

WHOSE DAM? THE DANGER OF NARROWLY DEFINED DEVELOPMENT: THE CASE OF KAJBAR DAM, NORTHERN SUDAN

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Abstract: The costs and atrocities of authoritarian development have always been justified by the promised material outcome. There is an English proverb that says, “You cannot make an omelet without breaking eggs.” In some contexts, this saying can dangerously misinform the development intervention, because it perceives the cost of making an omelet (i.e. the achievement of anticipated goals) can be paid only by breaking the egg (the narrowly calculated costs of development). It takes for granted that there is a well-founded and strongly built kitchen (with the kitchen I refer to the state in this article) in which to make the omelet. The main question I raise is: what if the kitchen is so poorly constructed that it collapses the moment we break the egg? In other words what if the omelet making has hidden, unrecognized and downplayed costs that go well beyond breaking eggs to include the potential collapse of the kitchen. My contention is that the state in most of development literatures is assumed to be a legitimate agent of undertaking development but in fact is rarely analyzed and contextualized. Contrary to these widely held beliefs, the case of Kajbar Dam proves that when the promotion of citizenship through enthusiastic participation is compromised in favor of developmentalists’ dogma in economic growth, neither is achieved.

Keywords: *Authoritarian development, Kajbar Dam, resistance, Sudan*

Introduction

Most development literature in general and literatures of dam construction and resettlement in particular (Cernea 1997, Colson 2003; Scudder 2006) open with a normative perception of the state as a development agent and then build on its assumed role. This problematic trend is particularly clear in arguments articulated by proponents of

the developmental state paradigm, which is gaining momentum in Africa¹ (Mbabazi and Taylor 2005)².

I argue that in the context of the distrustful relationship between state and society, any authoritarian development intervention provokes conflict, which sometimes escalates to threaten the existence of the state as a whole). Moreover, this approach can reveal the potential danger of narrowly defined development, which subordinates local enthusiasm and participation in projects deeply connected to their life. To substantiate this approach, I analyze the ethnographic case of the Kajbar³ proposed dam in Northern Sudan. I show how local Nubian perception of this state-led development program is inextricably linked to their perception of the state itself. To clarify this point, I compare two versions of the Kajbar project, the locally accepted version that was introduced and pursued through local initiatives and the version that was rejected or resisted when nationalized by the current regime.

In this paper, I depart from the normative perception of the state's role in the state-led development intervention. I do not argue that the state has been normatively perceived. In fact, the African post-colonial state has been analyzed thoroughly from the perspective of its empirical function and role in people's everyday lives (Bayart 1993; Bierschenk and De Sardan 2014), its commandments and conviviality's (Mbembe 2001) and the neo/patrimonial political cultures that underpin its legitimacy (Schatzberg 2001)⁴. Haider (2011) offers an interesting

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- 1 The idea of unilinear line of development, which at some 'early stages' can, or to make it even worse should, compromise participation and political engagement of the citizens for the sake of quick economic growth, is still propagated by concepts like benevolent dictator and pilot agency, etc.
 - 2 However I do not intend to extrapolate this Sudanese case onto Africa. My aim is rather, focusing on Kajbar case, is to show how local unacknowledged development intervention causes conflict in the case of a fragile state like Sudan.
 - 3 This paper is based on 15 months of ethnographic fieldwork that I have conducted during my MPhil and PhD researches in Sudan. I have carried out multisite fieldwork, observing and interviewing the locally affected people, the leaders of Anti-Kajbar movement and government officials and planners of the project. I have also collected rich secondary data ranging from exchanged letters, plans, reports, newspaper articles etc.
 - 4 Running into the internal differences in methods, focuses and conclusions between these writers is beyond the scope of this paper. I aim to describe empirically what happens to the patronage bases of political legitimacy during locally unacknowledged and suppressive 'development' intervention and the concomitant resistance it creates.

description of the state-society relationship (in contexts that resemble Sudan's case). He argues that in many fragile and conflict affected states, relationships are based on patronage and a lack of accountability. The prominence of informal institutions and relationships and unofficial processes result in divergences between formal systems and rules and actual practice. Political elites, who benefit from patronage and income from natural resource rents and criminal activities, often have little incentive to engage with citizens and to build an effective public authority (Haider 2011: 7). Literature on neopatrimonialism explain how the state functions and how it is experienced under "normal circumstances". However, they do not explain what happens to this routinized statecraft during conflict-ridden moments of contested developmental intervention.

