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**The Politics of Land Acquisition in
Sudan
The case of El-Gerief East,
Khartoum**

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International Development Studies-MDS

The Politics of Land Acquisition in Sudan

The case of El-Gerief East, Khartoum



Figure (1) Photo from one of the (*Kamāyin*) attached to the Blue Nile-El-Gerief East. Taken by Yousif Badawi

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Declaration

I, Yousif Badawi Abdelrahman, declare that this thesis is a result of my research investigations and findings. Sources of information other than my own have been acknowledged and a reference list has been appended. This work has not been previously submitted to any other university for award of any type of academic degree.

Signature.....

Date.....

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List of Acronyms

AUs	Administrative Units
BNC	The Blue Nile City
CPA	The Comprehensive Peace Agreement, 2005
CTA	The Civil Transaction Act 1984
EECS	El-Gerief East Community Sit-in
EESC	El-Gerief East Sit-in Committee
EESCD	El-Gerief East Sit-in Committee Document
GoS	Government of Sudan
KSP	Khartoum Structural Plan
LAO	The Land Acquisition Ordinance, 1930
LSRO	The Land Settlement and Registration Ordinance, 1925
MPP	Ministry of Physical Planning
NCP	National Congress Party
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
NIF	National Islamic Front
NLC	The National Land Commission
PC	Popular Committee
SCC	Sudan's Constitutional Court
SICS	The Interim Constitutions of Sudan
SSF	Social Security Fund
WB	The World Bank

Glossary of Arabic Terms¹

al-Hakuma	The Government
al-īamiyia al-Sudanyia	The Sudanese dialect from Arabic. It is the spoken language in Sudan. Borrowed from the local Sudanese languages and cultures.
al-Ṣāliḥ al-ām	It means “Public good”, a policy applied in 1989-1992, mainly cleaning the Sudanese civil service from the anti INF public employees.
ʿAraqi	local alcohol
Awald	the sons of
Fadān	Is a unit of area for land used in Sudan and Egypt. One feddan is approximately equal to an acre (0.42 hectare).
Ḥaram al-Qarya	The village boundary
Ḥiyāza	Unregistered piece of land. It may be owned by community, a leader or an individual.
Hubal	Hubal plural, is a local expression used to describe length of agricultural land-
Kamāyin	Is the Sudanese expression for where the clay brick is made
Khalifa	The successor. Famously used for the successor of The Mahadi of Sudan. Is also used in the Sufi context.
Lajnat iṭiṣām El-Gereif	El-Gerief Sit-in Committee
Masīd	Both Masīd and Khalwa are a local Sudanese expression to where Holy Quartan is taught and memorize
Maṭary Karkōj	All urban and peri-urban land in Greater Khartoum is registered in the name of <i>Mattari Karouj</i> . However, in the thesis the term refers to agricultural land owned by landowners or residents from El-Gerief East
Milk Ein	Is a public leasehold. Used on usufruct basis
Milk hurr	Freehold or privately owned
Mutamad	The Commissioner
Muwātin Garāfy	El-Gerief East citizen
Nasheed El-Gerief	The anthem of El-Gerief East
Sāgya	Sāgya Waterwheel, an old irrigation technique in the Nile valley

¹ Arabic transliteration follows the system of the International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies.

Sāḥāt al-Eid	The Eid square
Sāḥāt al-ītiṣām	The Sit-in square
Shamaasa	It means the vagabonds. Refers to the vast numbers of urban poor who used to live in the streets of Khartoum.
Sharq al-Nīl	The area located east of the Nile within Greater Khartoum
Shuhadaa	Martyrs. In the thesis it refers to those who missed their lives in the resistance against the Government expropriation of land in El-Gerief East
Tagneeb	A term used to explain the practice of set-aside or expatriation of public revenues.
Takaful Sandog	Is a local saving system, consisting of several members, sharing the same amount of money for a fixed period
Tamkeen	Means empowerment. Is a process of strengthening the political, economic and security capacities of the affiliated members and loyalist to the National Congress Party.
Tarabiza Kamīna	Literally 'table', but in Kamāyin is a work unit comprising four to five people.
Thawrat El-Gerief	El-Gerief East revolution. Here, refers to a newspaper article that labelled El-Gerief East Community Sit-in.
Ṭoob Harrary	Thermal industrialised bricks
Umdawanbān	Located 45 kilometer west east Khartoum, and 30 kilometres from El-Gerief East. It is a famous Sufi centre and ancient centre for (Quran Khalwas) where Holy Quran is taught memorized.
Wad Qabayil	Local expression said to describe someone who is from honourable tribe
Wāly	The Governor
Zoal al-hakuma	Local expression said to someone who is affiliated to the Government.

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I start by thanking my informants in El-Gerief East. All of them have been enormously collaborative during my field work time in Khartoum, July-August 2018. The insightful telling inspired me to work for the justice for land. I repeat with you in honour (*Nasheed El.Gerief*):

*Our beloved El-Gerief is the pride
your honoured land will never be suppressed
we see the youngsters hearing your calls
coming with knowledge and wisdom
Ohh mama, for how long will we bear the sorrow with patience
and our beloved El-Gerief is wounded
getting neither education nor health care
our land is taken, all our rights are abused*

The memory of El-Gerief East brings **Hamza Abdel Hamid** back, I visited him long time ago during our student's political activism. May his soul rest in pace. To the *Shuhadaa* (Martyrs) of El-Gerief East.

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Abstract

This study examines the politics of land acquisition in Sudan, exploring the subject empirically through an ethnographical case study of the land acquisition of El-Gerief East in Greater Khartoum. The main goal of the study is to contribute to the theoretical and empirical understanding of the land acquisition process in Sudan in its local, regional and global dynamics. Theoretically, the thesis has utilized a broad political economy approach and, in particular, the analysis of the power of exclusion by Hall, Hirsch and Li. The case illustrated that assemblages of powers were used to exclude the residents and land owners of El-Gerief East from their land. Those powers are chiefly regulation, legitimation, the market and force. Furthermore, political and administrative corruption were powerful tools of exclusion. The case illustrated that private registered land can be acquired and expropriated in the same way as customary land. A process of "licenced inclusion" however, reflected in the case in form of the State allocating land to favoured social and politically affiliated groups. The case illustrated that land acquisition is land grabbing in some of its aspects; land grabbing in the case and in Sudan in general, is identified as being driven by political elites. The counter resistance social movement represented in El-Gerief East Community Sit in is a mature social movement that fulfilled the definition of a social movement and is characterized by a flexible structure, as well as being task oriented and consensus based. It is the means by which a marginalized community has shown that they have a powerful voice, especially as their activities have been conducted in defiance of a lack of consent from the State. The sit-in has set a historical precedent in Sudan, as this is the first movement to create an ongoing and long-standing series of resistance activities which embody an emancipated social, political and cultural awareness. The study ascertained that through structural exclusions (political, socio-economic and legal) produced by the political elite at the macro level of Sudan, land acquisition in El-Gerief East has been affected. The connections between land grabbing, crisis and vulnerable urbanization as an outcome in the case of Greater Khartoum, raises the need for more research to link the combination of crisis, vulnerable urbanization, and land grabbing.

Figure (2) Map of Sudan



Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The recent unprecedented scrambling for urban land in greater Khartoum has produced a broad land debate that calls for profound land reform in the country. Although land dispossession has a long history in rural Sudan, the current land debate reform is associated with the latest developments in the urban arena. In a way it is an urban privilege. In my view this debate arose in its current form as a result of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) which contained clauses which led the opposition political parties, civil society activists and the educated elite to expect profound change in land issues through the establishment of the National Land Commission (NLC).

Yet the NLC was not the top priority of the two CPA partners, the National Congress Party and the Sudan People Liberation Movement (SPLM), despite the fact that land in Sudan has been used and allocated for patronage reasons to religious leaders, sectarian parties leaders and political affiliates (Beshir, 1974). Nonetheless, the current attack on urban land has been gluttonous and worrying. Some consider it to be an aspect of the corrupted politics of urban planning in Sudan (Post, 1996). Others relate it to the empty Sudanese treasury post secession (Umbada, 2014). While others consider the allocation of rural and urban land to be driven by corruption (Taha, 2016).

Conversely, the Sudanese rural arena has witnessed land dispossession against small scale farmers and pastoralists since the 1940s (Salih, 1999). However, the national government, from 1956 to the present day, has practiced structured exclusion against rural peasants and pastoralists in the marginalized Sudanese regions (Komey, 2010b). The effect of the Unregistered Land Act 1970 is considered to be an excellent illustration of institutionalized land grabbing against rural communities and their customary rights (Egemi, 2006) (Babiker, 2018). Within this context, land is considered to be at the heart of civil war causes (Komey, 2010a). With its congested reality, Sudan has to interact with the global phenomenon that is the “global land rush”. The country is one of those with the largest exposure to land grabbing in Africa (Cotula et al., 2009). Statistics on land grabbing in Sudan, prepared by international voluntary organizations like (GRAIN) and database sources as The Land Matrix, showed both interesting and contradicting figures. However, Sudan is characterized by Middle East and Arab countries targeting it for land grabbing. Despite the inconsistency in the data related to land

grabbing in Sudan. Yet, some scholars argues that the phenomenon is taking place and that it is in excess of the contradicting data (Umbadda, 2014).

On one hand, Greater Khartoum has been the centre for power and politics since independence. It represents both [urban and rural] fabric. The civil war, the environmental politics and the centralization of services reflect on it. On the other hand, the combination of population growth, contested governance and personal gain-oriented politics of urban planning have produced a form of distorted urbanization that have a profound effect on the urban land sector in Greater Khartoum. Therefore, the thesis will be a discussion of the specific politics, policies and factors [mentioned above] as they interact in Greater Khartoum as well as through the ethnographical case study of El-Gerief East. The case will be descriptively introduced, followed by the analytical part.

1.2 The Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is written in five chapters. Chapter one contains the introduction. Chapter two contains the research methods, theoretical approach and the literature review. Chapter three has two parts: the first part discusses the successive population growth and urbanization in Greater Khartoum and presents the major features of the urban economy and governance. The second part presents major land governance features, followed by the methodological approach of urban and rural land acquisition in Sudan.

Chapter four contains the descriptive ethnographical presentation of the case study of the land acquisition of El-Gerief East. Chapter five contains the discussion and the conclusion. In addition to the broad political economy approach, the discussion of this chapter utilized the powers of exclusion as scope of analysis.

Chapter Two: Approach and Methodology

2.1 Research Problem

Before the secession of the southern part of Sudan, the country was the largest in Africa, and famous for being one million square miles. In Sudan, land is a source of livelihood for many. Throughout the history of Sudan, the land tenure system has developed naturally as a result of historical, political and socio-economic patterns. The tenure relationship in the ancient kingdoms was shaped by the domination of the monarchs, and demonstrates state control over land (Spaulding & Kapteijns, 2002, p 6-13-177). Land tenure was also interrupted by the colonial invasions. Significant changes occurred in the land tenure system, during the period of ancient Sudanic Christian Nubia, where the general pattern of communal land ownership dissolved into private land ownership (Spaulding, 1982, p1-20). Later, the shift from the matrilineal pattern that prevailed in pre-Christian Nubia to the patriarchal Islamic pattern took place during the Arab migration to Sudan (Awad, 1971, p 215). During the Turkish period (1820-1885) the political economy of the Turkish taxation system stimulated the inception of agricultural slavery that caused a transformation in the tenure system, in the central and northern part of Sudan, into private land ownership (Spaulding, 1982, p 1-20). There is scholarly consensus, however, that the modern land tenure system has been affected by the Anglo-Egyptian administration ordinances on land registration. The period from 1899-1930 witnessed the promulgation of land legislation, encompassing fifteen Land Ordinances (Komey, 2010b, p 55). The new land procedures clearly targeted “native economic growth”, and the stimulation of foreign capital (Serels, 2007, p 62). One of the products of the colonial period is the Gezira Scheme, an extraordinary 20th century project that became the economic backbone of Sudan's economy. The capitalist agricultural expansion, however, continued after independence, and is reflected in two patterns, the mechanization of the rainfed areas and the establishment of new pump scheme projects like Halfa al-Jadida and al-Rahad (O'Brien, 1981, p 21-24).

The post-colonial period has been claimed not to vary much. The new policy of agrarian expansion in the form of so-called “mechanized farming” was supported by two Acts: the Mechanized Farming Act 1986 and the Unregistered Land Act 1970, where the latter has been perceived as institutionalized land grabbing and neglecting communal land ownership (Komey, 2010b) (Ayoub, 2006) (Babiker, 2018). On the other hand, Greater Khartoum has continued to be the political and financial centre since independence. The macro rural politics and policies

are reflected in Greater Khartoum, and the latest scrambling for urban land. The problem of the thesis aims to transcend the rural and urban question and to examine what distinguishes land acquisition in urban and peri-urban areas from rural areas.

2.2 Research Objectives and Research Questions

The goal of the study:

The main goal of this study is to contribute to the theoretical and empirical understanding of the land acquisition process in Sudan describing the local, regional and global dynamics around it.

The specific objectives and the research questions are:

1. To contribute to the understanding of drivers of land acquisition in Sudan through the case of El-Gerief East area

1.1 What were the main features of the history of land acquisition?

1.2. What were the external political and economic factors that led to acquisition?

1.3 What was the process of implementation over time?

1.4 What legal, political and bureaucratic mechanisms affected the land acquisition process?

2. To contribute to the understanding of community dynamics and society–state relations in land acquisitions

2.1 What were the internal social, economic and political factors involved in acquisition, including ethnicity, class and gender?

2.2 What were the major local social, economic, political and environmental effects of the land acquisitions?

2.3 What strategies of mobilization did communities use when facing the land acquisition, and what were their impact?

2.4 Were other actors involved in the process of contesting the acquisition, if so why and how?

2.5. What changes occurred in the state-society relationship as a consequence of the land acquisition?

3. To contribute to the understanding of the national, regional and global connections and dynamics related to the land acquisition in Sudan

- 3.1 Was the land acquisition affected by the global rush for land?
- 3.2 Does the case appear illustrative of or different from major trends and characteristics of land acquisition in Sudan?
- 3.3 In what major ways have the political debate or other processes at a national level addressed land acquisitions in Sudan?
- 3.4 Has Sudan developed policies in relation to land acquisitions, and have they played a role?
- 3.5 Have global policy changes played a role in the national context?

2.3 Literature Review

Land has a special nature that is a unique thing, object or commodity. It is characterized by its multiple dimensions as a resource, or property and has social meanings. Land “can be partitioned but cannot be removed as it stays in place”. The multiple functions and meanings, however, makes land a collective of “materialities, relations, technologies and discourses that have to be pulled together and made to align” (Li, 2014, p 589). Within the African context, competition over land is seen as a reflection of broader competition that touches individuals, resource and state lines. Such socio-political elements bring issues like citizenship, political identity, gender and age etc. These elements, however, are produced in a “complex historical and social process” (Lund & Boone, 2013). Historically, ancient land tenure relations in pre-colonial Sudan should be understood in the African context of a pre-capitalist state society. The tenure relationship in the ancient kingdoms was shaped by the domination of the monarchs (Spaulding & Kapteijns, 2002, p 56). The two Christian Nubian Kingdoms of Al Makara and Aldoia had a pattern of king and slave relationships. Transformation of the tenure system as well as the whole inheritance system; from the matrilineal pattern took place with the Arabs and Muslim migration (Awad, 1971, p 215). More transformation occurred during the Turkish Sudan (1820-1885) particularly in central northern Sudan, where there was a move from customary to private land ownership. (Spaulding, 1982, p 1-20).

In modern Sudan, the dilemma of land and its politicization goes back to the colonial administration era and the policy of “tribal homelands” that was implemented during the 1930s-1940s. This policy which was, however, underpinned by another national policy in the post-colonial era is summarized in the social and political asymmetrical implications of the Act of Unregistered Land, 1970 which had ample negative impacts on the rural Sudanese arena, the smallholders, peasants and weaker groups (Ayoub, 2006, p 1-2). The Act of Unregistered Land 1970 along with the Mechanized Farming Cooperation Act, 1968, has led to the domination of wealthy groups from Central Sudan over the land of the indigenous Nuba in Southern Kordofan. The illustrative numbers from the well-known Habila mechanized area show that from a total of 143 farms only 12 were allocated to local farmers. The accumulation of this suppression along with state political marginalization of the Nuba people has led them to join the rebel group of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in 1985 (Komey, 2010a, p 365). Another region which is affected by the mechanized farming wave is the Blue Nile. The area witnessed an increase in the cultivated area from 2.3 million in 1970 to 8.3 million *fadān* in 2004 allocated in the forms of large scale mechanized and semi mechanized areas. The policy affected the local communities and created destructive competition for what was left of the land and triggered a sense of political marginalization (Taha, 2015, p 19).

Land is perceived as a significant factor of conflict in the northern part of Sudan, where mainly the politics of dams dominates. The construction of the Aswan dam in 1964 and the absolute collaboration from the Sudan Government had profound effects on the Nubian population. As a result some 16,500 families were displaced from their original areas and resettled in Khashm al-Girba in the Middle East part of Sudan. In recent years, the government of Sudan has been constructing six new dams in north Sudan, between the second and the sixth cataracts, in the river Nile, at Sabaloga, Shirik, Dagash, Mugrat, Kajbar and Dal. More displacement is projected. The Nubian scholars and activists engaging in counter-resistance accuse the Government of Sudan (GoS) of carrying out social engineering in north Sudan by planning to resettle the mass population of Egyptian farmers resident in the region (Hashim, 2010, p 149). There is a wide scholarly consensus among the Sudanese scholars that mechanized farming represents a form of land grabbing. Such grabbing and land dispossession has chiefly excluded the rural smallholders and pastoralists. Pastoralists are considered to be among the most marginalized groups both politically and developmentally as they lack access to state institutions. Although they represent more than seven percent of the total population according to the Sudan population census 2008, nearly half the pastoralists report that they practice agro-pastoralism in rain-fed land. Such land is under what is known as “usufruct” rights, and thus by

decree belongs to the Government of Sudan (GoS) following the Act of Unregistered Land 1970. Mechanized farming is perceived as exclusion for the pastoralists and has turned them into “seasonal labours in land they cultivated before”. The two main groups of nomads in Sudan, the *Abballa* (camel herders) and *Baggara* (cattle herders) in east Sudan, Blue Nile, north and south Kordofan have been affected differently, yet the outcome is extensive exclusion by mechanized farming and later by oil discoveries in the southern part of the country. Their seasonal routes have been disrupted, and many have abandoned pastoralism as a means of livelihood and turned to charcoal production or wage labour (Umbadda, 2014, p 38-40).

Women also face discrimination in land ownership in Sudan. Although women are estimated to make up to 87% of the traditional agricultural sector they have been challenged by mechanized farming, and their contribution has dropped to 10%. The capitalist agriculture system represented by mechanized farming is considered to be one which excludes women. There are assemblages of political, socio-cultural and legislative factors that have contributed to the situation. The case of the pump scheme and acquiring a leasehold particularly illustrates this. The procedure of acquiring a leasehold requires an official document (*al-jensiya al-Sudaniya*), and obtaining it demands time and travel to large cities, making it difficult for rural women. Another socio-cultural factor lies in the lengthy distance from the home to the leased land. Furthermore, husbands refuse the help of their wives for socio-cultural reasons. Another double-edged marginalization is found in the milk production in rural Sudan. This sector is dominated by nomadic women. The sector also reflects the country's wealth of animal resources with fifty five million head of livestock, yet Sudan spends more than 10 million pounds importing milk products, ignoring its rich milk resources (Badri, 1986, p 89-92). On the other hand, although the Sudan interim Constitution 2005, and The Civil Transaction Act 1984 give women the same rights of ownership, the land sector is extremely male-dominated.

