

## Research Article

# Understanding State Formation: The Role of Political Parties in South Sudanese State-crafting and Failure

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## ARTICLE INFO

## ABSTRACT



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State crafting, failure and, collapse is an interesting area of social science research, which has been remotely examined by comparative political scientists. The paper comprehensively examines the crafting and failure of South Sudanese state. It conceptualizes state, state-crafting, state failure and collapse. It surveys the role of political parties in understanding state-crafting and failure in South Sudan. Empirically, the paper argues that South Sudanese political parties particularly, Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) have contributed in South Sudanese failure than crafting and prosperity. This is demonstrated through ethnicization of politics and politicization of ethnicity and through ethnic divisions. Using empirical literature, the paper discusses state crafting, failure and dissects the role of political parties in which SPLM has a big hand in the state failure of South Sudan.

In its methodology, the paper deploys primary and secondary sources in tapping the understanding of the role of South Sudanese political parties in state-crafting and failure. Primary data include the use of questionnaires and interviews in comprehending state formation and in particular, the role played by South Sudanese political parties in nascent state-crafting and failure. Secondary sources include the use of literature review in understanding political parties and their role in South Sudanese state failure. The study uses a sample size of 200 respondents with sample types of persuasives and cluster sampling combined. The study also combines case study and process tracing methods to contextualize and validate causal chains and empirical casual processes of South Sudan state formation and role of political parties in state-crafting and failure. The results of the study indicate that SPLM as a main ruling party has a huge contribution in South Sudanese state failure. While other 28 registered political parties are ethnic-based given that because they don't have national programmes across South Sudan, their contribution to South Sudanese state failure cannot be equated with SPLM. These 28 parties have their presence in the bomas, payams and counties only and have endeavored to promote ethnic divisions and violence in South Sudan. Finally, the paper draws conclusions on the need for civic role of political parties in state-crafting and democratization of South Sudan. The paper recommends future research on the role of SPLM party in reversing state failure and rescuing South Sudan from collapse.

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## 1. Introduction


State-crafting, failure and collapse has been a topical concept for the modern political scientists who have toiled to assess the emerged states' performance in offering political, social and economic liberties to their citizens and to ensure stability in regional and international system. Many States emerged after the World War II and Cold War periods to find their debuts. Some of these States crafted and consolidated themselves to prosperity while some wasted institutional opportunities for effective crafting, consolidation and became fail and collapse states (Migdal, 1998). Upon independence, South Sudan State delved into a lot of malpractices such as corruption, ethnic politics, power struggle, resources usurp and conflicts. These issues are viewed to have been caused by failure of political parties in

advancing pluralism thus allowing a pocket of political elites to fail the nascent state.

Given this staring decline in the State building, the Washington based Fund for Peace Research Think-tank in 2013 on Failed States Index (FSI) categorized South Sudan as 4th failed state and its 2014 report on fragile States ranked South Sudan as the most fragile State in the world based on social and economic indicators such as demographic pressures, group grievance, uneven economic development, refugees and IDPs, brain drain and human flight and poverty & economic decline (Rotberg, 2015). On the other hand, South Sudan State failure was also gauged on political and military indicators such as state legitimacy, inadequate role of political parties, human rights and rule of law, factionalized elites, public services, security apparatus and external intervention, replacing the long-collapsed state of

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Somalia in 2014 fragility index report ([Fragility Index Report, 2014](#)). This state of affairs requires critical study to understand South Sudan's state crafting, failure and collapse from political parties' point of view

The paper is laid out as follows: first, it introduces the study. Secondly, it reviews the literature, conceptualizes state and state-crafting, state failure and collapse. In understanding this, the paper argues state collapse processes: from fragility to failure. The paper examines political parties in state failure. In properly explaining this, the paper reviews secretive ethnic politics and emergence of briefcase parties who don't have national agenda. Thirdly, the paper discusses the methodology of the study. Fourthly, the study presents the results of the study and discusses the findings. Fifthly, the paper draws conclusions and six, the paper recommends further research.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 *Laying the foundation: conceptualizing state and state-crafting*

State is an ancient human institution dating back to some 6,000 years AD to the first agrarian societies in Mesopotamia. The origin of the modern state may be traced to the ancient Greek polis or nation-state during the medieval politics (Vincent, 1987). Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli eulogized the state due to its ability to meet most of the needs of the citizens especially the ability to practice politics (Kioi, 2012). Moreover, other modern philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau gave state a new dimension when they emphasized the need for necessity of the citizens to enter into a social contract whereby, they could willingly surrender the power to rule themselves to a governing authority in the name of government. The legalistic Montevideo views the state as a person of international law comprises a permanent population, defined geographical territory; government and capacity into enter in relations with other states (Campbell and Metanock, 2024).

However, Max Weber does not view the state in terms of physical structures. He defines a state as "a human community that successfully claims for itself the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory and with determined boundaries –the notion of territory being one of its characteristic features" (Draghics, 1989). Leaning on Max Weber, Joel Migdal defines the state ideally as "an organization, compose of numerous agencies led and coordinate by the state's leadership (executive authority) that has the ability or authority to make and implement the binding rules for all the people as well as the parameters of rulemaking for other social organizations in a particular territory, using force if necessary to have its way" (Migdal, 1998).

Appreciating Weber and Migdal and welcoming other scholarly perspectives, Francis Fukuyama argues that states have wide variety functions, for good and ill (Fukuyama, 2004). He further argues that the scope of state functions ranges from minimal, intermediate and activist. Minimal functions of state according to Fukuyama are based on provision of pure public goods, defense, law and order, property rights, macroeconomic management, public health, improving equity and protecting the poor (Ibid). Intermediate functions of state include addressing externalities, education, environment, regulating monopoly; overcoming imperfect education, economic, financial regulation and social insurance. Besides, the activist functions of state include industrial policy and wealth redistribution.

Apart from Weber, Migdal and Fukuyama definitions of the state, other scholars have also made great attempts. For instance, Robert Rotberg (2004) argues that the state's prime function is to

provide the political good of security so as to prevent cross border invasions, infiltration, and loss of territory as follows:

- To eliminate domestic threats to or attacks upon the national order and social structure;
- To prevent crime and any related dangers to domestic human security; and
- To enable citizens to resolve their differences with the state and with their fellow inhabitants without recourse to arms or other forms of physical coercion (Rotberg, 2004).

To discharge the above-named functions, the state should have been well built and crafted. State crafting therefore refers state building (Riak, 2021). It is a purposive action to develop the capacity, institutions and legitimacy of the state in relation to an effective political process for negotiating the mutual demands between the state and societal groups (OECD, 2009). Jok Madut, in his special report 'Diversity, Unity, and Nation Building in South Sudan' published by United States Institute of Peace regards state building as focusing on economic development, upgrading the capacity of human resources, establishing an effective security apparatus, being responsible for fiscal policy, efficient service delivery and providing general infrastructure (Madut, 2011). It entails policies aimed at encouraging the growth of private sector, including foreign investment. Francis Fukuyama further defines state-crafting as the creation of new government institutions and the strengthening of the existing ones (Fukuyama, 2004). In other words, Fukuyama sees the state-crafting as an institution process that enhances institutional building, transition and consolidation.

Overall state-crafting is fundamentally viewed as a theoretical edifice defined by its endogenous and exogenous conceptions. The endogenous paradigm suggests that the state-crafting (building) is a national process driven by state-society relations (D'Agoot, 2018). On the other hand, the exogenous paradigm is characteristically interventionist and posits that the activity in one country relates to another (Ibid).

Hence, discerning various scholars' definitions of state crafting as exhibited above, Francis Fukuyama's definition of state crafting stand tall and applicable for this paper. This is because Fukuyama views state crafting structurally and not crude and static process.

### 2.2 *Understanding state failure and collapse*

The rise and fall of nation-states are not new, but in a modern era when national states constitute the building blocks of world order, the violent disintegration and palpable weakness of selected African, Asian, Oceanic, and Latin American states threaten the very foundation of that system (Rotberg, 2015). International organizations and big powers consequently find themselves sucked disconcertingly into a maelstrom of anomic internal conflict and messy humanitarian relief. Desirable international norms such as stability and predictability become difficult to achieve when so many of the globe's newer nation-states waver precariously between weakness and failure, with some truly failing, and a few even collapsing (Riak, 2021).

### 2.3 *Processes of state collapse: from fragility to failure*

Before state fails, state moves from weak to fragility. A state that is unable to fulfill its social contract by providing protection and basic services for its citizens can be regarded as 'fragile' (Perera, 2015). Such states are vulnerable to conflicts, humanitarian crises and environmental shocks. A useful starting point is the OECD's description of fragile state as one that has weak capacity to carry out basic functions of governing a population and its territory, and lacks the ability to develop mutually constructive and reinforcing relations with society. As a

consequence, trust and mutual obligations between the state and its citizens become weak (OECD, 2010). Often the label of 'fragile state' is used interchangeably with terms such as 'weak state', 'failed state' and 'collapsed state', with little attention paid to the subtle differences implied by each term. However, fragile states are not necessarily collapsed states. There is a great difference. While the former is weak, failed and unable to provide public goods including security for all, the later have lost central authority, chaotic, lawlessness and violent conflict (Riak, 2021).