My approach contextualizes the contested Kajbar Dam project within the wider state-society relations in Sudan through critical ethnographic analysis that transcends the formalistic perception of the state and considers citizens' sense of belonging and how they see and are seen by the state. This approach provokes critical questions that remain unasked. For instance, in the World Commission on Dams (2000) report and in the World Bank's criteria for resettlement, we see that one of the most crucial requirements for dam construction to be met is "prior informed consent of the affected local people". The entity assumed to be in charge of informing the locals here is the state. Recently in post-structuralist critical reflection on development (Arce 2000; Cheshire 2006; Deb 2009; Escobar 1995; Ferguson 1994), it has become clear that local communities can be manipulated by the very nature of this informing process. We must ask: How is information channeled in a situation where the state is seen as an alien entity that should be treated adversely rather than cooperatively? What if the locals, 'the citizens', are not passive consumers of information but active producers of counter knowledge? How can the state inform locals in a context where it is largely delegitimized? How can this informing process be realized and experienced, if the main features of state-society relations are antagonistic and cynical?

Situating the Locally Initiated Kajbar Dam within the Wider Background of the Mahas - State Relationship

The proposed Kajbar Dam is scheduled for construction on the third cataract of the Nile River, in the very northern part of Sudan in a region known as Mahas. Mahas is the name for both the sub-Nubian ethnic group and the area it occupies. The site of the proposed dam is located in this Mahas area, in the heart of the Nubian homeland. Its construction started as a local initiative, mainly to irrigate 15,000 acres of land and to generate 85 megawatts of electricity for local consumption. The technical, hydrological, soil, legal and social studies for this plan were all carried out under the supervision of the Mahas Development Committee from 1969 to 1970, and were modified at the Mahas Co-operation Conference in 1988. The Mahas Development Committee's studies concluded that these projects would not need a dam more than three meters high, so no villages or palm trees would be affected, except some fields that are very close to the Nile that would be submerged. The total area of the fields targeted by the project in the Nubian homeland would eventually increase to 50,000 acres. The aim of the Mahas Development Union was to increase the production of wheat and other winter crops and to produce electric power for the area. The overarching aim was to cut the high rate of outmigration and facilitate the return of people who had already left the area. This idea was locally supported, and Nubians in their homeland and in the Diaspora have paid generously for this project (Salih 1996).

In Mahas, enthusiastic engagement of the local community is a well-established trend. Almost all village public utilities and services, such as common agricultural schemes, small clinics, schools, village water tanks, tractors and other facilities, are discussed and managed at the weekly Friday prayer congregation. If, for example, a village hospital or school requires maintenance or the village needs a new public utility, these and all related issues are discussed at the mosque. Questions of cost and its division among families, methods of payment, how much to solicit from the village associations in the capital city and abroad, who becomes in charge of contacting Diaspora associations and establishing committees for different reasons, are raised during these meetings. Decisions made at these gatherings are respected by all village members. Because of the socio-political significance of this

congregation, even those who do not perform other prayers make sure to perform this particular one. No respected man⁵ in the village would miss these gatherings. By the time the committee starts to collect shares from the families, the village members, and elsewhere, the expected amount is already calculated in advance. Almost every house has at least one male migrant abroad (mainly in Arab Gulf countries); thus their contributions always exceed local collections. This process lends the village semi-autonomy; it yields a political community founded on customary rights and duties. Committees always endeavor to provide the village with the best services and utilities. This process has been the main engine of village material progress in Mahas. Since the sixties, some villages in Mahas had already built elementary schools and small clinics; at the same time grinders were introduced instead of manual grinding. Contrary, to these small village-based projects, the proposed dam's costs and benefits necessitated the collaboration of more than 57 villages in the Mahas region, under the umbrella of the Mahas Development Union.