The global land grabbing or transnational land deals with as explained by Wisborg represent a major global fact. In summary, “rich countries and companies increasingly pursue economic, political, and environmental goals by appropriating land in poorer, land-rich countries, affecting the land tenure and livelihood practices of women and men” (Wisborg, 2014, p 24-25). This practice is accompanied by both ethical and political debate, where the main actors are international organizations and researchers (Wisborg, 2014, p 24-25). The global land acquisition currently comprises an estimated 49,193,878 hectares and 1,591 deals. The statistics also show 19,818,594 hectares - (209) deals are in progress, and that failed deals comprise 8,301,222 hectares, (119) deals (Land Matrix, 2018).

A study report on land grabbing in Africa explored both the risks and possibilities and recommended with caution that large land investment would reinforce growth in Africa through technology transfer and stimulation of employment as well as leveraging conditions of energy and food (Cotula et al., 2009). The World Bank supported the data on yield gap in comparison with land availability around the world and the global south. The report suggests investors would contribute by leveraging technology and productivity level, thus benefiting local populations and countries in the global south (Deininger & Byerlee, 2011). Other studies looked at the phenomenon as a synthesis of the wider globalization manifestations, liberalization and global land market as it emerges in form of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). Seven aspects are examined that shape the “foreignization of space” in the global land rush, adding to the complexity of the various competing components: local, national, local government, individuals, long-distance owners, non-governmental organizations, financial cooperation, private dwellers and real estate. This interaction, however turns both land issues and social justice into a global concern (Zoomers, 2010, p 429-447).

The process of local governance capacities and its connection to the global land rush has been studied in Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria and Zambia. The outcome of local governance in Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria and Zambia demonstrated how large-scale farmland in these countries failed to contribute to sustainable development. A form of contested land governance manifested in a vulnerable tenure system, allowed customary leaders and elites to take over the opportunities in these countries. Although the processes in the four countries were different, the investment in all cases was supplemented by displacement, dispossession and environmental degradation. The research showed countries with progressive laws and those with repressive land laws were the same in terms of practiced governance (Schoneveld, 2017, p 119-132).

Gender conditions in the transnational deals has captured research attention, based on a human rights approach, and a critical examination of both the ethics and policies. The review of international instruments like Responsible Agricultural Investment (RAI), World Bank (smart economy) and rights to food are perceived as not having fully addressed gender interests. A similar examination of utilitarian approaches indicated that they are more focused on economic benefits (jobs and growth). While the human rights approach focuses more on the consequences for groups or individuals. A normative approach is seen as an instrument balancing the scope of both investment and development in maximizing utilitarianism as well as responding to Human Rights needs (Wisborg, 2014, p 1199–1222).

The literature on urban and peri-urban land at the global level provide significant insights into the transformation and the drivers in the urban arena. The term peri-urban is not well-defined and includes “implicit definitions” and utilization. Nevertheless, a pertinent classification of peri-urban describes areas or an “environment which are in some meaningful way neither rural nor urban” (Jaquinta & Drescher, 2000, p 3-6). A comparative case from Ghana shows where urban expansion was caused by economic development, rural urban migration and a rise in population. Various patterns of peri-urban growth are observed between the southern and northern part of the country underpinned by historical, cultural and economic differences between the two parts. However, enhancing customary norms and widening local participation are seen as the key points to improve land use planning and balance the various peri-urban patterns. (Kleemann et al., 2017). Another case from Tanzania examined the peri-urban transformation around Dar es Salam. The case illustrated the special pressure on peri-urban areas. The case determines that “urbanization in poverty” is caused by rural urban migration, population growth and transformation in land use. The case showed the challenge of land use planning and the Tanzanian state incapacity to provide basic infrastructure. These two factors, when incorporated with poverty, are seen as being the largest challenges facing the so-called “organic urban growth” (Kombe, 2005).

In a case from Vietnam, the city of Hue tackled urban transformation and livelihoods among inhabitants who had lost their land. Referring to shifts in the economy in Vietnam, new trends of industrialization and urbanization-impacted transformation in peri-urban contexts particularly urban agriculture. Although the case showed marginalization of people who had lost their land during the negotiation processes, most of these inhabitants were reported to have recovered economically. Nevertheless, due to the dynamics of industrialization and urbanization, large scale of land acquisition is projected to continue. “Fair urbanization” that tackles multi levels of governance is seen to be the remedy (Nguyen Quang, 2015). Another case is from Melanesia, where land grabbing by political elites has occurred. Melanesia is described as having strong customary norms and is characterized by its patriarchal domination of access to land. Politically, it is described as a “shadow state of political patronage”. These conditions allowed state actors and political elites to allocate business to relatives in a clear form described as “licenced inclusion”. Both the shadow state and political patronage has created a “culture of complicity and illegality where government officials fear politicians and are unable to limit their power in allocating and leasing urban land to relatives and investors (McDonnell, 2017).

2.4 Theoretical Approach

In the theoretical approach I have adopted a broad political economy approach with special utilization for the power of exclusion according to Hall, Hirsch and Li, (2011). According to these authors exclusion is seen as “referring to the ways in which people are prevented from benefiting from a thing/land” (Hall et al., 2011, p 7). Exclusion works through utilization of the following: regulatory powers, as well as the rules that determine land boundaries and how and by whom access can be made. The power of the market, perceived as complex “socially embedded institutions that are underpinned by regulations, legitimation and force”. The power of legitimation is seen as a power in itself. It is a power of justification to “provide the normative, the indispensable normative underpinning to rules, the right to buy and sell and violence that makes them seem legitimate or in some cases makes them so much part of the natural order of things that they are not up for debate or analysis”. Force is the fourth power of exclusion (Hall et al., 2011, p 194-196).

2.5 Research Methods

The study is based on qualitative research. Qualitative research is distinguished from other types of research methods as it chiefly focus on the what, how, when and why of that which is being studied. It is also focuses on specifying the “meanings, concepts, characteristics, metaphors, symbols and description of things” (Berg & Lune, 2007, p 3). The main source of data collection for the study is in-depth-interviews. The latter may be defined as a method of data collection that involves interviewer and interviewee discussing a topic in an in-depth manner. It is different from a normal conversation as it is seeking “conversation with purpose” (Hennink et al., 2011, p 109).

The in-depth interviews were chiefly conducted with key informants from El-Gerief East sit-in committee, two government officials and an urban planner. The study, however, utilized the depth data from the key informants because of the depth and the time allocated to the subjects that the government officials did not give. Nonetheless, I would describe the interview with the urban planner as useful and fair. During the interviews I introduced myself as a master student from the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU), and I followed that by introducing

my topic. Then I started with a relatively open question during the interview. Nonetheless I allowed my interviewee the freedom to narrate, yet accompanied that with listening actively. The language used in the interview is Arabic with the Sudanese dialect (*al-īamiyia al-Sudanyia*). Since I am a native Sudanese this helps to reduce misunderstandings, although the language used was simple. I showed motivation and a connection to the topic in the pauses. Furthermore, I connected to what the interviewees said and asked follow up and additional questions when required (Berg & Lune, 2012, p 112). During the interview I used my interview guide (see Appendix 2). The interview guide, assisted me to make the required transition from topic to topic without interrupting my interviewees (Berg & Lune, 2012, p 119). All the interviews with the key informants from El-Gerief East and the urban planner were recorded, while the interviews with the two government officials were recorded with handwritten notes, as I was not allowed to record.

The study is also case study oriented. The case study could be defined as “An empirical inquiry about contemporary phenomenon (eg, a case) within its real-world context – especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2011, p 4). Literature on case studies showed the capacity of case studies to bring depth and insightful understanding for the studied subjects. In addition to the “compelling framework”, doing this case implies ethnographical elements and processes due to its dealing with humans and describing and interpreting their expressions (Berg & Lune, 2012, p 197). With respect to the practical side of the fieldwork and according to the socio-political context in Sudan which I describe as “open horizontally and contested vertically”. In other words, the context is open for mutual understanding and even dialogue with people, while it is contested with the government. I have chosen to negotiate my way and been inspired by Robert Burges when he suggested that access is “negotiated and renegotiated throughout the research process” cited in (Berg & Lune, 2012, p 198). Nonetheless, the contact with my field subjects took place in an open and direct manner. Building trust with my field subjects was crucial for me, and through this trust I was able to see the area and the two physical sites of land acquisition. These experiences helped me to strengthen my understanding of the issue I was researching. Nonetheless the protection of my human research subjects was a prerequisite from the research proposal, which was observed during the research process, and will continue definitely (Berg & Lune, 2012, p 203).

The case study is designed into two parts, the first part will be descriptive, and will offer special “insights into the social world” of the studied case (Yin, 2011, p 48) . The second part will be analytical. The analysis separates the presented evidence and from the interpretation. However,

the analysis will be based on the theoretical framework of the research, and the separation is inspired by the thought that the insights are significant and could be “more important than knowing the strength of the evidence of such insight (Yin, 2011, p 15). The case is designed to study a single case (the land acquisition in El-Gerief East), although broad political economy and comparative approaches will be used to examine similarities and differences to other cases. In terms of data sources, the case uses multiple sources: the in-depth-interviews, El-Gerief East sit-in archive, the media archive in the topic, and relevant literature. This is intended to overcome the weak validity of one source. In some of the issues on which the key informants disagreed, I integrated triangulation to help minimize the biased data. With regard to generalization from the case study it will only take place on an analytical basis (Yin, 2011, p 6-13-177).

2.5.1 Study Area

El-Gerief East is considered to be one of the oldest and most historical neighbourhoods in Greater Khartoum. Ancient archaeological sites found in the area trace its history back to the Meroitic civilization c. 800 BCE – c. 350 CE. (Khier, 2014, p 7). Furthermore, El-Gerief East also appeared to have played a major political role during the last two Christian kingdoms of Aldoia and Makudia. There are connections to Sufi Islam and the development of a special spiritual and social connection to Umdawanbān as a Sufi Islamic centre in the area (Khier, 2014, p 6-8).

El-Gerief East is located on the right bank of the Blue Nile and takes the geographical form of a vertical line alongside the river. It is approximately 4 kilometres from Khartoum North. The total area is approximately 32 square kilometres. El-Gerief East lies between 15-30 degrees latitude and 26-32 degrees longitude. Administratively, it is part of the *Sharq al-Nīl* administrative unit in the *Sharq al-Nīl* locality. The total population of the locality is estimated to be about 90,000 inhabitants according to the 2008 national census. El-Gerief East is comprised of several sub-neighbourhoods² (Khier, 2014, p 4).

² Ḥay Al-Zein El-shabik, renamed El-Gadissia, Ḥay dabaat Al-Naseem, currently (Hab Al-Naseem), Ḥay Haj Al-daw wa El-dalil (El-Heshaan), Ḥay El-Manasheer (El-Kheryaab). In addition to Faraig Haj Barakat, Faraig Al-Zareeba, Ḥay Sarhan is also known as Jaref Gamar and Kajkouj, one of the oldest neighbourhoods and divided into the sub-divisions of El-Grageeg, Faraig El-Shafie, Al-Hadara, Al-Natara and Al-Kwadeeb (Khier, 2014, p 4)

Hydrologically, the soil surface of the area is covered by black mud and a range of lowland plains from the east to the west towards the Blue Nile. It is crossed by several *khors* (small water sources) running in the same direction in the rainy seasons and flowing into the Blue Nile. The geological features of the area are characterized by three types of geological formations: basement complex, Nubian sandstone formation, and a superficial deposit. The latter was formed due to accumulation during the annual floods of the Blue Nile.

The climate of El-Gerief East is part of the climate of Greater Khartoum and comprises four seasons. The winter season from the middle of November to March, is the coldest period (cold dry). The summer season starts at the end of March, and the end of May is the hottest period. The autumn is the rainy season from July to September, with most rain falling in August. The period between September and the beginning of the winter is a short transitional season (Eltayeb, 2003, P 4). The economy of the area is connected to the clay brick-making profession as it is practiced in *al- Kamāyin*. However, it is shaping the other economic activities (Khier, 2014, p 7).

2.6 Ethical Considerations

Due to the fact that research in general and ethnographic research in particular dives into human social life, there is a significant responsibility to protect people's privacy (Berg & Lune, 2012, p 62). To ensure the practice of academic ethics in the field, I have prepared a form for informed consent. Informed consent means documenting and highlighting to the participants in the research process that their participation is free, and is not the result of any form of temptation, influences and manipulation (Berg & Lune, 2012, p 90). A form of informed consent was translated into Arabic and used before the interviews. Another issue that I consider a challenge to the ethics of the study is the nature of the studied case. The narrative of the land acquisition in El-Gerief East contains sensitive information related to loss of livelihoods, injured people and accusations against public figures. For the previous reasons, I will adopt a safeguarding strategy summarized by anonymity and confidentiality. Anonymity is perceived practically as “non-existent”, however a high level of confidentiality will be utilized throughout the study (Berg & Lune, 2012, p 94). The list of locations is evaluated to stay as it is, while the names will be changed for the sake of protection.

It worth mentioning that academic ethics principles will be followed regarding taking care of the archive of El-Gerief East Sit-in Committee with which I was provided in the field. In addition to the recorded interviews, the tradition of researcher “honesty” will be followed in describing what informants have said.

2.7 Limitation of the study

The field work took place in a period of 8 weeks (July-August 2018) in Greater Khartoum (El-Gerief East), a period shaped by its economic hardship and political tension. Furthermore, urban land issues in Greater Khartoum were subject to corruption investigations by the tabloid media, and this was followed by media and press surveillance. The case of El-Gerief East is known by its high profile and the counter resistance was perceived as being political. Researching it implied a certain level of risk-taking, which I understood. These factors have influenced the study to the extent that the in-depth key informants’ interviews are the core of it. The planned focus group discussion was suspended due to both security and logistical difficulties.

The interview with the civil society organization was suspended due to the civil society crack down, where the main advocacy organizations were closed down by the government. The interviews with the government officials were surrounded by complex procedures that make them obstacles for research in general. When the government interviews took place, the time allocated was short in addition to lack of cooperation.

Chapter 3: The Urbanization Dynamics and Land Governance in Greater Khartoum

In this chapter I will discuss three parts. In the first part I will discuss the urbanization dynamics around the three cities that form Greater Khartoum. The discussion, however, will be more factual than analytical. The discussion will involve the population growth, major elements of urban economy, governance, and the main features of urban planning. In the second part I will present the major norms that govern land in Sudan and thus Greater Khartoum. In the last part I will consider the possible connections/similarities and differences between urban and rural land acquisition.

3.1 Background to Urbanization in Sudan

Urbanization is a process that entails shifts from a simple to a more modern and complex lifestyle. Such shifts assume urban structure is transformed by the elements of urban growth, whether it is in the population or the economic. Interestingly, during the 1950s era, Sudan had special criteria for its urban centres: the annotation included all the towns that had 5,000 inhabitants and more. However, changes in urbanization criteria occurred in 1983, and urban centres are now defined as such when they reach 20,000 inhabitants or more (Habitat, 2014, p 8).

The rural urban migration phenomenon in developing countries is attributed to the shortcomings of these countries in sparking the agricultural sector for genuine production, in addition to the protectionist policies these countries adopt that lead to the direct shrinkage of their offshore market. The process of rural urban migration is part of larger socio-economic changes. In contrast, the earlier European experience of urban rural migration is different, because it was accompanied by the required development and industries (Farouk, 1991, p 96). Just as the colonial period has shaped many aspects of the politics, state formation, and social stratification, it has shaped the political economy of urbanization as well.

The Sudanese urbanization pattern has been significantly affected by the British administration's "mode of production", in terms of how the agricultural economy attracts labourers to work for low wages in various agricultural schemes. Nonetheless, there were many opportunities for labour migrants during the flourishing time of the agriculture-based economy.

The large schemes like Gezira, Toker, Gash delta and Gedarif³ attracted labour migrants as they could earn higher wages than in Khartoum. The consequence was a labour shortage in Khartoum during the agricultural seasons. Furthermore, Sudan has witnessed seasonal labour migration in large waves, like the one towards the Gezira scheme during the cotton-picking season: in the season of 1984/1985, migrant workers comprised up to 45 percent of the entire workforce (Farouk, 1991, p 172-268).

One could draw two major points from these facts; the first being that of all the drivers of rural migration, the economic factor is vital; the second is the pattern of agricultural economy provided more labour choices and multi-urban centres. The question is, what are the circumstances that led to the changes of multi-urban centres into one major urban centre? This is a large question to be answered here, and I will attempt to shed light on the political, economic and environmental reasons that contributed throughout the discussion in this chapter.

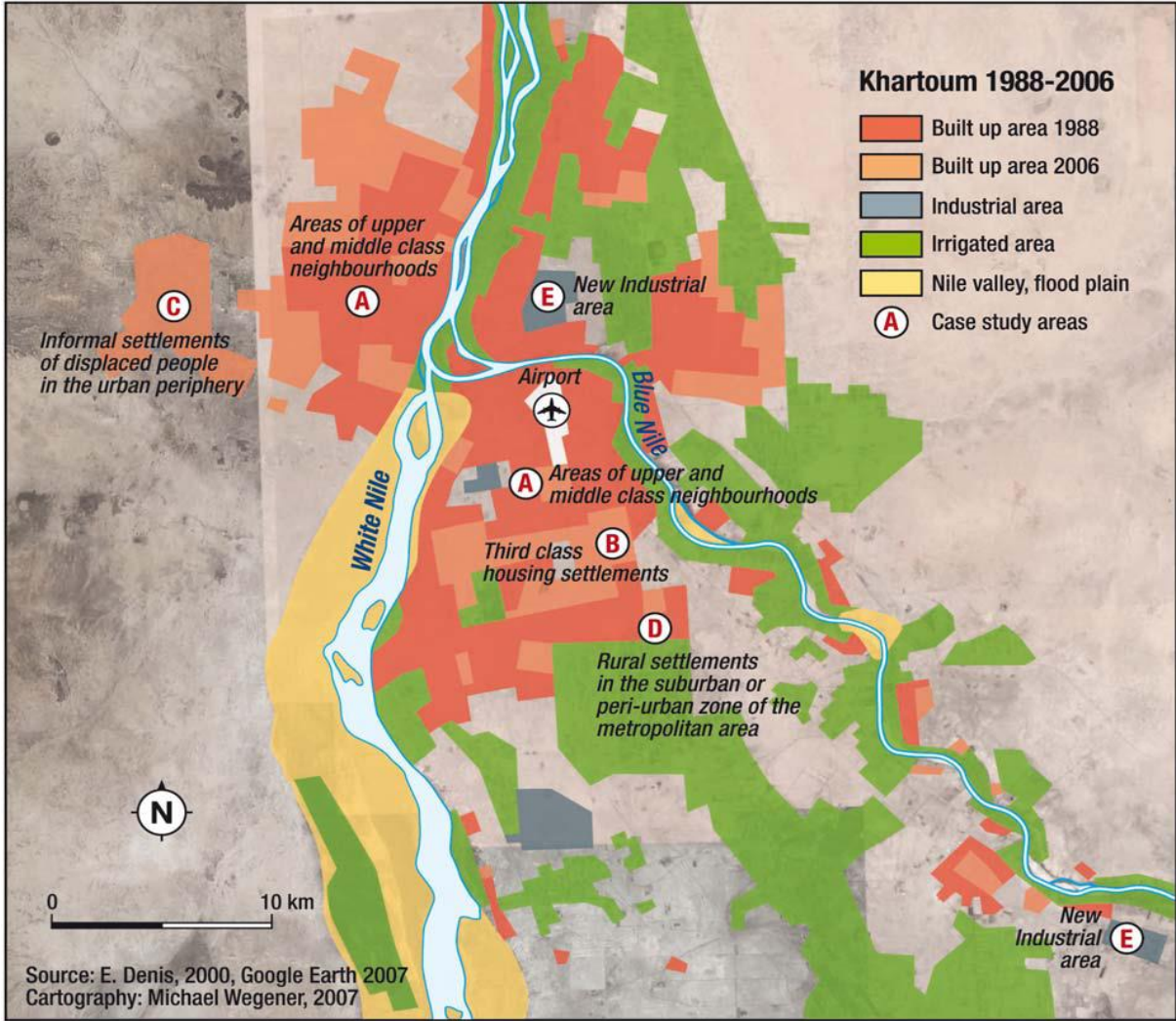
3.2 Brief History of the Making of Khartoum

The notes and impressions of travellers provide important testimonies about cities, countries and locations. Apart from the fantastic meeting of the Blue and the White Nile at al- Mogran, Khartoum did not appear a great deal in the notes and impressions of travellers before the 19th century (Babiker, 2003, p 9). The importance of Khartoum began mainly with the Turkish invasion of Sudan in 1820, when Mohammed Ali Pasha in Egypt decided to invade Sudan on behalf of the Successor (*Khalifa* / خَلِيفَة), the ruler of Astana. When the invasion was completed, the next step was to find a capital, and serious consideration was given to the cities of Sennar (the old capital), and Wad Medani. However, their tropical location, and association with diseases like malaria, made Khartoum the first choice as a new capital of the Turkish Sudan (Babiker, 2003, p 10). In less than five years, Khartoum experienced a renaissance as both an administrative and cultural centre. The city attracted unique figures, travellers, scientists, scholars, traders, fortune seekers, and adventurers (Babiker, 2003, p 11). When the Mahdist Revolution reclaimed the country in 1885, Omdurman replaced Khartoum as the administrative and national capital. Omdurman retained this status for thirteen years, until Lord Kitchener lead the Anglo-Egyptian army and invaded Sudan in 1898. Khartoum was re-established as the capital during this new colonial era which lasted until January 1st, 1956. The post-colonial state

³ Names of areas in the central and Eastern part on Sudan

kept Khartoum as the capital. The city of Khartoum has retained its colonial architecture, and functions as a trade centre and a centre for the Government ministries, while Khartoum north hosts the industrial areas. Omdurman is the most populated city of the three cities that comprise Greater Khartoum, and it also has great symbolic importance for the Sudanese nation.

