

**THE COLLAPSE OF THE  
STATE IN SOUTHERN  
SUDAN AFTER THE  
ADDIS ABABA  
AGREEMENT.**

**A Study of Internal Causes  
and the Role of the NGOs.\***

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## Introduction

The state administration in Southern Sudan and its post-1972 history provides a dramatic contrast to most other state administrations, not only when compared to the industrialised world but also when compared to other regions in Africa. Theoretical and universalistic concepts about "the state", the "Third World state", the "African state", "bureaucracy", "the African civil society" should not disregard the particular history of Southern Sudan.<sup>1</sup>

Southern Sudan between 1972 and 1985 is also an interesting area for studying NGO-government relationship in a comparative perspective, because of the weakness of both the state and the "civil society" and the relative strength of the international aid agencies.<sup>2</sup>

This paper discusses the institutional and organizational characteristics of the state administration in Southern Sudan and its relationship with the foreign non-governmental aid organisations (NGOs) in the period between the Addis Ababa peace agreement in 1972 and the collapse of the administrative structure in the middle of the 1980s. It focuses on two different but interrelated phenomena: Firstly, an empirical description and analysis of the state and the structure of the public bureaucracy and its characteristics and strength in the Southern Sudan will be presented. Secondly, an analysis of the role of the NGO-sector will be presented. This effort at understanding the role and policies of the foreign NGOs in relation to the development of the state administration's is an implicit comment on a dominating conceptualisation of the dynamics of NGO-government relations in Africa: that the NGO-sector plays an important role in the democratisation of African countries by strengthening and pluralising a civil society conceived as threatened by an overdeveloped.

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<sup>1</sup> The type and quality of administrative structures is important also from a developmental point of view; it has been said that "administrative improvement is the *sine qua non* in the process of programmes of national development" in developing countries (Emmerich 1969.1). A study of the theoretical problem of the relationship between bureaucracy and modernisation or administration structure and socio-economic development is, however, outside the scope of this article.

<sup>2</sup> The empirical parts of this chapter is based on a fairly extensive collection of reports produced by government officials and regional government departments, NGOs, UN-organisations, the World Bank and a number of consultants working in the South during this period.

bureaucratic and parasitic state administration.

A study of the administrative structure of the state in Southern Sudan should not reduce the state and its machinery to an arena for competing socio-economic interests; a locus of class struggle; an instrument of class rule or an expression of core values in the surrounding society. More fruitfully the state apparatus is approached as a separate socio-spatial organization, as an actor which aimed at shaping social and political processes. The political and administrative elite possessed an unusual degree of autonomy in relation to the processes in the Southern agricultural and pastoral society. Financially and politically the elite depended, however, upon support from Khartoum, and the state therefore also became an object to be controlled for the purpose of supporting clients. It should nevertheless not be conceived simply as a typical clientelistic state administration, since the same elite saw this very administrative system as a vehicle for reducing dependency on Khartoum in the long run. The state administration is studied as an entity in itself and as an actor by itself, but within the context of this particular political and socio-economic setting. This first part will focus on the institutional means rather than on the political aims. It will not focus on the performance of power or on the relevance and receptiveness of the state administration's general policies and programmes. It will describe some aspects of the build up of an administrative structure and civil service, its role, potentials and limitations within the state apparatus and its relation to the society; and focuses on its strength; i.e. administrative stability and financial base.

As is well known, the Southern society, due to a number of historical, geographical and economic reasons, was extremely structurally segmented and culturally diverse. It was characterised by a lack of integration and complementarity between various parts of the social system. It had a relative absence of value consensus, the relatively broad support for the Addis Ababa Agreement notwithstanding. The society was compartmentalized into relatively independent sub-systems, with only few points of contacts with each other. A great number of rural people and whole ethnic groups had only marginal participation in a common money economy. In Durkheimian terms such societies tend to be low on both "mechanical" and "organic" solidarity. The state building efforts in the aftermath of the civil

war could therefore from this point of view, be seen as an effort at social integration. By subjugation of what was described as Southerners to a common body politic, a specific point of contact on a supra-tribal and supra-ethnic level was established.

### **The state administration 1972-1981**

To establish and build up regional and local state institutions was regarded as the main task for the regional government after the Addis Ababa accord. It was thought that the broader goal of reconstruction and development would come to nothing without such structures. The aim was to turn these instruments into motors of economic and social reconstruction and development and to secure a kind of semi-autonomy for the region, as embodied in the spirit of the Accord. The old institutions had been partly destroyed by the war, and a new bureaucracy was to be constructed: a) the civil service (the district and provincial administration) was Southernised completely and b) new political structures were created through the establishment of the Regional Government and the establishment of the Sudanese Socialist Union Party. The Southern Provinces Regional Self-Government Act, 1972, which was signed into law by Nimeiri on 3 March and officially ratified in Addis Ababa on 27 March, meant that a new regional state apparatus should be established in the South; a legislature, an executive organ, a regional administration, three provincial administrations and district/rural administrations should be formed so as to initiate and implement the reconstruction and development of the society. Khartoum should keep control over matters of defence, foreign policy and trade, national economic planning, transport and communication, but the regional government was made responsible for the preservation of public order, internal security, administration and development in cultural, economic and social fields. In April 1972, the Interim High Executive Council was set up, headed by Abel Alier.

For the Council and the political elite in the South, the top priority was the establishment of a new administrative structure manned by southern staff and which should serve regional and southern interests. For the first time Southerners were to govern Southerners, and in an

institutionalised way. In fact an entirely new type of authority was to be established in the South. Compared to the region's colonial administrative and cultural history the aim implied a far-reaching administrative, bureaucratic revolution. This revolutionary drive was also influenced by a dominant ideology in the early 1970s in Africa in general, as well as in the Sudan after the 1969-revolution: the state and its administration was seen as the "prime mover" in societal transformation and development.

These more overall aims and normative legitimization of the new state structure, soon faced competition from more practical matters, often mixed up with problems of a clientelist nature. Who were the Southerners to govern and who should take command in the new state? There was the contradiction between Khartoum's strategy of appointing reliable and friendly staff and Southern aspirations of regional autonomy bringing hardliners into the government institutions, but also between the Southern exiles versus those Southerners who had remained in the South or in Khartoum, between soldiers and intellectuals, between people from different provinces and between people who could mobilize different ethnic constituencies. In addition, there were reportedly about 20,000 Any Nya supporters returning from the bush and many hundred thousands of refugees returning from neighbouring countries. The number of "soldiers" in Any Nya increased after the peace agreement. Some people joined the guerillas after the war in the hope of getting better job-opportunities. When peace came, they all rushed to Juba and other regional centres competing for the new posts. It had important consequences that these posts were created in a period when free money and aid poured (relatively speaking) into the region as part of the relief and resettlement program. From the very beginning this state administration had very weak economic links to the region it was supposed to serve.

The contradiction between the two dominating leaders, Joseph Lagu and Abel Alier, was both related to and reflected differences and conflicts within the Southern society. Lagu was part of a military bureaucratic hierarchy, being trained in the National Army before his defection, and had won his position as a soldier during the war. Alier had practised as a barrister and was an elected politician before being made a minister by Nimeiri in 1969. Lagu was from a small Equatorian tribe, the Madi. Alier was from Bor and a Dinka. Lagu

was appointed Major General in April 1972. The same month Alier was appointed President of the High Executive Council. These two leaders represented different political and administrative networks, different types of leadership, different provinces and ethnic groups. The degree of conflict between these two men from 1972 to 1981, when Nimeiri dismissed Alier's administration, in important respects reflected the degree to which the Southern political elite and administration was unable to control centrifugal forces within itself, especially in a situation when these contradictions were fuelled by Khartoum's tactics.

The ethnic distribution of administrative posts had for decades been a central conflict in the South. The political struggle against Arab domination in the early 1950s had centred on southernisation of administrative posts. In the South the Sudanisation of the British colonial administration was called Northernisation. Since the elections to the Parliament in 1953 the political struggle had often centred on the manning-policy for the administration. The Liberal Party criticized the plans for the Sudanisation programme, and the disappointment was great when the Sudanisation Committee presented their recommendations; only six southerners were found qualified for a total of 800 posts (four were found qualified for the post of Assistant District Commissioner and two for the post of Mamur). Later on the manifesto of the Federal Party called for a separate Southern Civil Service while the NUP president, Ismail al-Azhari, in the 1956 election-campaign promised to appoint southerners as District Commissioners and Governors (Arou 1988:308). The emergence of a Southern political consciousness was closely related to the fight for a greater role of Southerners in the administration of the South. One might say, that the preoccupation with this question had, by 1972, become part of the educated and political elite's "common concern", of their political culture.

The competition among the returnees, the Anya Nya and the "insiders", was of course fierce, not only for jobs, but for the best jobs. After all, a high political or administrative position was a very important foundation of wealth and also a basis for conversion of value into political support and clientelism. The political economy of similar state structures in Africa has been called "the state as plunder capitalism" (Mamdani 1986:46). In the Southern Sudan there was very little capitalism and not very much to plunder, the most important

exception being money given by foreign donors or by Khartoum. High official posts were also important to gain regular business interests. In general, however, the jobs were less luxurious and the size of the administrative class smaller than in many other regions in Africa. In spite of this; the crux of the matter is that the difficult economic and social and infra-structural situation in 1972 rendered, however, the state and its administration almost the only job-alternative for many. Naturally, this reinforced the political interest in who was appointed where by whom and why. Within the relatively small circles which made up the political-administrative elite, the question of distribution of positions soon became an obsessive game. From the very beginning of the administrative build up, two sharply conflicting considerations influenced both the structure and the self-image of the employed administrators: Development and reconstruction of the society was on the one hand regarded as being dependent upon a strong, efficient and rule-governed state-machinery. At the same time there was a need to handle the manning problem with great care and with an eye to local, often particularistic and competing expectations.

