

# GOVERNING DEVELOPMENT FOR SUDAN'S DEMOCRATIC TRANSFORMATION

Post-war and Sustainable Paths Forward

Discussion Paper, July 2024



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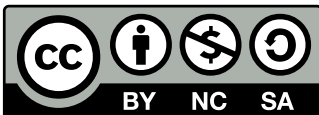
*Gussai H. Sheikheldin and Muzan Alneel*



**International IDEA**  
Strömsborg  
SE-103 34 Stockholm  
SWEDEN  
+46 8 698 37 00  
info@idea.int  
www.idea.int

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International IDEA  
Strömsborg  
SE-103 34 Stockholm  
SWEDEN  
Tel: +46 8 698 37 00  
Email: [info@idea.int](mailto:info@idea.int)  
Website: <https://www.idea.int>

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# Abbreviations

<b>APRM</b>	African Peer Review Mechanism
<b>CSR</b>	Corporate social responsibility
<b>ECF</b>	Extended Credit Facility (IMF)
<b>GDP</b>	Gross domestic product
<b>HIPC</b>	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative (IMF–WB)
<b>IDA</b>	International Development Association (WB)
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organization
<b>PCCF</b>	Post-Conflict Country Facility
<b>ROI</b>	Return on investment
<b>RSF</b>	Rapid Support Forces
<b>SAF</b>	Sudanese Armed Forces
<b>SAP</b>	Structural adjustment programme
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SMP</b>	Staff Monitored Program
<b>TAM</b>	The Collective of Demand-based Groups—Sudan (Tajamou' al-Ajsām al-Matlabia)
<b>WB</b>	World Bank

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Aspiration for democratic transformation is strongest when people are living the results of its opposite. Democratization, however, is a tough road that requires reliable vehicles, and one prominent vehicle is prioritizing sustainable development as a national agenda and through national, popular programmes. In this Discussion Paper, an argument is put forward for the critical role of development governance in the process of democratic transformation in post-war Sudan. Historical evidence and argumentation in general are provided as well as a closer look at Sudan's historical experience. Case studies in productive sectors in Sudan (agriculture, industry, energy, and mining) are briefly examined to demonstrate the viability of the main approach of 'democratizing development' through examples, and additionally, dynamic stories from the field, explore the prospect of cooperatives as democratization tools in Sudan. The Discussion Paper also discusses financing development and the alternatives that are in line with democratic transformation and people's sovereignty.

Sudan's democratic periods since independence were generally far from developmental, as decision makers were more occupied with the politics of power sharing, power brokering and conflict, over abstract ruling agendas such as Islamic laws and constitutions (in generic terms) and national identity (with divisive definitions of that identity). While developmental weakness was a national experience, the centre of the country received more developmental attention, leaving most of the rest of the country and its people suffering varied levels of development marginalization—all contributing to political instabilities that made democratic periods short and chaotic. The 2019 to 2021 transitional period was dominated by brokering power conflicts which left little attention and resources to development planning and governance.

In a collective exercise of brainstorming about the priorities, challenges and opportunities of a post-war Sudan, a group of researchers and journalists on governance, development and democracy in Sudan identified three priorities in post-war Sudan. The first is the reconstruction of the physical and social



infrastructure from basic services to health and education. The second is the redefinition of the terms of political discourse as well as the articulation of constitutional direction with emphasis on transitional and social justice. The third priority is to reimagine the governance structures within which the first two priorities are achieved starting from the public sector in a decentralized and municipal-level manner. These structures are also to be highly independent from foreign influence and reflect national sovereignty.

Overall, democratic transformation in Sudan's future will require prioritizing sustainable development goals, and for that to happen, there is a need to study and plan development governance models and tools that can stand up to the task. This Discussion Paper provides information and analytical tools to help in discussing the topic, for the Sudanese public as well as by groups of stakeholders from the larger Sudanese population, in an informed manner. Bringing things together, the paper concludes by contemplating anticipated challenges and possibilities of working at the intersection of development and democratization in Sudan.

## Chapter 1

# INTRODUCTION

When a country is in the midst of a civil war that is far-reaching, enflaming and devastating to the people, it may seem counter-intuitive to take the time for a deep discussion of pathways for post-conflict governance, democratization and sustainable development. However, there is both a lack of, and a need for, this form of deliberation on Sudan's future. Such exercises need not be a priority at the moment, but considering them now can reduce uncertainties in a future that all are invested in. Yet, post-war discussions must not ignore, or infringe upon, the demands of the present—including maximum efforts to preserve the lives and livelihoods of those most affected by the war. Rather, thinking about post-war reconstruction should build upon existing efforts, and should have some relevant contribution to them. In other words, organized, practice-oriented thinking about post-war Sudan should be a legitimate activity in the present.

What does not start 'before' will not suddenly appear 'after'. This is especially true of things that are inherently products of human organized work and communication, such as governance, democratization, and sustainable development (including reconstruction). Additionally, preparing for post-war is, in part, enforcing the resilience of dealing with the present, especially when the present is as unpleasant as it is. When people have less ambiguous ideas about what the future holds, after the heat of the present cools (even if relatively), it provides motivation towards continuing to do what can be done now, with visions to look forward to. Therefore, more people and platforms are encouraged to engage in organized thinking about preparing for challenges and possibilities in post-war Sudan.

The ongoing civil war in Sudan can be generally—but problematically—defined as an all-out war between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), two military factions within the same state that generally pretended on paper to be one, especially during Sudan's recent transitional period (August 2019 to October 2021) and very recent military coup period (October 2021 to April 2023). It is more complicated than that,

indeed, and the complexity is amplified by the reality that this is a relatively new conflict front added to many that existed long before it. The purpose of this paper is not to provide a comprehensive definition of the war or to analyse its complex elements; however, the war in Sudan has some salient features that may be unique to its case in modern Sudanese history that need to be briefly discussed. First, addressing the ongoing war cannot be done without knowing that Sudan was not really 'at peace' before this war broke out; Sudan has been internally at war for decades, oscillating between intense and less-intense phases, as well as between long periods of civil war and relatively short intervals of treaties that carry some hopes of peace. Throughout this time, there have always been victims of war among the Sudanese populations, and there have always been places and groups that lacked almost all features of development. Second, currently, there is a change in scale, as the ongoing war has spread to wider regions of the country, claimed more big cities as war zones (including the country's capital), amplified the displacement of people (internal and external) and raised the humanitarian crisis to unprecedented levels.

According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the number of people displaced by the war reached 7.76 million inside and outside of Sudan by mid-February 2024. Most are displaced within the country in over 6,000 locations across Sudan. Additionally, severe shortages in food and decreased access to healthcare are exacerbating the humanitarian situation all over the country and will lead to more dire impacts in the near future.

This Discussion Paper is written with the intent of encouraging more informed discussions, and more evidence-based policy thinking, regarding the prospects and strategies of democratic transformation in post-war Sudan. To do this, a number of assumptions and limitations are acknowledged. The paper was based on the assumption that a post-war Sudan is not in the very far future (i.e. not too far to the point that any lessons or data learned from recent history will be irrelevant). It also went with the assumption that a post-war Sudan will have authorities that possess the political will to pursue best practices and options towards democratic transformation. These assumptions require much contemplation in themselves, but for the scope of the paper they are givens. Additionally, the limitations of format, time and resources put a ceiling on how much can be covered and the depth at which it can be covered. Additionally, while many necessary topics related to the war and post-war period are discussed elsewhere, it was attempted to cover some issues and angles that have not yet received their deserved attention.

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**In this Discussion Paper, an argument is put forward for the critical role of development governance in the process of democratic transformation in post-war Sudan.**

In this Discussion Paper, an argument is put forward for the critical role of development governance in the process of democratic transformation in post-war Sudan. Historical evidence and argumentation in general are provided, as well as a closer look at Sudan's historical experience. Case studies in productive sectors in Sudan (agriculture, industry, energy, and extraction) are briefly examined to demonstrate the viability of our main approach. The paper then explores the prospect of cooperatives as democratization tools in Sudan,

and examines alternative options for financing development that are in line with democratic transformation. To bring things together, the paper concludes by contemplating anticipated challenges and possibilities of working at the intersection of development and democratization in Sudan.

## Chapter 2

# DEVELOPMENT AND DEMOCRACY: A DYNAMIC RELATIONSHIP

A 2016 report by scholars from the Brookings Institution presented a conclusion of many years of studying the relationship between economic development and democratization within countries. While for many the link between democracy and development seems to be intuitive, and while several previous studies seem to support that, further studies call for more scrutiny. Using historical trends and cases, the Brookings report concluded that, 'contrary to recent findings, unfortunately democracy does not seem to be the key to unlocking economic growth' (Vuletin, Ruiz Pozuelo and Slipowitz 2016). However, the report highlights other important considerations, such as that the failures of non-democratic regimes in bringing economic development have a correlation with democratization, because those failures tend to push the people under such regimes to mobilize for democratic transformation, driven by dissatisfaction with the regime's performance in economic development. In an ironic/dialectic way, non-democratic regimes that also perform poorly in terms of development seem to motivate their people to accelerate towards democratic transformation.

Still, the link between development and democracy is not totally dismissed. In earlier studies in the 1990s, Amartya Sen, the renowned development economist, presented, with other scholars, strong cases on the interlink between political freedom and economic freedom. They conclude that, although some democratic countries can be economically as poor as other undemocratic countries, there is no record in modern history of a famine taking place in a democratic country, while many famines have happened in undemocratic countries. This remains true even in the worse cases of decreased food production and purchasing power in countries with democratic multiparty systems in comparison to undemocratic developing countries. In his famous 1999 book, *Development as Freedom*, Sen explains that due to the pressures that governments in democratic countries are subjected to, by the opposition and the media, they take action against food crises before they reach the point of officially being defined as famine. He lays the example of the decrease in food production that took place in Zimbabwe and Botswana in the

1980s to levels lower than in Sudan and Ethiopia in the same period. However, both Botswana and Zimbabwe avoided famines while Sudan and Ethiopia failed to do so. Sen points to the democratic political movements in Zimbabwe and Botswana at the time and the pressures they placed on both governments to take action regarding the situation (Sen 1999: 178–79). On the other hand, and in earlier writings by Sen himself and others, there are examples of countries that avoided famine via wide governmental intervention that can be described as not fully democratic, including Tanzania under Nyerere's rule (which was a one-party system that later transformed to an electoral multiparty system, with Nyerere's support) (Drèze and Sen 1991). In those countries, governments were described as responsible and attentive to the basic needs of the masses, as part of their national programme and orientation.

