An *Harambee*[1] Theory of Rhetoric in Social Action: Persuasion, Religious Identity & Recognition in Sudan

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Abstract

There are various theories of social interaction that can be used to analyse the current state of Africa, albeit, there is also an inherent need for a theory which can capture the salient factors that perpetuate the state of social conflict that is unique to the African context. Hence, the aim of this research paper is to advance an African discourse that postulates an African born theory of rhetoric in the realm of critical social action. This research paper brings to the fore three important conceptual facets, namely persuasion, religious identity and recognition that have the potential to significantly influence the African social system of interaction. Thus, this paper calls for

[1] *Harambee* (Swahili) = 'pulling together'.

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an analysis of the revitalization of primordial consciousness in the context of group processes and intergroup relations which can serve as a mechanism for strategic mobilization. Using Sudan as a case study, the objective of this paper is to analyse the range of effects sought by the deployment of rhetoric in the realm of critical social action. Social action in the context of this paper involves roles and organizations as units of analysis. Hence, it involves not only interaction at the societal level, but even informal interpersonal relations involving two persons. Against this background, the paper posits a theory of rhetoric – i.e. 'An Harambee Theory' - which can serve as a model for analysing critical social action and interaction in Africa.

Key Concepts: An African discourse, rhetoric, social systems, social action, religious identity, social identity complexity, collective context, collective orientation, collective action, in-group and out-group, solidarity and belonging.

Introduction: Initiating an African Discourse in Social Action

In recent years, Africa has been portrayed has a continent plagued by the recurrent phenomena of social, religious and ethnic conflicts. Indeed, most reports on Africa generally create an impression of a continent torn apart by persistent conflicts, weak states, and displaced populations that require international aid and foreign intervention. The continent has undeniably been the site of some of the most violent and destructive conflicts over the past fifty years – i.e. the appalling conflicts in Algeria, Somalia, Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Sudan exhibit some of the most recent and dramatic examples (cf. Meredith 2005: 1-16).

In addressing the contested terrain of Africa within the larger political and socio-economic crises, I recall the words of Tadesse (2008: 41):

> Any serious conflict resolution initiative needs to confront the nature of the African state, which is the major locus of political and socio-economic crisis.... Most states [in Africa] don't represent the interest and character of all components of their population. The state, its

> institutions and rules and regulations are highly contested. A state which is a contested terrain in this sense suffers from political instability and institutional disarray and poses real challenges for reform and democratic transition.

Thus, the challenge confronting the African continent is to transform governments run by small elite groups with partisan agendas and militarised conceptions of security, to states that have inclusive, representative and legitimate processes and systems. According to the thesis of Reynal-Querol (2002:29), an understanding of the temporal link between the contested terrains, the effect of ethnic divisions on civil wars and the roles of political and economic systems, coincides with religious polarization and animist diversity. Reynal-Querol (2002:29-54) argues that religiously divided societies are more prone to intense conflict than countries where people have conflicting claims to resources based on interest groups or language divisions[2].

Building upon the foundation set by Reynal-Querol (2002), I began my personal journey advocating for an African discourse, which draws upon the pragmatic characteristics of conflict in Africa. Although, each contested terrain (i.e. Sudan, Nigeria, Eritrea, etc.) needs to be analyzed as individual flash points in Africa and understood within the parameters of its own discourse, there are also common loci that are shared within the larger African context. Hence, in contextualizing Parsons (1991: 25) definition of a social system, an 'African social system' can be defined in terms of a system of processes of interaction between individual actors and the structure of the relations between the interactions of these actors. This refers to the interaction of individual actors, which takes place under such conditions that it is plausible to treat this process of interaction as a system in the scientific sense. Hence, in substantiating an African discourse, three salient principles

[2] Religious identity is fixed and nonnegotiable, hence, disputes amongst identity groups based on their religious nature are particularly difficult to negotiate, thus, raising the odds of violence (cf. Reynal-Querol 2002: 29-35). However, arguably not all ethnically and religiously divided societies evolve into civil wars. There are also experiences of good relationships among individuals of different cultures within a country.

of interaction can be identified in Africa – i.e. persuasion, identity and recognition.

In the context of this research paper, persuasion is understood as the engineering of consent which encompasses the related qualities of trust, trustworthiness, credence and credibility and extends to objects and means used to secure such trust or belief (Carey 1994: 26). According to Blumenberg (1987: 423), persuasion is rooted in basic human capacities, with the primary intention for practical deliberation, for producing agreement through persuasive speech and for achieving mutual understanding. Both Brooks and Warren (1970: 36) classify this paradigm of interaction by three important perceptual facets – i.e. logic, time and space[3].

Thus, essential to persuasion is identity which serves as a mechanism for mobilization of the individual actor, acting upon a specific ideology which enhances a state of shared recognition. According to Deng (1995: 14):

> Identity is seen as a function of how people identify themselves and are identified in race, ethnicity, culture, language and religion, and how such identification determines or influences their participation in the political, economic, social and cultural life of their country.

According to the above definition, one can argue that identity is of little consequence in modern, democratic, and pluralistic countries or societies where discrimination on the basis of race, skin colour, national origin, religion, or gender is forbidden by law. However, stated in positive terms both Johnson (2003) and Jok (2007) argue that in Africa (with particular focus to Sudan), democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms also imply that an individual's identity is accommodated through tolerance for diversity. Hence, Deng (1995: 14-15) continues to argue that,

[3] 'Logic' refers to the reasoning process in which relations are established between one thing and another – i.e. cause and effect, evidence and conclusion; 'time' refers to the natural perception of sequence in our experience; and 'space' is based on the way we perceive the world in which we live, cf. Brooks and Warren (1970: 36-44) for further discussion.