The close link between state fragility and conflict has resulted in the concept being widely used to align development objectives with donor interests. States without the capacity or legitimacy to manage their own affairs have increasingly been framed as potential sanctuaries for global terrorism and transnational crime. Increasing the capacity of fragile states has been seen as an activity that safeguards western 'non-fragile' states from the negative effects of state fragility as much as it protects the citizens of fragile states (Perera, 2015). Consequently, there is a tendency when donors talk of fragile or failed states to impose 'a bias towards western liberal statehood and market economy' and as such, 'the discourse on failed, failing and fragile states centres on state-building as the main remedy for establishing or restoring political and social order' (Risse, 2011). Many OECD states prioritize funding for so-called 'fragile states', which may reflect the causal link between the emergence of the fragile states discourse and the securitization of development.

While donors have used the concept of state fragility to justify particular patterns of development spending and programming, some actors (especially in developing countries) have rejected the term. They argue that the 'fragile' label creates a self-fulfilling prophecy, as it deters the external investment that developing countries often seek when attempting to foster sustainable development (OECD, 2012). State fragility has also been tied very closely to the idea of state failure, as exemplified by the Fund for Peace's decision in 2014 to change the name of its annual failed states Index to the Fragile States Index (Donnelly, 2023). While the methodology of the index remains the same, the purpose of the name change is to move away from a discourse that shames governments, towards one that supports governments to improve conditions that might lead to violent conflict (Cicek and Gerim, 2024). It recognizes that 'all states, to different degrees, face conditions that threaten the livelihoods of their citizens'.

The state fragility discourse has been used to reify as fact the assumption that state failure is the cause of conflict, and that state-crafting is the natural solution to preventing and/or overcoming such conflict. However, in many developing countries non-state solutions promoting peace and development have proven effective (Grimm et al, 2014).

Some research suggests that, rather than focusing on state fragility, it is analytically more useful to focus on the limits of statehood, and understand state power as part of a wider network of governance mechanisms. For example, statehood can be limited territorially (state weakness in certain parts of a country); sectorally (weakness in particular policy areas); socially (weakness in the eyes of parts of the population); and temporally (temporary weakness) (Risse, 2011). The concept of limited statehood acknowledges that, despite reduced formal state capacity, even the most fragile of states rarely remain ungoverned. The focus on state fragility obscures the myriad ways in which societies organize themselves even in the absence of formal state structures.

Introduced by Helmen & Ratner (1993) and Zartman (1995), the concepts of state failure and state collapse have been victims of conceptual ambiguity of our times as these terms were used interchangeably (Zartman, 1995). Tetzlaff and Rotberg undertook initial attempts at conceptual clarity via distinction between the

two concepts. Tetzlaff conceives state failure as a long-term and multidimensional process whereby state collapse is the distinctive endpoint of this process (Ajude, 2007). He identified two dimensions to state failure: the loss of legitimacy which is the gradual attenuation of the authority of the state due to refusal of dissatisfied citizens to obey the state on the grounds of their perceptions that the state is incapable or repressive or both; and loss of efficiency-the increasing malfunctioning of the institutions of the state (which may be due to lack of resources or debt burden) which makes the government irrelevant to the citizens.

Rotberg's observation is similar to that of Tetzlaff and sees state collapse as the endpoint of a process of institutional and functional decay, which commences with state vulnerability and progresses through stages of weakness, failing and failure before reaching the stage of collapse. A collapsed state exhibits a vacuum of authority; it is a mere geographical expression; a black hole into which failed polity loss its central authority. William Zartman reinforces this view and considers state collapse from the perspective of the inability of state to fulfill the functions of state, which he summarizes as the sovereign authority, decision-making institution, and security guarantee for a populated territory (Zartman, 1995). Zartman came to a similar conception to Rotberg's in which he argues state collapse as "a situation whereby the structures, authority (legitimate power), laws and political order have fallen apart and must be reconstructed in some form, new or old" (Ajude, 2007).

There is no self-sufficient state. There is always a degree of inter-dependency among states in their relations. States do have their rightful positions on the continuum to satisfy the claims their citizens make against them (Garang, 2015). The state does this within the confine of its interests and values. Primarily, the state is responsible for provision of political goods especially the security of its citizens from all fears and fears of threats (Riak, 2021). Inability to do this makes the state a failure. Hence nation-states fail when they are consumed by internal violence and cease delivering positive political goods to their inhabitants (Rotberg, 2015). Their government loses credibility, and continuing nature of the particular nation-state itself becomes questionable and illegitimate in the hearts and minds of its citizens. Indeed, a failed state is one that is unable to perform its duties on vicious several levels: when violence cascades into an all-out internal war, when standards of living massively deteriorate, when the infrastructure of ordinary life decays, and when the greed of rulers overwhelms their responsibilities to better their people and their surroundings (Rosberg, 2007).

#### 2.4 South Sudanese state failure

South Sudan typically fulfils the characteristics of a failed State. Since its inception, the country was borne as a malformed polity because of the very fragile and dysfunctional nature of the rump state-Sudan (D'Agoot, 2018). Since its proclamation of her independence on July 9, 2011, the legion of its doubters prophesied, globe's first pre-failed state was being ushered into existence. This prophecy would become true. When the political contradictions within SPLM escalated and ballooned into skirmishes on December 15, 2013, the country was sent on a free-fall making her unable to rise up amongst peaceful nation-states in the world. The nascent state is consumed by inter-ethnic violent conflicts, multi-rebellions against the government, national army dissatisfaction that has adversely affected its ranks and files, dissident voices of civilians covertly or overtly expressed and of which the government is unable to control. Broadly, however, a country's fragility is closely associated with its state capacity to manage conflict; make and implement public policy; and deliver essential services and its systemic resilience in maintain system

coherence; societal cohesion; responding effectively to challenges and crises; and sustaining progressive development and quality of life (McKinney, 2024).

To unpack the complexities of what failed states entailed, Brennan Kraxberger (2012) characterizes failed states into two main categories of effectiveness and legitimacy of political institutions. By “effectiveness”, Kraxberger refers to the degree to which governments fulfill minimal expectations for delivering public goods and services, and the legitimacy addresses the amount of respect that citizens of a state have for state institutions (Kraxberger, 2012). Fulfillment of minimal expectations and legitimacy lies on physical security, which is a core problem for fragile states as argues by Rotberg, 2004. Failed states are extremely violent places, though violence can come in different forms. Rebels or warlords may control large chunks of territory or engage in fighting with government forces and on the other hand, the government security personnel may prey upon ordinary citizens, whether due to greed, organized repression or poor training.

Besides, failed states do not have functioning social services. Kraxberger argues that these states provide very little in the field of education...for instance educational systems suffer from quantitative and qualitative deficiencies (Kraxberger, 2012). Staff are not paid, and routinely absent from their works; school buildings are in varying condition of neglect or are often abandoned; school fees serve as an accessibility barrier and maybe squandered once collected and those students who do attend school often receive only a rudimentary primary education with few learning resources (Panjaitan and Tampubolon, 2024). South Sudan educational system is facing institutional and infrastructural challenges with little motivation to the teachers and lecturers.

Perturbing health outcomes is another common reality of failed states. Though data can be spotty, health indicators reveal much about the ineffectiveness of dysfunctional states; Adult life expectancy, maternal mortality, and under-five mortality rates are three indicators that can paint a grim picture. Failed states typically have far too few physicians, very limited access to clinics and hospitals in rural areas, and an uneven quality of care in cities (Riak, 2021). South Sudan poor health care speaks volumes of the reality of failed system that needs rebooting. Hence, limited health access is a phenomenon in South Sudan quality and accessible health sojourn.

What is more, poor transportation and road linkages characterize many failed states. Movement of people and goods into failed States is typically quite difficult given that roads may be all but impassable for whole seasons. While many roads' initiatives such as Juba-Bor-Renk road, Juba-Terekeka-Rumbek-Tonj Road and others have been actualized into asphaltic constructions, other existing tarmacked roads such as 120 km<sup>2</sup> of road from Nimule border to Juba is tarmacked with generous funding from USAID, has already eroded and worn out. Moreover, the inter-states roads including capital Juba are either non-existence or have been poorly dilapidated with gravels, which is easily washed away during the rainy season and with no maintenance.

Although many residents of failed states are poorly served by public transportation system, they also often lack access to minimally effective judiciary services. When informal means of conflict resolutions are insufficient, clean and efficient courts can fairly resolve these disputes much of time and the judiciary is a linchpin in keeping criminality in check. The tradition is that South Sudan judiciary is controlled by the executive with the ubiquitous of personal rule rather than a rule of law. A huge backlog of cases is yet to be cleared from the judiciary and all the courts of law in South Sudan.

