Splintering Agreements: A qualitative mixed-method research on rebel group fragmentation during peace negotiations in Sudan between 2003 and 2006

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A qualitative mixed-method research on rebel group fragmentation during peace negotiations in Sudan between 2003 and 2006

Master International Relations Thesis

Track: Global Conflict in the Modern Era

Word count: 13853 excl. Bibliography

Supervisor: Eelco van der Maat

Reference style: APA

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Content

Chapter 1. List of Abbreviations

AU – African Union

CPA – Comprehensive Peace Agreement

DPA – Darfur Peace Agreement

GoS – Government of Sudan

JEM - Justice and Equality Movement (led by Khalil Ibrahim)

SLM/A – Sudan Liberation Movement / Army

SLA-AW - Sudan Liberation Movement/ Army (Abdel Wahid Al Nur faction)

SLA-MM - Sudan Liberation Army Movement/ (Minni Minawi faction)

SPLM/A – Sudan People's Liberation Movement / Army (led by John Garang)

Chapter 2. Introduction

On May the 5th, 2006, the chairman of the Sudanese Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A), Minni Minnawi, signed the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) with the Government of Sudan that Minnawi's rival, Abdul Wahid, refused to sign. Afterwards, the SLM/A officially split into two factions: the SLM/A-MM under the command of Minni Minnawi and the SLM-AW under the control of Abdul Wahid (Borsché & Duursma 2018). This splinter was the first of a series of fragments within the SLM/A that left the rebel group deep wounds. While the two factions were attacking each other in the battlefields of Darfur during negotiation talks, the factions were themselves loose alliances of local leaders (Flint & de Waal 2008; HSBA 2011b). As of November 2006, twelve rebel groups existed in Darfur. In January 2008, this even increased to 27 rebel factions (Daly 2007; Netabay 2009). The rebel group fragmentation within Sudan initially led to increased violence among various rebel factions that simultaneously fought the government (Netabay 2009).

The fractionalisation that emerged during and after the DPA created severe obstacles to peace, as it proved impossible to have serious negotiations with many actors whose alliances are constantly shifting (Jumbert & Lanz 2013). Even though rebel group fragmentation has implications for the sustainability of peace, little is known about the underlying mechanism that causes rebel groups to splinter during a peace process. Interestingly, a peace process is a fruitful moment to examine rebel group fragmentation as it can exacerbate pre-existing internal divisions (Duursma & Fliervoet 2020). A peace process forces rebel groups to negotiate over issues concerning wealth and power. If distinct factions have different perspectives about the course the organisation should take during negotiations, there is a chance that these factions fragment because they cannot agree (Lidow 2016; Lyons 2016; Fjelde & Nilsson 2018).

Whilst peace processes are likely to catalyse rebel fragmentation, the effects of peace on fragmentation are far underestimated and undertheorised (Duursma & Fliervoet 2020). Scholars who try to explain why specific peace processes fail to end a conflict often conclude that specific rebel groups are excluded from the negotiations (Ghais 2019). I argue that not only exclusion of rebel groups should be problematised, but also the exclusion of specific actors within a rebel group. Rebel groups are not unitary actors but are embedded in a governance system consisting of several factions (Arjona 2014). Precisely the internal divisions within a group signify the multiparty character of conflicts (Fearon 2004; Kalyvas 2006; Lyall and Wilson 2009; Toft 2010). Like political parties, factions within a rebel group may break and start a new organisation (Christia 2012). As rebel group fragmentation is a relatively new

researched concept, limited research is done under which specific conditions these pre-existing internal divisions catalyse rebel splinter.

To explain why once-aligned non-state actors fragment, this thesis provides and test three insightful theoretical contributions: the structural explanations, the substantial explanation, and the elite-rivalry explanation. The structural explanation assumes that the organisational structure of a rebel group determinates the likelihood a subcommander initiates to defect from the parent organisation. The substantial explanation assumes that leaders of distinct factions fragment if they have different ideas about the rebel group's course during negotiations. The elite-rivalry explanation assumes that rebel groups fragment on the leadership level in times of high elite rivalry.

Little of the qualitative literature comprehensively analyse these three central explanations of rebel group fragmentation and its relationship with a peace process. This study aims to fill this gap and systematically explores under which conditions rebel groups fragmentation is likely to occur during a peace process. I focus on two peace processes in Sudan: the Darfur Peace Agreement (2004-2006) and the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (2002-2005). In this study, I will demonstrate why the Sudanese Peoples Liberation Movement/ Army (SPLM/A) signed the CPA and stayed united, whilst the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and the Sudanese Liberation Movement/ Army (SLM/A) splintered after the DPA. The results of a comparison between these cases should answer the following question: under which conditions is it most likely that rebel groups fragmentation occurs during a peace process in the case of Sudan?

Understanding fragmentation can provide policy instruments that can diminish the continuation of violence after negotiations. Fragmentation exacerbates the instability caused by civil war because it can increase the intensity of fighting (Cunningham et al. 2012; Rudloff & Findley 2016); the durability of a conflict; and the likelihood of unsustainable peace (Rudloff and Findley 2016; Nilsson 2010). Before one can design a policy instrument to avoid the escalation of violence because of fragmentation, it is essential to understand how a peace process can influence rebel group fragmentation (Christia 2012). To understand fragmentation, I conduct a within case-analysis and a between-case comparison whilst using process tracing. I will explore whether a given value on the variables associated with the structural, substantial, and elite rival explanation was a cause of rebel group fragmentation during peace negotiations in three different cases (Mahoney 2012). All three rebel groups operating in Sudan during the peace process were strong enough to be invited for a peace process and fought for a change in

government. Hence, all cases are similar but different in the outcome as the SPLM/A did not splinter during the CPA.

This thesis proceeds as follows. First, I will provide an overview of the existing literature on fragmentation and explain why it is relevant to study this phenomenon during a peace process. Second, I will justify my research design, case selection, and explain the observable implications that are central in the analysis. Next, I will present the case study and conduct a within-case and comparative case study to explore the conditions under which it is most likely that rebel group fragmentation occurs. Lastly, I will embed my result in the debate on rebel group fragmentation and peace processes and conclude that elite rivalry explains rebel group fragmentation at the leadership level and the structural explanation at the local level.

Chapter 3. Drivers of Rebel Group Fragmentation

There are three potential explanations for rebel group fragmentation central in this thesis: a structural, substantial, and elite rival explanation. Before explaining these drivers, I define rebel group fragmentation and explain why it is relevant to examine rebel fragmentation during a peace process. Throughout this thesis, I follow Michael Woldemariams' definition of rebel fragmentation, which is "an event where a segment of a rebel organisation formally and collectively exits that rebel organisation and either a) establishes a new rebel organisation, or b) joins an existing rebel organisation or c) joins the incumbent government" (Woldemariam 2018; p.24; 25). This definition emphasises the collective and coordinated nature of rebel fragmentation and excludes the possibility that individuals leave an organisation at a random time for their private interest.

Studying rebel group fragmentation during a peace process is relevant as peace negotiations can catalyse rebel pre-existing internal divisions (Duursma & Fliervoet 2020). Rebel group victory allows consolidation rather than power-sharing. Subsequently, the group can hold on to pre-existing wartime structures of command and control. On the other hand, peace processes are often associated with the contestations about the new order because it is not likely that there are enough essential roles for rebel fighters in the government after the negotiations. Therefore, one can expect that not everyone in the organisation has a similar idea about representing the movement and the compromises made during a peace settlement (Lyons 2016). Because this can catalyse rebel groups to fragment, a peace process is a relevant moment to study rebel group fragmentation.

Now, I will explain how already existing theories can be applied to rebel fragmentation during a peace process. Scholarship identifies three potential answers for rebel group fragmentation: the structural explanation, the substantial explanation, and an elite-rivalry explanation. The first explanation expects that rebel groups are more likely to fragment during a high level of structural divisions. How the network of a rebel group is structured determines why some rebel groups splinter and other groups do not (Bultmann 2018). Vertical fragmentation occurs if the leadership no longer aligns with its followers. Structural explanations of fragmentation derive from the premise that rebel organisations do often not have a unitary organisational structure (Duursma and Fliervoet 2020). Rebel groups are "comprised of a shifting set of actors who share a central identity but may also engage in malleable allegiances and possess diametrically opposing interest" (p.448). A rebel group in Syria, for example, consist of several factions operating under dozens of separate organisational command structures (Walther & Pedersen 2020).

Several scholars argue that when an organisation rules over a large swathe of territory, it is more likely that social fractures arise, which consequently create the structural conditions that allow for the fragmentation of rebel groups. As the principle-agent theory highlights, geographical distance exacerbates principle-agent problems in rebel organisations (Gates 2002; Woldemariam 2018; Duursma & Fliervoet 2020). When the size of a rebel group is big and operates in a large geographic area, the rebel group often consists of several sub-units working with relative autonomy. Rather than having a centralised command-and-control structure, the leadership of a rebel group authorises regional sub-commanders to administer violence on its behalf (Johnston 2008). Even though this delegation of authority may increase organisational effectiveness in wartime, structural divisions can also act as fault lines at the basis of organisational splits when a peace process is taking place. Suppose a rebel leader cannot convince regional subcommanders that a negotiated settlement is in their best interest and does not exercise sufficient control to force them to lay down their arms. In that case, factions of the organisation may decide to break away to continue the armed struggle (Duursma & Fliervoet 2020).