When the Provisional Government was set up in Juba on 22nd April, it lacked almost everything a government usually takes for granted; administrative personnel, office-buildings and administrative experience.<sup>3</sup> One of the biggest problems in 1972 was thought to be the availability of adequate qualified manpower to run the various tasks of government. At the end of 1973 the Regional Government had an estimated 30% of the manpower required to man and run the Regional Civil Service. The public services in the region had by December 1972, 284 administrative and professional personnel, 383 sub-professional and technical and 384 clerical personnel (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development 1973:7), probably at that time the smallest administration and the most uneducated administration in the world when compared to an estimated population of 4.3 million (Ibid., 8) and an area of 646,000 km<sup>2</sup>. This implies that there were 11227 persons and 2278km<sup>2</sup> per each professional administrator. The regional agricultural staff had 14 university graduates and 46 with lower level training (Ibid.,22). The educated group was to a large extent returnees. In 1976, still

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<sup>3</sup> See Alier 1976 for his description of the government-"infrastructure" in 1972. (Alier 1976:7-8)



only about half the required posts were filled (Alier 1976:38). On the other hand 10,000 former, mostly uneducated, Anya Nya forces had been taken into civilian departments in 1972 to assist in reconstruction and development. The bulk of them were taken by Forestry, Wildlife, Roads, Agriculture, Regional Local Government and Educations departments (Peace and progress 1972-1973, 1973: 4). As a comparison: the number of classified government personnel in the whole Sudan was 92,000 out of which 67,000 were in the central government (Al-Terafi 1986: 75).

But perhaps as important was the quality of the new administrative staff at hand. The bureaucratic culture and tradition was very weak among the Southern administrators in Southern Sudan. The legacy of British colonialism in the region had left few and weak bureaucratic structures and institutions. Although there were differences in the administrative set up between the hey-day of the District Commissioner in the 1920s and 1930s and the evolution of more development oriented administration in the 1940s and early 1950s, the period of Condominium rule taken as a whole was basically a "law and order" administration, with weak infrastructural power and with limited functions. The overall strategy was "to interfere as little as possible" in the society and to work through tribal authorities. Where no such authorities existed, new tribal authorities should be created as the southern governors agreed in 1922. The British established a local government system based on local tribal and cultural units. There were regional dissimilarities, and different systems were developed at the state administrative level and on the level of rural and tribal administration: In the sedentary areas the chiefdoms were basically territorial units, while among the pastoralists they were basically lineage chiefdoms. On the higher, state-administrative level very few Southerners were recruited. The policy was in general restricted to implementing the policy of "care and maintenance", as it was called, and administrative expenses were cut to the bone.

Well into the 1940s at least, individual District Commissioners could represent in one man all the government functions in regions which might be of a size of an average European country. In 1937, for example, Mongalla and Bahr al-Ghazal were brought together to form the Equatoria Province. The aim was to reduce administrative costs. The new governor

should administer this area from Juba. Sir James Robertson has underlined the problem with the enormous size of the administrative area and the limited administrative strength: "It was further from Nagichot, the most easterly of the district headquarters, to Raga, in the extreme west, than it is from London to Moscow" (Robertson 1974:104). During most of the period it was anathema to create bureaucratic structures which would compete with native and tribal administration, as the historian G.N. Sanderson has put it. The result was an administrative apparatus which depended on the individual capabilities of British DCs and the potential rapid deployment of technologically superior armed forces. The development of a centrally organized bureaucracy with ordinary political, administrative and economic institutions was thus discouraged, very different from what was the case other places in the Nile valley, as in Egypt, the northern riverain Sudan, Kenya and Uganda. The British did not want to develop an educated elite of Southern administrators, since they feared a detribalized and discontented intelligentsia. The missionaries were allowed to start schools, but the mission schools had other aims than creating bureaucrats or administrators. The colonial policy on religion barred a possible development of region-wide religious organizations. As part of their Nile valley strategy and their Southern Policy, Islam was suppressed. The expansion of the Church did not lead to the establishment of an ecclesiastical hierarchy nor serve the interest of the build up of a strong, region wide state apparatus, partly because the South was partitioned between different Catholic and Protestant groups. No overarching religious hierarchies or bodies were established. The traditional religions were organized on a communal basis, often around a local cultic centre. These traditional religions were therefore incapable of providing an ideological and organizational foundation for administrative centralization or broad regional bureaucratic organizations. The British aims created state institutions which were designed neither to be instruments of economic development or economic exploitation (as in Egypt, Uganda, Kenya or the northern riverain Sudan) nor efficient channels of Westernisation or modernisation, but to maintain peace with low costs. The imperial army's technological superiority and the role of the alien DCs, which from a purely local perspective could be seen as neutral arbiters in local conflicts, made success in this respect possible. The more bureaucratic regulations of the Municipal, Township and Rural Area Ordinance of 1937 and the provision of Provincial Councils in 1947 did not have any important effect in the South and came too late to have any impact on

institutional culture. Neither had the local government structure, suggested by Dr. Marshall (an expert on British government who in the late 1940s evaluated and recommended on local government in the Sudan) and incorporated into the Local Government Ordinance of 1951, any lasting consequences on Southern administration. The main reason was the less developed administrative structure in the South; the Local Councils in the South remained advisory and consulting agents to the District Commissioner. By 1972 the South had not experienced universally oriented and rule-governed bureaucracies and public administration.

Educationally, the Southern Region was probably the least developed in Africa. According to the 1973 census, 81% of the population aged 7-24 had never attended school. 58% of the workers employed in the modern sector in 1973 had received no education at all. There was moreover an imbalance in the distribution of educated people, not only between the North and South, but also within the South between regions and ethnic groups. When manpower requirements were first estimated in relation to the implementation of the government's Development Plan (1977/78-82/83), it was stated that there was a need for 2,400 graduates, 12,000 diploma- and certificate holders and 16,000 school leavers by 1982/83. The estimated demand for university graduates in agriculture and related fields alone were 500. (Mills 1977). The gap between estimated demand and potential supply can be indicated by the fact that there were in 1976 only about 250 Southern Region students in the whole of Sudan (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development 1981: 54).<sup>4</sup> In 1978/79 less than 10 out of some 1,000 students following degree level agricultural courses at Khartoum University were from the Southern Region, a region where more than 90% of the population were agriculturalists or pastoralists. The administrative language of the Southern bureaucracy was English, which only a few mastered better than they had mastered Arabic during the Khartoum-led administration in the 1950s and 1960s.

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<sup>4</sup> The Bank compares this with Somalia, which is "generally reckoned to have one of the least developed educational systems" and having about the same population as the Southern Sudan. Somalia had nearly 2,7000 students at university undertaking undergraduate courses in 1977, against the Southern Region's 250. In 1980, the Bank anticipated, there were likely to be a mere 500-700 students passing the secondary school certificate - compared to 3,500 in Somalia (International Bank of Reconstruction and Development 1981:54).

The character of the war prior to the peace and establishment of a state administration was not conducive to the training of administrators. Guerilla movements have in many other countries trained administrators during the struggle, through administering liberated areas for years. The Anya Nya did not build up such strong alternative administrative structures in the areas they controlled. Some chiefs and trained administrators defected to them and the Sudan Penal Code was used, but this did not create anything that resembled a unified, bureaucratic system. Those who represented the Southern movement at Addis Ababa and those who after the Agreement took up high posts in the regional government had therefore little administrative experience. The "insiders" had more experience, but they were on the other hand generally less trusted by the people.

The Southern movement was very disunited. Legal instruments of conflict resolution or bureaucratic institutions for policy implementation had not been established within and between the different factions. This fluid situation came to the fore time and again. A period of three years from 1967 saw for example, a number of different southern "governments", the Southern Sudan Provisional Government, the Nile Provisional Government, the Sue River Republic and the Anyidi Government. This lack of organisation was also noted by contemporary observers; "in places other than the Sudan (this) might have proved fatal". (Eprile 1974:97). It was only when Joseph Lagu, in 1970, managed to establish a military leadership over both the Anya Nya and a new political wing, the Southern Sudan Liberation Movement, that one can say that the movement became united. Unity was imposed by a "bush coup". This organizational weakness could work during the war, due to its character, but the shortcomings were exposed in ordinary institution building efforts. Lagu's authority was to a large extent derived from his ability to deliver goods, i.e. military hardware and training (through the Israelis). This was a kind of authority which proved to be unstable and difficult to transfer to peace conditions.

