



## The ethnic identity formulation a case of the Fertit groups in the former western Bahr EL-Ghazal

Wurok Chan Malith

Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of Sociology, University of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India

### Abstract

The paper painstakingly highlights the main issues pertaining to the formation of the Fertit Ethnic Identity in the former Western Bahr EL-Ghazal State. The main catalysts of ethnic identity subsume political struggle amidst the elites which was staunchly expressed as a domination marginalization, allocation resources, as well as lack of respect which could be dated back to the period of 1972. However, during the 1980s, contested issues were vying for power amidst the elites, economic issues, and security issues in the area. The conflict over land in Wau town and the surrounding areas between the local people and the government in some places in the area. Moreover, there are some issues triggered the violence in the area in 1980s such as the re-division of the South into three subregions, the broke out of the civil war and the permeating of atrocities and subversion in the region and the successive Sudanese governments' policy of encouraging tribal militia as mechanism of defeating and encountering the rebellion in the South. Meanwhile, after the independence of South Sudan in 211 ethnic identities, es issues emerged owing to the political struggle over power and leadership amidst the elites, the security situation, the civil war which broke out in the country and its impact on the region. The transfer of Wau County outside the town and the its objection by the local community, the apprehension of politicians and elites of the Fertit, the misrepresentation, the seasonal migration of pastoralists to the area and the unrest political situation in the country all these issues led into ethnic violence which sparked the displacement of thousands of people from their homes and sought refuge in other areas.

**Keywords:** Fertit Ethnic, identity, political struggle, Western Bahr EL-Ghazal

### 1. Introduction Fertit Ethnic

In the leeway of colonial-era ethnic identities were dormant and there were political issues which could manipulate or exaggerate identities issues in the region up the time of the Torit mutiny on 18<sup>th</sup> August 1955 which had repercussions on the ethnic groups and encouraged nationalism and patriotism among Southern people (Lupai, 2014) <sup>[2]</sup>. The ethnic groups vehemently, joined the rebellion to flounder the government's forces. However there was conspicuous ethnic conflict triggered politically in the region, despite there were communities' disputes wrought by competition over natural resources such pasture, water and land but not politically exacerbated conflict and such issues were resolved through traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution or through community consultation (Malith, 2017). However, the accomplishment of the Addis Ababa Accord in 1972 and the establishment of the Regional Government in the South and the distribution of resources and power led to conflict of interests amidst South Sudanese politicians and elites and led into the emergence of identity politics in South Sudan which was politically aggravated and manipulated ethnic animosities among the local communities and the emergence of ethnic animosities in the region after that period. Meanwhile, the Fertit groups expressed their disparagement of being dominated and also they had divulged their disquiet about the allocation of positions and employment, housing issues, disputes over land and the representation in the organized forces and directorates. This is in addition to some social issues such as lack of respect. The disputes over distribution

of power, resources, civil services. In lieu of the political rivalry in South Sudan amidst the politicians, the period was flanked by, tranquility amidst the Dinka, the Luo, and the Fertit and the conflict was abeyance. Because the Fertit demands and grievances were not politically, taken up and owing to that the situation was marked with the remarkable equanimity and cohesion amidst the main ethnic group in the region.

### 2. Political unrest and Ethnic Disputes in the region from 1983 -1985

That period witnessed serious vying for power and leadership amidst southern Sudanese politicians. However, some politicians were disappointed with the regional government in the South. That led to a demand for the establishment of subs regions to circumvent alleged Dinka domination of the political affairs in the South. The political competition led to the precarious rift amidst politicians in The South. However, the former President of Sudan Mohamed Numeiri in May 1983 issued the Presidential Decree for the formation of Regional Governments in Juba, Wau, and Malakal. The decree rescinded the Addis Ababa Agreement, which led to disappointment among southern politicians and culminated in the outbreak of the civil war in South Sudan in 1983-2005 (Malith, 2017).