Geographic distance also increases the likelihood of ethnic heterogeneity. Once ethnically heterogeneously, actors cannot rely on shared identities and norms in facilitating cohesion and encouraging behaviour consistent with the organisation's goals (Woldemariam 2018). Alternatively, the internal structures of insurgent groups with homologous pre-existing societal hierarchies enforce social network ties. However, this does not mean that groups based on homogenous social relations cannot fragment and vice-versa (Bultmann 2018). While it

would be normal to assume that rebel divisions and alignments result from similarities and differences in identity within and between the warring groups, this is often not what we see. Thus, neither homogeneous groups are safe from splintering, nor are heterogeneous groups incapable of reinventing a shared identity (Christia 2012).

Scholars who delve deeper into the structural mechanism underpinning the likelihood of fragmentation argue that specific characteristics within the hierarchy can determine strong bonds. Horizontal social ties have an essential role in fostering norms, beliefs, and shared meaning that facilitate cooperation among group members (Staniland 2014; Weinstein, 2007). Close vertically bonded are also crucial to avoid rebel group fragmentation because the vertical connections forge in with local institutions. Solid local institutions can contribute to lasting organisational cohesion, even though the new functions of the insurgency often fundamentally differ from prior activities of the social base. Eventually, an organisation needs both horizontal linkages to stimulate central command to not fuel elite feuding and splits and vertical ties that help leaders establish consistent discipline and control on the ground (Staniland 2012).

Another factor relevant within the knowledge field of rebel fragmentation is the leaderships agency. Rebel leaders with combat experience are more likely to remain cohesive, whilst leaders with political experience are more likely to fragment. Through war experiences, leaders can acquire qualities that increase the leader's organisational capacity (Doctor 2020). A rebel leader can influence organisational cohesion through the socialisation strategy. Top-down socialisation processes (e.g., political education) can generate cohesion, while bottom-up practices may increase the likelihood that rebel group sub-commanders split from the parent organisation. An example of such a bottom-up practice is the conduct of sexual. Committing sexual violence can provide the necessary cohesion, making subordinate commanders confident that their subordinates will follow (Nagel & Doctor 2020).

Lastly, a legitimate hierarchy decreases the chance of fragmentation. A character of legitimate hierarchy is a democratically elected leader. Leadership ascension within a rebel group through a local selection process, for example, can provide a strong signal of rebel cohesion (Cunningham & Sawyer 2019).

The second explanation expects that rebel group are more likely to fragment when substantial divisions are present. Substantial divisions are related to divergences in the aims and priorities of different rebel coalitions. The idea proposes that one or more groups ally because of shared interest and splinter away during a peace process because the negotiations are not in the interest of one of the coalitions anymore. Civil wars are anarchic environments where self-help is the

rule. Environments characterised by systematic insecurity produce a behavioural logic wherein security risk management becomes the main objective. Because the coalition's primary goal is survival, units can put their different preference aside to face a common challenge. When groups are no longer pre-occupied with survival or when it feels as if being part of a group is no longer connected to their survival, units can take actions that undermine cooperation in ways they could before. A radical action could be to fragment from the parent rebel group (Woldemariam 2018).

Often umbrella opposition groups form out of a desire to push a robust agenda against the government and break down because the internal factions cannot agree on their specific demands (Cunningham 2017). If one would see rebel actors as rational players, one can argue that an actor weighs the expected cost and benefits of engaging in a particular union activity (Anuradha 2011). Research on terrorist organisation explains that factions break out when they see their presence in the group no longer tenable. Simultaneously, their future organisation provides a sufficient level of support and resources to survive and be successful in their political struggle (Morrison 2013).

Groups may splinter because of disputes over which strategy to pursue, such as negotiating with the government or holding out and keeping fighting (Cunningham 2017). Because of the risk of an internal break, some rebel leaders try to defer issues that might lead to internal disagreement for as long as possible. For example, Polisario Frons postponed discussions on ideological matters until after achieving independence because it did not want to split the unity of the nationalist movement while the struggle for self-determination is still taking place (Hacene-Djaballah 1986). However, a peace process may force parties to make decisions because negotiations force rebel leaders to make their demands concrete vis-á-vis the government (Zartman 1995).

The final explanation expects that rebel groups are more likely to fragment during high elite rivalry. Like authoritarian regimes, rebel group elites operate in a field with primarily weak or absent constitutional checks and balances that protect elites from competitors' violence in liberal democracies (Chiozzo & Goemans 2011; Roessler 2011; Svolik 2012; Van der Maat 2020). As a result, elites at the top of regimes find their power checked by rival elites and have a high risk of losing life or office. Hence, authoritarian leaders always cope with a threat to their physical and political survival (Svolik 2012).

To enhance their survival in this insecure environment, elites rely on their support coalition and alliances with other elites (Hinton 2005; Van der Maat 2020). These can be

traditional elites, prominent party members or generals. When a leader depends on its allies (co-elites) to maintain power and promises its elites an increased share in power, one can speak of power-sharing. For example, the Syrian government of Hafiz al-Asad (1971-2000) did not control enough sources to govern alone. He assembled and relied on a coalition of military officers of the Alawi sect and al-Assad's family and friends. Once a ruler does not keep his promise of sharing power, allies can threaten the leader with removal. The intensity of this threat is closely related to the distribution of power between the dictator and its allies: the more equal the division of power, the more credible the threat of the allies to do so (Svolik 2012).

If a ruler and the ruled actor feel threatened by one another, a commitment issue arises. As rising mutual fears increase, allies-turned-rivals feel forced to adopt measures to defend themselves to such an extent that they reach a point of no return and that both sides are convinced that the other will eliminate them in the future. Once this point is reached, removing one's former ally from power is often perceived as the only feasible strategy to guarantee political and personal survival (Roessler 2011).

Consequently, the ally can feel threatened as this person feels excluded from creating a shadow state—a state with no space for the former-allied elite. Since there is no credible authority to protect them from the competitor's violence, the rival elite is afraid that the shadow clique and the ruler will turn on them. Therefore, the rival can already safeguard his privileged position and strengthen alliances to protect themselves better when the ruler eventually strikes. An example was in Uganda when in the late 1960's Idi Amin, the military chief of staff, recruited actors from his home area in the West Nile District because he was afraid that President Milton Obote was going to replace him (Roessler 2011).

If elite rivalry exists during a peace process, the excluded rival(s) likely fears for its own physical and political survival after the settlement, especially if the final peace agreement is mainly in favour of the rebel ruler. Likely, there is no third party that can control and enforce the agreed-on division of political power. If the weaker party does not defect and prolong the war, it takes the risk of being victimized at the hands of the most potent ally upon the war's conclusion (Christia 2012). In this situation, to protect itself the rival elite, together with its partners, fragment to threaten the once allied group.

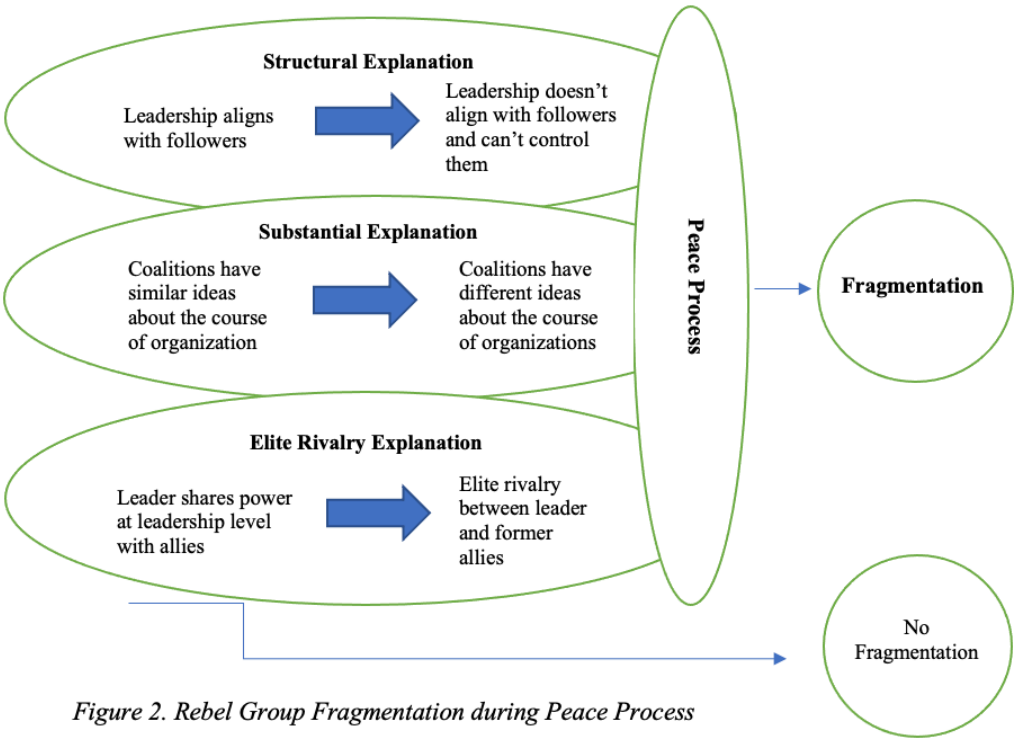

Figure 2. Rebel Group Fragmentation during Peace Process

Chapter 4. Methodology

This study aims to investigate under which conditions the dependent variable, rebel group fragmentation, occurs. Therefore, I adopt a qualitative mixed-method strategy, which compromises a within-case analysis and between-case comparison of a selection of three cases. There are three explanations for rebel fragmentation: a structural, substantial, and elite rivalry explanation. I will examine which explanations fit best by testing the observable implications whilst using process tracing (Bennett & Elman 2007; Dowding 2020). The explanations do not need to exclude one another. Suppose the structural explanation, for example, matches the evidence. In that case, it only means that it reduces the odds that this theory is true relative to fragmentation because of substantial explanation (Popper 1972, in Dowding 2020).

