emphasize the normative quality of narrative. A fully formed narrative, according to linguistics scholar William Labov, has an abstract, orientation, complicating action, evaluation, resolution, and coda (Labov & Waletsky, 1967; Labov, 1997). The "evaluative" component Labov stressed in his definition of storytelling is essential not only to the structure, but to the function, of a narrative, because of its implications for moral judgment (McCloskey, 1990, pp. 27-29; White, 1981, p. 20, cited in Fischer, 2003, p. 163). The "point" of the narrative –or the "so what"—tells the listener what he or she is supposed to take away from it—why he or

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she should care. In that sense, truth is less important than meaning in narrative. In fact, Bruner claimed that narrative is different than other forms of discourse, because of its constitutive parts—characters, sequential events, and plot—and the fact that narrative does not lose its power whether it is "real" or "imaginary" (Bruner, 1990). He argued that narrative is powerful because it is interpretative; it lays down the code by which we, as people, understand and respond to the world (Bruner, 1990).

In addition to their evaluative function, narratives in the world of decision-making reduce complexity and uncertainty (Roe, 1994). Just as frames crowd out alternative explanations of a situation, policy narratives hold certain variables steady. Emery Roe (1994) has demonstrated through several case studies how narratives operate in divisive policy debates to reduce uncertainty, for example over pesticide use, water resource management, and global warming. Roe (1994) has defined "policy narratives" as "those stories—scenarios and arguments—that are taken by one or more parties to the controversy as underwriting (that is, establishing or certifying) and stabilizing (that is, fixing or making steady) the assumptions for policymaking in the face of the issue's uncertainty, complexity, or polarization" (p. 3).

Roe (1994) also echoed the work of Entman (1991) on frames in observing how dominant narratives suppress contradictory information. From Roe's perspective, the resilience of policy narratives to change has more to do with the practical need to reduce complexity and uncertainty in the decision-making process than sheer cognitive shortcutting, but the effect is the same. Roe (1994) argued, "Stories commonly used in describing and analyzing policy issues are a force in themselves, and must be considered

explicitly in assessing policy options. Further, these stories …often resist change or modification even in the presence of contradictory empirical data" (p. 2). Roe (1994) saw the task of a policy analyst as shining a light on alternative stories or explanations for a problem and bridging the gap between the dominant narrative and these other "counternarratives." He was concerned primarily with reducing polarization in policy debates by developing a new more inclusive "metanarrative" that would lead to more effective policy prescriptions (Roe, 1994). He proposed a four-step approach to narrative policy analysis:

1. Identify those policy narratives in issues of high uncertainty and complexity that are either scenarios (with beginnings, middles, and ends) or arguments (with premises and conclusions);

2. Identify stories that do not conform to these the definition of story—i.e. nonstories (e.g. circular arguments) and counterstories (stories that run counter to the dominant policy narrative);

3. Compare the two sets and combine them into a metanarrative "told" by the comparison; and

4. Determine how the metanarrative, once generated, recasts the issues in a way so as to make it more amenable to decision making and policymaking. (Roe 1994, pp. 3-4; Fischer 2003, pp. 172-173)

According to Roe (1994), "the way to undermine a policy narrative is not by trying to subvert it empirically—a tactic that only increases uncertainty and therefore, the pressure to retain the policy narrative being critiqued. A better way to undermine a policy narrative is by creating a counternarrative … [and] finding ways to 'rewrite' dominant policy narratives or engaging other dominant narratives that happen to run counter to the narrative being disputed" (p. 5). Michael Bamberg (2004), drawing on Harré's notion of

"positioning" and "repositioning" actors in a story, has further contributed to the literature on counternarratives, defining them as the counter claim to dominant stories or "masternarratives" (Harré & Langenhove, 1999). Hilde Lindeman Nelson (2001) also has explored the role of "counterstories" in what she calls "narrative repair" of "damaged identities." In addition, Henry Giroux (1996) has written about the importance of counternarratives in challenging dominant discourses in the public education system.

Cobb (2013) has explored the dynamics of conflict narratives, and the tension between master and counternarratives. She argued that the "better-formed story"—a type of counternarrative—enables conflicting parties to construct each other, themselves, and their relational history in more complex terms, promoting conflict resolution (pp. 234-235). According to Cobb (2013):

> …conflict narratives have simple plots and character constructions in which each party legitimizes Self and delegitimizes Others, using very binary and simplistic moral frameworks. The better-formed story…is more complex. First, the plot of a better formed story is more complex in three ways: (a) is has quantitatively more events in the plot line—the number of events that people discuss as pertinent to the plot line increases, (b) it has a circular rather than linear logic such that all parties to the conflict are constructed as having contributed to the problem, thus creating an *ironic* plot, (c) it contains temporal complexity that ensures the plot has events in the past, that lead to the present, toward a future, as opposed to a plot only focused on the past or the future….Second, the discursive positions for each of the characters are more complex in that they are described (by Self and elaborated by Others) as having characteristics that constitute their legitimacy but that have a shadow side that reduces their perfection (increasing delegitimacy). Third, the moral order is moved from being binary to multimodal—that is, the dimensions along which persons evaluate Self and Other multiply, increasing the diversity of the moral frameworks that are elaborated by all of the parties. (p. 221)

Cobb's definitions of better-formed stories and narrative compression—the condition in which a dominant narrative consolidates and closes itself off to challenges

through routines that thwart the development of alternative storylines—also could be applied to "outsider" narratives about a conflict, i.e. stories told by actors other than the parties themselves. Understanding these narrative dynamics has implications for international intervention, as the quality—the complexity—of the narratives circulating in the international policy community is a potential indicator of the possible openings, or lack thereof, for conflict resolution. As Cobb (2013) has explained, however, simply constructing better-formed stories in a vacuum without the participation of the people who own these stories is unlikely to result in change (p. 161). Moreover, Cobb cited Nelson (2001) in warning that, some counternarratives merely "reproduce dominant narratives" and "maintain marginalized identity" (Cobb, 2013, p. 87). Cobb (2013) has advocated "contextualization"—or "thickening of a narrative"—as opposed to launching counternarratives into midair and hoping they will prevail or naturally reconcile with the dominant narrative, as Roe proposed (p. 87).

Fischer's (2003) claim that frames can be uncovered through analysis of problem setting stories, coupled with Roe's (1994) approach to identifying counternarratives and Cobb's (2013) contribution of better formed stories, are all useful for beginning to understand how solutions to problems are shaped and how dominant narratives and counternarratives might differ in complexity. However, they leave questions about both the intentionality and agency of individual and institutional actors. Do people tell stories about a problem based solely on their understanding of the situation through the lens of their own values, feelings, and beliefs or are they more strategic in their approach? Likewise, how much does a conflict of policy narratives result from the clashing of

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worldviews and subconscious reactions based on past experiences versus deliberate
calculations by relevant actors about which story is likely to win the debate? What is
needed is an understanding of policy narratives as more than just means of reducing
complexity, but also as instrumental—or persuasive—constructs.

Discourse and Storylines

Maarten Hajer (1995), who has explored the influence of "story-lines" in policy
discussions through case studies of environmental issues, argued that narratives are not
just "cognitive schemes" (Fischer 2003, p. 163). Rather, according to Hajer, they are
tools in an "argumentative struggle" for winning a policy debate (Hajer 1995, p. 53).
Hajer (1995), like Roe, observed that, "various actors are likely to hold different
perceptions of what the problem 'really' is," but Hajer was concerned more specifically
with the purposeful "mobilization of bias" through the promotion of storylines about the
problem (pp. 42-43). "A story-line," according to Hajer (1995), "is a generative sort of
narrative that allows actors to draw upon various discursive categories to give meaning to
specific physical or social phenomena. The key function of story-lines is that they suggest
unity in the bewildering variety of separate discursive component parts of a problem like
acid rain….story-lines reorder understandings" (p. 56). In other words, a storyline is, in
and of itself, an argument.

Hajer (1995) proposed an "argumentative approach" to discourse analysis that
"conceives of politics as a struggle for discursive hegemony in which actors try to secure
support for their definition of reality" (p. 59). He compared storylines, the primary unit of

discursive production, to "catchy one-liners," "symbolic references," and "metaphors"—

almost always accompanied by a "loss of meaning"—which both legitimize the speaker

within his or her own field and become "tropes" that justify particular courses of action

(Hajer 1995, pp. 62-63). Consistent with Roe's definition of "policy narratives," Hajer

(1995) said storylines facilitate "the reduction of the discursive complexity of a problem"

and "create possibilities for problem closure," while taking on "a ritual character" and

giving "permanence to the debate" (pp. 62-63). Hajer wrote (1995):

> The concept of a story-line is a key element in the argumentative approach. Story-
> lines fulfill an essential role in the clustering of knowledge, the positioning of
> actors, and, ultimately, in the creation of coalitions amongst the actors of a given
> domain. Story-line is the analytical term that unites several established concerns
> in research in the constructivist tradition. The discursive practice of the metaphor,
> recently rediscovered in political science, for instance, comes under the definition
> of a story-line, as do analogies, historical references, clichés, appeals to collective
> fears or senses of guilt. (p. 63)

Hajer (1993) did not, however, mean to imply that storylines are only a

convenient means of simplifying reality—rather, they are linguistic and argumentative

tools for creating it (p. 45-47). According to Hajer (1995), "political conflict is hidden in

the question of what definition is given to the problem, which aspects of social reality are

included and which are left undiscussed" (p. 43). Which aspects of social reality are

included in the problem definition, according to Hajer (1995), is in turn determined more

by which discourses are evoked by storyline than which storyline is correct (pp. 44-49).

Storylines gain credence, he said, because "they sound right" within a certain social and

institutional context; their credibility and plausibility has more to do with the speaker's

position and the listener's "discursive identity" in a given practice area than the objective

merits of the case (Hajer, 1995, p. 63). Hajer's (1995) work was not unique in this sense—he drew heavily from Michel Foucault's (1972) writing on "disciplines" and less explicitly from Bourdieu (1977, 1984)—but it is perhaps more explanatory than Roe's approach in helping to understand how storylines emerge from specific institutional discourses, as well as "inter-discursive" activity between people and organizations (Hajer, 1995, pp. 44-51).

As a discourse analyst, Hajer (1995) sought to uncover not only the existence of multiple narrative explanations for a problem, but to understand the process by which one account (or actor's position) "gains dominance and is seen as authoritative, while other understandings are discredited" (pp. 44 and 51). He was particularly interested in social power and the way in which institutional discourses both "enable and constrain action" by regulating the sphere of acceptable ideas, language, and practice (Hajer, 1995, pp. 46-50). Hajer (1993) defined discourse as, "the ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categories through which meaning is given to a phenomenon," adding that "discourses frame certain problems; … they distinguish some aspects of a situation rather than others" (p. 45). According to Hajer (1995):

> Discourses imply prohibitions since they make it impossible to raise certain questions or argue certain cases; they imply exclusionary systems because they only authorize certain people to participate in a discourse; they come with discursive forms of internal discipline through which a discursive order is maintained; and finally there are also certain rules regarding the conditions under which a discourse can be drawn upon. (p. 49)[17]

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[17] Also see Bourdieu (2000) regarding what is "speakable" in a particular domain—"social acceptability," Bourdieu said, "is not reducible to mere grammaticality"; rather, "competence" is derived from social position and the ability to speak the "legitimate language" (p. 474). "Speakers lacking the legitimate competence are *de facto* excluded from the social domains in which this competence is required, or are

Hajer (1995) referred to his perspective as "social-interactive discourse theory,"

because of its emphasis on human interaction, specifically language, as constitutive of

reality (pp. 52-53). He drew from Michael Billig (1989) in characterizing political actors

as conscious manipulators of thoughts, issues, and ideas with the intent of seeking

"argumentative victory against rival thinkers," for example, drawing on "categorization,"

which clusters an issue with seemingly similar situations, versus "particularization,"

which highlights a situation's differences to advance an argument (Billig, 1989, p. 54,

cited in Hajer 1995). He also drew on the work of Bronwyn Davies and Rom Harré

(1990) and Harré and Luk van Langenhove (1999) in explaining how actors position

themselves and others in storylines through speech acts, thereby reproducing the

discursive space in which certain "rules and conventions" are maintained and respected.

This reproduction of the status quo ensures that even subsequent speakers who seek to

discredit the dominant storyline must operate within existing "constructs" and "known

categories" and will be forced to "answer within the same discursive frame" (Hajer,

1995, pp. 55-58). According to Hajer (1995):

> Discourse analysis then investigates the boundaries between the clean and the
> dirty, the moral and the efficient, or how a particular framing of the discussion
> makes certain elements appear as fixed or appropriate while other elements
> appear problematic. One can endeavor to show whether definitions homogenize a
> problem, that is to say make the problem understandable within a reified
> perception of the wider problem field, or whether definitions suggest a
> 'heteroginization' that requires an opening up of established discursive categories.
> (p. 54)

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condemned to silence. What is rare, then is not the capacity to speak…but rather the competence to speak
the legitimate language" (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 474).

Hajer (1993, 1995) claimed that a given discourse becomes "hegemonic" when two conditions are satisfied: 1) "discourse structuration," which can be said to occur in cases where the credibility of speaker depends on their usage of certain terms—for instance, jargon—particular to a relevant discourse, and a discourse starts to dominate the way a society conceptualizes the world, and 2) "discourse institutionalization," which can be said to occur if the given discourse has taken hold in "institutional arrangements," meaning either in organizational practices or traditional ways of reasoning. According to Hajer (1995), "It becomes imperative to examine the specific idea of reality or of the status quo as something that is upheld by key actors through discourse. Likewise, it becomes essential to look at the specific way in which appositional forces seek to challenge these constructs" (p. 55).

Hajer further directed the analyst to look for "discourse coalitions," which bring together multiple groups through shared usage of a set of storylines (Hajer 1995, p.65; Fischer, 2003, p. 107). Hajer explained that discourse coalitions may even bring together seemingly quite disparate groups, because of the fact that storylines lend themselves to multiple interpretations (Fischer, 2003, p. 113). Groupings within discourse coalitions are, therefore, based on "discursive affinity," rather than some form of intentional coordination from above (Hajer, 1993, p. 47). As with a discourse, a discourse coalition becomes "dominant," according to Hajer (1993), when, "1) it dominates the discursive space; that is, central actors are persuaded by, or forced to accept, the rhetorical power of the new discourse (condition of discourse structuration); and 2) this is reflected in the institutional practices of that political domain; that is, the actual policy process is

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conducted according to the ideas of a given discourse (condition of discourse

institutionalization)" (p. 48).

Hajer has differentiated his discourse coalition approach to exploring policy

change from an empirical analytic framework developed by Paul Sabatier (1988) to

explain policy outcomes through the study of "advocacy coalitions" (Fischer, 2003, pp.

94, 100-101). Namely, Hajer has underscored the extent to which policy coalitions are

unified by discursive constructs, as opposed to belief systems or core values (Fischer,

2003, p. 94). Hajer also has differentiated his framework from Sabatier's on the basis that

discursive constructs are unique from policy debate to policy debate and are, themselves,

constantly producing new meanings, making it impossible to impose categories ahead of

time.[18] Rather, according to Hajer, each storyline—a melding of facts and normative

orientations into a persuasive narrative structure—must be interpreted in every new

discursive environment (Fischer, 2003, p. 103).

Vivien Schmidt's "discursive institutionalism" (2008) adds some nuance to

Hajer's distinction between beliefs or core values of a group and discourses in

institutional settings. Schmidt has argued that, "institutions are the product of two things:

1) agents' background ideational abilities, which allow them to "make sense of …a given

meaning context" and draw on the "rules" or "norms" of an organization; and 2)

foreground discursive abilities, which allow them to deliberate about and change their

institution's rules even as they operate within them (p. 314). She has additionally

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[18] See Fischer (2003, pp. 95-114) for a longer discussion of Hajer's critique of Paul Sabatier's (1988)
"Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF)" and the difference between advocacy coalitions and discourse
coalitions.

highlighted the importance of looking at not only communicative discourse, the outward facing conveyance of ideas to a public audience, but also coordinative discourse, the substance of conversations and debates between actors in a shared meaning space around a common policy enterprise (Schmidt, 2008, p. 310). Discourse coalitions are formed, according to Schmidt (2012), within this coordinative space.

In light of distinctions made between Hajer and Sabatier's approaches, it is important here to differentiate Hajer's analytic method—interpreting meanings in a given context—from an empirical approach, which might impose a coding scheme generalizable to all cases (Fischer, 2003, p. 102). For example, one might use Deborah Stone's (1989) concept of "causal stories," as shown below, to categorize storylines according to problem ownership and logically pursuant interventions. According to Stone (1989), policy debates are about more than problem definition—they are arguments specifically over causation of, and responsibility for, a problem, emphasizing the intentional versus the accidental nature of an event or phenomenon (p. 283). Stone (1989) claimed that policymakers and advocates not only launch particular storylines surrounding a problem to advance their agendas, they specifically "compose stories that describe harms and difficulties, attribute them to actions of other individuals or organizations, and thereby claim the right to invoke government power to stop the harm" (p. 282).

Stone (1989) proposed this concept could be used to create a framework, shown below, for understanding political arguments, which, in trying to compel action, seek to move causal stories from the realm of the inadvertent to the deliberate (p. 284). (Table 1.

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Barbara Stone (1989), Causal Stories and Policy Agendas.) However, using this

framework as the primary lens for analysis of storylines would assume that causation was

the only narrative feature around which a dominant discourse was constructed when, in

fact, Hajer has argued, the particular discursive constructs operative in every policy

debate differ from context to context. Stone's concept of causal stories remains useful for

identifying potential argumentative strategies in any social-interactive discourse analysis,

but a broader framework is needed to examine the multiple dimensions of narrative

complexity and simplicity that might differentiate storylines from one another.

Table 1. Barbara Stone (1989), Causal Stories and Policy Agendas

		Consequences	
		Intended	**Unintended**
Actions	**Unguided**	Mechanical Cause • Intervening agent • Machines • Trained animals • Brainwashed people	Accidental Cause • Nature • Weather • Earthquakes • Machines that run amok
	Purposeful	Intentional Cause • Assault • Oppression • Conspiracies that work • Programs that work	Inadvertent Cause • Intervening conditions • Unforeseen side effects • Neglect • Carelessness • Omission

Summary of Analytic Frameworks

Each of the theoretical approaches to discursive or interpretive policy analysis outlined above provides a useful launching point for understanding the role that meaning plays in shaping the international community's approach to a particular conflict. However, each of the approaches is incomplete. Frame analysis would enable the identification, categorization, and/or coding of frames relevant to a conflict, for example

through a simple exercise of counting the frequency of key words and metaphors in relevant texts, but would provide only a static snapshot of frames and their orientation toward certain solutions without exploring how they evolved and operated, dynamically and in interaction with each other. In addition, while existing methods of narrative analysis have focused on the nature of narratives in the policymaking process (Roe, 1994; Fischer, 2003), and the nature of stories associated with creating or resolving conflicts (Cobb, 2013), these contributions do not address how one narrative prevailed over another in a past decision. Hajer's social-interactive discourse approach does address how one storyline prevailed over others by appealing to existing social and institutional discourses and through use of narrative positioning, but would benefit from additional case development with respect to international conflict resolution as well as a more rigorous framework for exploring relevant discursive constructs and examining narrative complexity.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

As previewed in the introduction, an interpretive approach to analyzing how the international community arrives at decisions about how to intervene in conflicts marks an epistemological and methodological departure from traditional positivist decision-making analysis (Yanow, 2000; Klotz & Lynch, 2007). Positivist policy analysis, for example, has focused on cost-benefit calculations related to various policy options, helping the analyst to understand why one policy should be, or was, chosen versus another (Stokey & Zeckhauser, 1978; Yanow, 2000). A post-positivist approach, on the contrary, takes the position that policy responses—including international decisions about which intervention makes the most sense in any given conflict—are not the product of a rational cost-benefit calculations, but a reflection of many different constituencies' interpretations of a problem and responses to similar problems as a general enterprise (Hajer, 1993; Yanow, 2000, p. 8). This research endeavor starts from the premise that international conceptions and descriptions of conflicts cannot be empirically or predictably categorized from one debate to another—i.e. coded based on preconceived groupings—but are actually discursive constructs unique to every situation that must be explored and interpreted in context to understand why one intervention prevails over others (Hajer, 1995; Fischer, 2003; Weick, 1995; Klotz & Lynch, 2007).

Inter-Discursive Narrative Complexity Analysis

To answer the question of how a given narrative—in this case, a simplified advocacy narrative—became dominant in African Union and United Nations decision-making regarding the international response to Darfur, the analyst relied on Maarten Hajer's overarching approach to social-interactive discourse analysis with important modifications (Haajer, n.d.). Hajer's method was chosen as a starting point because of its potential to account for both temporal and inter-discursive dynamics and to analyze a debate already held in the past. Hajer's prescribed method involves ten steps, which the researcher has consolidated below into three by combining related activities under the following headers: interviews, construction of a timeline, and document analysis. The researcher found the steps in this method to be iterative, rather than linear, resulting a more fluid and often parallel process than a numbered list might imply, but the steps are, nevertheless, consistent with those taken. In addition, the researcher borrowed elements from at least one other analytic model, and innovated a framework for analysis of narrative complexity to interpret data, both of which are reflected in the final interpretive step under document analysis and will be discussed in more detail below.

1) <u>Interviews.</u> The researcher conducted two rounds of interviews, first with subject matter experts, i.e. people chosen because they have a view of the field form different positions—or "helicopters" in Hajer's terminology—and the second with decision makers and influential voices, or "key players," as Hajer would call them, as identified in the first step (Hajer, n.d.). Additional details

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on sampling and the format of these interviews will be provided below in the discussion on data collection.

a. "Helicopters." The researcher first interviewed five subject matter experts who both provided the researcher with an idea of which "artifacts" or documents were "significant carriers of meaning" or influential in the discursive space around Darfur—articles, reports, decisions, etc.—and helped establish an initial chronology of events for the researcher to continue adding to throughout the process (Hajer, n.d.; Yanow, 2000; Fischer, 2003, p. 149).

b. "Key players." The researcher then conducted ten interviews with key players, consisting of people who, based on the initial interviews, were identified as being "central actors in the political process" (Hajer's definition) and/or whose voices were somehow influential in the debate (the researcher's definition) (Hajer, n.d.). The goal of these interviews was to understand how key players interpreted particular events, reconstruct the discourse from which each actor approached the situation, and help identify turning points—or as Hajer calls them, cognitive and positional shifts or reframing—and explore what brought those turning points about, such as a particular report, a meeting, a confrontation, sudden recognition that someone else's perspective was valuable, or a particular practice (Hajer, n.d).

2) <u>Construction of a Written Timeline of Events.</u> Throughout the process, and based on, the interview process, the researcher constructed a chronology of events pertaining to international involvement in the Darfur conflict, which included relevant publications and dates, in a Word document. The researcher added to this timeline as additional data were collected and used the timeline to identify:

   a. <u>Key Incidents.</u> The researcher took note of key events, which in some cases corresponded to "turning points" identified by interview subjects. Examples of key events included important statements by UN officials, UN Security Council Resolutions or AU Peace and Security Council Decisions, and key moments in the advocacy movement or conflict itself, all raised by interview subjects. The timeline of events was by no means intended to be a complete accounting of the history of the conflict or international events related to it, but rather those that punctuated the discursive space based on interview subjects' recollection.

   b. <u>Sites of Discursive Production and Argumentation.</u> The analyst identified the moments or exchanges that created or reproduced meanings primarily through analysis of interview transcripts, followed by further research of particular moments. As NGO reporting was a primary site of public debate around the conflict, according to multiple interviewees, NGO accounts were considered among the most important sites of discursive production and argumentation. In addition, based on interviews, the researcher

focused on editorial pieces and blog posts by frequent commentators on

the Darfur conflict, who often responded if not directly, then indirectly, to

each other in the positioning of specific actors.

3) Document Analysis and Interpretation. The researcher used the above timeline

as a primary means of note taking on recurring concepts and ideas, or

structuring discourses—i.e. storylines—found in each document, eventually

resulting in a 138-page timeline (Hajer, n.d.). As an important addition to the

method, the researcher then analyzed the storylines uncovered in these

documents according to three narrative characteristics (below):

a. The researcher combined and used Autesserre (2014) and Cobb's (2013)

definitions of "simplified narratives" and "better formed stories,"

respectively, to take notes on each document—and the descriptions of the

Darfur conflict contained within them—according to the following

narrative characteristics[19]:

    i. Events in plotline and causation: When did the story begin and

      how did the conflict start? Was the history long with multiple

      building incidents or compressed to include only select events?

      Was the explanation multi-causal or mono-causal?

    ii. Characters and morality: How were the characters defined and

      judged morally? Were the characters monolithic or diverse and

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[19] The researcher worked from the assumption that, "narrative is one of the largest classes of discourse, that is of sequences of sentences subsumed to a certain order," but certainly not the only discursive element that may emerge as important in social-interactive discourse analysis (Ricoeur, 1981).

nuanced within groups? Were they defined in black and white terms, as good versus evil, or did the story recognize various ways of "being good," i.e. having legitimate reasons for behaving or responding one way or another? Was there a linear logic that blamed one party for the conflict or a circular logic by which both parties are constructed as having contributed to the problem?

      iii.   <u>Future and response:</u> Was there a future in the story that proceeded from events in both the past and present? If a future was envisioned, did it involve many possible responses or only one panacea?

b. <u>Analysis of Positioning Effects.</u> In addition to the three narratives characteristics notated for each document, the researcher took note of specific examples of actors positioning each other in certain roles. Examples might include a member of the advocacy movement implying that another actor who prioritized political negotiations was condoning human rights abuses. A second example might be an academic expert positioning those who characterized violence in Darfur in "ethnic" terms as endangering Darfur's long-term reconciliation.

c. <u>Analysis of Practices.</u> The researcher also noted, based on interview transcripts, where actors revealed institutional practices as formative in their discussion and interpretation of events. Such practices might include the pressure for advocates to condense information into one-page handouts

or the tendency of policymakers to rely on news media rather than local sources of information.

    d. <u>Reconstruction of the Discursive Order.</u> The researcher also added to Hajer's method by borrowing Dvora Yanow's (2000) concept of "communities of meaning" to map the discursive order—an "architecture of meaning"—based on operative discourses identified in the course of interviews and document analysis and then compiled a narrative account of the evolution and interplay of discursive structures—storylines—over time, based on the above analyses.

The above method—which can be referred to as inter-discursive narrative complexity analysis—enabled the researcher to do three things that the other approaches to frame and narrative analysis discussed in the previous chapter would not. First, it provided a means to capture inter-discursive dynamics, that is the interplay between discourses and discursive constructs, rather than to only analyze frames or narratives in parallel. Second, it allowed the researcher to investigate a process over time, rather than taking a static snapshot of a debate. Third, it was designed for the purpose of retroactive analysis to understand how a particular storyline dominated a debate that happened in the past, rather than analyzing a current debate and making policy recommendations based on that analysis in real time. Hajer's method was enhanced by the two additions below: the approach to mapping communities of meaning (Yanow, 2000) and the incorporation of the framework for analyzing narrative complexity (Cobb, 2013; Autesserre, 2014).

Communities of Meaning

As Hajer's method calls on the analyst to reconstruct the discursive order

surrounding a debate, this researcher found it useful to draw on Yanow's (2000) concepts

of "communities of meaning" and "architecture of meaning" developed for conducting

interpretive policy analysis. These concepts enabled the analyst to begin to conceptualize

both the "who" of the analysis and the "where," meaning the sites of discursive

production and argumentation. According to Yanow (2000):

> …"location" within an organizational structure, professional training and membership, sex and gender, and a myriad of other possible dimensions lead to a set of values, beliefs, and feelings that can bind people together in *communities of meaning*. Cognitive, linguistic, and cultural practices reinforce each other, to the point at which shared sense is more common than not, and policy-relevant groups become 'interpretive communities,' sharing thought, speech, practice, and their meanings. (p. 10)

In addition, Yanow has written, "The role of the interpretive policy analyst is to

map the 'architecture' of the debate relative to the policy issue under investigation by

identifying the language and its entailments (understandings, actions, meanings) used by

different communities in their framing of the issue" (Yanow, 2000, pp. 12-13). Thus,

Yanow's concepts provided a useful basis for understanding the discursive order.

Framework for Analyzing Narrative Complexity

Following the construction of an architecture of meaning, the incorporation of a

framework of analysis to examine narrative complexity within Hajer's method of social-

interactive discourse analysis allowed the researcher to accomplish two things: 1) it

provided a more rigorous method of *interpreting* discursive constructs as revealed in the

texts than Hajer's method otherwise entails, and 2) enabled the researcher to identify

areas of discursive affinity among storylines, a key concept for analyzing the formation

of discourse coalitions. Hajer's (1995) definition of a "storyline" does not necessarily

conform to the traditional Labovian structural requirements of narrative apart from,

perhaps, his claim that storylines conceal "normative commitments" behind "technical

positions" (p. 55). However, the researcher found it useful to consider the full narrative

structure on which relevant discursive constructs were based, to truly investigate the way

in which storylines reduce discursive complexity, resulting in a "loss of meaning" and

potential for "problem closure" (Hajer, 1995, 62-63).

Beyond providing a framework for *structural* analysis, however, inserting the

dimension of narrative complexity into Hajer's framework permitted the researcher to

conduct a *functional* analysis of storylines. Taking account of the three narrative features

above allowed the researcher to better explore the multiple ways in which conflict

narratives in the debate surrounding Darfur might have oriented action: How did

condensed plotlines focus attention on only certain types of intervention, e.g. starting

conflict narratives with a ceasefire agreement, as opposed to the events that preceded it?

What courses of action may have been precluded as a result of characters' depiction as

morally legitimate or illegitimate, e.g. dialogue with alleged war criminals? Which

characters were not included in potential solutions, because they were not considered

important in outside narratives about the conflict, e.g. civilians and/or government

militias? How did singular prescriptions for action crowd out other potential futures, e.g.

peacekeeping versus peace talks? Thus, while Hajer's method alone would have

effectively allowed the researcher to conduct a dynamic social-interactive discourse analysis of a past debate, the framework of narrative complexity was an important addition for more rigorously interpreting texts and processes.