Meanwhile, for the implementation of the presidential decree all the politicians, civil servants were instructed to move to their respective regions. Those from Bahr-EL- Ghazal came to Bahr EL-Ghazal Region (Juma, 2005) <sup>[1]</sup>. Following that

politicians of the minority ethnic groups of Western Bahr-EL-Ghazal had accepted the status quo and continue with their struggle for power. Owing to that Bahr EL-Ghazal regional government was formed with the late Dr. Lawrence Wol was the governor who made, appointments and promotions to key positions in the civil services and the recommendations for the appointments to constitutional posts, but the Fertit felt marginalized for the following reasons (Juma, 2005) <sup>[1]</sup>.

- For the allocation of positions, out of twenty constitutional positions in the Regional Executive, the Regional Assembly and the Regional Secretariat in 1983, only two were ceded to citizens of Western Bahr EL-Ghazal. And out of twenty top civil services posts of Directors General Departments, only five were allocated to citizens of Western Bahr EL-Ghazal. Also, the governor allocated the newly created positions of Directors of Finance and Administration in all Ministries and Departments were Dinka in appointment mostly from Gogrial District (Juma, 2005) <sup>[1]</sup>.
- Fertit had believed that all the regional commissioners of the organized forces: police, prisons, wildlife, and their officers were 99% Dinka. The Judiciary was 100% Dinka on the choice of the governor (Juma, 2005) <sup>[1]</sup>. Owing to that policy the senior civil servants and elites from Western Bahr EL-Ghazal submitted a petition to the Governor endorsed by 56 elites. Dated back at 9th September 1983, alluding unfair and imbalanced appointment. They had requested the governor to reconsider and re-address some of his decisions in the collective regional interest, but he declined (Juma, 2005) <sup>[1]</sup>.
- For economic sector the Fertit believed that they were marginalized, subsuming the sector of economic opportunities, and facilities to do business were allocated to Dinka youths by giving business licenses, allocation of quotas of commodities, credit facilities from loans department and the provisions of local contracts for works and supplies of provision to institutions such as the hospital and the prisons (Juma, 2005) <sup>[1]</sup>.
- The land issue became a serious sort of conflict in 1984-1985 when a portion of the Belanda's village and agricultural lands of Momoi that extend to the south of Wau along the western bank of Jur River was demarcated into cattle ranges and distributed to senior officials and traders (Juma, 2005) <sup>[1]</sup>.
- Fertit strongly divulged their opprobrium and disparagement in the way in which houses and accommodations were officially apportioned that pitfall culminated in gridlock. Also, services distribution, employment opportunities, and positions in the government.

### 3. Political situation and Identity Politics in the region from 1985 – 1989

The period portrayed witnessed the intensification of ethnic conflict between the Dinka and the Fertit in the leeway of the civil war. There were some people who purported to be SPLA soldiers and who were called *Nygatt*. The group started to assault Fertit's areas for looting and killing people in Fertit's areas in Busserei, Bagari, Mboro, Bisielia, Abu-Shaka, and

Ngolengbo and all these areas became a target of onslaught violence by armed group infiltrated from the side of Dinka and Luo in the in early 1986. Owing to that citizens were killed and properties were looted and houses were set on fire. The Fertit's chiefs and elders made appeals for protection, but the government ordered withdrawing of the small police force posted in Bussere, Bisselia, and Ngo-Tongo (Juma, 2005) <sup>[1]</sup>. The chiefs and elders gainsaid the withdrawal, the government arrested late: Imperio Mazino, Fr. Lino Rani, John Jiat, and Nicola Dimo and were, jailed for two years and discharged after that. They were imprisoned on the ground that they organized Fertit Militia and slaying of Dinka and Jur (Juma, 2005) <sup>[1]</sup>.