Notably, decisions about public utilities and services are negotiated and, once made, respected collectively. Changes are negotiated, each member's participation and rights and duties are satisfactorily met, and no committee member dares abuse this public trust.⁶ The very notion of self-help by improving the material conditions of the village has become a long standing tradition among the villagers. The village as a semi-autonomous socio-political system provides security; any member experiencing difficulties feels entitled to his fellow villager's support. These relations of rights and duties have a strong moral base in a collective perception and a strong notion of belongingness. The idea that the state government should provide for their needs is atypical.

Nevertheless, if any village member or friend has a high position in the government, he is approached for financial support. No matter

5 These are masculine spaces, and decision making processes are highly informed by the patriarchal norms of the community.

6 I encountered only one story of misuse of trust: A man did not deliver an amount of money collected from members of a village association in Saudi Arabia to the village committee, as promised. Rumors about this man's misbehavior have circulated throughout all corners of the village, about how the cities and diaspora's have corrupted some of their fellows. Of course methods of holding such actors accountable are not followed, but the strength of morality and graveness of such actions against the village in the collective perception minimizes corruption.

how big the contribution, this official's payment is not regarded as support from the state but as a sign of that official's "generosity". Channeling resources, in most cases, depends more on the notion of begging citizens and bigheartedness of the officials than on well-defined and institutionalized rights and duties. The latter mainly exists to deter unwanted beggars. This adversarial relationship between state and society, mediated by the brokers who fill the interlocking spaces, is the root cause of the citizenship crisis. For example, since 1989, the current Islamist regime in Mahas has excerpted this space to empower its local membership, eventually gaining popularity by exploiting these same dynamics between the begging society and the donating government official. What makes this relationship even more provoking is the fact that not all Sudanese societies and individuals are able to solicit government officials because of the serious crisis of hierarchically ordered citizenship (Abdelkarim 2005; Elnur 2009; Gallab 2013; Khalid 1993, Sørnbø and Ahmed 2013). Accessibility of the state institutions and 'generous' officials is highly defined by the socio-cultural, ideological, and political background of the person who wants to access it.

In Mahas, community members feel a deep belongingness not to the state but to the village. This allegiance is supported by the security that each member receives or expects to receive from this relationship, which is defined by a strong moral obligation to one another at the village level. Here I refer to ontological security in a wider and deeper sense that implies a systemic reliability (Giddens 1991), not the kind of state security associated with images of torture, threats, humiliation and intimidation. Unlike other services, the government in Mahas provides police, security and judiciary services, but locals do not show an interest in utilizing them. Discourses of being marginalized by the state are relatively new. A few decades ago, the idea of being connected to the state was rare because there were no strong bases for identifying with the state and no expectation of rights in return. There were some duties, like paying land taxes, which citizens performed as grudgingly as possible.

The idea of a relationship between state and subject is not deeply rooted in Mahas history. Of course, kingdom states thrived thousands of years ago in this part of the world (see Adam 1977), but these are different from the notion of the modern state. The impact of the colonial

and neocolonial legacy cannot be overlooked in any serious analysis of the emergence and continuity of the extractive state and its adversarial relationship with its citizens (Mamdani 1996; Mbembe 2001; Ekeh 1975). In other words, the state, in this postcolonial perspective, is an entity that should be avoided as much as possible when it comes to duties. At the same time it should be the first target for direct material gain, with the shortest route running through local bureaucrats, who are not only corrupt government officials but the legitimate offspring of this adverse state-society relationship.

In his widely quoted classic sociological analysis of the African state, Ekeh (1975) points out that there are two clearly distinguishable publics: the primordial public (ethnic, village, locality, religious, group, etc.), which defines citizenship in moral terms and which the individual has a strong moral obligation to maintain and develop; and the civic public (belongingness to the state), which defines the relationship in amoral terms through only material gain. This background of state-society relations is important in understanding state intervention in the Kajbar Dam project in Mahas. While the community supported the dam's first proposal for construction, which was local, it strongly rejected what later became a nationalized version.

