NOTHING WILL EVER BE THE SAME: THE GROWING GENERATION GAP IN SOUTH KORDOFAN STATE, SUDAN (2022-2024)[1]

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ABSTRACT

This work draws on preliminary data obtained two years ago on the aspirations, priorities, and needs of young people in South Kordofan State. It examines intergenerational communication and perception of relation under conditions of war, the manifestation of which emphasizes the generational gap between parents and children. As a non-straight forward relation between generations, the gap is traditionally driven by age differences and incompatible view points between the two sectors. Parents usually ignore children's complaints and pay less attention to what they ask, even though children have the opportunity to not accept the traditional ways of parents' lifestyle. It is nothing new that parents and their children do not get along with each other. But in war-torn South Kordofan State, the gap is widening dramatically and affecting the fabric of society. The relation between parents and youth has become tinged with tension, disharmony, uncertainty and full of anxiety. Misunderstandings are increasing; disconnection is manifested in lack of advice and weak interaction. War combined with other traditional factors augmented the gap over time and made children self-reliant, less attached to family, breaking the shackles and going beyond the limits of normal life.

Keywords: Generation, Gap, War, Youth, Parents.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This research focuses on exploring the growing intergenerational gap between parents and children in SKS under wartime conditions because it may represent and underlying driver of the gap's widening. Although the gap is traditionally caused by the traditional factors such as age differences, non-conforming views and gender issues, at SKS – a region that has witnessed continuous fighting since 1984, the war has fueled this gap with new dynamic, which adds substantive importance to this research. Youth have been a driving force for change in Sudan for decades, resisting an old and, stagnant political system led by an old generation that failed to run the country wisely and fulfills youth's aspirations for change. The resistance culminated in the political uprising that toppled the regime Omar al-Bashir's regime in 2019. But the repercussions of the revolution did not measure-up to the change the youth were hoping for, although, it has changed the relationship between Sudanese youth and their parents profoundly and created a clear gap between the two sectors that needs to be studied and explained.

The current academic work on generation gap; attempt to highlight the fact that we currently live in a globalized society that is undergoing rapid changes as a result of massive revolutions, which creating fast and accessible means of communication between different people, families, societies, culture and countries all over the world (Saud M.A.S. Al-Lawati 2019). Recent advances in technology and social media have made the world a small global village where people can communicate instantly and efficiently with one another (Ibid.). In this regard, we often hear the term "generation" thrown round without any real knowledge of what this concept means? Why does it matter, and why is it important? (Hannah, D. 2019: P.2). A critical understanding of this gap is not just because it affects relationships, but also shapes daily activities, resulting from the tremendous advances in communication and digital devices within the reach of younger generations.

Based on what has mentioned above, this research is considered an endeavor to explore the phenomenon of the generation gap that began to worsen due to the war at the nationwide level in general and in SKS in particular. The horrors of war have worsened in a more horrific way than before, causing negative and commutative multifaceted effects that have complicated the generation gap in the region to in an unprecedented way that it made a rift in familial relationship and in social cohesion as well. Although young people are the main victims of war, they are also agents of war – the main combatants on the forefronts. Social media platforms, global media houses, TV and broadcast channels and social narratives, show how military factions on different sides are mobilizing young people to move away with every line. The spread of war across the region not only destroyed physical assets and civilian infrastructure, but also led to fundamental changes in the direction of parents-youth relations. The war has perpetuated the generation gap, widening over time in favor of youth freedom and declining parental control.

1.1 Significance & Questions

The importance of this study comes because it represents the first study that attempts to explore the possible causes of the generation gap between parents and youth during war time. It focuses on exploring the driving factors that highlighted the generation gap between the two sectors by formulating the following questions:

1. What are the main reasons for the generation gap in SKS?
2. How did the war affect the power dynamics of the generation gap and the management of relationships?
3. How did the youth sector and parents view the generation gap?
4. Is there any change in the gender role in the generation gap due to war factor?