In addition, two legal factors were important for the manner and form the administrative build-up took. The Self Government Act came into existence before the promulgation of the new national Constitution in 1973. Some of the articles of the former differed from and contradicted articles later written into the Constitution. When such fundamental legal

instruments talked with two tongues, it was of course not conducive to the establishment of a rule-oriented administrative system; on the contrary it added to the uncertainty and confusion. The region, in line with Section 22 of the Act, was directly under the jurisdiction of the President, although the amending law was not enacted until July 1977 (Wieu 1988:48.) From the very beginning and during its formative years the build up of a Southern public administration was *formally* guided by legal provisions and rule-oriented, i.e. a bureaucratic authority was to replace the traditional authority of Native Administration. In reality, however, the administrative implementation of the Act was fundamentally personalised, since it depended to a very large extent on Nimeiri's opinions and attitudes. What took place represented a "centralized" decentralization, by which Nimeiri delegated some of his Khartoum based authority to Juba.

Personalist polities are the very opposite of universalistic, rule oriented administration. The difference has been defined by the fact that in the former, rulers themselves are the source of state norms (see Heper, 1987, 15). In the case of Nimeiri, the central "norm" became unpredictability (For examples and discussions, see Khalid, 1985 and Woodward, 1991). In the South especially, due to the Constitutional arrangements and Nimeiri's very strong position among the regional politicians and in the popular opinion, the fundamental arrangements were personalistic. Seen from the South, Nimeiri was the man who had given the Southerners peace and regional autonomy, or more precisely, he was seen as the only leader in Khartoum who could safeguard that peace, and was given southern support on that understanding. For the Southern elite in this context, with their multiplicity of local loyalties and the conflicting loyalties between supporting Nimeiri and pleasing the centre on the one hand,<sup>5</sup> and promoting the Southern cause more directly on the other, it was difficult to formulate and implement a consistent long-term policy on which the administration could

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<sup>5</sup> It is important to remember the strong support Nimeiri had in the South through the 1970s because of the May Revolution, the Peace Accord and the fact that Nimeiri, due to the role of the region as his "Southern constituency" for some years responded positively to Southern aspirations. Malwal wrote in 1981: "Second, the South has come to trust President Nimeiri personally very much, so much so that they do not question the basis of his decisions, even if those decisions could adversely affect the South" (Malwal 1981: 217).

work.

Additionally, this initial build-up of an entirely new administration was guided by the regulations and instruments of the People's Local Government Act, 1971. The aim of the act was to create a politicised administrative system, in support of the May Revolution of 1969. This had important consequences in the South, because the new regional, provincial and local administration, both its core administrative system and administrative personnel, were given shape and identity by guidelines directly contradicting the idea of a "neutral, bureaucratic" administrative system. The highly politicized atmosphere in the South turned the staff-appointments into a tense struggle among competing interests, authorities and statuses. The core administrative personnel from the very beginning conceived their role as a political role, and were so regarded by the ruled. Many had got their bureaucratic posts in order to represent "particular" interests within the state administration rather than to promote "universal", regional, state administrative interests. Promotions were often too rapid, and many were given jobs which they had no competence for.

The Act moreover, gave the People's Province Executive Councils responsibilities and functions that were virtually impossible and self-contradictory. Their membership were to be locally elected and appointed. Legally it was a body which should represent the local will and interests. The councils should promote all kinds of development initiatives: primary and intermediate education, public health, agricultural development, village and town planning, recreational activities etc. On the other hand they were to mobilize public support behind government policies and maintain public security. Generally, it failed in both respects. In reality it was the Commissioner who was the strong man, also according to the 1971 Act. He was appointed by the President in Khartoum and answerable to him only. He was chairman, treasurer and convener of the council sessions. He had supervisory and disciplinary powers over the staff. He was to report on the seconded staff to their respective ministers. He was at the same time SSU-secretary of his province. Due to his almost autocratic position vis à vis the rest of the civil service and the elected politicians locally (Badal 1983:90), the Commissioner's role eroded the possibilities for establishing a bureaucratized, rule-oriented system of government. If anything went wrong he was to blame. If no sugar, grain or petrol

was available in the Market, it was the fault of the Commissioner. More often the Commissioner became a symbol of anti-institutionalism and anti-routinisation; and he often used or misused the local councils haphazardly to boost personal political backing as he deemed fit (see Malik 1983:95).

The state administration was from the beginning an administration of a very special type since it did not depend on extraction of local resources or taxes for its existence. In this it resembled the British colonial state in the South. But contrary to what was the attitude and practice after 1972, the British had as a main administrative interest the extraction of taxes, not primarily as a source of state income but as a symbol of administrative state power and as a symbol of local submission to an externally imposed state administration. Administrative expenditure in Equatoria Province for instance was about double the receipts during the early 1930s (see different Memoranda by the Governor-General on the Finance and Administration and Condition of the Sudan). The government's taxation policy was therefore implemented in a rudimentary way and with the "ears to the ground". The chiefs were responsible for tax collection and were usually given a certain percentage of the taxes collected. The often personalised relationship between the District Commissioner and the local chiefs, created a system of government based more on clientilism than on bureaucratic rules. Although taxation on a certain scale by a central authority in the South was started by the British, a "coercion-extraction" cycle never seemed to have taken off. General political mechanisms behind state formation have been described as the "extraction-coercion cycle" (Finer, 1975:95). Extracting economic surpluses from the population makes it possible to maintain a state machinery, a permanent army etc. which in turn serves to extract further surpluses and so on. It also makes the state-rulers accountable to the ruled. No such cycle ever existed in the southern Sudan.

The financial regulations of the new regional administration were chaotic. The basic rules were governed by Presidential Decree No. 39 of 1972 and the Self-Government Act, 1972. Appendix B of the 1972 Act, "Draft ordinance of items of revenue and grants-in-aid for the Southern Region", was an instrument which fostered internal quarrels within the regional and provincial administration. Administrators and politicians fought for their own interests

or those of their own constituencies while trying to enlarge their slice of the "grant-in-aid" cake sent from Khartoum. It could exploit both as a carrot and stick vis á vis the South.

Paragraph 15 reads:

"New Social Service Projects to be established by the Region or any of its Local Government units, and for which funds are allocated, shall receive grants from the National Treasury in the following manners:

- Education institutions, 20 per cent of expenses
- Trunk and through Roads and Bridges, 25 per cent of expenses
- Relief and Social Amenities, 15 per cent of expenses
- Tourist attraction projects, 15 per cent of expenses
- Security, 15 per cent of expenses
- Grants for Post Secondary and University education within the Sudan, 20 per cent of grants, outside the Sudan 30 per cent of grants.
- Contribution for Research, Scientific Advancement, and Cultural Activities, 25 per cent of expenses."

The PECs were paid a "deficiency grant" by Khartoum through the Regional government, based on approved deficiency in the submitted budgets. This grant should cover provincial/local budgeted costs of personnel only. This led the provinces to prepare their budgets more or less as a "bid" for the central grant. The gap between budget figures and actual disbursement widened every year.<sup>9</sup> The executive councils were moreover unable to collect more than about 50% of their modest, budgeted local revenues (Malik 1981:6). According to some estimates, the tax revenue as percentage of total government revenue was about 15% in 1975-76, as compared to 74.9% in Kenya, 81,7% in Zaire, 87,2% in Ethiopia

<sup>9</sup> A table given in Malik 1981: 5, shows this (figures in £S 000)

YEARS	TOTAL GRANT RECEIVED	DISTRIBUTION		BUDGETED REG. MIN.	EXPENDITURE PECs.
		REG. MIN.	PECs.		
1977/78	20,800	12,721	8,079	19,742	15,671
1978/79	23,500	14,200	9,300	22,039	17,241
1979/80	36,000	16,200	19,800	22,148	29,990
1980/81	40,000	19,293	20,707	24,714	37,853
1981/82	48,000	21,962	26,038	34,377	55,443



and 89.1% in Uganda (Sodhi 1981:35). This affected the administrative system in two important ways. Firstly; the administrative system became very vulnerable and the staff continuously frustrated since their salaries depended upon an uncertain and varying central grant. Planning problems in Khartoum were immediately felt in the South. In rural councils in remote areas, at the bottom of the disbursement chain, money never arrived in time, if it arrived at all. This helped create a work-environment which diverted the civil service's attention away from administrative routine matters to personal matters. Secondly; since the personnel generally was paid by the north they did not have to cultivate relationships with local communities or to justify their work or lack of work to the local people. It became more important to be in the right offices in Juba when money arrived from Khartoum, than to be in the villages to improve relationships and strengthen administrative infrastructure. From the very beginning there was not established an extraction-coercion cycle, or an extraction-accountability cycle. If no services were established locally the administrators could simply blame the "centre", it was a system for writing off responsibility. At the same time these administrators depended upon this very "centre". For the "centre" itself this system also functioned as a dumping ground for Southern grievances and criticism. When money was disbursed the payment of salaries was a first priority. These regulations therefore further alienated the administrator from the local societies, since it regularly diminished the money left for investment in development locally. With the size and character of this financial base, the local administrations' penetrative power in the Southern rural societies had to be very weak, indeed. Not only that! As most of the Southern provinces established so-called Liaison Offices in Khartoum for follow up of business with the bodies which allocated resources, the South was soon governed directly from Khartoum. Even the High Executive Council was running the South from Khartoum. In the end, the "minimalist" administration had to a large extent been transferred *de facto* to the centre. The South was gradually evacuated administratively.