> In some countries or societies these elements of identity are important factors in the sense of belonging to the nation and participation in the political, economic, and social process. In tribal societies, for example, the family or clan is important to membership; in theocracies, religion is a critical factor; in a racially defined state, as in the apartheid South Africa, race determines participation; in a context of ethnic nationalism, as in the states of the former Yugoslavia and the former Soviet Union, ethnicity is a social detriment.

Elaborating further on the definition of identity, Giannakos (2002: 1) states that scholars tend to focus on identity as an end in itself or as a means to an end[4]. In general terms, they tend to view identity as the instrument by which institutions (i.e. state or a national state), become legitimate in the eyes of its citizens and the world, or a group of citizens become sovereign over a specific territory (i.e. the right to national self-determination).

In this context, identity becomes the means by which certain institutions become or attempt to become legitimate. Identity is hence attributed to a process where the role of the individual is passive, with identity being imposed on the individual by realities beyond his/her realm, such as systemic economic and political ones. Eriksen (1991: 263) relates ethnic and religious identity to the social reproduction of basic classificatory differences between categories of people and to aspects of 'gain and loss' on social interaction. Arguably, identity can therefore become an expression through which individuals are provided their social statuses. According to Singh (1995: 174) identity is essentially, a boundary between in-group and out-group, which has the potential to give rise to group mobilization and politicization qua separate community or society. Therefore, to understand the contributing significance of identity to the contested terrain, one needs to

[4] Those who focus on identity as an end tend to explain identity in terms of assumed racial or genetic characteristics or presumed cultural or linguistic uniqueness. Among the most prominent representatives of this school of thought are Gellner (1983), Smith (1991), Coleman (1968) and Connor (1978).

analyse the interaction of persuasion with identity in the realm of critical social action[5].

The conflicts in Africa are indeed many and varied and can arise as a result of pervasive structural or systemic factors that may create pre-conditions for violent outbreak. These include state repression, lack of political legitimacy, poor governance, unequal distribution of wealth, poverty, etc. Hence, together with persuasion and identity, another crucial facet that has the potential to delude the contested terrain is recognition. Thus, identity brings to the fore the interrelated problems of self-recognition and recognition by others[6].

This research paper aims to provide a theory of the pragmatics of rhetoric with the postulation of persuasion, religious identity and recognition in the paradigm of critical social action within the broader ambits of an African discourse using Sudan as a case study. It remains my objective and the thesis of this research paper to facilitate a wider discussion on the uniqueness of the African context, which takes into account the current state of Africa and beckons a call for an African theory unpacking 'African solutions to African problems'[7].

[5] In recent years discussions on social action have featured as prominent discourses among many scholars in various disciplines. The earlier works of scholars such as von Gierke (1913), Parsons (1934), Troeltsch (1911), Znaniecke (1925) and others seem to come to the fore in the writings of many contemporary scholars.

[6] Recognition is vital to any reflexivity – e.g. any capacity to look at oneself, to choose one's actions and see their consequences. Hence, according to Smelser (1962: 59) recognition is essential in the spreading of generalised belief, precipitating factors, and mobilization of participants for action.

[7] The importance of African solutions for African problems is highlighted by Kagwina (2009: 6) as a salient ideological force driving Africa's agenda for peace and security, especially within the African Union (AU).

Contemporary Discourses on the Correlates and Antecedents of Group Processes and Intergroup Relations

The postulation of an Harambee theory, originates from the current trends of 'belonging' and 'solidarity' discourses in the African context. As one surveys the present state of social interaction in Africa, the key factors that come to the fore as stimuli for action are the relations and interactions between individuals belonging to specific groups and their interactions with other groups. For example, Nigeria's two major religions, Islam and Christianity are often depicted as monolithic entities that confront each other in violent outbreaks (cf. Osaghae & Suberu 2005: 19-20). These outbreaks and riots are reported to be based on religious affiliation and collective responses towards the implementation of religious policies – i.e. such as the conflict in Kaduna between February and May 2000. Thus, the key issues of belonging to a group and solidarity, begins to shape the social agenda for reaction to policies and interaction between other groups and individuals. Based on the above premise, this research paper identifies the following current trends as crucial to understanding the African discourse between belonging and solidarity in the interactions of in-group and out-group relations and processes.

(a) The Solidarity of the Collective Group to a given Social Action

This paper adopts the minimal premise of 'social action' as individual actors interacting with each other in a situation, motivated towards the optimization of gratification, and whose relation to their situations, including each other, is defined and mediated in terms of a system of culturally structured and shared symbols (cf. Parson 1991: 4, for a further elaboration on this definition). In this action system of solidarity, members of a social group define certain actions as required in the interest of the integrity of the social system itself, and others as incompatible with that integrity, with the result that sanctions are necessitated. Such a system is termed a 'collective group'. Collective-orientation thus involves posing the 'question of confidence' (cf. Parsons 1991: 97) – i.e. 'Are you one of us or not?' Koenigsberg (2009: 83) contends that collective-orientation proposes an institutionalized obligation

of the role-expectations, i.e. as part of the collective group the actor is obligated to act in the prescribed manner of the collective[8]. Thus, according to Parsons (1991: 99) conformity with expectations of collective-orientation may be termed taking 'responsibility' as a member of the collective group[9]. Porterfield (1998: 165) argues that religious groups resemble such collective-orientations, whereby they exert significant power in the larger social world as collective actors of social order or social change. The power exerted by the collective group can be attributed to their group actions to implement social agendas and shape the attitudes and behaviours of their individual members. As centres for the implementation of group agendas, religious groups work through various forms of social action to restore a social order believed to have existed in the past, help create a new order for the future, or contribute to forces supporting social conditions as they exist in the present (cf. Lifton 1993: 87). However, as centres for the socialization of individuals, religious groups teach their collective members to cultivate certain attitudes towards themselves and others, and encourage particular kinds of social behaviours that members bring to their interactions in the larger world. Hence, according to Porterfield (1998: 165-166), these individual actors can