On the other hand, in failed states, direct taxation of citizens is very minimal and disorganized because people may refuse and abscond taxes to the authorities on the ground of lack of trust to the state. They regard the state as corrupt, wasteful, inefficient, repressive or unimportant to their lives, and they do not readily pay taxes. In this revelation, public officials may extract revenues from citizens, but this is mostly through the use of force. Corruption flourishes in an unimaginable rate, living standard of its citizens deteriorate considerably and human right is subjected to arbitrary abuse by security forces (Garang, 2015). Government institutions are infested with dreadful malpractices with impunity. A scam by clandestine workers of the central bank of South Sudan, which siphoned off millions of dollars into the parallel market to the detriment of the state, went unnoticed in 2013 (Akech, 2014). Gamal Amin, professor of economics at the American University in Cairo, has dubbed this phenomenon as the ‘soft state’ as he argues:

A soft state is a state that passes laws but does not enforce them. The elites can afford to ignore the law because their power protects them from it, while others pay bribes to work round it. Everything is up for sale, be it building permits for illegal construction, licenses to import illicit goods, or underhanded tax rebates and deferrals. The rules are made to be broken and to enrich those who break them, and taxes are often evaded. People clamor for positions of influence so that they may turn them to personal gain. Favors are sold or dispensed to protégés, relatives and sycophants (Amin, 2011).

Such weakness of the state encourages corruption and ultimately state failure (Chayes, 2015). However, Augustino Ting argues that clearly, ‘failure’ is a relative concept derived from ‘success’ associated with, among others, history (Ting, 2013). That means that South Sudan state failure has a strong explanation of being part of Sudan that has been categorized as successful failed state. However, Augustino Ting further disputes this assertion by arguing the events that encircled the President intimidating the peoples’ house into endorsing his speaker’s nominee, suppression of dissent within the ruling party, dismissal of elected officials on political grounds, expulsion of a UN human rights observer on whims, the killing of an innocent Kenyan teacher over a flag, the intimidation by some security agents of political commentators and journalists, and the murder of a formidable political analyst, Isaiah Abraham, surely distort the country’s image (Riak, 2021). All of this is Sudan in practice, and maintaining such an unflattering feature ultimately sustains South Sudan’s state failure in perhaps in most contexts.

To be sure, after its secession, the structures as well as maladministration practices make the state of South Sudan a purely imported system from Sudan. Negligence of public goods and services, intimidation and discriminating policies still pervade the country. Self-contradictions among the ruling elites and sizeable portion of citizens create a legitimacy gap in the country (Coleman and Rosberg, 2023). In the event where the external and international legitimacy gap is on rise, civil unrest and strife are inevitable. Furthermore, when state institutions are ill-prepared or weak enough to withstand inter-conflict the state easily descends into a debacle as South Sudan has been experiencing since December 15th 2013. Power wrangling among ruling elites presents an impression that the state lacks any system, which can streamline the power (Garang, 2015). However, David Marko Ference argues that South Sudan is not a failed state since it makes the best passports in the region through modern biometric (Ference, 2016).

## 2.5 Understanding political parties in a polity

Political parties are central to representative democracy and to the process of democratization in nation-state crafting and making of the statehood. They connect society and the state, aggregate and represent its interests, and recruit political leaders (Burnell, 2004). They disseminate political information, socialize citizens into democratic politics and manage conflicts.

However, in societies that have often experienced violent conflict, political parties can offer a forum for social and political integration, a tool that enhance nation and state crafting (Jatto and Suberu, 2024). Once done well, the political parties become the vehicle for institutional engineering and democratization of a polity. Nevertheless, the relations among the parties don't display a responsible attitude towards the practice of political competition (Ross, 2024).

Viewed as a state-crafting therapy, an institutionalized party system in a society can hold elected politician accountable for their performance in office and their role as the people's representatives. The public standing of the political parties and of

politicians themselves benefits when the parties and the party systems are in good political health (Schmidtke, 2024). Strategies to establish and consolidate democracy that ignore the central role of parties cannot hope to be successful, no matter how much attention they pay to other vital matters such as building civil society and the institutions of good governance. In essence, the essential role of political parties in a polity cannot be underrated.

## 2.6 Role of political parties in state-crafting and failure

Political parties are institutional vehicles for capturing state power as well as strong avenue for political programmes of the polity. Political parties serve as drivers of both state crafting and failure. A political party built on ideological orientation rather than ethnic lens serves as a promoter of state-crafting and consolidation (Gherghina and Jacquet, 2023). However, a political party established on ethnic overtures and personified rationality tends to enhance state failure and collapse, given dearth of ideological and institutional references when discharging its activities.

**Table 1: List of Registered South Sudanese Political Parties**

S. No	Name of Party	Party's Chairperson	Date of Registration	Registration Number
1	African National Congress (ANC)	Gen. George Kongor Arop	22 <sup>nd</sup> February 2016	1
2	Sudan People's Liberation Movement-SPLM	H.E. Gen. Salva Kiir Mayardit	22 <sup>nd</sup> February 2016	2
3	United South Sudan African Party-USSAP	Ustaz. Joseph Ukel Abango	22 <sup>nd</sup> February 2016	3
4	United Democratic Salvation Front-Mainstream-UDSF-M	Hon. Francis Ben Ataba	22 <sup>nd</sup> February 2016	4
5	National Liberation Party-NLP	Hon. Nkrumah W. Kelueljang	22 <sup>nd</sup> February 2016	5
6	National Congress Party-NCP	Hon. Agnes Poni Lokudu	23 <sup>rd</sup> February 2016	6
7	Democratic Change Party-DCP	Hon. Onyoti Adigo Nyikwec	11 <sup>th</sup> April 2016	7
8	South Sudan Democratic Front (SSDF)	Hon. Dr. Martin Elia Lomuro	11 <sup>th</sup> April 2016	8
9	National United Democratic Front-NUDF	Hon. Kornelio Kon Ngu	11 <sup>th</sup> April 2016	9
10	United South Sudan Party-USSP	Hon. Clement Juma Mbugoniwia	11 <sup>th</sup> April 2016	10
11	South Sudan Democratic Alliance-SSDA	Hon. Paskalina Philip Waden	11 <sup>th</sup> April 2016	11
12	Sudan African National Union (SANU)	Hon. Theresa Cirisio Iro	13 <sup>th</sup> June 2016	12
13	United Democratic Salvation Front-UDSF	Eng. Joseph Malual Dong	18 <sup>th</sup> August 2016	13
14	National Democratic Party-NDP	Hon. James Aniceto	23 <sup>rd</sup> September 2016	14
15	United Democratic Party-UDP	Hon. Tong Lual Ayat	8 <sup>th</sup> July 2024	15
16	Federal Democratic Party	Galdong Nyanyek Bkhok	8 <sup>th</sup> July 2024	16
17	United Democratic Front-UDF	Sabastian Ochan/Bona Deng	8 <sup>th</sup> July 2024	17
18	Communist Party of South Africa	Joseph Wol Modesto	8 <sup>th</sup> July 2024	18
19	Democratic Unionist Party-DUP	Albino John Lako	8 <sup>th</sup> July 2024	19
20	South Sudan African Union (SSANU)	Hon. Philip Palet	8 <sup>th</sup> July 2024	20
21	Generation Party-GP	Looth Math Tang	8 <sup>th</sup> July 2024	21
22	South Sudan National Party (SSNP)	Gen. (Rtd). James Loro (Decease)	8 <sup>th</sup> July 2024	22
23	National Democratic Front (NDF)	Stephen Goro	8 <sup>th</sup> July 2024	23
24	Republican Party of South Sudan	Anthony Agiem	8 <sup>th</sup> July 2024	24
25	Popular Congress Party	Musa Makur	8 <sup>th</sup> July 2024	25
26	South Sudan Generation Party	Jeremiah Mayen	8 <sup>th</sup> July 2024	26
27	Akut Bam Party	Makuc Akol	8 <sup>th</sup> July 2024	27
28	South Sudan National Labour Party	James Andrea Anyak	8 <sup>th</sup> July 2024	28
29	National Justice Movement Party	Matter Mayinde Risk	8 <sup>th</sup> July 2024	29

**Source:** Political Parties Council Report, 2024. Juba

Although South Sudan has over 30 political parties, only 29 have registered. The role of these political parties in enhancing state crafting is very remote. 28 of these parties, except SPLM are briefcase in nature and run by families' associates thus quite remote in programmes and outreach. Thus, South Sudanese

political parties have failed the state of South Sudan on various wave-lenses, buttressed by lack of political culture and programmes. This is the reason why there is an extreme division on fundamental issues such as federalism, integration and direction of South Sudan as a functioning state. There is a rise in

the hypocritical culture where political parties and their leaderships are raising conflicting elucidations of the solutions to issues of the constitution making including federalism, integration issues based on their political gains and advantages (Thapa, 2008).

While SPLM has so far defined its political culture on participation of South Sudanese spectrum in the governance, this has not been seen in practice. Instead, much is linked to the lack of internal democratic reforms that always escalated to power struggles and political violence. The SPLM failure to act as a strong and effective ruling party that followed the transformation path it had laid out in the run-up to the 2005 transition, caused South Sudan's leadership to adopt important yet insufficient stop gap measures towards political accommodation and governance strategies (Rogue, 2014). The political accommodation not only compromised accountability but it also compromised justice in the guerrilla party. This has prompted Mahmood Mamdani to caution laxity on impunity and argued a need for a bid of power that encouraged accountability and justice within the party and the State to enhance good governance and state-crafting (Mamdani, 2014). But gimmicks of politics in the party have overtaken the accountability programme. This has so far resulted in a diluted political landscape defined by profiteering and power interests instead of a defined political programme, which could have tempered the negative aspects of unaccountable alliances (Rogue, 2014). The result of which has been political conflicts and violence negating State-crafting.