Concerning development initiatives the Province Council was to combine former Provincial Council Revenue with sources of income of the local councils and central government grants. The Province Council kept the purse and decided what to give to which Town/Rural Council and what to keep. The Province could form subordinate councils and perform their

development functions at district and sub-district levels through the People's Town/Rural Councils and Village, Residential, Trade, Market and Neighbourhood councils. In 1973 there were no sub-province Local Councils in any of the provinces but 35 rural councils (Peace and progress 1973:11). In 1976 there were 24 Rural/Town Councils in the South. In 1980 it was necessary to budget for 53 Rural/Town councils. A number of the local councils which reportedly were established, existed only on paper. The Development Committees at the various sub-levels did not function as a general rule. Legally the base councils - the village and residential area councils - were to be elected first. These should send delegates to the higher councils. Thus the People's Province Executive Council should, according to the regulations, be composed of delegates from the Town/Rural Councils in the provinces plus the appointed members and the civil servants. Local Council budgets were being prepared as appendices to Provincial Budgets (Bior 1982:61) and the commissioners continued to draw money from Local Councils' treasuries during the whole period. The policy of decentralisation became therefore already at this early stage an activity which more resembled a symbolic ritual than effective devolution of power.

States and state administrative systems have generally tried to maintain their legitimacy and authority vis à vis those who are governed by a claim to "universalism". When the state is seen to favour particularistic, special ties to kin, locality, ethnicity etc., it has tended to loose authority and legitimacy. The strength of tribalism in the South and the elite's political culture, obsessed with job-distribution, caused the Dinka-domination issue which was raised with growing strength at the end of the 1970s. It became fatal to later state building. "External" factors like the high floods in the 1960s caused conflicts over grazing land/agricultural land between the Nilotic and the Equatorians, such as the Bari, and among the Nilotes themselves, and thus contributed to the growth of ethnic animosity in the 1970s and 1980s. What ever universalistic ideology about a "Southern cause" existed among state administrators in the first years after regional autonomy was attained, evaporated quickly in this inter-tribal conflict about control and jobs. The Jonglei Canal crisis in 1974 was the first open attack on the terms of the 1972-agreement. The Akobo uprising in 1975 and the arrest of Benjamin Bol and Joseph Oduho on Alier's order, because they called for a return to the bush (Alier 1990), had already demonstrated a political split among the Southerners and

sharpened the conflict between "insiders" and "outsiders". In 1978 Lagu retired from the People's Armed Forces and joined the ranks of the politicians. He was elected President of the High Executive Council. Alier was ousted. Two years later Lagu raised the issue of redivision in a petition to Nimeiri.

In his publication, *Decentralisation* (1980), Lagu warned against what he saw as Dinka-domination and Dinka-expansion. Taking the title of his pamphlet as a starting point, he could have focused on the deterioration of the regional and local economy and government structures, but such matters were made peripheral in his assessment of the Southern problem. Lagu gave figures and tables of the ethnic background of the politicians and administrators, but did not discuss economic or administrative indicators. He focused on the same job-distribution issue which had dominated election campaigns in the South since 1953, but in a different form and with different contenders. Redivision was now, for many, another word for "anti-Dinka" sentiments. The tribal factor and the "insider - outsider" dichotomy were also reflected in different viewpoints and attitudes towards the state, the state administration and the bureaucracy between the two main political rivals, Alier and Lagu. Alier was more concerned about building up bureaucratic structures and regulations than was Lagu. From his first days in office he concentrated on building up public administration and, being a lawyer by education, he tried to put emphasis on regulations and rules. The Peace and Progress Reports published during Alier's first period in office underlined the importance of regulations and rules. A number of bills were enacted to strengthen public administration; the Southern Region Service Act, 1975, the Southern Region Public Service Pensions Act, 1976 and the Southern Region Employees Discipline Act, 1976. Lagu's policy statements, in comparison, put little weight upon administration and administrative regulations and rules. Lagu voiced more populist opinions. Their different emphases regarding this question can be exemplified by Lagu's inauguration speech in 1978. He said that the Southern citizen had been a "victim of officialdom"; he should therefore be liberated "from institutional oppression". The government should work to cut "the web of bureaucratic red-tape" (Lagu

1978:7.).<sup>7</sup>

Alier and his High Executive Council planned to establish a state administrative structure based on western models and replicate what was in the North (see for example Peace and Progress and Alier's speeches from the 1970s). Seen from the perspective of the existing traditions, culture and organizational experience, this represented a bureaucratic revolution. Alier was trying to guarantee southern access to these bureaucratic arms of the state, at the same time as Nimeiri was trying to subordinate the state to himself, partly through the SSU and partly through the 1973 constitution.

### **The state administration 1981-1983**

During 1981 the regional administration got a mortal blow. In March 1981, 12 Southern MPs in the National Assembly asked Nimeiri to dissolve the Southern government and decree division of the South. On October 5th 1981 both the Regional Assembly and the High Executive Council were dissolved and Alier's administration was dismissed. Nimeiri appointed in its place an interim administration headed by Major General Gismalla Abdalla Rasas. His main task was said to be the supervision of the referendum on division/redivision. The reactions in the South were mixed. The divisionists generally supported the dissolution. Others saw it as part of a large strategy by Northerners to fragment the South. The struggle between the divisionists and the anti-divisionists, created a situation where again the manning of the administration became a question of paramount importance.

*The Peoples Local Government Act of 1981* was therefore soon overshadowed by the consequences of redivision (see below). The central government's Regional Government Act

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<sup>7</sup> The expression "red-tape" derives from the twine which the state administration in England used to tie around their big piles of old documents. In the South, most ministries never established a proper archival system, and the red-tape of the administration was not rule-oriented or based on organised institutional memory, but more influenced by particularism and clientilism.

in 1980 left largely intact the administrative framework in Southern Sudan. The main importance of this Act in the South was that it was one act in a row of legal instruments that contributed to the instability and deepened the difficulties of creating a viable state administration.

One central purpose of the 1981 Act was said to be the correction of what was described as disadvantages stemming from the concentration of powers at the provincial level in the previous Act; i.e. to devolve administrative power from the provincial to the district level. It abolished the Provincial Executive Councils. The aim in the South was to increase and rest the responsibility of local affairs in 25 Area Councils. The Area Councils should be the central instrument of the government's decentralization policy and their role was to serve as the link between the people in rural/town areas and the Regional Government, and at the same time to be the centre's main instrument to rally support around government policies. In addition they were to initiate and support social and economic developments of their areas and be directly responsible for providing the essential services to the people.<sup>8</sup>

In the 1981 Act, the Area Councils were given wider discretion in respect of budgeting and disbursement of expenditure than the Executive Councils had previously had. They were now to exercise a financial, supervisory and co-ordinatory role in respect to the sub-councils. But none of the fundamental problems had been solved. Rather they were rather magnified by the new Act. Local governments at different levels continued to inflate their budget estimates, hoping that the central government would fulfil its declared promise of meeting any budget deficits. This situation was described in the following way in 1981 by a discussant at a UN-seminar: "Everybody tries to lower their expected revenue and to raise

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<sup>8</sup> In the Annex to the Act the functions of the Area Council were specified. Concerning economic development it is mentioned:

- "1. Preparation of socio-economic plans in accordance with the delegated powers and presentation of necessary recommendations thereon to the Regional Executive Authority.
2. Organization of statistics in all fields and supply of necessary data which are capable of being depended upon.
3. To work for carrying out studies and preparation of research which are aimed at promotion of the Area in socio-economic fields".

their expected expenditure so as to increase the gap". This became especially important for the Area Councils taking into consideration the new responsibilities they were given, but which, based on realistic local revenue, they were totally unable to fulfil. But since Khartoum was virtually bankrupt, it could not possibly meet all the demands, no matter its actual Southern strategy. The 1981 Act empowered the Area Councils to decide on and approve their own budgets, and in Section 23 the sources of revenue available to the Area Councils were spelled out. But no arrangements were made for the Council to receive further, additional revenue to those already assigned to local government under the Appropriation of Taxes Ordinance, 1954; increasing further the cash shortages. Grant-in-aid from the central government was by far the major source of income. But even more important; it became a prerequisite for their very existence. Total local revenues, if fully collected, were not capable of financing more than 20% at most of the budgeted recurrent expenditure.

Local tax in 1980 should have met, according to the regulations, the demand for local investments in development projects, recurrent costs of maintaining and running schools, road building and maintenance etc. The regional government could and did levy a special Development Tax. Two years after the agreement they promulgated the Finance Act 1974, which was intended to yield a revenue of 2,7 million Sudanese pounds already in 1974/75 (Sodhi 1981:30-31). As during the British period the Social Service tax or the Poll Tax was the most important local tax, often forming more than half of the local revenues of the Local Councils. The actual amount collected was, however, far from meeting the targets, due to the lack of cooperation from the people, the seasonal movements of pastoralists, the immigration of youth to the towns but, first and foremost, lack of administrative strength, capability and will to levy and collect taxes. There had been a certain improvement; while tax revenues in the region constituted 15% of total revenue in 1975-76, the percentage had reached 34% in 1980/81, which was still extremely modest compared to its African neighbours (Sodhi 1981:35). The machinery for the collection of taxes levied by the central government but collected by the regional government (personal income tax, land rental tax and business profit tax) was, however, strengthened over the years. It started as a one man office but gradually the staff was increased to 33 officers and 119 tax collectors and base

level staff. But this system also faced great difficulties, especially in collecting the personal income tax.