Each explanation provides several observable implications. The theories of the structural explanation provide four observable implications. First, we would observe that the leaders of the rebel groups operate in an organisation without centralised leadership because the organisational structure is too weak to overcome the lack of pre-war ties on the leadership level. Not sharing pre-war social ties can mean that they differ in linguistic, caste, class, or ethnic background. Instead of observing leaders who cooperate to establish local institutions for all

their followers, we would observe that leaders focus mainly on the needs of their community (Staniland 2012).

Second, we would observe that subcommanders do not share pre-war ties with any influential members in the leadership of the rebel group organisation. At the same time, there is a lack of communication between the administration and the subcommanders during the negotiations. We would observe that subcommanders have little in common with the leadership, except for ideological preference. They can differ in linguistic, caste, class, or ethnic background (Staniland 2012). Suppose the leadership is not in direct contact with its subcommanders through, for example, local institutions. In that case, the leadership cannot be aware of the demands on the ground, and the followers can't communicate their requests to the leadership during the negotiations. If the leadership's political agenda mainly focuses on its own community, the subcommanders can feel neglected.

Third, we would observe that under a condition of growing frustrations about the leadership, subcommanders show behaviour that is not in line with the movement's political agenda. They could, for example, commit violent acts without command from above or create an antagonistic discourse about the leadership. Bottom-up processes and revolts against the leader can increase the likelihood that rebel group subcommanders split from the parent organisation. It creates the necessary cohesion that makes subcommanders commanders confident that their subordinates will follow (Nagel & Doctor 2020).

Finally, we would observe that followers—mostly subcommanders who are in direct contact with the local population – initiate to splinter from the parent organisation because they do not feel represented by the leadership's political agenda during the negotiations. This is most likely if two or more leaders control their swath of territory and focus primarily on their communities and subcommanders do not feel represented by any leader. As a result, subcommanders and their followers splinter away and integrate into an already existing rebel group or establish one themselves.

The theories of the substantial explanation provide three observable implications. First, we would observe that two or more actors in a coalition together disagree about the content of the peace agreement during a peace process. A precondition for this is that one or more factions established a party together because they believe it increases their political and physical survival chances. This implies that they share the same enemy, for example, a state, and that allying means that they are military stronger. They splinter because their incentive to ally does not hold

anymore (Wodemariam 2018; Duursma & Fliervoet 2020). A disagreement about the content of the peace agreement can be about the distribution of positions in the government.

Second, we would observe that one coalition feels relatively deprived in respect to the peace agreement. We can observe, for example, that negotiators promise to provide the most lucrative position within a government to only one coalition leader. In contrast, the other coalition leader would need to lay down their arms without getting what they aimed for.

Third, we would observe that the relatively deprived coalition fragments because it does no longer see its presence on the table tenable. This can happen the moment the other coalition sign the agreement or is likely to sign. Simultaneously, it is expected that the coalition establishes a new rebel group or joins another organization that provides sufficient support and resources to survive and meet its goals (Morrison 2013).

Lastly, the theories on elite rivalry deliver three observable implications. First, we would expect that the rebel ruler tries to exclude its former elites under a condition of high rivalry when the rebel ruler feels challenged by the rival elite. If the elite would openly challenge the rebel ruler, we would observe for example that they would stage a coup, create new alliances with another group, demand for international support, or enrich their financial base, so they depend less on the rebel ruler. On the other hand, we would observe that the rebel ruler excludes their former elites by arresting them, attacking them, restructure the hierarchy within the party so that the former elites are not part of the state apparatus anymore. Eventually this can lead to an increasement of infighting between the rebel ruler and the rival elite (Roessler 2011; Svolik 2012).

Second, we would observe that the rebel ruler and the rival elite built up their own security network under a condition of high elite rivalry as the threat or presence of infighting increases. We would observe for example, that the rebel ruler keeps the power within its inner circle, while rival elite increases its support base elders (e.g., international support, government support, or support from subcommanders).

Third, we would observe that during the negotiations the elite and the rebel ruler splinter under a condition of high elite rivalry when the peace process is in favour of one of them, on behalf of the other (Chiozzo & Goemans 2011; Roessler 2011; Svolik 2012; Van der Maat 2020). If this is the case, we would observe that rivals the government does not support, fear their own political or physical survival if it does not fragment with its own support base.

This thesis aims to indicate under which the abovementioned conditions rebel group fragmentation occurred in the case of Sudan. To reach this goal, I will take two steps. First, I conduct a within-case analysis to capture causal inference (Gerring 2007). I will examine which of the abovementioned potential answer matches the evidence of the SLM/A, JEM, and SPLM/A. Second, I conduct a between-case analysis. The extensive case knowledge from the within-case analysis provides the necessary information to make a comparison needed to explain why the SPLM/A did not fragment and the SLM/A and JEM did. After I know what independent variables correspond to the evidence of the fragmented cases only, I can conclude which conditions explain the fragmentation of rebel groups.

The selection of cases is not randomly. To minimise the chance that non-theoretical interest variables explain the variation in the outcome, this thesis conducts a "most similar" research design (Gerring 2008). This means that the chosen cases are as similar as possible, except for the variable that needs to be explained: rebel group fragmentation (Bennett & Elman 2007; Anckar 2020).

The first reason I selected these cases is because they differ in the dependent outcome. The cases that are perfect examples of rebel group fragmentation are the Sudan Liberation Movement/ Army (SLM/A) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM). The counterfactual case in which rebel groups did not fragment because of ongoing peace processes is the Sudanese People Liberation Front/ Army (SPLM/A). The Foundation of Rebel Group Emergence (FORGE) dataset provided the necessary answers to conclude that the two prominent cases and the counterfactual case differed in the dependent variable but similar in control variables (Braithwaite & Cunningham 2020).

The second reason I selected these cases is because they are similar in variables that could theoretically speaking, be relevant for the different outcome and therefore immediately give the independent variables of theoretical interest less explanatory power (Gerring 2008; Anckar 2020). Firstly, the cases are similar as they all finished a peace process in the same period. The SPLM/A signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) with the Government of Sudan (GoS) in 2005. The SLM/A and the JEM were both parts of the Darfur Peace Agreement that finished in 2006 (Nathan 2007). Because I examine fragmentation in the same period, it is less likely that time-specific factors (e.g., the composition of the government) explain the difference in the outcome of the independent variable.

Secondly, these cases are similar because all rebel groups operated in Sudan (Braithwaite & Cunningham 2020). As all rebel groups come from the same territorial area, it increases the likelihood that there is overlap between constant factors because they are more

likely to share similarities in history, culture, or the country's development (Gerring 2008; Dowding 2020; Anckar 2020).

Thirdly, these cases are similar as they aim to change the government through an armed struggle. Several scholars argue that conflicts fought over government control have higher prospects for peace than conflicts fought over territory (Nilsson & Jarstad. 2008; Gates & Lujala 2009). Since this can mean lower chances of fragmentation, it can mean variation in the outcome that the independent variables do not explain. Coded in the FORGE dataset is that the SLM/A aimed for a change in the Khartoum regime, the JEM aimed for regime change, and the SPLM/A sought to overthrow the current leaders of government (Braithwaite & Cunningham 2020).

Fourthly, these cases are similar as they are relatively similar in rebel strength. Suppose a rebel group holds a significant amount of power relative to the government. In that case, it is more likely that they have a stronger bargaining position during the peace process, which could eventually mean a higher chance of power-sharing as the strength of a rebel group increases (Gent 2011; Clayton 2013). A stronger position could mean that the rebel leadership has more functions to offer to the rebel group members. The latter could lead to fewer people satisfied during the peace process, consequently decreasing the incentives for fragmentation. Since all groups have been invited to a peace process, it is assumable that they hold a significant military or political amount of power concerning the government.

Chapter 5. Fragmentation during peace negotiations in Sudan

From 1983 until 2005 the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) fought the government of Sudan. The conflict ended after the rebel group signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). Consequently, the rebels integrated into the government without splitting up (Harbom et al. 2006).

