

Development, Ethnicity and Power Relations: Some Dominant Issues in the University Collaboration between Khartoum and Bergen*

Abdel Ghaffar M. Ahmed

Department of Social Anthropology, Faculty of Economic and Social Studies, University of Khartoum

Abstract: The collaboration between the Departments of Anthropology in the University of Khartoum and the University of Bergen has now lasted for over 50 years. Many schools of thought have left their mark on the development of the discipline in Khartoum. A number of issues related to development are of concern to the departments' staff in Khartoum and their colleagues in Bergen. The major issues that dominate the theoretical and empirical contributions of the department members in Khartoum are development, ethnicity and power relations. When addressing these issues researchers have to invoke the history that shapes the country's development. Opportunities to progress in development without falling in the ethnicity trap came and passed without the leading elite paying the necessary attention. Recently, the resurgence of ethnicity coupled with economic inequality and marginalization dominated the scene. Learning from experience and emphasizing issues related to development and peace are the major topics that engage the interested staff in both departments and other relevant institutions in Sudan and Norway.

Keywords: Development, ethnicity, anthropology, university collaboration, peace.

المستخلص: يمتد التعاون بين قسمي الأنثروبولوجيا في جامعة الخرطوم وجامعة بيرجن النرويجية الي أكثر من خمسين عاماً، حيث تركت العديد من المدارس الفكرية بصماتها علي مسيرة هذا المجال الأكاديمي في جامعة الخرطوم. وتحظى العديد من المسائل ذات الصلة بالتنمية بإهتمام هيئة التدريس في قسم الأنثروبولوجيا في جامعة الخرطوم ونظرائهم في جامعة بيرجن. وتتنحصر جل المساهمات النظرية والعلمية لأعضاء القسم في جامعة الخرطوم في قضايا التنمية الاثنية وعلاقات السلطة. ويتناولهم لهذه المسائل يتحتم علي الباحثين دراسة التاريخ الذي يشكل الاساس الذي تقوم عليه التنمية في البلاد. وقد لاحت الفرص للتقدم تنموياً بدون الوقوع في شرك العرقية ومرت بدون أن تبدي النخبة القائدة الاهتمام الكافي بها. مؤخراً، أصبح تنامي العرقية مقترناً بعدم المساواة الاقتصادية والتهميش يسيطر علي المشهد. إن التعلم من التجارب المختلفة مع التركيز علي القضايا المتعلقة بالتنمية والسلام من يعد من أهم المسائل التي تشغل اهتمام العاملين في كلا القسمين والمؤسسات الاخرى ذات الصلة في السودان والنرويج.

كلمات مفتاحية: التنمية، الإثنية، التعاون الجامعي-جامعة الخرطوم وجامعة بيرجن، السلام

1- Introduction:

The cover page at the back of a recent book titled "Past, present, and future: Fifty years of anthropology in Sudan" edited by Assal and Abdul Jalil (2015), provides a good summary of the development of anthropology in the country. It also includes a brief

comment on the collaboration between the departments of anthropology in Khartoum and Bergen showing the impact of the Norwegians, who among others represent a particular school or tradition of anthropology that helped shape this development. Their involvement in teaching and research

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started with an informal agreement in 1965, which was formalized later (Boe, 2009:5), and influenced the orientation of the discipline in Sudan as well as a number of Sudanese anthropologists. In reality this relation with the University of Bergen started two years earlier when UNESCO approached Fredrik Barth to join the University of Khartoum as a visiting professor for one year. "The agreement eventually signed with the University of Khartoum specified that Barth was to teach for half a year, followed by four months of fieldwork. Anthropology was already reasonable in Khartoum, and it had originally been developed by Evans-Pritchard, who had done long-term fieldwork in various parts of Sudan. This institutional cooperation between Khartoum and Bergen has continued to this day, and several researchers, both from the University of Bergen and from the development research institute, the Christian Mechelsens Institutt (CMI) would eventually carry out research in Sudan" (Erikson, 2015:85-86). This also offered opportunities for Sudanese students to do their higher training in Bergen starting in 1970.