The Case of the Locally Resisted Kajbar Dam

In Sudan in 1995, after the current Islamist⁷ regime of the National Congress Party (NCP) came to power, the scale of the Kajbar dam project shifted from local to national, to produce 360 megawatts with the expected submergence of 30 to 99 villages⁸. The idea of this na-

7 By the Islamist I mean the political ideology and movement of Islamic brotherhood. The ideology that entails a particular interpretation of Islam, should guide all aspects of the Sudanese life. It is a political agenda which has been evolving in Sudan since colonial eras (for historical analysis, critique and deeper understanding of this movement see An-Na'im 2008, Gallab 2008). The movement took several names during its evolution under its leader Al-Turabi, for instance from 1970s till the movement it split in the late 1990s it was known as the National Islamic Front (NIF). After the split the ruling party renamed itself the National Congress Party NCP. The Islamists came to power through a military coup in 1989.

8 These discrepancies are according to different versions of stories that come from; the government underestimation against Nubian resistance overestimation of the submergence level. On the one hand the government rhetoric underestimate the ecological and social effects without disseminating concrete figures. The length of the Kajbar reservoir is 55Km and this is the only information mentioned in a

tionalization was overwhelmingly rejected by a majority of the affected local communities, who immediately began to resist the new NCP.

Nubians are sensitized to the negative impacts of dam construction, displacement and impoverishment, as they have experienced it four times with the Aswan Dam in 1912 and its two heightenings and the High Dam in 1964 (see Hashim 2006; Hopkins & Mehanna 2010). These traumas left unforgettable fingerprints in Nubian collective memory and are represented in song, poetry, writing and popular culture. This historical memory was a strong anti-dam mobilizer. For most affected Nubians, what they saw as sacrificing their homeland for the state did not carry any conviction. A local primary school teacher interviewed by the BBC said, "I belong to this area before my belongingness to Sudan and if I am taken from here against my will I do not mind to take up arms against Sudan"⁹. The Kajbar Dam project is defined through language of 'sacrificing for the state' because of the established perception that nothing can be gained from a state-led initiative. Therefore, community members immediately established committees to oppose the state plan to build the dam.

During their first decade in power, Sudanese Islamists were euphoric with the establishment of an Islamic state. The regime's core ideology was to Islamize and re-Islamize not only the nation but also the region to counter-balance Western hegemony. The economic independence of countries of these regions, mainly Egypt and Saudi Arabia, from America and other Western countries was a priority to be achieved by investing oil money from the Gulf countries in Sudanese land and water resources. An old slogan, 'Sudan as the Arab food basket', was revitalized (Verhoeven 2015).

released infotainment from the Dam Implementation Unit in 2008. On the other hand the Nubian resistance overestimates the submergence levels. Underestimation and overestimations of both costs and benefits is at the heart of the dynamics of power relations over the project. The government tries to assure the locals by propagating lower costs and higher benefits from Kajbar, and on the other hand resistance is mobilized by advocating the contrary. The gap of appropriate information about Kajbar from the government side is being invested upon by the resistance. The resistance fills this gap by its own version of discourse that rebuts the hegemonic government's self-serving-developmental ideology. This is how a lack of participatory engagement is connected to 'development'-induced violence (for deeper understanding of development reductionism and its concomitant violence see Shiva 1991 and Oliver-Smith 2011).

9 See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D07BdJsAXww>

The leading person behind the nationalization of the project was the Islamist engineer and Head of the National Electricity, Mahmoud Sharief. After Sharief died in the war against the southern rebel movement, the Kajbar file was handled by the Sudanese Vice-President Zubair. Zubair was the first high government official to visit the affected area for the purpose of 'enlightening' the locals (*tenweer el-ahali*) on the benefits of the project. Naturally, this first encounter between the central government and the Nubians was already full of distrust. Most locals went to this public meeting only to show their total opposition to the idea of submerging their homes. The vice president perceived this attitude as a challenge to state power and responded arrogantly saying, "Sit down and listen to what I came to tell you. America could not frighten us, let alone your sign boards and quarrels". With this provocative statement, the vice president solidified the people's resentment of the state-led project. However, the vice president did not totally silence local opposition but called for calm and for negotiations between local citizenship and the state government. He promised that the government would not violate anyone's rights.