Data Collection

Hajer's method of analysis relies on both interview data and documents specific to the case at hand. As noted above, interviews were conducted in two phases. The process of document collection was both guided by these interviews and conducted throughout the interview process.

Interview Data. In the first phase of interviews, the researcher interviewed the following subject matter experts or "helicopters," all of whom were personally familiar with at least one, if not each, aspect of international intervention in Darfur, including the deployment of UNAMID, political negotiations between the Government of Sudan and Darfur rebels, and the humanitarian response (Hajer, n.d.). These interview subjects were selected on the basis of the researcher's existing familiarity with the case and their views of the field from multiple perspectives. A list of questions used in these interviews is included in Annex I.

- Two regionally focused academics;
- A non-governmental conflict and governance specialist;
- A former member of an advocacy organization; and
- A former humanitarian aid worker.

In the second phase of interviews, the researcher interviewed the following ten "key players," all of whom were recommended by one or more person during the initial phase of interviews or by other interview subjects in the second phase. Sampling in this phase was, therefore, accomplished using a snowball technique (Warren, 2001, p. 87). Specific interview questions are included in Annex II.

- Three current or former UN officials;

- A former AU official;

- A former US Government official;

- A member of a human rights advocacy organization;

- A former member of a conflict resolution NGO; and

- Three figures in the Darfur advocacy movement, including a diaspora member and women's issues expert.

The researcher initially identified a much longer list of possible interviewees than the final 15 according to a theoretical categorization of communities of meaning to ensure that interview subjects represented a broad spectrum of perspectives and also added to this list as interviewees suggested additional contacts. These notional communities of meaning, shown below, included academic and independent researchers, African Union permanent staff, United Nations departmental and secretariat staff, member state government officials, human rights advocacy groups, conflict prevention organizations, Sudan and Darfur-specific advocates and activists, humanitarian organizations, and Darfuri diaspora members. (Figure 6. Notional Communities of Meaning.) New interviews were conducted until the point of saturation, meaning the

stage at which all theoretical communities of meaning were represented by at least one interview subject, if not several, and the same artifacts, discursive structures, practices, and sites of discursive production were raised in multiple conversations.

Figure 6. Notional Communities of Meaning

The individuals selected for interviews—who were contacted primarily via e-mail, provided with and informed consent form, and promised non-attribution (Warren, 2001, pp. 89-90)—were chosen on the basis of their receptivity, availability, and involvement with the Darfur conflict from 2003 to 2006. Special attention was paid to finding interview subjects familiar with advocacy or decision-making surrounding the

AU-sponsored peace talks and the deployment of the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) and follow-on African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). It is not possible, nor was it intended, for the researcher to claim that interview subjects spoke on behalf of either their entire organizations or were more generally representative of the perspectives of their entire notional communities of meaning, each of which surely encompasses a diversity of views. It was, rather, assumed that the "subject positions" taken by interviewees were sometimes independent, especially for those who no longer worked for an organization of interest, and sometimes representative of an official organizational view; that said, nearly all interviewees, at some point, implied or specified that a comment was "off the record" (Gubrium & Holstein, 2003a, p. 39). Nevertheless, rather than seeking representativeness of organizational views, interview data was used as a starting point for clarifying relevant communities of meaning, constructing a timeline of events to include turning points (or positional shifts) and key incidents, and identifying representative artifacts, discursive structures, practices, and sites of discursive production.

The format of interviews was open ended. Interviews were based on a pre-determined set of questions and lasted, on average, one hour each. Roughly half of the interviews were conducted in person and half by Skype and all were recorded, with permission, and transcribed for use only in the data analysis phase (Warren, 2001, pp. 91-92). The interview transcripts, which were subsequently typed by hand, both helped the researcher construct the 138-page timeline of key events/documents and identify more than 200 relevant documents for review and, in and of themselves, provided additional

text for analysis. The researcher notes that, although interviewees were asked a pre-set list of questions (in Annexes I and II), the discussions were intended to be interactive and collaborative with significant exchange that sometimes took participants off script (Gubrium & Holstein, 2003a, p. 38). The interviews each started with a "generative question" about when an individual first came to be involved with the Darfur conflict, usually prompting a long narrative response (Flick, 2009, p. 178). From here, the analyst would interject at appropriate moments to ask clarifying questions such as, "What did you mean when you said…" or explicitly seek reactions to certain events and influential voices raised by the interview subject in order to capture the interactive nature of debate. Often an interview subject unknowingly answered the researcher's pre-set questions in his or her own "storying" of an experience, before even being asked.

Documents. Interviews and subsequent document research allowed the researcher to identify a lists of texts for document analysis. In general terms, these texts reflected UN and AU decision-making "outcomes" as well as "inputs" emblematic of each community of meaning. An illustrative, rather than exhaustive, list of documents analyzed is included below—a complete list is cited in the bibliography.

- UN Security Council Resolutions
- UN Security Council Presidential Statements
- UN Press Statements
- Reports of the UN Secretary-General to the Security Council
- AU Peace and Security Council Communiqués
- AU Executive Council Decisions

- AU Press Releases

- Reports of the Chairperson of the AU Commission to the AU PSC

- Reports by Non-Governmental Organizations

    o Amnesty International

    o Human Rights Watch

    o Médecins Sans Fronitères (MSF)

    o International Crisis Group

    o Justice Africa

- Influential Journal Articles and Books

- Doctrinal/Organizational Documents

- Prominent Media Accounts

- Opinion and Editorial Pieces

With the exception of editorials and some more in-depth articles in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, daily media coverage of the conflict was not analyzed, with the assumption that major news outlets were picking up many of the same narrative threads of the organizations working directly in or on the conflict. As an additional qualification, the researcher did not collect local Sudanese source material, including Arab or Darfuri language media. The researcher's own Arab language skills lacking, this presents somewhat of a gap in the research, but not a limiting one, as it was apparent in this research that UN and AU decision-makers also did not extensively rely on this information to inform their understanding of the Darfur conflict at the time, at least not in

a way that was reflected in interviews or the UN and AU documents reviewed; when local consultations were held with Sudanese Government officials and Darfuris, it was noted in UN and AU, as well as NGO, reports.[20] In addition, no online social media were incorporated in the analysis, as popular sites like Facebook and Twitter were not yet pervasive as they are now.

Finally, few reports by humanitarian organizations were analyzed independently, as the UN Secretariat incorporated much of the information reported by relief agencies into its monthly reports to the Security Council. In addition, humanitarian organizations tended to focus their public reporting on counting numbers of conflict affected people and identifying areas and items of need—the nature of their work—rather than focusing on dynamics of the conflict, the parties to it, and how to resolve it. A notable exception to this observation was MSF whose reports were specifically mentioned by interviewees as both independently informative of conditions on the ground and often outspoken with regard to political matters. In the same vein, few reports by Diaspora-specific organizations were analyzed as, according to interview data, the Diaspora did not initially have a distinct or substantial platform for public advocacy surrounding Darfur. Save Darfur and organizations like US Institute for Peace made more concerted efforts to bring Diaspora voices together and incorporate them into the advocacy movement starting in

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[20] Two present-day news sources on events in Darfur commonly cited in western circles also were not incorporated into the document collection strategy, as one, Radio Dabanga, which broadcasts in several Darfuri languages from the Netherlands, was not created until 2008. The other, Sudan Tribune, was created in 2003, but tended to reflect opinion, in many cases, and in other cases, was consistent with other daily news coverage.

2006, according to interviews. Members of the Diaspora were active earlier, however, in contributing to reports by several of the advocacy organizations listed above.

The researcher notes that would be impossible to collect every piece of text—NGO analysis, humanitarian report, advocacy flier, UN and AU document, press statement and article—that covered the Darfur conflict between 2003 and 2006. While the documents used in this analysis are not an exhaustive collection, they are a representative sample informed by interviews with individuals involved in the conflict during the relevant time period, based on their memories of what they read and which information sources were influential in the decision-making of their or others' organizations. As noted, these individuals were not chosen only by the researcher, but identified by each other, as representatives of communities of meaning relevant to them. They represented a primarily Western demographic with the understanding that, in the end, UN Security Council decision-making on Darfur was largely driven by Western member states and Western public debate.

In addition to interviews and document analysis, Yanow (2000) has highlighted the utility of participant observation and ethnography for drawing judgments in an interpretive analysis, which Frank Fischer has compared to Clifford Geertz's "thick description" (pp. 8-9; Fischer, 2003, p. 150). Observation would also be an apt method of data collection in Hajer's methodological approach to understand the practices from which meanings are derived. However, these methods were not possible in the context of a retrospective analysis. In addition, access to possible field sites within Sudan was too severely restricted to allow travel there. However, the researcher did leverage prior

familiarity with different stakeholder communities to help interpret meanings in interaction with interview participants who were currently or previously based in Addis Ababa, Abuja, Boston, Doha, Geneva, Khartoum, New York, Paris, and Washington, DC.

Limitations, Possible Objections, and Refutations

The application of interpretive, narrative, or discursive policy analysis to the realm of international conflict resolution is surely imperfect. Domestic policy debates differ from international decision-making about international interventions in conflict in at least three ways. First, domestic policy debates have a more definable set of constituents, such as lobbyists, advocacy and watchdog groups, community organizations, and voters broadly speaking, making it easier to identify stakeholders and relevant discursive groupings. Multilateral institutions are like onions of constituencies, with each internal functional unit and member state having its own historical perspectives, areas of expertise, and divisions of opinion. For example, the UN's Department of Peacekeeping is likely to have a different perspective than the Department of Political Affairs, at the same time every member state in the UN General Assembly is likely to take a different policy stance, while answering to its own varied and diverse constituents at home. Moreover, representatives of donor states who interact with each UN organization involved in a conflict, for example, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, and the UN World

Food Program, usually also bring a combination of their own member state's, functional, and personal perspective to any debate.

Second, policy debates, at least in democratic polities, tend to culminate in, and be decided by, popularly agreed upon legislative processes or executive policymaking mechanisms. International decision-making in the context of multilateral institutions such as the United Nations may lead to broadly supported resolutions and statements, which authorize certain actions, for example, establishing peacekeeping mandates, but these outcomes are non-binding on non-member states. So, whereas domestic policy debates in the United States come to a conclusion with or without popular consensus and citizens, generally speaking, respect policy decisions whether or not they agree with them, international debates over the proper course of action do not typically impel compliance by those states who opt out of the international system or regional organizations altogether. Even states that do not opt out of the system often do no respect multilateral decisions.

Third, and on a related note, domestic political debates, in theory (if not in practice), give equal voice to all constituents, while some constituencies of multilateral institutions—whether state governments, local populations, donors, or civil society organizations—have a greater say than others in the context of international debates by structural design. This disparity of influence matters a lot when it comes to intervention in conflicts between state governments and their own populations. For example, not only does the P5 in the United Nations—the United Nations, United Kingdom, France, Russia, and China—wield disproportionate influence over decision-making in the UN Security

Council, there is a growing moral consensus, for example embodied in the principle of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), that governments who fail to protect their own people lose the right to have a say over whether or how the international community intervenes in their domestic affairs. This does not mean to imply that domestic policy debates do not routinely, or even systematically, marginalize certain constituencies, but rather that multilateral institutions are intentionally structured to do so.

The application of an interpretive method of policy analysis to the debate behind international decision-making in multilateral institutions remains a productive line of inquiry, despite the imperfect analogy. The similarities between domestic policy debates and international "intervention debates" outweigh the differences. The UN system, with a growing number of observer and consulting organizations, in many ways resembles a domestic policymaking system, even if additional work is required to define, identify, and bound who the relevant "communities of meaning" are for any particular issue. Moreover, whether or not decisions of multilateral organizations are binding on their member states, state representatives are all inherently subject to the same discursive constraints of their institutions. Michael Barnett and Martha Finnemore (2004) and others have demonstrated how international organizations, such as the United Nations, are in fact their own bureaucracies with internal "rules" that lead to sometimes inefficient outcomes. Finally, the structural marginalization of certain constituencies from international debates over how to intervene in conflicts, rather than posing a problem for the interpretive and narrative researcher, could, in and of itself, be an area of focus for study. In fact, one of the primary goals of an interpretive approach to understanding

international decision-making about intervention in conflicts would be to identify which epistemic communities are either excluded from, or sidelined by, multilateral debates over the best course of action, perhaps including the conflict population itself.

A final possible objection to this research method regards the collection of data from interviews in which participants are asked to recall and interpret past events. There is inevitably some level of imprecision in people's memories of why one approach was chosen over another and how the conflict and related decisions were framed at the time. Moreover, narratives about the past inherently contain some level of "re-writing" and self justification for participants who know how the story turned out. Narratives are, after all, performance (Gubrium & Holstein, 2003b, p. 75). For this reason, interview texts were be used to supplement document analysis and provide context and additional insights on official narratives at the time, as opposed to forming the sole basis of judgments. However, the retrospective justification of action is in and of itself one of the most fascinating aspects of *sensemaking*, as it will be shown that organizations are prone to adapting narratives to fit chosen courses of action, rather than vice versa (Weick, 1995, p. 10).

CHAPTER FIVE: ARCHITECTURE OF MEANING

The findings in the next two chapters are separated by their static versus dynamic focus, respectively. Starting in this chapter, an overarching aim of Maarten Hajer's (n.d.) approach to social-interactive discourse analysis is to understand the discursive order surrounding a problem. Because decision making around Darfur was initially influenced by several discourses—one could argue that the United Nations and African Union lie at intersections of several overlapping discourse planes—the researcher found it important to account for variation in communities of meaning, rather than just describe the dominant or "hegemonic" discourse. To accomplish this task, the researcher borrowed a concept from Dvora Yanow's (2000) method of interpretive policy analysis to map the "architecture of meaning" surrounding the Darfur conflict, incorporating multiple communities of meaning and their relevant discursive resources.

In an interpretive method, communities of meaning are seen as interpreting an issue or problem though use of frames, which "direct attention toward from elements while simultaneously diverting attention from other elements" (Yanow, p. 11). The researcher considered communities of meaning, in that sense, to be analogous with the discourses, by Hajer's definition, from which storylines are derived. This is to say, communities of meaning can be seen as representing certain discourses and storylines can be seen as the frames though which they interpret events. The static presentation of these

communities in this chapter does not imply that communities of meaning are immovable or impervious to change. The goal here is simply to provide an outline of the discursive space based on both insights gleaned from interviews and document analysis. The next chapter will lay out the findings of a more dynamic analysis based on key events and turning points to show how one storyline became dominant—and one discourse hegemonic—over the others.

Mapping Communities of Meaning

As set out in the methodology chapter, the researcher initially established a hypothetical typology of communities of meaning. These were organized more by issue area or professional field than unifying discursive constructs, per se. Through the research emerged an understanding of these hypothetical communities of meaning as being more fluid, overlapping, and sometimes harder to categorize than the researcher first assumed would be the case. For example, the researcher expected that each community of meaning would be prone to problematize the conflicts in which it is involved according to the particular field it inhabits. In this ideal typology, one would expect aid agencies and relief NGOs, such as Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and Save The Children, to see conflicts as humanitarian problems requiring improved access and funding, while human rights advocacy organizations, such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, would see conflicts as accountability and protection problems requiring prosecutions and monitoring. Conflict prevention organizations, such as International Crisis Group, as well as academic and independent researchers focused on

particular regions—which, in the case of Sudan, there are many—might see conflicts as historical, political, social, and/or economic problems requiring negotiated settlements. Diasporas and activists, for example affiliated with Save Darfur, might see any and all of these problems, although, in the case of Darfur, it was somewhat foreseen that they would be focused on protection and accountability. Multilateral institutions might also deal with all of these problems, but additionally operate on their own discourse planes with intersecting political and institutional discourses, different departments, and varying cultural differences among both permanent and member states' staff and representatives who prioritize different facets of intervention.

Through analysis of artifacts, or texts, identified by interview subjects as influential in the discourse surrounding Darfur, the researcher mapped an architecture of meaning more precise than the hypothetical communities of meaning as part of the overarching discursive order (Yanow, 2000; Hajer, n.d.). (Figure 7. Architecture of Meaning.) This mapping consisted of six interpretive communities characterized by six accompanying discourses, rather than a list of specific members of each community. In some ways, these communities could be considered "thematic" groupings, but the implication of the word "meaning" here is deeper than themes alone. These discursive constructs played, to use Hajer's terminology, both enabling and constraining roles for each community of meaning in terms of which interventions were considered appropriate, or even permissible, and represent the fundamental differences in the construction of reality among an array of outside actors involved with the problem (Hajer, 1995, pp. 46-50). The narratives, or storylines, elaborated by various parties surrounding the conflict

were both inherently derived from and, in some cases, intentionally geared toward these sources of meaning. Again, drawing from Hajer: "Discourses frame certain problems; that is to say, they distinguish some aspects of a situation rather than others…. As such, discourse provides the tools from which problems are constructed. Discourse at the same time forms the context in which phenomena are understood and thus predetermines the definition of the problem" (Hajer, 2003, pp. 45-6).

These communities are not exhaustive of the full range of communities of meaning that may have been involved in decision-making surrounding Darfur. They were, however the ones most prevalent in the narrative recreation of events by interviewees and in analysis of documents not only written during the time period studied, 2003-2006, but also written in reflection during the years immediately after that time period. The researcher acknowledges that there might be other ways to map this architecture, or discursive order, for instance to include the other geographic or philosophical divides that might be evident in the debate over Darfur. For example, some researchers might include divisions within the UN Security Council between the United States, United Kingdom, and France on one hand, and Russia and China, on the other hand, with respect to principles of sovereignty and noninterference or nonintervention. However, it is important to distinguish *meanings* from *interests* within the Security Council setting. In addition, the researcher's site of analysis was focused more on the public debate behind decision-making, rather than Security Council dynamics, per se.

Below are snapshots of the various communities of meaning, according to their attendant discursive constructs. These snapshots consist of brief descriptions of the

relevant foundational artifacts or carriers of meaning—discursive resources—for those

communities, which oriented understandings of the problem in Darfur and corresponding

prescriptions for action with examples of associated actors. These snapshots are

accompanied by supporting examples from other commentaries on international

responses to the Darfur conflict and vignettes that were raised in interviews as indicative

of points of difference or friction between colliding discourses and then researched

through document analysis. These examples and vignettes are intended to be illustrative

of both the meanings and inter-discursive activity that will later be analyzed in depth in

the next chapter. Many of the vignettes occurred after 2006, the peak of the Save Darfur

advocacy movement and the year the UN Security Council approved sending some UN

troops to Darfur, but they reveal earlier dynamics hidden beneath the surface and are, for

that reason, relevant to the study of events from 2003 to 2006.

The below descriptions include glimpses of the narratives—in some cases,

argumentative storylines—that each community of meaning developed based on relevant

discourses. Those storylines will be elaborated in the next section on social-interactive

dynamics, as it is important to understand the way in which these narratives evolved and

interacted over time. More interestingly, it will also be possible in the more dynamic

analysis to see the way in which seemingly divergent storylines became compatible with

each other in arguing for certain solutions as part of a virtual discourse coalition (Hajer,

1993, p. 47). What may stand out below, in that sense, is the possibility for discursive

affinity between multiple communities of meaning within one ultimately hegemonic

discourse with little or no formal coordination from above (Hajer, 1993, p. 47).

Architecture of Meaning

Interpretive Community	Advocacy	Human Rights	Humanitarian	United Nations	African Union	Academic

Meaning	Responsibility to Protect (R2P)	Human Rights and Humanitarian Law	Impartiality/ Neutrality	North-South Lens and UN Doctrine	African States and African Solutions	Local and Tribal Ownership

Artifacts
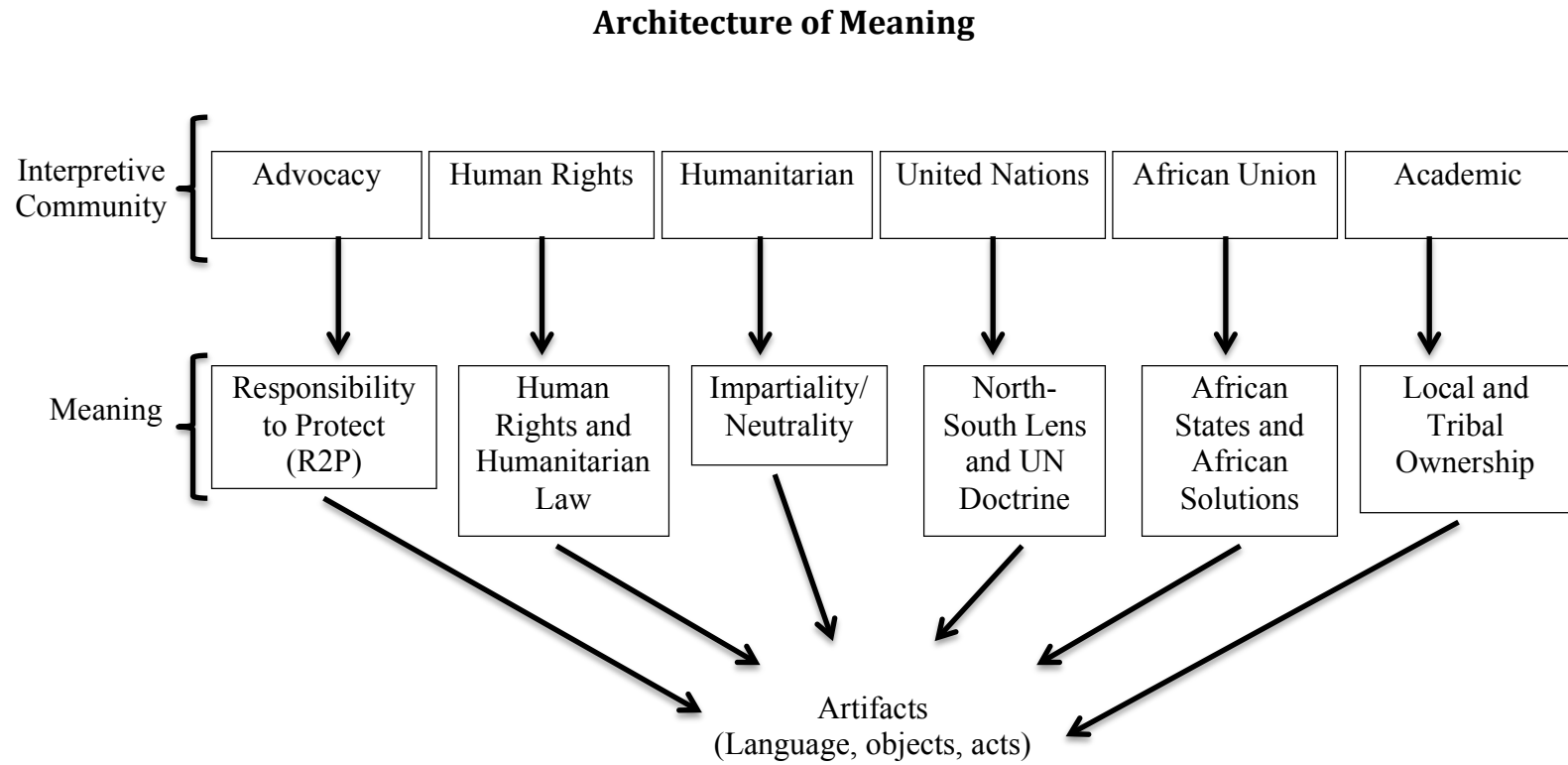(Language, objects, acts)

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Figure 7. Architecture of Meaning

Advocacy: The Responsibility to Protect

Many commentators have described the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) as the guiding philosophy behind the Darfur advocacy movement (Thomas-Jensen & Spiegel, 2007, p. 205; Hamilton, 2011; Lanz, 2011). It can also be seen as the discourse, or context, in which the Save Darfur movement characterized Darfur as a "protection problem." R2P is a concept that was developed by an International Commission on Intervention and State Strategy (ICISS), which met between 2000 and 2001, to agree upon international norms regarding the conditions under which principles of human rights should trump principles of state sovereignty (ICRP, n.d.). The strongest agreed upon response under these conditions was the deployment of peacekeepers to protect civilians and deliveries of humanitarian assistance (ICRP, n.d.). Former activist Rebecca Hamilton (2011) has described how the idea of R2P—that "sovereignty is contingent upon a country's responsibility to protect its civilians"—was a "catalyst" for action by the Save Darfur "citizens movement" (pp. 48-49). Others, including David Lanz (2011)[21], have echoed this claim, arguing that, although some scholars have referred to Darfur as a failure of R2P, because outside intervention failed to bring a stop to the conflict (De Waal, 2007b), the Darfur movement's successful use of R2P as a rallying cry for the formation a transnational advocacy group was, nevertheless, a victory for the evolution of international norms. Lanz (2011) also cited Darfur activists' claims that R2P provided the "intellectual underpinning" of the advocacy movement (p. 240).

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[21] For another example of Darfur used as a case for analysis of advocacy movements, also see Coley, 2013.

In her book, *Fighting for Darfur*, Hamilton (2011) even more specifically portrayed the use of an analogy comparing violence in Darfur to the Rwandan genocide as an instrumental tool of the advocacy movement to evoke the spirit of R2P in its campaign. In this sense, Hamilton (2011) described a storyline—the purposeful "mobilization of bias" through use of "catchy one-liners" or "symbolic references" that "sound right" within a certain social or institutional context and justify particular courses of action (Hajer, 1995, pp. 62-63). Hamilton (2011) explained how US student groups on campuses from Swarthmore to Georgetown became inspired by then Harvard lecturer and Pulitzer Prize winner Samantha Power's 2002 book, *A Problem From Hell: America in the Age of Genocide*, and a Sudan advocate and Smith College professor Eric Reeves (pp. 45-46, 49). With these figures' guidance, according to Hamilton (2011), a few key student leaders resolved to use the "Dallaire Model"—referring to the UN peacekeeping commander who was unable to convince UN officials in New York to send reinforcements during the 1994 Rwandan genocide—to mobilize public support and influence policymakers to "Save Darfur" (p. 44-46). "Of course," according to Hamilton (2011), "Darfur 2004 was nothing like Rwanda in 1994. But framing Darfur as a Rwanda-like problem resulted in sufficient guilt-by-association to promote a flurry of political rhetoric" (p. 32).

As evidence that the advocacy community's interpretation of R2P was a distinct discourse, some members of the humanitarian community and academia reject R2P as an international norm and have criticized Save Darfur for framing the Darfur conflict as ethnic in nature. Fabrice Weissman (2010) of Médecins Sans Fronitères (MSF)-France in

particular has associated the ideals of R2P with neo-colonialism: "While in the West, the

universalism of human rights is associated with the struggle for democracy and political

freedoms, it also harks back, in the former colonies, to the experience of domination and

exploitation." Taking this thread of argumentation to another level, Mahmoud Mamdani

(2009) has criticized the Save Darfur movement of knowingly portraying the conflict in

Darfur in simplistic and moralistic terms of "good versus evil" to justify military

intervention by powerful Western governments in a weaker Arab state. In his book,

Saviours and Survivors: Darfur, Politics, and the War on Terror, Mandani (2009) alleged

that Save Darfur manipulatively appealed to anti-Arab sentiment following the terrorist

attacks of September 11, 2001 to mobilize American public bias against the Government

of Sudan. Mamdani's (2009) argument cast R2P as not only an imperialist project in

opposition to the sovereignty of weaker states, but a racist one at that. Mamdani (2009)

wrote:

> The Save Darfur lobby in the US has turned the tragedy of the people in Darfur
> into a knife with which to slice Africa by demonizing one group of Africans,
> African Arabs. For undergirding the claim that a genocide has occurred in Darfur
> is another, born of colonial historiography, that Arabs in Sudan—and elsewhere
> in the African continent—are settlers who came in from the outside and whose
> rights must be subordinate to those of indigenous natives. (p. 300)

Defenders of Save Darfur, including a former policy analyst with the

organization, Sean Brooks (2009), have responded to Mamdani by acknowledging the

movement's inadvertent oversimplification of the "Arab versus African" dimension of

violence early in the conflict, but countering that Save Darfur's leadership consciously

addressed and corrected these mischaracterizations in its advocacy materials from 2006

onward. In a response to Mamdani, Brooks (2009) highlighted the efforts of Save Darfur

to hire Sudanese experts, broaden the coalition to Diaspora and advocacy groups on

several continents, and provide a voice for Darfuris themselves in peace talks (pp. 142,

149). He also highlighted the independent efforts of non-Western advocacy groups

aligned with the Save Darfur cause, including the Darfur Consortium—a group of 50

African civil society organizations that lobbied the African Union—and the Arab

Coalition for Darfur—a group of more than 30 Arab organizations formed in 2008

(Brooks, 2009, p. 139). Mamdani (2010) was unwavering in a blog reply to Brooks,

arguing that he cared more about negative consequences than good intentions. Although

Mamdani could be more forgiving, as will be shown, both the R2P discourse—

prioritizing outside intervention—and ethnicization of identity in the advocacy storyline

regarding Darfur were indeed operative in advocacy calls for peacekeepers before into

2006.

Human Rights: International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law

The Save Darfur movement, of course, was not the only advocacy actor in the

discursive space surrounding Darfur. Human rights advocacy organizations drew from

their own discursive material, much older than R2P, namely international human rights

and humanitarian law. Enshrined in documents as old as the Geneva Conventions of 1949

and as new as the Rome Statute[22], which established the International Criminal Court

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[22] The Rome Statue covers four categories of crimes: genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and crimes of aggression (ICC, n.d.).

(ICC) in 1998, international human rights and humanitarian law provides the basis on which reports by human rights watch dogs such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have long called for protection of civilians and accountability for atrocities committed in conflict zones (ICC, n.d.). Drawing on this discourse, Human Rights Watch, in its reports on Darfur from 2003 to 2006, repeatedly shorthanded violence in legal terms as "war crimes and crimes against humanity," and almost always concluded these reports with recommendations for protection and accountability-focused solutions, including peacekeeping and criminal investigations, as opposed to political responses (HRW, 2004c).

What also distinguished human rights advocacy organizations from the Save Darfur movement was not their reluctance to label the violence as ethnically targeted, but the decision to not call it "genocide." According to an interview with a human rights advocate, the choice by both Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International to refrain from using the genocide label "was very deliberate" following "intense debate" within the organizations. According to the same human rights advocate, they "could not conclude that there was a genocidal intent on the part of the Sudanese Government at a policy level." Both organizations did, however, refer to the conflict as "ethnic cleansing."