Figure (3) Map of Greater Khartoum, Sudan



(Source: Michael Wegener, 2008)

3.3 Demographic Trends in Greater Khartoum

The average population growth rate of Sudan is 2.8 % per annum, but urban growth is double this rate. At the time of independence in 1955/56 the urban population was less than one million (854,000 residents) and rose to 9,206,000 in 2008. (See Table 1). The proportion of the

population increasing at 2.8 % per annum in the country is considered high and indicates the high probability of the population doubling in less than 20 years, particularly when combined with significant urbanization (Habitat, 2014, p 15). However, there is considerable scepticism among Sudanese studies scholars and international reports (Pantuliano et al., 2011) (World Bank 2011) regarding the population figures. This is particularly the case regarding Greater Khartoum, and many have listed both the formal figure as 5.2 million and the informal figure as 6 – 7 million residents based on the last census. Applying the assumption of 2.8 % per annum with urban growth of 04%, the Greater Khartoum population in 2017/ 2018 would be roughly 8 million.

Table 1: Total and urban population in Sudan in the five population censuses:

	1955/1956	1973	1983	1993	2008
Total population (000s)	10300	14,800	21,590	24,900	30,894
Urban population (000s)	854	2,606	4,154	6,275	9,206
% Urban	8.8	18.5	20.5	25.2	29.8

Source: (Habitat, 2014)

The 2008 population census shows a relative gender balance: 51% are male, and 49% are female. Some statistics regarding human development in Sudan favour women, for example, life expectancy for females is 55.5 years, while for males it is 52.5 years. Statistics related to labour force participation and child education favour men. Labour force participation for women is 30.8 %, and 76 % for men. This imbalance is also reflected in the percentage of urban school-age children registered in schools for the period 2006-2012: girls 55.3 % and boys 61.7% (Habitat, 2014, p 51-52).

Age is an important distinguishing characteristic of the population of Sudan. The 2008 population census shows that more than 70% of the population are under 35 years of age, making Sudan a young nation. Furthermore, the population of Greater Khartoum has a very young population, with more than a third of the population being under the age of 15 (see Table 2.2).

Table 2: Population of Greater Khartoum based on age and gender-2008 census

Total Population	Age 0-15 years		Age above 16 years			
	Male	Female	Male	Female		
5274321	2800024	2474297	980282	930037	1819742	1544260

Source: Sudan population census, 2008

The statistics of the major cities' populations in Sudan shows that the highest figures for population growth are found in Khartoum, Omdurman, and Khartoum North (see Table 3). In fact, Greater Khartoum is becoming the largest urban centre, and the three cities that comprise Greater Khartoum: Khartoum, Omdurman and Khartoum North far exceed the population of the next largest city which is Nyala.

Table 3: Selected data of the largest city Population and Population Growth Rates:

City	Population from Census				Intercensal Growth Rates		
	1973	1983	1993	2008	1973-1983	1983-1993	1993-2008
Omdurman	299,399	526,192	1,271,403	1,849,659	5.6%	8.8%	3.7%
Khartoum	333,906	473,597	947,483	1,410,858	3.5%	6.9%	4.0%
Khartoum North	150,989	340,857	700,887	1,012,211	8.1%	7.2%	3.7%
Nyala	59,583	111,693	227,183	492,984	6.3%	7.1%	7.7%
Port Sudan	132,632	206,038	308,195	394,561	4.4%	4.0%	2.5%
El Obeid	90,073	137,582	229,425	345,126	4.2%	5.1%	4.1%
Kessala	99,652	141,429	234,622	298,529	3.5%	5.1%	2.4%

Medani	106,715	145,015	211,362	289,482	3.1%	3.8%	3.1%
Gedaref	66,465	116,876	191,164	269,395	5.6%	4.9%	3.4%

Source: (World Bank 2011)

The three cities have a combined population of 5.2 million while Nyala has 394,561 based on 2008 census figures. Interestingly, cities which are urban centres and linked to the large agricultural schemes like Medani (Gezira scheme) have the same rate of population growth in the period 1973-1993 (3.1%), as in 1993-2008 (3.1%). Gedaref, which is linked to mechanised farming, had a population growth of 5.6% in 1973-1993 and declined to 3.4% in 1993-2008. Migration to the urban centres of the three cities, Nyala, and El Obied, has increased clearly because of the centre of relief operations (Salih, 1999, p 65). The three cities of Greater Khartoum have witnessed extensive growth between 1973-1983; Omdurman and Khartoum North both doubled in population. Politically this period witnessed migration from the western regions of Kordofan and Darfur due to the 1983/85 famine.

3.4 Khartoum's Urban Economy

A well know economic crisis in Sudan goes back to the 1970s, however the crisis was declared both publicly and internationally by asking for help from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1978. Subsequent to the IMF prescription, Sudan was accused of not following the right structural adjustment program. The reason is that both the government of Nimeri (1969-1985) and Al-Sadig El-Mahadi (1986-1989) were reluctant to sacrifice the privileges of the senior elite. This is claimed to have led to the formation of patronage and corruption patterns (Post, 1996, p 130). In contrast to (Post, 1996) who argued that the current Sudanese government was more direct and audacious in applying austerities and neoliberal policies, I argue that the new version of Sudanese capitalism represented by privatization in the mid-1990s is the most structural patronage and corruption, and led to the dissolution of the country into the political party of National Congress Party (NCP). A report advises that nearly 164 state companies including the major companies in telecommunication, transport and services have been sold by top affiliates of the National Congress Party (NCP). The brothers of the president

are also reported to have large shares in twenty of the largest petroleum and telecommunication companies (Martini & no/publications/corruption-and-anti-corruption-in-sudan, 2012, p 4).

The urban economy of Khartoum comprises several components: approximately two thirds of the population works in the civil service, and a large proportion of the remainder are engaged in agricultural activities, including cultivation, and the raising of livestock and poultry (Eltayeb, 2003, p 5). The greatest impacts on the urban economy of Khartoum are the result of the transformation and shifts in the national economy, after the discovery of oil in 1991 and the commencement of oil exports in 1999.⁴ As Sudan was subject to a US embargo and sanctions, the country developed alternative partnerships with China, Malaysia and India. However, the shift from agriculture to an oil-oriented economy has changed the face of the economy and business in Greater Khartoum, where manifestations of economic growth, oil companies and related businesses, and gentrification are emerging. The shape of Khartoum has changed, and in some quarters, it is perceived as being a new Dubai⁵ (Choplin & Franck, 2010). These companies have absorbed few of the Sudanese skilled technical workers, engineers and administrator, and low-skilled Sudanese workers face competition as most of the low-skill jobs were taken by Chinese labourers. The high-level vacancies are mostly controlled by individuals who are politically affiliated to the National Congress party (NCP). (Eltayeb, 2003, p 5-6) (Pantuliano et al., 2011, p 15). Such growth allowed Greater Khartoum, by 1990, to have the lion's share in many sectors in the national income, for instance: 73 percent of the industrial sector; 75 percent of the industrial labour; 67 percent of the electricity sector; 85 percent of commercial and business, and 80 percent of banking services (including 80 percent of industrial bank loans, 71 percent of real estate loans; and 65 percent of the currency exchange). Also, Khartoum contributes 70 percent of tax payers, 80 percent of collected taxes, 70 percent of the hospital sector, 65 percent of the medical sector, and 80 percent of the nurses (Eltayeb, 2003, p 5-6).

⁴ Even though economic growth cannot evaluate the holistic economic performance, yet it gives important indicators about the certain economy performance. Sudan economic growth came from (-5,47) in 1990 to make (3.204) in 1999, the year oil started to be exported in Sudan. However, some growth fluctuations occurred, but in a positive pattern, until Sudan reached its third highest level of growth in its history (11.522) in 2007. After that it declined again to (-1.968) the year of Sudan secession (World Bank, 2018).

⁵ See (Choplin A. and Franck A.) "Seeing Dubai in Khartoum and Nouakchott: 'gulfication' on the margins of the Arab World

Along with the concentration of wealth and services in Greater Khartoum, there also lie the slums and the poor. Urban poverty has always been a concern, and one viewed from different perspectives. One perspective classifies urban poverty into three categories: the chronic poor (consisting of those who lack education and work skills); displaced persons (due civil war and natural disasters); and the new poor victims of neo-liberal policies and the structural adjustment program which are considered to be up to 20 percent from those who were from the middle class (Ahmad & El-Batthani, 1995, p 206). Overall, urban poverty is estimated to comprise up to 60% of the total population (Pantuliano et al., 2011, p 11)

Besides the formal sector, the informal sector has a vital role in the Greater Khartoum urban economy, and according to (Eltayeb, 2003) two-thirds of employees are attracted to the informal sector because of the inadequacy of official pay, as well as the informal sector not requiring high cost or competency (Eltayeb, 2003, p 5-6) . The informal sector, and to some degree the private sector, have been arenas of income and subsistence for thousands of the very qualified and professional Sudanese from various civil service backgrounds who lost their jobs due to the so-called “public good” (*al-Ṣāliḥ al-āṁ*) policies⁶ of the early 1990s (Baldo, 2016, p 10-15). Such policies were devastatingly abusive to the labour rights of thousands of Sudanese as well as being purely political and devised to enable the affiliated members of the National Islamic Front (NIF)/National Congress Party (NCP) to gain control of the state.

On the other hand, the gap between the nominal income and real income in Sudan is substantial, and necessary to understand the urban poverty; for example the minimum pay of the civil service in 1995 only represents 52 percent of its real value (Eltayeb, 2003, p 6). A study was carried out the same period of the mid-1990s showing that there is a clear “underpayment of government employees” and observing that this lead to one of three scenarios: either migration to the Gulf States or a move to the private sector; engaging in corruption and embezzlement of public funds; engaging in the sale of state land (Post, 1996, P 132). The challenge is greater for the poor and the extremely poor to fill the gap with real income. This gap in income is either realized by remittances, or income from the private sector or informal sector. While the private market is controlled and to a larger extent (politicized), remittances and the informal sector allow more space to fill the gap of real income. Nonetheless, the informal sector absorbs a

⁶ “Public goods” or *al-Ṣāliḥ al-āṁ* in Arabic is a policy that took place in the period of (1989-1992) when a mass dismissal included a number of 76,640 from the public sector employees just because there were accused of being anti or not belong to the National Islamic Front. For many, this was beginning of the collapse of Sudan civil service. Other see it as civil apartheid (Baldo, 2016, p 6).

variety of skills and it represents a significant source of subsistence for the lower and middle classes in Greater Khartoum. Furthermore, it brings out both the strengths and the innovative sides of the weak groups in the society. Poverty has led weaker groups to develop local solidarity strategies, such as the creation of a currency pool (*Takaful Sandog*)⁷. The sale of local alcohol (*araq*) is also a source of income for women and families in Khartoum's semi-displaced areas and other neighbourhoods, where it is widespread despite the Islamization project in Sudan, the police, and legal consequences (Pantuliano et al., 2011, p 10).

3.5 Governance, Urban Planning and Land Governance

Governance

In its 60 years of independence, Sudan has suffered greatly from the vicious circle of democracy/military dictatorship. Dictatorship regimes have held power in Sudan for almost 51 years out of 60. The long period of dictatorship has had tremendous negative effects on governance, nation building and sustainable peace. The Sudanese people however, expressed their wishes for freedom and prosperity by bringing down two dictatorships, in October 1964 and April 1985, and those two political revolutions remain a genuine testimony to both the mobilization and political consciousness of the Sudanese people. The current regime, and the longest one, arose as a result of the military coup d'état on 30 June 1989 which was planned and supported by the National Islamic Front (NIF) in the name of (National Salvation Revolution). Ten years later, the ruling Islamist elites split into two in 1999 due to a power conflict. Despite this, the Sudanese Islamists showed massive political aggression, political intolerance, and a totalitarian culture that is still affecting the governance pattern today. The major political events that have occurred in the 30 years of the regime can be summarized as follows: the discovery of oil in 1991; the signature of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005; the breakup of the Darfur crisis in 2003; the issuing of an arrest warrant for the Sudanese President by the International Criminal Court (ICC) in March 2009; and the secession of South Sudan in 2011.

⁷ Is a local saving system, consisting of several members, sharing the same amount of money for a fixed period. One person collects and distributes the money and is at the centre of this collaborative saving system which is based on trust. The entire amount is distributed to one of the members, for one month, and then distributed to another member the following month. Eventually, all members have had access to the total pool of funds, and the process can either cease, or begin again (with the same amount, or a different sum). Such saving strategies assist in the establishment of small businesses or may be used to pay school fees etc (Pantuliano et al., 2011, p 10)

The macro level of political governance incorporates factors such as the “shrinking environmental space”⁸ and civil war which have led to the emergence of the “urban refugees” phenomenon in Greater Khartoum and the larger urban centres. By 1994/95 almost 4.5 million were reported to have settled in squatter settlements in Khartoum. Nonetheless, much of the observed migration to urban centres took place because of the relief operation (Salih, 1999, p 61-65). The new shape of Greater Khartoum, has however brought up an incompatible debate about national identity. Some of the conservative journalist and politicians who adopt “Arabism” ideology label it “the black belt around Khartoum” referring to the population from southern and western Sudan. This type of influx was not the first; the 1983/85 drought led to a famous migration from western Sudan to Greater Khartoum. This influx however was accompanied by another exclusion policy, chiefly the arrest, detention and the deportation of the “urban poor” and those called “*Shamaasa*” the vagabonds. The campaign against the “*Shamaasa*” was justified as a campaign for the sake of security and national stability. Astonishingly, this led to the uprising initiative that brought down President Jaafar Nimeiry and brought the Parliamentary democracy back (Salih, 1999, p 65).

With respect to the administrative governance system, two years after the coup, in 1991, a new constitutional decree declared the inception of the “Federal System of Government”, and Sudan was immediately divided into 9 states, and 219 local councils. This remained in place until 1994, when a new system divided the country into 26 states, 108 provinces, and 531 localities. Another development in the governance system occurred when an amendment to the Local Government Act took place in 2003, and divided the Government into three levels: national, state, and local (Habitat, 2014, p 11). As a demonstration of the evolving governance system of Greater Khartoum, the Governor (*wāly*) is at the top of the governance system. However, the state also has a Legislative Assembly that is elected. The second level in the governance pyramid is the locality. The commissioner or the (*Muṭamad*) is appointed by the Governor. The locality also has an elected legislative council consists of 40 members. In theory, localities are effective and fully delegated bodies, but the practice shows such delegation is weakened by the control of the resources of the state. Greater Khartoum consists of seven localities: Khartoum and Jebel Awlia in Khartoum City; *Sharq al-Nīl* and Bahri in Khartoum North; and Omdurman,

⁸ Mohamed Salih delivers an analysis of all the famine and food shortages that took place in Sudan, the famous one in 1889-90 during the Mahadia, the 1967/68 and the 1983/85 events are all are man-made (political driven) (Salih, 1999, p 56-59)

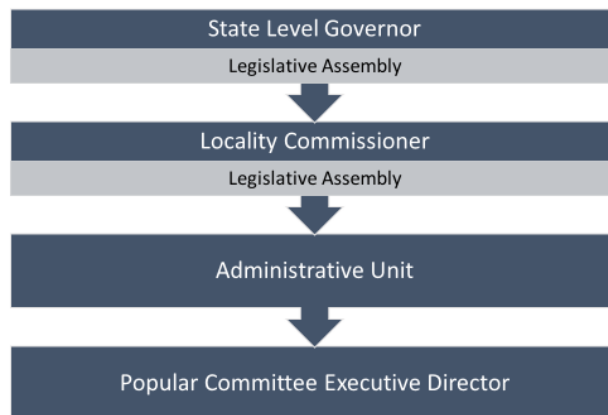
Umbadda and Karari in Omdurman. The third level is the Administrative Unit (AU), which is characterized by its direct connection with the people, as the AU has considerable interaction with people regarding everyday issues. At the bottom of the governance system is the popular committee, which despite its volunteer nature, still represents an important aspect of power. The popular committee is responsible for a wide range of tasks including community mobilization, surveillance, and issuing residency certificates (Pantuliano et al., 2011, p 11).

The governance system performance as described in Sudan lacks stability and it was an arena for rapid changes due to the one party political system and the upper political elite power struggle. Moreover, the Sudanese bureaucratic traditions are seen as complex and non-effective (Post, 1996, p 132). The essence behind the decentralization was perhaps to widen the community's participation, but the practice showed community participation is confined to certain occasions like mobilization to attend political processions, participation in the lower levels of administrative units and popular committees, rather than as performers. Furthermore, participation in the local or state legislative councils is more open to those persons affiliated and semi-affiliated with the ruling National Congress Party (NCP). Forms of real political participation from the opposition parties are threatened by security control. This is also supported by another tricky political fact that the many shadow committees/governments from the local, state and federal levels, and formed from the ruling party, represent very powerful elements of governance (Baldo, 2016, p 5). This is also reflected in the national economy in the form of two budgets (the national budget and the party budget (NCP)), and the spreading of terms like "*tamkeen*" which means "consolidation" or "empowerment"⁹ and "*tagneeb*"¹⁰ Such a practice is excavating corruption deeply into Sudanese political and societal life (Baldo: 2016: p:07-09). In addition to this, there are elements of governance that are shaped by security and a deep-state pattern. Thus, the governance pattern in Sudan, and hence Greater Khartoum, is characterized by interruption of political in-stability, its top down measures, and lack of real participation.