Furthermore, there are several cases that challenge prevalent assumptions. Stories of countries that achieved significant economic development in the last three to four decades are not democratic stories in the majority (although many of them became more democratic as they became more developed). There are some outstanding cases, such as China which is home to approximately one-fifth of the world's population. A 2022 report by the World Bank notes that 'Over the past 40 years, the number of people in China with incomes below USD 1.90 per day—the International Poverty Line as defined by the World Bank to track global extreme poverty—has fallen by close to 800 million. With this, China has contributed close to three-quarters of the global reduction in the number of people living in extreme poverty' (World Bank 2022). Additionally, China elevated the largest number of people from famine levels—more than 200 million people between 1970 and 1990—and achieved what is considered the biggest industrial renaissance in the world in recent decades (Lappé and Collins 2015).

It is important to note that it is crucial to approach development data from international organizations with scrutiny. An example that supports this point is the way in which international development organizations present progress in agricultural production and hunger reduction between the 1970s and 1990s, attributing it to the Green Revolution and global efforts. However, excluding China from the analysis reveals a different reality, where globally the percentage of people below the hunger line increased by over 11 per cent (despite the global increase of agricultural productivity). China stood out as a success story, lifting 200 million of its people above the hunger line during the same period (Lappé and Collins 2015). This achievement, along with lifting over 800 million people out of extreme poverty, underscores China's remarkable progress in combating hunger and poverty, and contradicts the narratives and models advocated by the international development organizations. Given that this breakdown was no secret to the organizations that choose to present the data differently, this example shows that development data can reflect the biases and interests of the institutions and systems that present them. Accordingly, serious efforts in development and democratization in the Global South must study such data critically and give the appropriate weight to the interests of the parties involved.

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**It is arguable that some mistakes along the development journey could have been avoided—along with their costs—if democratic principles were adopted earlier in decision-making processes.**

What these historical observations offer is a chance for reflection. There are good reasons why democracy and development are interlinked, but there is a need to identify the linkages better. For example, democracy is important for political stability and for governing diverse populations in ways that propagate consensus and collaboration instead of continuous conflict. Both—political stability and consensus planning—are crucial for sustainable development. What is noticeable is that some of the countries that make advancements in economic development without democratization later come back to democratization as their citizens become more educated and more able to recognize their interests, articulate them and organize around them (e.g. Singapore and South Korea). Indeed, they demand more social and political freedoms because they enhance the quality of life they have, along with the improved physical and economic conditions. Critical studies of the roads that have been taken to achieve economic development show little consensus that it was excusable to not democratize from earlier stages. Indeed, it is arguable that some mistakes along the development journey could have been avoided—along with their costs—if democratic principles were adopted earlier in decision-making processes. Nowadays, more voices call for an earlier marriage of democratic and developmental visions for countries, especially countries that are still in the early stages of development and that would do well to learn lessons from all the positive aspects of advanced countries without necessarily repeating their mistakes (Mkandawire 2014). Especially since successful stories of development in some countries are not simply replicable in other countries, for current and future historical contexts.

This paper supports the position that there is a critical interlink between development and democratization, but from an angle that is less discussed (albeit more supported by evidence): the critical role of sustainable development planning and implementation for the success of democratic transformation efforts. We view the relationship between development and democratization as dynamic and non-linear, that is, a chicken-and-egg relationship, or a reinforcing feedback-loop relationship, where elements are connected in ways in which change in one element instigates correlated change in the other element.

This paper's goal is to provide evidence and intelligence to help in making democratic transformation more likely to succeed. Particularly, in countries where many of the causes of conflict are related to deep imbalances in wealth sharing and development programmes between different citizen groups and regions, as is the case with Sudan, this approach is key for post-war strategies. Efforts towards democratic transformation are better equipped when there is recognition of the importance of integrating effective development governance from earlier stages, and of embedding democratic principles in development governance themselves.

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## 2.1. DEFINITION OF DEVELOPMENT GOVERNANCE

In 1990, the South Commission published a report that came out of a large brainstorming process that included multiple minds and development experts from the economic south and defined development:

In our view, development is a process which enables human beings to realize their potential, build self-confidence, and lead lives of dignity and fulfilment. It is a process which frees people from the fear of want and exploitation. It is a movement away from political, economic, or social oppression. Through development, political independence acquires its true significance. And it is a process of growth, a movement essentially springing from within the society that is developing .... Thus, development necessarily implies political freedom, for individuals as for nations .... Democratic institutions and popular participation in decision-making are therefore essential to genuine development.  
(South Commission 1990: 11–14)

As for governance, we can define it as the field of building institutions, as well as guiding and monitoring their performance according to designed indicators and objectives. Additionally, governance has to do with structured and interlinked regulations, models and standards, available for accountability and evaluation of institutions. Thus, governance exists at the overlap of a wide range of fields and activities, at multiple levels of institutions, and can be recognized by its tools and standards. However, not all tools are governance tools and not all standards are applicable for measuring the levels and results of governance.

Development governance is where the two definitions above meet. It is therefore the application of governance tools and standards to institutions in pursuit of development. Additionally, Zafarullah and Huque (2006) explain that 'development governance is also about linking various institutions, instruments, actors, and transactions relevant to development for the explicit purpose of meeting the common needs of society and bringing about stable livelihood for its citizens.' The same authors explain that development governance grew from an earlier field that was called 'development administration': 'The dominant development paradigm until the end of the 1960s was influenced by Western thinking of the role of state and approaches to development.' As the practice outgrew the old paradigm, and as developing societies gained more agency and development debates gave more prominence to participatory and sustainable approaches to development, the name of the field itself was replaced.



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**Inclusive development has to be participatory and democratic.**

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## 2.2. SUSTAINABILITY AND INCLUSIVENESS IN DEVELOPMENT

When we speak about development governance for democratic transformation, we immediately imply sustainable and inclusive development. It is generally agreed that sustainable development means the utilization of existing resources to meet human development goals in the present without negatively impacting the ability of future generations to benefit from the same resources. This is, however, one general side of sustainability. The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development lists 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which have a total of 169 targets tucked inside the goals. It is considered to be the current global blueprint for what sustainable development should be about, as the 17 goals span various social, economic, political and environmental agendas. For example, SDG 16 ('promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels') emphasizes that sustainable development has to be inclusive development. Goal 10 ('reduce inequalities within and among countries') reinforces the same position. Inclusive development has to be participatory and democratic. These sentiments are also present in the seventh goal of the African Union Agenda 2063 ('Environmentally sustainable and climate resilient economies and communities').

## Chapter 3

# GOVERNANCE MODELS AS THEY RELATE TO DEVELOPMENT AND DEMOCRACY

While there are many governance models at the state level, in terms of how economic and social development agenda are prioritized and carried out, and while the models in one country are probably different from those in any other country, there are still many general overlaps. In development debates, three main models are discussed and promoted for developing countries—the social democracy model, the (democratic) developmental state model and the neoclassical liberal model.

In the welfare state model, or the social democracy model, a wide range of extensive social welfare programmes (e.g. in healthcare, education and housing) are regulated by the state to guarantee most citizens a basic level of access to services that could not otherwise be guaranteed without state oversight. Additionally, labour laws tend to be more enabling of labour self-organization and collective bargaining power. Social democracy evolved, historically, as a political theory and orientation that promoted gradual, peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism. Eventually, many traditions of social democracy conceded to adopting general capitalist forms but with heavier state regulation than promoted by classical (and neoclassical) capitalist models. Hence, the private sector continues to lead the economy, with the public sector being more involved in strategic sectors and in wider employment (often in the social democracy model, the public sector is either the largest employer in the country or a close second). To maintain its ability to provide social welfare programmes, the social democracy model depends on high taxation regimes, state investments and returns from state-owned enterprises in select strategic sectors; all of which require the pre-existence of circulated wealth and industrialization in the country. Therefore, scholars in political science, such as Garland (2016), contend that the welfare state is not necessarily built around serving the poor or reducing poverty but around providing services and guarantees to a large middle-class through redistributive taxation, and do not necessarily address wealth inequalities effectively (evidenced in that many countries that follow the social democracy model have high rates of wealth inequalities). Ideal or promoted cases for the

**What the social democracy model offers, in terms of serving democracy through development, is important, because it arguably offers a legitimate platform for achieving the UN's SDG 16, among others.**

success of this model seem to be in countries that were already wealthy or had established institutions and traditions of industry (such as the Scandinavian countries and Germany). What is more significant, for our purposes, is that the state does not necessarily lead a development vision, because in order for the state to lead such a vision it has to push for more large investments that generate wealth in a developing society. In the case of developing countries, where circulated wealth is already low, and where the informal sector is large, taxation systems would find it difficult to collect enough to guarantee social welfare programmes to citizens (the majority of whom are not middle-class or securely employed). Hence, one of the technical challenges of the welfare state model is that it requires preconditions that may not exist in developing countries, and that the model itself may have to find other ways to achieve these preconditions. In other words, the welfare state model focuses on the redistributive and organizational role of the state, rather than its developmental role. Yet, what the social democracy model offers, in terms of serving democracy through development, is important, because it arguably offers a legitimate platform for achieving the UN's SDG 16, among others.

In the developmental state model, the general structure and main governance programme of the state are tied to development and the necessity of state direct intervention in activities related to development and development planning (Leftwich 1995). The developmental state model is almost an antithesis of the organizational state—that is, one that is concerned with organizing the market via regulations and general procedures without attempting to limit market mechanisms from defining production and commerce processes. The developmental state, on the other hand, leads the economy by managing the country's resources according to a national developmental agenda and vision, usually concerned with increasing the developmental benefits for a wider spectrum of the population instead of serving the interests of a dominant minority (i.e. a predatory state). In development studies, records show that the majority of countries that have achieved significant industrial development in the last few decades—for example China, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore and Taiwan—have adopted the developmental state model (in various versions), with focus on industrial policy (Oqubay 2016). On the outset, the developmental state has two main characteristics:

1. It regulates market mechanisms via trade laws and planned economic policies, at the top of which is industrial policy.
2. It takes the initiative to design and implement large developmental projects that lead to an increase in general development indicators in the medium and long terms, given that the state's capacity for large investment in the long term, and for developmental objectives, is larger than that of the private sector—national or foreign—especially in developing countries and in critical political situations.