In some ways, according to analyst Jane Blayton, human rights organizations' coverage of the Sudan, and human rights reporting more broadly, has constituted its own "genre" of narrative with important implications for intervention (Blayton, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c). In response to an opinion piece by Sudan activist and Smith College professor Eric Reeves on 3 June 2007, which the *Washington Post* entitled, "A Tragedy Straight

out of Shakespeare," Jane Blayton (2009a) argued that the genre of "tragedy" is a

misleading description of most human rights advocates' writing style:

> …tragedy involves a protagonist, admirable in many ways, who suffers a reverse in fortune, due either to circumstance or a fatal flaw in his or her character. The drama evokes fear and pity in the audience, and usually ends with a scene of revelation of epiphany on the part of the fallen hero….The narrative form of human rights reporting…is entirely different: the characters are cast in the moulds victim and perpetrator from the very beginning and never escape from those categories that define them. The human rights report version of tragedy is a catalogue of the march of evil, detailing the sufferings of the innocents trampled under foot.

Blayton (2009a) went on to describe what she called typical human rights

reporting by at least five organizations—Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch,

Minority Rights Group, Physicians for Human Rights, and International Crisis Group—as

simple stories of good versus evil, in which the world is divided into perpetrators and

victims with human rights defenders as its heroes. Setting aside the way in which reports

on atrocities in Darfur transcended customary modes of communication—multimedia

maps, publicly available satellite imagery of burned villages, You Tube videos, etc.—

Blayton (2009a) worked from the premise that "old-fashioned text still remains the

defining medium" for conveying victims' testimonies. She observed that few of these

organizations' accounts included testimonies of the alleged perpetrators, who were

reduced to personality-less counterparts of the victims and presumed to have intended the

effects of their actions (Blayton, 2009a). Moreover, she concluded that, "human rights

reports provide an exclusive explanatory framework which asserts moral and factual

certainty and does not leave room for multiple explanations," and, by relying almost

entirely on "legal principles" and "legal responsibility" to "frame their analysis and

recommendations," eliminate the possibility that the reader will experience any moral introspection, reflection, or dissonance (Blayton, 2009a).

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch should be spared some of Blayton's criticism, as these two organizations had "the most detailed body of research on the ground" in Darfur, both according a human rights advocate interviewed and document analysis by this researcher. Moreover, in contrast to general Sudan advocates, Amnesty International was one of the first organizations to call attention to a brewing conflict in Darfur and the need for local tribal reconciliation well before the rebellion even broke out in 2003. Generally speaking, the researcher would also characterize ICG as a conflict prevention organization, not a human rights organization, although ICG's storyline became very closely aligned to that of the Darfur advocacy movement. That said, Blayton's point remains consistent with a genre analysis conducted by conflict resolution scholar Samantha Hardy (2008), who has concluded that, too often, conflict narratives constitute melodramas centered on a helpless "heroine" who waits for justice to be dispensed from an "authoritative father figure" in the face of an evil "villain" (p. 261). Hardy has, conversely, argued that true literary tragedies call on morally complex protagonists to choose between fates; the outcome need not be total victory, nor total defeat, but can rather lead to personal growth through conflict (Hardy, 2008, pp. 264-266). Taken is this light, it would be fair to say that human rights advocacy organizations were similar to the Save Darfur Movement in their calls for rescue from the outside.

Humanitarian: Impartiality and Neutrality

Humanitarian aid providers occupy their own discursive space in the midst of this debate. In the same vein as his argument that R2P is problematically ridden with western values, Fabrice Weissman (2007, 2008, 2010) of MSF also has challenged the idea enshrined in R2P that aid organizations should operate with military escorts, as it would undermine their perceived impartiality and neutrality. The principles of impartiality and neutrality are two of the fundamental principles of the International Committee of the Red Cross and for most humanitarian aid organizations around the world (ICRC, 1979). "Impartiality" refers to the idea of non-discrimination when distributing assistance, while "neutrality" means not taking sides or taking actions that would facilitate conduct of hostilities by either side (IFRC, n.d.). Hajer (1995) might accordingly see Weissman's challenges to R2P as examples of "technical positions that conceal normative commitments" (p. 55).

Weissman, speaking on behalf of many members of the humanitarian community, has not so much challenged the principle of R2P in its conception, but rather its interpretation. Weissman (2010) has highlighted the fact that, R2P encompasses not only protection of civilians and humanitarian deliveries, but also the "prevention of conflicts" and the "rebuilding of societies" in addition to the "use of 'mass atrocities tool boxes' including humanitarian, diplomatic, economic, judicial, social, political, and, as a last resort, military actions."[23] Weissman (2010), speaking for MSF more broadly, has taken

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[23] This broader interpretation is consistent with former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan's speech, An Action Plan to Prevent Genocide, delivered in Geneva on the tenth anniversary of the genocide in Rwanda,

the position that supporting R2P as it is often narrowly interpreted—military intervention—would also pose a threat to humanitarian organizations' "autonomy" or independence, another core humanitarian value. Furthermore, he has asserted that "war" declared in the name of international humanitarian law—as may be implied by the deployment of a peacekeeping force in a non-permissive environment—risks making aid agencies parties to a conflict (Weissman, 2010).

While most humanitarian organizations shied away from publicly participating in this debate with respect to Darfur during the early years of the conflict, one incident of disagreement between the humanitarian community and the Save Darfur movement in 2007 illustrates the tensions that arose as the possibility of peacekeepers or some form of military intervention being deployed became more and more real. According to an interview with a former member of the advocacy movement, Save Darfur received a very large donation from an anonymous donor in late 2006 that provided the organization—a small leadership office with a loosely structured network of member groups under it— with tens of millions of dollars in advertising funds. During an outreach campaign using newspaper ads, television commercials, and billboards starting in February 2007, according to two interviews with former advocates, Save Darfur took out an advertisement that it implied was backed by humanitarian organizations calling for the establishment of a "no-fly zone" in Darfur (Strom & Polgreen, 2007). The advertisement prompted a backlash by InterAction, an umbrella group of several humanitarian groups in the United States, which not only said they wished to remain apolitical, but argued that

April 7 2004, which was evident in his monthly reports on the Darfur conflict to the UN Security Council (UN, 2004c).

banning flights could actually make delivery of humanitarian aid much more difficult than it already was (Strom & Polgreen, 2007).

According to a *New York Times* article published that June—which, a former member of the advocacy movement said misattributed the subsequent departure of Save Darfur's then director, David Rubsenstein, to the incident—InterAction's president, Sam Worthington, sent an e-mail to Rubsenstein saying, "I am deeply concerned by the inability of Save Darfur to be informed by the realities on the ground and to understand the consequences of your proposed actions" (Strom & Polgreen, 2007). According to the former advocate, "this was one of the only instances where the humanitarians really challenged what the advocacy community was really saying." Explaining why more humanitarian organizations did not challenge Save Darfur's Rwanda storyline calling for peacekeepers, he added, "In a lot of ways, I think they appreciated the attention, even if they knew the situation wasn't being characterized accurately. Because what they would do is, for their Christmas appeals or whatever, they'd put Darfur [in their mailings] as in, you know, 'Give money and it will go directly to Darfur.' And people knew about Darfur, because of Save Darfur, so I don't think that they really wanted to challenge that narrative."

United Nations: Comprehensive Solutions

Perhaps consistent with Weissman's holistic interpretation of R2P, on the surface, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's monthly reports to the UN Security Council on Darfur starting in July 2004 reflected an institutional preference for comprehensive

solutions to address the humanitarian, human rights, security, and political components of the Darfur conflict. Behind the scenes, according to an interview with a former UN official, there were three, perhaps four, nodes of practice within the UN permanent staff. First, according to the interviewee, there was "isolated action" by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), whose job it is to "mobilize" and "navigate"—they were "on the phone with MSF and other people who were doing real work out there, so their vector was pointing West [toward Darfur] and they were doing their thing, consolidated appeals, …and this that and the other." Second, he explained, there was "organizational inertia looking south," namely within the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), gearing up to deploy a peacekeeping force to help implement an agreement between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A). Third, there was the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) or "political guys," who perhaps understood a lot about the Darfur conflict, but "probably wouldn't bring it up at the table." A fourth, "rebel node," he added, was made up of old hands "who had been around for a long, long time, who thought they knew best, and they would chatter all over the place." Finally, he noted, there was also a group on the 38th floor "who could feel the bigness of it," but they were "many levels higher, so knowledge [was] diluted significantly." According to the interviewee, a taskforce that brought these elements together had "no strategic vector" on Darfur, because "no one was ever flying the plane."

The UN Secretariat was, nevertheless, channeling these various nodes and, according to an interview with a UN staffer, "the strategic decision, rightly or wrongly,

was to push hard on the peacemaking front on the north-south talks." Perhaps siding with organizational inertia, the Secretariat assessed that, "When those are concluded successfully, it will be much easier to push for a successful peace process in Darfur." Another UN staffer described the approach to Darfur as "intentionally putting it on the back burner." Thus, the Secretary-General's reports to the Security Council from 2004 through 2005 hung hope on a North-South storyline, that a Comprehensive Peace Agreement could eventually incorporate Darfur.[24] As will be shown in the next chapter, this storyline shifted international attention at least initially, to the humanitarian and human rights aspects of the problem, because the security and political aspects would have been too complicated to address in the context of the North-South negotiations.

The Secretary-General was not dismissive of the security aspects of the problem, but, according to an interview with a former UN official, "Annan knew he had no troops or finances in his bottom left-hand drawer. The only way he could get meaningful support to the African Union [ceasefire monitoring force] as the UN was with the Security Council mandate, which would be another whole negotiation. He knew that wasn't going to happen…But, he also knew he could be helpful in two ways. He could provide some technical support to the AU…and come up with a very credible plan that would have UN expertise underlying it, and use that to mobilize donor funding so that you could grow the AU mission in Darfur with funding from outside." Thus, the

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[24] A variant of this frame, casting Darfur as another symptom of a "center-periphery" problem, reinforced this dynamic. The center-periphery conception of the state's relationship with society could be attributed to sociologist Edward Shils (1975). The center-periphery frame as applied to Darfur contradicted the Rwanda storyline, according to one interview subject, who observed that, if one acknowledged a "center-periphery problem" in Sudan, it was hard to claim that fighting in Darfur was "Arab versus non-Arab" in nature since both populations in Darfur had been marginalized and looked down upon for decades by most members of the ruling party in Khartoum.

Secretary-General, who himself had been the Under-Secretary-General for UN

peacekeeping during the Rwanda crisis in 2004, cobbled together the best comprehensive

solution he thought he could at the time (Burr & Collins, 2008).

The North-South storyline was not the only one to emerge from the discourse of

comprehensive solutions, however, as time went on. Once it became evident that the

African Union Mission in Darfur (AMIS) would need a more permanent source of

funding to sustain its operations, UN peacekeeping doctrine—the "Brahimi report"—

became more of an influence on at least one of the floors "in house." The Brahimi

Report, also known as the Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, was

the product of a committee, named for its chair, Lakhdar Brahimi, that was tasked with

reforming peacekeeping within the United Nations in the year 2000 (UN, 2000). Among

other recommendations related to funding mechanisms, development of better conflict

prevention and peacebuilding (post-conflict transition) strategies, and doctrinal shifts in

civilian policing, the report laid out the need for clear, credible, and achievable mandates

for peacekeeping missions (UN, 2000). In addition, the report stated that, to be effective,

UN missions must be sufficiently resourced and equipped (UN, 2000). It was not long

after the report's publication that the conflict in Darfur erupted, yet it was arguably too

soon for the shift in UN doctrine to be absorbed by the public and perhaps to be fully

institutionalized across the United Nations. As will be shown in the next chapter, the

Brahimi report remained the touch point for UN peacekeeping officials opposed to the

"blue hatting" of AMIS without a well supported peace agreement.

African Union: African States and African Solutions

According to an interview with a former AU official, the African Union, following on a long history of non-intervention in African states, was also initially reluctant to become politically or militarily involved in Darfur. Chadian President Idriss Déby had played a role in trying to broker a ceasefire agreement between the Government of Sudan and Darfur rebels in late 2003, but, according to the interviewee, Déby ran into credibility problems, as the Government of Sudan saw him as being affiliated with Darfurians, some of whom had supported Déby's rise to power. In initially sending a small number of ceasefire monitors to Darfur, the African Union, the interviewee explained, "were there basically to support President Déby." The AU Peace and Security Council—an entity modeled on the UN Security Council as "a standing decision-making organ for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts"—had only just been established in December 2003 and was not yet prepared to intervene more forcefully in Darfur (AU, n.d.). According to the former AU official:

> The AU was not really keen or interested in going into these negotiations. Darfur had just exploded at the time, because for a long time, things were happening, but they were largely unreported and then, all of a sudden, Darfur was all over the place. You know, the atrocities that had been committed, the human rights abuses, and the crimes that had been committed in Darfur were of such an extent that even the African Union, which does not—at that time did not—pay much attention to what was happening in internal affairs of states, because of its history and all of that[25], … really became alarmed at the reporting on Darfur and the kinds of murders that were being committed.

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[25] The Constitutive Act of the African Union includes references to the following two principles: 1) Non-interference by any Member State in the internal affairs of another; 2) The right of the Union to intervene in a Member State pursuant to a decision of the Assembly in respect of grave circumstances, namely war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity (AU, 2000).

When asked where the African Union was hearing this information from, the AU

official explained:

> It was mainly NGO reports, because, the first people to go into Darfur were the
> NGOs who were active. I think that plays out until the end of the AU mission
> there, because we were always at odds with the NGOs, you know, because they
> held the view that there were lots and lots of criminal things which were
> happening in Darfur that the AU was silent about, so the first time it came to the
> AU, it was, I think, the gathering of NGOs in Addis Ababa on the margins of an
> AU Summit, that these NGOs came and really had a lot of protests and all of that.
> Second, I think there were groups which were very active both here and the
> United States…they were the activists who really brought Darfur to the
> consciousness of Africans.

The African Union had, in fact, been created following several crisis on the

continent in the early 1990s, including the conflicts in Rwanda and Somalia, in order to

lead "African Solutions to African Problems." Darfur was the first real test of the Peace

and Security Council's role in that process. Like the UN Secretariat's monthly reports to

the UN Security Council, the AU Commission's regular reports to the Peace and Security

Council maintained holistic assessments of the conflict, but as will be shown, AU public

statements often retained a statist bent, failing to name parties responsible for human

rights abuses—shorthanding violence as "ceasefire violations"—or erring on the side of

blaming the Darfur rebels. That Darfur was an African problem often meant deference to

an African government. The AU remained involved in the African Union-United Nations

Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) after the transition from AMIS, according to the

former AU official, "because Sudan, the government, did not want to work with the UN.

It had some reservations, was very uncooperative, and insisted that it wanted the

Africans. Judgment is out on whether it knew that the Africans were incompetent, were not going to have any meaningful operation going in Darfur, or whether it was just because the African Union itself, the leadership was [more] defensive about the Sudan, about Bashir, and the Sudan, than, of course, the UN."

Academia: Local Ownership

Consistent with the theme of "African Solutions to African Problems," but perhaps unique as a source of meaning, was a discursive undercurrent among academic experts who had been involved in efforts to resolve the Darfur conflict or whose analysis has frequently been consulted by key players in the discursive space. One example, Alex De Waal (2004a, 2006a), often in his Justice Africa blog, was a recurring source of proposals for locally, specifically tribally, managed security solutions that would not require forcible disarmament of militias or rebels by an outside peacekeeping force in Darfur from 2004 to 2006. De Waal was an advisor to the AU-sponsored peace talks in Abuja, as was Laurie Nathan (2006, 2007), who also published commentary on the need for local ownership of any political solution following the conclusion of the Darfur peace talks in 2006. Reflected in some of these writings was a focus on the requirement for representation of not only Darfur's "African" tribes, but also its marginalized "Arab" tribes, and perhaps the need not to see them as ethnically "African" or "Arab" at all (Justice Africa, 2004b, 2004c).

More recent analyses calling attention to local dynamics and solutions in Darfur have had the benefit of hindsight and having witnessed the many changes in the conflict

since its beginning (Tubiana, 2009; Murphy & Tubiana, 2010; Tanner & Tubiana, 2010; Flint, 2010; UNEP, 2014).[26] However, they provide a clue for finding overlooked descriptions and prescriptions related to the Darfur conflict in the early years. This research has ranged from a closer examination of how delivery of humanitarian assistance should have been more equitably distributed among diverse identity groups to avoid worsening tribal and livelihood tensions in Darfur (Tubiana, 2009), to the need to incorporate civil society into the Darfur peace process (Murphy & Tubiana, 2010), and the opportunity to embrace grassroots security and livelihood agreements while refraining from any international involvement at all (Tanner & Tubiana, 2010; Flint, 2010; UNEP, 2014; Bakarat, 2014). For example, writing about the failure of conflict resolution in Darfur in 2010, Sudan researcher Julie Flint (2010) concluded that, "lasting peace will come only through a multi-track process with investment at all levels that engages all communities and is supported, but not driven, by the international community" (p. 44). Flint (2010) added that, "If peace is to survive the turbulent winds of Darfur, it will need to be leaner and fitter, locally nurtured, and minimally reliant on foreign mediation" (p. 46).

More recently, on the theme of ethnicity, Lucy Hovil (2014), a researcher for the International Refugee Rights Initiative who has written about the plight of Darfur's IDPs, posted an article on *African Arguments* in February 2014 entitled "Why do we continually misunderstand conflict in Africa?" Hovil wrote that the "misdiagnosis" of conflicts as ethnic or tribal is not only "irritating" due to "inadequate descriptions of

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[26] Also see Sudan Democracy First Group (2014) and ICG (2015).

complex issues," but also "a dangerous business." By reducing political conflicts to primordial causes based on binary identity constructs, including "ethnic antagonism" or "ethnic genocide," Hovil (2014) argued, ethnic and tribal frames overshadow key issues, such as governance, and minimize flexibility and possibilities for conflicting parties to adopt multiple forms of belonging and identity in the post-conflict recovery phase. Citing present-day Rwanda as a case in point, Hovil (2014) concluded that, although "quick fixes are undeniably attractive," the international community must remain "multidimensional" in its thinking. Similar reasoning was evident in Justice Africa's blog posts throughout the early years of the Darfur conflict.

Summary of Communities

The above architecture of meaning provides a starting point for understanding the discursive order around decision making related to Darfur. While discursive production is a fluid process, the snapshots above provide a general description of the discursive space as well as some of the players and sites of argumentation within it. This static mapping exercise also sets the stage for a more dynamic analysis of the interplay between communities of meaning and the evolution of narrative positions over time. This backdrop will allow the reader to recall, in the next section, the general discursive order from which problem definitions surrounding Darfur were derived and the storylines constructed from them. What will become more evident in a dynamic analysis is how discursive affinity between seemingly separate communities of meaning can emerge over time, lending momentum to simple argumentative storylines even in the absence of total

agreement. The tables on the following pages preview findings by time period (Table 2. Findings by Time Period), examples of discursive affinity across storylines belonging to various actors (Table 3. Examples of Discursive Affinity), and a graphic mapping this affinity (Figure 8. Discursive Affinity Mapping).

The researcher highlights two additional qualifications, including one on the limitations of the data. First, notably absent from the communities of meaning above is the voice of Darfuris, as well as the Government of Sudan. While interviews with Darfuris formed the basis of much humanitarian and human rights reporting, and members of the diaspora were active in the Western advocacy community, especially from 2006 onward, Darfuris internally displaced within the region had little voice on the international stage. According to one UN official who was asked whether any particular perspectives were marginalized during the course of deliberations about international intervention:

> No, I wouldn't say that at all, actually, because this was the sexiest file on the international peace and security agenda, so everybody…there were actually too many cooks in the kitchen for this one. And I don't see anybody who was marginalized except the victims themselves. What I can tell you is that the advocacy lobby had a free hand, there were so many events on Darfur in New York and Washington and all over the place, in Brussels, and…so did the rebel movements, because most of their leaders were outside. Everybody had a role that they had crafted for themselves—the advocacy lobby, the United Nations, the powerful member states, spoilers like Libya, and other things and….I think the only two groups that actually felt—I felt were—marginalized and should have had more say in the conflict were the victims affected by the conflict itself.

The "two groups" the UN official referred to were both the non-Arab and Arab civilians of Darfur. The UN official went on to attribute much of this marginalization to armed actors in the conflict, including both the Government of Sudan and the rebel

groups. He added, referring to the period after the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) was
signed by Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) faction leader Minni Minawi, and
not Abdel Wahid, in May 2006:

> Any time the United Nations tried to reach out to people in the camps, Abdel
> Wahid had a very well connected network of omdas, who were the sheiks, who
> would threaten and bully people back to their places, because he claimed to be the
> representative of the camps. The Sudanese Government, on the other hand,
> always watched the camps with a hawk eye, but at the same time, would never
> allow the Arab tribes to be included in the talks or any outreach as a separate
> party, because they represented all the Arabs in the Darfur region, and I think the
> Arab tribes had a different outlook where there was a distortion that—as if it is
> only an Arab-African fight—there were alliances all over the place depending on
> there in Darfur you were observing. So, I think the only two groups that were not
> allowed to express themselves freely were people in the camps, as well as the
> Arab tribes, who were accused of having a militia.

As will be noted in the discussion section of this paper, a "better formed story"
about Darfur surely would have been constructed by all Darfuris in open participation—
and interaction—with the Government of Sudan and Darfur rebels—the communities of
meaning most relevant to resolution of the conflict. However, few, if any, opportunities
to construct such a narrative, which would contribute toward repairing and reconstructing
relationships in the region, have existed to date.

In addition to the absence of the Darfuri community of meaning from the debate,
it is important to note here that the following analysis does not take into consideration the
full range of potential forces on the discursive field that may have played a role in
decision-making outcomes on Darfur. For instance, as noted above, these forces may
have included geopolitical dynamics with respect to Chinese and Russian versus Western
positions on intervention. Additional forces may also have stemmed the post-9/11

counterterrorism environment in Africa, which called for a strengthening of African indigenous security capacities, as well as international momentum to test the powers of the recently created ICC, war weariness following Iraq, and both French and British post-colonial and domestic political interests pertaining to involvement in Chad and Sudan, respectively. This approach does not rule out likelihood that these forces played a role in determining outcomes and is, therefore, not a causal account.

Table 2. Findings by Time Period

Time Period	Early 2003-Early 2004	Early 2004-Late 2004	Late 2004 -Early 2005	Late 2005-Early 2006
Discursive Constructs/ Storylines/ Order	Humanitarian and human rights problem, North-South storyline	Discourse structuration by Rwanda storyline derived from R2P discourse	Argumentative struggle between R2P discourse coalition and more complex counter-narratives	Discourse institution-alization of Rwanda storyline; hegemony of R2P discourse coalition
Key Events	-Chadian mediation leading to signing of a "humanitarian ceasefire" for Darfur	-Kapila statement -Egeland briefing to UN -USHMM genocide emergency -New York Emergency Summit -Powell genocide declaration	-MSF-France speaks out -Government offensive suspends Abuja peace talks -USHMM hosts several events, including with Dallaire -Save Darfur sends letter to Pres. Bush	-Conclusion of Abuja talks -Save Darfur postcard campaign -Save Darfur rally on the National Mall
Positioning Effects	N/A	-Supporters of peace talks positioned as opponents of human rights -Advocates using ethnic descriptors positioned as endangering long-term reconciliation	-Actors describing tribal conflicts and complexity positioned as equating it to anarchy to avoid action and as using humanitarian aid to cover up human rights problems	N/A

Time Period	Early 2003-Early 2004	Early 2004-Late 2004	Late 2004 -Early 2005	Late 2005-Early 2006
		-Government of Sudan positioned as illegitimate negotiating partner -Absence of rebels in advocacy storyline positions them out of relevance	-Proponents of constructive engagement positioned as gullible -Darfur broadly positioned as part of a long-standing conflict between Khartoum and the West	
Positional Shifts	-ICG moves from Darfur political process to peacekeeping as primary response	-UN officials speak out of turn in speaking about Darfur -USG declares genocide; UN refers Darfur to Commission of Inquiry	-HRW implies AMIS might be better than blue-hatting	-UN Secretariat equates erratic and fragmented violence, rather than organized attacks, to the need for peacekeepers
Key Institutional Decision-Making/	-First UN Humanitarian Appeal	-UNSCR 1556 (arms embargo on *Jinjaweed*) -UNSCR 1564 (referral to Commission of Inquiry)	-UNSCRs 1590 (UN support to AMIS) -UNSCR 1591 (Panel of Experts / Threat of sanctions) -UNSCR1593 (ICC referral)	-UNSCRs 1651 and1655 (extension of POE) -UNSCR 1665 (UNMIS deployment to Darfur under R2P)

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Table 1. Examples of Discursive Affinity

	Problematization	Plotline of Events	Characters	Morality	Future Prescription
Advocacy	Rwanda storyline/ **Ethnic Genocide**	Militia attacks on civilians since 2002 or 2003	Arab government/ African civilians	**Binary "good" versus "evil"**; linear logic of violence	**Peacekeepers**
International Crisis Group	North-South storyline and **Ethnic cleansing**	Longstanding center-periphery conflict	Arab government/ African rebels and civilians	**Government primarily to blame**, but rebels also problematic	**Peacekeepers**, prosecutions, sanctions, incorporation into CPA
Human Rights Watch	**Ethnic cleansing** and Legal/criminal problem: Violations of Human Rights, War crimes, Crimes against humanity	Decades of build-up in inter-tribal tensions; history later compressed from 2003 onward	Arab government and militias, named rebels/civilians affiliated with specific tribes	Some circular logic of violence, but **government primarily to blame** and civilians ethnically targeted	Monitoring and investigations, protection in some form, whether AU, UN, or other **peacekeepers**
United Nations Secretariat	North-South Storyline; **Ethnic cleansing**; Humanitarian crisis, Human rights violations	History of North-South conflict with emergence of violence in Darfur in 2003	Government, militias, named rebels, civilians, specific tribes	Complex motivations; mixed morality; civilians caught in the middle and/or ethnically targeted	Humanitarian aid, Political agreement, Accountability, Reconciliation, **Peacekeepers**

	Problematization	**Plotline of Events**	**Characters**	**Morality**	**Future Prescription**
African Union Commission	Humanitarian crisis, human rights abuses, ceasefire violations	History of tribal and environmental conflict, but behavior of the parties measured against 2004 ceasefire	Government, militias, named rebels, civilians, specific tribes	Complex motivations; mixed morality; civilians caught in the middle, rebels potentially more to blame	Humanitarian access, political agreement, human rights and ceasefire monitoring, local reconciliation
Academics	Rebellion, Genocide, Inter-tribal conflict, Intra-Islamist conflict, Rule of law problem	Long history of marginalization, identity politics, environmental and migration changes	Government, militias, named rebels, civilians, specific tribes	Complex motivations; mixed morality; civilians caught in the middle	Political agreement and local security arrangements
Médecins Sans Frontières	Humanitarian crisis	Displacement since early 2003	Government and civilians	Circular logic of violence	Access and funding, humanitarian aid without military escorts

Figure 8. Discursive Affinity Mapping

Impartiality/ Neutrality + Local Solutions

R2P Discourse Coalition

MSF

ACAD.

JA

Advocacy Op-Eds

UN

ICG

Save Darfur

Rwanda Storyline

North-South Storyline

AU

USHMM

HRW

African Solutions

Comprehensive Solutions

Human Rights/ Humanitarian Law

Discourse

Storyline

Discourse Coalition

AU – African Union
HRW – Human Rights Watch
ICG – International Crisis Group
Acad. – Academics
JA – Justice Africa
MSF – Médecins Sans Frontières
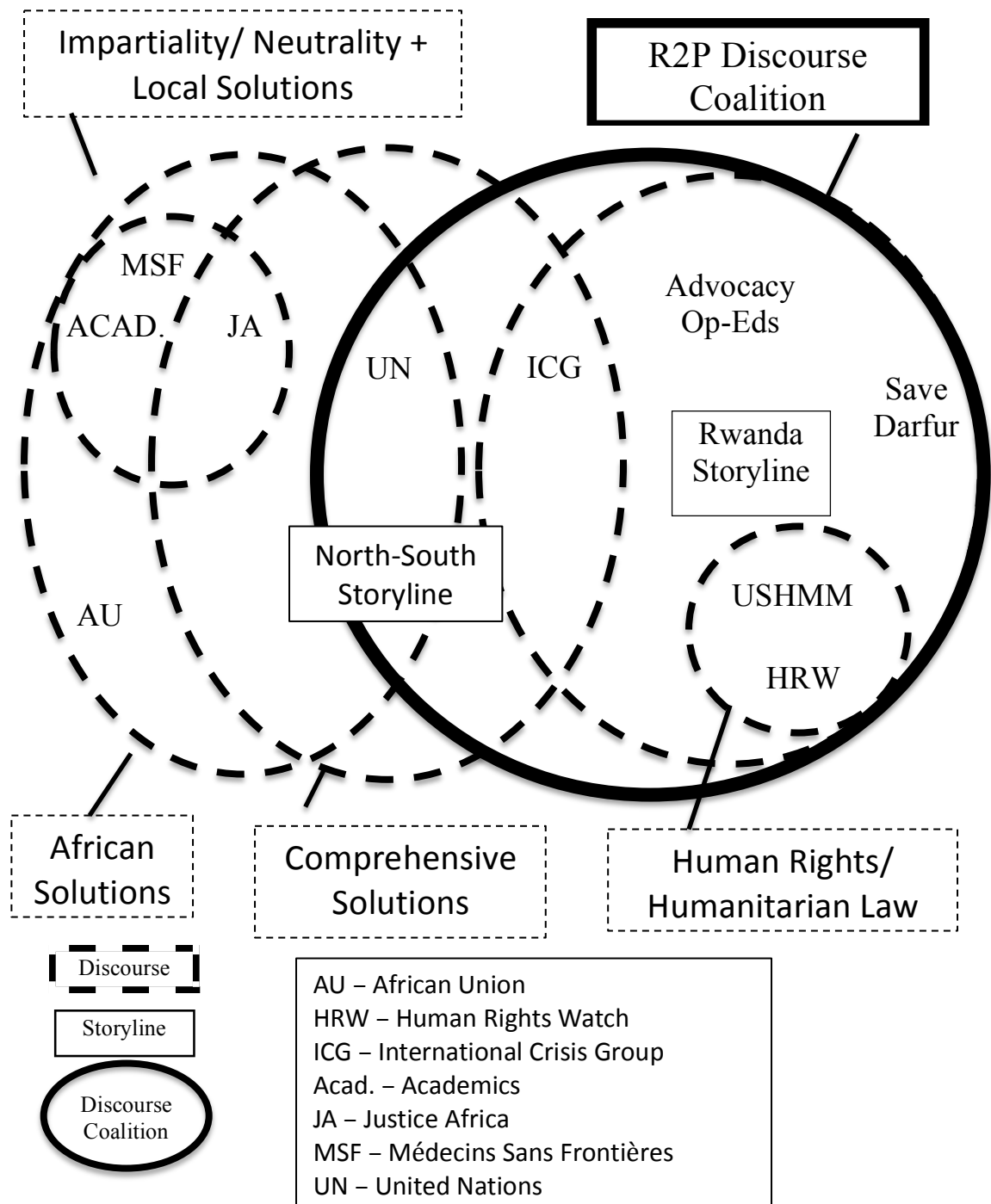UN – United Nations

CHAPTER SIX: INTER-DISCURSIVE NARRATIVE COMPLEXITY ANALYSIS

The research findings below represent the next step in an inter-discursive narrative complexity analysis beyond defining the initial architecture of meaning. The primary contention of this chapter is that the discursive space surrounding international intervention in Darfur between 2003 and 2006 was less defined by debate over merely facts or beliefs than it was by an argumentative battle between two discursive groupings, one of which could be considered a discourse coalition. These two groupings can broadly be described as ascribing to the "Responsibility to Protect (R2P)" discourse, on one hand, and a "comprehensive solutions" discourse, on the other hand. In more generic terms, these discourses can be differentiated by idea of simplicity, in the first place, and complexity, in the second, as this is also a story of narrative compression. The various actors falling under these groupings did not all end up in 2006 where they started in 2003—they were, rather, distributed among the disparate communities of meaning laid out in the previous chapter. Their evolutions had to do with the process by which one discourse coalition, centered around R2P, became hegemonic.