In the SPLM, the operational aspects of distinguishing between the state and the party, and the governance sequencing of who should lead who, have been blurred. Policy has been crafted at the government as opposed to the party level, and the driving force has been one of balancing the interests and representation of the various communities (Riak, 2021). One of such policy is the appointment criterion of the ministers and the state officers that the government lobbyists and rents-seekers continued to mislead the chairman of the SPLM (President Kiir) who should at all times consult the party top leadership for proposals, endorsements and major decisions. The second such policy was the nomination of party flag bearers for the elections in 2010. Indeed, the 2010 general elections testified to this state of affairs whereby the deficit of party internal control and democracy was exposed; SPLM party bearers were hand-picked by the top party leadership without the consultation of National Liberation Council (NLC) and Political Bureau (PB) leading to various rebellions of George Athor Deng, Gatluak Deng Gai and David Yau Yau, which South Sudan has heavily paid for. Thus, communal ethnic view of politics becomes the order of affairs in state formation and failure with centripetal interests ensued.

### 2.7 Conceptualizing ethnic parties and ethnic politics in South Sudan

The term ethnicity is derived from Greek word *ethnos* meaning race, or group of people with common racial features and common cultural peculiarities. Donald Rothchild (1997) refers to ethnicity as a subjective perception of common origins, historical, memories, ties and aspirations (Rothchild, 1997). Ethnicity is an extension of kinship based on the shared belief on common ancestry, regardless of whether or not a genuine blood relationship exists (Ndulo and Grieco, 2010). Ethnicity is a presumed identity that contains the potential for group formation but does not single out the group (Brubaker, 2004). Ethnic trust may actually find itself at odds with other forms of political identity such as class or professional affiliation. In many societies, individuals have more than one identity at any given time. Ethnicity belongs to the category of collective markers, which include nation, class,

profession, political ideology, party among others (Ndulo and Grieco, 2010). African ethnic groups are understood in an external sense as the collective actors of competitive politics, in what has been termed as political tribalism, but also as the 'internal discursive political arena, through which ethnic identities have emerged out of multiple, selective imagining of 'tradition', culture and identity from European as well as African sources', what has been termed moral ethnicity (Berman, 2006). Probably the most common political science explanation for ethnic conflict is that past discrimination and oppression lead to violence; if that discrimination took place along ethnic lines (or lines that can be perceived or construed as being ethnic), the conflict will be ethnic (Gurr, 1993). An ethnic conflict, in the context of this paper, is an incompatibility of goals in relation to political, economic, social, cultural or territorial issues between two or more ethnic communities (Brown, 2001). Such incompatibilities may arise as ethnic groups seek to serve their political, economic and social interests. Conflict arises when competition with other groups trying to achieve the same objectives disagree (Tarimo and Manwelo, 2009).

South Sudan is made up of mosaic of over 64 ethnic groups speaking different languages and with distinctive cultures. The discredited Sudan Fifth Population and Household Census put Dinka ethnic group at 3.2. Million people followed by Nuer at 1.6 million, the Azande ethnic group and others follow (Sudan Population Census Report, 2009). South Sudanese government rejected the census on account that it did not adequately cover the South Sudanese ethnic groups. Politics and state-crafting has been played within the manoeuvres of ethnic yardsticks. The majority of the ethnic group is, the major stake in political discourse including political positions and political parties.

### 2.8 Reality overlooked: ethnicization of politics and politicization of ethnicity in South Sudan

Ethnic-grounded political parties have harmed South Sudan state-crafting and consolidation. Political parties' activities have always been viewed on ethnic lenses rather than the ideological consideration. This state of affairs has led to ethnicization of politics and politicization of ethnicities affecting the state-society relations (Nyaba, 2011). This politicization has occurred at two levels, the military and local administration. Although the military is beyond the scope of this paper, it is important to mention the extent of militarization of ethnicities given the compatibility of SPLM and military wing Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). The army is in reality a bunch of localized militias, each led by an ethnic coterie of generals. This actually made the army to be a coalition of ethnic militia outfit with loyalties attached to an ethnic commander. Most of these militias are drawn from communal youth vigilante groups who are traditional cattle and land defenders, hunters and gatherers. This includes Gelweng (Cattle protectors) of Dinka, White Army of Nuer (Jiech Mabor), Akwelek of Chollo (land defenders), Monyimiji of Otuho (hunters), Maban Defense Forces (gatherers), amongst others (Chol, 2006). This state of affairs has ballooned the SPLA to about 3000,000 persons with ghost and fictitious names to the extent that the army lacks common doctrine and has become a traditional ethnic warrior company (Dan, 2016). Although the SPLA is large in number, the members lack common basic qualifications and modern trainings to pass the test of a national army than an ethnic outfit force. This has born a military ethnicity in post-independent South Sudan, causing South Sudan wobbling.

To be certain, the conundrum is the structure of access to state resources with a political aristocracy at its top and from the set of underlying norms of accountability and redistribution of military

(Ndulo and Grieco, 2010). This raises the question of social hierarchy as Bruce Berman (1998) stresses, in the post-independent period the dominant discourses of ethnicity have indeed come from 'those groups who gained the most from independence... and the educated elites who interpreted traditions to justify their gains and maintain control over networks of patronage that provided access for others to the resources of modernity' (Bremman, 1998). Mwangi Kimenyi (1997) contends that whereas in pre-colonial Africa, tribes used to make associations on a voluntary principle, post-colonial African states are an association of tribes that have been forced to live together under a unitary government, producing disastrous effects. His insightful observation on that matter is worth quoting at length:

The elimination of any form of local autonomy and its replacement by highly centralized unitary government has created a situation where ethnic competition for resources and power dominates the political landscape. Not only is the decision-making process now far removed from the people, but also the leadership has the power to make inter-ethnic transfers. The fact that a lot of resources in centralized states are channeled through the public sector has shifted the scope of ethnic interaction from market exchange and cooperation to competition in political markets. As a result, political office (regardless of how it has been attained) has become extremely valuable and cut-throat affair (Kimenyi, 1997).

Indeed, local government policy instituted by the new South Sudan ruling party SPLM made ethnic identity the basis of creating local government units, and thus of access to customary land for peasants and employment for the urban population (Mamdani, 2014). In localities where populations are ethnically mixed, ethnic identity on the basis of rights to land and employment is a sure recipe for breeding ethnic antagonism. To be sure, the outcome has been ethnic divisions and tensions that have been mismanaged, often leading to sporadic political violence and conflicts.

### 2.9 Revealing the epicentre of political violence and conflicts: ethnic divisions

Ethnic divisions, according to empirical democratic theory, and common-sense understandings of politics, threaten the survival of democratic institutions. One of the principal mechanisms linking the politicization of ethnic divisions with the destabilization of democracy is the so-called outbidding effect (Chandra, 2005). According to theory of ethnic outbidding, the politicization of ethnic divisions inevitably gives rise to one or more ethnic parties (Ibid). The emergence of even a single ethnic party, in turn, "infects" the political system, leading to a spiral of extreme bids that destroys competitive politics altogether. This is relevant to the splits in the SPLM leading to SPLM DC dominated by the Chollo, with 99%, SPLM in Opposition by Nuer with 85% and SPLM in the Government by the Dinka with 72%. SPLM faction led by the SPLM Former Political Detainees (FPD) has a fair representation of the ethnic diversity of South Sudan with majority of all South Sudanese ethnic groups represented. Other parties such as United Democratic Forum (UDF), South Sudan Democratic Forum (SSDF), United Salvation African Party (USAP), African National Congress (ANC), Sudan African National Union (SANU), National Congress Party (NCP), Communist Party and et cetera are run by a coterie of ethnic outfits that manifest the dominant of an ethnic group. However, this dominance cause mistrusts and suspicions in the discharges of parties' affairs, Aquiline Tarimo and Paulin Manwelo reinforce this argument:

Ethnic composition within the society matters insofar as the domination of one ethnic group over others raises mistrust that could be transferred to other dimensions of social life and institutions. Ethnic identity becomes the source of conflict when the self-centered leaders use it as a means to gain political power. Unless a political culture rooted in democratic practice is established, parties' affairs are likely to exacerbate ethnocentrism, disorder and violence (Tarimo and Manwelo, 2007).

Nonetheless, ethnicity itself does not constitute a problem. It is the implications of multiplicity/diversity for shaping and sharing of power, national wealth, public services and opportunities for economic wellbeing that give ethnicity the potential to generate conflicts (Nyaba, 2011). Put simply, it is the manipulation of ethnic diversity for parochial political ends, usually by the political elite, that turns ethnicity into a volatile admixture (Prah, 2006).