Building on a tradition which goes back to the earlier contributions of Seligman through E. E. Evans-Pritchard, Godfry Lienhardt, Ian Cunnison, Lewis Hill, Talal Asad, Wendy James, Ahmed al-Shahi, James Faris, Fredrik Barth, Gunnar Haaland and Gunnar Sørbo and others, the research that came out of Sudan gave the anthropology department in Khartoum a prestigious position on the African continent. In the words of Evans-Pritchard, "the Republic of the Sudan is in an exceptionally good position to continue these researches. It has a tradition of anthropological research unequalled in Africa or indeed in any commensurate region anywhere

else, both with regard of the standard of fieldwork and advance in theory attained by it. It has a flourishing department of Anthropology, well-staffed and with a large number of enthusiastic students" (Evans-Pritchard, 1962:13). With such a rich heritage, the department in the University of Khartoum continued to promote its status and open itself for new developments through its lasting collaboration with the Department of Social Anthropology at the University of Bergen.

The collaboration between the two departments came to be dominated by three themes or issues of concern to staff on both sides. These were (a) development, (b) ethnicity, and (c) conflict management to avoid the fragmentation of Sudan. These concerns shaped the theoretical and empirical contributions of those involved and left their marks on the development of the discipline at large. Theoretically, the department in Khartoum went from detailed ethnographic description of different groups in the country to the promotion of functional and structural functional theories where the impact of the Oxford and Manchester schools of anthropology could be felt. Different kind of anthropology was slowly developing. The interest no longer lay in the customs for their own sake, but in the explanation of how the customs and institutions of the society were related to one another, on the supposition that they were so organized as to constitute a unitary functional whole". (Cunnison, n.d.: 2). Historical perspectives were always important, partly because the leading figures at the time were interested in understanding how history impacted social relations¹. Substantivism,

¹ Both Ian Cunnison and Fredrik Barth started some early training in history. Cunnison work among the Luapula of North Rhodesia

formalism and market economy were also in competition with new developments in American anthropology introduced by members who joined during the late sixties and the seventies of last century.

During the process of the Khartoum department's development, it was recognized that formalism suffered from the limitations of classical economic theory where there is a marked concentration on competitive market equilibrium theory and a dearth of theoretical and applied reasoning in fields where power and political influence cannot be disregarded. Other competing schools in the department gave full weight to problems of power and to the inter-play between economic and political elements (Ahmed, 1979a:176). Dominant among these was Marxist theory that found its way through some staff in the department. The involvement of Fredrik Barth and his Norwegian students had their influence on the development of the discipline in Khartoum especially in view of an orientation toward applying anthropological thinking to development. Barth's approach, although it was often mistakenly taken to be a formalist one, differed basically in the ways and means in which conventional economic concepts are used. In his approach concepts are placed into their social context. Each concept is adequately defined for the specific situation in which it is used and through the use of such concepts social forms are generated and their relation within the whole social fabric could be investigated. The practical implications made it an obligation upon anthropologists in Sudan to provide evidence based information and knowledge upon which decision and

policy makers in the country might base their future plans. Through the collaboration with Norwegian colleagues, at all times, the departmental staff in Khartoum kept doing their best to pursue what they thought might help to enlighten the process of development without being distracted by debates.

2- The Historical Context: the future in the past

Those staffing the Department of Anthropology in Khartoum during its early phase were aware of the multiple problems facing the new independent country. Conflicts between different communal groups are common in Africa including Sudan as a result of the artificial nature of the borders drawn by the colonial powers that helped promote ethnic competition. In Sudan, this was further exacerbated by a number of economic factors brought about by drought, desertification and resulted in unprecedented population mobility since the early part of the 1970s. Such factors, combined with a weak and contested state as well as considerable ethnic diversity, led, at the beginning of this century, to the escalation of conflicts especially on the bases of ethnicity, kinship, religion and other identity markers. The recent conflict between the Rizaigat and the Maalya where a large number of individuals were killed, injured or taken as "war prisoners"² stands as testimony to this process of escalation³.

Many of the existing conflicts among different groups in Sudan have a long history marred by competition and grievances over the ownership and/or use of productive resources, especially land. It can be argued that the country has multiple histories and competing

(now Zambia) was on their history and social organization while Fredrik Barth assisted archaeologists in their work in Iraq before fully engaged in anthropological research.

² The concept of "war prisoners" does not, in reality, apply in such situations.