[8] An important frame of reference within the social system pertains to 'orientation' – i.e. the relation between the actor and other actors or group and other groups within a given situation.

[9] According to Prendergast (2007: 37) this is an important factor in mobilizing communities for conflict management. For example in the Greater Horn of Africa region, indigenous conflict management initiatives such as the Grassroots Peace Conference in Eastern and Western Torit district which involved the Catholic church and community leaders, the Intra-Neur Peace Conference (Akobo Peace Conference), and the Dinka-Misseriya Peace Agreements in the transitional zone between north and south, all owe their success and failures to the notion of collective solidarity which served as a mobilization mechanism (also cf. Ferris 2004; Kubai 2005; Villumstad, 2004; Nordstrom 1998; and Adebo 2005). Consequently, as one of the most important processes of social change, there is a continual process of dissolution of old collective groups and formation of new ones, albeit there are also processes of change which do not destroy the identity of the collective group (cf. Parsons & Shils 1962: 108).

play a constructive or destructive role depending on the context and the motivation for action initiated by the collective group.

(b) Social Identity Complexity: In-Group and Out-Group Tolerance

According to Miller, et al. (2009: 79), members in large and complex societies are differentiated or subdivided along many meaningful social dimensions, e.g. gender and sexual orientation, economic sector, religion and political ideology, etc. Each of these divisions provides a basis for shared identity and group membership that can become an important part of social identification. According to Lott (2005: 33), shared identity serves as a way of aligning ourselves with a distinctive way of life and with the people that share the values of that way of life, albeit affirming a shared identity also entails some degree of contrast with the 'other'. The paradox is that although shared identity intends some form of collective integration, it also entails some form of collective differentiation. Thus, according to Lott (2005: 33-34), in making clear who we are, and where we belong, we implicitly set ourselves in some measure over and against others who are different, i.e. alignment inevitably creates some kind of individual or collective alienation. Hence, the continuous dialogical process of identification and dis-identification, points out two distinct features of identity formation: (a) that our identities do not pre-exist us and (b) that our identities must be produced or established (cf. Kiguwa 2006: 119).

Elaborating further on the discourse of individual and collective identities, Brewer and Pierce (2005: 428), argue that these differentiations are also cross-cutting. The individual may share a common in-group membership on one dimension, but belong to different categories on another dimension. Thus, in a complex society such as Africa, the different groups that a particular individual belongs to across different domains of social life (e.g. religion and ethnicity) are likely to overlap. This is crucial to understanding the uniqueness of the African context and is substantiated by Jhazbhay (2009: 137-140) with reference to the intricate cross-cutting dimensions of religion; ethnicity and the traditional clan system in Somaliland, which emanates the challenges of a fragile development.

Undeniably, these cross-cutting dimensions bring to the fore the challenge of 'social identity complexity', vis-à-vis the way in which the individual subjectively represents the relationships among their multiple in-group memberships. According to Brewer and Pierce (2005: 429), social identity complexity is the product of a process of recognizing and interpreting information about one's own in-groups. Hence, social identity complexity is dependent upon two conditions, first awareness of more than one in-group categorization, and secondly, recognizing that the multiple in-group categories do not converge. Thus, members with fewer multiple social identities are less tolerant and accepting of out-groups, as compared to members who have greater multiple social identities. Members with fewer multiple social identities tend to be bias and maintain a more distinct boundary which defines their group memberships. Hence, for Brewer and Pierce (2005: 430), the general perception is that any individual who is an out-group member on more than one dimension is also perceived as an out-group member on other dimensions.

(c) Beyond 'Class': New Directions in Social Stratification

According to Anthias (2001: 836) while stratification theories cling to the traditional focus on 'class', much of the motivations for engaging with the classical understanding of class divisions has disappeared. Thus, placing stratification approaches on the periphery of the modern sociological debates. Accordingly, Touraine (1981: 45) argues that new emerging social movement theories bring to the fore new types of allegiances influenced by social forces organised in terms of local identities and concerns. Hence, new directions in defining social stratifications, prompts a new understanding of the concept 'social exclusion', with a redirection towards the broader recognition of the objects and mechanisms of inequality. Thus, for Anthias (2001: 838), social identities involve the construction of where, how and why particular boundaries are formed in exclusion and inclusion.

Two crucial debates come to the fore in understanding the emerging dichotomy of social stratification (cf. Crompton 1998). Firstly, in categorically identifying persons as 'the excluded', it reduces the subject to either passive victims or willing agents in their own denigration. Secondly,

there is a tendency to pathologise and homogenise, thereby producing a 'disqualified' identity, i.e. focusing on 'the excluded' as forming part of the bottom of the social scale does not allow for looking at forms of inequality within the higher hierarchy. In the context of social identity complexities (multiple in-group membership), this becomes problematic. In this regard, the process of exclusion is relational and multidimensional, hence, located in different social spheres and affects categories of the subject differently, i.e. depending on whether they are excluded in terms of religion, ethnicity, clan etc.