The Sudanese Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) differ from the SPLM/A as the movements splintered during the peace negotiations. The Darfur rebellion against the GoS was launched in April 2003, when SLM/A and JEM jointly attacked the airport of El Fasher (Netabay 2009; Jumbert & Lanz 2013). Even though the rebel groups collaborated on the ground, politically they were fragmentated (Brosché & Rothbart 2012). In their early years, the movements enjoyed military success. Khartoum tried to stop the rebel groups and started a counterinsurgency campaign that led to a

high number of human rights violations, for example ethnic cleansing and forced displacement (Brosché 2014).

In July 2004, the Abuja peace negotiations started, led by the African Union (AU). The goal of the negotiations was to establish a comprehensive peace agreement between the Sudanese Government (GoS), and the SLM/A and JEM. However, the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) is widely known for being unable to solve the conflict and increasing pre-existing tensions (Brosché & Duursma 2018). In 2004, a faction of JEM defected and established the National Movement for Reform and Development (NMRD) (Seymour 2014). In late 2005, negotiations on the issue of the DPA began. Contrary to Minni Minnawi, Khalil Ibrahim (JEM) and Abdul Wahid (SLMA-AW) did not sign the DPA in 2006 (Brosché & Duursma 2018). After the negotiations, the SLM/A splintered in several ways. First, the movement split up in two factions: the SLM/A-Minni Minnawi and the SLM/A-Abdul Wahid (Wassara 2010). Second, the faction of Minni Minnawi split up as many of subcommanders under his control deserted after he signed the DPA. Third, the faction of Abdul Wahid split up as some of his field commanders defected. The defectors of both Minnawi's and Wahid's faction established new rebel groups such as the Group of 19 (G-19) (Netabay 2009; Wassara 2010).

Chapter 6. Within-Case Analysis

6.1. Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A)

In 2001, Abdul Wahid's Fur-dominated forces merged with forces from the Zaghawa groups to contest the government forces jointly. Soon, another non-Arab ethnic group in Darfur – the Massalit—joined the Fur and Zaghawa armed struggle against the GoS. This made SLM/A a multi-ethnic armed-group, united through the goal to challenge the Karthoum regime (Brosché & Duursma 2018). The central figures in the movement were Minni Minnawi who used to be a primary school teacher, and Abdul Wahid Al Nur who used to be a lawyer (HSBA 2011a; HSBA 2011b).

The central question in this section is under which conditions the SLM/A splintered during the Darfur Peace Negotiations. The answer to this question is twofold as the rebel group split up both at the leadership level and the local level. The splinter at the leadership level was characterised by underlying leadership rivalry, ethnic tension within the higher ranks, and disagreements on the content of the DPA (Casey-Maslen 2013). At the local level, the fragmentation was a result of disagreement about the decision of the rebel leaders to (not) sign the DPA and due to SLM/A's organisational structure that was not strong enough for the leaders

to hold on to their followers (Netabay 2009; Wassara 2010). The following paragraphs illustrate which observable implications match the evidence per explanation and concludes with explaining which condition provides the greatest explanatory power.

If the structural explanation fits the evidence, first, we should observe that the leaders of the rebel groups operate in an organisation without centralised leadership because the organisational structure is too weak to overcome the lack of pre-war ties on the leadership level. The movement created an infrastructure for power sharing across ethnic divisions; the chairman was from the Fur tribe (Abdul Wahid Al-Nur), the chief of staff was a Zaghawa (Minni-Minnawi) and the deputy chair was Massalit (Brosché & Duursma 2018). Even though all leaders came from marginalized Darfur communities, they all had a different ethnical background. Hence the potential cohesion was rather stimulated by the organisational structure, than the existence of shared pre-war ties. However, Minni Minnawi and Abdul Wahid Al-Nur focused mainly on their own political agenda and ethnic support base (Seymour 2014). The Zaghawa leader, Minni Minnawi, did not necessarily want to overthrow the state, but wanted to fight against the Arab militias with whom they fought over North-Darfur. The Fur leader, Abdul Wahid, wanted a democratic and decentralized 'New Sudan' and envisioned its rebellion as anti-government (HSBA 2011a). As the leaders were not united, both in pre-war ties and in their political agenda, we observe a lack of unitary leadership.

Second, we should observe that there are subcommanders who do not share pre-war ties with any powerful members in the leadership of the rebel group organisation while, simultaneously, there is a lack of communication between the leadership and the subcommanders during the negotiations. The SLM/A supporters came from various tribes that all shared pre-war ties with the leaders. One challenge that the leaders found difficult to overcome was to also involve communities with whom they were not directly connected by their community. Especially the Arab followers that did not share ethnical ties with any of the leaders did not feel represented by the leadership (Flint & de Waal 2008; Brosché & Duursma 2018). Moreover, there was both a lack of local political institutions and a level of communication between leaders and subcommanders. During the DPA the leaders were hardly ever in Darfur to meet their supporters on the ground. Subsequently, the rebel leaders could hardly consult their field commanders. Accordingly, after signing the DPA, several local commanders challenged Minnawi's leadership more openly and accused Minnawi of the lack of consultation during and before signing the DPA (TNH 2006a; TNH 2006b). Abdul Wahid was also increasingly contested by his commanders. He spent more time outside Darfur than

inside. During the Abuja peace negotiations, he was based mainly in Paris and often refused to meet with high-level visitors, such as prominent members of his own faction who travelled to Sudan to collaborate with him (HSBA 2011a).

Third, we might find that under a condition of growing frustrations with the leadership and a lack of vertical organisational ties, subcommanders show behaviour that is not in line with the political agenda of the leaders of the parent group. As the Darfur agreements drew the leadership even further away from its soldiers and the civilian population on the local level, the leaders lost their sense of reality in the process. The negotiations drew fighters who felt more closely associated with the movement away from the field, and less experienced fighters stayed in the area where they started fighting each other without any command from above (Jumbert & Lanz 2013). In addition, there was an anti-leadership discourse on the sub-commander level. Minni's factions was viewed with suspicion by other ethnic groups such as the Fur, who created the discourse that he created a hidden agenda for a New Zaghawa homeland (TNH 2006b). As the subcommander operated without the command from above, and there was an anti-leadership discourse this observable implication also holds.

Finally, we should observe that followers—mostly subcommanders who are in direct contact with the local population – tend to splinter from the parent organisation because they do not feel represented by the political agenda of the leadership during the negotiations. After the negotiations many Minnawi commanders opposed the peace deal. The Fur opposed the DPA due to security arrangements and issues of compensation (TNH 2006b). Arab nomadic groups argue that Minni excluded them from the negotiations and that the peace deal does not represent their interests, especially concerning land rights (Brosché & Duursma 2018). The rebel faction of Al-Nur and the G-19 took advantage of this situation and started to recruit Minnawi commanders (TNH 2006b). Also, Al-Nur experienced some internal opposition. The SLM/A factions he controlled lost many supporters from ethnic groups other than the Fur because the different ethnic groups questioned Al-Nur's claim to represent all Darfuri people (Salih 2005). As many subcommanders of the SLM/A fragmented and joined the G-19, the structural explanation matches the evidence of fragmentation on the local level. The fragmentation between Minni Minnawi and Abdul Wahid on the other hand, was between two leaders and, therefore, structural explanation does not explain this splinter.

If the substantial explanation fits the evidence, first, we should observe that during a peace process two or more actors that are in a coalition together disagree about the content of the peace agreement. The three ethnic leaders were united through the need to strengthen their

military capacity. The SLM/A had no coherent political agenda on the leadership level before the peace talks started. The only issue they could agree on was that the government had to stop killing civilians and allow humanitarian efforts in the region (Netabay 2019). During the negotiations, a significant substantial division emerged on the leadership level about how to deal with Khartoum. The GoS established a counterinsurgency in which they were targeting Fur, Zaghawa and Masalit communities. The community hit hardest were the military less developed Furs. After these experiences, the Fur leaders were more inclined to negotiate on structural matters, whilst the Zaghawa, were less demanding during the peace talks (Tanner et al. 2007). Hence, two aligned actors disagreed about the content of the peace negotiation.

Second, we would observe that there is one coalition that feels relatively deprived in respect to the peace agreement. The GoS expected that SLM/A-MM was a stronger faction thus focused mostly on Minnawi's demands (Seymour 2014). Abdul Wahid argued that the DPA did not fulfil their demands for more compensation and political representation and more substantial security arrangements (TNH 2006a). As the DPA was mostly in favour of Minnawi's faction, it seems as if Abdul Wahid was relatively disadvantaged by the DPA.

Third, we would observe the fragmentation of the relatively deprived coalition because it does no longer see its presence at the negotiation table tenable. This observable implication fits the evidence because Abdul Wahid did not sign the agreement, partly because it did not agree with the content of the DPA. The latter meant the end of a united SLM/A (Borsché & Duursma 2018).

If the elite rivalry explanation fits the evidence, first, we would observe that the rebel ruler tries to exclude its former elites under a condition of high rivalry when the rebel ruler feels challenged by the rival elite. Initially the movement was relatively unified (Borsché & Duursma 2018). Throughout the years, former chief of staff, Minni Minawi, started to challenge the former chairman, Abdul Wahid al-Nur. Exclusion at the leadership level emerged in 2005. In this year, Minni organised, together with his followers, a conference in Haskanita (North Darfur). During this conference he was elected as the new chairman. Abdul Wahid refused to come because he accused Minni of using this conference to steal his leadership as many leading SLM/A figures were absent (Brosché & Rothbart 2012). Throughout the years, Minni Minnawi gained more control over the organisation, partly because he intimidated and arrested opponents who challenged him (Tanna et a. 2007). The evidence shows that the conference restructured the hierarchy of the organisation which gave Minnawi relatively more power, and that both rivals felt challenged by one another.