⁹ «*Tamkeen*» in Arabic means empowerment or consolidating, mainly it was a process of strengthening the political, economic and security capacities of the affiliated members and loyalist to the National Congress Party (NCP) (Baldo, 2016, p 7-9)

¹⁰ "*Tagneeb*": In Sudan, especially under the current regime, there is a special capacity of giving things another name. The example of *tagneeb* or "set-aside" or "expatriation" of public revenues. Nonetheless, reports from the Auditor General in Sudan show some Government institutions have accounts which are out of the control of the Ministry of Finance and Auditor General, and these accounts pay official bonuses. None of the pounds were claimed back, and none of the Ministries went for accountability (Baldo, 2016, p 7-9)

Figure 4 Formal Local Government Structure in Khartoum State



Source: Adapted from Pantuliano et.al. 2011

Urban planning, overview of the master- structural plans of Greater Khartoum

Urban planning and the organization of Greater Khartoum has taken place since the British colonial era. Nevertheless, the neighbourhood organization of Khartoum city was organized in a hierarchal pattern: English, Egyptians, and Sudanese natives, with housing for the latter being subject to strict controls. Prior to the Land Regulation Act of 1925, a comprehensive land survey was undertaken and by 1925 disputed land claims were resolved and the remaining land registered in the name of the state (Habitat, 2009, p 14). The effective and uncompromising nature of the British land legislation caught the attention of Sudanese scholar, Bushra E. Babiker, who did not hesitate to hide his admiration, writing:

“The 1925 Land Regulation Act allowed strict but effective control over the acquisition of land, thereby preventing land speculation. Restrictions on land-use conversion from agricultural to residential or commercial uses effectively protected land under cultivation around the city and discouraged excessive densities and developments on the riverbanks. Urban sprawl was also effectively controlled by the strict confinement of urban development within the boundaries of the City Council. These boundaries were virtually permanently un-changeable” (Babiker, 2003, p 17)

Khartoum has a long history with master plans, the first one being the McLean master plan of 1908. The plan was drawn up by Dr. McLean, a lecturer at the Memorial College of Gordon in Khartoum. As this plan was designed for the city of Khartoum, Omdurman and Khartoum North

were not included. The master plan was European-oriented, in the sense that it aimed to provide a clean and modernized atmosphere for the European inhabitant of Khartoum at that time. The plan targeted around 50.000 inhabitants, and it adopted a hierarchal housing system of four classes. Despite being conceived by a European, the plan is believed to be the first example of Sudanese culture being incorporated into modern planning, as it introduced new patterns of architecture like “verandas and the open traditional house of mud” (Hafazalla, 2006, p 112).

In 1959, the first post-colonial Government invited the Greek expert Constantinos Doxiadis to design the second master plan of Khartoum. After observing the expansion of Khartoum, Doxiadis advised that Khartoum's expansion towards the south should be encouraged, while slowing the growth of the other two cities Omdurman and Khartoum North. The master plan of Doxiadis challenged the rural urban migration towards the capital. It is also credited with introducing the pattern of broad architecture and modern concrete which is used in some wealthy neighbourhoods such as Amaraat in Khartoum.

The third plan was the MEFIT plan. This was designed by MEFIT, an Italian architectural and engineering consultancy firm, which was invited to design the Khartoum master plan in 1974. Then MEFIT plan primarily contained three areas of focus: regional development, urban development and beautification. Although the plan was not approved, some agricultural elements were adopted (Hafazalla, 2006, p 113). In 1990 a new master plan came out; a collaborative design of Doxiadis and the national expert A.M. Mustafa. Despite the plan dealing with the massive sprawl of Greater Khartoum, effective tools to manage the problem were not proposed. This master plan was succeeded by a new plan for the period (2000-2007), one which also had to face the ongoing challenge of the urban sprawl of Greater Khartoum. Consequently, the master plan proposed a highway network as a solution to the urban expansion phenomenon (Habitat, 2009, p 17). During these years squatter areas around Greater Khartoum were subject to demolition. This demolition, and the subsequent deportation of victims of war and drought-affected people to their home regions, without a clear plan, was considered to be a rights violation (Salih, 1999, p 66) .

By the mid-2000s, when the economic growth of Sudan was at its peak because of the oil boom, the government concluded that Greater Khartoum needed a more comprehensive and up-to-date master plan. Hence, the Khartoum Structural Plan (KSP) was born as a collaborative project between The Government of Sudan, the Sudanese Research Institutes, and the international consultancy firm, MEFIT. The KSP aimed to mix various social and ethnic groups as well as

to connect the rural surroundings of Greater Khartoum with the road network, adequate services, and security. The KSP progressed through the various legislative levels: the state, federal and the national parliament, being approved at each stage and eventually becoming law. The expansion of the new roads and bridges was expected to have a direct effect on the inhabitants of some areas like El-Geraif East and al-Halfaya in Khartoum North, Al- Salha and al-Hattana in Omdurman. The Ministry of Urban Planning was relying on sensitive management, conflict resolution mechanisms, and compensation to address these impacts (Pantuliano et al., 2011, p 7-8). Along with the construction of roads and new bridges, the KSP contained plans for a range of additional ambitious construction projects. These included: new industrial areas; urban centres; special areas for the military and railways; six Nile facades along the three cities; nine cities to accommodate population growth; surface and health drainage projects; transportation projects; and circular roads (interview with a government official). The implementation of some of the projects has affected some communities directly. Disagreement regarding land acquisition (both the concept and compensation measures) took place, and displacement occurred. Moreover, various forms of community organization emerged around Greater Khartoum.

Urban planning in Sudan can be critically viewed as weak and vulnerable. It has never been a political priority, which explains why Sudan has been shaped by this traditional pattern of planning (Post, 1996, p 129). The political apparatus seems to be a major obstacle for planning. Planning is merely “subservient” especially in the context of political “clientelism” in Sudan: National Congress Party (NCP) officials are seen as working at “filling the empty treasury through the uncoordinated sale of plots and helping supporters of the government to obtain land which they need for private development” (Post, 1996, p 132).

The overview of the master and structural plans of Greater Khartoum, shows how Greater Khartoum is absolutely branded by its “planning fatigue”. Apart from the first master plan which was designed and implemented in the colonial era, the three subsequent master plans and the structural plan during the post-independence era (see Table 4) faced the same challenges in terms of implementation; a “lack of political will and financial difficulties” (Hamid & Bahreldin, 2014). There were also challenges related to coordination and monitoring between the different administrative levels (state/localities), along with the political conflict of interest (Pantuliano et al., 2011, p 7-8). Recently, corruption related to urban planning has also been perceived as a concern, and a reason behind the slow construction of new residential areas: the land is allocated to those who do not need it and ends up serving speculation purposes (Post, 1996).

Table (4) Comparisons of the Different Master and Structural Plans of Khartoum:

	Mclean	Doxiadis 1	MEFIT	Doxiadis and AM Mustafa	Khartoum Structural Plan KPP5
Duration	1908/1910 - ?	1960 - 80	1979-75 – 1990	1990 – 2000	2008 – 2033
Scale	Urban, applied to Khartoum only	Urban	Regional and Urban	Urban	Regional and Urban
Main positive features	Well-designed European city Green boulevards. Parks	Green belt - Uni- directional expansion	Two new green belts beautification schemes Vertical expansion Satellite towns Relocation of airport + U of K	Focus on structural elements Advocated green belts Solid waste management.	Comprehensive Preserves agri. land More parks Preserves natural assets
Main negatives features	Polarized development	Sprawl - Loss of agri. land	Loss of agri land	Sprawl - Loss of agri. land	Unrealistic targets - Uncertainties
Implementation	Within Kh. only	Limited	None (Plan not formally approved)	Limited	Unrealistic targets - Uncertainties

Level of effect on land grabbing	No effect	Weak effect	Week effect	Average effect	Strong effect
Public participation	None Elitist	None - Elitist	None - Elitist	None - Elitist	Limited (Information-giving) Elitist

Source: Adapted from (Hamid & Bahreldin, 2014)

Land Governance in Greater Khartoum

The modern legalized land ordinances and norms started with the British administration in Sudan (1898-1956). Land organization was a high priority for the administration, and the outcome was plenty of ordinances, along with the Gezira scheme and other regional agricultural projects which were developed after independence. The thinking behind the tenure legislation had two aspects: the first being in favour of “native economic growth”, and the second advocating the stimulation of foreign capital (Serels, 2007, p 62). Two of the first ordinances were “The Khartoum, Berber and Dongola Town Land Ordinance” and the “Title to Land Ordinance”. The latter affirmed the private ownership of land that had been cultivated during the previous five years. The Act was only relevant for “riverain central Sudan” (Shazali, 1999, p 3-4). The period from 1899-1930 was a busy period of colonial “land reform” as it witnessed the promulgation of land legislation, encompassing fifteen Land Ordinances (Komey, 2010b, p 55).

Two of the main ordinances are the Land Settlement and Registration Ordinance 1925 (LSRO), and the Land Acquisition Ordinance of 1930 (LAO). The 1925 Land Settlement and Registration Ordinance consolidated all the former ordinances. The ordinance greatly enhanced the registration endeavour, while still retaining the power to retract “customary usufruct rights (Komey, 2010b, p 62). The 1925 ordinance primarily deals with agricultural land in an urban context, which at that time meant the central and riverain Sudan. The ordinance also had its effects on the local population in terms of ownership whether it was private or common (De Wit, 2001, p 7). The two ordinances are still in place, and the 1925 Act is mainly used for registration and for the organization of agricultural land, while the 1930 Act is used for land acquisition/grabbing in the name of “the public good”.

The post-colonial state promulgated The Act of Unregistered Land-1970. A key statement contained within the 1970 Act stated that “All land of any kind, whether waste, forest, occupied or unoccupied, which was not registered before the commencement of the Act, would on such commencement, be the property of the Government and be deemed to have been registered as such” (Babiker, 2018, p 132). The application of the Act had significant implications in customary land tenure. As the statistics indicate, in an area of 596.6 million *fadān*¹¹, only 6 million *fadān* were privately owned (Awad, 1971, p 218). The application of the Act left the

¹¹ Is a unit of area for land used in Sudan and Egypt. One *fadān* is approximately equal to an acre (0.42 hectare).

government as the biggest land owner. The implications of the Act for mechanized farming were significant as it confiscated agricultural land, in various areas of rural Sudan, that had been used and cultivated but which was not registered. The Government of Sudan thus claimed the land as government property. This policy, however has been perceived as institutionalized land grabbing and neglect of communal land ownership (Komey, 2010b) (Ayoub, 2006) (Babiker, 2018).

The Civil Transaction Act (CTA) of 1984¹² followed the Act of Unregistered Land 1970). The CTA is widely perceived as a controversial law. Despite this, Gordon describes it as “the most comprehensive piece of legislation since the 1971 Civil Code” (Gordon, 1986, p 143). The Unregistered Land Act of 1970 legislated that all unregistered land, occupied or unoccupied, before 1970, counted as government property. The Civil Transactions Act of 1984 reaffirmed the 1970 law and emphasized usufruct rights. The CTA stated that “land registered on or after 6 April 1970, as freehold in the name of an owner shall be deemed merely the ownership of the "usufruct"¹³ thereof”. With this articulation of the 1970 legislation, the Law of Unregistered Land 1970 is reaffirmed in the Civil Transaction Act of 1984, which makes the Civil Transaction Act merely a further reform of the former (Gordon, 1986, p 143).

The impact of both the 1970 and 1984 Acts on customary land rights were harmful to local communities. Gordon (1985) has grasped both the complexity and politicization of the application of law in Sudan as “often there is no relation between the law and what is practiced”. A similar observation is also made by various scholars from the mainstream land and agrarian studies regarding both the 1970 and 1984 Acts which have “never been applied on a routine basis” and the government uses them selectively when it needs to do so (Komey, 2010b) (Egemi, 2006) (De Wit, 2001).

Other Acts which relate to land include: the Construction Planning and Land Disposition Act 1994; the Investment Act 1983, and its two amendments 1991, 1998; the Forest Act, 1989; and the Local Government Act, 1998 (De Wit, 2001, p 7).

¹² The CTA was announced on 14 February 1984 and came into force that same day. The law consists of 95 chapters with 819 distinct sections, and provisions related to land represent more than one-third of it. The original text is in Arabic (Gordon, 1986, p 144)

¹³ ”Usufruct” according to the Civil Transaction Act, 1984, is defined as “the right to use property that belongs to another person”.

3.6 Transcending the Rural Urban Land Acquisition Debate in Sudan

The land tenure system and governance in Greater Khartoum is linked to the holistic land tenure of the country. Greater Khartoum remains the centre of power, as well as the economy, yet its relationship with the rest of the country is dynamic, rather than static. Whenever civil war erupts in the south or the west of Sudan, or severe ecological change hits the savannah or the arid land in eastern Sudan, or the processes of land grabbing or jobs grabbing occurs elsewhere in the country, the outcome emerges directly in Greater Khartoum. There is a subsequent influx of Sudanese seeking permanent or alternative places to live, either in the heart of the city or the outskirts, and this affects the tenure system. The centralization of industries, services and jobs in Greater Khartoum represents a form of secondary land grabbing; interpretation for Zoomers et al (2017).

The literature examining urban-rural land grabbing connections suggests that advancing the rural-urban connection is seen as significant for bridging the gap between the two. Instances of advancement, both as a concept and policy, are found in the future links of rural people, as global realities and costs prove that moving to cities will happen regardless. Advancing access to rural-urban livelihoods is seen as a strength. In cases of extensive urbanization, the rural-urban connection takes the form of moving towards megacities. In other cases, it takes the form of "villagization" as it aims to enhance certain developments and service delivery. Another transition could be found in forms of rural transformation into intermediate towns creating mega-regions. (Zoomers et al., 2017, p 246-249). Other literature views the rural land grabbing debate as being dominant in the last decade because of its magnitude and effects on the livelihoods of local people. In comparison, urban land grabbing appears fragmented and less visible than the rural variant, and when it is studied it involves the hybridity of urban transition. With the unprecedented proportions of population growth and urbanization, the subject of urban land grabbing appears to be a growing separate field of research (Steel et al., 2017, p 134-136). The urban context is multi-dimensional, suggesting the integration of related concepts such as the real estate market, public policies, displacement processes, and gentrification. An additional concepts such as urban speculation is seen to aid the understanding of phenomena such as land values, land speculation, land commodification, and their pattern in the global south (Steel et al., 2017, p 135-136).

Based on a table from (Steel et al., 2017) I will now examine some dissimilarities and common features between rural and urban land grabbing (acquisition) in Sudan (see Table 6). In terms of the grabbing effects, the rural areas are directly affected in their livelihoods. Land grabbing has also triggered a sense of political marginalization which has emerged in forms of violent conflict, as in the case of South Kordofan (Nuba Mountain) and *Angessina* in Blue Nile (Komey, 2010b) (Salih, 1999). In the urban areas, the effect of grabbing tends toward displacement and increasing the impoverishment of internally displaced people, those in the city slums, and low-income groups. The scale of grabbing also differs in that it is usually large scale in the rural areas, and small and medium scale in the urban areas, involving mainly land plots for individuals and community land. In terms of the actors involved, the Sudanese rural arena has witnessed the State as the main actor, especially after the Act of 1970. Additionally, Arab and Middle Eastern investors have had the greatest international presence, a circumstance that emerged after the appearance of slogans, in the 1970s, promulgating Sudan as the Arab breadbasket. Political elites and privileged social groups are involved in capturing land, a phenomena that is more widespread in cases involving mechanized farming.

The actors in the urban arena are different. The State of Khartoum has been identified as the main actor, followed by those real estate firms, both international and national, which emerged in the post oil growth interval. The political elites are heavily involved in urban land acquisition, with farmland owners in both urban and peri-urban Khartoum, currently under pressure due to expansion in real estate business (Franck, 2015). Communities and individuals are allegedly also engaging in the *hiyāza* form of land grabbing (Assal, 2018). The processes in the rural and urban situations are also different. Although land laws are not applied on a daily basis, the rural land grabbing is processed through the Act of Unregistered Land-1970 and the Civil Transaction Act-1984.

The rural processes are accompanied by both military and police violence, ethnocide and genocide (Salih, 1999). The urban arena processes are formalized through the 1925 Land Settlement and Registration Ordinance, the 1930 Land Acquisition Ordinance, and to some extent through the Construction Planning and Land Disposition Act, 1994. The former is mainly used to make use of the agricultural and *sāgya* land, while the latter is utilized explicitly for acquisition grabbing in the name of “the greater good”. Police violence is widely used in urban land grabbing or property demolition.