Hence, Anthias (2001: 839) shifts the discourse by proposing a reformulation which might be 'differential exclusion and inclusion', which brings it closer to a contextual understanding of African social stratification. Such an approach would see exclusion as not absolute but dynamic and contextual, i.e. it would not only focus on the bottom but the entire stratification structure.

(d) The Convergence of Rhetoric and Justified Anger

Within the current discourses of group processes and inter-group relations, the question of rhetoric and anger (in the context of social interaction) is an inevitable question. According to Zagacki and Boleyn-Fitzgerald (2006: 290), the rhetor faces a rhetorical challenge in deciding when and how to express anger and determine the role that it might play in public discourse, i.e. within specific audiences and in particular rhetorical situations. In recent years, rhetorical scholars have debated the various genres of rhetoric, from apocalyptic genres to the rhetoric of religious and political leaders, where the rhetorical application of anger is explained in terms of situational conventions and cultural norms. However, these discourses have not addressed the moral problems associated with the rhetoric of anger, i.e. discerning the moral limits of anger. Some contemporary scholars have gone further in suggesting that a failure to feel and express anger in public portrays an insufficient concern for justice and self respect (cf. Allen 1999, Carpenter 1981 and Doxtader 2001).

In the context of social interaction, much of the present debate for justified anger is based on Aristotle's (1962) understanding of the following

five factors: object (the person is angry with the right people), intensity or expression (the person is angry in the right way), duration (the person is angry for the right amount of time), time (the person is angry at the right time), and rationale (the person is angry for the right reason). Hence, according to Zagacki and Boleyn-Fitzgerald (2006: 307), the current discourses on rhetoric and justified anger leans toward the view that in many cases the transformation of anger is the strategic and practical choice for the development of democratic communities. This implies that the moral constitution of the selective groups and their social interactions must be viewed in terms of the ways in which anger becomes apart of the subject of the public discourse and promotes or diminishes public deliberations. Hence, Garver (1994: 106) cautions that 'emotions' have the potential to make practical judgements wise and determinate by considering the particularity of a case and sometimes they corrupt judgement by making it partial, using those same particularities to override justice.

Towards an *Harambee* Theory of Rhetoric in Social Action

The aim of postulating an African theory of rhetoric in social action, is to bring to the fore the uniqueness of the African context, by advocating a discourse on the intricate social relationships between individual social actors as agents for change and the interactions between various social in-groups and out-groups. 'Harambee' finds its origins in Swahili and literally means 'pulling together'. In East Africa, the concept implied ways to build and maintain communities, i.e. community events ranging from informal affairs to invitations spread by word of mouth. In 1963, preceding Kenya's independence, Jomo Kenyata (the first Prime Minister and later first President of Kenya) adopted Harambee as a socio-economic ideology of pulling the country together in building a new nation state. This research paper acknowledges the strategic importance of Harambee in Africa and its potential as a theory of social rhetoric.

In constructing a conceptual framework for an Harambee theory, this research paper proposes an analysis of three important social-stages i.e. collective context, collective orientation and collective action.

(a) Collective Context (Systemic Disequilibrium)

In analysing social-structural theories that perpetuate social change, both Conteh-Morgan (2004) and Parsons (1971) affirm that 'structure' and 'function' accentuate the idea of society as an organism whose entire system has to be in good working order for systemic equilibrium to be maintained. Both an organism and society are similar in that each represents an integrated whole, maintains a certain degree of structural continuity, and involves internal processes that perform specific functions. The analogy of society to an organismic model emphasises the attributes of interdependence, equilibrium and differentiation in every society. According to Strasser and Randall (1981: 98), interdependence refers to the interactions among social actors and social relations that comprise a social structure; equilibrium is the regulatory mechanisms of socialization, adaptation, goal attainments and social control that continuously attempts to preserve social-structural equilibrium; and differentiation is the institutionalisation of social roles and organisations and their related processes, outcomes and functions.

Therefore, the social system persists by maintaining its structural balance and managing change by adjusting its essential variables and overall structure. Collins (1975: 167) explains this process in the following manner:

> In other words, the social system maintains its equilibrium by retaining the necessary forms of social organisation and patterns of action, while abandoning dysfunctional patterns. In order to underscore the idea of system maintenance or survival, the system attempts to identify 'functional prerequisites' or 'needs' or 'essential variables' of society.

According to Johnson (1966: 208) there are four functional prerequisites to ensure that the social system stays in equilibrium. The first is socialization or pattern maintenance, which corresponds to the religious sector of social life, i.e. the inculcation of societal values and norms. The second prerequisite is adaptation, which relates to the political sectors of society, i.e. the differentiation and allocation of roles, as well as the distribution of scarce resources. The third prerequisite is goal attainment, which focuses on the economic sector of social life, and is concerned with the formation and

development of policies for achieving systemic goals. The final prerequisite is integration and social control, i.e. ways in which problems of deviancy are prevented or solved.

Accordingly, Conteh-Morgan (2004: 50) argues that these functional prerequisites must therefore be maintained within certain predetermined critical limits to ensure equilibrium. Hence, when the environment undergoes change, the critical limits of the systemic variables need to also change to compensate for the environmental changes. However, it is possible that with sudden and radical environmental changes, the system can break down. Hence when the system is incapable of adequately responding to these precipitated environmental changes, it becomes disequilibrated followed by a loss of authority, and then given a catalyst or precipitating factor, some form of collective reaction occurs (cf. Kornhauser 1959: 67).