Following that the Fertit elders mooted the notion of acquiring arms, protect their areas and before the war in 1983, there were no animosities between the Dinka and the Fertit. Due to the meltdown in security, they weighed their militia as a means to protect their villages in rural areas (Juma, 2005) <sup>[1]</sup>. Unfortunately, the Fertit's militia coincided with the government of Sudan policy under President Numeiri who was acquisitive, to find a way to vanquish the SPLA in the South. One of the ways was to apply the policy of divide and rule, through manipulating tribal animosities. As such Fertit grievances in the power-sharing in the region's government and continuous assault on their areas, led to the formation of the Fertit militia called Peace Force, *KuatTslam*, for protecting their territories. After the government knew about the militia, the police were sent assess the situation, but unfortunately, they fell in an ambush, conducted by the militia after that the army in Wau decided to intervene by opening up the former stations that were closed with military forces at Bussiere, Bagari, Bissielia, Bazia, Abu-Shaka, and Ngo-Tongo points at which the attackers used to infiltrate into the Fertit's villages. The citizens of Western Bahr EL-Ghazal had never been embroiled in any ethnic conflict.

However, from this point, the conflict was about the power-sharing in the regional government which was established in Wau, the advent of the war which broke out in the South and the Sudan government's policy which exaggerated the tribal conflict in the area. The conflict was dormant, but when it was manipulated by political struggle and the legacy of the civil war led to violence and atrocities (Juma, 2005) <sup>[1]</sup>. Moreover, the ethnic conflict between the Dinka the Luo and the Fertit continued for seven years with the high death toll on both sides. When George Kongor Arop who was appointed by the National Islamic Front. George Kongor Arophad exerted effort to achieve the peace through intervening in collaboration with the religious leaders, traditional leaders and intellectual. The peaceful intervention culminated in the reconciliation and forgiveness which brought tranquility and peaceful co-existence among the three ethnic groups this shows the importance of community constructive engagement in making local peace (Juma, 2005) <sup>[1]</sup>.

However, 1998, another turmoil wrought havoc in Wau and jeopardized peaceful coexistence of three ethnic groups, when Kerbino Kuanyin Bol, rebelled against the government in Wau town that incident sullied the cohesion among these tribes. Dinka was arraigned to have colluded with Kerbino. From 1998 to 2003 many efforts were exerted by the religious leaders, NGOs, Intellectuals, and leaders to resolve the

conflict among the ethnic groups. Such efforts group contributed to reducing the conflict until the signing of CPA in 2005 (Malith, 2017). But in general three incidents contributed to the occurrence of ethnic atrocities between the Fertit in other hand and the Dink and Jur in another hand and not traditional conflict as follows:

- the re-division of the South into three subregions among of them was Bhar EL- Ghazal in which the firth government was formed and the disputes amidst the elites of the ethnic groups over positions in the government led to political differences and eventually turned to ethnic conflict through manipulating of traditional issues among the main ethnic groups
- The beginning of rebellion in South and spread of looting and killing and attacking Fertit’s areas which led to the formation of the Fertit militia and led to violence and atrocities.
- The policy of Sudan Government of divide and rule which was based on the formation of militia from minor tribes as a counterinsurgency in the South by supplying arms to that militia. However, in that period the political issues led to an escalation of the violence in the area and not the tradition conflict its self, because the political issues used the potential of the conflict to achieve their objectives which were not links to the conflict in the area.

**4. The Political Problems and Ethnic Conflict in the former Western Bahr EL-Ghazal After the independence of South Sudan in 2011.**

After the signing of the peace agreement in 2005, the conference was held in Mapel in Western Bahr EL- Ghazal. The main theme of the conference was the need to ensure the peaceful coexistence among the three ethnic groups living in Western Bahr EL-Ghazal theFertit, the Luo and the Dinka Marial Bai. Most of the important issues were discussed in the conference, all three groups vowed not to return the past. All sides apologized for atrocities their respective subordinates might have committed during the conflicts. The SPLA did apologize to the Sudanic group, the Luo and the Dinka Marial Wau groups. All the parties called on each other to forget the past and open new a page for ensuring cooperation and development in Western Bahr EL-Ghazal (Malith, 2017).