Table (5) rural vs urban land acquisition/grabbing in Sudan

Category	Rural	Urban
Type of acquisition (s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Large areas for mechanized farming ➤ Large areas to build dams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Community-individual land, Demolition of squatter areas ➤ <i>Hiyāza</i> as a form of grabbing
Effects on	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Local communities' livelihood- belongings- history and cultural symbols ➤ Sense of marginalization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Individual and community stability ➤ Change in land use interrupt the pattern of livelihood history and cultural symbols
Commodity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Communal land 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Private owned land- community land ➤ Agricultural land in the peri-urban
Scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Large 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Small- medium ➤ Plot/s of land
Actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Government of Sudan- rural communities' ➤ Wealthy social groups ➤ Arab and middle Eastern investors ➤ Transnational investors ➤ Political elites' over the former Governments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ministry of Urban Planning/ Khartoum State ➤ Real estate investment ➤ Affiliated political elites to the ruling Party ➤ Farmers of the urban and peri-urban areas ➤ Individuals and communities in terms of <i>Hiyāza</i>
Processes	<p>Usage of land laws:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The Act of Unregistered land-1970 ✓ The Civil Transaction Act-1984 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Usage of extreme Violence- Police and Military ➤ Direct affect to bloody ongoing conflict and war 	<p>Usage of Land Laws:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The 1925 Land Settlement and Registration Ordinance; ✓ The 1930 Land Acquisition Ordinance ✓ The Construction Planning and Land Disposition Act, 1994 ✓ Urban planning and re-planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Forms of community resistance ➤ Negotiations ➤ Heterogeneous compensation measures ➤ Urban land exclusion for some groups ➤ Usage of violence- police

Source: adapted from (Steel et al., 2017)

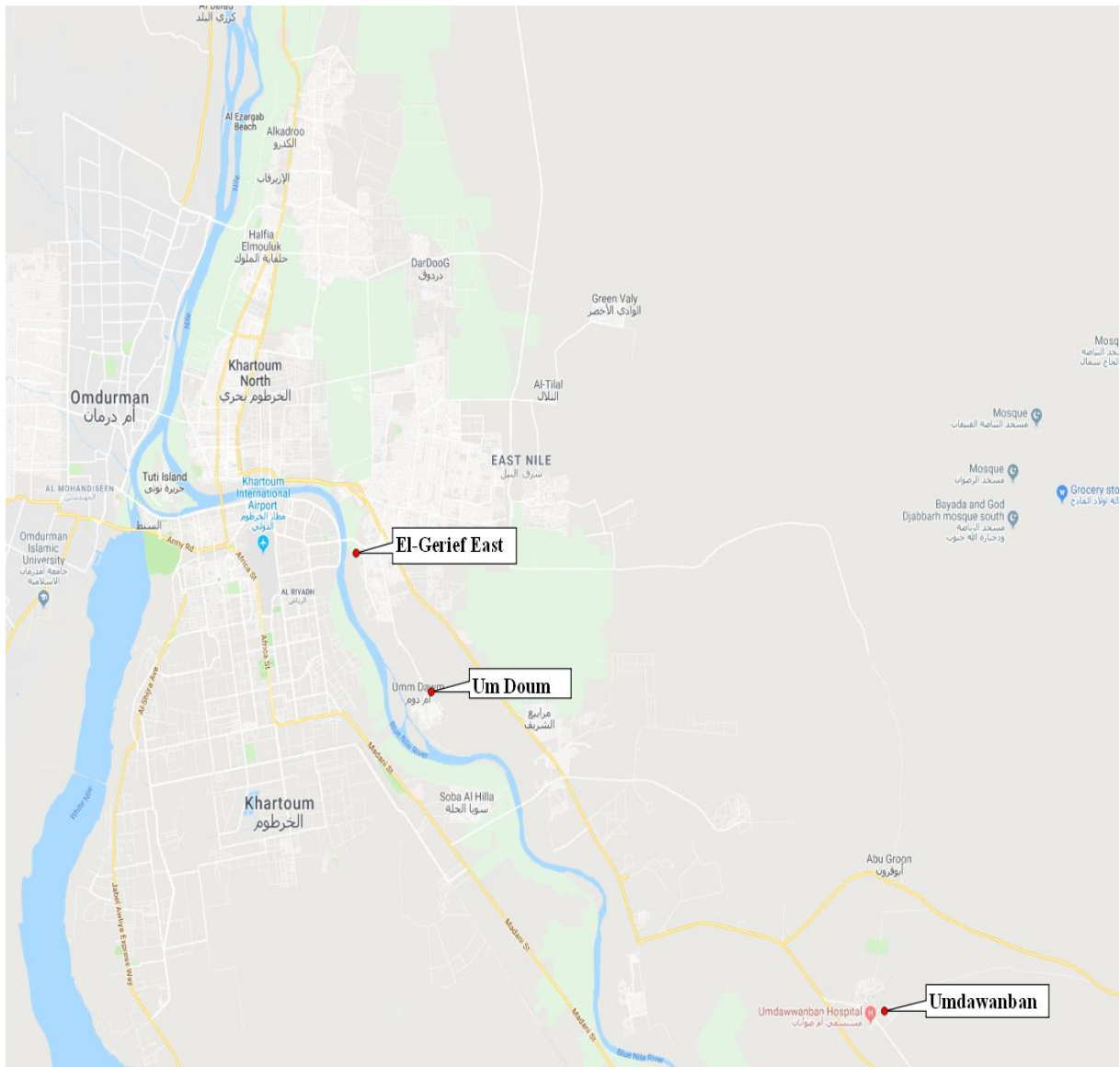
3.7 Summary

Khartoum has retained its status as the main urban centre since its inception in the mid-1880s. The post-independence period witnessed successive growth and features of urban sprawl following the period of civil war and drought. Economic shifts, civil war and drought also changed the features of other urban centres in Sudan. In terms of the master plans, these were seen to have both political and technical problems. The scale of implementation was weak as the possibilities for personal and patronage gains were exploited. With respect to the urban economy, Greater Khartoum dominates the services industry. The political-economy situation has produced a wide range of slums where the social groups that suffer most are comprised of internally displaced and low skilled individuals. Governance has been shaped by two features: crises have arisen due to the impact of civil war, drought, and centralization politics; and administratively, the system has a top-down orientation. The decentralization process did not achieve its goal.

The combination of population growth, contested governance and personal gain-oriented politics of urban planning shapes the urbanization in Greater Khartoum with distortion that have a profound effect on the urban land sector in Greater Khartoum.

Regarding land governance, the country has witnessed early “land reform” based on the British colonial interest. However, some of the norms have been retained up until the present day, and the added national norms have been evaluated to have a profound negative impact on the customary rights. On the other hand, the approach towards the urban-rural land suggests that there are many similarities and differences. The illustration of the case study will shed more light on the concrete drivers.

Figure (5) map shows El-Gerief East within Greater Khartoum and the East Nile part



Source: Adapted from google map

4. Chapter Four: Case Study of El-Gerief East

4.1 The Beginning of the Land Acquisition

The first land acquisition took place in 2005 upon the construction of the bridge that connects Buurri/El-Manshia (Khartoum) with El-Gerief East (Khartoum North). The first acquisition included the *sāgyas*¹⁴ near the bridge, when the government decided to acquire 300 square metres on each side of the river, north and south of the proposed bridge. The owners of the *sāgyas* accepted the acquisition because it was for the greater good. Negotiation for the compensation started at a later date and was fulfilled.¹⁵ Nonetheless, the land acquisition was extended to include more *sāgyas* towards El-Gerief East in 2005, but the land owners were not informed until 2007 after the file was closed. All the acquired *sāgyas* were held under freehold (*milk hurr*). The land acquisition of El-Gerief East involved two types of acquisition; the land acquisition for the *sāgyas* that were attached to the Blue Nile, and the land acquisition for the agricultural expansion of Karkōj (Maṭary Karkōj).

The land acquisition related to the Blue Nile City (BNC)

The land acquisition mainly occurred to allow for the establishment of the Blue Nile City. However, the acquisition has primarily affected a large part of the village of El-Gerief East and the *sāgyas* attached to the Blue Nile (where the profession of making clay bricks (*kamāyin*) is practised), as well as the old village of El-Gerief East.

The Blue Nile City project is described by the Al-barder group¹⁶ as a unique modern residential project that will be located in Khartoum with a total area of ten million square metres.

According to the project description, the project is targeting both the diaspora and domestic Sudanese upper/middle class buyers. The project is also driven by the need to find a solution to

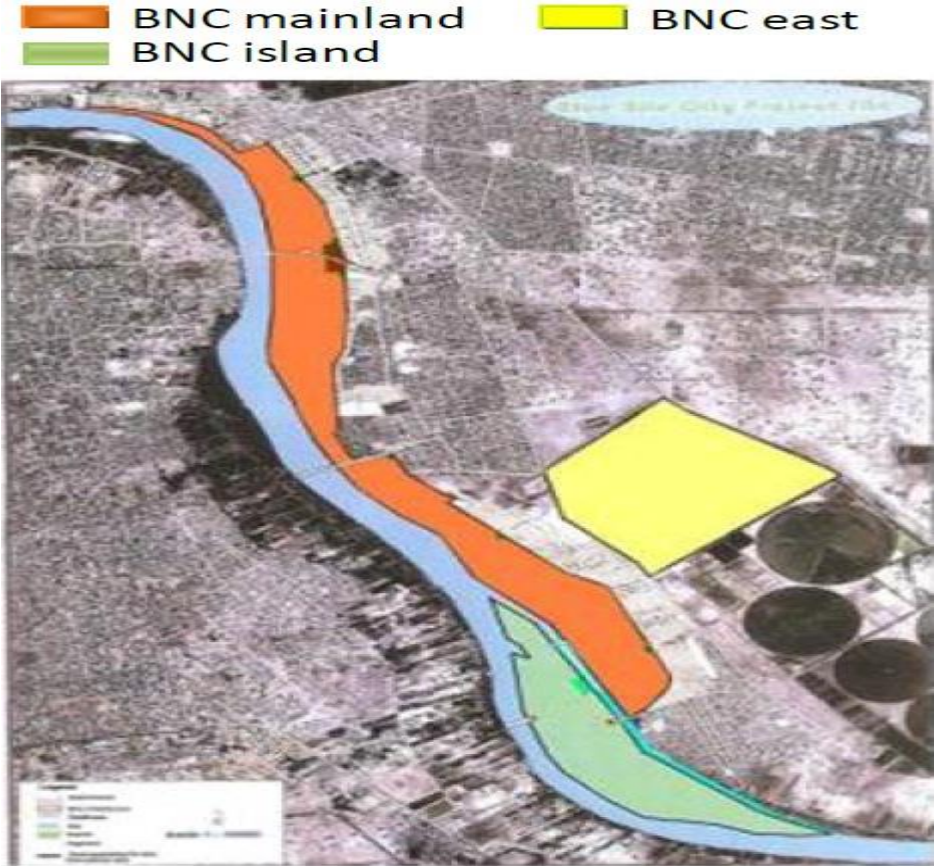
¹⁴ *Sāgya* “waterwheel is an ancient technique of irrigation in the Nile valley. The term designates by extension the highest lands where irrigation is used, unlike jaref lands, which are lower and are cultivated mostly” (Franck, 2015). The term is widely used in northern and central Sudan. In the context of the study the term is however describes all the land attached to the Blue Nile even if it is used for clay brick making. It is also used to describe the acquired rainfed agricultural area. Therefore, I use it here as *sāgya* = Singular; *sāgyas* = plural.

¹⁵ Memorandum from El-Gerief East resident to the Governor of Khartoum 13.07.2017

¹⁶ Al-bader is a Kuwait International Business Entrepreneur for me see: (Construction", 2019)

the chronic basic services problem in Khartoum, as well as presenting attractive and safe business and recreation zones. The project is comprised of three sites: Blue Nile City mainland, Blue Nile City Island, and Blue Nile City East.¹⁷

Figure 6: the map shows the three sites of the City of the Blue Nile (BNC)



Source: www.al-bader.com

The BNC project is one of six projects facing the Nile in Greater Khartoum based on the Khartoum Structural Plan (KSP). The length of the Nile shoreline in the Blue Nile project is planned to be 10 kilometres. The State of Khartoum signed an agreement with the business

¹⁷ The details of the three sites: “The Blue Nile City Mainland (430 Hectares): 3,500 Villas, 14000 Apartments, 410 m2 Offices, 270,000 m2 Commercial Mall, 1 Residential Hotel 3- star- 200 rooms; All Social, Commercial, Educational and Leisure Facilities. The Blue Nile City Island (195 Hectares) comprises: 400 Villas, 2,000 Apartments, 1 Hotel 5 star (400 rooms), 1 Golf Course (18-hole) and Academy, 1 Tennis Court Complex and Academy, 1 Marina. The Blue Nile City East (288 Hectares): University Campus, Vocational Institute, University, Hospital, 400 Staff Housing units, 8500 Student and Staff Housing units, 790,000 m2 Offices, 100,000 m2 Warehouses, 1 Family Motel (200 rooms) and 1 Football Stadium”. (Al-bader Group, 2018)

group in 2007. This agreement is based on the State of Khartoum providing land for the project while the business group provides the financial capital.¹⁸

The land acquisition in the rainfed agricultural area of Karkōj (*Maṭary Karkōj*)¹⁹

Since 1968/1970, the residents of El-Gerief have been waiting for a housing plan and to be allocated enough plots in the rainfed agricultural area of Karkōj (*Maṭary*) when it is converted into residential land. Such a housing plan has supposedly been ready for distribution in 1988, but its implementation was interrupted by the 1989 coup and the new political regime. The rainfed agricultural area of Karkōj (*Maṭary*) is considered to be owned (*milk ein*) leasehold and is registered in the Land Registry. However, the number of *sāgyas* owned by El-Gerief East residents are estimated to be 454 *sāgya*. Both the acquisition and conversion of the rainfed agricultural area “*Maṭary Karkōj*” has triggered a sense of lost rights within the residents of El-Gerief East. The first acquisition was the allocation of block 13 to the Social Security Fund, followed by the allocation of block 12 to employees of the telecommunication and petroleum sectors. During this process block 13 was renamed El-Manshia *Sharq* (El-Manshia East).

According to informant two²⁰, the acquisition took place in two stages. The second acquisition of 2007 included the areas south of the bridge towards El-Gerief East, from *sāgya* 17 to *sāgya* 22. The acquisition also included several sub-neighbourhoods and some areas of *Maṭary Karkōj*. The land owners accused the government of disturbing the village boundaries and hiding some of the official registrations of those plots. A landowner in *Maṭary Karkōj* said:

In 2007, the government (*al-Hakuma*) went further in grabbing our land, even part of the village boundaries (*haram al-Qarya*) were taken. The front side of *Maṭary Karkōj*, the rainfed part, has been acquired and redistributed as part of the public housing plan without fair compensations to the owners. These areas have now got new (marketing) names to be commercially attractive like Hay El-Nasr, Hay al-Jamaa, Hay al-Huda, Hai El-Fayha, Hay al-Mustafa, The Kireyab area, and El-Manshia *Sharq*/East. In addition to blocks 11/12/13/14/15/16/17/18/19, all the plots in these areas were grabbed without

¹⁸ Interview with Abdalla Osman, the Director of the Blue Nile City project

¹⁹ *Karkōj* is the name of one of the old neighbourhoods in El-Gerief East. However, all the rainfed agricultural land (*Maṭary*) in Greater Khartoum is registered in the name of Karkouj rainfed, from *Sharq al-Nīl* (East Nile) to al-Gaily northern Khartoum.

²⁰ Landowner in *Maṭary Karkōj*

informing the owners. The official registration papers of these plots were hidden but fortunately, the owners have their papers.²¹

According to informant two, the period 2005 to 2007 witnessed some activities for the *sāgya* owners, as they organized meetings, expressed opinions and outlined a solution. This period also witnessed some intervention from the ruling party through its affiliated members in El-Gerief East and forced certain agreement as expressed by informant two landowner in *Maṭary Karkōj* stated:

After nearly all the *sāgya'* owners expressed their rejection of the land acquisition, the State sent a delegate. This was after the second wave of grabbing in 2007. We as *sāgya* owners had two meetings: the first took place at Karkōj football club, and the result was total refusal; the second was at al-Saham football club in the same year, and we did not agree. After this meeting, we realized, that the NCP, [the ruling party], started recruiting people to play certain roles from behind. They started to use both coercion and enticement. Thus, an agreement with 13 articles²² has been forced and signed with the Ministry of Physical Planning.²³ Article number 13 says: in the case of not fulfilling any of the above obligations, the *sāgyas* will be allocated back to their owners prior to acquisition, and a compensation for any material or moral harm will be paid.²⁴

The 2007 agreement was not signed by all the *sāgyas'* owners. Informant one stated that he neither signed this agreement nor recognized it.

As an example, I myself own the largest number of “*Hubal*”²⁵ in *Sharq al-Nīl* (East Nile) in three areas (El-Gerief East, Karkōj and Om Doum), I was never invited to sign their paper or to receive compensation. I still come to my land and work at my profession of *al-Kamāyin* “maker of local bricks”, despite all the various kinds of pressure and damage.²⁶

On the other hand, the Director of Acquisition and Compensation in the Ministry of Physical Planning argued that the acquisition was for the greater good. The Khartoum Structural Plan (KSP) is a strategy document that outlines a vision for the nation and aims to benefit the

21 Landowner in *Maṭary Karkōj*

22 This refer to El-Gerief East Sit-in Committee documents

23 See Appendix 4

24 Interview with landowner in *Maṭary Karkōj*

25 *Hubal* (plural) is a local expression used to describe the length of agricultural land near the Nile. One *habl* is estimated to be 4.54 square metres.

26 Interview with an active member of El-Gerief East Sit-in Committee

Sudanese people. Additionally, he argues that the President of the Republic of Sudan is the only one who is capable of deciding what constitutes the greater good. Consequently, he stated, although the local residents have different opinions, consultation with them is not considered necessary (Interview with government official).

From the perspective of technical urban planning, the problem of El-Gerief East is an old one, as is its counterpart, Bait al-Mal Omdurman. The latter was considered a successful project in the late 1960s, and the described compensations have been very good in most of the cases. For instance, six people who lived together in an inherited family house could be compensated individually with their own house. The process and procedures were also fair to a large extent. Conversely, with El-Gerief East some old urban planners in the area were reported to have contributed to the problem by previously allocating land plots in improper ways. A retired urban planner stated:

El-Gerief East has suffered planning and re-planning fatigue in a way. It is the second oldest re-planning project after Bait al-Mal.²⁷ Also the period after the independence witnessed a large number of urban planners in this project. I believe some of the old public servants have contributed to the problem, and some of them were even from the area. Following some re-planning processes, misallocation and corruption took place, some of it before the current regime. I see it in two forms: firstly, some of the inhabitants of El-Gerief East who were not eligible for “in-kind compensation” were compensated and some of them received several plots. Secondly, some inhabitants from outside El-Gerief East were also compensated and of course they were not eligible. This has caused fragmentation in the area which has been reflected in the form of "El-Gerief East people vs outsiders". I think the “old fighters” or the old inhabitants of El-Gerief East are the people who have suffered most, and they are the ones who stand against the acquisition now. They suffered from the re-planning, the bridge, their *kamāyin* and professions, and corruption in the compensation.²⁸

Conversely, the decision to establish The Blue Nile City is perceived as a demolition of El-Gerief East. According to an El-Gerief sit-in committee document, the governor of Khartoum sold the land of the alleged Blue Nile City to the Kuwaiti entrepreneurs of the Al-bader group, but due to the lack of stability, the Kuwaiti group claimed to have sold to investors from Qatar who have

²⁷ A neighbourhood in Omdurman

²⁸ Interview with Kamal Salih

strong connections to ministries and politicians.²⁹ The government acquired a large part of the old village of El-Gerief East, and the attached *sāgyas* which are considered to be the grazing and firewood collection area of the people of Karkōj. In many ways this is perceived as an interruption of the village boundaries (*haram al-Qarya*). Overall, the new urban development and the Blue Nile City has increased the vulnerability of the urban identity of El-Gerief East, as is reflected in the interviews and documents of the Sit-in Committee “We neither have the services of a town nor the boundaries of a village”.

The new bridge is also seen as a significant factor in changing the perception of El-Gerief East and placing it in the heart of Greater Khartoum, in proximity to the wealthiest neighbourhoods across the bridge. In addition, this has brought the availability of land in the area to the attention of the political elites. An active member in the Sit-in said:

El-Gerief East used to be six miles from Khartoum, and one needed to cross the Koaber³⁰ or Khartoum North bridges. Now the distance is minutes. We are even part of Khartoum town now. Between us and the most wealthy and elegant area in Sudan are the river and bridge. There in (El- Manshia) live the educated and wealthy class, *Awlad Shibika*, *Awlad El-Brrir*³¹ and the wealthy elites. Here live the poor, the *kamāyin* workers and the less educated people. The bridge has made a big change. Our big trouble is that it introduced El-Gerief East and its expanded land to the political elites who are obsessed with selling the land of locals in their search for revenue. There is no respect for any historical attachment.³²

²⁹ El-Gerief East Sit-in Committee Document

³⁰ A neighbourhood in Khartoum North

³¹ Names of wealthy families

³² Interview with active member of El-Gerief East Sit-in Committee

Figure (7) El-Manshia Bridge³³ connects El-Gerief East to Khartoum



Source: Photo Yousif Badawi

4.2 El-Gerief East Community Sit-in (EECS) Initiation

According to informant four (*sāgya* owner attached to the Blue Nile)³⁴, in the beginning of 2014, the government has allocated block 12 to the Social Security Fund (SSF) to be redistributed to the well-paid employees of the petroleum, telecommunication and electricity sectors. Following this, El-Gerief East representatives sent a memorandum of concern to the Minister of Physical Planning on 30.01.2014 asking for a housing plan and the cancellation of Blue Nile City. The Ministry replied on 30.02.2014 stating that the land issue in the area was personal, and that those who signed the agreement with the government would be compensated, but overall the acquisition included everyone and was general. Following this, the government allocated block 13 to the investment sector of the Social Security Fund (SSF) which renamed it El-Manshia *Sharq*. This act triggered a sense of anger among the El-Gerief East residents and the land owners, as they sought to organize a sit-in on a part of the *Maṭary* land (rainfed land)

³³ For all my interviewees from El-Gerief East, the bridge is called (El-Gerief East Bridge) as it is the oldest neighbourhood.