The second contention of this chapter is that a storyline belonging to the R2P discourse coalition began to structure the debate surrounding Darfur starting in early 2004, but the coalition did not achieve "discourse institutionalization" until mid- to late 2006. The intervening years represent the time period in which an R2P discourse

coalition coalesced, drawing on many different communities of meaning, not through formal coordination, but rather discursive affinity, with outcomes eventually reflected in United Nations (UN) Security Council and African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council decision-making and practices. The R2P discourse coalition achieved this hegemony through the use of a simplified narrative—a Rwanda storyline—about the conflict in Darfur, which can be summarized by the following three narrative characteristics:

1) A mono-causal explanation of violence attributing the conflict to the genocidal intentions of the Government of Sudan and centering on an analogy to the 1994 Rwandan genocide, with brief or no mention of the Darfur insurgency or complicated history that preceded it and a linear, rather than circular logic of violence blaming one side (Frederick, 2005; Murphy, 2007; Gruley, 2009; De Waal, forthcoming; Cobb, 2013; Autesserre, 2014);

2) A binary moral construct and ethnically polarized conception of the parties as being distinguishable along "Arab" versus "non-Arab" lines as well consisting of organized government attacks on civilians (monolithically "evil" versus "good"), often excluding the rebels as actors in the story (Frederick, 2005; Murphy, 2007; Gruley, 2009; Blayton, 2009a; Cobb, 2013; Autesserre, 2014);

3) A single prescription for action, namely outside military intervention— peacekeepers—with accountability-focused interventions—sanctions and war crimes prosecutions—as close companions, and little connection between

these futures and present or past conditions (Flint, 2010; Cobb, 2013;

Autesserre, 2014).

To be clear, not all of the various members of the R2P discourse coalition would necessarily consider themselves to have "joined" the advocacy movement or any group at all. Instead, the discourse coalition was drawn from many communities of meaning, which each implicitly agreed on different aspects of the storyline, sufficient enough for the advocacy storyline to dominant the discursive space. For example, the humanitarian community's early pleas for funding and access, perhaps inadvertently, first evoked the need for outside intervention, though some members later opposed a military response. Human rights organizations, such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, disagreed with the genocide characterization, but supported the ethnic descriptors, civilian protection, and legalistic arguments. Conflict prevention organizations, such as the International Crisis Group (ICG), initially framed the conflict as a political problem requiring comprehensive solutions, but focused in on peacekeeping as a primary tool after several months, co-producing the advocacy movement's storyline. The UN Secretariat and UN Commission painted more complicated pictures of the sources of violence and the parties, and also took much broader definitions of R2P, which included humanitarian and political responses, yet discursively accommodated the military and legal arguments as well.

What follows is a chronological account of how this process occurred. The account begins with an early description of the discursive space, showing the limited capacity of the international community to absorb Darfur's complexity from early 2003

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to early 2004, followed by a narrative of key events that led to discourse structuration

around the Rwanda storyline from early to late 2004. The account continues with the

process of argumentative struggle between what emerged as a discourse coalition, on one

hand, and more complex counternarratives on the other, throughout 2005, and culminates

in the discursive institutionalization of R2P in 2006. These findings, according to Hajer's

method (1993), are based on "the examination of argumentative structure in documents

and other written or spoken statements," in order to understand the relevant "positions,"

"counterpositions," and "interplay" between them, revealing the "argumentative

meaning" (p. 44, 45). These documents and statements were singled out by interview

subjects and uncovered in subsequent document analysis.

Early 2003-Early 2004: Complexity and The Lens of the South

During the period between the launching of a rebellion in February 2003 and the

early months of 2004, violence in Darfur received very little international attention, and

what attention it did receive from actors familiar with the region went mostly un-heeded

by UN officials who were meanwhile concerned with preparations for a peace deal to be

signed by the Government of Sudan and southern Sudanese rebels. According to an

interview with one early arriver in Darfur, the only news trickling out at first was in small

blurbs in the *International Herald Tribune*—there was almost a "blackout of

information," he said. Soon, however, reporting by NGOs, according to multiple

interviews, became the primary source of information on the conflict. While human rights

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organizations familiar with the region launched narratives broadcasting the relatively complex nature of Darfur's problems, humanitarian organizations were somewhat less certain and more reluctant about going public regarding the underlying nature of the conflict. The ongoing north-south peace talks made it harder to inject complexity into the discussion, even for conflict prevention organizations that were seeking comprehensive solutions to all of Sudan's problems.

Human rights groups were among the first to raise alarm bells in Darfur, with Amnesty International leading the charge. In January 2003, Amnesty called for the Government of Sudan to conduct impartial investigations into "tribal clashes" in Darfur and involve community leaders in a reconciliation process; it also warned about the risk of an "all out war" (AI, 2003a). Another Amnesty report issued five days before the attack by the Sudanese Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) on Gulu in February 2003 described an "escalating cycle of attacks" by nomadic groups against the mostly sedentary Fur, Masalit, and Zaghawa tribes—underscoring a circular logic of violence—and reiterated the call for a commission of inquiry "to clarify to the people of Darfur and the world the complex factors which have led to the present deteriorating situation" (AI, 2003b). The same report stated that such a commission could also "identify mechanisms which are in accordance with human rights standards to protect effectively the population from attacks" (AI, 2003b). An Amnesty report published a year later on 3 February 2004 further described the multiple drivers of conflict in Darfur as a history of resource and livelihood disputes increasingly fought along tribal and racial lines, regional marginalization and underdevelopment, and a proliferation of small arms, worsened by

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the Government of Sudan's arming of local militias (AI, 2004a). Thus, Amnesty International's early reports underscored the complicated roots of the conflict and the need for a multipronged response, although the main actions implied by its use of a storyline summarized by "grave abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law" were monitoring and protection (AI, 2004a).

Humanitarian organizations were slightly more reticent. According to an interview with a former humanitarian aid worker, MSF began internal debates in mid-2003 about how to frame the violence before the media picked up on the crisis, but hesitated to speak out. Summarizing the dilemma, the former aid worker asked, "do you publicize the extent of the atrocities based on extensive interviews with refugees coming into Chad or would that undermine attempts to get access to Darfur? And the decision was taken to not really go public with things." There was also initially, according to the same interviewee, confusion within MSF over the logic behind the violence and whether the displacement was the result of the government's mechanized farming schemes in rural areas or, as it would turn out, Khartoum's traditional counterinsurgency strategy. According to the same former humanitarian worker, in all of MSF's internal discussions, "there was an expectation that proxy wars as conducted by Khartoum tend to use something of a scorched earth policy [and] because they're using ethnicized proxies, they do tend to involve ethnic cleansing." Ultimately, MSF published calls in late 2003 and early 2004 for more international assistance to deal with "catastrophic mortality rates" in Darfur, shying away from describing the roots of the conflict (MSF 2004a, 2004b). Thus, sticking to a humanitarian storyline, the early strategy of international action for

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organizations like MSF was to remain neutral and impartial by staying out of the debate over exactly what the problem in Darfur was.

By contrast, the first report by the ICG, a conflict prevention NGO, regarding violence in Darfur, published on 25 June 2003, was noteworthy for its early recognition of a political problem—not just a human rights or humanitarian problem—brewing outside of southern Sudan, but telling in its title, "Sudan's Other Wars" (ICG, 2003a). The report began by stating that the two-party framework of the North-South peace talks in Naivasha was insufficient for dealing with Sudan's current conflicts, including rebellions in the "Three Areas" of Abyei, the Nuba Mountains, and Southern Blue Nile, as well as Darfur (ICG, 2003a). It also compared the concerns of the ethnic groups from which the Darfur rebels were primarily drawn—the Fur, Zaghawa, and Massalit—with the concerns of populations in the South, the Three Areas, and Sudan's eastern region, pointing to a "shared problem" of "marginalisation of peripheral regions" (ICG, 2003a). In response, it called for a "separate and concentrated initiative," apart from the Naivasha process, by the Sudanese Government and the international community to end hostilities (ICG, 2003a).

An ICG report six months later took a similar but more foreboding line, arguing that Sudan's problems were "national, not simply between north and south" (ICG, 2003b). The report presciently warned that, even if an agreement was signed between north and south, "the peace agreement may be undermined" if the situations in Darfur and eastern Sudan were not addressed (ICG, 2003b). ICG called on the Inter-

governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) [27], the regional organization sponsoring

the talks North-South, to broaden participation of negotiations at Naivasha to "ensure that

an end to conflict in the south does not become the catalyst for a new bloody chapter in

the west" (2003b). The report concluded with multi-faceted recommendations for the

government and rebels to cease deliberate killings and attacks against civilians, allow

unimpeded humanitarian access, and accept external mediation, along with a call for the

United Nations to appoint a high level observer to act as a "bridge" between Chad-

mediated talks on Darfur and the IGAD process (ICG, 2003b). Thus, in the beginning,

ICG's storyline was relatively complex.

However, as the months went on, ICG's idea of a Darfur political process was

kicked down the road. An op-ed by then ICG affiliate John Prendergast in the Guardian

on 20 January 2004 described "an alarming deterioration in the humanitarian and human

rights situation" in Darfur owing to a brutal response by the Sudanese Government and

government-backed Arab militias to a rebellion launched in February 2003 (Prendergast,

2004a). The op-ed noted that Chadian-mediated talks between the Sudanese Government

and Darfur rebels had "gone nowhere" and ceasefire agreements signed on 3 September

and 4 November 2003 had broken down. Then, rather than calling for immediate

international assistance to bolster the Chadian intervention, the op-ed echoed calls for

improved access by aid workers in Darfur and stated that, "as soon as the deal is finalized

between the government and SPLA, a major effort must be mounted to resolve the

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[27] The primary sponsors of the talks in Naivasha including the United States, the United Kingdom, and
Norway ("the Troika"), as well as the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Partners
Forum (IPF), which consisted of several of Sudan's neighboring state governments, including Kenya,
Uganda, and Ethiopia.

conflict in Darfur" (Prendergast, 2004a). Alas, for ICG, the task of dealing with Darfur's political problems was, at least rhetorically, put into a holding pattern until north-south negotiations were complete.

The complexity of the situation in Darfur posed challenges to an international community with limited conceptual bandwidth to devote the level of attention already placed on North-South peace talks to another Sudan problem. According to several interviews with former UN, AU, and academic experts, news of violence in Darfur worried many of the sponsors of the North-South negotiations that any diversion of focus at this critical juncture in negotiations between the Government of Sudan and Sudanese People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) would kill momentum and possibly give one or both of the parties a reason to stall an agreement. As one UN staffer stated in an interview, "If we tried to broaden the agenda and the number of parties at the table to include the situation in Darfur, we'd probably get nothing." Another former UN staffer recalled a private conversation in which a senior UN official cursed the "f***ers out there in Darfur" and the "idiots in Khartoum," who were "going mess everything up." An AU official similarly remembered foreign envoys being "much more focused on the north-south issues" and "worried what would happen…about the dangers of imperiling that process by bringing in Darfur as well."

In a positive sense, the long-running North-South conflict was starting to bring the attention of international actors familiar with the history of Sudan's marginalized populations to Darfur, another neglected region. However, according to an interview with a member of a conflict resolution NGO, the idea that Darfur was just like Sudan's other

conflicts also initially created many misperceptions, for instance, that the conflict in Darfur was similarly being fought along religious lines, when in fact, most Darfuris were/are Muslim and one of the Darfur rebel movements—the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) was/is, itself, an Islamist offshoot of the ruling party in Khartoum. In addition, according to an interview with an academic expert, the model of peace talks between the Government of Sudan and SPLM/A as a "two-party negotiation" was ultimately inappropriate for Darfur. An AU official commented in an interview on the pitfalls of so many people basing their initial assessments of Darfur on their own experiences in South Sudan: "one of the problems we consistently had—and interestingly not only with the internationals, but with many of the Sudanese, including the SPLM in the South—was to explain the situation in Darfur was not comparable to the South …, [but] much more complex than that….Darfur has these fault lines, but they play out very, very differently."

A former US Government official recalled coming to the situation in Darfur "having a certain lens already on the Government of Sudan…and being in the middle of the intense negotiations on the CPA and the whole situation in southern Sudan and then coming to this new part of the country and trying to understand what was going on there and not just taking the lens of the south, …and the government's actions and agenda there, and sort of modus operandi…..we were clearly concerned that there were militias that were attacking civilians and not understanding why. I didn't really know much about the history of Darfur at all." As the North-South deal in Naivasha would not be concluded for yet another year, the United Nations retained the lead in coordinating a response to

the immediate humanitarian manifestations of the conflict, launching its first

humanitarian appeal for $139 million for Darfur in September 2003, but effectively

delegated the task of dealing with the political dimensions to the Chadian Government

and AU, already engaged in that process (Slim, 2004, p. 814).

International efforts to negotiate a more effective ceasefire picked up steam

between February and April 2004, with Chad remaining the host and a variety of other

international facilitators—including the Geneva-based Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue

(CHD), which had been privately engaging the rebels for an entire year beforehand—

assisting with the process of getting the Darfur rebels to N'Djamena, Chad (Slim 2004, p.

816). While French representatives to the talks attempted to steer discussion toward

political matters, according to one account, Chadian President Deby and the African

Union steered the final product toward a "*Humanitarian* Ceasefire Agreement," which

was signed on 8 April, so as not to take away from efforts in Naivasha (AU, 2004c; Slim

2004, p. 817). A UN staffer interviewed for this paper emphasized that the agreement

was, "characterized in those terms—not as a political agreement, not as a security

agreement, as a humanitarian ceasefire."

According to an interview with a conflict resolution expert, CHD's plan in getting

the Government of Sudan and Darfur rebels to the table to discuss humanitarian issues

was always aimed at moving talks in the political direction—"'humanitarian' was cover

for what was eventually or what was to be security and political discussions," because it

was "a much more acceptable way for the government to engage." On the ground before

even the original seven or eight international aid organizations that arrived in mid- to late

2004, CHD had been the first outsiders to really confront the political issues in Darfur in this way and was, according to several interviewees, instrumental in introducing the Darfur rebels and their cause to the United Nations, African Union, and foreign governments. However, following Darfur's entrance on to the world stage with a large donor conference held in Geneva in early 2004, CHD was marginalized from the process and eventually shut out of what would soon become the AU-sponsored Darfur peace talks, which did not begin in Abuja until August 2004.

The first passing reference to Darfur in a UN Security Council Resolution (1547) on 11 June 2004, meanwhile, placed it at the bottom of a Naivasha-focused statement of support for that process's facilitators and urged the Government of Sudan and SPLM/A to conclude a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) "as expeditiously as possible" (UN, 2004d). In the one paragraph regarding Sudan's "other wars," as ICG had called them, the resolution called on the unnamed "parties" in Darfur, along with those in Upper Nile, a separate conflict, to "halt" the non-specific "fighting" (UN, 2004d). It also urged the parties in Darfur to respect the ceasefire agreement signed in N'Djamena on 8 April 2004 and "conclude a political agreement without delay," welcoming the African Union's efforts (UN, 2004d). The first major discussion specifically on Darfur in the UN Security Council did not occur until 7 July 2004, highlighting, at the time, the early influence in the discourse of a North-South storyline that sequenced the CPA first and kept the "other conflicts" at bay (Slim, 2004, p. 811).

Early to Late 2004: Discourse Structuration

Broader international attention finally turned to Darfur in early 2004. Organizations tasked with responding to the conflict began developing more coherent descriptions about the problem in Darfur as more information became available. However, before long, the tendency to simplify, as Séverine Autesserre has described, rather than "analyze each occurrence a new," led to the reproduction of a familiar, simple narrative (Autesserre, 2014, p. 37). Perhaps the most formative moment marking the origin of storyline comparing Darfur to Rwanda was a statement made by the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Sudan Mukesh Kapila in a press conference on 19 March 2004. This was the first discursive turning point mentioned independently by more than half of those interviewed and it was often raised in disapproval. After serving in the position for 13 months, and having kept quiet with regard to the situation in Darfur up to that point, Kapila, who had just been dismissed from his job, stated that the conflict in Darfur had created the "worst humanitarian crisis in the world"—not just a humanitarian *situation*, but a crisis—a phrase that would be reproduced for months to come by UN officials, reporters, and advocacy groups ("Mass rape," 2004, Egeland 2004). He also characterized the violence as "ethnic cleansing" resulting from "a scorched-earth policy" ("Mass rape," 2004). Kapila compared the situation in Darfur to the 1994 Rwandan genocide, saying that the only difference was the "numbers involved" ("Mass rape," 2004; Power, 2004; Burr & Collins, 2008).

Every interview subject who raised this turning point expressed ambivalence about the influence of Kapila's statement and comparison of Darfur with Rwanda (also

see Weissman 2006). In general, they highlighted the positive impact it had in "breaking the silence" about "horrible" things happening in the region, but questioned Kapila's timing and the unfortunate implications of the analogy. According to one interviewee associated with the human rights community, Kapila's statement was belated in the eyes of human rights and humanitarian organizations in Darfur, which had been trying to attract international attention to deteriorating conditions in the region for a year (also see Weissman, 2007). While a member of the advocacy movement called Kapila's statement "important" and praised his outspokenness, a former UN official referred to Kapila's "cri de coeur" as "self serving" and "opportunistic." In another interview, a conflict resolution expert criticized Kapila's statement in that, "it was all based on the fact that he was being thrown out of the UN and he made a splash on his way out," but affirmed it was "influential, really a turning point…it was the most senior UN official saying, you know, there's something wrong here, which he hadn't done up until then. He was so preoccupied with the CPA and basically living in Nairobi, that the whole Darfur conflict was just kind of like a side dish. Really missed it, missed the ball on that one."

In an *International Affairs* article later that year, Hugo Slim, an academic expert in humanitarian studies, referred to the period following Kapila's statement as the "do something" moment (Slim, 2004, p. 814).[28] Indeed, a former member of the advocacy movement acknowledged in an interview that Kapila "started the ball rolling," but added, "comparisons…tend to obscure more than they illuminate in terms of understanding what is going on." To be sure, the Rwanda storyline crowded out the particular and

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[28] Slim's article included input from with input from Andrew Marshall of the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (CHD).

complicated history of the Darfur region and the rebellion that had begun the previous

February. It provided for none of the complexity that organizations like Amnesty

International had laid out, but did amplify earlier calls for international assistance by

organizations like MSF. In fact, Kapila was not the first person to imply that events in

Darfur constituted genocide, which was, after all, one interviewee recalled, one of the

SLM/A's stated reasons for rebellion in February 2003.[29][30] Still, Kapila's statements—

appealing in their simplicity—reverberated abroad more quickly than the Darfur rebels'

statements ever did.

Following Kapila's statement in March, the Rwanda storyline was reproduced in

accounts by other prominent UN officials, not accidentally in association with the tenth

anniversary of the Rwandan genocide in April 2004. In another "punctuation" on the

timeline, according to an interview with a former UN official, United Nations Under

Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Jan Egeland briefed the UN Security Council

and press outlets on 2 April (UN, 2004a). In his presentation, Egeland described the

"forcible and long-term displacement of the targeted communities" in Darfur (UN,

2004a). A former UN official interviewed for this project described Egeland's statement

as somewhat "selfish," as the rest of the UN bureaucracy was not yet prepared to respond

to what he laid on the Security Council's doorstep. He added that Egeland was "definitely

jumping up and singing a verse ahead or from a different page in the carol book….If I'm

honest, there wasn't much wrong of substance with what [Kapila and Egeland] were

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[29] See the Sudan Liberation Movement and Sudan Liberation Army (SLM/SLA) Political Declaration, Press Release/Commentary by SLM/A, March 14, 2003 (in Burr & Collins, 2008, p. 303).

[30] Smith College professor Eric Reeves, a longtime advocate for South Sudan, had also written a op-ed entitled, "Unnoticed Genocide" in the *Washington Post* on 25 February 2004 (Hamilton, 2011).

saying, it was just my firmly held professional belief that it's, a) not enough, and b) not your job to do that. In fact, it's an act of professional irresponsibility not to think through the next steps, even if they don't have much impact."

Still, on 7 April, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan raised Egeland's statement in the context of his speech in Geneva, "An Action Plan to Prevent Genocide," stating that the description of the violence in Darfur could also be termed "ethnic cleansing" and urged the international community not to ignore the "real danger of genocide" (UN, 2004c). Annan called for "action," meaning a "continuum of steps, which may include military action," but only as an "extreme measure." Annan called first, however, for a high-level team to visit Darfur to "gain a fuller understanding of the extent and nature of this crisis" (UN, 2004c).[31] Annan's emphasis on understanding the extent and nature of the crisis highlighted this early tension in the discursive space around Darfur between the normative and technical or analytical components of storylines surrounding the situation. On one hand, there was the urgency of action needed to stop the violence and, on the other hand, the importance of a comprehensive approach to resolve the many underlying sources of the conflict.

Earlier in the same speech in Geneva, Annan had stressed the need to address the multiple causes of armed conflict as the best way to reduce the chances of genocide, appealing to preventative components of R2P.[32] In that discussion, Annan had raised the

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[31] A UN High-Level Mission subsequently traveled to Darfur between 27 April and 2 May (Slim, 2004). Missions of the Acting UN Commissioner for Human Rights also traveled to Chad to interview Sudanese refugees between 5 and 15 April 2004 and to Khartoum and Darfur between 20 April and 3 May 2004 (Slim, 2004).

[32] See http://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/adviser/responsibility.shtml

need to strengthen local conflict prevention capacities, deal with environmental problems, prevent regional spillover of conflicts, promote education and peaceful employment, protect the rights of minorities, and end discrimination and hatred in areas at risk of genocide (UN, 2004c). This basic philosophy was evident in the Secretary General's soon-to-be monthly reports on Darfur, required by the UN Security Council starting in July 2004. In these reports, Annan would repeatedly describe the multiple layers of the conflict and call for a comprehensive solution to the conflict (UN, 2004f). He would also come under direct attack as Western activists' storyline arguing for a robust military response, the response the international community had failed to supply in Rwanda, grew louder.

According to Hugo Slim, the multiple UN fact-finding and assessment missions that followed Annan's statement couched their assessments in "post-Bosnia and post-Rwanda language," also clearly invoking norms of human rights violations, war crimes, and R2P, but with little result (Slim, 2004, p. 815). Thus, according to Slim, the problem was obvious to the UN Secretariat, even if it "resorted" to use of terms like "ethnic cleansing" to avoid saying the word "genocide" (Slim, 2004). Slim added that, "the tragic lesson from Darfur is that when the problem is obvious the solution may not be" (Slim, 2004). Slim attributed the delay in more assertive international responses in Darfur to competing priorities, such as the peace process in South Sudan, and a general lack of certainty over how best to respond, remarking that, "…having the will to do something is not the same as knowing what to do or being able to do it" (Slim, 2004).

According to an interview with a current UN official, the UN Secretariat leaves genocide determinations to legal bodies as a matter of policy, because it is not equipped to make such assessments. So, in fact, the UN Secretariat's use of the phrase "ethnic cleansing" was rather forward leaning. However, Slim was correct in asserting that the UN bureaucracy's avoidance of the Rwanda storyline had not lessened its references to R2P. The difference between advocates' and the UN Secretariat's appeals to R2P was the *urgency* implied by the Rwanda storyline and, as would soon be evident, the focus on military intervention above all other solutions, as opposed to a measured and comprehensive response.

As it was, neither Mukesh Kapila nor Secretary-General Annan's connection of Darfur to the possibility of genocide reflected a political consensus in the UN Security Council or the AU Peace and Security Council as of spring 2004, signifying a lack of discursive institutionalization. A press statement by the UN Security Council President following Jan Egeland's briefing to the Council on 2 April referred to Darfur as only a "massive humanitarian crisis," not referencing "Rwanda," "ethnic cleansing," or "genocide" (UN, 2004a). This disparity likely reflected the hesitance of UN member states to adopt a storyline that would indeed point to military action as, at a minimum, a necessary consideration. According to interviewees and other written analysis, there was no appetite for Western military intervention following the US intervention in Iraq in 2003 (Murphy, 2007). The statement instead called on "the parties" in Darfur—not specifically naming either the Government of Sudan, the Darfur rebel groups, or any identity groups—to ensure protection of civilians and facilitate humanitarian access to the

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population, both, as it happened, core elements of R2P, but without specific reference. In addition, the press statement welcomed ceasefire negotiations taking place with the support of the Chadian Government and African Union in N'Djamena (UN, 2004b).[33]

Formal statements by African Union officials reflected even fewer indications of discourse institutionalization with regard to R2P and the Rwanda storyline. The same day as Annan's statement in Geneva, Chairman of the AU Commission Alpha Oumar Konaré visited Kigali to commemorate the anniversary of the Rwandan genocide, and on his way, not coincidentally, visited Khartoum to meet with Sudanese President Omar El Bashir. According to AU press statements, the goal of the visit was for Konaré to confer with Bashir regarding "ongoing discussions in N'Djamena on the situation in the Darfour Region of Sudan" (AU, 2004a, 2004b). As in the UN Security Council statement, no direct link between Darfur and Rwanda was made in the AU press releases, apart from the implicit timing of the visit.[34] In addition, the AU press statement benignly and vaguely defined the conflict in Darfur as "a situation," probably reflecting a reluctance on the part of the AU to criticize a member state (AU, 2004a, 2004b).

A day later, on 8 April 2004, another AU press release welcoming the signing of the "humanitarian" ceasefire agreement reached between the Government of Sudan and Darfur rebels in N'Djamena squarely placed the conflict outside of the Rwanda frame—and the agreement outside of the "political" negotiations between the Government of

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[33] Similarly, a press statement by US President George Bush on 7 April, while coinciding with the anniversary of the Rwandan genocide, did not explicitly invoke it, and rather called for an end to atrocities by local militias in Darfur against the population (White House, 2004).
[34] According to Rebecca Hamilton (2011), Sudanese Vice President Taha had rushed the ceasefire agreement to ensure it was concluded before the tenth anniversary of Rwanda so that Darfur would not attract more attention than necessary (p. 33).

Sudan and the SPLM/A taking places in Naivasha, Kenya—with no reference to Rwanda or any specific description of the parties or "the situation" at all (AU, 2004c). Indeed, the AU's public communications from that point forward would frequently shorthand ongoing violence as "ceasefire violations" (AU, 2004e). As a result, the plotline of events of the Darfur conflict in most outward facing AU statements would begin, henceforth, with the ceasefire, and any future behavior of the parties would be measured against this benchmark, as opposed to being taken in the context of a much longer series of events (AU, 2004h).

Subsequent reports by the Chairman Konaré to the AU Peace and Security Council starting in April 2004 were similar to UN officials' statements regarding the "humanitarian situation" in Darfur, but avoided any allusion to ethnic cleansing or comparisons to Rwanda and also carefully refrained from placing blame on any party (AU, 2004d). In his April report, Konaré presented a multicausal explanation of the conflict in Darfur (AU, 2004d). He described the "violence" as having stemmed from a history of "intermittent conflict, arising from competition over access to grazing land and water between sedentarians and [pastoralists]; rivalries between communities over representations in the local structures of government; as well as impact of national policies" and "widespread circulation of small arms" (AU, 2004d). Konaré's report focused on the AU's primary charge of facilitating ceasefire negotiations between the Government of Sudan and Darfur rebels—separated out, by name, as JEM and SLM/A— and noted the parties' plan for negotiations of a more comprehensive agreement "to

achieve socio-economic developments" to begin 15 days after the signing of a ceasefire (AU, 2004d).