(b) Collective Orientation (Group Relational Dynamics)

According to Smelser (1962: 46), collective orientation is an action produced by a generalized belief in the existence of extraordinary forces (i.e. threats, conspiracies, etc.) that are at work in the wider environment. These generalized beliefs according to Smelser and Smelser (1970: 306), which produce collective orientation, also involve assessing the consequences that will result if such collective attempt to reconstitute social action is either successful or unsuccessful. In other words, Smelser's definition of collective orientation comprises an uninstitutionalised mobilization whose aim is to reconstitute a component of social action on the basis of a generalized belief (cf. Smelser 1962: 247-265; Conteh-Morgan 2004: 53).

Collective orientation can be produced by general determinants or a combination of unique determinants. Smelser (1962: 59) identifies structural conduciveness, structural strain, growth and spread of generalized belief, precipitating factors, mobilization of participants for action, and operation of social controls as the determinants of collective orientation. These determinants follow a specific pattern and sequence. According to Smelser (1962: 58), collective orientation can only occur if the above are activated in a specific pattern. The most general determinant is structural conduciveness and is a necessary condition for the activation of the other five. However, it

is important to distinguish between structural conduciveness and structural strain. Structural conduciveness refers to the social conditions that increase the tendency for groups to engage in collective orientation.[10] Structural strain refers to a conflict between opposing societal practices, i.e. equal opportunity and discriminatory practices, etc., which produces socio-economic and political depravations, conflicts and discrepancies.

(c) Collective Action (Coercive Persuasion)

Smelser (1962: 61) argues that before the group can engage in collective action, it must accept the combined situation of structural conduciveness and structural strain as consequential. Thus, this takes the form of accepting a general belief that communicates the meaning to potential collective behaviour participants by identifying the origin and source of the strain, attributing certain characteristics to this source, recommending that certain action be taken to deal with the strain, and the medium used to get attention and regain equality vis-à-vis other groups that are more accepted (cf. Lipset and Smelser 1961: 203). Hence, these precipitating factors provide the context towards which collective behavior can be channelled and provides an immediate catalyst effect of mobilizing participants for action.

According to Conteh-Morgan (2004: 52) in a disequilibrated system, the elite could either allow the system to undergo structural change or maintain the system. As a counter determinant of collective behaviour, the elite can choose to induce social coercion which minimizes structural conduciveness and structural strain, thereby reducing collective behaviour. However, Liska (1992: 12) disputes this hypothesis and argues that if the elite opt to maintain the system through coercive measures, then the coerced will respond to these threats with acts that reaffirm their collective values and identity. Accordingly Sites (1973:165) argues that coercive strategies are induced after other attempts of control have failed and the individual or group has not yet reached their objective, however this is disputable and beyond the scope of this paper. The use of different instruments of coercion

[10] For example: a populated neglected ethnic minority section of a city is more conducive to ethnic riots then areas with middle-class residential patterns.

depends on the resources and the resourcefulness of the parties involved (cf. Scott and Scott 1971: 14).

An Harambee theory postulates the complex yet significant influence of the 'ritualization of belief' which has the potential to mobilize coercive persuasive tactics and perpetuate violent coercion through riots and mob tactics, genocide, and terror tactics. Indeed, beliefs, attitudes, and values are integrated into the total personality and perform specific functions for the social actor. In recent years, there has been immense speculation concerning the relationship between publicly expressed and privately held beliefs, attitudes and values in the citizen of such society. According to Schein et al. (1961: 259), the simple dichotomy of overt public behaviour versus covert private behaviour is insufficient for an understanding of what can happen to cognitive-affective responses under the impact of coercive persuasion. Smith et al (1956) distinguishes three functions in which beliefs, attitudes and values can influence the social actor. They can serve to appraise reality – i.e. through their beliefs the individual can test reality, categorise incoming information, and reach rational conclusions about his/her environment. Secondly, they can facilitate and reinforce social adjustment – i.e. through his/her opinions, the social actor can relate him/herself to others, express his/her membership in certain groups, and his/her sense of identity. And thirdly, they can serve to externalise inner problems – i.e. through his/her opinions, the social actor can express his/her personal conflicts, his/her conscious and unconscious feelings and motives.

Thus, the ritualisation of belief is the psychological process which results when a group's formal doctrine and its manner of expression is controlled – i.e. through leaders of a religious group, ethnic leaders, clan elders etc. From the point of view of the individual social actor, the psychological manifestation of the ritualisation of belief is the ability to gain control over both the overt expression of belief and the private expression (i.e. even the expression of their own individual thoughts). Hence for Schein et al (1961: 261), learning to control overt expression is not difficult, but learning not to have thoughts other than the ideologically correct ones is very difficult and probably the result of being highly coerced to do so. In the context of collective action, Hoffer (1951: 156) highlights the ritualizing aspects as when unity and self sacrifice are indispensable for the normal

functioning of a society, and where everyday life is likely to be either religiofied (common tasks turned into holy causes) or militarized.

Thus, the Harambee theory postulates that the intended result of coercive persuasion is where the sphere of private activity becomes restricted or eliminated, that the belief systems become ritualized and come to serve solely as a motivation for collective action, and that such ritualisation has the potential to leave the individual social actor without the cognitive tools to lead a creative private life. Thus, in the end both his/her public life is dominated by ritual.