³⁴ *Sāgya* owner attached to the Blue Nile

which had been leased to the Arab company. However, as the land was in an open space and had no nearby services, the sit-in was subsequently moved to *Sāḥāt al-Eid*, the Eid square in El-Gerief East.

The involvement of the Social Security Fund (SSF) and its investment sector, is perceived as strange as this is the mandate of the Ministry of Housing. Such policy has been attributed to the influences of the powerful regime elites who have shares in the SSF³⁵ and the several small companies that have been created to take on related services.

4.2.1 Inside El-Gerief East Sit-In Square

Sāḥāt al-ītiṣām or the Sit-in square is the arena where the community mobilization takes place. The period of 2014-2017 is considered to be the most successful period of the sit-in activities. In the time of greatest tension, there were daily gatherings. It was an open and spontaneous arena for every El-Gerief citizen or resident (*muwātin garāfy*). The sit-in is described as being remarkable and demonstrating the social cohesion of the area. Informant one explained:

Our local people of El-Gerief East, especially the youth, showed an energy and commitment in the sit-in that I have never seen in my life. The sit-in square was the gathering place. Our local people from all ages were present during the mobilization evenings. The division of tasks occurred smoothly. The elderly, children, women everyone had the chance to express themselves freely in the sit-in square. The security people were questioning where did we get the funds? Everything was from our local people, our youths. It was not a sit-in, it was a social epic. (Interview with active member in El-Gerief East Sit-in Committee).

Furthermore, informant three, the female representative in the sit-in committee, approached the committee during the inception period and inquired about the presence of women. She then started to call and gather the women, considering her engagement to be natural, and attributing it to her belief in the rights and demands for the area. She also described other social activities that were taking place in the sit-in square

Our aim from the sit-in is to get back our rights: we are lacking health and education services and our land was taken. We are getting into our 40s and 50s. I do not want the members of our extended families to be broken up and divided between Idd

³⁵ Interview with Kamal Salih

Babiker or El-Samra³⁶. A group of women from different educational backgrounds and I joined the sit-in and we played a big role. My role was to mobilize the women. I had good support from my family. The sit-in square was a special arena, we were playing different roles, raising awareness against certain habits like drugs and prostitution. During the Sit-in days we tried to use the skills of our young people for creative purposes. We organized a class to teach reading and writing: this came out of the sit-in gatherings, and we even used the sit-in arena to resolve conflicts between women and young people.³⁷

The participation of El-Gerief East residents from all ages in the sit-in square received considerable attention. Furthermore, the events were full of emotion and togetherness, something described as being almost a revolution, as informant three explained:

I do not want to say “*thawratna*” our revolution, though we had the feeling that it was. It was a candle in the darkness. In the sit-in square our grandmothers and grandfathers were present. There was a strong feeling of togetherness, you could see the emotion in the crowds. Some people were crying, for example when our secretary of the Sit-in was arrested, and everyone was singing *the Gerief* song or anthem, especially our children of 6 to 12 years, even those who are 3 years³⁸

*Our beloved El-Gerief is the pride
your honoured land will never be suppressed
we see the youngsters hearing your calls
coming with knowledge and wisdom
Ohh mama, for how long will we bear the sorrow with patience
and our beloved El-Gerief is wounded
getting neither education nor health care
our land is taken, all our rights are abused³⁹*

³⁶ Name of villages in East Nile locality

³⁷ Interview with El-Gerief Sit-in participant

³⁸ Interview with El-Gerief Sit-in participant

³⁹ This is my own translation from Arabic of the “*Nasheed El-Gerief*” El-Gerief song or anthem

The sit-in activities caught the attention of one well-known columnist, Dr. Omar El-Garrai. His article entitled “*Thawrat El-Gerief*” (El-Gerief revolution) argued:

The local people of El-Gerief, like the local people of Kajbar⁴⁰ and the peasants of the Gezira scheme, they are neither a political party, nor interested in political power. They are a group of citizens demanding the clear rights some powerful political elites have abused for personal interest. ...Their main purpose in selling land to foreign investors is their personal gain from these deals. El-Gerief residents are Sudanese citizens who practiced their rights in a civilized and transparent manner and showed their conscious and rational behaviour. Yet they were faced with abandonment and humiliation by the rapacious political regime and executive authorities⁴¹ (El-Garrai, 2016).

Figure (8) photo shows preparation for a protest by El-Gerief East Community Sit-in



Source: El-Gerief Sit-in Committee Document

40 Kajbar and Dal are two newly constructed dams in north Sudan between the second and the third cataract. Both of them are causing displacement.

41 Thawrat El-Gerief Article, for more see (Alrakoba, 2016)

4.2.2 The Formation of El-Gerief East Sit-In Committee (EESC)

The Sit-in activities started at the beginning of 2014, while the formation of the sit-in committee came later, at the beginning of 2015, when it appeared that there was a need for that. Before the Sit-in commenced, the land owners tried to contact different influential politicians, legislators, and even Sufi sheikhs. Informant one active member of El-Gerief East Sit-in Committee says:

Let me tell you about the El-Gerief Sit-in Committee (*Lajnat itīṣām El-Gereif*). First, we as a local community were hurt by the wave of land acquisition. We have tried hard by all the means of communication to reach the politicians up there. We have tried our social networks, bribes, anything. We have contacted public figures like: Mohammed El-Sheikh Medani (when) he was the president of Khartoum State Legislative Council, Bakri Hassan Salih, when he was the President's Office Manager, and Ali Osman Mohammed Taha, when he was the Vice-President and he was powerful. We have contacted the Sufi sheikhs like El Tayeeb al-Gid in Umdawanbān; they are respected. We were seeking dialogue, either they convince us, or we convince them. Everything can be done through dialogue; it is better than grabbing.⁴²

The local residents of El-Gerief East were strongly united, which helped in the harmonization and the division of tasks. The formation of the sit-in committee is described as occurring in a spontaneous manner and based on trust. Informant one explained:

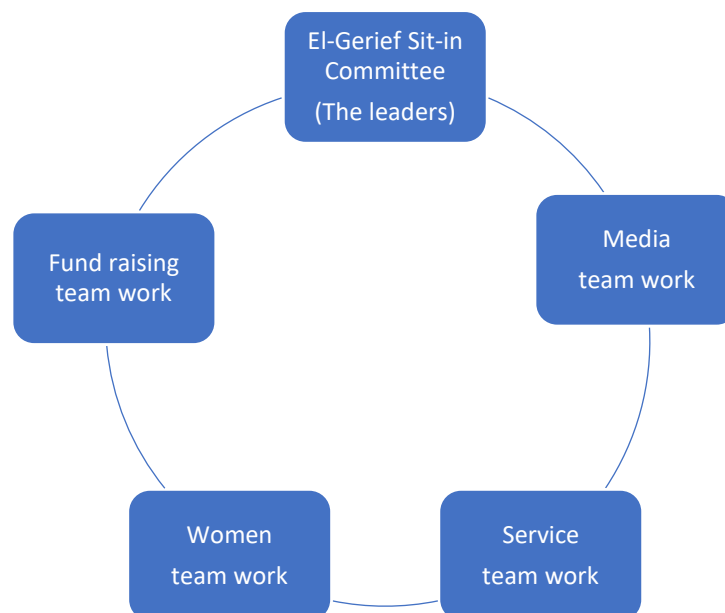
Our local people of El-Gerief East were united in their interest in the land issues, and this has helped us to have a very successful and continuous sit-in. In the beginning and until now, the meetings have been open; any good suggestion, even from the youngsters, will be adopted. In this way, we ended up having many functioning teams working with high efficiency: media, fund-raising, negotiation, organizational things, and women. I told them (the leaders) one thing, if you want this to be a success, let it be spontaneous; do not make regulations to bind the people. Openness and trust brought us together. In the mobilization evenings, they (the committee and the youngsters) were introducing in the loud speaker, everyone knows what is happening. In the tough time during the confrontations with police, I brought my three sons to the front. I told them to die here

⁴² Interview with active member of El-Gerief East Sit-in Committee

in the demonstrations, do not go and die with cancer (indicating the increase of the disease in Sudan), they have my blessings (forgiveness).⁴³

The conditions of security surveillance and the policy of arresting activists in Sudan has led the El-Gerief sit-in committee to form two committees; one is public, and the other is shadow. The members who represent the committee in the different negotiations are circulated and it has been described as highly efficient. Although the government does not officially recognize the sit-in committee, it does in practice, inviting them for the negotiations and to high level meetings. There is a consensus within the sit-in committee that the government used the negotiations for manipulation.

Figure 9 shows the work structure of the El-Gerief East Sit-in Committee (EESC)



Source: Interview with El-Gerief Sit-in Committee

The government targeted the key persons: the Sit-in Committee secretary and the public spokesperson for the Sit-in were arrested politically for 62 days, along with another active youngster.⁴⁴ Besides this, 2015-2016 witnessed six attempts to destroy the *kamāyin* and shut it

⁴³ Interview with active member of El-Gerief East Sit-in Committee

⁴⁴ According to a statement by the government this person was arrested because his father was a prominent communist leader

by force. Those attacks left large swathes of destruction in the *kamāyin*, with thousands of bricks reportedly destroyed (See table 6). The police attacks met with resistance from the *sāgyas*' owners and the residents of El-Gerief East. The police used both tear gas and bullets, and many people were documented as being seriously injured in the confrontations. For the details of the injured residents (See Appendix 5).

Figure (10) Photo shows the *Kamāyin* site in El-Gerief East



Source: Photo taken by Yousif Badawi

Table 6 shows the details of bricks owners, number of destroyed bricks and their value up to February 2015

No	Name	Quantity of brick (000)	Price in SDG
1	Ahmed Mohamed Ali Nasir	130	39.000
2	Niazi Osman Mohamed Ali	135	40.500

3	Yahia Ahmed Mohamed Ali	84	25.200
4	Dief Allah Hamad El-Niel Ahmed	173	51.900
5	Maaz Abdelmoniem	113	33.900
6	Hassan Ahmed	48	14.400
7	Mohamed Yousif Haj El-daw	240	72.000
8	Omar Mohamed Abdelrahman	134	40.000
9	Ibrahim Abdalla Abbas	111	33.300
10	Osman Ahmed Osman	55	16.500
11	Rashid Hassan El-Zien	210	63.000
12	Ala El-dinn Al-Gid Yousif	80	24.000
13	Hassabo El-Zien	88	264.000
14	Fadi Al-Mawla El-Khedir	900	270.000
15	Hassan El-Sidig	400	120.000
16	Fathi Abdel-Wahab	213	63.900
17	Mosab Fathi	85	25.500
18	Nagi El-Siddig Mohammed	77	23.100
19	Yusuf Ishag	130	39.000

Source: El-Gerief East Sit-in Committee Document (EESCD)

4.2.3 The Sit-In Committee's Endeavours in Mobilization and Negotiation

A large part of the Sit-in Committee work involved efforts at communication and dialogue. Consequently, I will review three significant events that took place during different periods of the land acquisition, as this will give greater depth to an understanding of the

mobilization as practiced by the El-Gerief Sit-in Committee. The three events are: the meeting with the Minister of Physical Planning in 2005, the march to Umdawanbān (Sheikh al-Gid) and the negotiations with the state through Issam El-Sheikh.

The meeting with the Minister of Physical Planning: provocation and abuse

According to informant one⁴⁵, the meeting with the Minister of Physical Planning took place at an early stage of the *sāgyas*' acquisition, in 2005. A large group of the *sāgyas*' owners gathered and approached the area parliamentary representative Hassab El-Rasoul Ameer, to ask him to organize a meeting with the Minister of Physical Planning. Mr Ameer is from both El-Gerief East and Um Doum. Although he represented the regime, he was described as good, educated, polite, and not corrupt. Consequently, Mr Ameer organized the meeting with the Minister of Physical Planning, Abdel-Wahab Osman, in his house in Um Doum. The meeting was attended by nearly one thousand people, including both the *sāgyas*' owners and the local residents of El-Gerief East. The Minister came to the meeting with his full office and assistants. He then launched into a prepared speech about land acquisition and said directly "The acquisition decision is made and valid, no one should discuss this as it is finished". He added that it would be possible to discuss compensation, whether it was satisfactory or not. This approach frustrated the local people and the *sāgyas*' owners, and many expressed a wish to talk about the acquisition itself. The Minister refused. Informant one was an eye witness, and he explained:

I observed more than one commentator from the local community saying to the Minister: How is the acquisition taking place without our consultation? How is the acquisition taking place without our consent? How is the acquisition taking place and is it not for the greater good? You want to acquire our land for investment. If so, it's our land and we should be the ones who invest.

The dialogue with the Minister was described as a two-way dialogue, and the Minister's response was disrespectful. Approaching the end of the meeting, the Minister said: "The State has issued the acquisition decision, the land use will be changed from agricultural into ordinary residential, first class and private ownership. The land owners and the residents of El-Gerief East were questioning; "Our land is already privately owned so what is their case?" Informant one expressed:

⁴⁵ Interview with active member of El-Gerief East Sit-in Committee

I personally approached the Minister⁴⁶, took a chance and said:

My land is something special for me, as well as being precious, since in the morning I come and put my chair out and sit; it brings me revenue; it has sand and precious mud, so I can cultivate it, or makes bricks!

The Minister said, he can tell me a way to get rich faster!

I said “what is it?”

The Minister said “Drive a truck to Kaffi Kenga⁴⁷ and fill it with *bango* (marijuana or hashish)”

I replied: “How can a good man like me trade in *bango*!”

The Minister said, “How good; now you are staying on land which is not yours! You are breaking the law of the State!”

The Parliamentary representative, the one who was hosting the meeting, intervened and asked me to please not reply. I adhered to that.

The march to Umdawanbān, escalation of the frustration and anger

In addition to the different memorandums that were sent to the various executive and legislatives levels, the Sit-in committee sought to reach Sheikh El-Tayeeb al-Gid in Umdawanbān, as he had advocated for the residents of Um Doum⁴⁸ to be provided with a housing plan. The march to Umdawanbān was very large, yet the outcome was considerable frustration. Nonetheless, I came across three different opinions, which I will now review, from participants of the march, describing the position of Sheikh al-Gid.

The first opinion was that Sheikh al-Gid refused to meet the march participants because the National Congress Party (NCP) representatives had arrived before the march and reported to him that the march was politically driven and would thus affect his position.

⁴⁶ Interview with active member of El-Gerief East Sit-in Committee

⁴⁷ A village in South Sudan

⁴⁸ The position of Sheikh al-Gid in Um Doum, the neighbourhood located south west of El-Gerief was different, his advocacy worked there as the residents of Um Doum were allocated a housing plan. For more see: (Elamin, 2018)

The result was that the march participants returned furious and protested on the bridge, where two persons died, and many were injured. Informant four expressed:

When we realized that Sheikh Tayeeb al-Gid had advocated for the local people of *Um Doum* to be provided with a housing plan, we sought to knock on his door. In terms of kinship relationship, he is closer to us than to Um Doum. On the day of the large march to Umdawanbān we filled thirty buses, in addition to the private cars, and we took our children and women. When we arrived there was something unusual, a cold reception and an unwelcoming atmosphere. Umdawanbān is like a second home for us, and the *masīd*⁴⁹ is a place of generosity where visitors get food and drinks before anything else. Later we discovered that the “National Congress Party” representative had arrived before us and given Sheikh al-Gid a false report about our intention. Nevertheless, Sheikh Tayeeb al-Gid refused to meet us saying he had other social duties and advised our representative to go and talk to the Commissioner. (Interview with *sāgya* owner attached to the Blue Nile).

The second opinion was that Sheikh al-Gid was not supportive. It was even claimed that he was affiliated with the ruling party, and that it was he who called the police. An active member in El-Gerief Sit-in Committee stated:

Although I’m not a Sufi person, I accepted that the suggestion of marching to the *masīd* of Sheikh al-Gid in Umdawanbān would help a lot. Yes, it is a fact that the Sufi sheikhs take care of their followers and El-Gerief East follow the Umdawanbān sheikhs. What we forgot was the profound change that has taken place in recent years: even Sufiism has changed, and for me Sheikh al-Gid has his affiliation with the National Congress Party (NCP). He met our march, but they (the participants) returned unsatisfied with him after he called the police and told them about our march.⁵⁰

Those with a third opinion believe that Sheikh al-Gid was supportive and welcomed the march, but some of the sit-in members had hidden agendas and misbehaved.

I was an eyewitness, and Sheikh Tayeeb al-Gid welcomed all of us in a respectful way. The march was very large: the front of the march was in Soba and the rest in El-Gerief East. When we reached Umdawanbān the end of the march was in al-Ellafoon.⁵¹ It was

⁴⁹ The *masīd* is a traditional school that teaches the Holy Quran and Islamic *Fiqh*

⁵⁰ Interview with active member of El-Gerief East Sit-in Committee

⁵¹ A village in Sharq al-Nīl

a huge crowd. As I said Sheikh al-Gid was supportive and I do not agree with the (negative) image many tried to create. Some members who came with us on the march had a role to play: they showed disrespect and an aggressive attitude, they slammed his door and said bad words. They were attempting to destroy our relationship with him, and they succeeded on that day. They are not part of us, and we do not consider them to be part of our sit-in: (interview with the El-Gerief East Sit-in Documenter).

Figure (11) Mosque in El-Gerief East. (The area has strong connection to Umdawanbān as religious centre)



Source: photo: Yousif Badawi

Negotiation with the state, another case of manipulation

Following several failed attempts to reach a solution or serious negotiation, the feeling of anger and frustration escalated within the sit-in, and as a consequence the act of protesting and closing the bridge has been repeated frequently. Moreover, the death of the sit-in martyrs (*shuhadaa*) Ahmed Obied and Fatheyia El-Zaki shaped the ongoing struggle and

gave it another dimension. The former is the icon of the sit-in and his picture is the one on the main banner in the Sit-in Square.

The sit-in leaders increased the mobilization level and declared that all were ready to die for their land and were pushing for confrontation. Following the loss of Ahmed Obied, the sit-in organized a large protest. The protest was immediately confronted by the police which surrounded both the bridge and El-Gerief East. On the other hand, the Government of Khartoum recognized the mistrust, and approached the negotiation with the sit-in committee differently, namely through a mediator who was acceptable to the El-Gerief East residents and their sit-in committee. The representative from the El-Gerief East Sit-in Committee (EESC) went to the negotiation. However, the outcome was manipulation of the demands of the El-Gerief East Sit-in. Informant one described the negotiation process by saying:

We have been contacted by Issam El-Sheikh. He is a business man who has been supported by the government (*zoal al-hakuma*), provided with facilities, and allocated large areas of land and even the ability to change the use of some of it. He has a natural capacity for mediation, is smart, wise, diplomatic, and knows how to approach community issues. He is *Wad Qabayil*⁵² who has the capacity to solve critical social issues like murder or divorce, he is even mediating conflict between government officials on his farm. For us as leaders, the judgement of the situation is difficult, especially in very violent times. You think about the youngster you told them to go out (and protest)...we are struggling for the land for them. If they die, what do we do with the land. You get such thoughts.