The three ethnic groups signed a Covenant, portrayed the core of coming together and leaving behind the past. The theme of the covenant was: Cross Line Peace Recovery and Reconciliation Covenant between the Fertit, the Luo and the Dinka Ethnic Communities of Western Bahr EL-Ghazal State. Hence, the conference was convened from 14-03-2005 to 23/03/2005 in Mapel. The chiefs, elders, church, civic and community leaders, women and youth leaders, commissioners, and commanders have met in across-Line Peace and Recovery Reconciliation conference in Mapel. The meeting was attended by the 2<sup>nd</sup>Vice-chairmen of the SPLM, Dr. Riek Machar. The objectives of the conferences were the reconciliation between the three ethnic groups, sustainable peaceful co-existence between the two communities and protection of the rights of the minority in the region (Malith, 2017).

However, at the end of the meeting, all participants from the three ethnic unanimously agreed upon that the post of the

governor in the coming interim period to be given to the Luo ethnic tribe since the Fertit had been in the power during the war. However, Mark Nypoch who hails from the Luo ethnic group was appointed by the president as the Governor of Western Bahr EL-Ghazal during the interim period. However, during the governorship of Mark Nypoch, there was peace and tranquility with some minor problems which transpired from time to time. However, after the election in 2010, Rizig Hassan Zachariah who was nominated as SPLM candidate for Western Bahr EL- Ghazal and he had won the 2010 election and became the governor of Western Bahr EL- Ghazal in 2010 (Malith, 2017). However, during Rizig governorship, the main issue which instantly sparked the ethnic conflict and violence in Western Bahr EL- Ghazal could be subsumed as follows.

**4.1 The Distribution of Portfolios in the government**

In the leeway of the process of allocation of the main portfolios, former politicians who had been in power before were excluded after the reshuffle. Such a move by the governor had brought political tensions. Some of them were members of the state cabinet who were relieved when the governor reshuffled the government. The political, struggle over positions led to manipulation of the previous potential of ethnic conflict and led to abrupt ethnic violence and atrocities between the Fertit and the Dinka. But the issue was a political woe between the governor and the politicians. These politicians used the incident and exacerbated it into an ethnic confrontation. The following tables attest the participating in the different government as follow:

**Table 1:** Percentage of responses of tribes in Wau town, Western Bahr EL-Ghazal South Sudan regarding whether they participate in the government in their area

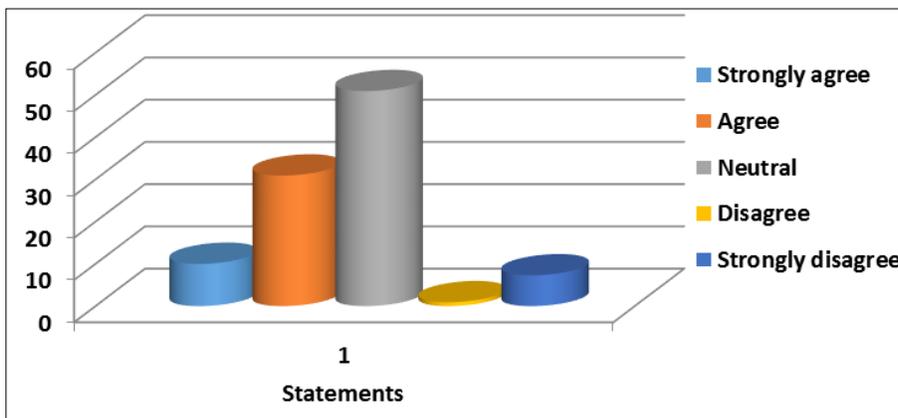
Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
State	87.27273	0.909091	2.727273	0	9.090909
County/District	80.90909	2.727273	5.454545	0.909091	10
Parliament	75.45455	6.363636	10	0.909091	7.272727
Central government	61.81818	9.090909	20	0.909091	8.181818