With deeply ethnicized politics, institutions become personal and tribal fiefdoms run by powerful people who undermine the broader social progress (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2012). This is what Kanchan Chandra argues as politics established and run on 'thin' rationality (Chandra, 2007). So the ethnicization of politics and politicization of ethnicities of South Sudan political parties, particularly, SPLM is one of the factors that led to the political violence and conflicts during 15<sup>th</sup> December 2013. The cacophony competing tunes of Nuer White Armies and Dinka Gelweng of communal militias explain the gravity of ethnic role in politics. But this conjecture is not new as Peter Adwok Nyaba argues:

Historically, the ethnicization of politics in South Sudan was first undertaken as a matter of policy by the Arab-dominated northern political elite to hook its people to their model of Sudan defined by Islam and Arab culture. In this model, ethnic communities were pitted against one another to prevent unity and solidarity against their mutual oppression and exploitation. However, it could also be confidently asserted that ethnicity, a political category became a factor of state building and political engineering in Southern Sudan during Southern Regional Government (1972-1983). The *Kokora* (re-division) was its anticlimax when the political elites from Equatoria turned its back against colleagues hailing from Upper Nile and Bahr el Ghazal regions (Nyaba, 2011).

It can be argued that ethnic suspicion has contaminated South Sudan politics to the extent that government constitutional slots and trivial jobs have been allocated to the people on ethnic relations rather than competence. Mwangi Kimenyi (2006) analyzes the inter-relationships among ethnicity, governance and the provision of public goods (Kimenyi, 2006). He focuses on the behavior of ethnic groups and specifically on their impacts on the provision of public goods. Kimenyi contends:

An explanation of why ethnicity may influence collective action, which reduces co-operative action, is that ethnic groups behave much like special interest groups. The interest group theory of government as applied to ethnic groups assumes that ethnic groups seek to maximize their welfare of their members at the expense of others. Like other interest groups such as Labour unions or producer groups, ethnic groups necessarily adopt strategies that give them advantage in influencing policy decisions. The most efficient way for ethnic groups to influence policy is to capture the means of wealth transfer through the government. Unlike other interest groups, however, ethnic interest

groups are more durable since entry and exit into such groups is limited. Competition among permanent interest groups can be expected to be more intense and continuous than is the case with other interest groups. Such competition has implications on provision of public goods (Kimenyi, 2006).

This characterizes the current rise of ethnic and regional sentiments in South Sudan, which, represent a direct response to the government's policies and attitudes toward the excluded and marginalized ethnic groups (Idris, 2015). As the bulwark of survival or domination, many ethnic groups have formed ethnic lobbies unions such as the Jieng Council of Elders (JCE), Nuer Council of Elders (NCE), Equatoria Council of Elders (ECE), Chollo Council of Elders (CCE), among others to champion their communities' interest in politics. While some of these elders' unions are inactive, others are proactive and vocal than the government.

Fighting for its dominance and political hegemony, the Jieng Council of Elders had appeared as a parallel government decision-making body that influence the decisions of President Salva Kiir. Although its sounds like a social union, Jieng Council of Elders had often responded to any inflammatory speech by the non-Dinka against the President or the Jieng people. Among some famous responses were the call by the SPLM-IO for President Kiir to step down, a matter that would have been handled through institutional lay down of SPLM in the Government. Juxtaposition itself, the Jieng Council of Elders strongly refuted the mantra, calling President Salva Kiir their son whom they argued would not step down any time soon. Instead, they blamed Dr. Riek Machar for murdering Dinka people and for being a power greedy fellow. As if that was not enough, the Jieng Council of Elders' pronounced a warning to Equatorians to desist from supporting Dr. Riek Machar's rebellion. Bona Malwal, one of the Dinka elders and veteran politician reinforce these ethnic innuendoes:

Unfortunately, Equatoria, this rather unusual, indeed non-existing constitutional being in South Sudan, has now got onto the bandwagon of Riek Machar Teny, hoping to defeat and overthrow the Dinka that Equatoria has always hated. There is a clear Dinka hate campaign now on in South Sudan. Even the elected governors of Equatoria have sent a delegation to Ethiopia to plead for the IGAD mediators to decree a new federal arrangement for South Sudan. This is Equatoria's new way of hoping to get rid of the Dinka from Juba, the land of Equatoria which happens to be also the capital of South Sudan from which no any South Sudanese ethnic community can be excluded. This is now hate campaign, which will make it very difficult, if not impossible to find a solution to the current problem, the failed attempt to overthrow the legitimate system of South Sudan (Malwal, 2015).

Clarifying further the deep ethnic overtones on the muggiest power politics, Bona Malwal argues:

The Dinka have land and space from which to seek to survive and should not be expected to give away power to those who hate the Dinka! One gives away power to someone or those one does not think hate another one. The Dinka have been described, or indeed insulted, as a foolish majority. But even a fool recognizes death when they see it. Will the Dinka be so foolish to cede power to those they know hate the name Dinka? Can the Dinka be so foolish to offer their lives as a solution, in order to provide a second Rwanda of Africa? (Ibid).

The inter-ethnic accusations and counter accusations could not wane away, and each individual or a member of another ethnic group was either misquoted or sent a threat to another group. Fueling the ethnic divisions, the then Western Equatoria State (WES) Governor Bangasi Joseph Bakosoro and former Minister for Presidential Affairs was alleged to have argued that Dinka leaders and their community failed the country.

'Dinka leaders and their community have failed our country, South Sudan. What's wrong with you people, wherever you go, problems and havoc follow!' The former WES governor narrated (Upper Nile Report, 2021). Bakosoro believed that members of Dinka community, who are internally displaced to Western Equatoria, are the source of havoc Western Equatoria state as he allegedly argued:

"You ran from danger in your areas and only to come and cause havoc in our state (sic). You don't like peaceful coexistence of people. Your leaders need to look themselves in the eye and find out why you are not welcomed by anyone anywhere in South Sudan" Bakosoro said (Ibid).

Although the above statements were viewed as wild fabrications and disputed by the then minister of information of Western Equatoria state, members of Jieng Council of Elders condemned the statement and called on President Salva Kiir to sack the then Governor Bakosoro from Western Equatoria's leadership. But such statements if credible could have been encouraged by ethnic animosity and suspicion as the former Governor of Central Equatoria State (CES), Clement Konga previously cautioned the Equatorians to be out of December 15<sup>th</sup> 2013 conflict terming it as Nuer-Dinka war. "It is the only chance for the people of Equatoria to come together so as to bring to an end to this war between Dinka and Nuer". "Who are you going to fight? Are you going to fight with Dinka or Riek Machar?" the then CES Governor wondered..

However, Bona Malwal, in his book "*Sudan and South Sudan: From One to Two*", thinks that the wars and conflicts should squarely be blamed on Nuer Community he as stipulates:

It is the leadership of the ethnic Nuer of South Sudan who must be the first to come out to say, clearly, that it is not right for any aspiring political leader of any community of South Sudan to kill innocent defenseless citizens and expect to be rewarded with political leadership of the country. The South Sudanese expect the ethnic Nuer political leadership to tell Riek Machar Teny, even before he is judged by South Sudanese law, whether or not he is innocent of all the atrocities that have been committed in his name, that he no longer qualifies to be considered as one of the future South Sudanese political leaders to rule that country (Malwal, 2015).

Despite ethnic threats by some Dinka elders such as Bona Malwal about other ethnic groups hatred against the Dinka, it can be discerned that most ethnic-related hatred and suspicions against Dinka have been caused perhaps by the behavior of some Dinka people, particularly, the grabbing of Equatorians land, random occupation, hostility to others and the trespassing of Dinka animals to Equatorian farms, especially, in Western, Central and Eastern Equatoria states. However, the mushrooming of ethnic based unions and associations in particular during the political violence has thwarted the inter-ethnic relations.

Apart from internal shield of Jieng interest, JCE assumed protection and defence of South Sudan sovereignty from any



external influence in search for best solutions of country's political ignominy as they argue:

Given this situation, we would like to alert the world of the inherent complications that will be engendered by this planned invasion of our country. Our country is very fragile, socially, economically, and politically. The long bouts of the relentless civil wars that our people have gone through have shaken our country to the core. Any disturbance in the present setup will drastically send our country, and by extension the region, spinning dangerously into the abyss. Given the pending destruction of our country and our dignity as a people, we would like the world to know that, like any other people in the world, the South Sudanese reserve the right to defend themselves against unjust aggression anywhere and at any time. Our internal contradictions notwithstanding, the world must understand that the South Sudanese will unite in their resistance against any imposed agreement (JCE Report, 2022).

And to the face of IGAD and African Union, JCE asserts:

It should also be made known to IGAD and the African Union that South Sudan will not become a testing ground for crude and new governance theories and that such attempts will be resisted to the fullest. As for the proposed African Oversight Force, it should be clear to the continental body that such a force could only touch ground in South Sudan only with the government's permission. Any movement of such force illegally into South Sudan would be an act of war and will be met with a tested resistance. We want peace, but it has to be home grown, not a regional or international peace that undermines the sanctity of our sovereignty. The world should know that South Sudan's sovereignty and its independence are irrevocable and that those who will try this shall meet the rage of men and women who liberated this country (Ibid).

It is worth mentioning that the JCE rhetoric warns the International Community and reveals looming ethnic resistances and insurgencies as Jieng politicians, decorated, as elders argue:

Despite the prevailing rhetoric in the international circles that this external intervention will bring the ongoing conflict to an expeditious end, the fact of the matter is that the current situation will be worsened by this external meddling. Given the tribal nature of the current insurgencies, armed and unarmed dissidents, it is conceivable that these groups will be emboldened by their newly found power, as they will definitely attack other tribes. This will encourage an arm race among various tribes, as every tribe will be trying to acquire means of self-defense. What will then invariably ensue is a complicated web of tribal warfare at a scale never before witnessed in the history of South Sudan (Ibid).