2.0 METHODOLOGY

The study relies on a continuous and sequential method of collecting data over two consecutive years from two sources: first, from focus group discussion (FGDs) with the youth sector conducted by the author as consultative meetings from 12 to 26 April 2022. Second, semi-structured interviews with parents with parents in each sample area. A participatory approach of generating data through lecturing and barnstorming were additional tools used. The aim was to identify the aspirations, priorities, needs and challenges of youth in SKS to integrate them into the peace-building processes stipulated in the Juba Peace Agreement (JPA) in 2020. A

total of 100 participants attended the consultative meetings; distributed equally among five localities: Kadugli, Alkiwaik, Dilling, Algoaz and Alabassiya. Both male and female included. They came from different background: students, members of resistance committees, political parties, civic sphere and ordinary people. The sampling was conducted through voluntary recruitment with the assistance of youth associations in each location. In addition, the semi-participant observation technique by the author was a good tool for verify the data and gain deep analytical insight. Data were coded according to observed frequency and thematic issues were prioritized based on the statistical package framework. Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was used to investigate the lived experience of the sample population, capturing emerging issues related to thematic relationship between generations and extracting comprehensive and in-depth understanding of gap differences. The article benefited from review and analysis of various other sources – academic publications, reports, etc. Consents were obtained collectively with the youth sample population before the meetings began and individually with parents on the condition of anonymity for confidentiality purposes. A triangulation approach was used to ensure the reliability of the collected data and a field follow-up mechanism was established to monitor manifestation of the gap for one year.

2.1 Theory

The available literature that addressed the issue of the generation gap looked at it from a dual social-psychological perspective; in terms of perception, understanding and analysis. From a sociological point of view, various theories have been developed about studying the social phenomena of generation gap. Many of these theories concluded that childhood relationships shape an individual's identity as feelings and practices are shaped by the inspirations or rejections family role models (Brannen et al., 2004). The frequency and intensity of relationships between family members as well as the type of family structure help children shape their life (Tehminal, S. et. al, op. cit.). Falk and Falk (2005) presented six theoretical types of family structures in which children could be raised, which will have implications for their future life. The first one is autocratic in which children are not allowed to express their opinions or participate in or lead the decision-making process. The second is an authoritarian structure in which children are allowed to express their thoughts and opinions but decisions are implemented only by the parents. The third is a democratic structure that allows children to make some decisions regarding their own behaviors although the final decision must have parental consensus. The equalitarian structure gives as much importance to children's voices as to their parents. On the other hand, the permissive structure gives them more freedom to make decisions for them-selves compared to their parents. Finally, Leissez Faire structure denies full parental interference in children the affairs.

The above classifications of familial structures are essential for understanding the root-causes of the gap between generations and why conflict arises and staggers due to the effect of each structure. However, most of these theories view that elders are loyal, committed, reliable, and expect the same from their children; as the most possible and respectful path to pass through in their life, no matter this argument is still valid under the overwhelming impact of communication and digital technology of today. Elders usually try to inculcate values, social norms, and emotional growth in their children (Mahidra, S. R., and Pami, Gaube, 2017). Sulaiman MAS and Al-Muscati SR 2017 found that: Personality characteristics, information level, technical information, life style, social norms and cultural values, work values, and ways

of communication were the factors that contributed to generation gap. However some sources invite difference in beliefs and politics of values as main causes of the generation gap (Wikipedia 2019).

Another theory, which tries to study the social causes of the generation gap is the "Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory (AUM). It seeks to understand how our communication changes to balance anxiety or uncertainty in different social situation (Stephan, op. cit. 1999). AUM theory helps to explain why some generations may seem to "put up a wall," or be less responsive when interacting with generations out of their own; based on stereotyping, whether this is accurate judgment or not. Generations may feel uncomfortable or uncertain when interacting with grandparents, because they may believe that their grandparents are not interested in the same activities or topics that they are interested in (Swiggard, S., et. al., 2011). In contrast to this result, some theories tell that generations may have more communication methods in common than different (Venter, E., 2017).