A Case Study of Sudan: The African 'Cauldron of Dissent'

In order to apply the conceptual framework of the Harambee theory and substantiate an African discourse in social action, this research paper proposes an analysis of the conflict in Sudan as a case study. The call for peace and conflict resolution in Sudan presents the Sudanese, African and the international community with a vital challenge to develop doctrines and modalities that will provide an inclusive yet flexible formula to which all Sudanese can collectively and confidently identify. Hence, Nantulya (2003: 104) contends that such a formula should not only accommodate their ethnic, cultural, racial and religious diversities, but also assist in deconstructing myths and stereotypes associated with the negative aspects of identity mobilisation.

Sudan shares its borders with Egypt, Libya, Chad, the Central African Republic, Zaire, Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia and Eritrea. In effect, all these states have their own socio-economic and political problems, continuing tensions and diverse interests. Given the size of Sudan (i.e. the largest country in Africa), and the absence of security measures, the region has become a base or transit point for assorted collective coercive tactics, i.e. guerrilla tactics, terrorism and Islamist fundamentalists. In applying the Harambee theory to Sudan, it should be noted that it is not the intention of this paper to provide a discussion on the historical development of the conflict or epitomize the political contentions. Thus, selective discourses will be highlighted to engage with the salient principles of collective context, collective orientation and collective action perpetuating social action in Sudan.

(a) The Encroachment of Collective Identities in the Struggle for a National Sudanese Identity

This research paper argues that amidst the socio-economic and the varying political contentions, the primary cause for the conflict in Sudan is the contending perspectives on national identity. Due to identity conflicts being highly complex, Sudan exhibits an extremely sensitive case study, embodied with problematic concerns for preventive initiatives and effective diplomatic interventions. The crisis in Sudan is often characterised as two powerful social collective forces contesting against each other, i.e. a Northern Arab-Islamic identity and an African identity that is asserted by the South. Despite the Northern elite being products of centuries of African and Arab intermarriages, they see themselves as exclusively Arab, and have framed the national identity along Arab-Islamic lines. This brings to the fore crucial policy implications, as it excludes a large portion of the population from full participation in national life. Thus, according to Nantulya (2003: 104-105), the South in particular has been badly affected, albeit, it has been largely impacted by a colonial legacy of separate development and remains resistant to racial, cultural and religious assimilation into the Arab-Islamic model of the North.

Accordingly Reeves (2007), Totten and Markusen (2006) and De Waal (2007), all contend that the main protagonists in the continuing debate for defining the national identity framework are the Northern ruling elites and the Southern resistance forces that have historically been led and mobilised by various liberation movements, i.e. the most notable being the Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement and Army (SPLM/A). While the successive Northern ruling elites have, since independence in 1956, defined the national identity framework along the parameters of 'Islamism' and 'Arabism', the Southern resistance forces have asserted 'Africanism' and 'secularism' as counter identities. For Wakoson (1998), there is a strong ideological dichotomy between these two collectives. He contends that the Northern ruling elite almost exclusively embraces the negative and totalitarian ideological notions in 'Islamism', while the SPLM/A in embracing 'Africanism', focuses more on liberalism and democracy, secular democratic federalism, freedom of religion, and consensual unity in diversity. However, while such notions are desirable and favour a more

peaceful alternative in Sudan, there is no guarantee that if the SPLM/A comes into power, that it would institute such ideas. Hence, a more cautious approach should perhaps be followed in analysing the opposing ideologies of these collectives.

The present contention of the Southern resistance forces is that while an Arab-Islamic identity is part of the reality of the diversity in Sudan, it is only one reality amongst many others. As a result when an Arab-Islamic identity is adopted as the official philosophy of the state, it inevitably excludes the other identities that have shaped the country through the many years. However, arguably the problem is not so much what the dominating collective (i.e. Northern ruling elite) perceive themselves to be, but rather the manner in which this self-perception has come to shape the definition, configuration, and the exercise of political power and control. Thus, these successive elites have defined the country within a self-perceived and minimalist Arab-Islamic mould, which does not accommodate the broader multiplicities and diversities which does not fall within these parameters (cf. Schwartz 2009).

(b) Collective Context: Sudan in Social Disequilibrium

The present diverse identity of Sudan can be viewed as an outcome of a long process of socialization and acculturation developed through a process of historical, political and socio-economic adaptation, with mutual co-existence and religious tolerance between Muslim Arabs and Sudanese indigenous groups. According to Hurreiz and Al-Salam (1989: 77), this process had always been the backbone and social fabric of the Sudanese culture and identity, as it allowed different groups the flexibility to merge and form wider groupings. However, in modern day Sudan, the main causes of mutiny, instability and civil war are ‘marginalization’ and ‘ethnicization’ that have been exercised by the Northern ruling elites (cf. Musa 2009a). The underlying misperceptions, ambiguities, and conflicting perspectives of what should constitute the national identity framework continue to play a key role in undermining trust and confidence between these collective groups. As a result, distribution of resources, access to political and economic power, development, welfare, and other rights, duties and responsibilities have advocated exclusion and forced assimilation.

To create a further understanding of the social system in Sudan, I will briefly contextualize Johnson's (1966) functional prerequisites to Sudan.