However, Peter Adwok Nyaba castigates the mission of JCE as he argues:

The argument that it is JCE, or the Jieng in general, constitutional right to form themselves and to speak out on the national issues is reactionary and obscurant driven by a dangerous combination of ignorance and arrogance. It is meant to justify the inordinate concentration of political power and wealth in Warrap and by extension the Jieng nationality. It carries the dangers of polarizing the South Sudanese and renders

explosive the political engineering process of the South Sudan state. It is toxic politics and has the potential for unmaking South Sudan as a sovereign country (Nyaba, 2018).

Hence, such ethnic lobby tone continued to portray deepening of politicization of ethnicity and ethnicization of politics leading to suspicion and failing of South Sudan state in lieu of crafting. Such sectarian initiative gradually hollowed out state sovereignty, overtook the ruling party mechanisms, deepened ethnic suspicion and soon provided channels for mobilization and organization (D'Agoot, 2018). JCE has become a divisive, bootlicking, dirty group bent on making South Sudan a Jieng Republic (Garang, 2017). However, the JCE surprised the country with their public statement "*Breaking the Silence*" by distancing themselves from the crisis bedeviling South Sudan. They wanted to "speak about the state of affairs in our country." The letter tried to explain that the council – which was formed, in their own words, to "oversee the interest of the Jieng people", has been widely misunderstood and they have are "a force for good of the country, not its destruction," (JCE Public Statement, 2021) although they have been constantly "accused of pursuing a parochial interest to establish a state that only serves the interest of the Jieng people" (Kioi, 2012). They noted that the recommendations of the National Dialogue of South Sudan required implementation in latter and spirit. One of the recommendations from the grassroots wanted President Salva Kiir and 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Riek Machar out of power so that South Sudanese elect new brand leaders. This recommendation was not received well by President Salva Kiir and 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Riek Machar. The JCE went muted. The recommendation died natural death. No any political party helped in institutionalization of national dialogue recommendations.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Research design

A research design can be thought of as the structure of research. It is the "glue" that holds all of the elements in a research project together (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). A design is used to structure the research, to show how all of the major parts of the research work together to try to address the central research questions. It is defined as the scheme, outline or plan that is used to generate answers to research problems. Donald Kombo and Delno Tromp (2006) note that a research design can be regarded as an arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance with the research purpose (Ibid). It is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted. It constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data (Kothari, 2004). According to Basilo Lukudu (2008), the important features of research design are as follows:

- I. It is a plan that specifies that the sources and types of information relevant to the research problem;
- II. It is a strategy specifying which approach will be used for gathering and analyzing the data; and
- III. It also includes the time and the cost budget since most studies are done under these two constraints (Jovenale, 2008)

The study adopted Basilo Lukudu mixed research design and incorporated it into other applicable research instruments of data collection such as primary and secondary sources.

#### 3.2 Descriptive survey

This study deployed descriptive survey, which is a method of collecting information by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals. It is used when collecting

information about peoples' attitudes, opinions, habits or any of the variety of education or social issues (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). Therefore, in this study both primary and secondary sources of data are applied to enhance the understanding of state formation and the role of political parties in state-crafting and failure. Indeed, the descriptive survey was utilized to collect the qualitative data and indeed a large amount of data at once.

Although the researcher used both primary and secondary sources data, primary source of data was mostly used than the secondary data because it was right source from the individuals given the newly engagement on the topic and for the reason that the topic has not been researched before. However, the secondary source of data has already been obtained through literature review particularly from books, periodicals, journals and newspapers, Internet websites surfing and unpublished works as demonstrated in the literature review section.

### 3.3 Research site description

The selection of a research site is essential. Its influences the usefulness of the information produced. The idea is to start with larger population and through progressive elimination, end up with the actual site where data is collected (Kombo and Tromp, 2006)

For this study, the research site description is cardinal. The study was carried in Juba, the seat of South Sudan Government as well as the Central Equatoria state Government. Moreover, the study stretched to Jonglei state capital, Bor, and Western Bahr El Ghazal state capital, Wau to discern wider understanding of the citizens on South Sudan state-crafting and failure and role of political parties. The three controlled cities for the study were chosen as research sites because they represented the then former regional cities of the Southern Sudan. Bor city represents the Greater Upper region because Malakal could not be accessed at the time of fieldwork due to militias related conflicts.

Juba city is a cosmopolitan city with the highest population; it is the seat of the Government of the Republic of South Sudan (GRSS) as well as the seat of Central Equatoria Government. It is the most advanced city of South Sudan in term of infrastructure, trade, civilization and intellectual engagement. Moreover, Juba city also was chosen on the ground that majority of Juba residents are literate in comparison to the other states and respondents in Juba were able to respond to the questions and inquiries amicably.

Besides, Bor Town, the capital of Jonglei state is a regional hub linking Greater Upper Nile with other states and Juba Metropolitan city with Dr. John Garang University of Science and Technology. Therefore, its choice of conducting survey there was done deliberate to allow the residents to part-take in the study. Being one of the oldest towns where the South Sudan liberation struggles began with the firing of the first bullet on 16<sup>th</sup> May 1983, Bor Town stands tall as a center of research for South Sudanese and foreigners who live side by side with each other. Thus, their participation in the research enriched the findings on the role of political parties in state-crafting and failure of South Sudan.

What is more, Wau, the capital of Western Bahr el Ghazal state was chosen because of its diversity and on the point that it was the regional city of the then Bahr el Ghazal region. It is the oldest city of civilization as the Arabs and Africans lived together side by side and it is closed to Sudan. Because of the influence of the Sudanese culture and being the advanced city of greater Bahr el Ghazal with the University of Bahr el Ghazal at the center, Wau has remained as one of sophisticated and intellectually engaging cities where the study was carried out to gauge the residents' opinions and perceptions on the role of political parties in state-crafting and failure of South Sudan.

### 3.4 Target population and sample selection

#### 3.4.1 Target population

According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), a population is defined as a group of individuals, objects or items from which samples are taken for measurement (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). It is also referred to an entire group of persons or elements that have at least one thing in common. It further refers to the larger group from which the sample is drawn. Target population in this case refers to the desired population the researcher wishes to study to meet his/her objectives. It is in actual sense the population where the sample is drawn. The researcher's target population was 400 drawn from social, economic and political elites both working at the Government of South Sudan at and private institutions. The reason is that most of the elites would really understand the trajectory of South Sudan State-crafting and failure and role of political parties and they could be able to give signposts on the institutional and political direction of the nascent state. Academics and researchers were targeted also because they possess enormous information on South Sudanese state crafting and the role of political parties.

Ordinary literate men and women were included in the study because they lived closely with the large chunk of the illiterate population in the rural areas. Besides, the study chose the religious leaders from both Islamic and Christianity faiths and sought their understanding on State-crafting and failure and the role of political parties. The reason of choosing the leaders from both faiths is that South Sudan attained its independence with the Transitional Constitution 2011 as amended that stipulates South Sudan as a secular state that embrace religious tolerance and multi-religious dimensions. Thus, seeking the opinions of Muslims and Christians helped in understanding perspectives of South Sudan state-crafting (state building) and failure from religious angle. This fact can be seen from the parties' composition and ideologies; the Christian ideology of the South mainly dominate SPLM and it professes Christian values and NCP is dominated by the Northern Sudanese and the party advocates Islamic values perpetuated by the Muslims fundamentalists.

The study targeted humanitarian workers both working at International Organizations and United Nations in South Sudan to seek their views on South Sudan state-crafting and role of political parties. Their views were pertinent because international development partners are equally stakeholders in South Sudan state-crafting and failure. In addition, community leaders and opinion leaders were also involved given the untainted wisdom they possessed and further reason that the leaders are the voices of the grassroots in matters regarding South Sudan state-crafting and failure. Hence, the researcher dedicated most of his time in scheduling interviews and administering questionnaires for these leaders.

Finally, the study did not leave out young people known as the young lions and thus another target population was the youth. The rationale behind their selection was that most of them were either recruited to serve as child soldiers in SPLA or conscripted to serve in the Sudan Army forces (SAFs) for those who were living in the Sudan during the inter-war periods and thus their views on the direction of South Sudan state-crafting and failure was valuable.

#### 3.4.2 Determination of sample size

The sample size of this paper was derived using a formula designed by Taro Yamane (1967) with 95% level of confidence and when the size of the target population is known (Yamane, 1967). The size (n) is determined based on the below formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + (e)^2}$$

Where N= population size, e=level of precision (0.05), n= sample size

$$n = \frac{400}{1 + 400(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{400}{1 + 400(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{400}{1 + 1}$$

$$n = \frac{400}{2}$$

$$= 200$$

### 3.4.3 Sampling selection

Sampling is the procedure a researcher uses to gather people, places or things to study. It is a process of selecting a number of individuals or objects from a population such that the selected group contains element representative of the characteristics found in the entire group (Orodho and Kombo, 2002). According to Kombo & Tromp (2006) sampling is a finite part of a statistical population whose properties are studied to gain information about the people (Kombo and Tromp, 2006).