Conflict theory is an additional theory that is relevant to the investigation of the generation gap and fits reasonably well within this work. Power dynamics in societies are viewed as "a struggle between groups competing for power and resources. The theory focuses on how inequalities in wealth, status and power create conflict that drives social change." (Nikerson, Chalotte, 2023). The theory highlights how dominant groups maintain power and privileges through control of economic, political and cultural institutions (Ibid). The conflict that this focuses on is the conflict of vision between the youth and older generation who enjoy privilege of dictating to the youth because they monopolize wealth, experiences and socialization mechanisms.

Psychological approach, on the other hand, builds on the assumption that the new generation's psychology is different in such that: they think, learn, and act differently because they live in a world occupied with digital information, active platforms, visual reality, knowledge economy and the fourth industrial revolution (Saud M.A.S. Al-Lawati, op. cit.). In support of this, another set of theories concentrate on the process of "socialization" of today's youth as a core factor for the growing-up generation gap. The current youth in SKS is raised in environment that often emphasizes individuality, information, entertainment and social interaction with peers and friends" (Roehling et al., 2011). Stepanova 2014 recommended that parents should possess scientific psychological knowledge to understand the psychology of youths. It is important to study today's youths as a distinct group because they need to be treated, taught, marketed to, communicated with and studied differently from previous generation (Beinhoff, L 2011).

The above theories can provide a reasonable conceptual and analytical framework for this study for several reasons: First, the war element in the SKS context resulted in profound social and psychological impacts on both children and parents to varying degrees. Second, the influence of the family structure through which the values and norms of socialization are transmitted from the older generation to the younger generation has gradually begun to rise for reasons of modernization. As elsewhere around the world, the current SKS generation has grown up in an environment that often emphasizes individuality, information, entertainment and social interaction with peers and friends. Third, conflict transformation in SKS will favor the youth sector as the transition from combat to peace represents important crossroads processes for their position within society. Furthermore, the study reiterates existing discourses that

embodying youth aspirations through plans of hopes and dreams highlights youth's evolving self-agency (Raphaela, K., et al. 2022).

Generally speaking, current scientific works continue to emphasize that generations are different and unable to communicate effectively with each other, and this causes further discussion between generations (Towner, 2016). As far as this literature is concerned, nothing has been done so far to investigate the phenomenon of generation gap in the context of wartime conditions as in the case study in this article.

2.2 Context

South Kordofan State, a geographically isolated region in South-central Sudan, has a long history of conflict dates back to the early 1980s, when it first became involved in fighting between the Sudan's governments (SG) and the SPLA/SPLM. The state has deep roots in historical, ethnic and political tension; on the one hand, against the central government, and in internal conflict on the other hand.

The fighting between SG and SPLA has sustained for more than four decades now. Although, a short-lived peace period was concluded in the CPA 2005, which ended the second Sudanese civil war, some crucial issues were left unresolved. These were issues related to governance, resource sharing, and the political status of the region including option for self-determination. The last point included demands for greater regional autonomy, equitable sharing of resource and aspirations for self-governance within a secular framework. In spite of, all these factors relate to the concern of youth, present and in the future, all of these issues in the CPA were concluded in complete absence of youth sector and its urging demands.

Recently, security situation has become worsened due to the warning of various factions in the region, including the ongoing war. Although, the war begun in Khartoum between the two military entities, namely, SAF and RSF, the war in SKS region has taken on three dimensions where three military factions are fighting, considering SPLA the third stakeholder. The war has negatively affected the generation gap between parents and children with greater complexity.

Traditionally, prior to the political uprising in 2019, youth and women in SKS were subject to a restricting disciplinary patriarchal norm, and therefore, not in a position to determine their own distny. Parents were in charge of all areas related to youth affairs; make choices, choose their preferences and make decisions about what they consider to be the best way of decent socialization for young people. The outbreak of war in April 2023 has brought about profound challenges, upending the structural system of family relationship in favor of young people who had hardly pushed for self-determination. As the current generations who have access to and connection to cyberspace and its virtual communities, youth were not happy with that kind of continuous parental dependency; they began to whisper unspoken dissatisfaction within the inner circles of interaction and sent signal of hope for certain change.