In the meeting at Issam El-Sheikh's farm with the presence of the National Congress representative, El-Sheikh approached us in a decent way and inquired about our demands. We spoke our demand, fair judgement for our land and service for our area. He asked is there any demand I can meet now, and we told him: we need the police to leave now. He phoned, and the police left immediately. He asked: is there anything else? We told him: we need our detainees to be free. He called and promised, they will be free now. Regarding the other demands, he said some of it cannot be solved now, as it needs time, but he promised to help with his network and proposed solutions. This was logical, and we accepted it. We returned home. The next day we discovered the manipulation as no one was freed. The manipulation from the government side took many forms. The last

⁵² Expression used to describe someone who is from honoured tribes

governor said his cabinet was not formed for long. This put us in a critical situation with our local people; some think we are cheating them.⁵³

The Sit-in action and activities showed a certain model of community mobilization summarized in three patterns: communication, community mobilization and direct resistance (see Figure 6). Communication was always the first choice of the sit-in committee. The sit-in committee archive documented more than 24 written memorandums⁵⁴ and letters to different executives and legislative bodies, 12 legal notices and several media interviews seeking dialogue and solution. In addition to the undocumented number of verbal communications⁵⁵ through both social and political networks. Communication included dialogue, negotiations and both written and verbal memorandums. Community mobilization as it emerged in the form of mobilization nights was the second choice, mainly as a reaction to the blocked communication and the various types of manipulation from the government side. The same applied to the direct resistance choice, as it was either confrontation against demolition of the *kamāyin* or as an urgent response to blocked communication. There is no chronological order for the usage of community mobilization and direct resistance, it was rather a spontaneous community expression for rights. The sit-in model of mobilization was perceived as highly political, particularly from the government side, as it was always looking to find the "leftist hidden hands"⁵⁶ In fact, the El-Gerief East Sit-in was indeed highly politically motivated, but it had the express purpose of asserting land rights and protesting against land grabbing.

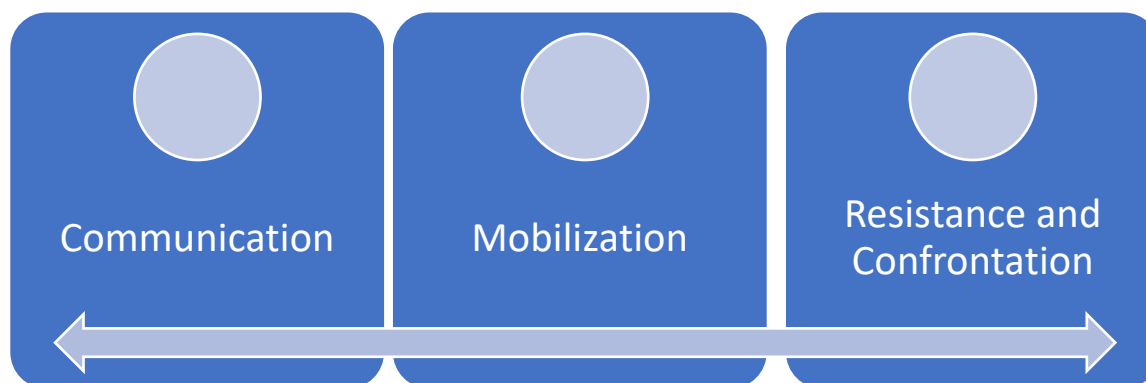
⁵³ Interview with active member of El-Gerief East Sit-in Committee

⁵⁴ This refers to El-Gerief East Sit-in Committee Documents (EESCD)

⁵⁵ Verbal communication is highly appreciated in the Sudanese context. It plays a significant role in both business and problem solving.

⁵⁶ According to the Government, any opposition work is associated with The Sudanese Communist Party (SCP)

Figure (12) shows the El-Gerief East Sit-in Committee (EECS) model of community mobilization:



Source: interview with El-Gerief East Sit-in Committee members

4.3 Dynamics around the Land Acquisition of El-Gerief East

4.3.1 Economic Conflict of Interest

A group of the *kamāyin* owners perceived the land acquisition issue as a conflict of economic interests. They see it as a competition between the local bricks and the thermal bricks (*Toob Harrary*) in the local market. The accusation is that some of the political elites have opened industrial bricks factories, in Greater Khartoum, which do not yet compete with the local bricks. Informant one explains:

Some people are benefiting from this acquisition, they are looking for us to close and shut the *kamāyin*. The local bricks we produce are good, some of those people have opened “brick industries” and they cannot compete with us. The local bricks we produce are very good and well known in the local market, to builders and engineers, they have been used for a very long time. The industrial bricks belong to government elites. They are promoting them, but we have the trust of the local market. They are trying to destroy us with the high-level decisions, coercion and the front-end loader.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ The front-end loader is used to demolish the *kamāyin*. Interview with active member of El-Gerief East Sit-in Committee

The process of shutting down the *kamāyin* is also seen to imply a deliberate process of social and human substitution, as it aims to bring another class of people to live in the proposed Blue Nile City, whose factories are located in the down town area.

El-Gerief-East as a town existed because of the “brick industries” and now they want to stop this profession because some influential figures have established thermal bricks industries “*Toob Harrary*” and they want to bring their people to live here. As they are saying to us as El-Gerief East people, you do not deserve this place near the bank of the Blue Nile!! They want another type of people to come and live here, and their factories are far from here. And by the way, most of the “*Toob Harrary*” factories are not registered in the real name of the owners. They use a cover registration in the name of a Turkish or Emirates owner, but the real owners are persons from the powerful elites of the regime.⁵⁸

The authorities have tried to use environmental reasons to shut down the *kamāyin*, but this was seen as merely an excuse. The *kamāyin* owners pursued the case up to the Constitutional Court and a decision to reject this claim was handed down. However, the sit-in committee claims that they have obtained a document stating that one of the well-known business families has complained about the *kamāyin* in El-Gerief East, claiming that it is causing economic harm to their industrial factories

Now the authorities have designed a new law to limit the profession as it is harmful for the environment. We have a decision from Sudan’s Constitutional Court (SCC) that the profession is not harmful for the environment. The judge articulated, if the *kamāyin* of El-Gerief East stops, all the factories should stop as well. As far as we know all the *kamāyin* along the river in Greater Khartoum work normally. Our financial deficit has reached 8 SDG milliard, and this has caused impoverishment for many families. Furthermore, it has had effects on our social cohesion in various areas, at least I can say that we are not like before. On the other hand, we have a document that shows that “Awlad al-Brrir” have complained about our local bricks and *kamāyin*⁵⁹, claiming that it has caused their factories’ losses.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Interview with active member of El-Gerief East Sit-in Committee

⁵⁹ This refers to an El-Gerief East Sit-in Committee Document

⁶⁰ Interview with landowner in Maṭary Karkōj

4.3.2 Views of Compensation Process: Corruption Claims

The *sāgyas* owners whose land was close to the bridge have been well compensated, both financially and in kind. The land owners considered the compensation to be fair and it was accepted according to informant one.

I was following the news of the first acquired *sāgyas* close to the bridge. Those were the first *sāgyas* to be acquired. Although the government accessed the *sāgyas* before the owners were compensated, they have received support from the area representative in the Parliament, Hassab El-Rasoul Ameer. Nevertheless, the owners of those *sāgyas* have received good compensation both cash and in kind. The officials approached everyone on the land who had a profession got good estimation for the profession and compensated them well eg; the compensation was 30 million SDG for each (*tarabaiza kamīna*)⁶¹. Thus, it was good compensation and the land owners have accepted it. This is the information that I had.⁶²

The second testimony indicates that not everyone thought that the compensation was fair and suggests that the land owners have not benefitted from it. Furthermore, it indicates the corruption in the compensation processes and calls for an investigation to be opened into the El-Gerief East land case. According to informant two.

None of the land owners benefited from the compensation. We as owners know the real values of our land. We lost a lot. This land represents our history, past and values; it is our real inheritance. The corruption in the compensation (processes and amounts) was unbelievable. Whatever I say would not cover this. All we need is to have an open fair investigation into the El-Gerief East land issue. I do not want to accuse anybody. But this file contains a lot of corruption.⁶³

Another view is that the compensation in general was not fair. Improper practices accompanied the allocation of compensated plots in the proposed site area for Blue Nile City, while the rainfed area of *Karkōj* was perceived as having the largest level of corruption involving both

⁶¹ *Tarabaiza* literally means table, but in the *kamāyin* and the brick-making language, it is a small work unit comprising four to five people. Two workers mix the mud, one fills the machine with brick moulds, and two workers empty the machine

⁶² Interview with active member of El-Gerief East Sit-in Committee

⁶³ Interview with landowner in Maṭary Karkōj

politicians and lawyers. Sāgya owner attached to the Blue Nile and El-Gerief East Sit-in Documenter expressed:

For us the compensation did not have any advantages. The area of the old village has been affected by the City of Blue Nile. The compensation for the acquired *sāgyas* and plots was not fair. Further, we have noticed corruption in the allocation of the converted land, the unique locations were given according to other criteria. The state did not fulfil its agreement with us, and we are cheated; according to article 13 the *sāgyas* should be allocated back to the owners. Regarding *Maṭary Karkōj*, the rain-fed land, this (situation) has seen the largest level of corruption in Sudan involving political elites and some lawyers. Few of our people were compensated in block 3 and al-Selliet East.⁶⁴

The fourth opinion tackled the in kind compensation, as the government suggested that in kind compensation could take place in the El-Sheikh al-amin area but it was refused by the *kamāyin* owners. A land owner in *Maṭary Karkōj* explained:

According to the 2007 Agreement, the Ministry is obliged to provide a suitable alternative where we can practice our profession of brick-making, a location that has enough water in addition to mud and animal dung (*zibala*), the government suggested the El-Sheikh al-amin area, an area that has neither enough water nor suitable mud for brick-making. The major point, the Government (*al-hakuma*) said that the *kamāyin* are harmful for the environment. Why do they want to harm the residents of El-Sheikh al-amin? Aren't they people? We know their motivation, they want to acquire our land that is attached to the Blue Nile.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Interview with Sāgya owner attached to the Blue Nile and the Sit-in Documenter.

⁶⁵ Interview with landowner in *Maṭary Karkōj*

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Political Elites Utilizing the Exclusion Measures

In this chapter I will discuss and conclude. First, I will discuss the descriptive case study as it is presented in chapter four, then I will summarize the findings of the thesis. A discussion of the material presented in chapter three will also be included.

According to (Hall et al., 2011, p 7) exclusion from land in South East Asia and other countries works through utilization of these four powers “regulation, legitimation, the market and force”. Based on this framework of understanding I will explore the assemblage of powers utilized throughout the case to exclude the landowners and residents of El-Gerief East from their rights to land.

A unique fact about the case of El-Gerief East is that it comprises two types of land acquisition: the *sāgyas* attached to the Blue Nile where the main economic profession of brick making is practised, and the acquisition of the *Maṭary* Karkōj agricultural rainfed area which is being converted to residential areas. Several dynamics are involved in the acquisition of the *sāgyas* attached to the Blue Nile, which is the site proposed for the construction of the Blue Nile City (BNC). The power of the market is the first implicit dynamic, as global capital is involved in urban land grabbing. The information about the project, obtained from the Al-bader group documentation, states that the project needs five million square metres. Furthermore, the map of the project describes one of the sites as “The Blue Nile East”, when it is in fact the old village of El-Gerief East. The dismal reality is that the construction of the Blue Nile City means demolishing a large part of El-Gerief East. The land acquisition that took place, favouring the Blue Nile City, demonstrates class exclusion. It shows the exclusionary nature of capitalism against the weaker groups accompanied by land dispossession (Hall et al., 2011, p 10).

The rainfed agricultural area of *Maṭary* Karkō has witnessed conversion to residential land parcels. This shows the pressure agricultural land faces in Greater Khartoum and the demand for land due to population growth and urban expansion. Furthermore, it also shows that conversion of agricultural land can solve housing problems, yet it does not support the maintenance of a green belt, and food production in Greater Khartoum. The most compelling fact for the residents of El-Gerief East in this case, is that this is their land and they should have

been informed, compensated, and provided with a housing plan for which they have been waiting for many years. Instead the Government has chosen to allocate the majority of the converted parcels to the employees of the petroleum, telecommunication, and electricity sectors, and the employees of these sectors are either affiliated with or supported by the Government. In my view this step can be considered to be a process of “licenced inclusion” which “highlights the role of the state and use of regulatory power as the main mechanism to define who shall hold what land, under what condition” (Hall et al., 2011, p 55).

One of the aspects of the case of El-Gerief East involves land grabbing⁶⁶ and international investors. This can be seen in the presence of the Kuwaiti company of Al-bader, the owner of the Blue Nile City. The use of government force shows the pressure they face to deliver the land. Nevertheless, the government has failed to deliver the land, despite reports it has received money for land. At this point it is relevant to discuss some complexities and dilemmas related to land grabbing in Sudan through four myths. The first myth is the statistical inconsistency. Sudan is often included with the leading countries subject to land grabbing, along with Madagascar, Ethiopia and Mozambique (Cotula et al., 2009, p 19). data from 2008 showed a total of 3,454,429 hectares being acquired (GRAIN, 2008). Purchasers are primarily from the Persian Gulf and Middle Eastern countries. Nonetheless, the latest data about large land acquisitions in Sudan shows that large land acquisition in Sudan is an ongoing process, with the total amount of acquired land being 646,414 hectares. Umbadda and Babiker reported that Sudan contributes 2.6 million leased hectares. Another estimation from the global project shows that the leased land ranges from 3.2 to 4.9 million hectares (Umbadda, 2014, p 38) (Babiker, 2013). The inconsistency related to the Sudan data on land grabbing reflects what Oya has tackled in his methodological reflection (Oya, 2013). Regardless of the data inconsistency in land grabbing, there is a Sudanese scholarly claim that all these figures “could be an underestimation of the amount of land contracted to foreigners” and that the reality is far more than that (Umbadda, 2014, p 38). The second myth is that land grabbing is as economic opportunity for African countries looking to attract foreign direct investment (FDI), and that Sudan is no exception. More particularly, the reality of Sudan after the secession of South Sudan

⁶⁶ Here I follow the definition of land grabbing as it defined by Tirana Declaration. It refers to the acquisition that are one or more of the following: (i) violate of human rights, particularly women rights; (ii) Ignore the consent of the affected land-users; (iii) Ignore social, economic and environmental impacts (iv) Lack transparency and; (v) Lack democratic participation (Tirana Declaration, 2011)

is that the country has lost nearly 75% of its foreign exchange and approximately 40% of its budget revenue. The country's record on good governance is perceived as an obstacle to attracting agricultural investment. “In view of the weak governance, this competition is likely to result in many bilateral project agreements being signed. Contracts that benefit a few, while damaging the environment, promoting inequality and stirring contention between both rural and marginalized community and central authorities” (Umbadda, 2014, p 45). For more details see section 6.2.

The third myth is the shadow of the failure of the “Sudan Arab breadbasket” discourse in the 1970s and 1980s. A related project with a total projected cost of US \$6 billion, only saw the allocation of US \$15 million for the feasibility procedures. O'Brien (1981) criticized the entire notion of the breadbasket:

The fantastic, ideological and exploitive nature of the breadbasket idea should be captured. The assumption of abundant fertile 185 million *fadān* is against the country's socio-political and ecological reality... “The hidden agenda of the breadbasket notion aims to convert the population occupying Sudan's "vacant" lands into agricultural wage labourers, producing the commodities demanded by the Arab oil-producers and profits for Arab and western capital” (O'Brien, 1981, p 26).

The fourth myth is the role of the Sudanese elites in the land grabbing. The rural example has suggested that with the support of the State, land has ended up in the hands of the wealthy “merchants/farmers agrarian-based elites using political coercion and genocide against the victims of induced environmental degradation” (Salih, 1999, p 72). Other prominent critical political literature, however, goes beyond that and describes the “Sudanese political elites and syndrome of failure”, giving them responsibility for failing to address the country’s largest questions: unity, development, peace and national identity, while giving preference to their own interests (Khalid, 1993). However, with reference to the arguments concerning the interests of the Sudanese political elites, and the other three myths, my own view is that land grabbing is indeed elite-driven in Sudan. The State and its elites will continue to offer both rural and urban land to investors, even cheaply, “to fill its coffers and perhaps to benefit unscrupulous officials” (Umbadda, 2014, p 46).

Highlighting the role of Sheikh al-Gid in the case provides some valuable insights. In a way it shows the strong legitimization role that Sufis, and Sufiism, plays in the Sudanese community. It also shows the rural face of El-Gerief East, not in a negative sense, but in that it demonstrates

the way followers of the Sufi *turuq* believe that their sheikhs can help to bring about justice even with its secular challenges. This insight shows that within the “multidimensional changes that took place in Sudan 1989-2011” (Casciarri et al., 2015) Sufism was also subject to change that were underpinned by politics.

A significant difference between the situation in El-Gerief East, and that of their counterparts in Um Doum, was the negotiation and support of Sheikh al-Gid, which underpinned Um Doum's endeavours in being allocated a housing plan on the converted land (Elamin, 2018). This showed how political, economic and symbolic power can determine social life. The mainstream residents of Um Doum are known to have their wealth and economic power as merchants. I would highlight the role Sheikh al-Gid in this case as certain interests converged: the residence of Um Doum, the Government, and Sheikh al-Gid. None of these powers are to be found in El-Gerief East. Sufi leaders have their significant symbolic power, yet they are never far from politics. They have always been an important source of legitimation for politicians and political regimes. The engagement of Sufi groups as a significant source of legitimation during the period (1969-1985) of President Nimeri is noteworthy (Hassan, 1993).

Conversely, the Sit-in of El-Gerief East presented a model social movement. A social movement is defined as “a network of informal interaction between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organizations engaged in political or cultural conflict on the basis of a shared collective identity” (Diani, 1992, p 13). To a large extent the sit-in has fulfilled the characteristics of a social movement. It comprises networks that informally share common beliefs and solidarities, engage in collective action, and are not part of an official organization (Diani, 1992, p 7). Nonetheless, the elements of common beliefs, solidarity, and collective action, in the El-Gerief East case, are the strongest features of the Sit-in. In my view, the Sit-in is a manifestation of what the community needed. The sit in clearly expressed the togetherness of the local residents, their views and interests. Furthermore, it presented a model of high profile urban land counter resistance that is distinguished from other land resistance in Greater Khartoum. The Sit-in committee is well organized, with dedicated leaders who are strengthened by a firm belief in the justice of their land rights issue. Therefore, the Sit-in committee represented the legitimate power of the people. Throughout the three decades of dictatorship in Sudan, the Government has tended not to recognize any social or political body which does not have permission from its authorities. The aim has been to control the political arena. Nonetheless, when the protest erupted the Government was forced to recognize the Sit-in

committee and to negotiate with them, as the protest and particularly its urban aspect was considered to be a political threat requiring a quick remedy.

(Bratton & Van de Walle, 1997) have observed that Africa urban protests rarely take the form of armed rebellion movements. This is due to urban residents and elites having vested interests in the State and being dependent on it. Their observation also applies to the early political opposition movement and its urban origins. The rural areas are seen as following the social and political patterns that are produced in towns. The economic concentration in urban areas is seen to produce protests that are connected to economic conditions that could generate violence and lootings, and which are often condemned by the urban elites. Non-violent protest would serve their interests better, backed by the fact that urban societies' interests are served better than those of their rural counterparts. Cited in (Salih, 1999, p 163). Despite the fact that El-Gerief East may be considered peri-urban from the socio-economic perspective, the protest and the sit-in activities have a significant impact on the urban politics of Greater Khartoum. They share some of the dynamics and transformation features of peri-urban areas, and these connect to the macro social fabric beyond the economy and the geography (Jaquinta & Drescher, 2000, p 11). This, however, was clear in the way the Government approached the sit-in committee aiming for a quick solution during the congested situation through a third party who was a Government-backed person. Nonetheless, the discussion generated by Bratton and Van de Walle is relevant to the position of El-Gerief East in Greater Khartoum.