A review of the historical trends through which the largest industrial states of our time have developed and grown to their current positions (e.g. Germany,

Russia, United Kingdom and United States) shows that they have all utilized some level of industrial policies during their periods of developmental leaps. Accordingly, the last few years have witnessed a revival of the call for clear and efficient industrial policies in the countries seeking economic and human development, such as in most African countries (UNECA 2016; Mkandawire 2001). The 'mixed economy' approach has also been associated more with developmental state models (although it can also apply, sometimes, to welfare state models) and refers to utilizing both planned economy and market economy mechanisms in a selective, or mixed, way, but with overall steering by the state.

As for the neoclassical liberal model, it is mainly characterized by three main features: (a) shrinking the state (austerity and wide privatization of industry and services); (b) trade liberalization (or implementing market economy regulations); and (c) focusing on growth measures with the understanding that inequalities will be handled over time as wealth accumulates.

The neoclassical liberal model's approach to development views it as an increase in two aspects—economic growth and liberal freedoms (including 'freedoms' related to private property ownership and trade). In general, the first aspect is a priority while the second increases the country's evaluation in global indices making it an environment more attractive for investment, work and consumption, while generally taking human rights into consideration. This approach considers itself to be objective and descriptive, meaning that it is used by many development scholars as a standard measure for the level of development in any given country or area, and used by policy and decision makers as governance objectives. Throughout the 1970s and up to the 1990s, this model was promoted to developing countries through what became known globally as 'structural adjustment programmes' (SAPs), through international institutions such as the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other multilateral organizations or mechanisms. SAPs have since been widely criticized for not only failing to improve conditions in developing countries but, in many cases, making situations worse (Chang and Grabel 2014), to the point where many former champions of the said international institutions have become highly critical of their approaches and their consequences (such as Joseph Stiglitz, former chief economist of the World Bank, 1996–1999; see Stiglitz 2000). (see Stiglitz 2000)). One of the main concerns about the liberal model is that it establishes unhealthy relationships between development and democratization:

Basically, markets are run according to a 'one dollar one vote' rule, and democracies are run according to a 'one person one vote' rule. So, if you say that you want to 'constrain politics' [in running the economy], it basically implies that you want to give more power to people with more money.  
(Chang 2019)

In terms of SDGs, it is difficult to defend the neoclassical liberal model as far as SDG 10 goes. On the other hand, SDG 16 faces many systemic challenges

in this model, particularly in developing societies where public institutions are still weak and where the private sector is still too small and hesitant to take on long-term investment and mega projects needed for national development (such as infrastructure, energy, healthcare and education). Additionally, the model has difficulties in fulfilling SDGs 1, 2 and 8 (which are: ending poverty, eradicating hunger and providing decent employment) in a timely manner in developing countries.

These three models can be compared to each other in terms of two main features—the role of the state (in public life) and the level of developmental orientation. If we assume that commitment to democracy is present in the three models, then they can be compared as shown in Figure 3.1. Additionally, all three models seem to relate to what John K. Galbraith (1987) calls ‘the dialectic of our time’, which is:

between economic enterprise and the state .... It is government that reflects the concerns of a constituency that goes far beyond the workers—a constituency of the old, the urban and rural poor, minorities, consumers, farmers, those who seek the protection of the environment, advocates of public action in such areas of private default as housing, mass transportation and health care, those pressing the case for education and public services in general. Some of the activities thus urged impair the authority or autonomy of the private enterprise; others replace private with public operation; all, in greater or lesser measure, are at cost either to the private enterprise or to its participants. Thus, the modern conflict between business and government.  
(Galbraith 1987)

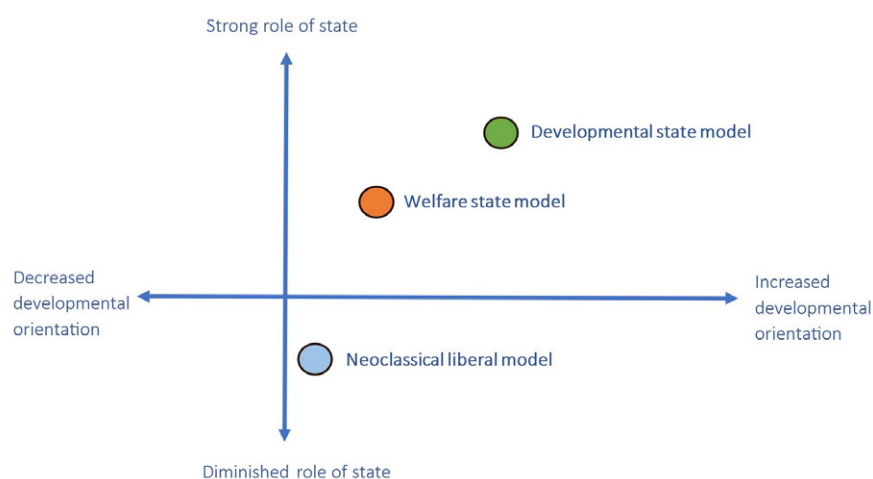
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### 3.1. GOVERNANCE MODELS DRIVE POLICIES

Public policies can be defined as the orientation of governance. They are any type of intervention or measure, set by authorities, that attempts to improve the enabling environment for particular sectors or services or issues of public concern, or to alter the structure of economic and political activity towards sectors, technologies or tasks. Such interventions or alterations are expected to offer different (better) prospects than would occur in their absence.

Policies are administrative, logistical, political and economic guidelines and regulations that create a clear pattern of the approaches and solutions presented by authorities. Therefore, policies and institutions are represented in what authorities do and seek, not only in what they claim and intend. Announced intentions and written objectives are thereby part of policies but not all that is policy. In reality, policies manifest in different forms: legislation and amendments, funds, initiatives, incentives, conditions, assigned tasks, standards, work procedures, tax changes, links between institutions and communities (internally and externally), training, media campaigns, and

**Figure 3.1. Governance models\*—with relevance to developmental orientation and role of the state**



\*Assuming equal commitment to democracy in all models.

Source: Created by the authors.

so forth. The difference between policies and other decisions (made by authorities) in general is a difference of degree: while policies must be cohesive to achieve clear objectives (as policies usually come in packages), indicating prior research, thinking and planning by their creators, other authoritarian decisions might be arbitrary or singular, or responding to a particular emergency issue or situation (i.e. decisions that are not following a declared policy that preceded them).

Ultimately, policies are the manifestation of planning and organization in circles of decision (whether at the state level, sectoral or regional levels, municipal levels or organizational levels). Policies epitomize purpose and intelligent intent:

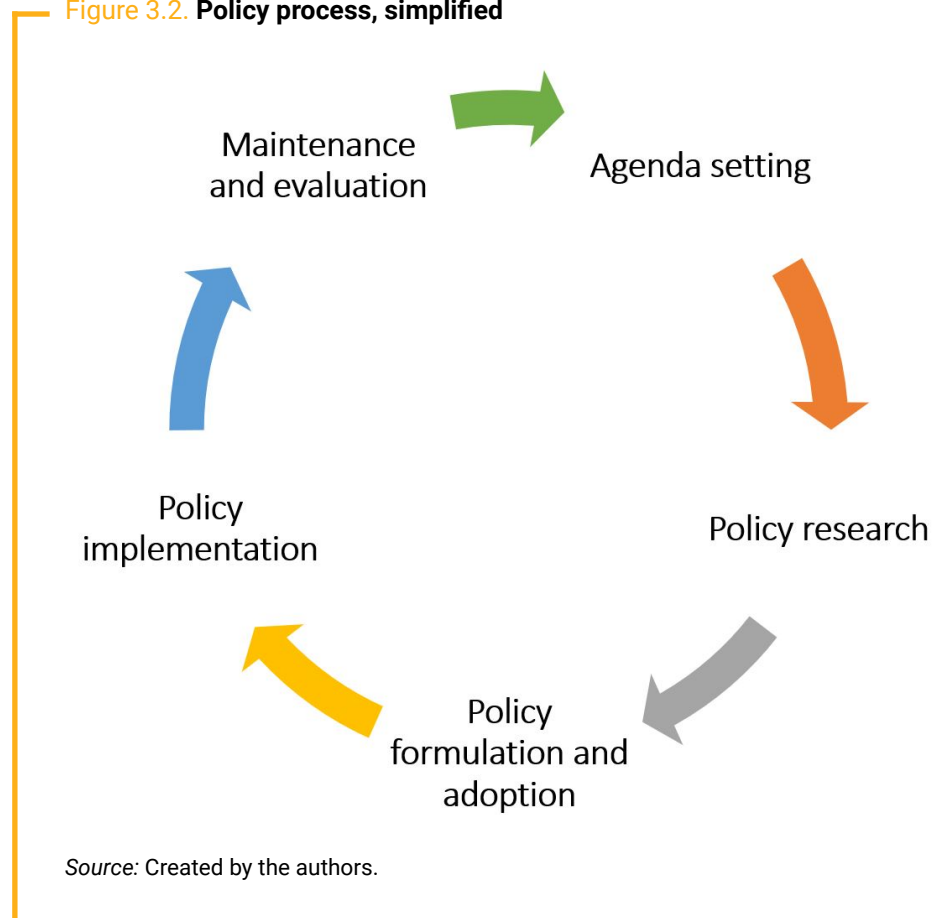
Organization is one of the great facts of contemporary life. It accounts for the most significant achievements of modern industry and government in tasks that go far beyond both the physical and intellectual reach of the individual. This it does by combining diversely specialized intellectual qualifications for results superior to those otherwise available. And since many varied scientific, engineering and experiential qualifications bear upon each decision, the organization encompasses the crucial power of decision.

(Galbraith 1987: Chapter 21)

Well-planned and well-driven policies make the difference between success and failure. Planning involves relying on evidence, and drive involves a sound vision for sustainable development. Democratic transformation requires the involvement of citizen groups in policy choices and policy implementation.