In 1982 the Area Councils and the Town/Rural Councils in the three regions combined employed about 250 professional administrators (Malik 1983:97). Before the redivision there were, for example, eight Area Councils in Equatoria Region (four were temporarily dissolved in December 1983). Financially the Area Councils in 1982/83 were not viable units and needed a subsidy of 60% of their total budget expenditure (Inter-Regional Training Project 1983:1), a deficit which unavoidably increased, as it was expected that more and more social services should be rendered to the population at the same time as the transfer from the North decreased.

The Area Councils' administrative, professional, technical and support staff was on secondment from the Regional Ministries. This made them a dumping ground on which to off load inefficient and incompetent staff from more central administrative organs, since the Councils became responsible for their salaries. In spite of this, UNDP reported for 1981 that, for example, over 50% of the provincial and local book-keeping and accountancy posts were vacant. At one stage, only one out of six posts of the Controllers of Accounts in the Province was filled (Malik 1981:5-6). The Commissionerpost continued, but his powers were reduced as spelled out in Section 10 of the Act. He was now only to supervise and check the activities of the Local Councils and not directly to participate in them. But the Act did not address the power vacuum the reduced role of the Commissioner created. Hence an additional unclear administrative structure was established.

The training problem which was highlighted already in 1972, remained a crucial issue. For example: not before 1982 was the *National Training Regulation 1976* translated into English and made available in the South: a Regional Civil Service Training Institute was never established; the Regional Institute of Public Administration was conceived, created by Decree, but never materialized. A training centre offer courses in book keeping and accounting, budgeting, auditing and tax administration was conceived in 1975. Official approval of the project was secured first in 1978. In July 1981 the Regional Accountancy

Training Centre was officially started. The Training Advisory Board and the Steering Committee, established to provide policy and administrative guidance, never did manage to function! Contributions from three regional governments were unpaid as by November 1984 (See UNDP 1984).

### **The state administration after redivision in 1983**

In this rather chaotic and unsettled administrative situation, marked by very unclear management structures, serious shortages of trained staff, a weak "esprit de corps" among the administrators, and first and foremost - with no adequate finances to pay either for the administrative staff or for development initiatives - came the redivision of 1983. Without waiting for the planned and promised referendum, Nimeiri, on June 6th 1983, decreed the establishment of three new regions in the South. The Presidential Order No 1/1983 created three new regional governments and a number of new departments, Area Councils etc. The Regional Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning of the Southern Region Government (RMFEP) was, for example, split into three regional Ministries of Finance and Economic Affairs. The three regional governments divided the assets and resources of the former ministry, with the Equatoria Regional Government inheriting the building of the former RMFEP. The distribution of personnel depended on which region the officers and employees belonged to (UN 1987:1). The Nilotic and other people from Upper Nile and Bahr al-Ghazal provinces were forced to leave Equatoria and *vice versa* (Badal 1988:21-23). An untenable administrative situation which was wrought with fundamental uncertainties about basic regulations was created.

In a situation where educated people were few,<sup>9</sup> and where money was in short supply, the establishment of more administrative units added to the already unsolved staffing problems.

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<sup>9</sup> The trained pupils at intermediate schools in the whole region, were, according to the official statistics, 189 in 1980/81. The number enrolled in primary six the same year was 14812.



In the regional assembly, it was said that the only surplus manpower was politicians, and they were the only ones who would benefit from the creation of new posts in the new regions (The Speaker of the Regional Assembly, Angelo Beda, quoted in Arou 1988: 171). The councils came to depend entirely on grant-in-aid from the central government. This was released to the Regional governments which in turn allocated parts of it to the different area councils. A regular formula for how this money should be allocated was never established. Furthermore, most of the book-keeping, accounting and clerical personnel staffing in the Area Councils were not trained at all. Since the budgets were seriously underfinanced - as were the budgets of the provinces before the 1981 Act, disbursement of approved expenditures in the recurrent budget could not be done owing to lack of authorization for the release of funds. In this transitional atmosphere regional and local politicians often tried to influence the posting of the officers in such a manner that the "right officer was not posted in the right place" (See Khamis 1984:172).

The redivision made it impossible to generate both a rule oriented and an efficient public administration. Before the redivision quite a few Area Councils used to have their separate development budget. Between June 1983 and October 1984 the situation had deteriorated so fast that no money had come to the Area Councils in Equatoria for development purposes. The situation was regarded as so difficult, that the area councils did not even bother to prepare any Development Budgets for the years 1983/84 and 1984/85.

The ambiguity of the regulations continued. The relationship between the Chief Executive and the elected members of the Area Councils had not been settled. The legislature in every region should have been partly elected and partly appointed. The executive power in the region rested, however, with the Governor, appointed by Nimeiri. He was to be assisted by a deputy and five ministers all responsible to the Governor. The Governor was to be solely responsible to the President in Khartoum. The administration did not have enough money to pay for recurrent expenditure, and such categories as teachers were rarely paid. In 1984, for example, all the primary schools under government control were closed down for more than three quarters of the year. Neither did they have instruments by which administration could become possible. Almost all the Area Councils, even in Equatoria, did not have vehicles for

their operation; at best they had some few bicycles.

The decree by Nimeiri led to absurd situations. When, for example, the new Regional Executive Authority of Bahr el Ghazal came into being no facilities had been provided to cater for the new regional government. The administrative headquarters had to be established in the previous premises of the Headquarters of the former Bahr al Ghazal Province. None of the five new regional ministries in Bahr al Ghazal had offices, inventory or personnel. The new ministries were waiting for months for the arrival of furniture distributed from Juba. During this initial phase no work was done (Bahr el Ghazal Region Group 1984:154). In its turn the Province headquarters of eastern Bahr el Ghazal Province at Aweil had to move into the premises of the previous Aweil People's Town Council. The same happened in Western Bahr al Ghazal province. The problem of staffing these new ministries and councils was solved by "applying speedy promotion" (Ibid.:155). It offered job opportunities for the lesser qualified among the educated elite. In Bahr al Ghazal the Regional Ministry of Services, Department of Education upgraded the primary school teachers to intermediate school level "overnight", and a great number of teachers were shifted to the Regional Ministry of Administration. Education suffered, and little administration was done. In Equatoria it led to further delays in the payment of salaries, to transfer of office furniture from Juba to Wau and Malakal while "personnel took extra long leave" (Directorate of Health and Social Service, 1983:37). Some departments became overstaffed, due to the "influx of Equatoria Region personnel returning from the other Regions" (Ibid.), while other departments experienced serious manpower shortages.

The administration of the Western Area Council as of October 1984 can be used as an example to indicate the staffing situation in Equatoria, the most administratively developed region. In the Area Council 895 were on the pay-roll. These included General Administration Department (49), Agricultural Department (26), Education Department including teachers etc. (694).<sup>10</sup> Agriculture and Veterinary Department (26), Forestry

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<sup>10</sup> The Education Department had no vehicles, but three bicycles were available for visits by the Inspectors of Education. Books and educational materials - including chalk, were practically non-existent).

Department (39), Health Department (86) and Social Welfare Department (1) (sic!) Staff shortfall was estimated at more than 50% (Pickering and Davies (no date):33-39). This description of the Western Area Council would also hold for the Central Area Council and for the Eastern Area Council.

By 1985 development efforts undertaken by the government had almost been brought to a complete stop. The staff had gone on strike and in the schools there were neither schooling material nor teachers. Many councils had stopped working during 1984 and 1985. Added to this came the staff-transfer policy. The senior administrators in the Western Area Council were changed three times during the three years between 1981 to 1984 (Pickering and Davies:54). Efforts at improving, for instance, budget procedures and structures became almost impossible due to instabilities. In 1982 the government had appointed a number of technical committees to advise on rules and regulations for the effective implementation of the systems as laid down in the 1981 Act. The first budget procedures of the Area Councils these influenced were for the fiscal year 1982/83. "Unfortunately", as it is stated in a UN-report, these procedures were not followed by the councils the next year due to further decentralisation (Inter-regional Training Project 1983:2). The redivision required new procedures and regulations. Everything had to be done again, but now in three regions, by even less trained staff and with less money to undertake the work than ever. The 1983 decision led to the fragmentation of an already weak administrative system, and supplanted it with new administrative structures whose fragility and limited administrative capacity were only matched by the paucity of financial and other resources at their disposal.

In the Southern Sudan, where ethnic groups as social categories have been more important than social class, one of the paramount problems in building up the administration has been one of "ethnic arithmetics". The difficulties in implementing universalistic bureaucratic principle in a context of ethnic rivalry and conflict were demonstrated again and again. Here we have analyzed the failure of the Southern Regional Government in a primarily southern context. This focus does not relate the whole story, of course. It was a semi-autonomous state, to a large extent dependent upon the political will and decisions in Khartoum and by Nimeiri.