Once the Government of Sudan and Darfur rebels had signed a ceasefire agreement in early April 2004, however, Konaré's reports to the Peace and Security Council focused largely on logistics of deploying a ceasefire monitoring force. (AU, 2004d, 2004f, 2004g, 2004h, 2004i). Events in the plotline of the Chairman's July report, and from that point on, began after the ceasefire was signed and, unlike the more in depth explanation of the conflict provided in the previous report, the violence moving forward was characterized simply as "abuses of international law" and "continued human rights violations" (AU, 2004j). The report also recalled, however, the parties' commitment to hold a "general conference" on the "political, economic, and social situation in the Darfur with the view of finding a global and definitive solution between the parties to the conflict" (AU, 2004j). In much simpler terms, AU Executive Council and Assembly Decisions in July 2004 referred to the situation in Darfur as a "humanitarian crisis" with continued "human rights violations" and the Peace and Security Council explicitly declared that the situation could *not* be called "genocide" (AU, 2004j, 2004l; 2004m).

Mobilization of Bias—the Rwanda Storyline

In the meantime, many voices began to emerge outside of UN, AU, and NGO circles, laying the seeds of a discourse coalition. *New York Times* editorialist Nicholas Kristof, for instance, was named by several interviewees for this study as an influential voice in the response to the Darfur conflict, because he was "the voice of God to

advocates." Kristof published three pieces in late March 2004 echoing the language of

Kapila's statement and reproducing the use of ethnic descriptors and binary moral

positions for the characters in his narrative. (Kristof, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c). In these

editorials, Kristof described the conflict as being between "Sudan's Arab rulers" and

"black African Sudanese," and raised the specter of "genocide" (Kristof, 2004a, 2004b,

2004c). Another Kristof op-ed in the *New York Times* on 14 April 2004 added

comparisons between Darfuris and Armenians, Jews, Cambodians, and Bosnians as a call

to "get serious" about enforcing the recently signed humanitarian ceasefire agreement

and improving access for aid workers (Kristof, 2004d).[35] Several op-eds making similar

comparisons followed around the United States in the coming weeks (Murphy, 2007;

Hamilton, 2011). For example, Harvard lecturer Samantha Power also wrote an op-ed in

the *New York Times* on 6 April 2004 entitled "Remember Rwanda, but take Action in

Sudan" (Power, 2004a).

    According to a media analysis by Deborah Murphy, who reviewed eighty three

editorials and op-eds in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *Wall Street Journal*

between March and September 2004, "by far, the most common analogy was Rwanda,"

with attendant allusions to the failure of the international community to act, as opposed to

substantive discussion on how the situations in Rwanda and Darfur were "alike or

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[35] Also in April/May 2004, USAID, led by then Administrator Andrew Natsios, developed and shared
mortality estimates for Darfur predicting 10,000 deaths/day by June unless the government of Sudan lifted
travel restrictions on humanitarian organizations; it also projected 350,000 deaths total in a worst case
scenario (Winter, 2004b).

different" (pp. 315-16).[36] Expanding on the narrative news sources of the Rwanda

storyline, Murphy (2007) found:

> Over April, May, and June [2004], a common description of the conflict quickly emerged: the Arab-dominated Sudanese Government had armed local Arab militias (usually called "Jinjaweed") to attack civilians (identified as either "African" or "non-Arab"), causing thousands to flee to neighboring Chad and hundreds of thousand more to remain internally displaced in Darfur beyond the reach of relief agencies. Twenty-three of the eighty-three articles also stated that the violence was a response to a local rebellion, which was itself a response to, variously, the government's favoring of the Arab population, the historical neglect of the Darfur region or the exclusion of Darfurian groups from the North-South peace process. However, little attention was paid to the role of the rebels. (p. 316)

Some commentators have argued that the lack of a role for rebels in media and

activists' conflict narratives allowed the Darfur armed movements to escape international

pressure and drag their feet in multiple iterations of peace talks (Flint, 2010; Gustafson,

2010, pp. 5-6). One could also argue the opposite case, that exclusion of the Darfur rebels

from descriptions of the very conflict they wanted credit for instigating positioned them

as irrelevant, robbing them of the international leverage they needed to negotiate on

firmer ground.

While early news articles about the Darfur conflict in April, May, and June 2004

explained the background of the crisis, according to Murphy (2007), the focus later that

summer was much more on factors affecting the international response (p. 316). In that

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[36] For additional analysis of media frames regarding Darfur in *Washington Post* and *New York Times* coverage at the time, see Gruley's (2009) critique of these newspapers' dominant representations of Darfuris as "African" and "Arab" and violence in the region as stemming from tribal/ethnic conflict with a colonial undertone. In addition, see Frederick's (2005) comparison of framing of the Darfur conflict by the *New York Times* and *China People's Daily* between January 2003 and February 2005; in one comparison, Frederick (2005) found that, in *New York Times* coverage of Darfur during the studied time period, "the word genocide was used an average of 1.71 times per article," and "Ethnic cleansing was used .23 times per article," whereas in the *People's Daily*, "the word genocide only appeared an average of .26 times per article," and "[ethnic] cleansing only appeared .06 times per article" (pp. 30-32).

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sense, Murphy's analysis (2007) also provided evidence of an increasingly compressed event history in media coverage of Darfur as the conflict went on. In articles published later, during the summer of 2004, according to Murphy (2007), the US policy debate was described as being driven by three themes related to what she called the "Iraq syndrome": war weariness in the face of significant public pressure to respond to atrocities, tension over a unilateral versus a multilateral approach, and a resulting deferral to the African Union to take the lead in Darfur when it "became clear the UN and Western governments were not prepared to take meaningful action" (p. 328).

At the end of the summer, Samantha Power argued in the New Yorker that the debate over semantics about genocide had diverted attention from the more important question of how to save lives in Darfur (Power, 2004b). While noting the influence of Kapila's statement and comparison to Rwanda in galvanizing international attention on Darfur, Power provided a much more detailed account of personalities and dynamics involved in the origin of the Darfur conflict than had been provided in short op-eds to date (Power, 2004b). She, nevertheless, described the conflict as a "campaign of ethnic cleansing on non-Arabs" and settled on international peacekeeping and protection as the most needed responses in Darfur (Power, 2004b). In addition, Power, implied the need for the UN Security Council to refer atrocities in Darfur to the ICC. Thus, she did not rely on the Rwanda storyline, but the "Arab versus non-Arab" and "government versus civilian" derivative of that storyline remained operative in defining Power's prescriptions for action.

Accounts by reputable human rights groups about Darfur in 2004 showed similar discursive affinity with the Rwanda storyline. For example, while Human Rights Watch's (HRW) reports told more complicated stories about Darfur than Kristof's op-eds, political negotiations often did not make the list of priorities for intervention and the prioritization of solutions turned toward military intervention. According to an interview with a human rights advocate, HRW, in both an April 2004 report, "Darfur in Flames," and a May 2004 follow-up report, "Darfur Destroyed," consciously opted against calling the situation in Darfur "genocide" (HRW, 2004a, 2004b). HRW nevertheless relied on legalistic language and concepts to underscore the urgency of international response (HRW, 2004a, 2004b). The reports laid out a relatively complex historical context of the Darfur conflict—including drought, livelihood disputes, the breakdown of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, cycles of retribution, and regional marginalization—but, like others, divided the parties into Arab and African actors, namely "Arab militias" and civilians of the Fur, Massalit, and Zaghawa ethnic groups (HRW, 2004b). It also established a pattern of events that would substantiate accusations of "war crimes" and "crimes against humanity," in legal terms (HRW, 2004b).

HRW's prescriptions for action included calls for the UN Security Council to ensure protection of civilians and access for humanitarian deliveries and for the Government of Sudan to disarm the *Jinjaweed*—all evocative of R2P (HRW, 2004b). In addition, the HRW report in May recommended an increase in human rights monitors, the establishment of a committee of experts, and additional funding for AU ceasefire monitors and humanitarian assistance (HRW, 2004b). HRW's reports vaguely

acknowledged the circular logic of violence, ascribing neither good nor evil intentions to any party. Still, the Darfur rebels and any need for political dialogue remained relatively absent from the story, again bearing discursive resemblance to the Rwanda storyline, even if unintentional.

A November 2004 report by HRW, "If We Return, We Will be Killed: Consolidation of Ethnic Cleansing in Darfur," similarly resisted the genocide label, but referred to the situation, in terms akin to those used by the UN Secretariat, as "the ongoing human rights crisis in Darfur," and unequivocally called it "ethnic cleansing,"[37] consisting, in clear legal terms, of "war crimes" and "crimes against humanity" (HRW, 2004c). The plotline of events was shortened to the period since HRW's last report before the summer, although it alluded to a long history of forced displacement by Sudanese authorities in other parts of the country (HRW, 2004c). The report also was unusual in that it disaggregated armed actors into multiple categories of government forces— including *Jinjaweed*, fursan, mujahedeen, peshmerga, PDF, border intelligence guards, police—and named specific rebels (HRW, 2004c). In this report, HRW did not cast equal blame for the conflict, but again acknowledged the circular logic of violence (HRW, 2004c). Still, it focused prescriptions for action on everything *but* a political solution, above all a UN-led chapter VII mandated protection force (AU or UN) and ICC referral by the UN Security Council (HRW, 2004c).

In a positional shift, ICG's reports—which had previously focused on the need for a political process in Darfur, either independent from, or attached to, the North-South

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[37] A subsequent Human Rights Watch Report in January 2005 more specifically detailed government actions targeting the Fur population, including detentions, brutality, and mass executions (HRW, 2005a).

peace talks—also showed increasing discursive affinity with the Rwanda storyline

starting in early 2004. In a 23 May 2004 report, "Sudan: Now or Never in Darfur," ICG

borrowed Kapila's language describing Darfur as "the worst humanitarian situation in the

world" (ICG, 2004b). The ICG report also used catchy one-liners, warning that "urgent

action" was required to ensure that, "'Darfur 2004' did not join 'Rwanda 1994' as

shorthand for international shame" (ICG, 2004b; Hajer, 1995, pp. 62-63). Unlike some

editorial and human rights reporting from the same time period, ICG did not cast the

conflict in purely racial terms, apart from referring to it as "ethnic cleansing" at the outset

of the report; in addition, ICG explicitly named the Darfur rebel groups, not just civilians,

as relevant actors in the story, while many editorial pieces had not (ICG, 2004b). The

ICG report focused on the need for a political solution to the conflict, but may also have

been the first—prior to either Power or HRW's recommendations—to call for UN

planning of military intervention in Darfur, as well as a "no-fly" zone to protect civilians,

clearly connecting the Rwanda frame to military action (ICG, 2004b).

From that point forward, Sudan advocate John Prendergast, still affiliated with

ICG, began calling for the transitioning of the AU Ceasefire Commission (CFC) that had

been created to monitor the April 2004 N'Djamena humanitarian ceasefire agreement

into a civilian protection force. An op-ed entitled "Sudan's Ravines of Death," written by

Prendergast and published in the *New York Times* on 15 July 2004, called for financing,

equipping, and support of Rwandan and Nigerian ceasefire monitors by the United States

and the European Union to help protect civilians in Darfur and ensure disarmament of

Arab militias backed by the Sudanese Government, also known as *Jinjaweed*

(Prendergast, 2004b). It also called on the UN Security Council to ensure "accountability for crimes against humanity" (Prendergast, 2004b). These two avenues of intervention would become the pillars of the Save Darfur movement's rallying cries a year and a half later, but were, for the moment, probably the most publicly read early calls for peacekeepers and sanctions to be considered with respect to Darfur.

On 6 September 2004, Prendergast published another op-ed in the Washington Times entitled "Sudan's Killing Fields," describing the conflict in Darfur as Rwanda on slow burn (Prendergast, 2000c). Compelling western attention and action, he wrote: "In 1994, the world had only 90 days in which to act before the killing in Rwanda was over. In contrast, the Sudanese slaughter began in earnest 17 months ago. The hundreds of thousands of further deaths now feared from disease and malnutrition will happen in slow motion" (Prendergast, 2004c). Prendergast again advocated for the deployment of an expanded AU force to protect civilians and explicitly pitted the proposal of punitive measures in the UN Security Council—i.e. targeted sanctions on Sudanese officials and businesses—against then nascent political negotiations facilitated by the African Union in Abuja. He argued that, "human rights should no longer be traded off against endless peace processes that never quite come to fruition" (Prendergast, 2004c).

This op-ed typified an advocacy approach of positioning international actors who supported a political solution to the Darfur conflict, perhaps even ICG, as somehow less sympathetic to the plight of Darfuris or even naïve for thinking that the Government of Sudan was a worthy negotiating partner. Prendergast would use similar positioning strategies in the coming years. The implication, on one hand, that those international

actors in favor of finding a comprehensive political solution to the Darfur conflict must have opposed accountability and, on the other hand, that the goal of addressing the grievances of the Darfur rebels was less important than punishing the Government of Sudan, ultimately had the positioning effect of both denying the Darfur rebel groups and Darfuris, in general, agency in the outcome of the conflict and relegating the goal of obtaining a political agreement to a lower priority relative to the deployment of peacekeepers and implementation of sanctions.

It was during the summer of 2004 that organizations involved in genocide prevention became more vocal regarding Darfur as well, drawing, if nothing else, symbolic, comparisons between Darfur and the Holocaust, fostering more discursive affinity with the Rwanda storyline. On 6 June, 2004, the head of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum's Committee on Conscience, Jerry Fowler, published a piece in the Outlook section of the *Washington Post* referring to "indicators of genocide" in Darfur (Fowler, 2004).[38] On 24 June, the Holocaust Museum hosted an event with a Holocaust survivor, a Darfuri woman in exile, and three US members of Congress, all long time advocates of South Sudan, to bring attention to the situation in Darfur (Schiff, 2004). A month later, on 26 July, the Committee on Conscience declared its first "Genocide Emergency," having previously issued a "Genocide Warning" in January (USHMM, 2004a, 2004b). The Holocaust Museum also launched an exhibit about Darfur with

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[38] According to an interview with a former member of the advocacy movement, Fowler came under attack from a prominent Sudan advocate, because his op-ed did not declare the situation "genocide" outright. This was likely because, according to Rebecca Hamilton, many activists took the message from Samantha Power's (2002) book "A Problem From Hell: America in the Age of Genocide," that the first step in responding appropriately to situations like Darfur is saying the "G word" (Hamilton, 2011).

posters showing displaced Darfuri children and burned villages with simple captions, such as "Targeted because of their ethnic identity…" and "Harsh conditions threaten the survival…"—lines meant to recall portions of the legal definition of genocide under the 1948 Genocide Convention.[39]

Another key event occurred in this period, according to interviews with three former members of the advocacy community. A small group of representatives from several organizations met for a "Darfur Emergency Summit in New York" on 14 July 2004 and formed the basis of the Save Darfur Coalition (Hamilton, 2011). This group, which included Fowler, David Rubenstein, and Ruth Messinger from The American World Jewish Service, crafted a multipronged set of objectives for action on Darfur meant to allow a broad set of actors to sign on to their vision: an end to violence against civilians, unimpeded humanitarian access, the safe and voluntary return of displaced Darfuris to their homes, and accountability for perpetrators (Save Darfur, n.d.). Student and church groups around the country began to sign on to the Coalition, which grew to some 80 or 90 members within months (Hamilton, 2011).[40]

However, as with any loose alliance, the process of signing on new groups was not formally coordinated and, as the movement grew over the next two years, so did the divide of understanding between what became a well-funded policy staff in the formal

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[39] The legal definition of genocide under the 1948 Genocide Convention is: "intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;   (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group."

[40] As of September 2008, 180 religious, advocacy, and humanitarian organizations belonged to Save Darfur (Armenian National Committee, 2008).

Save Darfur organization and the grassroots membership. Speaking in an interview about the divisions between the policy and grassroots teams, a former member of the advocacy movement contemplated a common advocacy practice: "the grassroots people working with the students and local Save Darfur chapters and churches, they just wanted something boiled down to a, you know, one-page handout….It was the rare occasion when people from those groups would call and ask more serious questions….So, it wasn't intentionally trying to keep them out of the conversation, but, you know, it wasn't trying to teach up people." By 2006, the grassroots memberships' focus would shift almost entirely toward getting peacekeepers deployed in Darfur, overshadowing other objectives. In the meantime, the conflict would evolve considerably in nature.[41]

A notable counternarrative to the Rwanda storyline in this time period came from independent researchers at Justice Africa, whose "Prospects for Peace" blog was affiliated with frequent Sudan commentator Alex De Waal. In its May post, Justice Africa described the situation in Darfur as both a human rights and humanitarian crisis, but focused attention on the political implications of the Darfur rebellion (Justice Africa, 2004a). The Justice Africa blog uniquely highlighted the perspectives of the Government of Sudan and Darfur's Arabs, the former of whom, it claimed, saw the conflict as an "intra-Islamist dispute" and the latter of whom saw themselves as having been on the losing end of a longstanding confrontation between farmers and herders in the region (Justice Africa, 2004a). The blog assessed that Darfur had "sundered" the National

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[41] According to Hamilton, "…for members of the public who came into the Darfur movement through stories of the 2003-2004 massacres, it would take explicit direction to get them to update their narrative of the conflict; simply posting some information in the textual segments of Save Darfur's website was insufficient." (Hamilton, 2011, p. 105).

Congress Party (NCP) "along its most sensitive fault line: race" and warned that the

rebellion "could easily prefigure a conflict that could tear apart the fabric of the Sudanese

State itself" (Justice Africa, 2004a). The blog was particularly unusual at the time for its

disaggregation of relevant actors—also discussing variances in rebel platforms—and

recognition of possibly legitimate motivations, on all sides (Justice Africa, 2004a).

Yet, forced to respond to other advocacy reports within the "same discursive

frame" and reproduce the status quo, the Justice Africa blog entries in May and July 2004

also addressed the question of whether genocide was occurring in Darfur. In May, Justice

Africa concluded that violence in Darfur was a combination of two things: both "a crime

planned at the highest level of the Sudanese state" and "a counterinsurgency that has got

out of control" (Justice Africa, 2004a). Such cognitive dissonance would not be easily

grasped by advocacy groups. Similarly, Justice Africa's blog on 5 July accepted the

argument that "prima facie evidence" of violence in Darfur constituted genocide under

the Genocide Convention of 1948, but warned that "simplistic racial analyses of the

conflict are unhelpful and can be positively dangerous" (Justice Africa, 2004b). It also

cautioned against the "tendency for international analysis of Darfur to be refracted

through the lenses of previous crises, including Southern Sudan (from whence the

simplified 'Arab versus Africans' dichotomy is borrowed[42]) and Rwanda." It additionally

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[42] Interestingly, other analysts have criticized the Darfur advocacy movement for not recognizing the
similarities of violence in Darfur to the conflict in the south (Hamilton, 2011, p. 51). For example, in her
analysis of media narratives about Darfur in 2004, Deborah Murphy (2007) described the following
comparison by John Ryle as one of the more *overlooked* analogies relative to the Rwanda: Darfur has been
described as 'Rwanda in slow motion.' But, more significantly, it is Southern Sudan speeded up. For two
decades in the south, successive Khartoum governments have employed the same counterinsurgency
techniques as in Darfur today, with similar results. During the 1980s and 1990s Arab militias from Darfur
and neighboring Kordofan, similar to the *Jinjaweed*, but known to the southerners by the derogatory term

highlighted "a danger that these lenses will complicate or delay addressing the real issues in Darfur" (Justice Africa, 2004b). Another entry on 3 September echoed the same concern that media "dichotomization" of "Arabs" and "Africans" in Darfur risked "entrenching the racial component to the war in Darfur" (Justice Africa, 2004c).

At the same time, in a glimpse of discursive affinity, Justice Africa acknowledged that the AU ceasefire monitoring force in Darfur was indeed "too small and poorly resourced" and concluded that a "credible and large-scale international military observer force" was needed (Justice Africa, 2004b). Justice Africa also cautioned against prioritizing "humanitarian access at the expense of a political settlement" and warned of mounting pressure in Western capitals to intervene militarily, specifically alluding to officials "haunted by their failures over Rwanda" (Justice Africa, 2004b). It cautioned officials in Khartoum that, "unless the [Government of Sudan] takes rapid action to implement its commitments, these pressures will rapidly translate into an unstoppable momentum" (Justice Africa, 2004b). Finally, Justice Africa called for an independent body, namely the African Commission on Human Rights, to investigate human rights violations with the possibility of forwarding evidence to the ICC—another point of discursive affinity with the Rwanda storyline (Justice Africa, 2004c).[43]

'Murahaliin' (nomads), were deployed against communities in SPLM-controlled area of Bahr el-Ghazal, the province to the south of Darfur. The famines that afflicted Bahr el-Ghazal in 1987-1988 and 1998-1999 were the result of these attacks….These attacks were coordinated by military intelligence and sometimes accompanied by aerial bombardment, as in Darfur. And an ideology of Muslim religious and Arab racial superiority was used to justify them (p. 320).

[43] The African Human Rights Commission sent a delegation to the Darfur to "get acquainted with" the human rights situation in July 2004 and the African Union held an extra-ordinary session on the matter in September 2010 (African Human Rights Commission, July 2004, September 2004, May 2005, December 2005). The Commission received little Western attention.

One of Justice Africa's founders, De Waal remained among those voices on the opposite side of advocacy arguments comparing Darfur to Rwanda into the summer of 2004. Interviewees for this paper cited his publications, which included a 5 August 2004 article, "Counterinsurgency on The Cheap" in the *London Review of Books*, as influential in expanding key players' understanding of the Darfur region (De Waal, 2004a). In that article, De Waal provided one of the more nuanced descriptions of the origins of the Darfur conflict—with one of the most complex explanations of events leading to recent violence—in popular references at that time, not directly differentiating it from Rwanda, but explaining the long history of marginalization of both the region's Arab and non-Arab tribes, as well as the construction of "Arab" and "non-Arab" identities over centuries (De Waal, 2004a). He called the violence in Darfur "genocide by habit," as opposed to the product of ideological design by the Government of Sudan and argued that, although legal action to deter future war crimes in Darfur was necessary, "condemnation is not a solution" (De Waal, 2004a).

Again responding within the discursive frame set by the Rwanda storyline, De Waal acknowledged that AU ceasefire monitors on the ground were not capable of protecting civilians, a job that could fall to "additional troops sent from outside Africa" (De Waal, 2004a). However, he emphasized that, "the best, and perhaps the only means" of disarming the government-backed militias, or *Jinjaweed*, was a locally owned process by which Darfuri leaders themselves would "regulate ownership of arms" and isolate outlaws (De Waal, 2004a). He further underscored that this process could take at least a decade and added that "reconstituting" Darfur would be a "slow, complicated, and

expensive" process (De Waal, 2004a). The option of local ownership of disarmament was never reflected in public communications of the United Nations or African Union, although, according to interviewees, it was discussed during the AU-facilitated peace talks in Abuja, to which De Waal was an advisor. The suggestion that a locally focused response would take at least ten years was not likely to be appealing to activists seeking an immediate fix.

While the Rwanda storyline had achieved discourse structuration by mid- to late 2004, discourse institutionalization was still a couple of years away. Advocacy calls for bolstering the AU ceasefire monitors began to have an impact on decision-making, however, as member states called for stronger action in mid-2004. In the case of the African Union, these calls "sounded right" within the organization's running characterization of violence in Darfur as "humanitarian ceasefire violations," rather than "genocide" or "ethnic cleansing." On 27 July 2004, the AU Peace and Security Council, in the Communiqué from its 13th Meeting, requested that the Chairman of the AU Commission prepare a plan on how to enhance the effectiveness of AMIS, "including the possibility of transforming said Mission into a full-fledged peacekeeping mission" (AU, 2004n). The Communiqué described the conflict generically as a "grave situation" and "humanitarian crisis," also noting "human rights abuses" without attribution to specific perpetrators (AU, 2004n).[44]

In even more minimalist terms than the AU's 27 July Communiqué, the AU Peace and Security Council's Communiqué from its 14th Meeting on 9 August 2004

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[44] In July, Britain and Australia announced they were considering sending troops for peacekeeping.

expressed satisfaction at the progress made in establishing AMIS and described the conflict in Darfur as only a "crisis" with no additional details (AU, 2004o). The Communiqué included calls for the Government of Sudan and named rebel groups to respect their ceasefire commitments, international support for newly launched peace talks between the Government of Sudan and the Darfur rebels in Abuja, Nigeria, and ongoing provision of humanitarian assistance to the region (AU, 2004o). No mention of genocide or military intervention beyond the ceasefire monitors was made, but by September, the AU Peace and Security Council requested the Commission "expedite the preparations for the enhancement of AMIS" and in October, the AU Peace and Security Council decided to deploy a larger force (AU, 2004p, 2004q, 2004s).

The United Nations, having secured a commitment by the Government of Sudan to improve access for aid workers on 3 July, also turned attention toward reinforcement of AMIS in mid-summer 2004 ("Joint Communiqué between…," 2004). As with the African Union, this step resonated within the UN Security Council's representation of the Darfur conflict as a "humanitarian crisis" punctuated by "widespread human rights violations," rather than genocide. On 30 July 2004, UN Security Council Resolution 1556 expressed support by the UN Security Council for the AU's deployment of international ceasefire monitors and called for a UN team to assist the AU with planning and assessments for the mission (UN, 2004e). The Security Council, continuing to resist the Rwanda storyline again referred to the conflict as an "ongoing humanitarian crisis" and described "acts of violence with an ethnic dimension" (UN, 2004e). Resolution 1556 also placed an arms embargo on the Darfur rebels and *Jinjaweed*, and required the UN

Secretary General to provide monthly reports to the Council on events in the region, humanitarian conditions, violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, and steps taken to assist the African Union's deployment of ceasefire monitors (UN, 2004e).

Reflecting even greater public demands on Western member states by the end of the summer, the UN Security Council also made additional moves toward both a stronger military response and punitive measures on the Government of Sudan. On 18 September 2004, nine days after a statement by US Secretary of State Colin Powell declaring the violence in Darfur "genocide"[45]—both a key event and a positional shift raised by interviewees—the UN Security Council referred the situation to an International Commission of Inquiry (COI) for investigation (UN, 2004g). In what would become familiar refrains, the Security Council also called upon the Government of Sudan and Darfur rebels "to work together under the auspices of the AU to reach a political agreement" and for the Government of Sudan to end "impunity," while expressing its support for AMIS's enhancement and calling for generous contributions by member states for humanitarian operations (UN, 2004g). In addition, Resolution 1564 declared the Council's intent to consider "additional measures" such as "actions to affect Sudan's petroleum sector and the Government of Sudan or individual members of the Government of Sudan" (UN, 2004g).

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[45] Powell is said to have based this determination, in part, on a report by the U.S. Department of State, American Bar Association, and Coalition for International Justice, called Documenting Atrocities in Darfur, September 2004, which laid out the results of a survey conducted among Darfuri refugees in Eastern Chad establishing a widespread and systematic pattern of attacks by the Government of Sudan on Darfuri civilians during the past year, meeting the legal criteria, at a minimum for Crimes Against Humanity (US State Department, 2004; Hamilton, 2011, pp. 37-38; Hagan and Raymond-Richmond, 2009, pp. 79-80).

To summarize, although the Rwanda storyline was resisted by the UN Security Council and AU Peace and Security Council in formal communications throughout 2004, it "stuck" in activist circles and generated an increasing amount of discursive affinity with other storylines such that a discourse coalition began to emerge. The storyline persisted, even as the sources of violence in Darfur became less organized and more diffuse from late 2004 onward, paradoxically just as the Save Darfur advocacy movement, and its direct comparisons of Darfur to Rwanda, picked up steam, peaking in April 2006. With the Rwanda storyline came the assumption that, as though part of a melodrama, only outside actors, namely peacekeepers, could rescue Darfur (Hardy, 2008). Meanwhile, the UN's own continued storyline referring to Darfur as "humanitarian and human rights problem"—to maintain its separation from the still ongoing North-South peace process—reinforced the minimization of a political solution even as the Secretariat paid lip service to its importance, thus opening the possibility of discursive affinity with the advocacy storyline later on.

Late 2004 to Early 2005: Argumentative Struggle

By late 2004 and early 2005, the world had woken up to the violence in Darfur and interested observers undertook more ambitious research surrounding the conflict to understand exactly what the problem was. The period following US Secretary of State Powell's declaration of "genocide" in Darfur was characterized on one hand, by a thickening of the narrative by actors with access to the evolving situation on the ground and, on the other hand a flurry of advocacy group activity that simultaneously sought to

recompress the narrative into a marketable storyline from afar. In effect, a burgeoning

discourse coalition, on one hand, and a loose grouping of independent voices launching

more complicated storylines, on the other hand, engaged each other in an argumentative

struggle over the simplicity versus the complexity of the problem in Darfur. As follows,

counternarratives to the Rwanda storyline distinguished themselves in at least three ways:

more complex descriptions of the causes and sources of violence, inclusion of more

complex and morally complicated characters with a circular logic to the fighting, and

multipronged prescriptions for the future.

It is worth noting here that, while senior UN officials were sitting in New York

and Geneva, and AU headquarters operated in Addis Ababa, their information sources

were local. Between September 2004 and May 2005, the total number of international

and national humanitarian staff operating in Darfur doubled from just under 6,000 to just

under 12,000. (Figure 9. Trend of Humanitarian Staff Working in Darfur (April 2004-

October 2008)). The UN Secretariat was working off of the assessments of all of these

humanitarian workers as well as UN staffers supporting the AU. With the AU having

only just stood up the Peace and Security Council in December 2003, it was not

accustomed to fielding ceasefire monitoring missions, so many of the African Union's

planners came from the ranks of the United Nations. In addition, the AU Commission

was receiving regular reports form the nearly 2,400 of AMIS's authorized 3,320

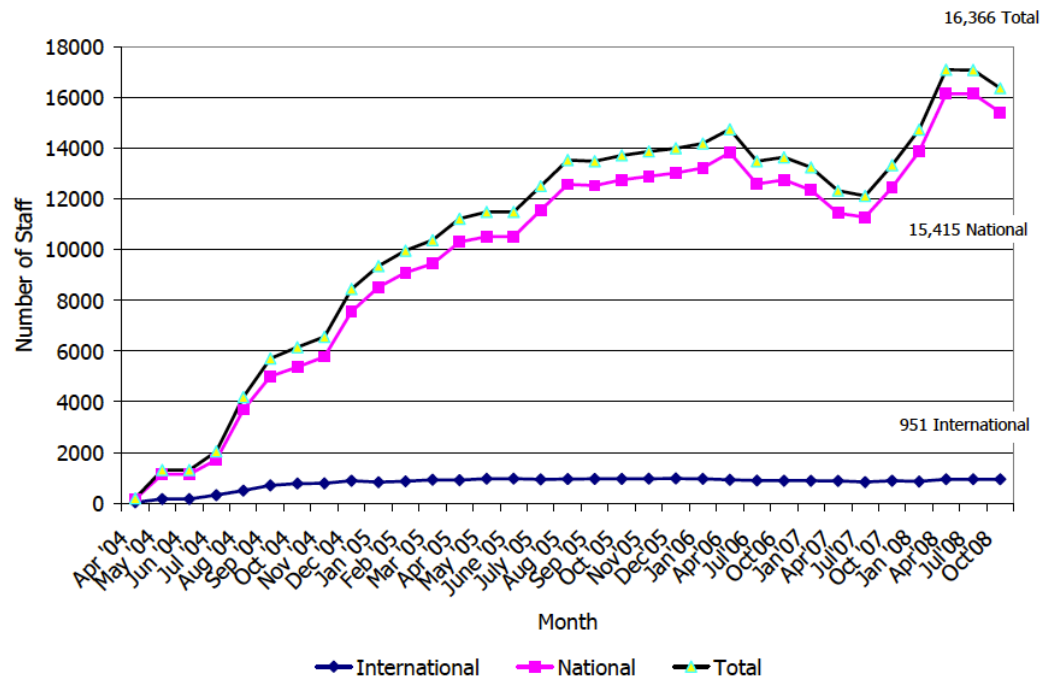personnel on the ground and the AU mediation team in Abuja (AU, 2005d).