³ This conflict was reported by Sudanese *Al Sudani* newspaper (issue no 3366 dated 12.05.2015).

versions of what matters about the past. Such history is too often told simply as a story of conflict producing local rivalries between ethnic groups over resources, beliefs and political dominance. The ecological, environmental and population elements of pre-secession Sudan are complex, diverse and indicate many possibilities of weak national integration and ties. This, however, if well managed, does not exclude the possibilities of cooperation between groups as it happens when collective labor is required during certain part of the year. Such images of the country go a long way back. Before 1821, what became known in the last century as the Sudan, consisted of two separate sultanates and a no-man's land between and south of both these two entities. With Mohamed Ali's invasion of the two sultanates followed by the emergence of the Mahdist state, the map of a new country started to take shape. The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan came about as result of the invasion by the two powers to regain the land and its resources that Egypt had lost, as well as a reaction to the European power scramble for Africa.

Managing diversity and administering Sudan needed a lot of reorganization and adjustments especially when, for example, it came to determining its borders. Although this started with the 1900 Lado Enclave becoming part of Sudan and the incorporation of the Darfur Sultanate in 1916, the Anglo-Egyptian colonial administration managed to shed away some parts of its new acquisitions for administrative purposes. In 1930 a large piece of land was given (transferred) to the Italian colony of Libya. Today, the Halaib area in north-east Sudan and the Ilemi Triangle in the south-east of currently

the Republic of South Sudan,⁴ are both disputed borders with Egypt and Kenya respectively. The borders with both Ethiopia and Eretria have remained unsettled leading to annual conflicts between farmers and pastoralists and a movement of Ethiopians onto Sudanese territory (Fig. 1).

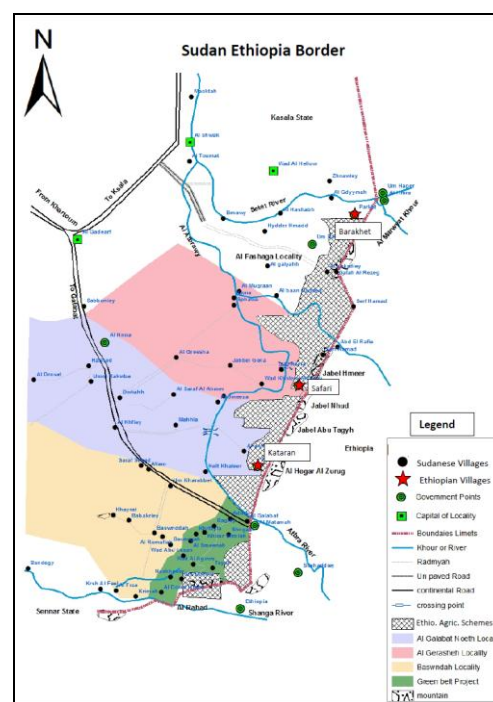


Fig. (1): The borders with Ethiopia and Eretria

Within the political borders established by the colonial administration in the 19th century, what became "the Sudan" came to be inhabited by a highly diversified number of "races" (Seligman, 1957) and ethnic groups each with different traditions, values and beliefs. The natural resources available attracted different groups from across the Red Sea, Egypt, North and West Africa to compete with the local inhabitants of the land⁵. It proved to be difficult to manage such diversity in ways that allow for peaceful

⁴ For more details see "The Sudan Handbook" edited by John Ryle, Justin Willis, Suliman Baldo and Jok Madut Jok. (2011 p 4) For more information on the Lado Enclave one can refer to "Equatoria: The Lado Enclave" by Major C. H. Stigand (1968).

⁵ For more on the migration of different group to the Sudan, see Na'um Shuqayr (1903) and Yusuf Fadl Hasan (1967).

coexistence and equitable use of available resources. Perhaps more than any other country in Africa, Sudan failed dismally in managing racial, ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity and forging a collective sense of national identity and equal citizenship (Deng 2010: 123). Thus, for example, the polarizing dichotomies of Arabs and Africans, Muslims and non-Muslims, dominant and marginalized populations forged historically and sustained by institutions of abduction and slavery, still dominate the daily lives of the people in the border zones between present day Sudan and South Sudan.

Although there was no attempt to minimize the relevance of this history in understanding the present and forecasting the future, no attention was paid to the polarity that exists between different ethnic groups, nor were the existing dichotomies carefully addressed in order to minimize their negative role. After independence in 1956, the Sudanese political elite thought that the only obstacle facing the future of the country was the possible escalation of the 1955 conflict in its southern part and its development into a full-fledged civil war. It should have been clear that what was taking place at the time was a war of vision based on historical grievances and feeling of political and economic marginalization (cf. Deng, 1995). Had the leading elite in the center then listened to the voices of wisdom and honored their promise of considering the demand for a federal system for the South that they promised to consider once the Southern elite voted for independence, things might have taken a different path (cf. Alier 1990). The anthropological studies available at the time, even before the establishment of the Department of Anthropology in the University of Khartoum, could have

helped provide a better understanding and more clear formulation of development plans for the future of the new state. The development of the anthropology department and the added value of the contribution of the Norwegian anthropologists have availed material that could, if properly used, helped in directing the decisions of Sudanese policy makers.