Second, we would observe that the rebel ruler and rival elite built up their own security network under a condition of high elite rivalry as the threat or presence of infighting increases. After the Haskanita conference in November, the factions of both rebel leaders started to fight. The Zaghawa attacked the Fur heartland which led to 45 casualties (Prunier 2007; HSBA 2011a; Brosché & Rothbart 2012). After this event, they continued the peace process as representatives of the SLM/A—Minni Minawi (SLM/A—MM) and SLM/A—Abdul Wahid (SLM/A—AW). After 2005 Minni started to appoint people on the Zaghawa wing of the SLM/A from his clan. Subsequently, this made other factions of the SLM/A more suspicious, especially its rival, Abdul Wahid (Seymour 2014). Wahid on the other hand, started to increase its support base among the Fur clan while he stayed in France (HSBA 2011a).

Third, we would observe that during the negotiations the elite and the rebel ruler splinter under a condition of high elite rivalry when the peace process is in favour of one of them, on behalf of the other. If Minnawi were to sign the peace agreement with the government, it provided a lot of security provisions. Before committing to the government, Minnawi was promised weapons, vehicles, and logistical support from the Sudanese army. In doing so, he expected that the government's help would secure its dominant position in Darfur (Seymour 2014). Another critical point was in 2006. Again, the rivalry factions—SLM/A—MM and SLM/A—AW – fought one another in Darfur. This led to 40 fatalities. The direct trigger of the fighting was a disagreement over the terms of the peace agreement and their aspiration to acquire political power before the agreement could be reached (Brosché & Rothbart 2012). As they could not overcome this, Minni Minnawi and Abdul Wahid Al-Nur's rivalry increased to the level that if one signed, the other would not sign the DPA (Seymour 2014). The government chose for Minnawi at the expense of Abdul Wahid.

This section shows that the SLM/A splintered at a local and leadership level during the negotiations from 2003 to 2006. Depending on which level it splinters, one can argue which explanation holds. The split at the leadership level can mostly be explained by a continuous condition and increased amount of elite rivalry between Minnawi and Wahid. However, the disagreement about the content of the peace agreement was also a factor that contributed to the splinter—Minnawi was focused on the demands of the Zaghawa, whilst Abdul Wahid focused on the Fur communities. In terms of content, he was therefore not able to sign the agreement. The critical point was substantial of nature (disagreement about content of DPA), but a condition of high elite rivalry is what eventually made it more difficult to overcome or avoid disagreements. The rivalry between Minni Minnawi and Abdul Wahid Al-Nur's already

increased to such a level that if one signed, the other would not sign the DPA (Seymour 2014). At the end it was likely that Abdul Wahid would not sign the DPA, because the agreement did not give him the same security provision as it gave to Minni Minnawi. Therefore, he had no other option but continue the armed struggle against both his rivals: Minni Minnawi and the Government of Sudan.

On the local level fragmentation subcommanders initiated the defection against the parent organisation. The movement is built upon weak pre-war ties between various ethnic groups and a weak organisational structure, both vertically and horizontally (Seymour 2014). These ethnic divisions are exacerbated by the atrocities committed by the GoS, which left some communities affected more than other communities. The DPA was highly unpopular in the eyes of many SLM/A subcommanders and followers because they did not feel connected with the decisions made from above (Brosché & Duursma 2018). First, they did not know what was going on because of a lack of communication and local institutions (Jumbert & Lanz 2013). Second, they did not agree with what Minnawi signed for. Therefore, Minni Minnawi lost a lot of support from its subcommanders (HSBA 2011b). As the evidence of SLM/ shows, a condition of weak pre-war organisational ties that the movement was not able to overcome during the negotiations explains local fragmentation.

6.2. Justice and Equality Movement (JEM)

The Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) was established in 2000 and was led by Khalil Ibrahim who remained the leader until he was killed in action in 2011 (Brosché 2014). Khalil was a former politician who was active in the National Islamic Front (NIF). The founders of JEM wanted to create a decentralized federal state with religious and political freedom and a fair distribution of wealth and power (Flint & de Waal 2008). It was up until 2002 that the JEM started to organize itself as a military movement. At the beginning of the war, JEM was perceived as military weak, but over time it proved itself as a significant military player with a solid political agenda (Johnston 2007; Seymour 2014).

The central question of this section is under which conditions the JEM splintered during the Darfur Peace Negotiations. The rebel split central in this study emerged in early 2004. JEM military chief Jibreel Abdul Karim was unsatisfied with Turabi's – head of the NIF—influence on JEM and Khalil micromanaging the movement from Europe. Jibreel was a member of the predominantly Chadian Kapka clan to which many of JEM’s fighters belonged. When he formed his new breakaway group, he managed to take many kinsmen with him that did not feel

associated by Khalil Ibrahim (Flint & de Waal 2008). However, what triggered the splinter was the role of Khalil in the death of Jibreels close ally, the chief of staff of the Kapka clan. This act is part of ongoing rivalry between the chairman and the military staff; therefore, the elite rivalry seems to be the most important explanatory power (Tubiana 2011). However, as in the case of SLM/A, there is more nuance. The following section will provide an analysis of the potential observable implication that provides the necessary nuance.

If the structural explanation fits the evidence of the JEM, first, we should observe that leaders of the rebel groups operate in an organisation without centralised leadership because the organisational structure is too weak to overcome the lack of pre-war ties at the leadership level. Some non-Kobe members held senior positions; Nur al-Din Dafalla from the Missiriya tribe became Khalil's deputy, Khattab Ibrahim Widaa, a Ta'aisha, became deputy spokesman, Ibrahim Yahya from West Darfur became speaker of the parliament (Flint & de Waal 2008). Still, the rebel group was at the top level dominated by the Zaghawa Kobé tribe; the clan of the leader Khalil Ibrahim (Tubiana 2011). Even though the JEM created a black book to signify its political agenda, Ibrahim is often accused of focusing more on the Islamic goal than on the marginalization of the Darfurians (Flint & de Waal 2008).

Second, we should observe that there are subcommanders who do not share pre-war ties with any powerful members in the leadership of the rebel group organisation while, simultaneously, there is a lack of communication between the leadership and the subcommanders during the negotiations. In the beginning years, JEM had low engagement of the rebels at the local level (Jumbert & Lanz 2013). Khalil Ibrahim was not very accessible but trusted his lieutenants to decide the party line and conduct day-to-day affairs. He only met up with the highest-level officials when there were important issues to discuss. Through his commanders, Khalil could exercise control on the ground. However, he mainly enjoyed popular support from subcommanders from his own tribe (Flint & de Waal 2008). On the lower ranks, Khalil's men tried to buy support on the battlefield. They did not limit themselves to Zaghawa areas but also attempted to recruit people from the Fur hearth of Jebel Marra with the provision of money, food, and clothing. However, this was not enough to overcome lack of pre-existing ties. Many non-Kobeans thought Khalil did not acquire the legitimacy of uniting all Darfurians (Jumbert & Lanz 2013; Flint & de Waal 2008). Therefore, many of JEM's Kapka followers, followed Jibreel, which was a condition for the rebel splinter (Flint & de Waal 2008; Tubiana 2011).

Third, we should observe that under a condition of growing frustration about the leadership and a lack of vertical organisational ties, subcommanders start to show behaviour that is not in line with the political agenda of the leaders of the movement. Khalil was not often in Darfur while the negotiations were going on. Jibreel Abdul Karim openly shared how unsatisfied he was with Khalil micromanaging the movement from Europe (Flint & de Waal 2008). In addition, before the NMRD was founded, members who challenged Khalil's leadership created a discourse about how Khalil Ibrahim focused more on Turabi than on the JEM. The established groups of the JEM were openly criticised, especially by younger people in displaced camps (Jumbert & Lanz 2013). This discourse was a necessary condition for the group to splinter, as it decreased Khalil's legitimacy and subsequently, his ability to have control on the ground.

Finally, we would observe that followers—mostly subcommanders who are in direct contact with the local population – initiate to splinter from the parent organisation because they do not feel represented by the political agenda of the leadership during the negotiations. This does not match the evidence as Jibreel, who defected from the organisation and established the NMRD, was JEM's military chief. Thus, the rebel split occurred at the leadership level (Flint & de Waal 2008).

If the substantial explanation fits the evidence, first, we should observe that during a peace process two or more actors that are in a coalition together disagree about the content of the peace agreement. JEM needed to broaden its support base to pose a serious military threat towards the government. Therefore, Khalil was forced to win the support of people that also came from different tribes. What most of the non-Kobé members had in common was that they believed in the philosophy of the black book that focused on the marginalization of the Darfur people (Flint & de Waal 2008). The disagreement between Khalil and Jibreel was mostly about how JEM was centred around Turabi and its Islamist movement (Flint & de Waal).