### 3.4.4 Sample type

The study deployed both sampling design of probability and non-probability. The probability sampling design was cluster random sampling to enhance the division of the study population into clusters such as regional cities and chosen counties. The non-probability sampling design was persuasive sampling to target a group of people believed to be reliable for the study. The researcher persuasively selected those areas to get representative information about the role of political parties in state-crafting and failure in South Sudan.

### 3.4.5 Sample size

A sample of 200 respondents was purposely and random clustered and selected from the three regional cities of South Sudan. Juba, being the capital city of Government of South Sudan as well as Central Equatoria Government and with the highest population was given lion share of respondents. Bor followed and later Wau given the insecurity during the time of fieldwork. The researcher endeavored in ensuring that the selected sample was diverse and representative of the population. The study has assigned this sample size to minimize the biases; ensuring that the data collected was reliable and valid.

## 3.5 3.5. Data collection procedures (instruments)

Data collection refers to the gathering of information to serve or prove some facts. In research, the term "data collection" refers to gathering specific information aimed at proving or refuting some facts. Kombo and Tromp (2006), provide various purposes why data collection is important and they note the reasons as follows:

- i. To stimulate new ideas. This is because data collection helps in identifying areas related to the research topic that need improvement or further evaluation;
- ii. To highlight a situation and therefore create awareness and improvement;
- iii. It is the only reliable way to evaluate the responsiveness and effectiveness of the study;
- iv. It promotes decision-making and resource allocations that are based on solid evidence rather than on isolated

occurrences, assumptions, emotions, politics etc (Kombo and Tromp, 2006).

### 3.5.1 Primary and secondary sources of data

The study used primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data collection involved the use of interviews and questionnaires and secondary source of data collection has already been used in the review of empirical literature. These include the use of books, journals, periodicals and newspapers tapping the information on the understanding of state formation and role of political parties in state-crafting and failure of South Sudan. The procedures of data collection commenced from the preparation of the research tools, which include planning for the research study, designing questionnaire and pretesting the research tools.

### 3.5.2 Piloting of research tools

Piloting of research tools such as questionnaires and interview guides was done to ensure that the tools were correct and compatible. Questions that were poorly and ambiguously set were corrected from piloting of a few respondents.

### 3.5.3 Permission for fieldwork

Before going to the field, the researcher obtained permission from the National Security Service (NSS) so as to collect the data freely without any repression. More so, the researcher obtained a letter of authorization from the University of Juba. Besides, the researcher also got local authorization from the regional cities' authorities as well and ensured that nothing was left to chance in collecting quality data.

### 3.5.4 The order of the data collection

The data collection procedures took place in the following order:

- Administration of questionnaires: the researcher administered questionnaires to various groups of people in Juba, Bor and Wau. A sample size of 200 questionnaires were administered, particularly, National and States Ministers, Advisors of National, States and Local Governments, Senior Members of SPLM in Government, SPLM-IO, DCP, SPLM Former Political Detainees (SPLM-FPDs), Senior Members of National Alliance of political parties. Members of Dinka (Jieng), Nuer (Naath) and Equatoria Council of Elders were interviewed. Academics at the universities together with researchers at the research institutions and think tanks were surveyed as well. Moreover, members of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) representing youth, students, women & church leaders and representatives of Community Based Organizations were surveyed. Some humanitarian workers at the UN, especially UNDP and UNMISS were interviewed to tap their understanding of state formation and role of political parties in South Sudanese state-crafting and failure.
- Scheduling of interviews. Interviews were conducted and the respondents from the above categories provided in-depth insights about the role of political parties in South Sudanese state-crafting and failure.

## 3.6 Data analysis

Data analysis is defined as the process of converting raw data into meaningful information, which can be used for the purpose it was intended to serve (Orodho and Kombo, 2002). It involves rearranging the data into more meaningful fact to assist in finding important relationship. Data analysis involves the followings:

-Pres-analysis of the data: after the questionnaire or measuring instruments have been administered, the mass of the raw material

collected are systematically organized in a manner that facilitates analysis.

-Data editing. It is meant to detect as far as possible eliminate errors in the data gathered. The main issues in editing to be taken into account include:

- Completeness
- Accuracy
- Uniformity

The researcher was very keen on the completion of questionnaire to ensure that all the gaps skipped have been filled. This was done within the stipulated time to avoid missing respondents who could be travelling around. Accuracy was very much observed by the researcher and any questionnaire that that was erroneously filled was returned to the respondent. Uniformity was also paid much attention; the main reason was to determine whether a researcher would interpret and present the questions uniformly to the respondents or whether he could give a varying understanding to questions administered to various respondents. The researcher strictly observed the uniformity so as to help in the massive collection of the data. Any questionnaire with major errors was discarded and the remaining ones were given serial numbers.

**4. Results and Discussions**

-Data Coding. It is defined as a transformation of sentences into figures. It is a term given to the preparation of the data for entry into the computer for statistical analysis. The study used tables to interpret the variables that explain the role of political parties in South Sudanese state-crafting and failure. In addition, the study utilized multiple correlations analysis to determine the relationship among the variables. The variables were categorized as independent such as the role of political parties in state-crafting and failure and understanding state formation as dependent variable. The researcher assigned numerical values to the various categories of un-structured, semi-structured and structured questions to facilitate the statistical representation of the data.

The study deployed the multivariate package version 21 to generate analysis and the interpretation of data. This software is preferred by the researcher because of its merits in record keeping and the capacity to interchange data with other systems such as word processors, spreadsheets, Chi square, graphic packages & statistical packages and the easy access to the survey responses that are coded with Yes and No.

The data analysis is displayed through pattern tables, pie charts, bar graphs, column charts, and histograms and is interpreted within the frame of the research problem, the research objectives and theoretical and analytical exposure.

**Table 2:** Definition of State-crafting (building)

Categories	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Creation of new government institutions and strengthening the existing institutions	164	82.0	82.0	82.0
Building of country system using blocks and bricks	20	10.0	10.0	92.0
Conscious process of grabbing resources of the country by leaders	12	6.0	6.0	98.0
Destroying existing institutions and rule by decree	4	2.0	2.0	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Source: Fieldwork

Table 2 provides analysis of the meaning of state crafting. Asked to explain their understanding of state crafting (building) on the provided options, majority of the respondents agreed that state crafting is creation of new government institutions and strengthening of the existing ones. 164 respondents, representing 82% agreed on this meaning arguing it is only through institutional creation and strengthening that state crafting is realized. This indicates that the respondents, majorly from the academics as demonstrated in the previous facts analysis, do understand the meaning of state crafting (building).

Besides, 20 respondents, representing 10% believes that state crafting is building of country system using blocks and bricks.

These respondents' category believes that state crafting (building) is rudimentary and understood on blocks and bricks construction. Moreover, another category of 12 respondents, representing 6% argues that state crafting is conscious process of grabbing resources of the country by leaders. They believe that the grabbing of land and natural resources by the leaders is the meaning of state crafting. Finally, 4 respondents, representing 2% underscores that state crafting is the destruction state institutions and rule by decree. They argue that the frequently president's issuance of the republican decree is the meaning of state crafting (building) and thus existing institutions should be destroyed.

**Table 3:** Definition of nation-building

Categories	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Construction or structuring of national identity within a framework of a State	183	91.0	91.0	91.0
Neglecting communities to fight each other by the government.	10	5.0	5.0	5.0
Favouring one ethnicity in the government by the political elites	6	3.0	3.0	3.0
Domination of government institutions by one or two ethnic group (s).	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Source: Fieldwork

Table 3 analyses the respondents' level of awareness on the definition of nation building. 183 respondents, representing 91% note that nation building is a construction or structuring of

national identity within a framework of a state. On the other hand, 10 respondents, representing 5% argue that nation building is the neglecting of communities to fight one another by the

government. 6 respondents, representing 3% believe that nation building is favoring one ethnicity in the government by the political elites through their political parties thus, it is a centrepiece of nepotism and tribalism. Finally, 1 respondent, representing 1% argues that nation building is the domination of

government institutions by one or two ethnic groups. This respondent underscores that Dinka and Nuer have dominated the Government of South Sudan for very long time and this trend, the respondent believes, has been the essence of nation building.

**Table 4:** Definition of nation-building-analysis with skewness and kurtosis Statistics

Categories		Neglecting communities to fight each other	Favouring of one ethnicity in the government allocation of resources	Construction or structuring of a national identity within a framework of State	Domination of Government institutions by one or two ethnic group(s)
N	Valid	200	200	200	200
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Skewness		4.423	6.131	-2.999	11.338
Std. Error of Skewness		.172	.172	.172	.172
Kurtosis		17.740	35.948	7.063	134.506
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.342	.342	.342	.342

Source: Fieldwork

Table 4 analyses the definition of nation building using statistics of error of skewness and kurtosis. Subjecting the same variables on the skewness and kurtosis test, the result indicates the level of significant of the definition of nation building as the construction or structuring of national identity within a framework of a state. The level of skewness as showcase in the table has strengthened this choice, which is -2.999 indicating the

lowest skewness and robustness of the result. On kurtosis, again, the level is very low on construction or structuring of national identity within a framework of state, which is 7.063 indicating the spuriousness of the result. This demonstrates that construction or structuring of national identity within a framework of a state is indeed the nation building.