2.3 Field's Work

From April 12 to 26, 2022, five models of consultative meetings were conducted with selected youth groups in five localities: Kadugli, Alkiwaik, Dilling, Algoaz and Alabassiya. The consultative FGDs aimed to enhance youth engament through organized and purposeful

participation in various aspects under the title: "Building comprehensive dialogues between governments and youth in SKS", by identifying youth priorities, needs and challenges. In total, a number of 100 samples were selected within 5-FGDs, each of which included 20-participants from with diverse groups' age 18 to 25 years old, representing different background, students, professional and political affiliations, civic community-based organization and environmental activists.

The FGDs provided a much-needed platform for youth after years of hatred and divisive conflict, and a step forwards to their constructive contribution to a peaceful and inclusive post-revolutionary Sudan. It was an attempt to bring generations together and have an interactive dialogue to discuss issues of common ground. The following illustrative tables; table (1) and table (2) show the basic information of participants and the categorical analysis of their social, economic, professional and political backgrounds.

Table (1): Participants: Areas, Date & Gender Analysis

Locality	Date	Gender		Total
		Male	**Female**	
Kadugli	12/04/2022	10	10	20
Alkiwaik[2]	16/04/2022	05	15	20
Dilling	20/04/2022	11	09	20
Algoaz	23/04/2022	10	10	20
Alabassiya	26/04/2022	10	10	20
G. Total		46	54	100

Source: Author Analysis: FGDs: 12 to 26 April 2022

Table (2): Participants' Categorical Analysis

locality	Category					Total
	Student	Resist Comt	Civic Com.	Politician	Others	
Kadugli	04	02	04	02	08	20
Alkiwaik	03	02	01	00	14	20
Dilling	02	04	03	03	08	20
Algoaz	06	05	02	04	03	20
Alabassiya	07	05	02	03	03	20
G. Total	**22**	**18**	**12**	**12**	**36**	**100**

Source: Author Analysis: FGDs: 07 to 22 April 2016 updated 2023

2.4 SKS State: Generations under War

Although many academic literatures trace the generation gap factor of: sex, difference in preference, opinion, conflicting visions of understanding lifestyle, however, in SKS other factors may be invited. I spent two weeks in SKS as a peace-building trainer doing focus group discussion FGDs with five samples communities of youth identifying aspirations, priorities, needs and challenges with the aim of incorporating them in the process of peace-building stipulated by Juba Peace Agreement 2020. Throughout these weeks I met with several groups

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[2] The imbalance representation in favor of female in the locality of Alkiwaik was due to the fact that most of youth during the selection process were reluctant to participate for security conservation

of youth who shared their thoughts on the future. A recurring theme in our conversations was a feeling of disconnection, not only from their parents but from the ways of the older generation as a whole.

The widening rift between different generations is even more multi-faceted. Traditionally, youth and women were under tightly disciplinary socioeconomic setting in which case they were not able to stand on their own capabilities. They were institutionally excluded from the process and mechanisms of decision-making; even, when such decisions directly touched their living preference and expectations. Other entities like community agents, and government circles kept on representing youth in critical matters which impacted their life accordingly. The strong societal and parental control, ironically, has been a contributing factor for some to join one of the warring parties (which in SKS, in addition to the Sudan Armed Forces and the rapid Support Forces, also includes the Sudanese People Liberation Army). The youth to whom I talked to told me that while at home, they were trapped in negative relations with their parents, often being unfairly treated, and not being able to make a living on their own. Joining the war was a golden opportunity for them to break free from their parents' control.