## NON-GOVERNMENTAL AID ORGANISATIONS, SOCIETY AND THE STATE ADMINISTRATION<sup>11</sup>

The 1980s, in Africa, has been called the "NGO decade"; then the NGOs "entered the limelight..." (Bratton 1989:569). In Southern Sudan the NGOs came to play a very important role already in the 1970s.<sup>12</sup> The enormous task of socio-economic reconstruction of the whole region after the first war, the emergency assistance to more than half a million Sudanese returnees and later to about 200 000 Ugandan refugees fleeing to Southern Sudan between 1979 and 1983, and a weak and new state administration without enough money, people or experience to carry out these tasks alone, made the region an early and natural place for extensive NGO involvement.<sup>13</sup> In Juba alone in 1985 there were 38 foreign aid

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<sup>11</sup> The term non-governmental organization (NGO) have no clear meaning, and denotes different type of organisations in different countries and different settings. The very term is a residual expression which describes what the agency is not; i.e. it is not part of a government administration. Here it will mean foreign non-profit-making development agencies which are not initiated or controlled by the beneficiaries and which raise funds from the general public and receive support from the development budget in the home countries for development purposes or which provide development services as sub-contractors in the aid system. (In the Southern Sudan many NGOs were sub-contractors of UNHCR.)

<sup>12</sup> At the Relief & Resettlement Conference on Southern Region in 1972, 38 representatives of different foreign NGOs participated (Proceedings of Relief & Resettlement Conference on Southern Region, 1972, 51-52).

<sup>13</sup> Some of the western NGOs operating in Southern Sudan during the period of study were Action Committee for Relief of Southern Sudan (ACROSS), African Interior Mission, African Medical and Research Foundation (AMREF), Catholic Relief Service, Euro-Accord, German Volunteer Service (GTZ), German Leprosy Relief Association, International Volunteer Service, International Summer School of Linguistics, Lutheran World Federation, Missionary Aviation Fellowship, Norwegian Council for the Prevention of Blindness, Norwegian Association for Disabled, Norwegian Church Aid/Sudan Programme, Oxford Committee for Famine Relief (OXFAM), Save the Children Fund, Seventh-Day Adventist, Sudan Interior Mission, Swedish Free Mission, Voluntary Service Group, Swiss Interchurch Aid, Voluntary Service Overseas and World Vision. This list of NGOs is compiled from Madison, 1984, 174-191, and personal notes of implementing agencies for UNHCR, Juba (The author worked in 1985/1986 as a Programme Officer for United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Juba, being responsible for social services for all the Ugandan refugees in the South and for the rural settlement program for about 40 000 refugees on the East Bank).

organisations.

There can be no doubt that many of the NGOs were rather efficient development agents. The Norwegian Church Aid/Sudan Programme, which will be especially focused on in this chapter, definitely helped to improve the living standards in their programme area on the East Bank of the Nile in Equatoria Province. The area covered 86,000 km<sup>2</sup> and had an estimated population of around 500,000. Approximately 90 per cent were small farmers. About 20 different ethnic groups lived in the area: the most important being Tophosa, Boya and Didinga in the eastern part of the programme area, Latuka, Lapit and Lokoro in the centre and Madi, Acholi, Lokoya, Laluba and Bari in the western parts of the area. After 1983 it covered Kapoeta, Chukudum, Ikotos, Torit and Magwe Area Councils in addition to the east bank of the Nile in Juba Area Council. Norwegian Church Aid built a number of new roads in the area and organized repair and maintenance on others. They helped establish 15 dispensaries and 40 primary health care stations. They constructed 30 primary schools and six secondary schools and 16 schools which they helped to initiate on a self help basis. They drilled hundreds of wells and installed Indian Pump II. Through their active support Torit District Cooperative Union was able to organise 139 co-operatives at village level. Broadly speaking, NCA was an efficient aid organisation, primarily concerned with doing a good humanitarian job while trying to stay out of local and regional politics. The NGOs will, however, in this chapter not be evaluated as to their ability to reach the target groups and deliver the goods. Their impact will be analysed in relation to the dissolution of state administrative functions and institutions in the South, and to the whole underlying question of social integration and particularism versus universalism.

### **The state - civil society dichotomy**

In recent years much research on NGO-government relationship has focused on the differences and contrasts between the political role and characteristics of states versus those of voluntary organisations. This theory gives the NGOs a crucial role in the democratisation of African countries: they are to strengthen and pluralize what commonly is called the civil

society. The NGOs are conceived as representing instruments for organising local initiatives and for promoting local participation and diversity as opposed to the state, whose approach is seen as dirigiste and top-down, and which expresses the interests of a bureaucraticised, alienated elite in search for control. The emergence of NGOs on the African scene have been analyzed as an organisational expression of particular interests or objectives within the body politic which are not adequately represented within the political governance system.

The 1980s were a NGO-decade, but it was also a decade of NGO-mythology. Influenced by strong anti-state ideologies and criticism of "big government", which dominated the political debate in the United States and Great Britain, especially under President Reagan and Prime Minister Thatcher, the private or non-governmental organisations were as a group given common positive characteristics and roles, as contrasted to the state, which was generally painted in dark colours. The term "civil society" with its present meaning emerged in Europe in the beginning of the nineteenth century. It expressed a reaction to the strong, all-pervasive state which developed during and in the wake of the industrial revolution. It was important to curb the role of the state in order to safeguard private initiative, individual freedom etc. The sudden dominance of the term "civil society" in the vocabulary of social sciences and in the jargon of the development aid community in the 1980s (it is extremely rare to find the term in development aid documents of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. Even in dictionaries of social sciences and political thought the term was often not mentioned at that time), can be seen as an expression of the strength of this ideological trend. This dichotomy has obvious ideological connotations. But more importantly; the power of this concept and its inherent perspective has given birth to a mythology which has tended to disregard the differences in relationships between the state and the society under industrial and post-industrial capitalism and in societies where 90 per cent are subsistence farmers. The term has also, when dogmatically applied in prescriptions about NGOs contribution to development, failed to distinguish between African societies with a long and internally rooted state tradition (as in Egypt, Ethiopia and to a lesser extent Dar Fur, which is studied in this volume), and African societies in which the state is a very recent phenomenon, introduced from above and maintained by external sources. Moreover, the actual and potential role of the third sector in African countries varies according to its homogeneity, its organisational history, its exchange

relations with the state sector etc. Analytical perspectives which study NGO-government relations in Africa within frameworks based on general assumptions about a bureaucraticised and parasitic state on the one hand, and the existence of a civil society with supra-ethnic or supra-tribal organisations fighting to curb the role of the state supported by NGOs as agents of micro-developments on the other, can, of course, be fruitful. I will show that in the case of the Southern Sudan it is not very illuminating. The impact of the NGOs, must be analysed concretely. It depends on the specific character of the state system and the "civil society" in which they operate.

The relationship between governments and non-governmental organisations is fundamentally a question of the legitimacy of the various types of institutions which exercise power and authority. I will argue that, in the Southern Sudan, the NGOs contributed unintentionally to the erosion of the authority of the very weak state. The NGOs did not organise the civil society against the state, or consciously promote and strengthen the civil society, as the present rhetorics suppose. Basically they themselves became local substitutes for state administration. The NGOs assumed in a very efficient manner the welfare functions of an ordinary state (which, as shown above, the state in the South was unable to fulfil). As the state was "withering away", (though not in the way Karl Marx described) - in the first instance it was ephemeral and in the second its role as service provider was abdicated - whole districts or sections of ordinary government ministries' responsibilities were handed over to the NGOs to run. The NGOs put up their own administration and authority systems thereby undermining the state institutions without establishing viable alternative structures; partly because there simply was no familiar "civil society" to root them in. The project proliferation; therefore; imposed potential and long-term burdens on state administration and state finances. The NGOs represented different types of organisational behaviour, different types of bureaucratic systems and development philosophies. Their practices therefore came to express institutional and ideological opposition to region-wide, rule-oriented and universalistic state administration and bureaucracy.

These points will be substantiated mainly by a closer description of the programme of the biggest NGO in the region, the Norwegian Church Aid. NCA was in important respects



more concerned about developing good relations with the state and its administrative structures than many other NGOs. They continuously emphasised the need for mutual discussions and formal agreements with the state authorities. NCA warned against the danger of establishing institutions the government could not take over and stressed the necessity of local participation as a way to root the projects locally.<sup>14</sup> Other agencies were apparently less concerned about the long term sustainability of their projects. This situation makes NCA especially interesting, and the extensive documentations of their project activities combined with their relative openness, makes their history accessible to outsiders.

### **Formal relations**

Both in Juba and locally there were now and then open tensions between the state administration trying to execute administrative command and control of all the different NGOs and the NGOs' defence of their autonomy. In the first years after the Addis Ababa Agreement regular monthly meetings with the NGOs were coordinated by the Regional Ministry of Finance and Planning (NCR/SP 1975:31). But these meetings gradually developed into empty rituals: the government representatives were formally in charge, but their words carried less and less authority. They had little administrative power to back their proposals and objections. Some of the government representatives also irritated the action-oriented agencies; they demonstrated a combination of "officialdom" and lack of knowledge about what was going on in the rural communities. There were NGOs which did not bother about whether they were registered by the host-government. Some of them did not want to discuss their projects with the regional or local authorities, although they would inform them about their plans. Many organisations had formal agreements approved by the central or regional government (some donor countries like Norway made this a requirement for financial support), while others looked upon this as unnecessary "red tape". What is more

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<sup>14</sup> In 1986/87, when their long-lasting integrated rural development programme had been brought to a halt due to the civil war, the NCA also reassessed their past policies and decided that in future development assistance programs in the Southern Sudan more emphasis should be given to institution building including support to local state institutions.

interesting than these formal questions. however, and what will have far-reaching consequences in a longer historical perspective, is the imprint of the existence of different forms of authorities and different types of organisations and bureaucracies on the local society.