Second, we should observe that there is one coalition that feels relatively deprived with respect to the peace agreement. One of the reasons why Jibreel and his followers splintered was because they wanted to sign a peace agreement on their own terms (Jumbert & Lanz 2016). As Khalil Ibrahim was the rebel ruler, he had more to say during negotiations than Jibreel. NMRD said that —opposed to JEM—they wanted peace and therefore accepted the invitation of President Deby to come to N'djamena and sign a ceasefire agreement (TNH 2005). The third observable implication, that assumes that the fragmented factions do not longer see their presence at the table tenable holds as JEM had a more attractive alternative.

If the elite rivalry explanation fits the evidence, first, we should observe that the rebel ruler tries to exclude its former elites under a condition of high rivalry when the rebel ruler feels challenged by the rival elite. Within the movement some non-Kobe members held senior positions; however, the real power stayed within Khalil and his Kobe inner circle (Flint & de Waal 2008). Jibreel Abdel Karim, who established the splinter movement was part of the Chadian Kapka clan and openly criticized the power-vacuum Khalil created around him (Tanner et al. 2007). Khalil and his close allies fiercely suppressed all actors that challenged him. As the JEM leadership got hold of Jibreel who tried to gain support for new non-tribal leadership, Khalil stopped sharing critical information with him and his support base. In addition, he imprisoned several of Jibreels supporters in Girgira, the South of Tine, who afterwards claimed that they had been abused (Flint & de Waal 2008).

Second, we should observe that the rebel ruler and the rival elite built up their own security network under a condition of high elite rivalry as the threat or presence of infighting increases. The soon-to-be splinter group was already in contact with members of the Chadian regime before they established the NMRD (Flint & de Waal 2008). Khalil knew that Jibreel had met with Chadian supporters in Paris before the NMRD emerged. Idriss Deby, the Chadian President and most of his inner circle distrusted the Islamist background of most of his leaders (Tubiana 2011). The alternative support Jibreel had provided the necessary power to establish an alternative party in which they could survive. Moreover, Khalil always had a group of aides who operated as personal bodyguards, both inside as outside of his room (Flint & de Waal 2008). This signifies that he was aware of the possibility of infighting.

Third, we would observe that during the negotiations the elite and the rebel ruler splinter under a condition of high elite rivalry when the peace process is in favour of one of them at the expense of the other. The actual trigger of the split was when Khalil demanded Jibreel to withdraw to Kordofan with all his forces when a massive government attack across North Darfur in February 2004 was imminent. The moment Jibreel gathered his support base, JEM attacked and killed his Kapka chief of staff, Omar Issa Rabe (Flint & de Waal 2008). As Jibreel always had less power in JEM and felt it was unlikely that the peace process would be in his advantage. The alternative peace process on the other hand, would. Therefore, it was a strategic decision for Jibreel to defect, especially, under the condition of infighting and exclusion.

This case shows that rebel fragmentation occurred between the rebel ruler and its chief of military whilst there were both elements of structural divisions and substantial divisions.

However, the eventual trigger was because of a high level of elite rivalry between the chairman Khalil Ibrahim and the former JEM chief of military. Whilst the negotiations were going on, both parties were already suspicious of one another. However, the actual killing of one of Jibreels most important men was the final trigger. Still, the structural explanation has some explanatory power, as it was the lack of pre-existing horizontal and vertical ties within the organisation that provides the condition of a leadership in which the power was divided over ethnic lines with contested political agendas. One can argue that the structural pre-conditions of the movement created the necessary conditions for elite rivalry to escalate.

6.3. Sudanese People's Liberation Movement/ Army (SPLM/A)

The SPLM/A is a former rebel group, established in 1983. The group primarily operated in Southern Sudan, parts of the Nuba mountains, Blue Nile, and Eastern Sudan (Wassara 2010). In 2005, SPLM/A signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). By that time John Garang was the leader of the movement (Pendle 2018). The peace agreement promised SPLM/A members a prominent position in the government and the organisation of a referendum about the independence of South-Sudan (Casey-Maslen 2013).

In contrast to the two latter cases, the main question of this section is under which condition the SPLM/A did not splinter during the Comprehensive Peace negotiations. To answer this question, I explain which observable implication holds, but more importantly, why certain observable implications do not hold.

If the structural explanation fits the evidence of the SPLM/A, first, we should observe that the leaders of the rebel groups operate in an organisation without centralised leadership because the organisational structure is too weak to overcome the lack pre-war ties on the leadership level. The SPLM/A could not rely on pre-existing horizontal ties on the leadership level. In the beginning of the 1990's there were tension between the Dinka—the tribe that leader John Garang is from—and the Nuer—the tribe some rival leaders are from which ended up in a splinter group. However, after years of negotiations led by South Sudanese churches and support of the United States, the Dinka and Nuer factions reunited in 2002 (Brosché & Duursma 2018). After the unification other tribal groups have been relatively equally represented in the SPLM/A's leadership. The SPLM/A even changed its command structure to include Riek Machar. Garang asked Salva Kiir who was also a Dinka, to resign as vice president to create space for Riek Machar, one of the figure heads of the Nuer tribe (Rolandsen 2005; Barltrop

2010). The integration of former defectors into the ranks of the SPLA enabled the rebel group to conduct negotiations in Kenya as a united, strong movement (Rolandsen 2005). The leaders mostly united by their shared goal: the creation of an independent South-Sudan. As the CPA was the means to that end, all leaders prevented the CPA from failing. Since there were clear agreements about the division of power and they shared a political agenda during the negotiations, the variation in tribal lines was compensated (Brosché & Duursma 2018).

Second, we should observe that there are subcommanders who do not share pre-war ties with any powerful members in the leadership of the rebel group organisation while, simultaneously, there is a lack of communication between the leadership and the subcommanders during the negotiations. Even though not all leaders shared pre-existing ethnic ties with the subcommanders, it could rely on strong local institutions through which it could streamline information. In the past, many non-Dinka communities viewed the SPLM-a as a Dinka movement because the leading ranks were mainly dominated by Dinka. This changed when the former elites were integrated in the movement (Barltrop 2010; Brosché & Duursma 2018).

Another element that contributed to the strong vertical ties between the leaders and subcommanders are the local institutions. Between 1992 and 1996, there was a high level of insecurity in SPLM/A held areas. This prevented establishing basic local structures and limited opportunities for popular participation in the decision-making process. In 1995 the competition for political supremacy finished which made it possible for the SPLM/A leadership to re-establish trust and political control. In 1994 the SPLM/A held a National Convention, which was a turning point regarding the organisation's structure. Most changes occurred at the local level**.** More frequently official meetings involved several institutions and assemblies of large numbers of people. This provided opportunities for local representatives to voice their opinions. According to supporters, this was the moment that the movement transformed from a militaristic, ineffective, and exclusive rebel army into a democratic, efficient, and popular activity (Rolandsen 2005).

Third, we would observe that under a condition of growing frustrations about the leadership, subcommanders show behaviour that is not in line with the political agenda of the leaders of the movement. John Garang enjoyed a significant amount of legitimacy because he tried to unite all Darfurians and therefore he managed to keep control over its subcommanders during the peace process, even though he was physically absent (Jumbelt & Lanz 2009). Most of SPLM/A's followers shared the aim of the leadership to sign a peace agreement. As the political agenda during the negotiations seems to align with the need of its subcommanders,

there was no need for subcommanders to splinter from the parent organisation because they did not feel represented by the leadership (Brosché & Duursma 2018).

If the substantial explanation fits the evidence, first, we should observe that during a peace process two or more actors that are in a coalition together disagree about the content of the peace agreement. The CPA promised the rights of South Sudanese to self-determination through a free and fair referendum. As this was the goal of the movement, there was no disagreement about the content. Moreover, the SPLM/A had a lot of material incentives to offer. They attracted many factions by promising them several rewards, tolerating corruption by commanders, and providing high-level positions in the army for mostly illiterate commanders and jobs in the army for the fighters (Rolandsen 2005). Thus, the possibility to share wealth and power in the leadership was an instrument to overcome divisions about the content of the agreement.

Second, we should observe that there is one coalition that feels relatively deprived in respect to the peace agreement. It happened once that a disagreement of the content created tensions at the leadership level. In 2004 a potential peace-agreement between the GoS and SPLM/A was imminent. However, Salva Kiir, former First Deputy Chairman of the SPLM/A, was concerned that if SPLM/A would sign, it would give Garang more power because it would give him more international legitimacy, which would make it more difficult to reorganize SPLM/A structures and to decentralise power away from Garang (Pendle 2018).

Third, we would observe that the relatively deprived coalition fragments, because it does not longer see its presence at the negotiation table tenable. Eventually, Garang and Kiir reconciled enough to not sign the agreement and continue the negotiation (Pendle 2018). As this example shows, postponing the agreement could have been a crucial condition in diminishing tensions within the rebel group. In addition, this was apart from the latter example, a point that was very easy to avoid for the SPLM/A. Many members of the group were longing for peace, so eventually there was no resistance about signing a peace with the government. Especially not since there was also little disagreement about the content of the peace agreement (Rolandsen 2005).