Despite the risks, they enjoyed their time away from home, exchanging news and discussing personal experiences about everything including war to football matches and films. Escaping their childhood homes yet still living close to the city, they had more interaction with other youth, leading to consolidated group-thinking and built mutual trust in the youth community. Over and above that, the impact of technology on youth was immense, in that it fostered peers interaction, consolidated group-thinking and built mutual destiny among youth community in correspondence to parent's ties. The following illustration is an analytical typology to the generation gap in SKS. Through the conversations we had with youth in the five samples communities, a typology of thematic issues that contributed to the generational gap crystalized.

Table (3): Cross-sectional GG Factor Analysis in the 5-FGDs

Factors	Kind of Concern	Reasons	Impact
Authority and Attitude	Youth	Over control and negligence of Youth demands	Misunderstanding
Values of Socialization	Parents/youth	Conflicting views – goodwill from parents and refusal from youth	Disagreement
War	Parents/youth	-Long off-home stay by both sectors reduces family's communication and interaction -Economic empowerment for youth -Gender's appearance in the public space.	Less familial engagement
Unsatisfied needs of youth	Youth	Less spending on youth demand	Little influence and weak orientation
Parents marital status (Polygamy)	Youth	Intra-family conflicts between mother and step-mother	Familial fraction and disruption
Digital technology	Parents	Cyber interaction and Peer effects	Collective solidarity, networking and less commitment to the local norms and values.
Military enrollment	Parents	Youth economic empowerment	Self-spending and more self-freedom

Gender empowerment	Parents	Less parents control	More space for gender in the public sphere and participation in mechanisms of decision-making.

Source: Author analysis from the FGDs

3.0 ANALYSIS & PATTERNS

3.1 Conflict of visions

Analysis of FGDs meetings took patterns' approaches that were reflected as tendencies which compromise, deviate or conflict the parental framework. This was due to the fact that expectations of youth conduct fall-shorter than the mainstream life-style of the parents. Discrepancies in visions, misunderstanding, non-compromise views and conflicting perceptions with elders; all contributed to weaken the traditional ties between youth and their parents. Meeting with several youth groups in SKS was a good chance for them to speak-out their visions concerning the relations with parents during wartime. Trivializing new modes of youth lifestyles, belittle their concern; parents have made kids averse to; and combatant to the elder advice. The common feeling of the entire five samples was that:

"The bilateral relation between us and our elders has become tinged with tension, disharmony, and uncertainty, less communicated and full of anxiety. Misunderstandings are increasing; separation is manifesting in lack of advice and weak interaction."

This finding is consistent with several conducted-on youth, which have shown that young people feel their interests are excluded from the adult-dominated space of activities, leading them to form and mobilize special youth-centered organizations and forums.

3.2 Communication

Parents usually create a certain image in their minds for their children. They hope for their kinds to follow the same path and to act following their values, norms and tradition as the best framework for socialization and good future. In this regard, there is a lack of understanding and acceptance; reciprocity of relation between the groups becomes strained with limited time for familial interaction and follow-up. Youth are unable to communicate his or her thought because, first they were socialized in a non-conducive dialogue environment and second, they lack time of communication with parents under circumstances of wartime. Accordingly, parents are unable to accommodate what kids are thinking of, as stated by a female participant in Algoaz locality:

"The crucial point is that our parents are not yet ready to change the way they view our interests. They want to see us subjectively with the same old framework of their era when they were our age, and that is not fair, not even possible."

Hence, youth feel alienated from the community in which they born, socialized and live-in. They are no longer so committed to the norms and parental oversight. As observed by the impact of the family structure on the generation gap, the frequency and intensity of relations

among in SKS state; family's members help children in shaping their life (Tehminal, S. et. al, op. cit.). However, under the wartime conditions the family's structures have influential impacts on the generation gap between the two sectors. The war provided youth with advantages that enabled them to gradually, act, react and in some cases proact in a flexible manner that was contrary to the nature of the family's structure.