In response, the local committee established four sub-committees to evaluate project feasibility, evaluate costs and benefits, examine alternatives and lastly assemble the relevant statistics in case the project was accepted. The government did not consider seriously these committees and immediately began to enumerate properties for compensation purposes. The governor replied to the committees' evaluation work, submitted to him in a meeting with representatives, saying, "These are far-fetched demands; go and live where the reservoir stops". This dismissal became a turning point in the history of the Kajbar anti-dam resistance. The committee soon changed its name from "Kajbar-Dam Affected People's Committee" to "Kajbar Anti-Dam Committee". The second name connotes clearly an uncompromising position.

This predictable impasse is the result of manipulative negotiations and crafty engagement on both sides. On the one hand, most of the locals were not convinced by the very idea of the project and accordingly over-evaluated their properties anticipating government rejection. Many local negotiators' tactics were mere maneuvering tactics toward this bottleneck. The local committee itself was under pressure from fellow village men and women, for any sign of progress in negotiations

with the government would be interpreted as betrayal. On the other hand, the idea of local consultation is totally different for the Islamist regime. The Islamic notion of *shura* [consultation] is interpreted as a discussion with the “righteous” powerful men instead of the critical mass. These benchmarks of legitimate leadership, as perceived by the government, can be found only among its local loyalists. These members are politically socialized not to be critical of their leader’s policies; otherwise, they can be perceived as being disloyal to the Islamists and their party membership questioned. The bottom line is that the government created and empowered these leaders to be consulted eventually. This notion lies at the heart of the NCP political culture and is manifested in the regime’s response to local distrust and resistance.

During this critical time many Nubian non-governmental organizations in the capital city and in the Diaspora, Nubian student associations, intellectuals, and Nubian cadres in the opposition political parties alongside the local anti-dam committees constituted a strong resistance network. The strongest unifying slogan was that Nubians should merge their resistance efforts in the face of targeted attempts by the pro-Arab Khartoum regime to eliminate their unique non-Arab culture. Submerging their history was interpreted as a manifestation of the Arabization policy of the regime through population engineering (Hashim 2006). Consequently, Nubian identity took a sharp political connotation; some extreme voices (e.g. the Kush Liberation Movement) called for armed struggle rather than ‘unfruitful’ peaceful resistance in an attempt to preserve their land and culture from state encroachment. With this escalating local resistance, accompanied by other regional factors and international economic sanctions on Sudan, the idea of the project faded from the public screen.

Nubians were misled by the perception that their resistance forced the government to retreat from the Kajbar Dam issue. But in 2007, Kajbar was re-introduced in a more authoritarian manner. The locals felt the strange movement of heavy machinery at the dam site. The old anti-dam committee members reorganized and contacted different government levels inquiring about the area, holding them accountable for the consequence of any reactions from frustrated villagers. They realized that even the prefect of the locality and the governor of the state did not know about the ongoing activities at the dam site. Then

the villagers organized the biggest protest march ever seen in the area. Thousands of village men and women marched to the dam site to show their opposition and attempt to halt the activity there. In the middle of their path police and security forces cracked down on the protestors with tear gas and live bullets, killing four and injuring about twenty¹⁰ (Hashim 2006). Journalists were prohibited from covering the event; resistance leaders were arrested and taken away. In some villages, security members remained for several days so as to protect the machines and “preserve the clout of the state”, as the governor argued. People were prevented from going to their farms; they were retained and checked in a humiliating manner. In other villages, angry protestors managed to eradicate government officials, forming what they called “liberated land”. Thus, villages were either occupied by or liberated from the state during the few days that followed the event.