If the elite rivalry explanation fits the evidence, first, we should observe that the rebel ruler tries to exclude its former elites under a condition of high rivalry when the rebel ruler feels challenged by the rival elite. During the 1990s rivalry within the leadership of the movement was predominant. Dr Riek Machar, Dr Lam Akol and Gordon Kong Chol rebelled against

SPLM/A's leadership and accused Garang of being a dictatorial leader. Machar emphasised the role of Garang in the SPLM/A committing widespread human rights abuses and recruiting many child soldiers. Soon, these elite divisions became apparent at the local level; former allied communities started fighting one another as they supported different factions. Both Riek and Garang used ethnic narratives, targeted ethnic killings, and demanded mobilisation along ethnic lines (Rolandsen 2005). The division and infighting were primary between the Dinka's (John Garang, the rebel ruler) and the Nuer (his rivals).

In august 1991, two prominent leaders, Riek Machar and Lam Akol split away. This resulted in a high level of fighting between the two factions throughout the 1990's (Brosché & Duursma 2018). In 2002, the latter defected rebel leaders reintegrated into the rebel military organisation (Rolandsen 2005). Riek Machar promised to stay loyal to the SPLM/A and ensure the implementation of the CPA. Hence, instead of excluding rivals, as we would expect, the SPLM/A started to integrate old rivals in the higher ranks.

As the rebel group never created space for elite rivalry, the SPLM/A elites were not looking for an external support base. The SPLM/A could even provide defecting commanders from other groups security guarantees, and by doing so, mitigated concerns for survival (Seymour 2014). Thus, instead of elites seeking for support, they created a safe support base for the defected commanders from other groups themselves. Neither was the rebel group during the CPA divided in such a way that during negotiations the one group could be excluded at the expense of the other one. The abovementioned means, that also other expectations from elite rivalry do not match de evidence of the case.

The SPLM/A avoided a second splinter on the leadership level, and fragmentation between the leaders and the subcommanders. On the leadership level, SPLM/A decided to reintegrate high ranked former elites during the negotiations. Restructuring the movement without fuelling elite rivalry was possible because they all shared the aim to create a reunited and independent South Sudan, for all Sudanese people (Rolandsen 2015; Brosché & Duursma 2018). In addition, SPLM/A avoided substantial divisions as John Garang rejected a peace agreement, because Salva Kiir did not agree with it (Pendle 2018).

The peaceful Dinka-Nuer relations in the higher ranks influenced the success of the CPA at the ground level as well. The subcommanders and followers agreed with the content of the agreement and the strategy the leadership pursued. They were eager to sign the CPA, which stopped the fighting between South Sudanese people. The unity on the local level was also due to strong local institutions that made it possible to create cohesion between the leader and his

subcommanders (Brosché & Duursma 2018). Concluding, there was a significant amount of unity among the southern Sudanese tribes and leaders because of a strong political landscape and an attractive peace agreement.

Chapter 7. Comparing the Cases

The results of the within-case analysis show that all three rebel groups needed to broaden their support base over ethnic lines to increase their military strength to challenge the government. Therefore, all groups needed to cope with the challenge of heterogeneity. However, whilst the SPLM/A did not fracture over weak social ties, the SLM/A and the JEM did (Nathan 2007; Netabay 2009; Jumbert & Lanz 2013).

There seems to be a paradox that the SLM/A and JEM did not manage to overcome. On the one hand, the movements needed to include people in the higher and lower ranks of the movement from other communities to expand their military capacity. On the other hand, the rebel groups tried to hold a significant amount of power within their close-knit community. The central question of this between-case analysis is under what conditions the Darfurian rebel groups could not overcome this paradox. The chapter above identifies two types of fragmentation: 1) fragmentation between rebel leaders and 2) fragmentation between rebel leaders and subcommanders. The first section in this chapter outsets a comparison of the cases on the leadership level; the second section compares the cases at the local level; and the third section will bring both levels together again.

Two differences between the JEM and SLM/A, and the South Sudanese SPLM/A demonstrate under which conditions rebel group fragmentation on the leadership level occurs. First, there was a difference in whether the movements shared a political agenda during the negotiations. Within the SLM/A, the two leaders disagreed about the content of the agreement. During negotiations, Abdul Wahid demanded more recognition for the Fur clan than Minni Minnawi would sign for (Seymour 2014). The JEM splinter occurred partly because Jibreel wanted a peace process that Khalil Ibrahim did not control because Jibreel did not trust Khalil's political agenda. Eventually, the Chadian government offered Jibreel an alternative peace process (Flint & de Waal 2008; Tubiana 2011). The SPLM/A was not as politically divided as the other two rebel groups. All SPLM/A leaders were committed not to let the CPA fail because they wanted to end the war and create an independent South Sudanese state for all Sudanese people (Rolandsen 2005).

Secondly, the SPLM/A during the negotiations was less characterised by an environment of increased elite rivalry than the SLM/A and JEM. In JEM and SLM/A, the leaders consisted of several members from different ethnicities, whilst the real power was concentrated around the rebel ruler and its close relatives (Jumbert & Lanz 2013). An unfair distribution of power can stimulate elite rivalry as it can frustrate people who feel excluded from the promised power (Roessler 2011; Christia 2012; Slovik 2012).

We can see the tension on the leadership back in the legitimacy the rebel leaders enjoyed. Whilst the SPLM/A had a democratically elected leader, John Garang, the JEM and SLM/A were characterised by a degree of contested leadership. Within the SLM/A, Minni Minnawi was also democratically elected, however, with the absence of important key figures of the SLM/A. This made his leaderships position contested. The JEM's leader Khalil Ibrahim was chairman because he established the movement, not because he was elected. Several actors in higher-ranked positions found that he did not focus enough on fighting for the cause of marginalisation of the Sudanese and wondered whether he was the right leader (Rolandsen 2005). A chosen leader such as Garang, dimished the space for other actors in the leadership to compete for the leadership positions (Cunningham & Sawyer 2019).

Two differences between the SLM/A, and the South Sudanese SPLM/A demonstrate under which conditions rebel group fragmentation on the local level occurs. First, the cases differ in the way in which subcommanders and their followers felt represented by the agenda of the rebel leaders. For example, Fur communities did not feel represented by Minni Minnawi, who focused on the Zaghawa clan (Seymour 2014). This led to an inconsistency within the SLM/A about which strategy leaders needed to pursue during the negotiations (TNH 2006b).

Even though its ethnic heterogeneity characterised the SPLM/A, it managed to provide enough security to control the population outside the Kobe communities (Brosché & Duursma 2018). The movement explicitly mentioned that their agenda reached further than only considering the Kobe and Darfurians. Thus, SPLM/A reinvented a necessarily shared identity that fostered cohesion within the group (Flint & de Waal 2008; Staniland 2012; Christia 2012). Moreover, in SPLM/A, there was no disagreement about the content and which strategy to pursue. While the Darfurians wanted to continue fighting because DPA failed to consider essential root issues such as land rights and compensation, the CPA addressed the prime grievances in South Sudan: independence. A result of the southern desire for independence was that southern leaders did not need to resist the CPA to keep legitimacy among the communities,

which contributed to a collective commitment to the implementation of the CPA (Brosché & Duursma 2018).

Moreover, there was a difference in control on the ground. Once the peace process was ongoing, the physical absence of the leadership exacerbated pre-existing cleavages, which was one of the conditions for the eventual rebel split. The Darfur agreements drew the leadership even further away from its soldiers and the civilian population on the local level, but in contrast to the SPLM/A in South Sudan, the Darfur rebels did not establish such civilian solid administration. Such administration was responsible for consolidating the areas under their control that was strong enough to compensate that he was physically absent because of the negotiations (Rolandsen 2005; Jumbert & Lanz 2013). What facilitated this is that the SPLM/A operated far from a government-held region and competing factions. Even though they were physically distanced from the local people, they established civilian administration in the areas held under control through which they still held some command on the ground (Rolandsen 2005). Thus, inherent to the difference in control on the ground level is whether there are strong local institutions.

To come to broader conclusions about the condition for rebel group fragmentation, we can bring both levels of fragmentation together again. The first observation is how the rebel groups ability to overcome a state of heterogeneity that comes with expanding power determines rebel group fragmentation. All groups had to deal with the ethnic diversity that characterises Sudan. Therefore, the rebel groups could not rely on shared identities and norms that often facilitate cohesion and encourage behaviour consistent with the organisation's goals (Woldemariam 2018). The SLM/A highlighted the deeply rooted historical differences plaguing Sudan (Flint & de Waal 2008). Instead of reinventing identities, the leaders formed a close-knit group around them, all sharing an ethnic background while others felt unsafe or even excluded (Christia 2012). A similar phenomenon happened within the JEM, in which Jibreel and his followers felt a distance from the course the leaders were taking (Flint & de Waal 2008).

The latter observation is closely related to the difference in leadership quality. The leader of the SPLM/A, John Garang, was already military active for decades. His experience in the war could have contributed to his organisational management capacity, making it possible for him to overcome fragmentation over tribal lines and disagreements about the CPA (Rolandsen 2005; Doctor 2020). Other higher-ranked actors and commanders contested the other leaders because they failed to establish strong institutions, lack communication, and focused on their personal agendas. Remarkable, what all these leaders share is the absence of

pre-war military experience: Minni Minnawi was a former schoolteacher, Abdul Wahid was a former lawyer, and Khalil Ibrahim was a politician (Flint & de Waal 2008; HSBA 2011a; HSBA 2011b). The result supports a relationship between the leaders' military experience and fragmentation; the rebel leader with combat experience did not fragment, while the others did (Doctor 2020).