3- Possibilities for Integration: Sudan's Lost Opportunities

The promise of considering a federal South Sudan made by the political parties in the center might have led to national integration, but similar opportunities have come and gone. This state of affairs eventually led in 2011 to the birth of the new state of South Sudan^{6 7 8}.

Since then the conflict between the north and south of the country that started with a mutiny in August 1955, gradually developed into a full scale civil war led by the Anyanya rebels in South Sudan. The declaration of the central government (9 June 1971)⁹ established the first ministry dealing with issues related to the state of affairs in the South (the Ministry of Southern Affairs). However, it was the Addis Ababa Agreement of 1972 that preliminarily settled the conflict, giving the southern part regional autonomy and peace that lasted for ten years. The abrogation of the Addis Ababa Agreement and the application of Shari'a laws in September 1983 led to the renewal of the conflict leading to the longest civil war in Africa. This was again settled in 2005 with the

⁶ The Addis Ababa Agreement between the government of Sudan and the rebel movement in South Sudan led by Major Joseph Lago.

⁷ For more on this see Abel Alier (1990).

⁸ The country is inhabited by a multitude of groups with different languages, values, tradition and systems of organizations and livelihoods. For more on this and on the historical processes that these groups may have undergone, see Ahmed 2007.

⁹ This ministry was established during the first year of Nimeri's rule and was headed by Josef Garang of the Central Committee of the Sudanese Communist Party. It was abolished after the Addis Ababa agreement was signed.

signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the Government in Khartoum and the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M). Both signatories agreed on referendum where people in South Sudan could decide on their future relations with the North. It was agreed that the two parties to the agreement shall work toward making "unity attractive". The basic idea, according to the leader of the SPLA/M, was to work for an equal opportunity, democratic Sudan where people have full representation and freedom of expression. It seems that there had been a clear understanding and a well-informed vision based on the anthropological studies available on the people of Sudan. However, this vision did not have a chance to persist for long and vanished with the death of John Garang, the Vice president of the Sudan and the leader of the SPLA/M, on 21 June 2006.

During the 1970s and 1980s the northern part of Sudan faced a change in climate and suffered from prolonged droughts and desertification. This led many people to lose their livelihoods with no alternatives but to move to urban areas hoping to find a place in the informal sector to eke out a living. This internally displaced population (IDPs) came to dwell the outskirts of urban areas and settled with other ethnic groups who may have had different languages, values and traditions. They had to learn how to coexist with and tolerate other ways of life and systems of organization. A process of cultural integration spontaneously started offering an opportunity to work for unity among such groups. Yet the political parties led by the elite in the center did not use this process which had already been started by the IDPs in their new settlements in order to create unity and

coexistence out of the existing diversity. Those people left in their original areas had to fight over the existing natural resources available and regroup under the banner of ethnicity in order to do so.

The denial and mismanagement of diversity in Sudan lasted from before the advent of independence to the present day. It's recent and officially most clear expression came in a public address by the president of the country to his supporters in Gedarif state a few days after the secession of South Sudan where he claimed that diversity no longer exists and Sudan can enjoy peace now that we are an Arab and Muslim country¹⁰. However, as a result of the secession of the South, the unity of what was left of "old Sudan" did not become a reality nor did the new country live in peace. The situation in Darfur, South Kordofan, Blue Nile State and Eastern Sudan proved to be a testimony of this diversity and "writing on the wall" for those who try to halt the country from total dis- integration or from falling apart. National integration turned out to be an illusion that very few now entertain.