At the very least, this requires information diffusion and citizen consultation in the policy process (see Figure 3.2). This is why democratic practices in development planning and execution do not need to wait for democracy at the state government level—democratic practices in development can be, and need to be, implemented at project and local levels, directly with the beneficiaries and stakeholders of development.

**Figure 3.2. Policy process, simplified**



For the same reasons, the choice of governance model determines the orientation and direction of policies, and what basic tools are readily available to implement them. A governance model also pre-determines, in various ways, which actors will likely be responsible for what. For example, if a country adopts a governance model that allocates economic growth and employment primarily to the private sector and non-state actors, then that country will likely see governments that are less involved in addressing unemployment rates and championing development flagship projects. Basic services of healthcare, education, infrastructure and housing may also be allocated to different actors, in different percentages, based on the adopted governance model. Lastly, laws and regulations that shape socio-legal environments will also be influenced by the chosen governance model, with consequences on many SDGs related to inequalities and to inclusive, accountable institutions.

## Chapter 4

# SUDAN: MISALIGNMENTS OF DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT

This paper focuses on the context of post-war Sudan. To understand that context, we need to review a brief history of modern Sudan, before moving forward.

Sudan's democratic periods, since independence, were generally far from developmental, as decision makers were more occupied with the politics of power sharing, power brokering and conflict, over abstract ruling agenda such as Islamic laws and constitutions (which were mostly concerned with social restrictions and criminal penalties, and less with any developmental paths) and national identity (as an abstraction of 'Arab vs. African' and the status of South Sudan). Although developmental weakness was a national experience, the centre of the country received better attention, while most of the rest of the country suffered varied levels of development marginalization—all contributing to political instabilities that made democratic periods short and chaotic. While the most recent transitional period seemed to have less polarization regarding things like Islamic laws and national identity, it was submerged in power conflicts and brokering that left little attention and resources to development planning and governance.

Transforming the national economy towards more industry and manufacturing was difficult, as well as moving democratic processes towards comprehensive development. In the 1950s and 1960s, agriculture was dominant in contribution to the GDP: around 60 per cent, followed by transport, with a minimum contribution from industry and government activities (Ali and Elbadawi 2004). Though dominant, agriculture continued to serve traditional/native elites, rather than the masses (Ali 1989). Along the same lines, the constituencies that contributed more to the GDP and agriculture were dominated by the Umma Party, while nationally there was high competition between the Umma Party (which was backed by the Ansar sect) and Unionist parties (backed by the Khatmiya sect) (Alfeel 2015). In parliament, as well as in political life, contests between the two major groups were mostly about vague ideas about government ideology and orientation, but most importantly they collaborated in

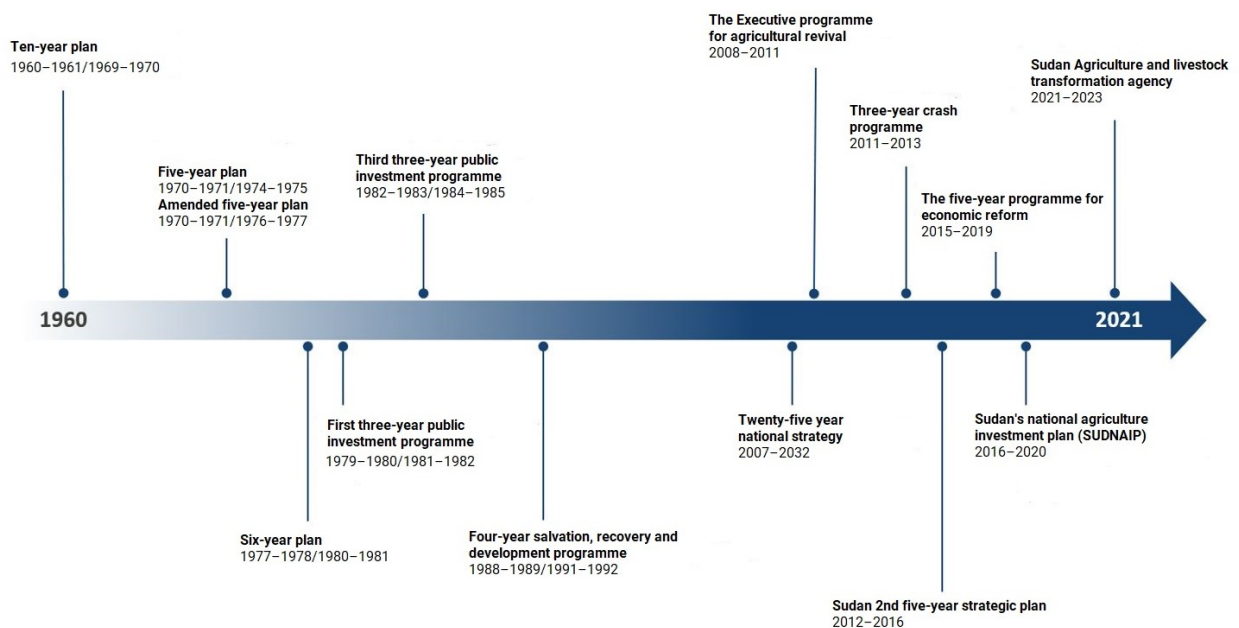


**Transforming the national economy towards more industry and manufacturing was difficult, as well as moving democratic processes towards comprehensive development.**

keeping other political movements and their views sidelined and marginalized in national decision making. A good example of the dominance of political skirmishes over serious development planning is that, in a country as poor and politically fragile as Sudan, the number of constituencies increased from 97 to 260 between 1953 and 1986 (Ali and Elbadawi 2004: 13), making room for more seats in parliament—which come with a greater portion of the national budget for hard-to-justify government expenses—but without felt differences in governance models, political agenda or development achievements.

Most regimes had national development plans that may have looked substantial on paper (see Figure 4.1), but the reality is that the orientation in general was ad-hoc policies that leaned for the most part towards liberalizing the economy (Ali and Elbadawi 2004). Generally, those plans were conceived and managed under conditions of clientelism and oligopolies of resources. From 1956 to 1969, the general economic policy orientation was focused on 'private sector and export orientation, agricultural development, and fine-tuning fiscal and monetary policy' (Ali and Elbadawi 2004: 13–14). From 1969 to 1984 the country witnessed oscillations from self-identified socialist policies to liberalization and foreign capital inflow, to a debt crisis and another round of IMF/WB adjustment policies. The period from 1985 to 1989 witnessed ad-hoc policies that could not be identified with any governance orientation, and from 1989 to 2019 the country witnessed a 'confused policy stand.... Home-grown adjustment policies of the IMF/WB variety with no financial support (Ali and Elbadawi 2004: 14).

**Figure 4.1. Timeline of development plans in Sudan since 1960**



Source: Permission from the source author obtained from roundtable discussion participant (Abubakr Omer) Omer, A. and Elnasri, H., 'PADEO Design for Sudan: Improving Sustainable Productivity in the Rain-fed Agriculture in the Gum Arabic Belt Region', RVO, 2023.

Oil exports started in 1999, and in 2012 took second place to gold exports in (now 'North') Sudan, due to the secession of South Sudan and to increased gold mining in Darfur (el-Battahani 2023: 96). Throughout all of this, and despite the relative increase of GDP per capita (from USD 500 per capita in 1978 to USD 2,800 per capita in 2018), real and felt measures of socio-economic development, such as purchasing power of the middle-income class, were declining. The human development index (HDI) for Sudan has been plummeting and is even worse when the inequality-adjusted HDI is used. Additionally, in the years before the December 2018 revolution, Sudan joined the list of fragile states—that is, those marked by high levels of poverty, violence, and political instability.

A slight exception in the above narrative is noted by Alfeel (2015) who argues that the period between 1958 and 1969 saw some potential of a 'forgotten' developmental state, where a group of capitalist merchants ventured into light industries, and where there were some industrial policies at play, such as the establishment of the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) in 1965. Although that period witnessed a significant increase of industrial contribution to GDP from around 1 per cent to 8.3 per cent, several institutional barriers, with limitations in technological capabilities (that required more investment in training and more time than the period mentioned), along with continuous political instabilities and mismatched priorities, did not make it a continuous trend.

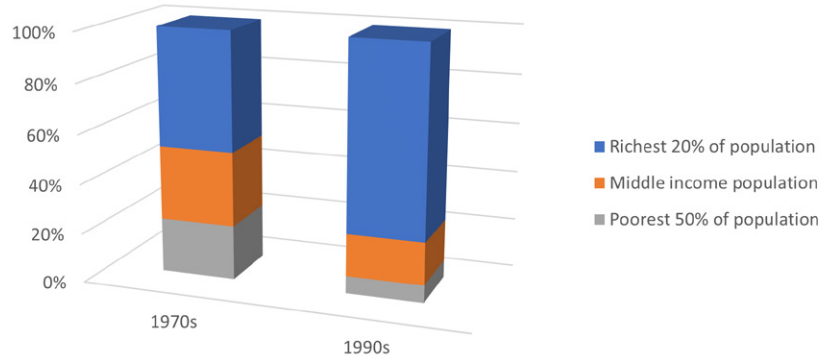
Between the 1970s and 1990s, wealth disparity increased: the share of the richest 20 per cent of the population increased from 50 per cent of GDP to more than 75 per cent, while the share of the poorest 50 per cent of the population dropped from 20 per cent of GDP to only 7 per cent (Figure 4.2). The unemployment rate remained steady (between 13 per cent and 15 per cent) despite fluctuations in GDP growth between 1991 and 2016 (el-Battahani 2023: 92). The trend did not change during democratic or transitional periods; in fact, according to Ali (1990, Arabic) transitional periods were mostly economically worse-off, partly due to absence of investment in productive sectors and partly due to following IMF and WB policies. The last transitional period (2019–2021) was along that same line. Sudan has experienced five transitional periods, thus far, in its modern history (1953–1955; 1964–1965; 1985–1986; 2005–2011; and 2019–2021), all of which seem to have failed in fulfilling their objectives as well as the aspirations of the people (el-Battahani 2023).