### Infrastructural power

The NGOs had in certain areas very strong infrastructural power as compared to the state. In total NCA's activities on the East bank for the years up to 1986, including the refugee aid, amounted to about 75 million US dollars. This was almost 20 million more than the regional government invested in the whole region.<sup>15</sup> In a land-locked economy, Juba being about 5000

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<sup>15</sup> For comparative purposes, Malik's (Malik 1981:11) data on expenditures, revenue and grant-in-aid to different government hierarchies can be given.

Table 2: Budgeted expenditure/revenue recurrent £S(000)

ITEMS	1978/79	1979/80	1980/81	1981/82
<u>Expenditures</u>				
Regional	28,138	34,236	38,203	47,122
Executive Councils	13,192	29,990	32,383	46,381
Local Councils	4,050		5,470	9,063
<b>TOTAL EXP.</b>	<b>45,380</b>	<b>64,226</b>	<b>76,056</b>	<b>102,566</b>
<u>Revenue</u>				
<u>Tax &amp; Non Tax Rev.</u>				
Regional	11,412	14,371	15,054	18,114
Provincial	2,896	7,143	2,680	8,333*
Local	4,523		4,682	9,062*
<b>TOTAL REV.</b>	<b>18,831</b>	<b>21,514</b>	<b>22,416</b>	<b>35,509</b>
<u>Grants-in-aid</u>				
Regional	14,200	16,200	19,293	21,962
Provincial/Local	9,300	19,800	20,707	26,038
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>23,500</b>	<b>36,000</b>	<b>40,000</b>	<b>48,000</b>

kilometres from the nearest port, and in a society where there were no regular newspapers, one local radio-station which was on the air some few hours a day, no inter-regional mail- or telegraph-system which functioned. the NGOs and their employees in important areas monopolised distribution of both information and things due to their well-developed logistic systems, communication networks and superior means of transport. The British NGO, ACROSS, had more than 100 vehicles. When petrol became very scarce in the mid-1980s, this power relationship tipped even further to the side of the NGOs, since the few government cars had often to be supplied with fuel begged or bought from the NGOs or the UN.

Hilieu, just outside Torit, was the administrative centre of NCA. It had excellent secretarial services, radio-communication with Khartoum, Nairobi and most of the East Bank, a functioning mail service and flight services. (For comparison: the regional government in Juba did at times not have a functioning photo-copying machine.) Hilieu had three office blocks and the whole program had approximately 600 000 US dollars for stationery and office equipment (Norwegian Church Aid/Sudan Programme 1986b, Annex 11: 5). Hilieu had a car park with about 200 vehicles and with no felt fuel shortages. Most of the cars which went on the roads on the East Bank in the mid-1980s were NCA-cars. NCA built up 6 administrative centres, with administrators, logistic officers, researchers and secretarial staff and stationery and radio communication. NCA had, until the evacuation in January 1985, about 50-60 expatriate personnel. The expatriate colony in Hilieu counted, including family members, about 200 people.

In Arapi Rural Development Centre (RDC), in Loa district, there were between five and ten expatriate experts who had lived and worked there for years until 1985. The centre had two administrative buildings, much better than any house owned by the government or any other person in the area, well equipped with stationery and clerks. The RDC had radio-links to

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\* Includes Savings.

both Juba and Hilieu, had plenty of cars, fuel, a mechanical workshop etc. The local government in Loa, being responsible for the same area as Arapi RDC, was housed in an old building which was badly in need of repair. In addition to the Head Chief there were only one cashier and a typist/secretary, with one typewriter. The Head-Chief had a bicycle, and when he had business with the government in Juba he often came cycling to NCAs Development Centre to ask if he could borrow NCA's radio. This infrastructural weakness of the Sudanese state would have been a fact whether or not the NCA had been there, but the existence of this efficient and successful programme demonstrated its weakness to the people and thus eroded its legitimacy. NCA had become not only a state within a state, but the "state". The NCA not only delivered services, they could also respond to local requests, they could bring sick people to hospitals etc. The government's ordinary administrative authority was more or less confined to the radius of the old chief's bicycle (the police, the military or the coercive power of the state was of course another matter. This we do not include in the analysis).

This led to what can be described as a process of local brain-drain. The NGOs had relative minor staffing problems as compared to the state. They did not necessarily pay higher wages, but the salaries were regularly paid and there were certain fringe benefits, such as access to cars, motor-bikes etc. In addition, to work for an agency generally brought higher work satisfaction because the organization functioned properly. The number of local Sudanese staff varied, but for years it amounted to more than 2000 people, which made NCA the biggest employer on the East Bank. It had a management staff as per 1. October 1985 of about 90 persons (Norwegian Church Aid/Sudan Programme 1985: 36-37), of whom 70 were Sudanese. NCR/SPs report for 1974 reported in line with the Regional Government that also their "greatest problem in the period has been lack of staff in all projects (Norwegian Church Relief/Sudan Programme 1974:11). The agricultural staff of the NCA project in 1974 numbered already 174 people. In 1983 the number of permanent Sudanese staff had increased to 317 (NCA/SP 1984: 28), with 69 working at both Arapi Rural Development Centre (RDC) and Palotaka RDC, while the whole Department of Agriculture employed 80 (Norwegian Church Aid/Sudan Programme 1986:13). None of the later reports mentioned lack of staff as a serious problem, contrary to the situation within the government

where staff-shortage was a permanent problem.

### **Local monopoly in the social service sector**

The NGOs' strong position reflected the fact that they could supply something which was very much needed and something which nobody else, and especially not the state, could deliver: social services. As shown, the state administration had very little money for development projects and social services projects.<sup>16</sup> It did not even manage to pay some of the recurrent expenditures for teacher salaries causing government schools to close down temporarily, while agency supported schools functioned.

One might say that the big NGOs and the Khartoum government shared one thing in common: because of their purse they held the Southern government machinery hostage. Most government financed projects in the South were not implemented. Many of them were big and well-known projects, but as the government admitted in 1977; "though the list of projects is impressive, in fact the majority of them were not implemented" (Peace and Progress, 1977, 38).

The local government on the East Bank naturally did not pay much heed to collecting unpopular social service taxes, since these services were provided anyway. By easing this burden of governing, the NGO at the same time further alienated the state from the society and *vice versa* and reduced its potential role as meeting point between the compartmentalized unities in the society. By establishing what can be described as competing tax-systems (in order to mobilise what was commonly called the "sense of responsibility" among the local people and the level of "popular participation", the agencies demanded that the local people should pay for pump-repairs, stationery etc. to the agency or some local committee

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<sup>16</sup> According to Madison (1984), the Regional Government expenditure on Regional Ministry of Agricultural and Natural Resources up to 1981/82 totalled around 7 million Sudanese pounds (Madison, 1984, 148). The Regional Ministry of Communication, Transport and Roads had spent about 2,5 million pounds on undertaken projects.

established by the agency), the "extraction/accountability cycle" was affected. Most normal functions of a government became the domain of the NCA as in other areas it had become the domain of other NGOs.

Both compared to the government administration and the institutional and organizational features of the local societies in which they worked, the NGOs did represent and, in many areas, did introduce different organizational modes and cultural values. The NGOs were goal-oriented organizations, organized in principle on a temporary basis. They were in the context of the surrounding society more ad hoc "problem-solvers" than "rule-oriented" bureaucracies. They furthermore operated within geographical limited areas with limited objectives, and therefore did not have to develop more general, universalistic types of organisations which were adapted to different types of activities and different types of cultures.

A local government bureaucracy was anathema to the NGO-sector, as it had been to the British, although for different reasons. The NGOs' relationship to the state administration was often based on individual and personal contacts. These contacts were important when it came to speeding up the removal of official stumbling blocks which hindered efficient project implementation. The NGO-government relationship was therefore also personalised, and not rule-based, in many ways identical to the clientilistic system which had been developed within the state administration itself. Their relations to the recipient society contrasted with cultural attitudes within the beneficiary groups, and they also played by different rules than that which is presupposed by western bureaucratic culture. From their expatriate compounds the aid workers made development-excursions into the surrounding society.<sup>17</sup> A relationship was established which had no traits of that reciprocity which has been said to be typical for the local socio-cultural relations.

The NGOs as a rule did not try to establish anti-state structures or organisations. There was

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<sup>17</sup> In Juba there were 8 separate compounds for the aid workers. NCA/SP also had their own compound at Hilieu, where, for example, the Sudanese employees had no admission to the dining-room before 1985/86.

no deliberate policy of strengthening such organisations to counterbalance the state. The "civil" organisations which were established, like Women Groups, Cooperative Societies etc., were in line with government policies and priorities and was no stronghold for anti-government policies. Their fundamental basis was, however, money supplied from foreign sources. The kind of development institutions which were established through popular participation had therefore difficulties in growing roots in the local soil or in breaking down ethnically divided polities. Little consideration was given to the problem of organisational sustainability in this context, independent of aid-injections. The NGOs created bases for alternative entities, but entities that did not possess the universalistic outlook of a regional or provincial administration and which ultimately depended on external money to survive.