Table (4): Family Structure in the Sample Community 2022

FGDs	Family Structure	Power Dynamics	
		Parents	**Youth**
Kadugli[3]	authoritarian	Dictate	Limited self-expression
Alkiwaik	autocratic	Dictate	Subordinate
Dilling[4]	authoritarian	Dictate	Limited self-expression
Algoaz	autocratic	Dictate	Subordinate
Alabassiya	autocratic	Dictate	Subordinate

Sources: FGDs in the 5 Localities 2022

As revealed by the analysis of FGDs across the sampling groups it was clear that in Kadugli and Dilling localities as metropolitan cities and centers of political activism and educational enlightenment, the structure of family is of authoritarian nature, where kids have enjoyed a limited self-expression. On the other hand, the cases of family structure in the three other localities; families have, are of autocratic characteristic in which case, kids are mere subordinate[5]. However, in both cases kids were reluctant and reactively start moving far from the mainstream parental path.

3.3 Youth independence

The chronic mode of parental control was so strong that private efforts by youth cannot change it. Hence, a new type of thinking, desire for collective act and networking started to emerge. Some current youth studies emphasis that "Youth's movements represent a collective behavior of age-conscious groups of young people to create or resist changes through mobilization." (Braungart, 1984,). Accordingly, youth's groups in SKS have started acting more independently than they used to do within the traditional framework of socialization. Exclusion from the process and mechanism of the decision-making is no more effective in keeping youth under normative control, and silencing their voices. Availability of new spaces of interaction; cyber platform, civic community, music bands, and football clubs, offer them more free spaces, and made and empower them more trust, acquire techniques of self-organization and opt for collective work as a strategy to counteract parents' control. Furthermore, getting economically

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[3] Kadugli is the capital city of the region since 1974 and a hub for many UN and NGOs.

[4] Dilling is the second important city in the region and a host-location for the Teacher Training Institute established in 1945, currently, University of Dilling.

[5] In Algoaz locality a 32-years male participant was expelled six-month out of the family during which he stayed with his uncle due to uncompromised view with his father on the choice of marriage. He did not accept the father's nominated girls and went on his own preference.

well-off by joining militant factions, youth have developed a sense of self-reliance. Parental influence is now fading-up; instead, peers' influence for collective action and professional ties networking are now under-making. The family is no longer an interactive space for generations' meeting and mutual viewing life, a 20-year-old student states:

"Most of our time is now devoted to interaction outside the family sphere. We understand each other as peers, colleagues, and friends to interact and exchange news about football matches, war and other youth interests instead of remaining in the family sphere."

3.4 Militarization

Since all employment opportunities were few and closed to the aspirations of youth sector, except the military service, youth in SKS, were easily mobilized alongside one of the fighting factions. Update monitoring to the target sample revealed that out of 46 males, 40 of them are now actively engaged in militant work with varying degree. In Kadugli, Dilling and Algoaz localities all the 36 members of the sample communities plus 4 from Alabassiya have joined SAF, RSF or SPLA. Militarization/malitiazation is of a double effect on youth; first, it is a quick opportunity for swift enrichment under circumstances of war's economy, second, a successful tactic for self-protection till the war ceases. In SKS, due to the long-lasting war in the region since 1984, militarization has become a societal tendency that has penetrated almost all the families in the region with varying propensity of recruitment. In many families in the region militarization has become inherent job which absorbs at least two generations; parents and kids simultaneously.

Moreover, Sudan's military participation in the "Desert Storm Forces" through SAF and RSF in the Arabian Peninsula has far-reach impact on the generation gap. Militarization, with the huge income it generates compared to the decreasing yield in the traditional farming and animal husbandry, has exacerbated the desire of youth to joint military service. That kind of military gain consolidated the economic influence of young people within the family power dynamics in contrast to the influence of parents, which withered significantly, as an old man confesses:

"The influence of income coming from militarized activities has lessened the children-parental ties to an unfamiliar level before. The rein of lead and orientation is no longer at our hand and the children do all they want to do."