(1) Sharia, Secularism and Tribalism as Methods of Socialisation

As discussed earlier, the first prerequisite to social equilibrium refers to socialization or pattern maintenance. Clearly, in Sudan there is a distinct fragmentation of socialisation which can be seen in three patterns. Firstly, the implementation and institutionalization of *Sharia* (i.e. Islamic Law) in Sudan is a dominating pattern, taking into consideration that the Islamicised and Arabicised northern Sudanese considered their culture and way of life to be the 'norm' for a combined Sudanese identity which they ambitioned to spread throughout Sudan. The Northern ruling elite argued that the Muslim majority had the right to establish a constitutional system that it preferred, i.e. *Sharia*. However, they contended that religious diversity would be honoured by exempting the south from the severest of body punishments under the *Sharia*, the *Hudud*. Funke and Solomon (2006: 255) argues that the intention of the Northern ruling elite was to retain the central government's authority over policy-making related to religion and education. However, with the crisis in Darfur (whose population is 100% Muslim) rebelling against an Islamic ruling government on ethnic basis, a second pattern of socialisation emerged where the tribe proved to be a prominent social pattern (cf. Flint and De Waal 2008). The third social pattern comes to the fore with the SPLM/A which advocated secular democracy and equality, and opposed the proposed religious and racial assimilation and implied marginalisation of non-Muslims (cf. Schwartz 2009).

(2) An Arabist Discourse: Politics and Power of the Elite

According to Musa (2009a), the actual problem in Sudan is 'politicized ethnicity' – i.e. the discourse of the Northern ruling elite and their ethnic-oriented political behaviour. This hypothesis perpetuates a national debate on whether Sudan is an Arab country, an African country or and Afro/Arab county. The present state of social disequilibrium owes much to its colonial predecessors who developed centralised authoritative systems. The national elite, who took over after independence (1956), inherited this system

fostering an elitist bourgeoisie with a gulf between the state institution and the social structure. Thus, according to Musa (2009b: 39), the elitist centralised authoritarian system gave birth to a hierarchy through which the interests of the minority are maintained, whereas disadvantaging the majority.

Hence, the dominant power-related discourse as been formulated in such a way as to confirm the superiority of the ruling elites and the relevant affiliations whose interests they safeguard. In addition, this prejudiced discourse has been intended to stereotype all non-Arabs and the Sudanese Arabs other than those coming from central and Northern Sudan as inferior and primitive and thereby denying access to power even in regions they dominate (cf. Ezza and Libis 2009: 3). Thus, this paper hypothesises that the prejudiced, power-related discourses derive from racial, regional and religious preconceptions about the 'other', which has been institutionalised and exploited by the ruling elites to achieve their political interests, i.e. eternal access to power.

(3) An Africanist Discourse: The Dialogue of the Resistance

An African discourse in social action takes the form of a resistance discourse that goes hand-in-hand with the armed struggle against the Northern ruling elites. In applying Van Dijk (1993: 249-283), principles of a critical discourse, Ezza and Libis (2009), defines this social action as a protesting dialogue by some enlightened elites from the remote corners of Sudan, advocating against the monopolization of wealth by the ruling class. A few years ago, it was taboo to express concerns of villages and dwellers of remote areas over developing their homelands and seeking equitable share with how the country should be ruled. However, with the increasing exposure in the international arena, there is an increase in the solidarity of the Sudanese over the significance of negotiating these issues. The Sudanese liberation/resistant movements have also succeeded in bringing these marginalised discourses into the national and international levels. Although, the methods used by these movements in attacking the Northern ruling elites are morally questionable, in the context of justified anger, they have instated a new discourse with a protesting tone backed by military operations, i.e. mostly guerrilla attacks.

(c) Collective Orientation: 'Uninstitutionalised Mobilization'

In addressing the issue of collective orientation in Sudan, I recalled the words of Mamdani (2009: 244-245) pertaining to collective interactions between Arab (comprising Mahariya, Mahameed, Eraigat, Etaifata, and Awlad-Rashid) and non-Arab (the Zaghawa) collectives in Darfur:

> Each side developed its own defence of the right of access to productive natural resources, and each did this in the language of rights. Settled groups with *hakura* [land rights] defended their rights as 'customary' and 'tribal', whereas those with diminished or no homeland (*dar*) rights claimed access to productive natural resources as the right of a 'citizen'. The clash between rights took the form of ethnic wars. As each side undertook to defend an exclusive right, its defence began to take on an increasingly racist tone.

The above quotation of Mamdani epitomises the challenges of collective orientation in Sudan. According to Mamdani (2009: 245), the more these collective groups saw themselves as victims with little control over their situations, the more both sides tended to slide into an 'exclusionist rhetoric' that inevitably opened them to outside influences that further racialised and inflamed the discourse. The crisis of collective orientation is a prominent factor in the Sudan conflict and has certainly contributed to its tragedy since post-independence. Although, it is evident that the emerging post-colonial Sudanese state is a multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic, and multi-religious modern state, its formation was wrongly constructed on the basis of Islamism and Arabism rather than on all-encompassing Sudanese ingredients.[11] Thus for Makris (2001: 55), 'Sudanization' or becoming a citizen, essentially meant Arabization or concomitantly Islamization.