Regarding their participation in the government in their area, 87.27273% of the tribes in Wau town, Western Bahr EL-Ghazal, South Sudan strongly agree that they are participating in activities of the “State”. It is followed by participation in “County / District” (80.90909%); “Parliament” (75.45455%); and in “Central government” (61.81818%). The table shows the participation of the majority of the ethnic group in the state’s government with significant representation in the central government. Some of the problems are the land grabbing, the inadequate legal system, the negligence of the national government about political snags in the state, interferences of neighboring states and imbalance of power-sharing.

Regarding the equality of tribes in political power, resources and economic dividends, 10% of the tribes in Wau town, Western Bahr EL-Ghazal, South Sudan strongly agree with the fact that “All tribes share political power, resources, and economic dividends equally”. While the resources allocation, remain a controversial issue. The following Fig. shows the

responses of people to the issue of power, resources and economic dividends allocation in the state as it is shown in the

Fig given below.



**Fig 1:** Percentage of responses of tribes in Wau town, Western Bahr EL-Ghazal, South Sudan regarding the equality of tribes in political power, resources, and economic dividends

**Table 2:** Percentage of responses of tribes in Wau town, Western Bahr EL-Ghazal South Sudan regarding the privileges given to some groups

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Appointment of government’s officials and Ministers	54.54545	11.81818	6.363636	0	27.27273
Allocation of government employment along the ethnic line	60.90909	8.181818	10	0	20.90909
Other	10.90909	30.90909	51.81818	0.909091	5.454545

Regarding the privileges which are given to some groups, 60.90909% of the tribes in Wau town, Western Bahr EL-Ghazal, South Sudan strongly agree with “Allocation of government employment along the ethnic line”. It is followed by “Appointment of government’s officials and Ministers” (54.54545%); “Other” (10.90909%). This shows that the majority believe that in the government and other power station discrimination is shown against some ethnic groups by giving privileges to some groups. This unequal sharing of power and resources remain the major issue which is deemed to be behind all political differences as it is reflected in the power struggle amidst the elites.

**4.2 The Political Struggle and the Disputes over the Town**

After the independence, the power in the state has changed from those were in the power in the leeway of the war to new the elites who have taken from them the power. The loss of the power by former elites who had been in power calumniated into frustration amidst some of politicians and elites. The situation akin to a marginalization and misrepresentation in their state as one of the teachers put it to me in writing: “Monopoly, Wau has been monopolized by some other powerful ethnic groups who think that they have the right to live and rule so these groups have taken Wau State hostage, occupying all the key posts in the state and even the land. Wau cannot be run by outsiders while the owners are there without the power to run the state. This is of course quite clear, the cause. The state is allocated in such a way that people of the state to run their affairs. But this is not found in Wau, whereas the affairs of state are run by other people from other tribes”. This is a conspicuous rejection of the currents way the state is been run and weighed themselves to be aggrieved and oppressed tribes in their state (Malith, 2017).

**4.3 The Relocation of Wau County to Baggari**

The tribal conflict was triggered by the decision taken by the former governor of Western Bahr EL -Ghazal to relocate Wau and Jur River Counties outside Wau town. Wau County to Baggari and Jur River to Yin Akok. The notion of the relocation of Wau County was, rejected by the Fertit community in Wau. In the process, the politicians began to mobilize and coax the youth for an urgent strike in the town on Sunday. The strike was discreet, directed to the governor’s office. During the strike, 9 people were killed and others were maimed. The State government’s decision to abruptly transfer Wau County Administration and Headquarters from Wau town to a village called Baggari. Ruggedly, wreaked havoc, turbulence and profoundly, occasioned the violence which, unfortunately, transpired as the issue was still being debated. With the state government arguing that the idea of “taking towns to people” has been a central part of the SPLM vision. However, the relocation of the county’s headquarter had been planned for over a year, assiduously, identifying the sine-quo-non-resources to affably build it. The Fertit community achingly argued that the relocation was willy-nilly taken their town without the countenance of the community of Wau and the ramifications the carnage of the bloody violence in the state.