The way in which the services were provided was perhaps as important. For some of the NGOs money was not the deciding constraint on their scope of activities. What affected the project size and the project components were in general not the purse, but arguments about what was morally right and most conducive to local development. Generally, the NGOs acted within a culture of absolute affluence, where services and goods were not priced. When the NCA now and then tried to counter this unsustainable economic culture, as when they were informing the UNHCR that if they needed NCA-lorries for transport-purposes, they would have to pay, this was met by strong objections from the aid community. It was by central actors in the aid community characterised as greediness, although the sum did not cover the cost involved. It was difficult to question the principle that aid was free and in some mysterious way outside the realm of economic realities.

The NGOs could moreover decide what kind of exchange relations that should be subject to negotiations among the people, the state and the NGO. When a specialized agency worked in an area (education or health for example), they delivered their specialities. An organisation geared towards aid for education or the disabled could not, or were not, willing to respond to proposals which, seen from a local or government perspective, were more important to the society as a whole. On the East Bank, it was in the NCA development centres and ultimately in Hilieu that decisions in reality were taken where to drill bore-holes, where to assist self-help schools, which agricultural produce should be supported in what areas, which

Primary Societies should receive most support. Through their control of the Co-operative Union they also fixed the prices of crucial agricultural components such as seeds and ox-ploughs. The local people influenced the decisions as did the government, but at the end of the day NCA decided.

### **A particularistic, target oriented development strategy**

The dominant development strategy of the NGOs, that of realizing the peoples' basic needs, had consequences for both how the agencies conceptualized the NGO-government relationship and for the social, economic and political integration process. The NGOs had a particularistic strategy for development and a particularistic approach to the administrative system they tried to establish.

Most of the NGOs had a target oriented strategy, aiming at reaching the poor people living in their villages. The NGOs had different approaches, and implemented different aspects of the basic needs strategy. Some only worked in the health sector and with small pockets within it, like combatting blindness and helping the disabled. Other concentrated on educational services, while some NGOs, like NCA, implemented comprehensive integrated rural development projects. What was common for almost all these projects was that, in order to meet the goals and also the need to report success-stories, to maintain the support from the home-country or the UN-family, the NGOs sought to circumvent the inefficient state institutions and work directly with the beneficiaries. The better they did it, the more the authority and legitimacy of the local government structures were eroded. There was a contradiction between establishing programmes for costly social services and the state's potential for becoming a vehicle of economic transformation. The NGOs established social services which, although differing in the level of ambition, had running and maintenance costs which could not be financed by local surpluses or local revenue, not even in the foreseeable future.

The realization of people's basic needs was considered as a right by both the NGOs, by the



local people and by the government's declarations and rhetoric. But the recurrent costs of these had to become, also in the long run, a serious drain on the already strained budgets of the local councils. The legitimacy of the state institutions were undermined and, therefore, also the chances for building institutions which could penetrate competing and localised institutions. The possibilities for the local administrations and state institutions to take upon themselves a more active role regarding new investments etc, were simply not there, no matter the personal attitudes or the wishes of the local administrators or government representatives. The NGOs were instrumental in relieving the government from would-be pressures by carrying out the service sector. On the other hand, by fulfilling this role, the state, as a potential supra-ethnic and universalistic entity, could not point to its record as service provider to strengthen its position.

There was, therefore, also a contradiction between projects aiming at realizing certain target groups' basic needs at a local level and projects aiming at strengthening the regional or national economy, or between a successful local project and a beneficial regional project. Since the aid input was so heavy and the local development councils and committees so weak, this uneven relationship also created uneven development between people and areas defined as target areas and areas outside the spheres of development aid organisations. The ambitious programmes and projects and the lack of reflections on the administrative and financial situation in the Southern Region created a situation in which there was little correlation between development activities and implementation capacities in the would-be implementing institutions.

The NGOs were apportioned different parts of the region, in many ways similar to the British government, decades before, divided the region between different missionary societies. The NGOs tried to establish local institutions and local accountability by the policy of "popular participation". They established formal administrative structures and informal authority networks independent of the state institutions and partly in competition with them. The bypassing of the local state institutions took different forms, unintended in some cases and deliberate in others. The general impact of their activities, aiming at reaching the target groups with basic needs projects, further marginalized the state in many areas and

made the local and provincial councils more or less redundant.

### **A giving, care-taker "state"**

A type of development administration was created with very unusual traits. The aid handed out was mainly grants and the improvement of the lot of the people did not reflect an improvement in state finances. In at least important parts of the South there were no "tremendous setbacks" in the meeting of basic needs of the rural people in the early 1980s, as the World Bank reported to be the general rule in Africa. On the contrary, there was an increase in living standards and without doubt there was an increase in collective services at least in Equatoria. This development was mainly caused by foreign donors and NGOs as implementing agencies. The aid helped the local people. But the aid mechanism and the asymmetric relationship between the weakness of the infrastructural power of the state and the strong infrastructural power of the NGOs caused the state institutions to play an even more peripheral role in large parts of the region. There had been established a system whereby the people expected initiatives and development projects to come from individual foreign organizations rather than from a bankrupt, inefficient government. What had happened was an improvement of social and economic conditions but, due to the particular conditions of the region, it is questionable whether it represented a strengthening of the "civil society". It weakened the possibility for building state institutions and a potentially universalistic, rule-oriented bureaucracy. A practice was established, however, whereby predominantly subsistence farmers started to talk to their government about their rights regarding education, clean water, health facilities etc. There had taken place a revolution in expectations, more profoundly than at any time in the regions history, without a parallel improvement or the state's ability to fulfil them or to guarantee these rights.

The success of the NCA-programme and the consequential growth of their budgets and activities, created a "state", an administrative machinery, which represented a "revolution from outside" on the East Bank as far as development administration is concerned. In the perspective of a local state building process, however, this machinery represented a

perpetuation of some of those processes which had helped to block a locally rooted state building process in the past. Its actual and immediate role was, however, very different; it built and did not destroy, it gave, but it did not take anything. Both in a historical and contemporary perspective this "state administration" was a novelty. It was a state as a service institution, without functions either of suppression or extraction. The relative autonomy of *this* state in relation to the economic and social basis of the society was complete, since its activities depended on money from abroad and the moral-political judgements of the aid workers. These "state officials" were social workers rather than rulers and parasites. New institutional structures and new normative models of state behaviour had been created, but structures and models which can hardly be implemented by any future Southern state. What had taken place was what can be termed a *privatisation* and an externalisation of the state, at the same time as the Government continued their rhetoric about the state building socialism.

### **The accountability-problem**

Also the NGOs had conflicting and multiple loyalties and created an organizational system marked by lack of accountability. Important ordinary state functions had been taken over by a Norwegian private organization which legally was answerable first and foremost to Oslo, the capital of Norway, although morally to the local people. The lack of clear lines of administrative authority in the region in general was further blurred. From one point of view the NGO-sector deepened the general problem of accountability. It was an in-built problem of the whole structure, since the personnel and the organisation were rewarded for implementing the project target within an alternative and fundamentally external reward system. It was "downwards" accountability to the people and upward accountability to the NGO's HQs, while the local state institutions were often regarded as inefficient, time-consuming institutions that preferably were circumvented.

NCA had established formal institutions and informal networks which not only were a counterweight to the state, but an alternative. In the same way as the British "indirect rule"

policy created traditions and practices which influenced the framework for the administrative build up of the Southern Region after 1972. The NCA-programme and its operation will have a legacy for future state building. NCA and the other NGOs were not important enough to bar the development of a universalistic bureaucratic rule over the whole region, but by establishing its own localised bureaucracy with stronger infrastructural powers than the regular state in important sectors of the society, they represented one of many centrifugal forces. While the programme area locally was called "Little Norway", the Sudanese administrative staff were called "Black Norwegians".

### **NGO-mythology versus Southern realities**

The character of and relationship between state and society vary considerably between countries, reflecting historical developments, economic situation, the degree of social integration/compartmentalization etc. A productive relationship between NGOs and the host government's administrative system will therefore have to adapt to different roles and potentials of the third sector. In the case of the Southern Sudan a kind of conceptual dogmatism played an important role; the dominant perspective underestimated the weakness of the state institutions and overestimated the degree of social integration and value consensus in the social system. One example, in 1974 NCR/SP stated typically, and in line with government aims, that their reconstruction programme should be incorporated in "the existing government structures at the end of the 3-year programme" (Norwegian Church Relief/Sudan Programme 1974a:4), i.e. in 1977. In 1977 the programme was further from being handed over to the government than it had been when started. The Southern politicians and the NGOs both underrated the region's very special "state-history" and its financial difficulties. One example: The agency-meetings (which were few, partly because of competition and mutual suspicion) mostly reported on the development within the different organisations' areas, and never did consider more macro-oriented issues like regional integration or regional universalism. The NGOs made important contributions to the improvement of local living standards and they mobilised people locally for development and social change. But the impact of NGOs, insofar as they are involved on such a relatively

massive scale as they were in the Southern Sudan, cannot be properly understood within the micro-perspective and grassroots-perspective which have been part and parcel of current NGO-mythology. They also had important and overlooked impacts on the state administrative system; impacts which were not intended but which must have influenced, although on a limited scale, both the dissolution of the Southern state and the breakdown of the administrative system.

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