3.5 Technology

Undoubtedly, the effect of new technologies and digital devices on the GG between youth and parents is not deniable; and the existing literature ensured this fact. Internet has attracted a lot of attention which has raised several questions like inequality, access, the quality of the contents, the implication of it on children's education and social development (Mahidra, S. R, op. cit.) Though, technology, which comes with both opportunities and risks are not new to society but its effect is more widespread and immediate, especially for teenagers and younger generations (Lievrouw, L., & Livingstone, S., 2002). In all the 5 FGDs, the effect of technology on youth lives in one hand and on their relationships with parents on the other hand was almost tremendous. As stated by considerable number of youths, internet represents the available resort for leisure time, and takes approximately more than 6-hour a day. Even, gives youth more choice options. A 22-univeristy student states:

"My smart phone is a useful device for spending leisure time and a good friend at the same time; however, my parents were not happy about the way I engaged with it. They always scold me for it, which makes me uncomfortable and prefer outgoing instead".

It was interesting that, all the 100 sample members have had smart phones with every-now-and-then internet service. They use internet and digital communication devices in a set of beneficial ways – SMS, calling, emailing, tweeting; education, documentation, recording and snap-shooting. However, using internet and digital devices for youth's anonymous mobilization and collective decision-making in issues like joining military services was a new privilege that parents were not happy about it and look at it with intense doubt.

3.6 Gender role

Women engagement in warfare like in the World War 1 and World War 2 elevated their status within society (Total Military Insight, 2024), even though, theoretically, they are expected to be the most victims of any war. They usually subject to brutal acts like abduction, rape, sexual abuse, and the likes. As they took on some responsibilities as nurse, factory workers, and even soldiers their contribution became recognized as vital (Ibid). In SKS under wartime, women have not only maintained societal functions and family survival, but have also emerged as necessary components of peace-building process. Taking the FGDs I did with youth group in South Kordofan State, women have made a breakthrough success. As men were deployed to fight on the frontlines, leaving a vacuum full of responsibilities, women stepped into roles previously deemed unsuitable for them. For instance, in greater Dilling locality women have not only successfully endured the fatal repercussions of war, but also achieved pride change in gender-role. They became the bread-winners for most families since men were either absent, injured, killed or cannot show-up due to military targeting.

In the public space, women were actively engaged in managing emergency kitchen, provided food stuff via a local initiative; "Sharae AL-Hawadith" translated the "road of emergency". However, the most notified act of changing gender role was the pioneering task of mediation for humanitarian assistance and opening peace-corridors among the warring factions. Hayat A.S, a civic activist and women right advocate, led a delegation of women with the aim to negotiate access to humanitarian aid, and allow opening of the national highway ring-road that connects four cities Dibaibat[6], Dilling, Kurgul, and Kadugli. All of which were under control by RSF, SAF, SPLA and SAF, respectively. The mission was one of success, and achieved some break-through. Hayat states:

"Violence was recurrently happening on daily basis, and individuals' movement was risk-full adventure, yet, we have had a meeting with SPLA in Kurgul, then; we met with the RSF in Dibaibat, and lastly, we met with SAF in Dilling. The mission was extremely dangerous. But with complete absence of any possible alternative, we had to act."

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[6] Dibaibat is the capital city of Algoaz locality and it's a site of strategic significance in the current war, because it is located on the railways line and the juncture of the Highway ring road linking central, western and southern Sudan. It has been captured by the RSF in June 2023. Since then, the city became the head-quarter for the RSF military commandership, and thus, an active area for military fighting between SAF and RSF. Thousands of young people are deployed on daily basis to join the battle field alongside the RSF. Participation

Such roles were slightly visible before 2023, when the gender was almost secluded from the public space. In addition to that, women gained more spaces for preferences' freedom even when such gain does not compromise with parents' orientation. Freedom of marriage choice and travelling with a man, were two cases under focus. A parent states:

"One unexpected fact we have to recognize due to the war is that: not only male kids who have broken the norms of our control, but female as well. The war has damaged all what we had relied on in managing our relationship with kids." Freedom of female's consolidated by war has gone far to allow for a husband choice without parents' consent or interference.