The second observation is that the lack of opportunity to create strong organisational structures drives rebel group fragmentation during a peace process. Organisations often built solid political institutions over time. However, in times of conflict, this is more complicated as state violence or rebel group between- and infighting can create conditions of deep uncertainty. This uncertainty can create structural constraints, which prevent the leaders from restructuring their organisation (Staniland 2012). Both the JEM and the SLM/A are relatively young organisations. They threw themselves into a bloody conflict against the state (Netabay 2009). It often happens those leaders make a strategic miscalculation and are surprised by the onset of a protracted war. For example, SLM/A was militarily strong but underestimated how difficult it was to implement a multi-ethnic infrastructure without created politically vital institutions that prevented them from elite rivalry to escalate (Tanner et al. 2007). Even though a rebel group expects some form of violence, it does not always have the space to establish inclusive institutions (Staniland 2012).

The third observation is that a lack of unitary leadership can make it more challenging to create strong institutions to overcome structural divisions. A unified leadership makes it less likely that elite rivalry emerges and creates the space for leaders to work together and establish local institutions to connect the leaders with all rebel group members, not only with their pre-war network members. The SLM/ A created an infrastructure for multi-ethnic leadership. Still, as the Fur leaders and Zaghawa leaders held different political agendas, a so-called "problem of power-sharing" emerged. Both parties needed to include people in the higher ranks of the movement from other tribes to expand their support base (HSBA 2011A; Svolik 2012). As the rebel rulers felt challenged by some members from the higher ranks of the movement, the rebel groups' environment became more insecure.

The peace process exacerbated this feeling of insecurity because it provided opportunities for one rebel actor at the expense of the other. In SLM/A and JEM, the chairman held the most vital position during negotiations (Flint & de Waal 2008). Once the rival realised this, the need to expand their support base increased. The JEM defectors accepted support from the Chadian government and Abdul Wahid was allowed to settle in Paris when the Abuja Peace talks ended (Flint & de Waal 2008; HSBA, 2011a). This can exacerbate commitment issues to

such an extent that the rebel ruler feels the need to challenge back—for example, by increasing the level of infighting (Roessler 2011). As the rivalry between Abdul Wahid Al-Nur and Minni Minnawi grew, infighting emerged (Netabay 2009). The JEM's actual trigger point of the fragmentation is the murder of a prominent ally of Khalil's rival (Flint & de Waal 2008). A high degree of elite rivalry puts a greater focus on the security arrangements a peace deal offers, as rivals can use this to protect themselves from the other rivals. We saw the latter happen in the case of the SLM/A. Minni Minnawi signed a peace agreement that made the government protect him from Abdul Wahid (Brosché & Duursma 2018). In addition, this made it impossible for his rival to sign the agreement, as it is a political and physical risk to sign an agreement favouring mainly the rebel ruler.

Simultaneously, high rivalry influenced subcommanders to fragment as well. If rebel rulers sign a peace agreement to ensure their safety without taking the needs of the followers into account, it can mean the end of the subcommanders support. For example, the DPA was highly unpopular by Minni Minnawi's followers, who eventually left him. As a result, Minnawi lost so much support from commanders that it had no access to rebel-controlled areas of Darfur. He could only safely move in government-controlled areas (HSBA 2011b). As the last shows, a peace process can push the rebel ruler in a forced agreement while pushing the rebel rival to—while under pressure—expand its support base and gain the strength to establish a new party or join an already existing party.

The SPLM/A, on the other hand, suffered from elite rivalry in earlier years but managed to overcome it as the leadership of the party focused on reintegrating high ranked former elites during the negotiations instead of excluding them (Brosché & Duursma 2018). During the negotiations the movement managed to construct a feeling of unity, as all leaders and communities on the ground did not want to complicate the CPA. Hence, the SPLM/A shows how unified leadership provides safety within the organisation (Brosché & Duursma 2018).

Chapter 8. Conclusion

In this thesis, I examined under which conditions it is most likely that rebel group fragmentation occurs during a peace-making process. The fact that the JEM and SLM/A fractured during negotiations while the SPLM/A did not called for an examination, as understanding the difference between the groups can answer the central question of this thesis. This study builds upon scholars who argue that rebel group fragmentation is undertheorized, because rebel groups are seen as unitary actors (Walther & Pedersen 2020). What the result of this thesis shows is

that also fragmentation itself is not a unitary concept. The relevant conditions that catalyse rebel groups to splinter depend on whether fragmentation occurs within the leadership level or the local level—for example, when subcommanders initiate the defection. Under a state of high elite rivalry, it is most likely that a rebel group fragments on the leadership level. Under a condition of weak pre-war ties that the rebel movement cannot overcome due to a lack of unitary leadership and strong local institutions, it is more likely that subcommanders and their followers splinter from the parent organisation.

This study sets out several other innovative observations for rebel group fragmentation. Firstly, one point of inconsistency the fragmented rebel groups could not overcome, was that their military effectiveness was in strong contrast to the weakness of their political structure. The most significant political challenge for all rebel groups was that it consisted of several communities that did not share pre-war ties (Brosché & Duursma 2018). The SPLM/A managed to overcome the lack of pre-war linkages. Thus, structural divisions itself are not the central problem, but rather how a rebel group deals with this diversity (Rolandsen 2005). In support of previous research, this thesis concludes that rebel leaders with combat experience are more likely to remain cohesive, whilst leaders with political experience are more likely to fragment (Doctor 2020). Surprisingly, the JEM and SLM/A were militarily strong enough to resist Khartoum's attempts to solve the conflict through force. However, they lacked the political capacity to move forward with the negations as a united front. Therefore, more than weapons or military power, these movements need political structure to control their followers on the ground during negotiations (Tanner et al., 2007).

Secondly, this study demonstrates that elite rivalry is not only relevant to study genocide or autocratic regimes (Roessler 2011; Svolik 2012; van der Maat 2020) but also to understand rebel group fragmentation. A peace process is likely to catalyse commitment issues— for example, if the rebel ruler can gain more benefits from an agreement than the rival, there is more pressure on the rival to expand its own support network. At the same time, ongoing rivalry can catalyse fragmentation of subcommanders. When rebellious rulers are hungry to sign a peace deal because it can provide security, they may need to sign a treaty that does not meet the needs of their followers (HSBA 2011b; Brosché & Duursma 2018). If a negotiated settlement is not in the subcommanders best interest, it is even more complicated for the rebel ruler to convince subcommanders to lay down their arms (Duursma & Fliervoet 2020).

Moreover, a condition of high rivalry exacerbates a feeling of political and physical unsafety within a rebel movement. Scholarly on fragmentation acknowledges that the presence of security threats diminishes the opportunity for leaders to establish a robust political

framework. Whilst these scholars argue that external actors, such as the state or other rebel groups create unsafe conditions within a rebel group, this thesis highlights that elite diminishes the opportunities to develop institutions that foster horizontal and vertical social ties (Staniland 2012; Bulttman 2018). Thus, another outcome of this study is that field of elite rivalry and rebel governance together explain why rebel group fragmentation occurs.

Thirdly, this thesis shows how systematic insecurity—from both within as outside the rebel group—was primarily existing in the younger rebel groups, the SLM/A and the JEM (Woldemariam 2018). We know that SPLM/A tamed elite rivalry by including and promising high ranked positions to former elites. Simultaneously, they avoided disputes about the peace agreement by changing the agreement's content (Rolandsen 2005). We also know that the SPLM/A already had a peace process before, already experienced elite rivalry and existed longer than the two others. The latter highlights a limitation of this research and a potential for future research. A limitation of this research is that one can consider whether the SPLM/A was politically too strong to compare with the two other cases. Future research can examine three cases that are even more similar because—for example, by including the age of the rebel group.

Another feature taken from this study is that a more profound understanding of rebel group fragmentation conditions can have clear policy implications in two ways. First, this study aims to demonstrate how important it is to focus on within-rebel group exclusion at the negotiation table, mainly concerning local fragmentation. Rebel leaders are likely to be present—or at least, be invited—to the negotiation table. However, this differs in the case of subunits. Suppose a particular group—for example, Arabs in the SLM/A—do not feel represented anymore with the agenda of the organisation's leadership. To prevent them from leaving the organisation and follow or establish an organisation that provides more protection and recognition, mediators should consider the internal politics of the conflict parties (Christia 2012). The latter can help negotiators to think about which groups to invite to the negotiation table.

The second policy implication is that considering the conditions under which rebel group fragmentation occurs, makes it less likely that a peace process starts that it bound to lead to rebel group fragmentation, leading to an intensification of violence (Rudloff & Findley 2016). Sometimes, it is better to postpone peace processes if the rebel groups are not mature enough. If mediators and policymakers understand what the underlying conditions are that catalyse rebel group fragmentation, they can wonder whether the negotiation initiative should happen if the conflict is not yet 'ripe' (Zartman 2008).

Chapter 9. Bibliography

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