Figure 9. Trend of Humanitarian Staff Working in Darfur (April 2004-October 2008), United Nations Humanitarian Profile No. 33.

Complex Counternarratives

Most humanitarian organizations in 2003 and 2004 refrained from commenting on the political aspects of the conflict in Darfur. Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) was initially no exception, according to an interviewee: "MSF's agreed public position, which was quite thought about, was that MSF is not competent to decide whether it's genocide or not. MSF is an aid providing organization and sees the conflict through the prism of our provision of aid. We're not a research organization, which sets out to provide a comprehensive legal interpretation of what's happening." However, according to the interviewee, one chapter of the organization—MSF-France—disagreed with this stance and felt it was important to publicly contest the genocide storyline (Bradol, 2004; Hoile,

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2004). After visiting the region in late June 2004, then President of MSF-France Jean-Hervé Bradol posted his assessment on MSF-France's website that, "Our teams have not seen evidence of the deliberate intention to kill people of a specific group. We have received reports of massacres, but not of attempts to specifically eliminate all the members of a group" (Birchall, 2004). He called the genocide label inappropriate and instead described the situation as "a mass campaign of repression directed against civilians," certainly no less serious of a concern (Birchall, 2004).

A former humanitarian aid worker described the gap between outside perceptions and what actors on the ground in Darfur were seeing as follows:

> There's always that gap. And partly, that gap is the nature of advocacy. Advocacy needs to shrink down reality into a consumable package, in a way like the news media does, but even, in some ways, much more aggressively. The news media tries to do that, occasionally, in a neutral way. The advocacy community is trying to shrink it down into a message, which will motivate people. So, any advocacy attempt is, by definition, trying to crush…I think it's Roberto Unger's thing—you're trying to crush reality into an understandable package. And advocacy is doing that very consciously.

Another interviewee who had worked with a humanitarian NGO from outside of the country spoke of how practices by outside observers and policymakers abroad reinforced that gap:

> I definitely swallowed the advocacy narrative early on just because that was what dominated media coverage and that's who had the loudest voice. Now, that's not to say that the narrative is wrong, though I think there are aspects that are misguided. But, I had sort of a *New York Times* understanding of what was going on, and that does get boiled down to the Arab versus African dynamic, which has a lot of truth to it at the macro level, but, well, kind of breaks down the lower you get…..It's, you know, the Government of Sudan and the Arab *Jinjaweed* militia and the burning of villages, mass rape, throwing people in wells, huge numbers of people forced into camps and into, across the border into Chad. You know, general *wanton* terror tactics, for, ultimately uncertain purposes, too. I mean…

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you know, clearly a counterinsurgency aspect to it, [but] even sort of initially, it strikes you as ..'what's the real goal here?' Is it really to wipe out an entire population? That's really hard to do. ….You know, the policymakers who spend ten minutes of their day on this, they have little choice but to accept that view, and getting to a much more nuanced view is pretty difficult. And, you know they read the newspaper and watch TV, too, and so much of the advocacy efforts are geared toward those high level individuals that, if there's any degree of success, then they are hearing that line.

Even the news media began picking up on the nuances of the conflict, however, and some commentators tried to upend the notion of organized violence in Darfur altogether. An article by Scott Anderson, "How Did Darfur Happen?" published in the *New York Times* on 17 October 2004, offered a more complex explanation of events in the region than most press coverage at that time (Anderson, 2004). Based on a trip he had taken with some 40, mostly Sudanese, journalists in Darfur, Anderson (2004) attempted to unpack the region's history of drought, desertification, changing migration patterns, blurry identities, and intercommunal strife, as well as national political struggles and regional neglect. The article also incorporated humanizing quotes from an interview with Ibrahim Suleiman, then governor of North Darfur, depicting at least some Sudanese Government officials as more incapable than evil and, perhaps haplessly, also now stuck in a situation that had spun out of their control (Anderson, 2004). He wrote:

In its need to hold someone responsible for both causing the crisis and for ending it, the outside world has imbued Darfur with a clarity and coherence that are not at all apparent on the ground. Instead, what emerges is a far more complicated and, ultimately, more disheartening tale: disaster brought about through a blend of incompetence, cynicism, and cowardice. At it's most grim, it is the story of how a remarkably small group of combatants—probably just a few thousand soldiers, rebels, and so-called Janjaweed combined, mostly armed with little more than what might be found in a National Guard armory—was able to precipitate a tragedy that has pushed more than a million people to the edge of extinction. The

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paradox is that the very ease with which they were able to do so also means there is no quick or simple solution (Anderson, 2004).

Steering the conversation away from a causal story that placed blame entirely on the Government of Sudan, Anderson (2004) concluded that a declaration of genocide would not lend greater clarity to what was happening on the ground in Darfur, because, unlike in Rwanda, it remained "virtually impossible to distinguish incompetence from conspiracy."

Other outside observers began to thicken the narrative around Darfur by focusing on differences in local dynamics. In one such endeavor, Victor Tanner, with funding from the Sudan Advocacy Coalition[46], authored a paper, "Rule of Lawlessness: Roots and Repercussions of the Darfur Crisis" in January 2005. Tanner described the conflict as "a political crisis that has grown increasingly tribal at the local level" (Tanner, 2005). He went on to differentiate between the nature of violence in each of the three Darfur states, explaining that North Darfur had taken the brunt of the government counterinsurgency, because that was where the rebellion began, while fighting in West Darfur was about access by nomadic tribes to arable land, and violence in South Darfur was a complicated mix (Tanner, 2005). The report proposed a multi-pronged and time-phased response, emphasizing the need for foreign personnel—"aid workers, human rights observers, and military observers"—to address short-term protection needs, followed by long-term solutions focused on internal efforts to ensure rule of law and development (Tanner, 2005). The characters in Tanner's story were not Arabs and Africans, but complicated

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[46] The Sudan Advocacy Coalition was made up of CARE International, Christian Aid, International Rescue Committee, Oxfam International, Save the Children UK, and Tearfund.

actors with mixed motivations, and the problem in Darfur was a "security" problem, not a "humanitarian" one (Tanner, 2005).

In a similar trend, reports of the UN Secretary-General to the UN Security Council in late 2004 clung to the earlier storyline placing Darfur in the category of Sudan's "other conflicts"—subordinate to the South—but also painted an increasingly murky picture of events on the ground in Darfur that posed something of a challenge to the idea that Darfur was a Rwanda-type problem. In the first regard, the Secretary-General's report on general progress in Sudan on 28 September 2004 showed that it was finally possible for the international community to discuss the North-South peace process and AU efforts in Darfur in connection with each other (UN, 2004h). However, the Secretary-General held fast to the idea that Naivasha itself would create a solution, or at least conditions for a solution, to problems in Darfur. He highlighted the need for the UN Mission in Sudan—the peacekeeping mission expected to help implement the CPA, once concluded, in southern Sudan—to expand its scope in support of AMIS in Darfur as well (UN, 2004h). He acknowledged that a lack of progress in North-South talks and recent events in Darfur had caused him to focus much more attention on the latter than the former in recent months (UN, 2004h). But, he concluded that the CPA would provide the "basis for answers to the wider issues of insecurity and conflict," reflecting years of investment in the North-South peace process and perhaps a fear that the international community would lose sight of its importance (UN, 2004h).

The UN Secretary-General reiterated this sentiment in his monthly report specifically covering Darfur the following week, on 4 October 2004 (UN, 2004i). While

paying due page space to developments at the AU-sponsored peace talks in Abuja

between the Government of Sudan and Darfur rebels—which were laid out in much more

detail by the Chairperson of the AU Commission in his regular reports to the AU Peace

and Security Council—the Secretary-General wrote, "I would like to stress again my firm

conviction that the conclusion of a comprehensive north-south peace agreement is a sine

qua non for the resolution of the Darfur conflict" (UN, 2004i). While most likely

intended to send a message to the Government of Sudan and SPLA that international

pressure to sign a peace agreement would not waver, the secondary positioning effect was

again to hold a political solution in Darfur hostage to the CPA.

     The UN Secretary-General's report to the Security Council on general progress in

Sudan on 2 November 2004 was likewise adamant in emphasizing the importance of a

political agreement for Darfur, but continued to hang it on the North-South hook (UN,

2004j). The report implied that, for the parties in Darfur to reach a political framework

agreement, they needed to link their vision to the peace agreement emerging at Naivasha

(UN, 2004j). The Secretary-General repeated the idea that the agreement reached at

Naivasha, leading to a new constitution with a federal structure, could serve as a model

for Darfur, and called on the North-South negotiators to also work together to resolve the

Darfur conflict (UN, 2004j). While the Government of Sudan and SPLM/A probably felt

as though Darfur was jeopardizing their peace process, as opposed to vice versa, it was

clear that Naivasha needed to conclude for Abuja to move forward (UN, 2004j).

     With respect to the second trend of growing complexity, the UN Secretariat's

report to the Council on 4 October 2004 pointed to ongoing tit-for-tat fighting between

government and rebel forces, as well as attacks by government-backed militias on civilians, but also suggested a breakdown in command and control of government forces and stated that "banditry and random violence are on the rise" (UN, 2004i). In particular, the report referred to inter-tribal fighting in South Darfur and noted that it was "not easy to read a clear pattern from the incidents above" (UN, 2004i). His 2 November report also described, "a general drift toward lawlessness, cases of banditry, and abduction" (UN, 2004j). In his 3 December report, Annan blamed the rebels for "baiting" government forces, rather than acting in self defense, referred to new armed groups, and suggested that the government's aerial bombings were self defeating (UN, 2004l). These descriptions of the increasingly diffuse and unorganized sources of violence in Darfur— storylines acknowledging a circular logic, unintentional outcomes, and complicated motives by multifaceted actors—would become even more evident in reports by both the UN Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the AU Commission from early 2005 onward.

Throughout this time period, the Chairperson of the AU Commission also continued to provide the AU Peace and Security Council with regular updates on negotiations between the Government of Sudan and Darfur rebels at Abuja (AU, 2004q). Rarely attaching the Abuja process to North-South negotiations—in contrast to the UN Secretary General—the Chairman's reports focused on what progress had made by the parties in Darfur to agree upon a Protocol on The Improvement of the Humanitarian Situation and a Protocol on the Enhancement of the Security Situation in Darfur between August and November 2004 (AU, 2005b). Unfortunately, a massive "road clearing"

operation by the Government of Sudan in December 2004—which marked a crescendo nearing the end of the Sudanese Government's formal counterinsurgency in Darfur—led to the temporary collapse of peace talks in Abuja until spring 2005 (UN, 2005a, 2005b). The December military offensive also left no question about the competence of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) to coordinate action when it wanted to (UN, 2005a).

The road clearing operation set off a new cycle of retaliatory violence, according to the UN Secretary-General's report on 7 January 2005, which stated that both the government and rebels were at fault for the negative impact on civilians and aid deliveries, even if the rebels had not instigated the current round of fighting (UN, 2005a). The UN Secretary General's report called for reinforcements of AMIS and put a premium on civilian protection as well as renewed political negotiations, local reconciliation, and restoration of the social fabric of Darfur (UN, 2005a). The report did not come close to implying genocidal plans by the Government of Sudan, but did indicate a level of organization and intentionality correlated with the signing of the CPA—namely, a desire by government officials to wrap up the situation in Darfur by the time the North-South peace agreement was concluded (UN, 2005a).

Drawing on Darfur-based information sources throughout early 2005, descriptions of the conflict in reports by the UN Secretary-General to the UN Security Council and by the Chairperson of the AU Commission to AU Peace and Security Council continued to evolve. For example, the Secretary-General's report on 4 March 2005 assessed, "Although there have been fewer clashes between the Government of Sudan and armed movements in February 2005 than in the previous two months, and some disengagement

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has occurred, the security situation remains fragile. Reports indicate that lawlessness and

attacks by militia continue to blight the lives of thousands of civilians. It is hard to tell

where economically motivated attacks end and politically or tribally motivated attacks by

militia begin, but one thing is clear: the Government [of Sudan] has not stopped these

groups from attacking civilians" (UN, 2005c). Similarly, the Chairperson of the African

Union Commission's report to the Peace and Security Council on 28 April 2005,

commenting on events of the previous three months, stated:

> While the nature of the violence continues to include orchestrated attacks by the
> armed movements, the [Government of Sudan] forces and the armed militias,
> notably the Jinjaweed, there is a rising number of opportunistic attacks by militias
> and the rebels, inter-tribal violence, sometimes fed by the Parties to the conflict,
> and banditry. Deficiencies in the overall rule of law system encourage lawlessness
> and create scope for criminal activities as such. However, the interlinking nature
> of the different perpetrators of the violence makes it difficult at times to
> differentiate ceasefire violations from regular criminal activity. (AU, 2005e)

The trend of growing complexity in the AU and UN permanent staff's reporting

to their respective political decision-making bodies carried into the spring of 2005,

further challenging simple moral characterizations of the key players in Darfur. First,

both the UN Secretariat and AU Commission increasingly noted the fault of the Darfur

rebel groups in instigating attacks on the Government of Sudan as well as attacks by both

the rebels and government-backed militias on international humanitarian workers and

members of AMIS (UN, 2005i, 2005j, 2005m; AU, 2005e). As the conflict dragged on,

the rebels, desperate for vehicles and supplies, were routinely attacking aid convoys,

hijacking, looting, and kidnapping, making many roads and areas off-limits to aid

agencies (UN, 2005i, 2005j, 2005m; AU, 2005e). In addition, the AU Commission

informed the AU Peace and Security Council several times of leadership splits within the

rebel movements negotiating with the Government of Sudan at Abuja, slowing progress

in the peace talks (AU, 2005e). Moreover, the Chairperson of the AU Commission

repeatedly reported that, while the Government of Sudan had provided its military

positions to the AU Ceasefire Commission (AU CFC), as requested, the Darfur rebels

refused to do so, delaying progress at Abuja (AU, 2005e).

Storylines Positioning Advocates as Harmful

Perhaps anticipating the reality that activists' framing of the Darfur conflict would

not bend easily to incorporate more complex descriptions, Justice Africa tried to co-opt

the Rwanda storyline in way that pointed toward both political and military solutions

without inviting western intervention. In a blog post on 11 October 2004, Justice Africa

endorsed the US declaration of genocide, claiming it would be no more difficult for a

prosecutor to demonstrate "intent to remove or damage identifiable ethnic groups" in the

case of Darfur than it had been in Rwanda and Bosnia (Justice Africa, 2004d). However,

the blog post predicted that accusations of genocide would do nothing more than

"escalate the war of words" (Justice Africa, 2004d). It further argued that a genocide

determination dictated "a combination of diplomatic activities and the scaling up of the

AU force…not the dispatch of US forces with a mission of regime change" (Justice

Africa, 2004d). In addition, it emphasized that there was "no credible plan for resolving

the Darfur crisis that does not involve the consent of the [Government of Sudan],"

directly contrary to later activist arguments, but ultimately a key obstacle to be faced by any peacekeeping mission (Justice Africa, 2004d).

The 11 October report also reinforced the Secretary-General's notion of sequencing efforts to conclude a deal in the South before Darfur. Justice Africa, while providing a meaty update on the Abuja talks, highlighted that Naivasha had "returned to centre stage, and rightly so" (Justice Africa, 2004d). It noted that, after months of uncertainty over how to proceed, "it has become clear that the preferred sequence is, Naivasha first, Abuja second" (Justice Africa, 2004d). It went on to urge the Government of Sudan to swear in SPLM Chairman John Garang as Sudanese Vice President as soon as the CPA is signed; it implied that, the new combined governments of north and south Sudan could create a national political framework allowing autonomy in Darfur and Eastern Sudan, using the model of agreements made over Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile (Justice Africa, 2004d). Follow-up blog posts on 15 November 2004 and February 23, 2005 provided updates on the talks at Abuja—discussing details, such as reinstatement of the Native Administration and intra-rebel consultations, absent from other outside commentaries—but determined that it would "take a long time before conditions are in place for a political solution to Darfur" (Justice Africa, 2004e, 2005b). The November blog also offered theories for the Government of Sudan's failures to disarm the *Jinjaweed*, discarding the idea that Khartoum lacked command and control of its forces, and instead positing that loyalists of ousted NCP figure Hassan al-Turabi were undermining central decision-making (Justice Africa, 2004e).

Intent on inserting even more complexity into the international framing of the

Darfur conflict after the CPA was signed in January 2005, Justice Africa founder Alex

De Waal published an article in *African Affairs* in April called "Who Are the

Darfurians?" De Waal (2005b) provided a lengthy and layered explanation of Darfuri

identity formation throughout history and observed that, if the Genocide Convention was

interpreted broadly to determine that genocide had occurred in Darfur—short of the

extermination of an entire ethnic group—then it would necessarily also apply in the

Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Uganda, Nigeria, and a host of other countries.

He also cautioned that outside characterizations of violence in Darfur along Arab and

non-Arab lines were becoming "internalized" in Darfuri politics, with affected

communities "orienting their self-representation" to an "international audience," which

would complicate the "task of reconstructing the social fabric of Darfur" (De Waal,

2005b, p. 202).[47] In closing, De Waal (2005b) hoped that Darfuris would be allowed to

own a "counter process" in which they could find the space to create identities from

something other than violence.

These types of critiques put De Waal at odds with activists, who found them to be

patronizing in the absence of concrete, alternative proposals for intervention. According

to an interview with a former member of the advocacy movement, relative newcomers to

the conflict had learned a lot about Sudan from De Waal, but felt as though he was saying

in return, "this is a horrible situation, and thanks to all of these amateurs for calling

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[47] Evidence to back up these claims at the time was sparse, as polling data on Darfuri self conceptions was almost nonexistent, but the argument was somewhat borne out by a later survey conducted by the African Union Panel on Darfur, of which De Waal is a member (De Waal, forthcoming).

attention to it, but now if you'll just get out of the way, the professionals can resolve it."
On the other hand, a former UN official interviewed felt that De Waal's lessons were somewhat obvious and he should have stuck to being an expert, not a practitioner: "if you're fit enough to walk ten miles in Darfur, you're going to see three or four universes, right? He's an analyst and a historian, he's not a diplomat or an operator."

Behind the scenes, however, De Waal's and other AU advisors' attempts to devise alternate locally-owned security and disarmament arrangements for the parties negotiating at Abuja continued outside of the international spotlight. De Waal (2007a) later wrote that several concepts for a disarmament with the consent of the parties based on other models in the region were discussed at Abuja, but there was insufficient time to develop them. These ideas included including registration of arms, restriction of militia movements, impounding of vehicles, and gradual restrictions on arms usage (De Waal, 2007a). These proposals were never evident in advocacy or NGO reporting abroad. In fact, according to interviews with former members of the Save Darfur movement, not only were these proposals off their radar, the day-to-day of the peace talks at Abuja, in general, were not a major focus of their attention.

Re-Positioning by Advocates and Recompression of the Storyline

As UN and AU voices and independent researchers thickened the narrative, such nuanced descriptions and prescriptions remained rare among Darfur activists and, in some cases, were even attacked by them. The gradual shift in advocates' attention from the priority of the North-South peace process coincided with their ramping up of focus on

the deceitfulness of the Sudanese Government as an obstacle to peace in Darfur, and, according to an interview with a former member of the advocacy movement, Save Darfur "took their talking points from John Prendergast." Prendergast's 18 November 2004 op-ed in the *Baltimore Sun*, entitled "Get Serious With Sudan," painted the Government of Sudan as an evil monolith, associating it with al-Qa'ida and the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda, presumably to evoke a US national security interest in intervening in Sudan (Prendergast, 2004d). It also claimed that, "The real lesson of the last 15 years is that constructive engagement hasn't worked. When Sudan has been the target of serious pressure with a specific objective, it has modified its behavior" (Prendergast, 2004d). This paradigm, placing Darfur in a long-running battle between the West and Khartoum, pointed to tougher military and accountability-focused responses: a stronger mandate for AU forces on the ground and UN sanctions on Sudanese leadership (Prendergast, 2004d). A December op-ed by Prendergast in the *Los Angeles Times*—entitled "Unraveling the African Tragedy"—similarly appealed to outsiders to rescue Darfur (Prendergast, 2004e). The Darfur rebels and political negotiations might as well not been part of the story at all.

This trend continued through the following spring, even as humanitarian conditions in Darfur stabilized with the influx of aid workers. On 1 March 2005, John Prendergast and actor Don Cheadle, star of the 2004 film *Hotel Rwanda*, co-authored an op-ed in *USA Today* entitled "Never Again." They began the piece by warning that, "Rwanda's horror of a decade ago is happening again—this time, in Sudan's western region of Darfur" (Cheadle & Prendergast, 2005a). Telling a perfect causal story— seeking to move actin from the realm of the inadvertent to the deliberate and "thereby

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claim the right to invoke government power to stop the harm"—the op-ed went on to say that, as in Rwanda, the majority of the violence in Darfur was perpetrated by militias and those targeted were members of specific ethnic groups (Cheadle & Prendergast, 2005a; Stone, 1989, pps. 282, 284). The op-ed then took Prendergast's earlier positioning strategy to another level, invoking the lessons of Power's 2002 book and indirectly criticizing analyses such as those put forth by the UN Secretary-General and other commentators on the complexity of the conflict above by stating that "the international community intentionally portrays matters as more complicated than they actually are, to delay difficult decisions and bold action" (Cheadle & Prendergast, 2005a).

Moreover, the op-ed claimed that, just as in the case of Rwanda, world leaders were describing the conflict in Darfur as "tribal" and equating it to "chaos" to avoid action (Cheadle & Prendergast, 2005a). Worse, the authors alleged, world leaders ascribed moral equivalency to the warring parties in Darfur by supporting negotiations between them. This allegation implied that any actor who supported the Abuja peace talks also condoned war crimes committed by the Government of Sudan (Cheadle & Prendergast, 2005a). In another catchy one-liner positioning UN officials, Prendergast and Cheadle accused the international community of "applying humanitarian Band-aids over gaping human rights wounds" (Cheadle & Prendergast, 2005a). The only appropriate responses, they concluded, were making civilian protection AMIS's primary focus and the UN Security Council referring Darfur to the ICC. More simplistically, they called for a letter writing campaign to let the US government know that Americans wanted the killing in Darfur to stop (Cheadle & Prendergast, 2005a).

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In late March, Prendergast and Cheadle also published an op-ed in the *Wall Street Journal* listing ten "lame excuses" for inaction by the United States on civilian protection and accountability in Darfur (Cheadle & Prendergast, 2005b). The op-ed did not directly refer to the situation in Darfur as "genocide," but referred only to Powell's use of the term, so as to cast the responsibility on the US Government (Cheadle & Prendergast, 2005b). There was no mention of the need to support a viable peace process (Cheadle & Prendergast, 2005b). According to interviews with former members of the advocacy movement, celebrity endorsements and associations with films like Hotel Rwanda were key to raising public awareness and mobilizing support for the Save Darfur Coalition, the underlying assumption being that, the more people were aware of what was happening in Darfur and pressured policymakers, the more likely something would be done to help Darfuris.

In that spirit, the US Holocaust Memorial Museum acted in a convening capacity, hosting several key advocacy events. First, the museum hosted a national student leader conference on Darfur on 31 January 2005, which included Romeo Dallaire, Commander of UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda from 1993 to 1994; Dallaire also later appeared on a panel chaired by Samantha Power at Harvard Kennedy School event that April, an event that interviewees remembered as formative in the movement. The Holocaust Museum subsequently organized a "minute of silence" for Darfur on 1 March 2005 and promoted a letter writing campaign by group organized by Georgetown students called STAND (Students Take Action Now for Darfur), comparing inaction on Darfur to inaction in Rwanda (USHMM, 2005a, 2005b). These initiatives were followed by the

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launching of a display at the Museum on 22 March 2005 that showed photos and interview excerpts from Jerry Fowler's trip to Darfur in May 2004 as well as artifacts from John Prendergast and Samantha Power's visits to the region (USHMM, 2005c). Again, the calls to action implied by these events were drawn from the same simple storyline: awareness will lead to action—namely, peacekeepers and international criminal prosecutions to respond to a Rwanda-like genocide.

In another key event, on 24 May 2005, members of Save Darfur, sent an open letter to US President George Bush calling for international support to the African Union to accomplish the four goals set out in the July 2004 New York Summit, which by then were expanded to include the enforcement of the April 2004 ceasefire and creation of a "stable environment for meaningful peace talks to proceed" ("National Leaders…," 2005). Thus, even peace talks were predicated on military intervention: the letter, signed by multiple organizations,[48] first and foremost called on the US Government to, (1) "work through the United Nations (UN) to achieve a stronger civilian protection mandate for the African Union mission and for a broader international force, and (2) encourage the UN to quickly approve and assemble a robust international force to integrate or co-deploy with the African Union and reinforce its efforts" ("National Leaders…," 2005).

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[48] Original signatories of the letter included Africa Action, American Jewish World Service, Coalition for International Justice, Darfur Rehabilitation Project, Foreign Policy in Focus, Genocide Intervention Fund, Physicians for Human Rights, Save Darfur Coalition, TransAfrica Forum and Smith College Professor Eric Reeves. Later additions included members of the U.S. Congress, the NAACP, the National Council of Negro Women, the General Secretaries of the All Africa Conference of Churches and the National Council of Churches (USA), as well as interfaith & labor leaders, heads of women's groups and advocacy organizations & other leadership figures from across the United States (see "National Leaders Release Open Letter …," 2005 for full list).

Meanwhile, ICG, like Justice Africa, had echoed the Secretary-General's prioritization of concluding the CPA before shifting focus to Darfur in an 11 October 2004 report entitled "Sudan's Dual Crises," arguing that, "The draft agreement negotiated at Naivasha contains provisions that can assist a political solution in Darfur" (ICG, 2004d). However, once the CPA was signed in January, ICG strengthened recommendations for military intervention in the region. ICG in both March and April 2005 published reports calling for western logistical support of AMIS, a stronger civilian protection mandate for the mission, and an increase in its size to at least 10,000 with the help of the UN, EU, and NATO (ICG, 2005a, 2005b). Their reports also called for additional sanctions on the Government of Sudan, ICC investigations of crimes committed in Darfur, and implementation of a no-fly zone (ICG, 2005a, 2005b). Third on a list of recommendations in ICG's April "Action Plan," following objectives aimed at improving civilian protection and accountability, was "Build A Darfur Peace Process," as though one did not already exist (ICG, 2005b).

To ICG's credit, a peace process with the level of international support given to CPA negotiations between northern and southern Sudan did not exist in Abuja, but very little of activists' energy had, to date, gone into advocating that it did. ICG acknowledged in its March report that rebel splintering was beginning to hinder the peace talks that did exist at Abuja and called on the rebels to resolve their differences and comply with the AU CFC in providing areas of control (ICG, 2005a), but these details were not picked up in Save Darfur's letter to the President, nor did the substance of the peace talks appear in other advocacy texts. The March 2005 report also again highlighted ICG's previous line

that the CPA "contains provisions and models that could form the basis of a political solution" in both Darfur and Eastern Sudan (ICG, 2005a). It invoked Prendergast's placement of Darfur in the context of a long-running feud between Sudan and the West over southern Sudan, alleging that Khartoum had singed the CPA, in part, to deflect growing international pressure over its actions in Darfur, implying that the Government of Sudan could be forced to negotiate only by external stimulus, as opposed to any legitimate internal motivations (ICG, 2005a).

By mid-2005, ICG's reports attributed increasingly diabolical intentions to the Government of Sudan. Its 6 July 2005 paper, "The AU's Mission in Darfur: Bridging The Gaps," acknowledged that the African Union had taken the lead in facilitating the peace talks in Abuja, but the rebels were not mentioned once; instead, the analysis was figuratively focused entirely on the conflict between the Government of Sudan and the West, with the Government of Sudan playing a wily and untrustworthy party (ICG, 2005d). Specifically, it read:

> The assumption that the Sudanese government will fulfill its responsibilities and continued reliance on its cooperation as a pre-requisite for action against the militias with which it is allied are egregious self-deceptions. Khartoum's interest in seeking a lasting solution to the conflict is disingenuous, and it has systematically flouted numerous commitments to rein in its proxy militias— collectively know as the Jinjaweed. It has consistently opted for cosmetic efforts aimed at appeasing international pressure, minimized the political dimensions of the conflict, and inflamed ethnic divisions to achieve military objectives. (ICG, 2005d)

The majority of the ICG report's recommendations argued in favor of giving AMIS a stronger mandate and sending more troops (now up to 12-15,000) to Darfur with support from the United Nations, European Union, and NATO (ICG, 2005d). It further

called for AU and NATO enforcement of the UN Security Council ban on offensive military flights, stating that "civilian protection needs to become the primary objective" (ICG, 2005d). The results of a June 2005 survey published by ICG indicating US public support for military action in Darfur and describing the Government of Sudan's objectives in Darfur as "violent anarchy" were also then reproduced in an op-ed by Prendergast in the Philadelphia Inquirer in August 2005 (Prendergast, 2005; ICG, 2005c).