The last transitional period included serious rhetoric about development by the transitional government, with little attention to it, due to being occupied with politics and to being ushered into problematic economic decisions by the IMF/WB and consortia, rather than by the voice of the people (Sheikheldin and Alneel 2021; Ali 1990, 2nd edition 2021)—despite the observation that Sudan records show increases in GDP and employability during the periods where economic decisions were not following IMF or WB recommendations. A September 2020 'economic conference' was held by the transitional government as a spectacle for the consumption of the masses and the media, while decisions were made elsewhere. To understand how the transitional

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**Sudan has experienced five transitional periods, thus far, in its modern history (1953–1955; 1964–1965; 1985–1986; 2005–2011; and 2019–2021), all of which seem to have failed in fulfilling their objectives as well as the aspirations of the people.**

**Figure 4.2. National income distribution in Sudan (early 1970s to late 1990s)**



Source: Data from el-Battahani, A. H., *The Dilemma of Political Transition in Sudan: An Analytical Approach* (Stockholm: International IDEA, 2023), Annex 2, <<https://doi.org/10.31752/idea.2023.51>>.

period did not prioritize development we highlight three decisions and trends that happened during that time:

1. The inflation of basic wage goods, as a clear decision by the transitional government, went against almost every sense of understanding how and why the December revolution built momentum to the point of overthrowing a totalitarian regime in 2019. By choosing that path, the transitional government made a choice of not taking a democratic or participatory road towards economic change and aligned itself with policies that do not have a good track record of success in Sudan or elsewhere. As explained by Cramer, Sender and Oqubay (2020) in their recent comprehensive book about African economic development, 'the most serious constraint on financing a cumulative dynamic of investment, productivity growth, employment, and savings, stems from the price inflation of basic wage goods. This compromises both savings by workers and the profitability of investment, and can also threaten political stability .... So, for industrialization and structural change to proceed, 'there must be no inflationary price increase of necessities' (2020: 95–96).
2. The Industry Organization and Development Act took a back seat to two newer acts: the Investment Encouragement Act and the Public–Private Partnership Act of 2021 (published in the official gazette, issues 1914 and 1915, May and June 2021). Despite its draft being submitted for approval to the Sovereignty Council in late 2020, 'the Industry Organization Act was overshadowed by the latter two acts and was thus rendered toothless, since most major decisions related to industrial policy are under the scope

of the PPP [public–private partnership] and Investment acts’ (Sheikheldin and Alneel 2021).

3. As a tradition from previous transitional periods, ministers of finance appointed were either former employees of the WB or IMF or known to be in line with them. Hence, their conformity with the policies of those institutions was either guaranteed or generally expected. Additionally, the IMF and WB had some of their employees, ex-employees, and ‘friendly’ experts in key positions in various ministries and in consulting bodies that worked with the transitional government. In many of these cases, the salaries of these individuals were paid directly by the WB, although they were considered public employees and public servants. This, of course, happened in agreement with the government, without any form of public consultation.

Whatever the outcome of the ongoing war, it can be agreed that the people of Sudan will have more reasons to prioritize sustainable development than ever before. A prudent approach to development should be both sectoral and comprehensive: comprehensive in governance model; sectoral (and integrative) in policy. Productive sectors should be prioritized, because their significance is that they respond to demand for necessities and for employment simultaneously, and their integrative capacities are broad. Along with that, financing development flagship projects should be done through mechanisms that respect sustainability, inclusiveness, and citizen participation.

All the models of governance, discussed in Chapter 3, represent the dialectic between the interests of the public sector and those of the private sector, in the sense of the ‘double movement’ as described by Karl Polanyi (1944): while social forces fight to maintain land, labour and money from being fully commodified, market forces push for more self-regulation and more domination over the economic realm. This continuous conflict between social forces and market forces usually manifests in the fields of politics and law. But in Sudan, and other fragile states, we may have to view things a little differently, because both private economic enterprise and the state—that is, public sector and private sector—are weak. Hence, the big dialectic in a country like Sudan seems to be between narrow interest groups—sometimes called ‘the political class’ (el-Battahani 2023)—in relative control of the state apparatus as well as enterprise, and without necessarily advancing either, and between the larger groups of citizens, of various socio-economic divisions, who anticipate and want a fairer share of wealth and power. To do that, the majority of the population wants to motivate the state and economic enterprise to work properly for broader national interests, while narrow interest groups are, for all practical purposes, holding the status quo and rotating decision-making positions among themselves (while they themselves are having their internal conflicts).

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**Productive sectors should be prioritized, because their significance is that they respond to demand for necessities and for employment simultaneously, and their integrative capacities are broad.**

## Chapter 5

# CASE STUDIES: DEMOCRATIZING DEVELOPMENT IN SUDAN

As mentioned earlier, there are good reasons for prioritizing productive sectors as targets for development in post-war Sudan, since these sectors respond to demand for necessities and for employment simultaneously, which are important for an economic period that will be marked by reconstruction efforts. Additionally, if these sectors are democratized, they will likely make the democratization of other sectors of development more attainable. While other important sectors, such as education and healthcare, are covered more extensively in post-conflict literature, this paper focuses on the productive sectors, including brief case studies of the agriculture, industrial, energy and extractive sectors in Sudan.<sup>1</sup>

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### 5.1. CASE STUDY A

#### **Participatory trends in agriculture and food systems in Sudan**

Sudan's historical landscape is marred by recurrent famines, with significant food crises recorded in the years 1888–1891, 1896–1900, 1914, 1918–1919, 1925–1927, 1942–1943, and notably in 1984–1985 (Serels 2013). This distressing pattern reveals that, over the last century and a half, almost every generation has endured the harsh realities of a major famine. In 1977, researchers from the Food First Institute wrote the book *World Hunger: 10 Myths* (revised versions in 1998 and 2015; see Lappé and Collins 2015), in which they challenged the common belief, at the time, that famines result solely from food shortages. They carefully argued, with supporting evidence, that famines stem from socio-economic factors that hinder access to food and proposed that many famines result from policies (or policy failures) more than from environmental reasons that cause shortages in food production. Here we

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<sup>1</sup> The four case studies are based on papers contributed by participants in the round table 'Governing development for democratic transformation', from which this Discussion Paper emerged. The authors relied on the contributions of Abubakr Omer (case study A), Muzan Alneel (case study B), Razaz Bashier (case study C) and Mohamed Salah Abdulrahman (case study D). We summarized the content of their papers and re-articulated their main points, when needed, for the benefit of the flow and size of this Discussion Paper.

look at the case of agriculture and food systems in Sudan through a similar lens.

The transformation of Sudanese agriculture during Anglo-Egyptian colonialism marked a pivotal shift in the country's food production systems. The colonial emphasis on cultivating large-scale, specialty crops for global markets, particularly cotton, significantly altered local agricultural practices. While these exports were lucrative for private and colonial enterprises, they failed to uplift the local agricultural communities' livelihoods (Ali 1989). The colonial administration's primary focus on security and budget control fostered an environment of shortsighted autocracy, neglecting the development and support of local food systems. This governance approach contributed to the deterioration of these systems and a widening food gap. Post-independence, Sudan's reliance on wheat aid highlighted the deepening crisis, fostering dependency on international policies and exacerbating vulnerability to global market fluctuations. Despite over 12 strategic plans issued in the following decades aimed at enhancing agricultural resource management, insufficient investment in research and development, consistently below 1 per cent of the sector's GDP, has hindered progress. This lack of innovation and sustainable practices remains a significant barrier to development. Additionally, persistent food price inflation sparks ongoing debates over the accuracy and methodology of pricing data collection.

The critical challenges within Sudan's agricultural sector prior to the current crises were deeply rooted in systemic issues around historical power-politics of access to resources (Sulaiman 2006, Arabic). Recently, the agricultural sector faced critical financial challenges, with a mere 1 per cent of total financing allocated to 65 per cent of producers who are traditional smallholders, leaving them as the least profitable actors within the agri-food value chains. On the other hand, 70 per cent of the available finance went to larger traders (FAO 2020). This financial disparity severely limited the capacity for growth and innovation among smallholders. Additionally, access to improved agricultural inputs was alarmingly low: only 11.5 per cent of farmers had access to improved seeds, and 26 per cent had vaccine availability for animals. This lack of access to crucial agricultural inputs severely limited productivity and resilience to disease.

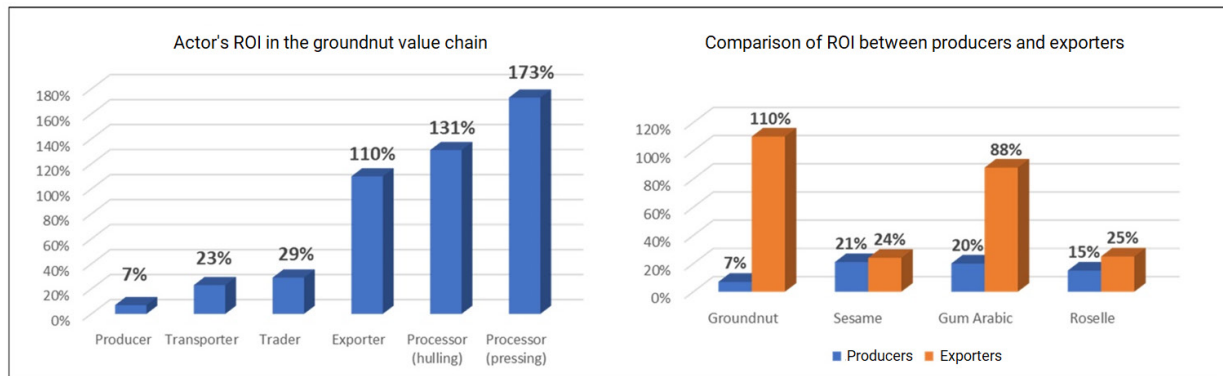
Another indicator of unsustainability in food systems that propagates hunger and causes political instabilities that hinder social peace and democratic transformation, is the disparities in return on investment (ROI) among the agri-food value chain's stakeholders in East Darfur. While smallholder farmers of groundnut experienced an ROI of 7 per cent, transporters enjoyed a 23 per cent ROI, and traders enjoyed a 29 per cent ROI, whereas exporters enjoyed a 110 per cent ROI. Manufacturers, on the other hand, benefited the most with a 131 per cent ROI for shelling and an astounding 173 per cent for pressing (Figure 5.1). Profound inequities within the agricultural sector exacerbate the financial vulnerabilities of those in the earlier stages of the value chain (who also happen to be under-represented in decision-making circles). Political

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**The critical challenges within Sudan's agricultural sector prior to the current crises were deeply rooted in systemic issues around historical power-politics of access to resources.**

instabilities and competition over resources, fuelled by these inequalities, manifest in increasing militarization of rural producers' communities.