When the Kajbar project was introduced in such a locally unacceptable way yielding these violent confrontations, many local NCP members took explicit or implicit opposing attitudes. Many sided with their relatives’ and not only opposed the project but also joined the local anti-dam committee. Expectedly, this category was targeted by the government. In an interview, the former governor explained, “The loyalty of some of the Nubians who held prominent positions has been severely tested during those days. Some of them supported the government but others returned to their relatives”. The deputy governor and the prefect of the locality immediately resigned, arguing that they had been humiliated among their relatives by this Dam Implementation Unit (DIU) intervention. The loyalists still engaged in pro-dam activities (locally known as *karazayat*¹¹) were effectively ostracized. For instance, the sister of a former governor consultant called her (prominently pro-dam) brother and asked him never to come back to the village, confirming how much shame and disgrace he brought to the family: “If you appear in the village, I will throw myself into the Nile and commit suicide”, she said.

10 Part of this violent encounter is videotaped, see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EdzJJY2l-Ss>

11 From the name of Hamid Karzai, the Afghanistan former president, who is widely believed, in that part of the world, to be empowered by the United States to work for its own interest not in the interest of Afghan citizens. In the context of Mahas, this powerfully analogizes working for the Sudanese government by spying and working for a foreign country.

Tension over the Kjabar project escalated, local NCP members faced conflicting loyalties, the interlocking space between the state and society shrunk and some NCP members supported their relatives, a position considered unfriendly to the government. Under these new circumstances, the internal restructuring of the NCP became unavoidable. But this reordering of the internal ruling party's house took an authoritative line in accordance with project loyalty. This new criterion provided momentum for newly joining members, who had no longstanding resources of power within the NCP, to compete with old members. Changing the rules of the game was not accepted by old members, who resisted this new competition. NCP members believed that they were in a position to be taken seriously, but they were as uniformed as the villagers, which put them, as government officials, in the excruciating position of being unable to explain what was going on and answer their relatives' pressing questions, like: What activities are going on around the dam site? *Uoga fakidachina* [Are we being drowned]? *Uoga fa nachil foagjina* [Will we be thrown into the desert? Why is the government ignoring us? Have local NCP members been paid to betray us?

The anti-dam activists, among young generations in particular, further fueled suspicion with intimidating speculation and rumors. They perfectly capitalized on the gap created by the government's lack of transparency. Their speculation found a receptive audience. In this uncertain and distrustful climate, the most pessimistic rumors became the most quickly circulated and believed. No one dared defend government action. As a result, the DIU's authoritative actions opened more space for the local anti-dam activists to shape local attitudes toward the project than the one left to NCP members.

Because of the nature of its establishment with wider authorities, the DIU downplayed the local Islamist's role in softening the friction, had they given the needed resources like time, information and participatory space. Even the government loyalists, whose support does not require serious engagement by the virtue of patronage norms, were taken by surprise equally with their fellow villagers. If these compromises had taken place, describing it as authoritative intervention would lose ground. That means the 'local leaders' whom the government created and generously empowered to be eventually consulted by *shura*, were themselves discounted. The point here is that, as far as the

Kajbar case is concerned, the Islamist regime could not commit itself even to implement its own manipulative participatory model of *shura*.

The Northern State Government (NSG)¹² faced the same challenges, rooted in its role as mediator between the two conflicting camps, neither of which acknowledged the NSG legitimacy. Worse, the NSG was trying to navigate these opposing visions without possessing the legitimacy to question and modify each side's position. The NSG executives end up negotiating for their own legitimacy within this troubled local-DIU relationship. Locals knew that the DIU is powerful and that the NSG would not jeopardize its position by getting into serious disagreements with the DIU. They also knew that even if the governor would take such a risk, he would immediately be replaced by another willing to implement DIU policies. Thus for the locals, who are aware of these facts, the governor's reassurance that their rights would not be violated was perceived as an empty promise. The former governor acknowledged that his government was not informed or consulted. When I asked how and why he tried to reassure the locals when he, as a governor, was not certain about how things would go, he replied:

In the DIUs' plan, Kajbar was the next project after Merowe Dam. But they have never learnt from the Merowe experience and the same mistakes have been repeated in the approach to Kajbar. Until they started there was no resistance. The way they have started has escalated the resistance. Their approach has even created distrust of those who were ready to accept the project. The DIU perceives itself as a federal unit and tries to enjoy the vertical relations between the federal and state level. Federal plans and decisions overrule the states, but the relations should have been coordinated in a smooth way to avoid such disputes. We did not face problems with other federal ministries' programs as we faced it with the DIU. When they started in Kajbar we did not have any prior information. The project started, and naturally the local felt the movements and contacted the prefect, and he contacted me. I contacted the DIU and told them that when they start such a project they should have let us be informed, because

12 Since 1991, Sudan has adopted federalism as a political system to solve issues of diversity management, power sharing and problem solving that suits Sudan's multi-tiered heterogeneity.

it has security implications and we are responsible for the state's and your own worker security¹³.

Though the governor acknowledges that the DIU took 'the wrong approach', he did not try to reverse or modify it; when he contacted the DIU he focused more on his role as a security provider. But what does security mean in this context? Who is being secured from whom and how? The 'security' necessitated sending more armed forces to the area to protect the workers and their equipment on the dam site against the 'ungrateful' locals. This securitized approach is what led to the violent confrontation, which the governor justified as "to preserve the clout of the state". But, what has long continued to be a latent function of the ideology of development, which is controlling with impunity through coercion and exploitation, has created an epistemological ground for the local people, through which both the state and its development projects are processed. In other words, the historical overspill of what Ake (1996) calls latent functions of the ideology of development constituted the main impediment to both development and the functioning of the state, which are both seen through the lenses of hostility and distrust (See Suleiman 2000 and Gertel, Rottenburg & Calkins 2014 for more conflict-laden cases from other parts of Sudan). It is the perspective from below which the Kajbar case adds to Ake's (1996) emphasis on the mismanagement of both state power and development from above.

Conclusion

The Kajbar Dam debacle teaches how local perception of development can be inextricably linked to the perception of the state. The ethnographic analyses of the state-society relationship in the context of Kajbar reveal how different degrees in citizenship, sense of belongingness, trust, reliability, loyalty, ownership and entitlement produced different ways of the local community engagement with the project. The local oriented version of Kajbar, which enjoyed stronger relations (measured in terms of the above mentioned substantive qualities) with its social base, displayed enthusiastic engagement with the project. In contrast, the nationalized version was resisted mainly because of local distrust, which shaped the perception of the outcome of the project

13 Interview conducted, by the author, with the former governor of the Northern State in 2012.

as destructive and impoverishing. The state's authoritarian intervention and its implementation at different levels intensified this distrust and escalated resistance. In sum, in this context, a more authoritative development approach that compromises serious engagement with local communities leads to resistance more likely to escalate into a civil war threatening the existence of the whole country. That means, going back to the metaphor of the omelet, the kitchen which was taken for granted to be so strongly built, might very likely fall apart before its occupants enjoy the omelet.

The inherent problem of development in Sudan is threaded together by the crisis of legitimacy of the state institutions that implement them. The paper thus ethnographically unpacks the nature of the state which itself can be a hindrance to development let alone being an unquestionable developer. To this end, I argue that development cannot be understood without considering its implementation within a larger state-society context. The seeds of the state's legitimacy are problematically sown upon the ground of its duty 'to develop' the nation rather than the fertile soil of non-discriminatory contractual relations with its citizens. Development, whether real or imagined, becomes the omnipresent justification for authoritative and exploitative manifestations of the state. The state becomes the bureaucratic apparatus, which facilitates subjugation of the people and their resources, depending on their position in the citizen's hierarchy, for the winning alliances. The quest for development, as a political discourse, is the most dominant feature of postcolonial Sudan. In both colonial and postcolonial Sudan, development has been instrumentalized efficiently to perpetuate, create and consolidate social injustice and the uneven distribution of rights and duties as well as 'development' costs and benefits. As a result, Sudan affords preferential treatment to citizens on the merit of their ethnic, cultural, religious, gender, intellectual, ideological and geographical positions. The illegitimacy of the state and its manipulatively implemented development projects yield an adversarial state-society relationship in which neither state nor its projects of development are trusted. How the Kajbar project will continue to unfold in light of these conditions remains to be seen.

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