In the same time period, in late May and early June 2005, Nicholas Kristof published two opinion pieces in the *New York Times* (Kristof, 2005b, 2005c). The first called attention to President Bush's "141 days of silence" since Powell's genocide declaration and crudely compared Bush to a reader from Oregon who had written to Kristof asking "why the US should care for the rest of the world" (Kristof, 2005b). The May op-ed pandered to readers by suggesting that the United States should care about Darfur and Sudan from a strategic standpoint, if nothing else, because "failed states" are prone to "nurture terrorists like Osama and diseases like polio, while exporting refugees and hijackers" (Kristof, 2005b). According to interviewees, Kristof's columns did wonders for fundraising. A former member of the Save Darfur advocacy movement noted that, "money just started coming in, because people would read about Darfur—they would read a Kristof column or something—and they would Google 'Darfur' and Save Darfur would come up and they would donate money."

As with ICG, Kristof deserved credit in the May piece for decrying rebel "intransigence" at negotiations, along with the Government of Sudan's failure to disarm the *Jinjaweed*, but interestingly referred to the rebels as "Sudanese," rather than

"Darfuri," as if almost in fear that his readers would get confused if "Sudanese" were not

entirely *bad* characters and "Darfuris" were not entirely *good* characters in his narrative

(Kristof, 2005b). His June op-ed also highlighted the findings of a March 2005 MSF

report on sexual violence in Darfur (Kristof, 2005c; MSF, 2005). The MSF report had

pointed to widespread use of rape and sexual violence as a tool of warfare by multiple

unnamed parties to the conflict since 2003 (MSF, 2005). The report was distinctive for its

non-emphasis on outside sources of assistance, perhaps either because MSF was

concerned about maintaining its presence in Darfur or because MSF was all too familiar

with conflict situations where peacekeepers themselves had contributed to cultures of

sexual violence (MSF, 2005). Kristof did not, however, mention in his op-ed that MSF

had primarily called on local authorities to change the climate as a more durable solution

than outside intervention (MSF, 2005).[49]

Approaching Discourse Institutionalization

During the latter months of 2004, the UN Security Council increasingly signaled

its support for AU efforts to mediate a political agreement in Darfur. These signals

became even more encouraging as the CPA signing, which would take place in January

2005, entered into sight (AU, 2005b). On 19 November 2004, UN Security Council

Resolution 1574 emphasized that, "a [North-South] Comprehensive Peace Agreement

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[49] In February 2005, Kristof (2005a) had also published an op-ed about the African Union's "secret genocide archive" of photos taken by AMIS monitors in Darfur. The piece was based on photos taken by a US military advisor to AMIS in the fall of 2004 named Brian Steidle, who subsequently appeared in person at an event at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in July 2005; Steidle, who had personally witnessed AMIS's challenges in enforcing what had become an almost non-existent ceasefire in Darfur, said he spoke out in the hope that awareness would lead to action—namely, authorization of a peacekeeping force with a civilian protection mandate (USHMM, 2005d).

will contribute towards sustainable peace and stability throughout Sudan" but also underlined "the importance of progress in peace talks in Abuja between the Government of Sudan and the Sudanese Liberation Army and Justice and Equality Movement toward resolving the crisis in Darfur" (UN, 2004k). The Abuja talks remained out of the Western public's view, however, and the impression that no new steps were being taken to stop the violence in Darfur—and that the Government of Sudan had made no visible effort to disarm militias, apart from integrating them into its security services—heightened activists' pressure on Western governments.

Notwithstanding the rebels' contribution to mixed sources of violence on the ground, the Government of Sudan had taken no action to disarm the *Jinjaweed* by early 2005, and the UN Security Council, with the US Government now leading the charge, began responding to activists by pressuring the Government of Sudan in "ad hoc" ways (De Waal, 2007b). In early signs of discourse institutionalization, the UN Security Council passed three resolutions taking bolder steps toward improving the security situation and enforcing accountability for violence in Darfur. First, on 24 March 2005, UN Security Council Resolution 1590 requested that UNMIS liaise closely with AMIS with a view toward reinforcing the force (UN, 2005d).[50] Second, on 29 March 2005, UN Security Council Resolution 1591—with abstentions from Algeria, China, and Russia— created a "Panel of Experts" to monitor and record incidences of the Government of Sudan's aerial bombings, movements of troops and military equipment, and the flow of arms into Darfur with an eye to recommending individuals to a sanctions committee,

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[50] Also see UN PRST on 12 May 2005 calling for the same (UN, 2005k).

which would impose travel bans and asset freezes on those designated as a result (UN, 2005e). Third, based on the report of the Commission of Inquiry that the UN Security Council had created in September, UN Security Council Resolution 1593—with abstentions from Algeria, Brazil, China, and the United States[51]—referred the situation in Darfur to the ICC for investigation by the Office of the Prosecutor on 31 March 2005 (UN, 2005f). The Commission had found in January that the Government of Sudan *did not* pursue a policy of genocide in Darfur, but that some individuals, including within the government, may have acted with genocidal intent (COI, 2005).[52] In addition, in April 2005, the AU Peace and Security Council authorized an expansion of AMIS to 7,731 personnel by the end of September 2005 (AU, 2005g).

A former member of the advocacy movement commented in an interview on the implications of the ICC referral for later international diplomatic engagement with parties to the conflict. He added, in retrospect:

> A legalistic discourse kind of defines our understanding of mass violence, and you know one component of that is the whole idea of genocide, but then [also] the way the idea of genocide is embodied, in the Genocide Convention, which is a convention on the punishment of a crime….If your discourse starts out from this legalistic point of view of crime and punishment, it really anchors your perceptions of what is possible….The creation of the ICC, this whole kind of big momentum toward accountability and crime, and a criminal way or a criminal lens to look at these things, you know, helps create these discourses or the discourses that dominated with Darfur and dominate in other places….I felt that, from the beginning, referring the situation to the ICC before you actually resolved

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[51] The United States, not a party to the Rome Statute that created the ICC, abstained from the vote out of a preference for a hybrid tribunal in Africa, but did not oppose the referral to the ICC on the basis that the resolution included provisions protecting US citizens from prosecutions and ensuring that any costs incurred by the ICC would be covered by parties to the Rome Statute, not UN member states (UN, 2005g). According to Hamilton (2011), the Darfur advocacy movement had nothing to do with the US decision to abstain (as opposed to vetoing the resolution).

[52] An EU fact-finding mission had also concluded there was no evidence of genocide in Darfur (Grajewski, 2004).

it was getting things backward. And it was done on purpose…it was a way of kicking the can down the road. But, you know, eventually it comes back to haunt you, and…I'm not comfortable with the whole, you know, peace without justice...I'm saying, well, you know, sometimes it's more complicated. Sometimes you have to, …the two don't really go together. And, I think, you know there's always been a tendency to just dispense with justice and still not have peace, but frontloading the ICC and accountability is really a means of abdicating responsibility for resolving the underlying political conflict.

According the same interviewee, the three UN Security Council resolutions in March 2005 were a turning point in that they marked a spike of activist momentum that had started with US Secretary of State Powell's genocide declaration the previous September, and the start of its decline until one year later. However, from activists' perspective, he stated, all three resolutions, UNSCRs 1590, 1591, and 1593—not just the ICC referral—were "a huge exercise in kicking the can down the road," because they gave the illusion that the United Nations were engaging in Darfur, but were, in reality, not doing anything different than before. Because UNSCRs 1591 and 1593 did not directly address the civilian protection issue in March—they only created more "fact-finding"-type entities—activists turned up the heat. According to a later commentary by Alex De Waal (2007b), discussions within the US Government in the summer of 2005 were moving toward the conclusion that AMIS should be handed over to a UN peacekeeping force, but the UN Secretariat, AU Commission, other UN Security Council and AU Peace and Security Council members, and the Government of Sudan remained opposed to the idea.

Late 2005-Early 2006—Discursive Hegemony

Amidst this collision between proponents of the Rwanda storyline and those advancing more complex counternarratives arguing for comprehensive solutions emerged one relative consensus: the Abuja peace process needed to conclude. For one set of actors, this imperative related to the primacy of a negotiated solution to the conflict; for the others, a political agreement was needed to get a stronger peacekeeping force deployed. Early inaction by the international community in Darfur had left a void for advocacy voices to fill and, by the time the United Nations and African Union got up close to understand the multiple layers of the Darfur problem, the descriptions of the complexity they faced there never stood a chance in capturing activists' attention the way a simplified storyline about peacekeepers could. This is how a discourse coalition loosely united by the Rwanda storyline came to dominate the discursive space.

International efforts to unify the Darfur rebels and conclude the Abuja peace talks coalesced only when the preference to reach a political agreement before strengthening AMIS's protection capacity emerged in late 2005. Reports by the UN Secretariat and AU Commission continued to reflect the growing complexity of the conflict in Darfur, but with the CPA now complete, the United Nations and international envoys turned their attention toward the Abuja peace process and, in response to advocacy pressure, discussions with the African Union and international partners about blue-hatting AMIS. As will be shown, the UN Secretariat—through its own process of "sensemaking" (Weick, 1995)—even started to connect complexity, rather than organized violence, to

the need for peacekeepers, and suddenly, it seemed, negotiations at Abuja needed to conclude, and quickly.

Dominance of a Discourse Coalition

As in the preceding year, activists' storyline about Darfur being a Rwanda-like problem posed a stark contrast to the more complex counternarratives of the UN Secretariat and AU Commission in late 2005 and early 2006. For instance, a Communiqué of the AU Peace and Security Council on 3 July 2005, welcomed "the relative calm currently prevailing in Darfur" and underscored that, "the core of the conflict in Darfur is political and socio-economic in nature and…the Abuja peace talks provide the most viable mechanism to achieve a negotiated and lasting solution" (AU, 2005f). As a positive sign of progress in that direction, on 5 July, the Government and Sudan and JEM agreed to a Declaration of Principles with the expectation that the SLM/A would sign on later (AU, 2005g).

Reports by the UN Secretariat and AU Commission from summer 2005 onward similarly maintained holistic assessments of the conflict in Darfur—always addressing the security, human rights, humanitarian, and political aspects of the situation—but devoted more attention to the peace talks in Abuja than in previous months as negotiations began to gain momentum. The UN Secretary-General's report to the UN Security Council on 18 July 2005 noted the progress the international community had made in stabilizing humanitarian conditions in the previous year and observed that large-scale attacks on villages had mostly stopped, but emphasized that this was partly because

there were few rebel-associated villages left to clear (UN, 2005m). The report noted a shift in the nature of violence to areas outside of major population centers and internally displaced persons (IDP) camps, as the Government of Sudan had incorporated the *Jinjaweed* into local police and other security forces, and incidences of rebel banditry on roads were increasing (UN, 2005m). The report also attributed the majority of attacks on AMIS and humanitarian organizations to the rebel SLM/A, which had lost control of many field commanders (UN, 2005m).

The UN Secretary General's reports in August and September 2005 also noted relatively few violations of the ceasefire in the preceding months, but again highlighted "the clearest trend" to be a "considerable rise in abductions, harassment, extortion, and looting" by both JEM and SLM/A (UN, 2005n). In addition, the September report stated, "banditry has become the main threat to civilians and to humanitarian activities in Darfur, with highway robbery, kidnapping, burglary, theft, and armed attacks occurring on a regular basis" (UN, 2005o). A subsequent UN Security Council Presidential Statement (PRST) and AU Peace and Security Council Communiqué in October 2005 condemned recent SLM/A attacks, which included atrocities committed against civilians and abductions of AMIS and NGO workers, signaling growing impatience by the AU and UN with the Darfur rebels (AU, 2005h; UN, 2005p).

During this time period, voices influential in the advocacy movement, still affiliated with ICG, painted the decrease in access for humanitarian workers and ceasefire monitors resulting from SLM/A activity as a plot by the Government of Sudan to starve the population of Darfur. A 30 August 2005 op-ed by John Prendergast and Colin

Thomas-Jensen in *The Boston Globe* warned readers not to believe pronouncements by UN officials that conditions were getting better (Prendergast & Thomas-Jensen, 2005). They argued that "Khartoum," monolithically, was simply in the second phase of its extermination plan, in which it would annihilate Darfur's civilians "off camera" (Prendergast & Thomas-Jensen, 2005).[53] The op-ed again underscored the need for an enhanced AU force with at least 12,000 troops to protect civilians and, presumably, to forcibly disarm the *Jinjaweed*, which it maintained, were still controlled by the Government of Sudan (Prendergast & Thomas-Jensen, 2005).

Rebel divisions were, meanwhile, overlooked by advocates as an impediment to progress in the Darfur political negotiations until fall 2005 at which point they became a convenient basis on which to question the African Union's prospects of success at Abuja. A 6 October 2005 report by ICG, "Unifying Darfur's Rebels: A Prerequisite for Peace," focused on internal dynamics within the SLM/A and JEM for the first time in ICG's narrative and highlighted the need for concerted international pressure to get the rebels on the same page. However, the report also used the rebels' fragmentation and reported transgressions in attacking humanitarian convoys on the ground, previously unacknowledged by advocacy groups, to question the legitimacy of the Abuja process in general (ICG, 2005e). While the report cautioned that it would be a "mistake" to "leave the root causes of the conflict untouched"—implying that a political settlement was still necessary—it was indicative of the international community's growing frustration with

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[53] It is possible the authors were referring to a Government of Sudan blockade of the Kalma IDP camp—a large, primarily Fur settlement of displaced persons generally loyal to SLM/A leader Abdel Wahid, who fostered anti-AU and anti-UN sentiment.

the rebels and diminution of their concerns in reaching a comprehensive agreement (ICG, 2005e).

More consistent with its previous narrative thread, ICG soon returned its attention to calling for reinforcement of AMIS, which, by this point, was receiving two-thirds of its financing from the European Union in the absence of a permanent funding mechanism within the African Union (ICG, 2005f). ICG's 25 October 2005 report restated its estimate of 12-15,000 troops needed on the ground in Darfur—whether provided by the African Union, NATO, or the United Nations—to "create the requisite security to protect civilians, encourage displaced persons to return home and establish conditions conducive to more productive negotiations for a political settlement" (ICG, 2005f). It underscored the importance of a Chapter VII mandate, contrary to the AU Commission's assessment that the appropriate mandate already existed, and suggested that "double hatting" UNMIS, the peacekeeping force established in March to implement the CPA between the North and South, would be the best solution (ICG, 2005f).

An additional op-ed and a companion report by ICG on 17 March 2006 again called for UN reinforcement of AMIS. In the op-ed posted on *allAfrica.com*, John Prendergast and Colin Thomas-Jensen repeated accusations from a year earlier that references by international officials to "tribal violence" in Darfur were akin to calling the situation "anarchy" and designed, just as they had been during the conflicts in Rwanda and Bosnia, to avoid doing anything about it (Prendergast & Thomas-Jensen, 2006). Telling the same causal story as a year earlier, they insisted the violence in Darfur was organized, government-sponsored, and directed at civilians and called for a 5,000-strong

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UN stabilization force to buttress AMIS (Prendergast & Thomas-Jensen, 2006). ICG's report, "To Save Darfur," published on the same day, also called for a 5,000-strong UN border protection force to prevent the escalation of a brewing proxy war between Sudan and Chad and argued that the force could eventually be merged with AMIS (ICG, 2006a). ICG's warning of regional spillover was, in its own way, a reference to Rwanda and the spread of conflict in the Great Lakes region during the 1990s.

Responding in the same frame, HRW published reports in December 2005 and January 2006 resonating within ICG's calls to action with variations, but not so large as to remove the discursive affinity. HRW's reports again refrained from referring to the situation in Darfur as genocide, but described the problem in legal terms, pointing toward judicial and protection-oriented solutions (HRW, 2005b, 2006). The first of the two reports, "Entrenching Impunity," called ethnic cleansing in Darfur a "fait accompli" and referred to "widespread and systematic abuses" constituting war crimes and crimes against humanity by the Government of Sudan's forces, resulting in mass displacement of *both* Arab and African civilians (HRW, 2005b, 2006). The December 2005 report depicted characters in the Darfur conflict relatively three dimensionally, including documentation of specifically named individuals, but did not advocate for political solutions or reconciliation (HRW, 2005b).

HRW's January 2006 report focused more on ways the international community could help AMIS fulfill its existing mandate to protect civilians by enabling it to respond to incidents more rapidly and expanding its areas of patrol, making sure it was fully

equipped[54], and clarifying the rules of engagement to give commanders the ability to made decision to shoot with deadly force on the spot and to arrest criminals (HRW, 2006). The report also cautioned against "blue-hatting" AMIS if it would, in fact "water down" the mandate (HRW, 2006). As it turned out, HRW's admonition about blue-hatting may have provided a subtle warning of challenges any UN-led force would face operating in a country that had not invited it. Such considerations did not deter activists, however, and shades of difference in HRW's arguments about outside intervention were lost in the argumentative struggle.

In a key event named by interviewees, on 22 January 2006, the 55th anniversary of the ratification of the UN's Convention on Genocide, Save Darfur launched a postcard campaign, "A Million Voices for Darfur," calling on US President George Bush to deploy peacekeepers to the region (Hamilton, 2011; Save Darfur n.d.). The postcards, which were sent by students, church groups, and other activists around the country addressed the President: "During your first year in the White House, you wrote in the margins of a report on the Rwandan genocide, 'Not on My watch." I urge you to live up to those words by using the power of your office to support a stronger multinational force to protect the civilians of Darfur" (UUSC, 2006). The connection to Rwanda was blatant, as was the implicit assumption that the *only* way to resolve this situation was with military intervention (Religious Action Center, 2006).

The next key event—the peak of the activism surrounding Darfur and the moment of "take off," according to an interview with a former member of the advocacy

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[54] At this time, the Government of Sudan was blocking the import of a certain number of APCs destined for AMIS in Darfur.

movement—came with Save Darfur's "Rally to Stop Genocide" on the National Mall in

Washington on April 30, 2006. Some 50,000 people from various groups in the coalition

attended the rally to hear speeches by actor George Clooney, then Senator Barack

Obama, and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel. They carried signs with slogans like "Never

Again Means Never Again" and "Not on Our Watch" meant to evoke the Rwanda

storyline. According to an interview with another former advocate, the rally was preceded

by a meeting between activists and President Bush at the White House. According to

interviewees formerly affiliated with Save Darfur, even some of the most engaged

advocates in movement were not, at that time, aware of the details of peace talks at

Abuja, which were coming to a close the same week. Their focus remained on getting

peacekeepers deployed to Darfur.

Discourse Institutionalization

The tone of relative calm in UN and AU reports shifted from the summer to the

fall of 2005 as Darfur saw an "alarming deterioration" in security conditions that

September (UN, 2005q). On one hand, this change marked the end of the rainy season in

Darfur, which typically ends in August and deters major military clashes as waterlogged

roads make it difficult to move vehicles and heavy equipment in Darfur. On the other

hand, an escalation of violence on the ground was not unforeseen with political

negotiations moving forward. In December 2005, the UN Secretariat relayed that reports

of violence in October and November had gone down, but the number of civilian deaths

had risen and displacement also had spiked (UN, 2005r, 2005u). The growing litany of

reasons for this fluctuation in conditions from September to December 2005 would truly have been confusing to an outside observer: "massive government military action," ongoing militia (*Jinjaweed*) attacks on villages, continued violence against women, a "chronic disregard" by all combatants (notably the Government of Sudan and SLM/A) for the ceasefire, widespread banditry and lawlessness, shifting loyalties and fighting between Fur and Zaghawa members of the SLM/A in North Darfur (associated with faction leaders Abdel Wahid and Mini Minawi, respectively), an influx of military deserters from Chad and Chadian opposition figures engaged in cross-border smuggling and cattle rustling in West Darfur, and "serious" inter-tribal fighting between the Falata and Massalit in South Darfur (UN, 2005q, 2005r, 2005u). Civilians, the UN Secretary General underscored, remained trapped in the middle (UN, 2005q, 2005r, 2005u).

As in previous reports, the UN Secretariat gave comprehensive treatment to the various avenues of intervention in Darfur, including the Abuja peace talks, notably providing updates on failed efforts by the SLM/A's warring factions to re-unify in October[55] (UN, 2005u). The AU's mediation team's reports on these developments, specifically international envoys' varied attempts to bring the SLM/A together, were again even more detailed than the UN's, given the mediation team's proximity to the talks (AU, 2005j). In fact, the peace talks in Abuja, which resumed for the seventh and final round of negotiations on 29 November 2005, had not gotten so much ink since the start of the conflict (Toga, 2007, p. 235). The conclusion of peace talks was not

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[55] The SLM/A held a field conference in Haskanita, North Darfur 29-31 October 2005 with the aim of choosing its leadership after persistent divisions between Abdel Wahid and Minni Minawi; the conference made divisions worse, according to AU advisor Dawit Toga (Toga, 2007, p. 234).

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inherently motivating, however, as, according to interviews with former UN and AU

officials and other commentators, it had become evident that a peace agreement was

necessary to convince UN officials to deploy a peacekeeping force—in other words, they

needed a peace to keep (Guéhenno, 2006a, 2006b; Hamilton, 2011).

The pressure to move peace talks along at Abuja became evident in a UN Security

Council PRST[56] on 21 December 2005, which called on the parties to the Darfur

conflict—specifically referring to the Government of Sudan, JEM, and SLM/A—to

"fulfill their commitments," including respect for the ceasefire and disarmament of

"militias," and to "conclude a just and full peace accord without delay" (UN, 2005s). As

in past UN Security Council statements and resolutions, the "militias" were not included

in descriptions of actors whose presence was required at Abuja and "those responsible for

violations of human rights and international humanitarian law" were left unspecified

(UN, 2005s). An AU Peace and Security Communiqué on 12 January and AU Assembly

Declaration on 24 January 2006 reproduced the UN's message, calling on all parties to

cooperate with AMIS's full deployment and facilitate the "early" and successful

conclusion of the talks (AU, 2006b, 2006c).

Reports of the UN Secretary-General and AU Commission in the first half of

2006 then resumed describing the long list of challenges and types of violence their

sources were reporting from the ground and Abuja. For his part, the Chairman of the AU

Commission, in his January 2006 report continued to shorthand the big picture in Darfur

as "ongoing violations of international human rights and humanitarian law" and referred

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[56] Also on 21 December 2005, UN Security Council Resolution 1651 extended the mandate of the Sudan
Panel of Experts (UN, 2005t).

to the security and political situation in Darfur as "fluid" (AU, 2006a). He reported that,

based on investigations of reported ceasefire violations, major military confrontations

between the "recognized parties" had decreased and the majority of incidents now

resulted from SLM/A forces attacking JEM, SLM/A attacking government forces and

government forces retaliating, SLM/A attacking AMIS and humanitarian workers, and

the government and *Jinjaweed* attacking civilians (AU, 2006a). The chairperson

concluded that the main security concerns in Darfur were now armed banditry, stealing of

livestock, attacks on NGO convoys, abductions, disruptions in IDP camps, tensions

between Chad and Sudan, and intertribal violence (AU, 2006a). He assessed that AMIS's

mandate to protect civilians in immediate danger was already strong enough, but needed

to be communicated more clearly to the field commanders, and he blamed financial and

logistical challenges for the force's slow deployment (AU, 2006a). He also asserted that

the African Union had created the security and humanitarian conditions for political

negotiations, but SLM/A leadership divisions were wasting time and stymying the

African Union's and international community's efforts (AU, 2006a).[57]

     On 3 February 2006, the UN Security Council issued another PRST indicating

that the AU Peace and Security Council had given the nod to the UN to start discussing

transition of AMIS to a UN operation (UN, 2006c). The PRST called on the parties at

Abuja to negotiate in good faith and quickly conclude an agreement. In March 2006, the

AU Peace and Security Council issued a compatible Communiqué referring to the

conflict in Darfur as not only a "humanitarian and human rights situation," but a

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[57] The chairperson noted that the rebels saw AMIS as a success, however, in his March report (AU, March 2006).

"deteriorating" one, and demanding that the parties cooperate more closely with the AU mediation team to conclude an agreement (AU, 2006d). The Communiqué took note of an announcement by the Government of Sudan's that it would accept a UN force "after and as part of a peace agreement" at the Abuja talks (AU, 2006d). It also stressed all several factors that the transition from AMIS to a UN peacekeeping operation should take into account, including a successful outcome of the Abuja talks, which, rather than providing space for negotiations to effectively play out, led to further pressure by the United Nations and international envoys for the talks to conclude (AU, 2006d). On 24 March 2006, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1663 asking the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council with options for UN reinforcement of AMIS by 24 April 2006 and called on the parties to conclude a peace agreement by the same date (UN, 2006e).

The UN Secretary-General's reports to the Security Council during this time period were similar to the AU Commission's complex descriptions of the sources of violence, security concerns, causes of civilian displacement, and threats to humanitarian access. The Secretariat's reports in January, March, April, and May 2006 described government and militia attacks against civilians, often ethnically targeted, for instance against Zaghawa communities; government and militia clashes with rebels, instigated by all sides, and often resulting in retaliatory violence; inter-tribal fighting and attacks by Chadian rebels and military deserters on populations in West Darfur; intra-SLM/A fighting, including attacks against civilians aligned with opposing factions of the rebel group; and rebel attacks on AMIS and aid workers, including banditry and hijackings,

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along with government use of white helicopters and vehicles, sometimes marked with UN and AU insignia, to conduct military operations (UN, 2006a, 2006d, 2006f, 2006m, 2006n). The UN Secretary-General's reports noted ongoing contingency planning to transition AMIS to a UN operation (authorized by the February PRST and later UNSCR 1663), but emphasized that any UN presence would be multidimensional—"including political, military, police, humanitarian, and human rights elements"—and, without a functioning ceasefire, would require a robust mandate to protect civilians at risk (UN, 2006d). In fact, the UN Secretary-General's reports took an unexpected turn in arguing that, although "the violence will only end when the parties make a final and definitive commitment to negotiate a comprehensive peace agreement, rather than pursuing a military solution," efforts to protect civilians needed strengthening more than ever, as the conflict had become "increasingly erratic and fragmented" (UN, 2006f, 2006m).

Thus, in an important positional shift, the UN Secretary-General *backed in* to the idea of a UN peacekeeping force only after the Security Council moved toward its inevitability. Whereas advocates had been advancing a storyline all along that organized violence was what necessitated military intervention, the Secretariat now maintained that it was precisely the "erratic and fragmented" nature of the conflict that required a strengthening of AMIS, including, as it happened, a transition to a UN force. Still, the Secretary-General noted, the Government of Sudan and some AU member states remained opposed to the idea, and he hoped that those who were reluctant to accept non-African troops on Sudanese soil did not misunderstand the objectives of the force (UN, 2006f). The Secretary-General's April 2006 report also notably called for the inclusion of

Arab militias who had been excluded from the process in Abuja to be part of a community reconciliation process moving forward (UN, 2006f).

The international pressure to conclude a peace agreement in Darfur, which followed these reports in early 2006, has been referred to by Laurie Nathan (2007), an advisor to the AU-sponsored talks in Abuja, as "deadline diplomacy." On 6 April 2006, an AU Communiqué reiterated the call for the parties to cooperate with the AU mediation team and reach a peace agreement by the end of April 2006, a deadline the UN Security Council restated on 11 April (AU, 2006f; UN, 2006g). The Communiqué also requested that the Chairperson of the Commission prompt AMIS to urgently draw up plans implementing the anticipated agreement's enhanced ceasefire (AU, 2006f; UN, 2006g). A mid-April UN Security Council Resolution (1672) responded to a UN Panel of Experts report (UN, 2006b, 2006h, 2006i) by sanctioning four individuals—a SAF commander, Musa Hilal, an SLM/A commander, and an NMRD commander—but the focus returned to pressuring the parties at Abuja by the end of the month with a UN PRST on 25 April expressing support for the AU mediator Salim Salim to finish talks at Abuja by 30 April (UN, 2006j). Another AU Peace and Security Council Communiqué on 28 April "invited" the parties at Abuja to accept the draft Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) as the most viable basis for finding a lasting solution to the conflict in Darfur by the "deadline" of 30 April 2006 and called on the international community, especially the UN Security Council, to support the adoption and implementation of the agreement (AU, 2006g).

The DPA was agreed to by the Government of Sudan and one rebel faction—the SLM/A led by Mini Minnawi—on 5 May 2006 (UN, 2006m; AU, 2006h). The UN

Security Council welcomed the agreement, urged the other parties to sign, and called for the full and rapid implementation of the DPA as well as the rapid transition of AMIS to a UN force with a strong African character (UN, 2006k). According to Nathan (2007), the international community—represented by UN, AU, EU, US, UK, French, Chadian, Eritrean, Libyan, and other envoys—had issued repeated warnings to the negotiating parties in Abuja that patience and money to sustain political negotiations would run out (pp. 248-9). The UN Security Council had even threatened sanctions for not coming to an agreement by the end of April 2006, despite the fact that historical negotiations of similar complexity, such as those in Mozambique and South Africa, had lasted more than two years (Nathan, 2007). Julie Flint (2006), an independent researcher personally familiar with both the rebels and militias in Darfur also raised this concern at the time in an online feature on 11 May 2006, noting that, "It took four years to negotiate an end to Mozambique's civil war."

Consistent with this account, according to an interview with a former AU official, the AU mediation team felt as though their biggest challenge was not dealing with the Government of Sudan's divide-and-conquer tactics or the rebels' inexperience and lack of cohesion, but rather fending off a large cast of international envoys who wanted the agreement to conclude so that peacekeepers could be approved in the UN Security Council. So, while AU efforts to mediate a political solution on Darfur got more international attention than ever before, the peace agreement became a box-checking exercise. Under time constraints, the two-party lens carried over from the North-South peace process could not be shaken at Abuja, even with the SLM/A split into two and the

Arab militias, whose disarmament the rebels demanded, absent from the table. The lack

of time to incorporate any civil society representation or information sharing with both

Arab and non-Arab community leaders in Darfur also prevented local ownership of the

agreement that might have provided moral pressure on all parties to lay down their arms.