Figure 5.1. Actors' ROI in agricultural—East Darfur



Source: Data used with permission from Gasmelseed, K. K. and Elamin, A. M. A., *Final Report on Value Chain Analysis for Groundnuts, Sesame, Gum Arabic, and Roselle in East Darfur State*, Natural Resource Management Project for Sustainable Livelihoods, funded by the United Nations Office for Project Services and United Nations Environment Programme, 2017.

Different models for managing the agricultural sector in Sudan, ones that are people-centred and pro-democratic, are necessary and possible. One example is the Sharik Foundation which is formed of five entities—Sharik Cooperative Foundation, Sharik Organization, Sharik Company, Sharik Knowledge Hub and Sharik Creative Design Studio. It has a governance structure characterized by a networked system of institutions and work units, designed to promote collaborative and efficient goal achievement. Supported by over 5,000 community enablers and 130 technical experts, Sharik ('participate' in Arabic) is pioneering business models to establish cooperative institutional banks alongside food, health, education and housing banks. Sharik has recently presented a business plan for establishing a food bank, which includes defining roles across the agri-food value chains and forging multilevel partnerships between actors. This initiative seeks to achieve food sovereignty by ensuring that community assets, including human, social, institutional, physical, environmental, political and financial assets, are developed and managed innovatively and in a participatory or democratic manner, leveraging Sharik's ecosystem to organize and manage value creation and sustain essential life systems.

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## 5.2. CASE STUDY B

### People-centred industrial policies for Sudan

Manufacturing—the process of adding value to inputs to create products—drives economic growth by boosting productivity and creating higher value compared to other activities, making it essential for funding welfare services in a democratic society (Kaldor 1967). The study of the industrial and manufacturing reality and potentials in Sudan is thus essential for any serious developmental and democratization efforts in the country.

Sudan's 2003 industrial survey—the last national survey of its kind at the time of writing—found 648 large facilities non-operational nationwide, with just 1.7 per cent of the operational facilities employing over 50 workers. Manufacturing employed 1.7 per cent of the labour force, with 77 per cent of large facilities concentrated in three states (Ministry of Industry 2005). Over two decades, Sudan relied heavily on oil and metal exports. With oil exports dropping post-South Sudan independence, metal exports surged. The lack of diversification is evident, with leather products accounting for only 0.7 per cent of exports despite ample livestock resources (UNIDO 2018). Sudan's industrial sector is weak and centralized, and obstructs people-centred development.

An economy reliant on crop exports and extraction concentrates wealth among a few capitalists, merchants and landowners, undermining democracy as they resist wealth redistribution (Acemoglu and Robinson 2006). In contrast, industrial workers tend to favour democracy due to their exposure to economic risks. Urban clustering of manufacturing workers reduces information and coordination barriers, enabling collective action for democratic change. Industrial broad linkages (backward linkages and forward linkages in the value chain) amplify this impact, making an industrialized economy more resilient and adaptable to labour disruptions (van Noort 2020).

Public interventions aimed at shaping the business environment and economic activities, known as industrial policies, inherently involve politics due to their direct impact on resource and wealth distribution within a finite world. An analysis of the industrial policy of Sudan's last transitional government reveals a preference for large capitalists and extractive industries with low value-added. For instance, the document 'Vision, Challenges & Development Priorities for the Governance of the Transitional Period', presented by the prime minister during the National Economic Conference in September 2020, emphasizes a comparative advantage approach, highlighting metal manufacturing, agriculture and new sectors. While it encourages innovation and entrepreneurship, the focus on capital-intensive and high-entry-cost sectors may impede the competitiveness and survival of smaller businesses (Alneel 2022). In terms of legislation, the Public-Private Partnership Law 2021, for example, establishes a new unit to oversee projects, funded partially by them and acting as a partner. However, it lacks legislative oversight for approving, defining scope or monitoring public-private partnership projects. These examples show an industrial policy that counters people-centred development and democratic transformation.

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**An economy reliant on crop exports and extraction concentrates wealth among a few capitalists, merchants and landowners, undermining democracy as they resist wealth redistribution.**

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**An analysis of the industrial policy of Sudan's last transitional government reveals a preference for large capitalists and extractive industries with low value-added.**



On the other hand, designing industrial policies that prioritize people and democracy is essential to overcome the challenges of low industrialization and harness the democratizing effects of industrialization. Examples include:

- Supporting small-sized industrial enterprises (SIEs) and facilities: small industrial enterprises broaden access to industrial revenue, fostering a cycle that strengthens the industrial community and promotes democratization and wealth redistribution within the sector. The success of SIEs is a first step towards national industrial development in many countries.
- Adopting people-centred tools in industrial policymaking: an example of which is adopting a brownfield approach to industrial policy which involves considering existing resource utilization when crafting new policies. Brownfield project management tools provide a clear understanding of those impacted by industrial policy by examining the current state of resources to be repurposed. This approach prioritizes understanding people's realities and appropriately involving them in the planning process.
- Exploring people-centred partnerships as a tool of re-industrialization: public-private partnerships are often touted as an optimal blend of private sector efficiency and public sector oversight for societal benefit. Yet, in pre-industrialized economies, the alignment of governmental and public interests may be lacking due to control over the government by narrow interest groups, as previously discussed. Hence, exploring partnerships between the public sector and grassroots organizations, such as neighbourhood councils and labour associations, could offer a more democratic alignment with public interests and citizen participation in development governance. With stronger representation of the broader population in government, possible partnership projects can be chosen on a case-by-case basis and according to their potential in advancing national development agenda.

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**Exploring partnerships between the public sector and grassroots organizations, such as neighbourhood councils and labour associations, could offer a more democratic alignment with public interests and citizen participation in development governance.**

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### 5.3. CASE STUDY C

#### **Democratizing energy access**

Access to energy is pivotal to enhancing living standards and boosting productive capabilities. It is a key factor in empowering social groups to advocate for fairer terms of citizenship that can expedite the journey towards democratic transformation. The energy sector in Sudan should be examined within the broader framework of a just energy transition—a framework that is attentive to historically disadvantaged groups from populations in the Global South, minorities, labour and local communities (Akuno et al. 2022).

Prior to the most recent war, just 32 per cent of the population in Sudan had access to electricity—and with frequent interruptions. The current 3.5-gigawatt capacity is evenly split between hydropower and thermal generation (Usui et al. 2019). Grid access is concentrated in urban spaces and completely excludes

the five states of Darfur and the region of South Kordofan, mirroring a situation largely shaped by historical developmental inequality. Energy supply was turned into a massive project of political clientelism as networks expanded in northern and central Sudan to gain support from its residents. Favouring the middle-class urbanite is manifested in the fact that Khartoum accounted for over 60 per cent of the country's electricity consumption. Paradoxically, while more than 60 per cent of the population remains off-grid, consumption rates among the grid-connected are nearly six times higher than the average in sub-Saharan Africa (308 KWh per month).

Under the influence of international institutions and their affiliated consultants, and with regard to governance reforms and future capacity plans, the National Electricity Corporation (NEC) underwent full unbundling in 2010, resulting in the creation of five new companies based on technical functions. However, the anticipated increase in management efficiency from unbundling did not occur. Future capacity planning has significantly deviated from the principles of just energy transition following a one-dimensional, cost-minimizing approach known as the least-cost plan, which prioritizes financial costs over potential social or environmental impacts. Hydropower dams were developed following unrevised colonial blueprints disrupting ecological systems and livelihoods of local communities, while thermal plants became the go-to option in more recent years, with more than 1,200-megawatts of thermal plants having been installed between 2003 and 2016 (see Figure 5.2).

In line with the principle of full-cost recovery promoted by the World Bank, between January 2021 and January 2022, electricity tariffs were adjusted three times at exponential rates. While the residential sector consumes 60 per cent of the supply, productive sectors were hit the hardest with this tariff liberalization. The commercial and agricultural tariffs have increased by 13,000 per cent and 5,000 per cent respectively.

Popular response to the injustices related to the sector included resorting to 'co-production of public services' models, which involve organizing into consumer cooperatives and securing micro-financing for grid connections in coordination with the Sudan Electricity Distribution Company (Basheir 2021). Such models can also face resistance from some communities due to public perceptions, as access to conventional services and a national grid has been historically associated with citizenship rights. However, within the current demographic pressures and limited financial resources, coupled with climate change, public perceptions may need revisiting through engagement, debate and availing information in the public domain. Another form of response is popular anti-dam mobilization and struggle, which culminated in the announcement by the transitional government that all planned large hydropower projects in northern Sudan were cancelled. Additionally, farmers in northern Sudan protested rising agricultural tariffs in early 2022, and erected barricades on the main road connecting northern Sudan and Egypt. This direct action, known as the 'North Barricades', lasted over four months and led to a reduction in electricity tariffs for local farmers from 21 to 9 Sudanese Pounds per KWh.

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**Energy supply was turned into a massive project of political clientelism as networks expanded in northern and central Sudan to gain support from its residents.**

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**'Co-production of public services' models can also face resistance from some communities due to public perceptions, as access to conventional services and a national grid has been historically associated with citizenship rights.**

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**Popular movements and citizen participation in reforming the sector have proven to be relatively effective in revising undemocratic energy policies.**

Despite the energy sector in Sudan continuing to diverge from principles of fair energy transition conducive to democratic transformation, popular movements and citizen participation in reforming the sector have proven to be relatively effective in revising undemocratic energy policies. Along that line, concerned citizen groups have also continued to promote shifting from large hydropower projects that disrupt ecosystems and the livelihoods connected to them. To move towards democratizing energy access, the sector can be governed through models and plans that move away from reliance on disruptive large dams and fossil fuel-based sources and transition towards a mix of distributed and utility-scale renewable energy sources alongside the existing hydro-thermal capacity. Furthermore, more attention should be paid to providing power to off-grid communities, using socially driven financing mechanisms instead of privatization and full-cost recovery mechanisms. More importantly, energy sector frameworks should be informed by public participation through democratic channels, in both policymaking and energy generation activities.