**Table 5: Understanding state failure**

Categories	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
a) When a state failed like falling of ceiling board in the room	12	6.0	6.0	6.0
b) When the Government provide services to the citizens	10	5.0	6.0	6.0
c) When the Government Officials blame one another and ask citizens to preserve	26	13.0	13.0	13.0
When a state does not provide public goods to her citizens including security for all	152	76.0	76.0	76.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Fieldwork

Table 5 provides analysis on the understanding of state failure by the respondents. 12 respondents, representing 6% think that state failure is when a state failed like falling of ceiling board from a roof of a room. 10 respondents, representing 5% argue state failure is when the government provides services to the citizens. Besides, 26 respondents, representing 13% understand state failure as when the government officials blame one another and ask citizens to persevere. Finally, majority of the respondents, 152, representing 76% understand state failure as when a state doesn't provide public goods to her citizens including security for all. These responses are within the context of understanding state crafting and failure.

**Figure 1:** South Sudan as a failed and surviving state

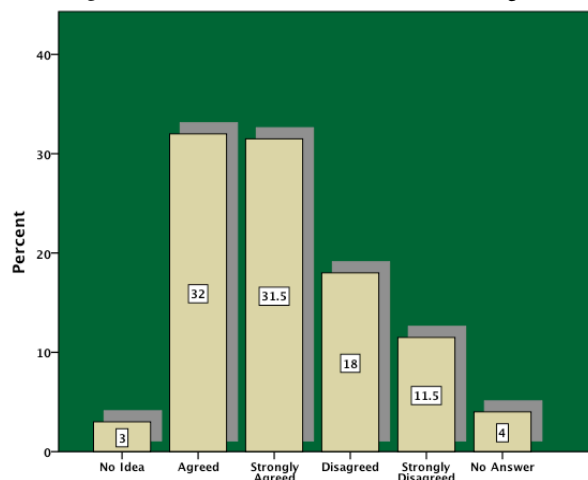


Figure 1 analyze respondents' views on the understanding of South Sudan as a failed as well as a surviving state. 64 respondents, representing 32% agreed that South Sudan is a failed but a surviving state. Besides, 63 respondents, representing 31% strongly agreed on assertion of South Sudan as a failed but a surviving State. On the other hand, 23 respondents, representing 12% disagreed with the assertion of South Sudan being a failed but surviving state. The respondents' reasons for these categories are based on the previous open-ended question querying South Sudan as a failed state. Moreover, 6 respondents, representing 3% have no idea on the question asked and finally 8 respondents, representing 4% did not provide any answer.

**4.5 Role of political parties in South Sudan state-crafting and failure**

In tapping the understanding of the role of the political parties in state crafting and failure, 200 surveyed respondents provided enthusiastic responses. Majority of respondents said 'Yes' that political parties have played critical role in state crafting and failure. Those who cited their roles in failing South Sudan State argued the captured of the state by the politicians who use parties for their parochial narrow interests and not national development. They argued that SPLM as the main ruling party has failed South Sudanese citizens. They noted that the party has remained as the battleground for scrambling for power, wealth and rampant corruption. Moreover, the respondents acknowledged that while the parties may have played a role in state crafting and failure, the country political class has failed to establish strong institutions to check the lone wolf SPLM. However, the proponents of the role of the parties in the state crafting argue that political parties act as the drivers of nation building through their various programmes. They added the parties educate the citizens on their programmes and provide forums for the citizens to express their political views on governance, rule of law and democracy. Also, respondents feel that political parties are the voice of the voiceless in the democratization of the nascent state of South Sudan.

On the other hand, some respondents argued 'No' on the role of political parties in state crafting and failure referring to the negative roles these parties have played in running South Sudan State. They cited that there are no real political parties in South Sudan but mere briefcases that survive through positions lobbying. Thus, majority of political parties are all pro-government and thus lack political agenda and independence. What is more, most political parties do not have a vision for the country and thus their programmes are muted and based on tribalism that has promoted Dinka dominance. In addition, some respondents noted that other political parties are working for the downfall of the SPLM out of sheer interest to fail the state of South Sudan. Besides, many political parties have failed to play satisfactory role in state-crafting given that they have not been given the same platform by the SPLM led government out of political competition and centripetal. Respondents view that

political parties have destroyed the nascent state as they have been yearning for leadership through violent means. Although the parties pronounce nation building and state making in their programmes, they have seriously failed the country through cancerous corruption, high-level employment, and abuse of laws, ethnic violence and rent-seeking rebellions. Many political parties have their own militias which are hired to cause chaos and violence at the high peak of political squabbles. Finally, respondents noted that political parties failed to champion the unity and common identity of the people of South Sudan.

**4.5.1 Understanding ethnic based political parties in South Sudan state crafting and failure.**

In gauging the respondents' responses on this very particular question. Most respondents agreed that ethnic-based political parties have caused South Sudan failure than crafting. They cited fighting amongst themselves over power, wealth and prestige. Besides, the respondents argue that furious tribesmen and women who have negative attitudes toward other tribes have dominated these parties. Moreover, these parties have produced ethnic militias such as Gelweng/TitWeng of Dinka, White Army of Nuer and Agwelek of Chollo etc that have terrorized the communities and semblance of peace in the nascent state. Thus rebellions, counter rebellions and insurgencies have affected tranquility and peaceful settlement of the citizens.

Because of ethnicity, peculiar ethnic group dominates these parties, for instance, Dinka dominates SPLM-IG, SPLM-IO by Nuer and Democratic Change Party (DCP) by the Chollo. Given that these parties factions are not based on any national ideology but ethnic cards, they have caused ethnic tensions and conflicts and the leaders have favored their ethnic groups. The outcome has been ethnic parties 'outbidding', political bargaining and illegal power ascendancy of the elites.

Furthermore, the respondents noted that based on the challenges of national security and political programmes, random ethnic killing, stolen economy is the order of the practice in the country and the struggle of citizens over failed economy remained the norm. In addition, the parties have planted corruption, nepotism and favourism in the South Sudanese society that has embedded divisions, disunity and thus killed nationalism and patriotism. Based on this kleptocracy, the country is run through family's ideas and decisions.

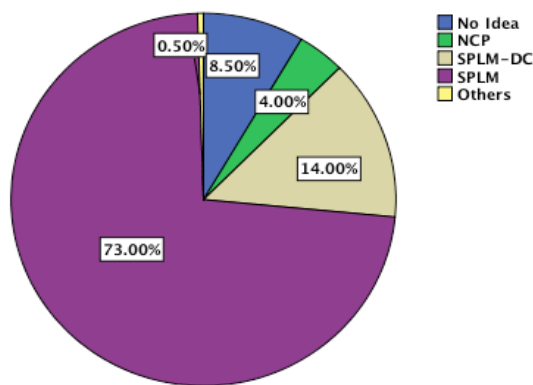
Furthermore, the respondents argued that these parties lack the capacity to influence democratization and the rule of law. Because of this capacity deficit, they have failed to champion national agenda for development of the country. However, few respondents noticed that ethnic-based political parties have not yet failed the South Sudan arguing that they are trying to build their programmes and activities despite South Sudan being a young country. These views have not been deeply substantiated because only 2 respondents out of 200 failed to clarify further how ethnic-based parties crafted the nascent state.

**Table 6:** Political party responsible for South Sudanese political crisis

Categories		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No Idea	17	8.5	8.5	8.5
	NCP	8	4.0	4.0	12.5
	SPLM-DC	28	14.0	14.0	26.5
	SPLM	146	73.0	73.0	99.5
	Others	1	.5	.5	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Source: Fieldwork

**Figure 2:** Political party responsible for South Sudanese political crisis



Source: Fieldwork

Table 6 and Figure 2 above have provided responses of 200 surveyed respondents. 146 respondents, representing 73% argue that SPLM is responsible for the political crisis that has bedeviled the country, citing zero-sum power struggle within the party. 28 respondents, representing 14% mentioned SPLM-DC now known as DCP, citing the specific ethnic-based of the party in Chollo's land. Moreover, 17 respondents, representing 8% had no idea on the question. Besides, 8 respondents, representing 4% argue that it is NCP that is the cause of South Sudan political crisis citing the constraining relations between South Sudan and Sudan. Finally, 1 respondent, representing 1% argues that others political parties which he/she has not specified are responsible for South Sudanese political crisis.

**5. Conclusions**

The paper has advanced a plausible argument on the role of political parties, particularly, SPLM in South Sudanese state-crafting and failure. It conceptualizes state, state crafting, fragility and failure. It argues that South Sudanese political parties, in particular SPLM have caused South Sudanese state failure than crafting. This has been demonstrated through the empirical literature via politicization of ethnicity, ethnicization of politics and through ethnic divisions. With detailed empirical evidence and in-depth arguments presented in the paper, it is plausible to conclude that political parties in South Sudan, particularly, SPLM have caused state failure than crafting. Reversing South Sudanese state failure required the political parties, the SPLM to eschew politicization of ethnicity and ethnicization of politics. This demands adherence to parties' programme and visionary leadership.

**6. Recommendation for future research**

While the researcher doesn't assume to have exhausted the role of South Sudanese political parties particularly, SPLM in state failure, future empirical research is hereby recommended on the role of SPLM party in reversing state failure and rescuing South Sudan from collapse.

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