**4.4 The Incident of violence in 2012**

The incident of 2012 culminated with the gruesome killing on 9<sup>th</sup> of December, 2012, the fatalities were eleven on the side of the youth. The incident according to KamailioLoshano Jarban the Manager of Political and Media Program at South Sudan’s Television and Media in Wau, who strenuously enunciated it to the researcher in an interview with him as follows: ‘Risk Zachariah was officially nominated as the SPLM candidate for Western Bahr EL- Ghazal for the election of 2010 and he did clinch the election and became the governor

of Western Bahr EL- Ghazal. However, in leeway, of the of the celebration for independence in 2011, he officially declared that he would implement the SPLM program of taking towns to people. Moreover, the ambitious plan of taking counties outside Wau was mooted to the State's Assembly, owing to that the steering committee was formed with the chairman of John Peter Maskin the former commissioner of Wau County and Wol Madoung. The State's Assembly steadfastly turned down the plan and vigorously insinuated that the plan needs an inclusive consultation with the people before the implementation.

Meanwhile, the youth and the people of Wau county vehemently gainsaid and lambasted the transfer of their county to Baggari and such a move gruesomely culminated in the doleful conflict between the State's Government and Wau community's people. However, without conspicuous consultation with the community, the governor solely decided to implement the relocation of Wau County. Owing to that the youth of Wau County, closed the road between Wau and Baggari to block the move. The committee was formed to urgently transfer the counties into new areas. The Wau County Commissioner John Maskin resigned as the acknowledgment of the opposition of the community to the idea of transfer of the county. The committee was commissioned by subsuming security members, political advisor, and assembly's members to punctiliously resolve the woe of youth repudiating the plan of relocating Wau County to Baggari. The committee thoroughly discussed the plan and finally asserted that they assiduously discussed hurdle and it was unanimously approved by the state assembly. The assembly members were called to talk to the community about the conundrum in the school in Hai el Salaam. In the leeway of the meeting, it was found that the relocation of the county was not approved by the State Assembly as such they opposed the plan. In order for the governor to counterbalance the opposition, the governor summoned the assembly's members to endorse the transfer of the county. As a repercussion, the youth immediately informed the security that they had have blocked the road between Wau and Tombra, which led to a furious rupture between the youth and security forces. The governor convened the meeting at his house to discuss the problem and he had acknowledged that the issue could be resolved through dialogue and openness consultation. 'Following that situation, police and the youth clashed on Saturday 8/12/2012 which horrendously culminated in the mowing of two people and many others were wounded. On the following day which was Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> of December 2012 the youth organized the demonstration to the assembly and the bank of South Sudan in such demonstration, nine people were shot dead by police and others were wounded who had been hospitalized in Wau hospital. As such the community signed the petition deploring the transfer of the county. Furthermore, the governor decided to nab the people who staunchly withheld the transfer of the county to the new location.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> of December, a group of people shortly arrived from Warrap, this in addition to other Dinka people who were in Wau collectively joined in an attempt to sally Fertit areas. Consequently, some houses were torched and many lives were lost. On the 24<sup>th</sup> of December, many people were indiscriminately busted and arraigned for being behind the

crisis in the town including assembly members and the government's officials. Moreover, on 2<sup>th</sup> of January, those were against the relocation of the county were apprehended, jailed and some of them were trained. Following that, other people were immediately released. Also, a new commissioner was appointed Mr. Elia Kamilio Dimo who implemented the transfer of the county. The current animosity was a ramification of the state government policy of apprehending the opposition leaders and dissidents, and torturing of the people led to the perilous situation between the former governor of the state and the Fertit community. Meanwhile, after three days of the killing of demonstrators in Wau, other six innocent people were mown down in Faraja village. As the incident was narrated by Isaac Bol Criminal Investigation officer in Wau to the researcher as follows:

*"The incident took place on the 12/12/2012, the information reached the CID about the demise of six people in Farajalla. Immediately, the team from the CID department immediately galloped at 9 o'clock p.m. to the scene where people were liquidated. However, in the scene, the chief was instantly nabbed from Ango Baggari. The corpses of slain people were taken to Wau teaching hospital. Following that the case was opened against unknown suspect under the article 59 and those who had been busted the case was opened against them under the article 206. The special committee was commissioned to strenuously investigate the case and eleven people were arraigned, in the leeway of the court trial, four people were found innocent and they were immediately released, the chief was sentenced to ten years in prison and five people were sentenced to death and amid of them one child who had supposed to reach 19 years old to be executed. However, the sentence was not fully implemented because the decision has not been taken by the president up to date". From this incident, it is very pervasive that it was a politically exaggerated incident which led to the catastrophic loss of properties and lives in a very short time in the town.*

#### **4.5 The Apprehension of Fertit's Politicians and Chiefs**

The governor's decision of indiscriminately, nabbing the Fertit's politicians, chiefs, and elders without an incontrovertible arraignment of involvement in atrocities in the state, had haughtily ignited animosities between the Fertit's elites and the former governor. The security situation in the state led the youth acquiesced for the call by opposition leader Dr. Riek Machar a bête noire who empathically contacted the Fertit's youths through his coordination office in Khartoum and a promising them with unswerving support, they are in need of he personally pledged to amicably, resolve their hurdle. Some Fertit elites did join the SPLA-IO, they established their faction in Western Bahr EL- Ghazal and they are believed to be getting arms from SPLA-IO.

#### **4.6 The Security Situation in the State**

The Fertit group in Wau felt disappointed and owing to that they mused that they are excluded from the security sector, which is a vital issue for tranquility. The current situation politically evinced that they are not well-represented in all the

organized forces such, police force, prison, wildlife, civil defense, immigration, security agencies, access to citizenship. The domination of the dominant tribe in the major security organs, negative response from elites and the permeating of spirits of looting amid the forces and withholding of free movement. Finally, apprehension, kidnapping, and intruders of cattle keepers into the farmers' lands as cattle keepers are believed to be staunchly upheld by the high ranks officers.

#### **4.7 The Disputes over the Government's Facilities and Housing in the town**

There is a complaint about the government's facilities and houses in the town which they believed that they are being occupied by people from the neighboring states and they find difficulties in claiming these houses. And the way government's houses were officially allocated to senior officials and this also conspicuously demoted the discontent and disquiet amidst the Fertit people of Wau.

#### **4.8 Lack of Respect for the Fertit**

The Fertit people bemoan and remonstrate of being ignored, the dearth of homages as the minor tribe, unfair treatment towards inequality in the representation and lack of good will in addressing the issues of the minor tribe. The issues alluded above wrought the situation of ethnic animosities which subsume political struggle amidst the elites of the main ethnic groups in the area, the resource allocation, the power-sharing and the conflict over land. The conflict over the power and the resources distribution is reflected in the grievances which eventually, culminated in ethnic violence. However, the elites play a great role in articulating and manipulating these issues in achieving their material ends which will take the situation willy-nilly into violence, not only the grievances which are the result of unequal distribution of power and resource.

### **5. Conclusion**

Ethnic identities were socially constructed through power struggle amidst the elites as alluded before beginning with the first regional government in South Sudan and through the civil war until the independence of the country. As such tribal animosities are wrought and manipulated politically by elites in their vying for power and leadership and this makes ethnicity as a symptom or a tool in the hand of some power-seeking elites which could be used when there is the confrontation or political struggle. The main issues which lead to the formulation of ethnic identity subsume power struggle, resources allocation, positions and disputes over land, all these culminated in an ethnic antagonism among communities in the region.

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