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**CSR practices have inadvertently reinforced pre-colonial anti-democratic structures by directing revenues through tribal leaderships. This trend has been associated with increased militarization and a weakening of civil governance.**

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#### 5.4. CASE STUDY D

##### **Can the extractive sector be democratized?**

The curse of underdevelopment in Sudan is mixed with pockets of economic activity characterized by heavy extraction, which creates a unique Sudanese reality that requires creative thinking about development solutions (Abdulrahman 2018). In Sudan's current regulatory framework, the development contribution of industries like gold mining is often channelled through corporate social responsibility (CSR) models. However, research indicates that this approach has negative consequences. CSR practices have inadvertently reinforced pre-colonial anti-democratic structures by directing revenues through tribal leaderships. This trend has been associated with increased militarization and a weakening of civil governance. Essentially, CSR has intertwined conflicts over resources, identity, tribal land ownership and militarization in gold-rich regions.

The last transitional government struggled to effectively intervene in the gold mining sector due to several factors. First, the transitional government was cautious not to disrupt the power-sharing arrangement that brought it into existence, as key entities within the government, such as the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces, were not only partners in the new government but also significant investors in the gold mining industry. Additionally, the National Congress Party of the ousted president al-Bashir maintained substantial investments in the sector. Despite public calls for the party's investments to be returned to the national treasury, biases within the transitional government favoured the military authorities, allowing them to exert dominance in the gold mining sector and inherit the economic space previously occupied by the National Congress Party.

During the transitional period, grassroots organizations advocated for significant reforms in the gold mining sector, highlighting its detrimental impacts on democracy and development. Citizen groups marked several existing policies and regulations governing the sector as inadequate and posing a substantial risk to both democratic governance and economic progress. The Collective of Demand-based Groups Tajamou' al-Ajsām al-Matlabia (TAM)—have advocated for an alternative democratic and development inducing model for governing the gold production industry in an effort worthy of serious study and consideration (TAM 2020, Arabic).

Since the beginning of the transitional period TAM led the initiative to hold the first mining conference emphasizing the need for restructuring the sector with the participation of various actors (the state apparatus, gold companies and academia). The initiative presented a new vision that proposed a transition formula that establishes a relationship between the state and producers by organizing them into production cooperatives. Under this model, the state would source gold from the production of miners, which provides increased efficiency, reduces environmental impact, provides budgets for local development, increases producer returns and provides facilities for companies to transform into production companies in the long run. Additionally, this formula allows workers to organize and contribute to decision making and allows communities to participate, often to the extent of rejecting mining altogether if chosen. In this way, it is a transformation that does not necessarily contradict the capital transformation and connection to the global market that the transitional government sought, but it makes the process move forward with the leadership of a civil state and allows for democracy, broader citizen participation and local development. Despite the broad agreement on this formula, the formation of the Supreme Committee for Economic Emergencies led by the leader of the RSF, and the creation of the Gold Committee led by his brother and deputy leader of the RSF, undermined any progress towards a functioning democracy and building a civil state while controlling state productive capabilities. The coup of October 2021 practically halted all efforts to democratize the extractive sector.

This case study, and the three others visited above, demonstrates that democratic and development-oriented models of governing productive sectors are feasible and enjoy community support, as evidenced by significant and sophisticated grassroots contributions. However, the same cases highlight that the implementation of such democratic development models is directly influenced by the political will of those holding state power, thus reinforcing the need for democratic-developmental governance models in political decision making.

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## Chapter 6

# PROSPECTS OF COOPERATIVES AS A DEVELOPMENT-DEMOCRATIZATION MODEL

In the case studies presented above, cooperatives appeared more than once as a form of democratic organization in developmental activities. Cooperatives appear to have a pivotal role in fostering democratic practices and facilitating democratic transformation in post-war Sudan. Their collective capacity to support democratic initiatives and advance the objectives of sustainable development and peace should be highlighted. Additionally, cooperatives appear to have a role as integral components of solutions addressing the dire humanitarian conditions amid the ongoing war. The cooperative movement is intrinsically tied to democracy, embodying the principles of international cooperation and inclusive participation as pathways towards universal peace, sustainability and food security. Historically, those involved in establishing cooperatives were driven not only by financial incentives but also by a collective desire to achieve shared objectives through communal and democratic processes. This characteristic positions cooperatives as an alternative model for fostering a more inclusive economy.<sup>2</sup>

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**Since the 1980s, the cooperative sector has encountered fierce competition from the private sector, which not only possesses more resources but also has the capability to access public funds allocated to cooperatives.**

In Sudan, the colonial government in the late 1920s initiated efforts to establish organized cooperative forms. Initially focused on agriculture, the movement saw the emergence of agricultural credit associations in the Tokar Delta. The government aimed to shield farmers from exploitation by merchants and moneylenders offering unfair financing. However, the primary goal was to boost cotton production for the benefit of colonial authorities rather than protecting farmers' interests. This approach ultimately led to the failure of the experiment. Since the 1980s, the cooperative sector has encountered fierce competition from the private sector, which not only possesses more resources but also has the capability to access public funds allocated to cooperatives. The cooperative movement in Sudan also focused on consumption activities rather than production activities thereby limiting its real potential. The first

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<sup>2</sup> This section on cooperatives is mainly based on the paper and presentation contributed by Mohamed Elfatih Abdelwahab in the round table 'Governing development for democratic transformation'. The authors summarized and re-articulated the content of that contribution for the benefit of the flow and size of this Discussion Paper.

legislation regulating cooperatives appeared in 1948 and focused on the administrative and managerial aspects of operating cooperatives. In 2020 a new legislation for cooperatives was drafted by a committee of experts and approved by the technical committee of the cabinet of the transitional government; but it did not receive final approval by the government and was delayed until the coup of 2021 took place and effectively ended the transitional period.

Since its political independence, Sudan has witnessed the formulation of numerous plans, programmes and policies intended to foster the development of the cooperative sector. However, these initiatives have yielded only limited success, due to several key factors. Among the most significant factors are political instability, the conflation of cooperative principles with charity and the adoption of a top-down approach to building cooperatives which neglects active involvement from development stakeholders, citizens and other stakeholders in setting priorities. Furthermore, internal challenges such as corruption, limited awareness, inadequate training and mismanagement have compounded the obstacles facing the Sudanese cooperative movement.

Cooperatives are a very appropriate model for the operation and management of any economic sector. A 2013 study by the International Labour Organization (ILO) titled *Resilience in a Downturn: The Power of Financial Cooperatives* showed that efficiently governed financial cooperatives outperformed traditional banks for investors before, during and after the global financial crisis of 2007–2008, and contributed to the long-term stability of other cooperatives through maintaining the flow of small and medium loans (Birchall 2013). In addition, the ILO confirms that cooperatives can better accommodate the requirements of individuals in all fields through cooperative projects, rather than individual projects and individual efforts. Additional examples of cooperative models that can support Sudan's democratic transformation include:

- In the extractive sector, boosting the effectiveness of mining cooperatives involves organizing miners into cooperative associations and legalizing existing mining cooperatives. Establishing partnerships between these cooperatives and the private sector is key, along with creating credit and savings associations in mining areas. These efforts aim to streamline operations, formalize the sector and minimize losses due to lack of organization and smuggling. In Sudan, chrome miners have experience organizing into cooperatives and can be an example worthy of study for the entire sector.
- In the healthcare sector, Sudan's health system was already fragile prior to the war reaching the country's capital. Cooperatives can play a vital role in ensuring access to healthcare by establishing infrastructure and financing services and offering home care for chronically ill persons. Healthcare cooperatives, including worker, patient or community cooperatives, as well as multi-stakeholder hybrid cooperatives, can provide a range of services from home care to comprehensive hospital care.

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**Among the most significant factors are political instability, the conflation of cooperative principles with charity and the adoption of a top-down approach to building cooperatives which neglects active involvement from development stakeholders, citizens and other stakeholders in setting priorities.**

- In the energy sector, energy cooperatives can play a crucial role in advancing sustainable energy objectives, including improving access and efficiency and reducing emissions. They contribute significantly to generating and distributing electricity, while spearheading the adoption of sustainable energy sources, such as solar and wind. Rural electric cooperatives, renowned for providing electricity to rural areas worldwide, exemplify this. In the United States, for example, consumer-owned utilities purchase electricity at wholesale rates and deliver it directly to consumers.

## Chapter 7

# CAN DEVELOPMENT BE FINANCED IN LINE WITH DEMOCRATIC VALUES?

Sudan is under debt distress with a debt of over USD 60 billion, which was more than 160 per cent of GDP in 2019. Most of Sudan's debt is owed to bilateral creditors, split almost equally between Paris Club and non-Paris Club countries. The modern conventional approach to debt relief for this level of debt is through the IMF's Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative. The first step in the process is engaging in a Staff Monitored Program (SMP), during which the IMF assesses the country's economic policy programme and ensures that it is in line with its fiscal and monetary responsibility criteria. At the HIPC decision point, a country then becomes eligible for World Bank International Development Association (IDA) grants and the IMF's Extended Credit Facility (ECF). The most recent ECF, approved on the back of a successful SMP and a HIPC decision point, enrolled Sudan in a 39-month arrangement for access to USD 2.5 billion.<sup>3</sup>

While successful in achieving partial debt relief and creating financing options, the SMP and HIPC qualification processes assertively infringe on national policy decisions. Despite the World Bank's insistence that its role—and the role of the IMF—is unintrusive in local politics, their financing mechanisms are contingent on the IMF's assessments of a country's eligibility for finance. This process, by way of its prescribed conditions, intervenes in local policymaking. Therefore, by design, IMF and World Bank financing encroaches on the political process and could—and, in some cases, evidently did—undermine democratic deliberation and accountability (Mkandawire 2010; Ali 1990).

There is a paucity of literature of alternative financing options for post-conflict recovery that aligns with democratic transition and national sovereignty (Ball 2007). Nevertheless, harms documented as a result of donor-dependent

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**There is a paucity of literature of alternative financing options for post-conflict recovery that aligns with democratic transition and national sovereignty.**

<sup>3</sup> This section on the possibilities of financing development projects in Sudan is based on the paper and presentation contributed by Muez Ali in the round table 'Governing development for democratic transformation'. The authors summarized and re-articulated the content of that contribution for the benefit of the flow and size of this Discussion Paper.