Officials in the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO),

accordingly, remained unconvinced following the signing of the DPA that conditions

were yet ripe for deployment of a protection force. UN Under-Secretary General for

Peacekeeping Operations, Jean-Marie Guéhenno, a key proponent of the 2000 "Brahimi

Report" on peacekeeping effectiveness, spoke publicly about his concerns regarding

whether conditions were favorable for a peacekeeping mission in Darfur at the Council

on Foreign Relations event in New York in May 2006. When asked whether preparations

were underway for some type of force to deploy in Darfur, he responded:

> Is there a peace to keep in Darfur? I think it's in the making, frankly. The
> agreement, as we know, does not enjoy the support yet of all the players. I think
> it's very important that every effort be made from all the key players in Darfur to
> really sign that agreement. But more than that, any peace operation requires the
> strategic cooperation of the parties. If there is a signature at the bottom of the page
> but there is not the strategic cooperation, very quickly you run into trouble. So I
> do believe that it's also very important at this stage to engage with the rebel
> movements, the government of Sudan to consolidate a real support for the peace
> process. (Guéhenno, 2006a)

Showing discursive affinity with Guéhenno's statement—but not sufficient to

form a second discourse coalition—Justice Africa posted a piece by Alex De Waal online

on 6 July 2006 proposing that the international community stop looking at Rwanda as the

most relevant frame for disarmament of the *Jinjaweed* and start looking at Ethiopia and

Somaliland (De Waal, 2006a). The blog entry estimated that, by effective

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counterinsurgency standards, some 200,000 troops would be needed to take on the 20,000 *Jinjaweed* with force, which would amount to a declaration of war on Khartoum (De Waal, 2006a). It argued that the current AU force was not capable of doing this and should not be asked to (De Waal, 2006a). Fabrice Weissman (2006) of MSF-France repeated this argument in an op-ed in Le Monde on 2 November 2006. De Waal (2006a) concluded that, what was needed to disarm the *Jinjaweed* was not a huge peacekeeping force, as activists said, but a small, quick one that could work with local tribal leaders to implement the agreement.

Some AU and UN voices have argued that AMIS alone may have been able to implement the DPA with the proper security arrangements in place, more popular support from Darfuri civilians, and a sustainable funding source, but absent those conditions, the DPA quickly collapsed (Hoge, 2006). Incongruously, an ICG report published in June 2006 indicated that shoring up AMIS was the only way to prevent the DPA from doing further damage to Darfur and reiterated the recommendation to deploy a robust UN peacekeeping force with a Chapter VII mandate (ICG, 2006b). According to an article by a former member of the advocacy movement, Sean Brooks, Save Darfur took its cues from ICG and continued on that path (Brooks, 2009). The momentum to send UN peacekeepers to Darfur, as De Waal had once warned, became unstoppable. The UN Security Council invited Sudan's consent for an expansion of UNMIS into Darfur with UN Security Council Resolution 1706 on 31 August 2006, explicitly referencing "R2P" in the text—and this was the moment of discourse institutionalization.

According to Rebecca Hamilton, the Save Darfur movement had, therefore,

gotten most of what it wanted by mid-2006. Demonstrators at a rally, "Global Days for

Darfur," organized by Save Darfur in Central Park during the UN's General Assembly

meetings in September 2006, made the momentum more symbolically evident by wearing

"blue hats" to symbolize the proposed transition of AMIS to a UN force (Save Darfur

n.d.). Still, months after the DPA was signed and had begun to unravel, in October 2006,

Guéhenno reiterated similar sentiments to his earlier remarks at a UN press conference in

New York:

> We continue to be convinced that there has to be a political approach to Darfur
> that the notion that there's a military solution to Darfur would be a tragedy. That
> has to be absolutely avoided. There is no military solution in Darfur and so the
> Secretary-General as you know is intensifying his efforts with key leaders, with
> the AU, with the Arab league, with the Security Council to address that. The
> notion that if there is no political solution, there is no peacekeeping, that
> peacekeeping can only happen if there is a political solution. Then what? Then
> that is not a UN peacekeeping answer. We are in a different world. Peacekeeping
> is there to address situations when there is a political process. We think that
> Darfur desperately needs a political process. What we see on the ground is
> fragmentation of the rebel groups, what we see is in fighting between various
> rebel groups leading to more suffering, leading to more displaced person. What
> we see if fighting for control of IDP camps, all that shows that you absolutely
> need to bring the key players and key actors in Darfur into a political process. If
> that does not happen, it would be very difficult to find any credible solution to the
> tragedy of Darfur. (Guéhenno, 2006b)

In an interview with a former UN staffer who was present at a high-level meeting

chaired by Kofi Annan some time after Guéhenno's public statement to discuss next steps

in Darfur, the staffer recounted seeing Guéhenno essentially ushered away from the

podium when he tried to lay out the reasoning behind why peacekeeping "really isn't the

right idea." The same former staffer continued, "And the poor guy, he was cowed,

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blushed, sunk back in this chair." Pointing to UN practices, the staffer commented, "if

there was a culture that was able to kind of push back, but to help in a constructive way,

if it had been the year after the Brahimi report, all of those second secretaries would have

known the doctrine and they would've said, 'great, we have to help, but you know these

limitations,' but that was lost, lost, lost."

It was only following lengthy deliberations, including Chinese negotiations with

the Sudanese Government, that the African Union-United Nations hybrid Operation in

Darfur (UNAMID) was finally authorized on 31 July 2007 (UN, 2007). UNAMID did

not come close to its full-strength of 25,987 uniformed peacekeepers until 2011

(UNAMID, 2015). By then, violence on the ground in Darfur had ebbed and flowed, the

DPA was dead, and a new joint AU-UN peace process for Darfur had begun in Doha, but

pressure on Western governments subsided as other crises took the spotlight. As an AU

official lamented in an interview, "Another crisis situation comes and overtakes—you

know, the patience of the international community is very limited, so Darfur lost…it had

its day in the sun, and it lost it because we could not help them come to an agreement that

would have helped them to build their communities….We have UNAMID there, and

UNAMID has not been able to control the situation, there is no peace to be kept in

Darfur, peacekeepers are still being killed and all of that, so something tells me that,

really, we should have really tried a little bit more, you know, to get these people to come

together, because Darfur is still the same old miserable place that it used to be."

Reflecting on the above events, the same former UN staffer quoted above

remarked, "it still bemuses me that there was this lunge to the material solution instead of

doing a bit of thinking, doing a bit of analysis, trying to get in there, and suppose mediate or something." When asked if, by "material," he meant boots on the ground, he replied, "I mean peacekeeping operation, which…for my money, has achieved precisely nothing. I mean, and that's being generous, because I could have graded it in the negative, but it's sent a lot of remittances back to Nigeria and other places." He added, "Everybody was screaming for a screwdriver to drive a nail. Or a hammer to turn a screw or whatever the analogy is. And it was just wrong." When asked why there was such an emphasis on peacekeeping, he stated, "because there is no publicly acceptable, admissible answer. It's just not acceptable to say, 'this is really complicated, it's going to take a lot of time, you know, we're going to have to deal with a lot of people who are unsavory, …and in the meantime, villages will burn. Even if you leave that last bit in parentheses. And, in the meantime, refugees will flow." He concluded, "Fixing that stuff is really, it's not arithmetic, it's calculus."

The former UN staffer went on to describe the "can do" attitude of then UN Under-Secretary General Mark Malloch Brown in response to sustained pressure to provide greater support to the African Union on the ground in contrast to the perspective of Guéhenno and others who thought responses other than peacekeeping were more appropriate, but had to go with the flow: "it's because they had retained some of that, some of the results of all that effort to develop doctrine…and…there are some ideas in there worth defending, and they were the stewards of them…But, they're also survivors in big international bureaucracies, so they read the writing on the wall. But, oh yeah. Hammer. Screw. Not right, you know?" Ultimately, the former UN staffer attributed the

rush to material solution to "the vapidity of the international discourse on this stuff" and the fact that "there wasn't really an understanding of the tools in the toolbox."

A separate UN official interviewed for this paper added to this idea: "What I think was so … important was the notion that there were simple solutions. So, the advocacy community in the United States seemed to think that getting a UN peacekeeping mission would solve everything. Anybody who had dealt with large UN peacekeeping missions should have been extremely skeptical that the UN….that a UN peacekeeping mission was actually going to provide protection to civilians in Darfur. And, of course, UNAMID's record bears that out. But, that should have been, should have been quite clear to anybody who had deal with large peacekeeping missions in the past, particularly given the reality that Sudan was going to have some type of vetting over which were the troop contributing countries. In the end, we know from Congo, we know from everywhere else, that poorly equipped, poorly motivated, and poorly led troops are not…are not aggressive forces of protection."

Conclusion

The above findings add new understanding to prior claims that a simplified advocacy narrative steered international intervention in Darfur toward peacekeeping, overshadowing other solutions (Flint, 2010; De Waal, forthcoming). An inter-discursive narrative complexity analysis shows that, while it would be easy to credit or blame the Darfur advocacy movement with singlehandedly draining the narrative of complexity, resulting in an overemphasis on peacekeeping as a tool of intervention, the story of this

storyline is more complicated than that. Not only were UN and AU decision-makers relying on more than just advocacy arguments for information about the conflict, broader discursive dynamics were at play. To quote one former member of the advocacy movement interviewed for this research, "I don't think [policymakers] were really making their policy decisions based [only] on what was being recommended by a bunch of people with green wrist bands."

The Rwanda storyline's resonance within the R2P discourse gave it both credibility and acceptability (Hajer, 1995, pp. 59-60). In addition, its discursive affinity with the storylines of established and trusted NGOs whose analysis was some of the earliest and most read information available on the conflict, as well as the UN Secretariat, allowed for the formation of a discourse coalition. This discourse coalition was broader than the Save Darfur advocacy movement itself and unified around more than just facts or beliefs, but tied together by broader meanings and interpretations of the situation that aligned with each other (Hajer, 1993, p. 47). This affinity, achieved through discourse structuration by the Rwanda storyline from early 2004 onward, allowed for discourse institutionalization and, therefore, discursive hegemony by early 2006.

More complex counternarratives never coalesced in a competing discourse coalition, perhaps in part, because the counternarratives were just too complex to unify into a single storyline. In addition, the act of positioning supporters of R2P as wrong and advocating for more time to address complicated politics and local dynamics was not socially acceptable. Organizational practices also contributed to the reduction of discursive complexity: advocates boiling down talking points into one-page handouts,

outside observers and policymakers depending on news media narratives instead of local sources, human rights advocates shorthanding violence in legal or criminal terms, UN officials not pushing back in meetings with constructive counter-suggestions, among others. Moreover, the narrative positioning of outside observers who described more complex dynamics as avoiding action, or those who sought peace talks as being opposed to human rights, marginalized voices seeking more comprehensive solutions. In addition, the narrative positioning of insiders to the conflict as either irrelevant (the rebels) or illegitimate (the government) relegated dialogue to a lower priority solution. Thus, a state of narrative compression prevailed, closing off alternatives to the chosen path of peacekeeping.

CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION

The preceding case study analyzing the inter-discursive dynamics surrounding UN and AU decision-making regarding international intervention in Darfur from 2003 to 2006 is significant to the literature and research in the fields of both discursive policy analysis and conflict resolution. First, this case study provides additional case development relevant to Hajer's work on argumentative storylines and discourse coalitions by showing how these theories and concepts work in a conflict resolution context. It also tests the application of a framework for examining narrative complexity within Hajer's method of social-interactive discourse analysis, creating a new method of inter-discursive narrative complexity analysis. Second, this case study contributes to related literature in the field of conflict resolution by expanding the site of analysis in Autesserre's *Peaceland* to explore not only how simplified narratives by expatriates working in conflict zones and foreign headquarters orient action toward specific options for intervention, but, more broadly, how discursive constructs employed by a diverse—rather than monolithic—community of actors abroad, including advocacy organizations, also contribute to an emphasis on one course of action over another. A short discussion of each of these contributions follows.

Significance of the Case for Discursive Policy Analysis

The incorporation of a framework to account for narrative complexity within Hajer's method of social-interactive discourse analysis represents an innovation in the field of discursive policy analysis. While relevant discourses and discursive constructs will inevitably vary from context to context, making it impossible to code or categorize them in advance, storylines are predictable in at least one respect of how they reorder understandings and that is by reducing discursive complexity. The common features shared by conflict narratives may make them especially well suited for such an approach—for example, shared event histories of particular characters seeking some form of relationship repair or conflict resolution—but it is possible that a similar framework could be used to analyze other types of policy issues, if only based on comparisons of the causes, consequences, and proposed solutions to a problem (Autesserre, 2014). Additional case studies would allow for further improvement and refinement of the method to determine its applicability in other instances of third party interventions, or other types of policy debates, in order to understand why certain courses of action were chosen over others and what responses were not taken as a result.

The researcher notes that, for the same reasons social-interactive discourse analysis, as an interpretive method, does not lend itself well to coding of storylines, Hajer might object to the researcher's use of a pre-made framework for analyzing narrative complexity. That is to say, an interpretive analyst might not appreciate the implication that *any* aspect of a storyline, structural or otherwise, can be empirically known in advance of a particular case study. In response, the researcher would argue that advanced

understanding of the potential dimensions of narrative simplicity and complexity is not deterministic of findings, but rather enabling in the process of identifying relevant discursive constructs and further exploring how discursive complexity is reduced through the process of argumentative struggle. One potential approach to testing this claim would be to conduct parallel analyses of one case, one drawing on the framework for narrative complexity and one not. Should important discursive constructs be revealed in one analysis that were not revealed in another, the utility, or non-utility, of the framework could be shown.

In addition, Hajer might also object to the researcher's use of the concept of communities of meaning in the initial analysis of the discursive space. He would likely argue that such communities are too fluid to be mapped and could be confused with categories of values or beliefs, which he has distinguished from meanings that are derived from constantly evolving discourses. This would be a fair criticism, but the researcher maintains that it is possible to take a static snapshot of discursive groups and to loosely define the boundaries between epistemic communities—argumentative sites—either at key moments in time or as seen through the lens of certain events that show how interpretations within one community differed from another in at least one instance. The researcher admits that it was difficult to consistently place one actor or another within a specific community of meaning, as, in some cases, actors shifted positions. However, the broader communities of meaning—or discourses—remained relatively distinct over time. Such an approach might not be possible in a study with a longer time horizon.

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Significance of the Case to Conflict Resolution

While demonstrating that a simplified narrative alone did not orient international intervention in Darfur toward peacekeeping over all other responses, the preceding case does illuminate how simplified constructs come to dominate the discourse around a particular conflict and how the bounds of the broader discursive space that conflict resolution practitioners inhabit can limit the field of possible action. In this sense, at least three themes emerge from the findings that yield broader lessons for the field of conflict resolution. First, the way in which violence is shorthanded, either to reduce discursive complexity and make it more comprehensible, or to argue for a certain course of action, can having lasting implications for which types of interventions are considered "possible" down the line. For instance, the repetition in UN and AU reports referring to the situation in Darfur as a "humanitarian and human rights crisis" helped avoid blame for any party, ensuring access for aid workers, but also obscured political demands of the rebels and the general grievances of the population of Darfur, downplaying the diplomatic avenue of intervention until after international pressure was already mounting to pursue a military option.

In addition, the legalistic terms used by human rights organizations and adopted by the United Nations and others—shorthanding violence as "war crimes and crimes against humanity"—not only anchored what was possible, as one former member of the advocacy movement said, it also established which parties were seen as *legitimate* enough to engage in dialogue, as opposed to *criminals* who should be punished. This legal shorthanding would have consequences later in the conflict, as the International

Criminal Court (ICC)'s issuance of an arrest warrant for the President of Sudan on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity in 2008 made negotiating with the government in Khartoum even less of an attractive option than before. Moreover, narratives that exonerated the rebels of any responsibility may have emboldened them, according to some sources, but they also deprived the rebels of the agency to take part in finding a solution to their own problem (Flint, 2010; Gustafson, 2010).

Moreover, even as institutional actors pay lip service to multi-pronged responses to conflicts, in general, these condensed descriptions of violence over time create path dependencies. Long complicated event histories that get boiled down into phrases like "ongoing violations of human rights and international humanitarian law" necessarily point toward protection and accountability-focused responses. In addition, victimization narratives not only delegitimize armed actors, they marginalize civilians (the "victims") from the discussion, too. From there, the international community are the only ones left to solve the problem, often creating false expectations among local populations about what outsiders can ultimately achieve. Simplified narratives with binary moral constructions ("good" versus "evil") even further reduce the agency of the "victim," while re-empowering the perpetrator when international interventions fail to deliver promised results. These characterizations also ultimately reduce opportunities for the parties to legitimize "the other" and their needs, potentially closing the door on indigenous solutions.

Second, the way in which discourses determine what is spoken and what is "speakable" surrounding a conflict—which solutions are considered credible and which

cannot be challenged—should give conflict resolution practitioners pause for reflection. One of the key findings of this research is that the prescription for action in Darfur implied by the Rwanda storyline "won" the debate for more reasons than just its simplistic or normative appeal. It dominated the discourse because it resonated within existing institutional and social discourses and because the discursive resources that would have been necessary to create the space for a more inclusive and sustainable political solution, particularly a locally owned one, did not exist at the time. This lack of such discursive resources was evident in the dominant narrative in at least three ways: 1) the negotiating parties in Darfur were not depicted as having sufficient trustworthiness or agency to be a part of the solution to their own problem, 2) not all of the relevant parties, including, and particularly, Darfuri civilians (Arabs and non-Arabs), were conceived as capable participants, and 3) none of the mainstream storylines pointed to the idea that local solutions were acceptable without international involvement. Subsequent attempts by the United Nations and African Union to facilitate a more inclusive political agreement beyond the time period studied, from 2009-2011, took onboard calls for incorporating civil society participants at negotiations, but these efforts, too, were problematic, as the designation of some civilians as a "civil society," but not others, was itself exclusionary.

The takeaway is that advocacy solutions are only as good as the discursive resources available to them and, as it happens, the discourse around international intervention in intrastate conflicts was, and perhaps is, impoverished. R2P provided a framework around which an advocacy movement could credibly organize calls to action

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in Darfur, but R2P was widely interpreted as entailing only a military solution. What discursive resources were available to activists to advocate for political solutions, particularly local dialogue? Not only were peace talks discredited by some advocates as an excuse for not taking bolder action—i.e. deploying peacekeepers—the idea of locally owned agreements and traditional approaches to reconciliation were rarely explored or valued, if at all, as solutions in their own rights.

Third, in addition to the "vapidity of the international discourse," as a former UN official described it, this case demonstrates how the pressure to "do something" combined with a limited bandwidth within the international community to respond to a crisis and a finite repertoire of interventions can collectively contribute to an inability to absorb complexity that would allow the identification of new types of, and opportunities for, intervention. In other words, the case highlights the extreme discomfort of the international community with complexity in the face of urgency and a moral imperative to act. The fact that utterances of complexity are perceived, and the speakers positioned, as stalling, or that attempts to understand and address the underlying causes of conflict are seen as not caring about human rights, puts the long term outcome of many intrastate conflicts around the world today in question. In addition, the repetition of practices that reinforce this discomfort with complexity—including self-censorship—are troubling.

In the case of Darfur, specifically, this analysis illuminates the conclusion that, missing from the dominant international interpretation of the Darfur conflict was, and is, a consensus to continue to treat the situation like a "Darfur problem" as opposed to framing it as only a small piece of a national problem or a problem similar to other

conflicts. While Sudan's problems are very interrelated, perhaps becoming more so by the day, and national dialogue is required, it is also essential to understand the local history, differences in local dynamics, and possible steps toward resolving underlying causes of the conflict in Darfur as well as to engage and empower a full range of actors to participate in rebuilding their own future. Restoring both the agency and legitimacy of all parties involved in the Darfur conflict—government, rebels, militias, civilians, and all—may necessitate a heroic rethinking by outsiders of international approaches to changing dynamics and repairing relationships as the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) begins to exit the scene.

Importance of this Research

Understanding how advocacy prescriptions for peacekeeping came to dominate the discourse and marginalized sustainable and inclusive political solutions in a Darfur can do little to change the current course of events. Similarly, demonstrating that an advocacy storyline alone did not wholly determine outcomes will not undo what is done. What it might allow, however, is self reflection about the discursive forces at play in future international responses to conflict and a greater awareness by advocates, experts, bureaucrats, and others about the discourses that are taken for granted, the discursive processes decision-makers might not even be aware they are subject to, and the discourses they reproduce by failing to think outside existing vocabularies. Casting blame would be pointless, but collectively accepting responsibility for how the field talks about conflicts and the possible responses attached to them is essential.

While the findings of this study may not be generalizable, they do have implications for other cases and conflicts. The case of Darfur enhances not only understanding of how a simplified narrative can come to dominate the discursive space, but also awareness of how storylines gain credence by appealing to elements of existing discourses, often without representing their full meaning or intent. Namely, although R2P implies a moral imperative to intervene when civilians are at risk, peacekeeping should not be seen as the only tool in the toolbox. UN officials and advocates can argue indefinitely about what UNAMID could have accomplished in Darfur were it not for Khartoum's restrictions on the nature and troop make-up of the force, but there will always be cases where the conditions for peacekeeping to succeed are just not going to be right.

In response to complex conflicts like Darfur, it is not enough to simply appeal for the international community to "do something" in the name of R2P. In life and death matters, it is important to do the right thing. Solutions chosen simply to lessen public pressure tend to be sub-optimal. Yet, the reality is that there are not yet enough answers on the shelf to deal with complex problems like Darfur, Libya, Syria, or any other conflict where civilians are threatened. The question should not always be "how quickly can we deploy peacekeepers?" The question should be, "how well are we engaging the parties to the conflict in addressing drivers of conflict?" Arguments are often made in favor of "stopping the bleeding" before such conversations can occur, but the longer it takes for such conversations to even begin, the longer the bleeding will last. The challenge is not just about warning to deal with underlying causes, but about framing

conflicts thoughtfully, being comfortable with complexity, and not falling back on pat responses and accepting that multiple, simultaneous types of intervention are likely to be required. Vital to this approach is an understanding of local dynamics, developed with the input of local residents to enable productive responses.

Granted, local residents in conflict areas, often subject to political oppression and persecution, will not always have the luxury of a megaphone to provide such input. Outside participation is often required to enable social change (Castel & Cobb, forthcoming). Further case studies would be required to draw generalizable conclusions about how third parties, including advocacy organizations, might seek to craft more productive conflict storylines related to future conflicts in cases where giving local civilians a role is difficult or impossible without putting them in danger. This case study does allow one to propose some simple hypotheses, however, about potential risks raised by outsiders' reliance on certain narrative features within the practice of conflict resolution. Building on the work of Sara Cobb, it is possible, as laid out in the table below, to suggest a generalized typology of elements of simplified third-party conflict narratives and associated risks to effective and holistic intervention. (Table 4. Possible Generalized Typology of Simplified Narrative Features.)

Table 4. Possible Generalized Typology of Simplified Narrative Features

Narrative Feature…	…Risks….
Compressed event histories of violence stemming from external time markers…	…effacing longer series and complexity of events motivating behavior.
• Melodramatic plotline…	…externalizing responsibility, disempowering civilian leaders, and marginalizing local solutions.
• Monocausal explanations of violence…	…overlooking conflict drivers that could reveal opportunities for addressing underlying causes.
• Shorthanding of the conflict as a "humanitarian crisis"…	…de-emphasizing importance of genuine political grievances.
• Reliance on legalistic discourse to describe violence…	…anchoring what is possible in terms of engagement with various parties.
Two-dimensional/monolithic descriptions of characters…	..ignoring legitimate motivations, real constraints within groups.
• Characterization of parties as government versus civilian…	…denying the agency of armed movements to play a role in solutions.
• Simplification of multiparty conflicts into two-party negotiations…	…concluding agreements that will be difficult to implement without broader support.
• Binary moral characterizations ("good versus evil")….	…de-legitimizing one or more party to a negotiation and/or political solution.
• Ethnic categorization of parties…	…marginalizing certain ethnic groups, hardening constructed identities, and challenging post-conflict reconciliation.
A future envisioned for other conflicts (not the one at hand)…	…responses that do not logically follow from the progression of past events.
• Single prescription futures…	…interventions that address only one facet of the problem.

It may always be natural for aid agencies to shorthand conflicts as "humanitarian crises" to attract international attention and support, and for human rights organizations to use legalistic language to describe violence to invoke the need for accountability. However, the key audiences for this type of reporting—analysts, policymakers, and other organizational staffers—could keep this typology in mind as a means of remaining vigilant about how they receive such information, how they are constructing knowledge around a conflict, and implications for intervention. This proposal recalls Vivien Schmidt's (2008) claim that individuals make sense of a situation through both their background ideational and foreground discursive abilities—in other words, both structure and agency matter (p. 314).

Additional Questions for Research and Exploration

This research raises many additional areas for research, including at least five ideas for follow-on exploration. First, as this case study focused primarily on the intersection of advocacy and NGO reporting with the UN Secretariat and AU Commission's reporting on Darfur, one could argue a gap remains with respect to the influence of member state narratives on decision-making outcomes. It would be possible, for example, to further explore publicized notes on UN Security Council and AU Peace and Security Council deliberations to further unpack the discursive influences of each member state's position on final documents; this might also require an analysis of key states' internal discussions among political leadership and staff, which would have been too ambitious for this project to attempt. In addition, additional research could be done

into differences in discursive influences among the various permanent organs of the United Nations and African Union, many of which were assumed in this project to be reflected in UN Secretariat and AU Commission reporting, but may also not always have been made public.

Second, one could apply a critical lens to the above discourse analysis by examining the role of power dynamics and differentials between the United Nations Security Council and African Union Peace and Security Council and amongst member states in each body. Further exploration is needed to understand the discursive influence of the United Nations' institutional practices and narratives on the African Union as it stood up new entities in Darfur. Such a study could also explore the implications of hegemonic discourses regarding international conflict intervention for the African Union, in general. Part of this analysis could include a closer examination of internal documents and notes related to the Abuja peace process. This research might also take into account the Arab League and Arab governments' responses to the conflict, taking into account intra-regional relationships with the Government of Sudan.

Third, eleven years into the Darfur conflict, there may be more of an opportunity to explore the impact of the "Arab versus African" characterization of violence on reconciliation efforts than in the past. Namely, one could attempt to test Lucy Hovil's assertions that ethnic frames, by overshadowing political realities, minimize possibilities to adapt to new post-conflict identity groupings. While UNAMID has been criticized for falling short in the task of civilian protection, its civil affairs officers have conducted many local "town hall" conversations in recent years, documentation of which could

provide clues as to how Darfuri self perceptions are evolving as time goes on. While some have argued against the value of UNAMID's facilitation of such conversations, in part because of the presence of government and security officials, the content of these conversations would provide a start point for developing data sources that point to how easily "Arab" and "non-Arab" constructs can be, or whether they need to be, deconstructed in the future.

Fourth, as this research dealt only with the first four years of international discourse surrounding the Darfur conflict, it would be useful to analyze the time periods that followed. Not only did conditions in Darfur—and Sudan, in general—continue to change after 2006, governments abroad changed hands, new advocacy groups were formed, and social media exploded on to the scene. It would be useful to analyze how outside narratives of Darfur changed, or did not change, with UNAMID's deployment, the opening of a new peace process sponsored by the Government of Qatar, national elections, the secession of southern Sudan from Sudan, the killing of Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) leader Khalil Ibrahim by the Government of Sudan, and the formation of a new rebel alliance between the Darfur armed movements and southern-backed rebels in disputed areas along the North-South border. Darfur has passed through at least two chapters of events, if not more, since 2006, providing a rich set of data for additional analysis.

Fifth, and finally, one of the most valuable areas of research with implications for practice would be an analysis of the evolution of Darfuri and Government of Sudan narratives about how the conflict began, what it means, and how it should end. As noted

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in chapter 5, Darfuri civilians would constitute the most important community of meaning to participate in the construction of a better formed story. While previous surveys have addressed this gap in the context of Darfuri refugee camps in Chad, still lacking is an open-ended interview process—or even interactive dialogue—aimed at understanding the narrative perspectives of both Darfuris on all sides of the conflict in Darfur and government officials with influence over local actors from Khartoum. Until efforts are made to conduct this type of participatory research, whether by outsiders, or preferably by insiders, it is unlikely that violence will cease to be the most attractive tool for dealing with persistent political grievances by all Darfuris, on one hand, and security concerns by the government, on the other. It will be impossible for outsiders to know exactly what the better formed story looks like until the parties themselves write it.

ANNEXES

I.   "Helicopter" Interview Questions

1) Who would you consider to have been the most influential voices and decision-makers during international discussions and debates over how to intervene in the Darfur conflict once it emerged in 2003?

2) Whom would you interview if you wanted to gain a better understanding of how multilateral institutions, donor governments, and other organizations perceived and characterized the Darfur violence during the period between 2003 and 2006?

3) Where would you look for relevant texts and artifacts that reflect their views?

4) How would you characterize their interpretations of the violence looking back at it now?

5) If you had to group these actors thematically or categorically according to their descriptions of the conflict, how would you do so?

6) How would you say their interpretations of the violence in Darfur influenced the course of international interventions and outcomes in the region?

7) Were any voices, perspectives, or proposed interventions, in your opinion, excluded from these primary groupings of influential decision-makers? Who wasn't allowed or invited to participate in the debate?

II.   "Key Player" Interview Questions

1) When reports of violence and displacement in Darfur began emerging in 2003, what do you recall was your understanding of the conflict?

2) In your recollection, how was the nature of the conflict discussed in your office's/organization's/institution's public and private deliberations?

3) Do you recall significant differences of interpretation and opinion about the nature of the violence (either between public and private deliberations or between key actors)?

4) When the decision was made to intervene with AU-led peace talks in Abuja, do you recall how the proposed intervention was expected to address the causes of the conflict?

5) What about when the decision was made to deploy an AU ceasefire monitoring mission?

6) What about when the decision was made to convert AMIS into a hybrid AU-UN Chapter VII peacekeeping mission, UNAMID?

7) Were any voices, perspectives, or proposed interventions, in your opinion, excluded from these discussions?

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