4- Ethnicity, Economic Inequality and Marginalization:

Many factors, particularly ethnicity, economic inequality and marginalization as well as weaknesses and divisions within the national political parties, have contributed to the present state of affairs in Sudan. Under such circumstances understanding the means of halting possible scenarios of fragmentation of the country requires an in-depth analysis especially of ethnicity and its resurgence today as a driving force in the political process taking place in rural areas. "Hard" ethnic boundaries rather than "soft"

¹⁰ This text of this statement of the president appeared in a number of newspapers one week after the secession of South Sudan.

ones are being created every day, unlike the case that Gunnar Haaland wrote about in his western Darfur analysis of 1969 where economic determinants played an important role in shifting identities. The sedentary Fur could adopt nomadism which was mainly associated with the Baggara, by being able to produce more millet on their communal lands and then invest the extra income in animals that could be grazed on communal pastures. The use of cattle as a bank for savings and shifting identity were possible in the 1970s situation in Darfur¹¹. The resurgence of ethnicity and creation of ethnic boundaries and its use in daily politics is a reality not only in Darfur but almost in all other regions of Sudan as expressed in the April 2015 election¹².

Ethnicity is also important for understanding marginalization and economic inequality as well as the role of the elite in the peripheries. It is clear that those elites in rural areas who pledge their allegiance to the elite in the center get more than their share of power, authority and wealth compared to other individuals. Center- periphery relations must be closely monitored when it comes to power and wealth sharing and creation of serving elites in peripheral states.

In focusing on the center it has to be realized that the unity of the leading elite in present day Sudan is weak if not altogether non-existent. Individual interests seem to be the guiding principles in most of the moves that the elites in the center make. This is exemplified by the fragmentation of the leading political parties, both ruling

and in the opposition. The number of such parties on both sides of the fence is large for largely personal interests. Just as an example, according to a recent release by the National Election Committee in April 19, 2015, over 80 parties (were expected to participate in the 13 April 2015 election) while 44 parties actually took part. However, the general public boycotted the election because the results were mostly decided beforehand, and that the ruling National Congress Party was going to win having means that were not available to others.

5- Conflict settlement: Learning from Experience.

Conflicts, as already stated, over resources between farmers and pastoralists repeatedly, happen in Sudan. This may relate to people's culture as can be observed between farmers and pastoralists in southern Darfur today. While settled farmers mostly combine agriculture and livestock rearing, pastoral groups are mobile seeking pasture and water for their livestock. Conceptual understanding of what a gum tree, for example, means to each group is essential. It is a source of capital for the farmer while it is primarily fodder for the pastoralist's livestock¹³. Damaging trees leads to conflicts based on such differences. Unfortunately, state officials are most often based far away from the battle ground, with different concepts of land ownership, a lack of cultural understanding of local situations, and, therefore, unable to deal with local resource conflicts (Ahmed, 2002 and Shazali and Ahmed, 1999).

This lack of understanding of local adaptations and indigenous knowledge and its positive use in advancing

¹¹ For more details see Haaland in "Essays in Sudan Ethnography" edited by Ian Gunnison and Wendy James (1971) and "Ethnic Groups and Boundaries" edited by Fredrik Barth (1969).

¹² Both the National Congress Party and its allies who contested this recent election have used their ethnic relations as a means for gaining seats in different states. This is even clearer in the case of those who contested the election against the wish of their original parties by standing as independent candidates.

¹³ In mid-1976 I was in Nyala and had the chance of seeing the result of the conflict between the Habbania farmers and the Rizagat pastoralists when one camel was grazing in a gum garden. The result was a death of many on both sides.

development was not so much the case before and during the early years of independence. The central government had inherited mechanisms for settling conflicts using indigenous knowledge and experience found among different groups in their localities. Even though these mechanisms can, together with the regimes that established them, be criticized for their exploitative nature (cf Asad, 1972, Ahmed, 1979) there are lessons to be learned. The Native Administration, tribal conferences and the Agaweed (local mediators) systems (Alzeen and Badri, 2005) were some of the mechanisms¹⁴. Even though the central government was able to keep its legitimacy and authority in the peripheries, it allowed people to handle issues according to their cultural heritage and understanding of their relations with their neighbors. However, the abolishment of the system of native administration, which was a travelling model first applied by the colonial rulers in West Africa, led to the dismantling of a powerful mechanism in conflict resolution that was culturally accepted by the local populations (Asad, 1973). It was followed by the disappearance of tribal conferences and the diminishing role of the Agaweed. This became even worse when the government started losing its authority in the peripheries and tried to create parallel systems of native administration, mainly for the internally displaced in urban areas¹⁵. Ethnic and other conflicts in what is left of Sudan could have benefited a lot from this historical experience.