Accordingly, Battahani (1998) argues that a major consequence of the exclusionary state was that some excluded sub-national identities,

[11] Idris (2001: 34-52) argues that the perspective of Northern Arab superiority over Southerners as been a constant theme in Sudanese politics, however, the 'Arabness' of the Northern elite is not grounded on objective fact, but on a denial of their African heritage, which is so obvious in their physical features.

occupying specific regions, began to make their political and economic demands to the state on the basis of their ethnic identity. They inevitably associated the region they occupied as being concretized as a political entity with a specific character, image, and an icon of socio-cultural belongings and identifications. In the persistent failure of the state to effectively redress the fundamental political questions and the growing political demands of the marginalised groups, there emerged political movements along ethno-political identities that later shifted from peaceful to armed struggle. This gradual shift started with the first civil war led by the Anya Anya Movement (1955-1972) in Southern Sudan. The second war led by the SPLM/A (1983-2005), was wider in scale, time, space and consequences. According to Khalid (2003), indoctrinated by the notion of 'New Sudan', the SPLM/A redefined what was historically called the 'problem of Southern Sudan' to 'the problem of Sudan'. This new ideological shift attracted the marginalised collectives on the peripheral regions beyond Southern Sudan, extending the armed struggle of the SPLM/A to the Nuba Mountains and the Southern Blue Nile in the 1980s, to the Beja in Eastern Sudan in the 1990s and with the Justice and Equity Movement (JEM) and Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) extended to Darfur in the early 2000s. Dr. John Grang d Mabior, chairman of the SPLM/A, and one of the founders of the insurgency summarized the political aims of the New Sudan as follows:

> We believe the New Sudan represents the future and the hopes and aspirations of the Sudanese people, in that the new Sudan is based on a Sudanese commonality – a social and political commonality that belongs to all of us, irrespective of race – whether we are Arab or African origins. Nations are formed as a result of the historic *movement* of peoples.... So we aspire to a new Sudanese dispensation in which all are equal, irrespective of these localisms which we inherit out of no choice of our own (as quoted in Meyer 2005: 90).

(d) Collective Action: Ideology of the National Islamic Front

As discussed earlier, the ritualization of belief has the potential to mobilise coercive persuasion, which in turn can reduce collective behaviour. It can

also potentially serve as a unifying factor, i.e. as with the Northern ruling elite around a particular ideological stance, which favoured their position as ruling elite. Hence, according to Funke and Solomon (2006: 274), it is important to analyse some of the ideas of Hassan al-Turabi, which have shaped the ideology of National Islamic Front (NIF), inspite of his split with the party in 1999.

The basic underpinning of Turabi's political ideology of an Islamic state is the metaphysical principle of *tawhid* (unity of God) and human life. Contemporary Islamic scholars have interpreted *tawhid* as being the unifying force among various aspects of human life, such as socio, religious and the political. Hence, substantiating the earlier discourse on overt versus covert religious behaviour, a unification of the political and religious implies that public (or political) and religious life cannot be separated. Hence, in this context secularism is regarded as the denial of the rightful role of religious faith and God in the governing of human affairs. Accordingly, Turabi contends that *tawhid* in the political realm means the ascendancy of Islamic law over the rulers and thus, God is considered supreme or sovereign, while the *Sharia* provides connections between God's followers and the will of God (as quoted in Morrison 2001: 153-154). However, *tawhid* inevitably influenced which kinds of political forms Turabi considered acceptable. Turabi rejected the concept of nationalism on the basis that allegiance is to be owed to God and not the state; nonetheless he accepted the notion of the state as a territorial national entity (cf. Morrison 2001: 154). According to Ibrahim ((1999: 205), Turabi affirms that the modern state has become so enmeshed in society that it has taken over certain responsibilities that once belonged to the family, i.e. transmitting of culture and education to the younger generation. The counter argument is that these facets of society are too important to be left to secularists, and hence the reclaiming of the state by Islamic fundamentalists is an imperative social action.

Turabi's basic ideological stance also advocates for the return to Islam's fundamental texts. However, Turabi does not believe that it is useful to adhere to a literal interpretation of the text as they may be ambiguous. Instead he calls for a new interpretive method which encompasses *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) and *tajdid* (renewal or revival), which implies new thinking and fresh expression of religious rules and principles, appropriate to the new situation (cf. Morrison 2001: 155). In his political ideological stance,

Turabi makes use of two important concepts, i.e. *shura* (which he defines as the selection of a consultation with the government) and *ijima* (consensus). Funke and Solomon (2006: 279) argue that for Turabi, the basic difference between democracy and *shura* is the locus of sovereignty. In democracy, sovereignty lies with the population of a country, whereas if one adheres to *tawhid*, the sovereignty lies with God. Hence, there is no conflict between *shura* and *sharia*, as the latter represents the convictions of the people and, therefore, their direct will. *Shura* is then considered an indication of the equality of people before God and provides the basis for or rather the requirement of respect for their political freedom; hence, Turabi sees the minority/majority character of western democracy as undesirable.

Conclusion

The aim and objective of this research paper was to develop an African born theory of rhetoric in social action. In response, I have postulated an Harambee theory (pulling together) of rhetoric, which is based on three social stages, i.e. collective context, collective orientation and collective action. To substantiate an African discourse in social action, I selectively analysed various discourses in the case study of Sudan. The crucial question in Sudan is why peace initiatives haven't been able to prevent the continuation to the civil war. This research paper concludes that in the context of Sudan, a sound conflict prevention process is one which (1) establishes trust and confidence between the collective groups and creates a genuine commitment to peace, (2) creates joint ownership between the collective groups, (3) establishes mechanisms to create parity and confidence between the collectives, and (4) facilitates discussion with a view to reaching a compromise solution on national identity framework. Against this background, I offer the following African theory of rhetoric in social action, which has the potential to also critique group mobilization for social transformation in social action.

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