3.7 Authority

Induction from the analytical cross-sectional issues concerning the generation gap in SKS, revealed conflicting perceptions and views between youth and parents. It is evident from various works on generation gap that parents and their children may evaluate their relationship with each other in different ways (Shapiro, A. 2004). It was observed that parents usually reported better relationship quality whereas children reported the other way round (Umberson, D. 1992). Traditional variables were found to influence the correspondence between the two generations were age, marital status, gender and residential proximity (lusher, K, & Pillimer, K. 1998). In regards to the case under focus, the two sectors developed ambivalent relationship and conflicting perceptions.

Building on similar results of the existing literature, the analysis of FGDs, went on the same path, however, with slight difference referral to the impact of war. Whereas youth opted for personal autonomy, independence, parents have a sense of fear of change associated with therewith. Parents feel that allowing bid autonomy for whatever reasons may drive kids less-obedient, reduce parents' control and change the power dynamics within family structure, particularly, when kids are in adulthood. The most critical points in this juncture were the style of life, technology addiction and time management that parents have perceived as the "evil of the time". On the opposite side, the majority of youth have look at technology as a liberating tool that endorses a collective youth culture and identity. Parental control in the eyes of youth, was perceived as nothing but a barrier transcended by digital technology. This discrepancy in perception, opinions, thoughts and choices let to a definite conflict between the two generations and hence widened the gap.

3.8 Breaking the shackles

The generation gap in conservative societies like South Kordofan State has long been muted by strong parental control. But since 2019 the balance has shifted in favor of youth. The outbreak of war in April 2023 has deepened the divide, as many young people have joined the war drawn by both economic incentives and as sense of breaking free from the grip of older generations. A 50-years old man in Kadugli states:

"One of the salient facts that we have to realize because of the war is that: it is not only male children who have broken the cycle of our control, but female children as well. It is really sad and yet, it seems reasonable, if you look at it from the angle of today's lifestyle and the actual conditions imposed by the war."

As the rural economy collapse due to war and climate change in the region, parents have lost a very important mechanism through which they can exercise generational control. Agriculture and animal husbandry no longer produce as much or more, as they did before. These subsistent rural economic sectors cannot meet the rising needs of children as in the past, and they have to look for new ways of financial support. Today the youth in SKS are pushing back the old traditional boundaries, making independent choices and carving out spaces for new identities.

In this regard, militarization is opening-up new horizons for young's people freedom, preferences and serves as a liberating mechanism from dependence on financial support from parents. As a lesson I learnt from my conversation with youth in SKS, those who make constructive, egalitarian and democratic engagement impossible also make the war and violence inevitable and this rule is applicable from the most intimate family spaces to the national and perhaps global one.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Until recently, just a few years before the outbreak of ongoing war, the generational gap between parents and young people was not clearly evident because adults were in a powerful position to dictate what they considered way to bring-up their children. However, with emergence of the youth uprising in 2019, matters changed dramatically in favor of youth sector at the expense of parental control. The war has added the military field as a new dimension, greatly affecting and widening the gap to an unprecedented level. As a source of rapid enrichment, militarization has injected youth with effective economic empowerment and pushed them towards greater self-reliance. Analysis of the FGDs indicates that war, combined with the traditional factors mentioned, has increased the gap overtime and made children self-reliant, less attached to family, breaking the shackles and going beyond the limits of normal life. The study will inspire future studies and whet appetite of the specialists in youth issues in general and under war conditions in particular. The active role of youth in shaping the future course of events remains a rich area for further exploratory future generations' studies in post war societies.

4.1 Policy implication

The evidence-based academic results of this study will influence the policy implications of the main actors on the development and peacebuilding in the region in different ways: 1. Helps policymakers design informed effective policies with far-reaching effect on power dynamics between youth and adults. 2. Alert policymakers to the need to integrate youth concerns, including aspirations, needs, priorities and challenges into all community development policies in a way that will reduce the gap between generations and direct it towards a mutual and constructive relationship between the two sectors.

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