Anthropologists have worked toward its documentation among local populations, but it was left to decision and policy makers to make use of the information provided since the post of government anthropologist in Sudan was no longer in existence. However, the history of involvement with the colonial rulers, starting with Evans-Prichard in the 1930s reporting on the Nuer, up to the days of Cunnison in the early 1950s among the Baggara, was of no interest to the new ruling elite in Khartoum. In fact they followed the negative attitudes of other ruling elites in Africa who considered anthropology as a “hand maiden of imperialism”. As I have argued elsewhere, anthropology could and would benefit countries like Sudan if the methods it advocates were used for understanding the situations at hand and to promote development (Ahmed, 1973).

6- Anthropology and Peace in Sudan

Now back to the state of development of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Khartoum and what it gained through its collaboration with the Department of Anthropology in Bergen. At the start, it became clear that applied anthropology was important when attempting to graduate students with an expertise in development studies. This included looking at power and how it could be studied. Being part of the Faculty of Economic and Social Studies the department had to deal with the concept of social stratification where social relations have to be granted prominence in teaching. It was needed to be realized that “economics as a separate science is unrealistic, and misleading if taken as a guide in practice. It is one element; it is true—in a wider study, the science of power” (Russell 1975: 92). Being part of the Faculty of Economic and Social Studies the Department of

¹⁴ The Agaweed consisted of elderly wise men in villages or camps that mediate and settle local conflicts of different nature including domestic ones. Some of them who were reputed for their wisdom and knowledge of values and traditions of other groups than their own were normally asked to join tribal conferences that settle disputes between conflicting ethnic groups. Individuals like Babo Nimer (Baggara), Yusuf Almak (Fung), Surur Ramli (Gaalyeen and others leaders of ethnic groups are examples of such Agaweed.

¹⁵ The chapter by Musa Adam Abdul Jalil (2015 p. 223- 233) gives a detailed analysis of this system.

Anthropology had to emphasize the social dimension in its analysis of the development process without under estimating the role of economics as a discipline that can lend a hand.

The break away from the functional and structural functional theories that dominated the work of those in the department started with Barth joining the department in 1963 and his studies of the Fur (1967, 1967a, 1967b) and those of his assistant Haaland (1969, 1972, 1982), followed by Asad in his study of the Kababish (1970). This was a time when new theoretical approaches started to emerge in the works of the staff at the department. Two ways of addressing the development issues became clear. While Barth's approach can be categorized as much closer to the formalist theories in anthropology and adopted by some members of the staff, Asad and others like Faris and his American students, were followed by other staff who were influenced by Marxism. This is what made the contribution of anthropology very significant at that stage of development in Sudan.

By way of continuity those who have grown up in the tradition of this historical relation between the two universities of Bergen and Khartoum have continued to advance their research, with a special focus on what may help in development and contribute to conflict resolution in Sudan. The most significant work started with the "Savannah Project" in the early 1970s (Haaland, 1982). While addressing issues of pastoral movement and land tenure it also considered urban growth and how it impacted rural areas. It developed capacity among a number of students at the time both in the University of Khartoum and the University of Bergen. The outcome of that project in terms of research and capacity building speaks for itself. Leif Manger, Sharif Harir and a number of others are a testimony for this. The Sudan Project and the Red Sea Area Program (RESAP) followed the same path and even extended beyond the disciplines of anthropology to cover other area such as archaeology, geography and botany (cf. Manger et al, 1996) (Table 1).

Table (1): Different collaboration projects between the universities of Bergen and Khartoum and other academic Institutions

Project	Date	Collaborating Institute	Other Partners
Savannah Project	1975-----1978	UofK Staff	National Research Council
Sudan Program	1982-----1985	UofK Staff	-----
Red Sea Area Program (RESAP)	1986-----1993	UofK	-----
Dryland Husbandry Project	1994-----2004	UofK (Environment Studies Institute)	Organization for Social Science Research in Africa (OSSREA)
Micro-macro Issues in Peace Building in Sudan	2005-----2013	UofK and Ahfad	CMI and regional universities in Sudan
Assisting Regional Universities in Sudan	2009-----2013	UofK and Ahfad	Regional universities in Sudan
Assisting Regional Universities in Sudan and South Sudan	2013-----2016	UofK and Ahfad	Regional universities in Sudan and South Sudan

However, when the political situation in Sudan became an obstacle for the implementation of programs and research, collaboration continued (1993-2004) through the Organization of Social Research Science in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA) with its head office in Addis Ababa. The University of Bergen did not sever its relation with Khartoum but froze it for a while until things got better in order for it to resume (cf. Assal, 2003).