**Table 7.1. Donor-dependent financing mechanisms****Financing mechanism Examples**

<b>Direct donor execution</b>	Bilateral financing of development projects
<b>Pooled financing</b>	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF), World Bank MDTF, UN Common Humanitarian Funds
<b>Co-financing</b>	IDA post-conflict grants, World Bank Post-Conflict Fund, UNDP/World Bank thematic funds
<b>Channel funding</b>	UN agencies, UN Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP), international NGOs, local NGOs, civil society

financing (see Table 7.1) can be reduced through a number of mechanisms and approaches, such as:

- **Conventional finance with negotiated conditions:** Sudan's experiences with negotiating terms of financing with the IMF and WB (1977, 1986 and 2019) have historically lacked local alternatives and hence assumed very weak positions during negotiations. A strong negotiated position (e.g. Ethiopia) should be able to align conventional finance with the local democratic process.
- **African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM):** The APRM is a self-monitoring mechanism set up as a specialized agency of the African Union. Through its peer review process, the APRM helps African countries ensure their economic programmes align with the local context and avoid economic and political repercussions of shortsighted reforms.
- **Post-Conflict Country Facility (PCCF):** established in 2004 by the African Development Bank to help eligible countries clear debt arrears, the PCCF has successfully supported Burundi, the Central African Republic, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This is potentially an African alternative to the HIPC process (or a pre-HIPC engagement) that might add to Sudan's ability to negotiate conditions for finance.
- **Thematic funds:** various UN agencies and international financial institutions have funds designed for specific themes (e.g. climate change adaptation, institutional development, gender equality) without the prescriptive rules of engagement of conventional finance.

## Chapter 8

# CONCLUSIONS: POST-WAR SUDAN AND SUSTAINABLE PATHS FORWARD

The notion of a post-war Sudan has been rightly criticized as quite vague and problematic in identifying whether what is meant is a functioning, reliable ceasefire or a phase in which the main causes of war are addressed (thus making sure the direct armed conflict will not resume). In either case, it will be difficult to call either situation a post-war situation because ending the war requires serious, arduous work in peacebuilding, relief and so forth. Such conditions still call for clear governance and development priorities in a phase that may not be called 'post-war' yet but in which the main activities related to post-war conditions must begin, and it is upon the relative success of such activities that we may make passage towards 'post-war'.

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### 8.1. IMAGINING A POST-WAR SUDAN

In a collective exercise of contemplating, or brainstorming, general and main features of what would be the priorities, challenges, and opportunities, of a post-war Sudan, a group of researchers and journalists on governance, development and democracy in Sudan identified three priorities for a post-war Sudan. The first is the reconstruction of the physical and social infrastructures from basic services to health and education. The second is the redefinition of the terms of political discourse as well as the articulation of constitutional direction with emphasis on transitional and social justice. The third is the governance structures within which the first two priorities are achieved which need to be imagined starting from the public sector in a decentralized and municipal-level manner. These structures are also to be highly independent from foreign influence and reflect national sovereignty.

A significant number of challenges are expected to hinder carrying out these priorities. Mainly, the huge damage the state institutions received, in infrastructure and human resources, coupled with the lack of information or data needed to inform decisions. Moreover, serious challenges come

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**The experience of war by the whole country is perceived as an opportunity for the Sudanese people to shift their mindset in what concerns the understanding of citizenship, the state and social change in a way that can lead to more cohesive political and institutional reforms and a larger sense of equality and solidarity.**

from the damage inflicted on the social fabric through the spread of the means of violence, the return to kinship-based solidarity and the rupture of organic solidarity networks such as the emerging forms of popular organizations. Additionally, a challenge resides in the rentier political culture of the elite and its translation into a lack of political will capable of pursuing a consistent national programme of sustainable development and democratic transformation.

Nonetheless, the round table participants saw several opportunities that can emerge from the current conditions. Most important is the weakness of the central state and how this can be an opportunity to rebuild the trust in local communities and civil society and their ability to devise local governance structures with limited resources for health, education and the like. Conditions can also render small industries and cooperatives more competitive in the absence of big industries and smooth import routes. An emergence of local cooperatives and small industries can create a shift towards import replacement. More broadly, the experience of war by the whole country is perceived as an opportunity for the Sudanese people to shift their mindset in what concerns the understanding of citizenship, the state and social change in a way that can lead to more cohesive political and institutional reforms and a larger sense of equality and solidarity.

The three priorities are not comprehensive but rather ignite thinking about using collective capacities to prepare for what would be a very critical phase in the history of the people (or peoples) of Sudan. It is understood, however, that imagining a post-war Sudan is only useful if it motivates thinking and acting that begins now, instead of waiting idly and helplessly for future events that could not manifest independently of the people involved in their creation.

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## 8.2. SUSTAINABLE POSSIBILITIES

Democratic transformation in Sudan's future will require prioritizing sustainable development goals, and for that to happen we need to study and plan development governance models and tools that can stand up to the task, at the national level, at sectoral levels, and at regional and local levels. Sustainable possibilities require sustainable development.

A 2019 document, drafted by a committee under the banner of the Sudanese Professionals Association (SPA), was published on 22 April, with the title of 'A Proposal for Governing Structures and Constitution Building'. Article 93 of the document proposed the establishment of a Commission for Sustainable Development. It was proposed for the transitional period—and was not taken up by the transitional authorities—and later it was proposed again, with more details, on various platforms, during and after the collapse of the transitional period. The general objectives of such a commission were three:

1. Ensuring the drafting of a national development plan—guided by a national vision and strategy—that gets all actors on board, and that constitutes a national project larger than political sectarianism or election periods.
2. Coordinating between the various bodies of the state (ministries, agencies, councils, etc.) to ‘deliver as one’ sanctioned projects that cross boundaries between sectors and specialties of ministries or agencies.
3. Selecting flagship projects to execute and monitor, to set a tone for managing such projects and connecting them to national plans.

For these reasons, the commission was proposed to have direct access to the head of state or government (i.e. not being under a ministry or other body in the state), to coordinate the objectives above at a higher level of command. Additionally, and for the long term, the commission may transform into an agency, after the transitional period, with more permanent arrangements, with the consideration that a national development plan (and subsequent plans) will likely need more time than the transitional period, while the purpose of the transitional period is to prepare the country for a new phase of constitutional and democratic rule.

Such a proposal only serves as an example of prioritizing people-centred development for democratic transformation and using governance tools to put that prioritization into motion. Democratic transformation itself can be initiated in Sudan through democratizing development—that is, through citizens’ participation in development decision making and through enhancing the agency of actors and creators of value in the various sectors of economic and human development. In this paper, we explored case studies of people-centred development proposals and initiatives in four productive sectors: agriculture, industry, energy and mining. Those proposals and initiatives either were born from concerns of local groups (communities of residence or communities of labour) about activities and services that affect them, or stemmed from research and expertise that value inclusive, sustainable, people-centred approaches to developing the sectors. To support such proposals, tools of governance, organization and financing conducive to democratic decision making should be explored, selected and integrated into policy and implementation at national and sectoral levels. The paper thus explored options of democratic governance models as they relate to development orientation and the role of the state. Additionally, it explored the potential of cooperatives in Sudan as an approach to organizing producers and consumers that is consistent with democratization and sustainable development. Finally, the paper reviewed options for financing development projects and programmes in a post-war Sudan that are not disruptive to national democratic processes. All of the above can inform public debates on policy choices that can be cohesively integrated into policy packages for sustainable development in post-war Sudan.

This paper does not aim to provide policy recommendations. Instead, it provides information and analytical tools to help a wider audience and groups

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**Democratic transformation itself can be initiated in Sudan through democratizing development—that is, through citizens’ participation in development decision making and through enhancing the agency of actors and creators of value in the various sectors of economic and human development.**

of stakeholders discuss the topic in an informed manner. Therefore, the above are not policy recommendations but examples of proposals and thinking processes that prioritize sustainable development goals for democratic transformation in post-war Sudan. The proposals and initiatives highlighted in the paper may serve as examples or may find their way to policy adoption in the future. In either case, that depends on the success of this paper in making its main argument, described above, clear and supported with evidence.

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## About the authors

**Gussai H. Sheikheldin** is a research fellow with STIPRO (Science, Technology and Innovation Policy Research Organization), Tanzania, and a research associate with ISTinaD Centre, Sudan. His work seeks to illuminate synergies between technologies and institutions, to advance policy issues in sustainable development, science systems, industrial management, and tertiary education. A former director of Sudan's Industrial Research and Consultancy Centre (IRCC), he holds a PhD from the School of Environmental Design and Rural Development, University of Guelph, and a Master of Engineering and Public Policy from McMaster University (Canada).

**Muzan Alneel** is an engineer, researcher and public speaker with an interdisciplinary professional and academic background (engineering, socio-economics, public policy). She is the managing director and a founding member of ISTinaD, Sudan, a research centre that works in the field of innovation, science and technology for people-centred development. Muzan has over 10 years of engineering experience in the private sector, managing projects in fast-moving consumer goods, start-ups and relevant technical consultancy, and holds a Master of Engineering in Technical Management from Hochschule Emden/Leer (Germany).

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**International IDEA**  
Strömsborg  
SE-103 34 Stockholm  
SWEDEN  
+46 8 698 37 00  
info@idea.int  
www.idea.int

Aspiration for democratic transformation is strongest when people are living the results of its opposite. Democratization, however, is a tough road that requires reliable vehicles, and one prominent vehicle is prioritizing sustainable development as a national agenda and through national, popular programmes. This paper presents a case for the critical role of development governance in the process of democratic transformation in post-war Sudan. It provides a historical review of the failures in misaligning democracy and development in Sudan, by consecutive regimes, and examines case studies in its productive sectors (agriculture, industry, energy and mining) to demonstrate the viability of the main approach of 'democratizing development' through examples and dynamic stories from the field.

Democratic transformation in Sudan will require prioritizing sustainable development goals, and for that to happen we need to study and plan development governance models and tools that can stand up to the task. This paper provides information and analytical tools to help in discussing the topic, by a wider audience and groups of stakeholders, in an informed manner.