When the civil war became an increasing international concern, Norway got involved as an important part of a troika with the US and the UK (cf. Johoson, 2011). Researchers from the Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI)¹⁶, together with senior researchers from the University of Khartoum, started the Micro-Macro project that worked towards producing evidence based knowledge relevant for implementing the different issues proposed in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (Sørbo and Ahmed, 2013). At almost the same time the University of Bergen started the Assisting Regional Universities in Sudan (ARUS) project based on the experience and the capacity built during the implementation of RESAP. These two projects are now merged under the name of Assisting Regional Universities in Sudan and South Sudan (ARUSS). The main idea behind merging the two projects is to address the issues such as a) borders and boundaries and systems of livelihoods; b) fiscal federalism and the financial relations between the center and the peripheries; and (c) gender equality in participation in everyday life, that cut

across all previous issues. A number of Sudanese and Norwegian researchers from different social science disciplines are taking part in this new project. However, the most important part of this project is, in addition to carrying research in the above mentioned fields, is the effort made in building capacity at regional universities in both Sudan and South Sudan. This is so that they serve as vehicles for producing evidence-based-knowledge that decision makers and local and international non-government organizations (NGOs) can benefit from in their development activities.

The table below shows the number of degrees obtained since the Khartoum-Bergen collaboration started up until 2013.

Table (2): The number of Master and doctoral degrees gained by Norwegian and Sudanese since the relation started up until 2013.

Country	MA/MSc Degree	PhD degree	Total
Sudan	37	23	60
Norway	12	06	18

It should be acknowledged that all projects mentioned have been financially supported by the Norwegian Agency for Development (Norad) and the Norwegian Embassy in Khartoum and administered by Khartoum, Bergen and Ahfad Universities as well as the Chr. Michelsen Institute.

7- Sustainability Challenges

In their early projects the two departments received help from other partners in order to sustain their research activities and build the needed capacity in their institutions, as well as serving Sudan's need for development agents. There was also financial support from the University of Khartoum even through it was limited and in no way did it match the funds received from Norway. The new

¹⁶ The Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI) on request from ILO was involved in research and policy development since the early 1970s. The publication of the book "Employment, Growth and Equity" in 1976 represents a land mark in evaluating and recommending a development strategy for Sudan. It also provided an economic advisor to the government for a few years after the publication of the document.

addition of CMI to the list of partners remains a welcome move. However, with the engagement in regional universities in the capacity building process more funds became necessary to sustain such joint activities. Though the Norwegian support is continuing it needs to be remembered that though it has been going on for a long time it may sometimes stop. This makes it essential to look for financial sustainability elsewhere. Another important issue is that of managing to keep the capacity built in regional universities in place so that they can serve their regions as planned and expected.

The recent projects in which the two departments are involved have attracted genuine partners such as Ahfad University for Women and attempted to create a triangular partnership between academic researchers, government policy makers and non-governmental institutions in regional areas. The focal points established at the level of each regional university had members representing these two new partners. The main idea is to make sure that the output resulting from research that the staff and the students in universities undertake is relevant to the daily problems that these different departments and institutions need to consider in the process of leading development and peace in the said state. The issue of sustainability of these research activities and relations with different stakeholders is essential for the continuity of the collaboration.

8- Concluding Remarks

After more than fifty years of anthropology collaboration between the University of Bergen and the University of Khartoum both institutions have benefited much from their long relations. Mutual benefits and cordial personal relations have

paved the way for equal partnership and cooperation on teaching and research. Capacity building processes in the two departments have developed over these years impacting empirical research and theoretical developments in both universities. The collaboration between the two departments has been extended to other departments and institutions. New areas in social sciences as well as natural sciences have been incorporated. However, more importantly in the new collaborative projects the assistance is extended to the regional universities in Sudan and South Sudan where capacity building is highly needed. The young staff in regional universities are being familiarized with new methods in social sciences and offered an opportunity to do research where they can apply what they have learned. Some promising graduate students have been encouraged through small grants to pursue their studies for higher degrees and have been enabled to join the staff in these universities.

The extension of the collaboration beyond the two departments where regional universities and new stakeholders are involved requires careful planning for sustainability and continuity. Joint work to engage additional national and international supporters would help keep this going.

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