From the perspective of macro-politics, the sit-in represented a political challenge. The sit-in square represented an emancipated political, social, and cultural free arena of expression that was taken and protected by the people's legitimacy. Astonishingly, throughout the three decades of dictatorship in Sudan, none of the political parties or social movements were able to grasp an arena of expression without state consent for a lengthy period. The exceptions are the El-Gerief East Sit-in and the resistance movement of *Kajbar* in northern Sudan (although the resistance arena and dynamics were different for the latter). One should consider the impact of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) 2005 and the Sudan Interim Constitution 2005 on both the political and social life, at least theoretically, as they promised a more peaceful and inclusive life. Another effect is that of the Arab Spring 2011, as it provided people with various techniques of peaceful expression. I perceive it as vital in promoting the popular non-violence expressions within the Sudanese context.

With respect to the discussion of the different patterns of tenure between the different parts of Sudan, Komey states that “the registration of land as private property means acquisition of an

asset of significant and durable economic value”. He argues that the differences in land rights and land tenure between the case of Nuba Mountain (customary) and private land ownership in northern and central Sudan is the cause of the political and socio-economic differences, or in his words “ differences in land ownership rights has provided and still provides the source of wealth and power for the current political parties and their socio-economic institutions in northern and central Sudan” (Komey, 2010b, p 218). I divide my argument into two parts. In the first part I agree that there are historical and socio-economic factors that have caused asymmetrical relations between different parts of the country (the centre and the peripheries). The second part is disagreement with Komey’s absolute argument, as the case of El-Gerief East land acquisition illustrates that even land that is privately owned can be subject to state and political elite acquisition, exclusion, and land dispossession, and can also take place in the centre and the northern part of Sudan.

It is pertinent to compare the cases of El-Gerief East with other cases of land acquisition in Greater Khartoum, namely the case of Um Doum, the case of Abu Sied and the case of Al-Salha. In the case of peri-urban Um Doum, there was clear land grabbing intervention as the government intended to sell one thousand *fadān* to an Arab investor. Community mobilization with the assistance of Sheikh al-Gid stopped the acquisition and the land has been converted into a residential zone and re-distributed. Sadly, the case has seen social exclusion for certain groups (Elamin, 2018). The case of Abu Sied has involved the acquisition of individual and community land that has been acquired and re-allocated to two foreign real estate corporations (without informing the land owners), to construct two residential cities that target the middle and upper middle class, and the compensation has seen mismanagement (Franck, 2015). The case of Al-Salha represents a unique narrative, which arises from the community rather than the State being the main actor in terms of land acquisition. The community acquired the land through the *hiyāza* process. *Hiyāza* “is any unregistered piece of land. It does not matter who used it or who claims it: whether a community, a leader or an individual. If it is unregistered, it is *hiyāza*” (Assal, 2018, p 78). Although the situation is that an individual or community occupies the land for a lengthy period of time, it is still *hiyāza*. The problem, however, concerns the increase in the demand for land in Greater Khartoum. Due to affordability issues for the lower income groups, *hiyāza* is one of the best and most realistic ways to obtain a land parcel. The dilemma arises, however, that the one piece of land is sold many times, and the process involves the lower level of administration (popular committee) being responsible for issuing the land sale certificate. This practice is causing conflict between the old inhabitants and the

newcomers (Assal, 2018, 76-93). In comparing the three cases with the case of El-Gerief East some similarities with the case of Um Doum are evident, chiefly in the involvement of the Arab investors, and the role of Sheikh Al-Gid. However, the two cases are distinguished by their outcomes. Some similarities with case of Abu Sied are also apparent, most notably in the way in which the government acquired the land and processed the compensation. In my view the case of *hiyāza* represents a unique form of land acquisition, and demonstrates the complexity of tenure in Sudan, mainly challenging those scholars who argue that: “Land belongs to the State”. Nevertheless, the case of El-Gerief East stands alone in terms of its complexity, as the land acquisition took place in two geographical locations, with two separate processes, and the resistance accompanying the acquisition had a high profile.

The aggressive move to close down the *kamāyin* with the introduction of a new law was viewed as an attempt to benefit other business interests (capitalists). The competition between the local red bricks and the new industrialized thermal bricks is clear and shows the presence of market power. Such competition can also be read as livelihood versus capitalism. This issue has demonstrated the utilization of environmental discourse against the local *kamāyin*. Although some studies have revealed the negative contribution of local brick industries (*kamāyin*) to deforestation and greenhouse gas emissions (Alam, 2006), the overall policy based on an environmental impact assessment of this profession should be based on finding suitable livelihood alternatives, along with treating all the emissions creators (local-industrial) as equal. Here I see the presence of the market and regulatory power as interlinked.

Some of the exclusionary methods, however, lie in the regulations and legislation that govern land in Sudan (rural and urban). The exclusion is evident in two areas; one in the regulations themselves and the other in the implementation and observance of the regulations. The regulations include: The Unregistered Land Act 1970 where it is stated that “All land of any kind, whether waste, forest, occupied or unoccupied, which was not registered before the commencement of the Act, would on such commencement, be the property of the Government and be deemed to have been registered as such” (Babiker, 2018, p 132). The application of the Act has significant implications for many issues particularly that of customary land tenure. The CTA stated that “land registered on or after 6 April 1970, as freehold in the name of an owner shall be deemed merely the ownership of the "usufruct" thereof”. This makes the Civil Transaction Act merely a further reform of the former (Gordon, 1986, p 143). The Investment Act in its amended version of 1999 included a provision prohibiting nationals from taking foreign investors to court (Umbadda, 2014, p 35). With regards to the Construction Planning

and Land Disposition Act, 1994, it does not have the legal power of the Civil Transaction Act 1984, but it has powerful influences on land acquisition in urban areas. The Act is designed to strengthen the power of the Governor, Ministry of Investment and Ministry of Animal resources. It is built on the 1930 Act and reaffirms it. The Act does not show any recognition for communal rights or individual rights in urban areas. Out of 24 articles, only one article talks about citizen land rights and it was a detail of the compensation mechanisms. The Act is poorly drafted and shows a mercantile mentality.

The regulations in practice also show the selective manner of their application, both the 1970 and 1984 Acts have “never been applied on a routine basis” and the government uses them selectively when it needs to do so (Komey, 2010b) (Egemi, 2006) (De Wit, 2001). Some of the exclusionary regulations arise from socio-cultural patterns. This has been reflected in both land ownership in the case, in general, and in the *kamāyin* profession, which is a patriarchal dominated arena. During my explorations to find answers to the issue of women owning land, particularly in view of the female participation in the sit-in, it was revealed that some of the women inherited land, but that it was managed either by their son or husband.

The case of El-Gerief East involves compulsory land acquisition. Compulsory acquisition is the power of the State in acquiring the right to land, regardless of the consent of the land or property owners, for the purposes of a development project or conservation. Nonetheless, finding a balance between the need for land for the greater good, and enhancing tenure and property rights, is required (Keith et al., 2008, P 5). The compensations are perceived to be the backbone of the acquisition process. The compensation process is recommended and protected by both constitutional and human rights instruments such as the Habitat Agenda, as it is expressed via the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements (1996) and The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Keith et al., 2008, P 5). Furthermore, The Interim Constitution of Sudan 2005: Article 43 (1) states that "Every citizen shall have the right to acquire or own property as regulated by law. (2) No private property may be expropriated save by law in the public interest and in consideration for prompt and fair compensation. No private property shall be confiscated save by an order of a court of law." (Sudan Interim Constitution, 2005). The compensation in the case lacked unified measures, an inference I also drew from the interviews with government officials. In contrast with Hall, Hirsch and Li (2011) perceive compensation as “double edge exclusion” whereas I identify it as market driven in the case of El-Gerief East. (Hall et al., 2011, p 10).

The case of El-Gerief East is multi-layered in the sense that the land issue cannot be considered in isolation but is rather a combination of issues of livelihood, housing and land materiality, development marginalization, lack of services, and identity. Amazingly, the so-called El-Gerief Anthem epitomizes these values and meanings. The anthem shows that the land issue belongs to the people and is a part of their suffering. In Sudanese culture, with both its Islamic and African components, pride is something collective, yet when it emerges it covers other issues.

Our beloved El-Gerief is the pride

your honoured land will never be suppressed.....

The relationship of people to their land is not limited by its materiality and livelihood, it is social and culturally embedded. It involves values, identity and symbolism (Salih, 1999, p 163).

The power of force is observed in the utilization of state violence, both on the bank of the Blue Nile where the profession of local brick-making is practised (the proposed site of the Blue Nile City), and on the bridge as an arena for protest. The physical violence caused loss of lives and loss of livelihood. The use of violence was accompanied by a legitimization discourse, that the land is acquired for the “greater good”. This can be compared with the violence the Sudanese state uses against the rural population when they are expropriated from their land. The violence against rural populations is different but the same in essentials. The rural violence resembles ethnic cleansing rather than land expropriation, while the urban violence is taking place in the public gaze.

5.2 Political Corruption as a Form of Exclusion

It is claimed that both the conversion of the rainfed agricultural land of *Karkōj* and the allocation of compensation have involved massive practices of corruption. More specifically the claims accuse politicians, lawyers and officials of playing and even hiding official papers from the National Land Registry. The corruption claims in land governance and urbanization involves the Khartoum Structural Plan (KSP) in that there is a claim that some affiliated National Congress Party (NCP) members who also sit on the Khartoum Structural Plan (KSP) Committee, have used the information of the KSP for their personal gain, particularly, the locations that will witness land conversion from agriculture to residential zoning in Greater Khartoum. There is also a claim that those (new landlords) have influenced a change in the

original location of the bridge that connects El-Gerief East to Burry-Khartoum.⁶⁷ These claims focus on political and administrative corruption. Political corruption is the “the abuse of public office for private gain”. Political corruption is also seen as exclusion as it is harmful for the collective institutions and the democratic process (Warren, 2006, p 803-804). Literature on political and administrative corruption suggests that the two are intertwined with the broader setting of governance and institutions. Nonetheless, in cases of contested governance and absence of accountability corruption thrives even more. Political corruption is difficult to prove, yet it is inherent in the processes by which political elites acquire the land of the poor and weaker social groups. In the land sector, political corruption can take many forms, but the impact whereby the rights of individuals and communities are violated is universal. Furthermore, political corruption is frequently observed in countries with transitional situations both in politics and economics, for instance in cases of moving from a central planned economy to a neo-liberal economy (International, 2011, p 4-5).

The Sudanese conditions in the global transparency and governance literature also offer significant insights. According to the Transparency International Index 2017 Sudan is categorized within the most corrupt countries, ranking number 175 out of 180 countries, with a score of 16. Although the score has increased from 11 in the past five years, the country still occupies the bottom five in the world transparency indicators, and is the worst in Africa, along with South Sudan and Somalia (International, 2018). According to the World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators 2017, Sudan has a low score (below 10) in most of the criteria: 4.29 in political stability, 7.21 in government effectiveness, 4.33 in regulatory quality, 10.58 in role of law, and 3.37 in the control of corruption (Bank, 2017). Another recognized global index is the global integrity 2016 data, where Sudan has an overall score of 24 which is considered weak on the global scale and aggregate bottom scores in the East African level. Sudan scored 33 (weak) in accountability and civil services, 25 in role of law and election and public management, and a score of 3 in access to information and openness (Integrity).

Other indicators are related to the business environment and doing business. In the last 5 years Sudan had an overall ranking of 154 out of 183; ranked 154 out of 183 in investor protection; 155 out of 183 in hiring project personnel, and 146 out of 183 in contract enforcement (Umbadda, 2014, p 40). Lack of transparency and nepotism are reported to have taken place between and in some of the Ministries. This is made clear in the report of The Ministry of

⁶⁷ Interview with Kamal Salih

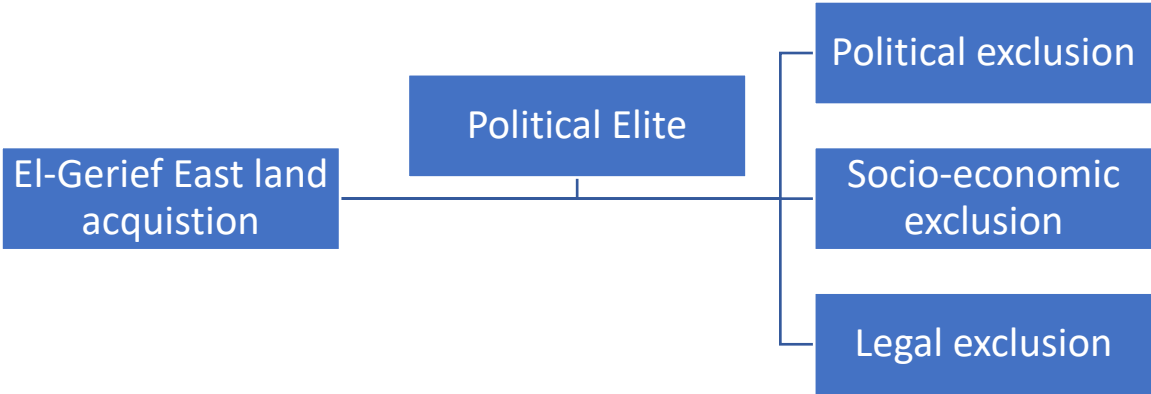
Industry and Investment (2015) where Khartoum State's Ministry of Investment is accused of selling land parcels valued at 12.7 million Sudanese pounds to three Arabian companies without consulting the Investment Commission Authorities. The report also states that only 25% of the proposed development projects are implemented due to land use inefficiency (Taha, 2016, p 21). The tabloid newspapers and scholars reported that some investors, especially Saudi investors, who are primarily linked to agricultural investment complained that "State governors would not grant concession unless they are heavily bribed for unspecified services". This is reported to have led Saudi investors to find alternative destinations for investment (Umbadda, 2014, p 45).

5.3 Summarizing the Exclusion Cycle

The material presented in this thesis explored ethnographically the case of El-Gerief East. The case described the historical and relatively complex struggle of El-Gerief East residents with their land and livelihood. The case showed the assemblage of powers utilized to exclude the resident of El-Gerief East/the *sāgyas* owners from their land. Those powers concern aspects of regulation, legitimation, the market and force. Furthermore, political and administrative corruption were powerful tools of exclusion. The case illustrated that private registered land can be acquired and expropriated in same way as customary land. The process of "licence inclusion" is reflected in the form of the State allocating land to favoured social and politically affiliated groups. The case illustrated that the utilization of force and violence in the urban context is in principal the same as in the rural environment, but it differs in its scale, being less intense. The case showed that the Ministry of Urban Planning lacks unified measures of compensation, and that the latter is a tool of exclusion. The case illustrated that land acquisition is linked to land grabbing in some of its aspects, however, both the land grabbing in Sudan, and in the case, is driven by political elites.

The Sit-in of El-Gerief East is a mature social movement that fulfilled the definition of a social movement and is characterized by a flexible structure, as well as being task oriented and consensus based. It is the means by which a marginalized community has shown that they have a powerful voice, especially as their activities have been conducted in defiance of a lack of consent from the State. The sit-in has set a historical precedent in Sudan, as this is the first movement to create an ongoing and long-standing series of resistance activities which embody an emancipated social, political and cultural awareness.

Figure (13) the Cycle of Exclusion



Source: Study data

Linking the case to the macro level of politics and policies would enable it to be better understood within the holistic politics, economics, social and legal context of Sudan (see Figure 11). The macro level suggests that the case is influenced by the pattern of distorted urbanization and population agglomeration in Greater Khartoum. The reflection of these factors in Greater Khartoum shows the strong rural-urban interlinks. The second aspect is that the political elite are the major producer of the structural exclusions: politically in terms of contested governance, socio-economically in terms of producing asymmetrical inequality between the various Sudanese geographies and legally through the land norms the concentrate power in hand of political elite and their wealthy alliance. The political elites also produced the direct powers of exclusions that have violated land rights and livelihoods in the case of El-Gerief East.

The material presented in the thesis aimed at providing a “meaning making” interpretation for both the descriptive and the ethnographical part of the case study of El-Gerief East and the macro political level in Sudan. A vital observation that can be extracted from the gluttonous

scrambling for urban and peri-urban land, is that it has been demonstrated to all actors that land reform is needed, and urgently, in Sudan.

However, both the context of the case and the macro environment seem to reflect an “atmosphere of exclusion”. In order to transform this paradigm into one of "inclusion" I suggest the followings reforms:

- a) Democracy: In my view democracy is significant in any case of land reform in Sudan. Democracy impacts all the governance levels positively and allows bottom up participation. Furthermore, it will allow the Sudanese communities to express their inherent wisdom and innovative heritage.
- b) Reform of the land laws: The practice showed that land laws are complex, ineffective and biased for both rural and urban populations. Urgent reform is thus needed.
- c) The law reform should, however, be underpinned by a clear framework that tackles macro land policy, updates legislation, promotes good institutions, and the role of law (Pantuliano, 2007).
- d) Comprehensive reconciliation: The long history of conflict and oppression suggests that a solution for a better remedy should extend beyond a political solution and should embrace the social, cultural, and political aspects of society, in order to impact at the group, individual and national levels. Therefore, comprehensive reconciliation is essential to land reform in Sudan.
- e) The urban-rural land reform is interlinked: the representation of the urban-rural dichotomy in Greater Khartoum illustrates that urban-rural land reform needs to be combined. A balanced and fair development based on the right approach is critical to both and would facilitate the transition from “land grabbing to inclusive cities” and [villages] (Zoomers et al., 2017).

Appendixes

Appendix (1) List of Interviewees

No	Name	Age	sex	Date of Interview	Place of interview	Brief Profile
1	Active member in El-Gerief Sit-in Committee	55	Man	2 times 20.07-25.07 and 10.08.2018	El-Gerief East	Active member in El-Gerief Sit-in Committee
2	Landowner in matari Karkōj	45	Man	Twice 20.07 and 01.08.2018	Maṭary Karkōj-El-Gerief East	Active member in El-Gerief East Sit-in Committee
3	Sāgya owner attached to the Blue Nile	48	Man	Twice 28.07.2018 and 01.08.2018	El-Gerief East	Active member in El-Gerief East Sit-in Committee
4	El-Gerief East Sit-in participant	40	woman	12.08.2018	El-Gerief East	Active member in El-Gerief East Sit-in Committee
5	El-Gerief East Sit-in documenter	60	Man	3 times 25.07-01.08 and 20.08.2018	El-Gerief East- The old village	Active member in El-Gerief East Sit-in Committee

6	Osama Shabo	60	Man	15.08.2018	Office in Khartoum	Director of Acquisition and Compensation, Ministry of Physical Planning
7	Abdalla Osman	55	Man	15.08.2018	Office in Khartoum	Director of the Blue Nile City Project
8	Kamal Salih	70	Man	Twice 5.08-18.08.2018	Home-Omdurman	Retired urban planner
9	Omar Egemi (Informal interview)	65	Man	05.08.2018	Office-University of Khartoum	University Lecturer

Appendix (2) Interviews Guide

Interview guide with the Key informants from the community

Have you been asked or consulted on the process of land acquisition in the area?

How the process of taking off the land has started?

Have the local community been contacted?

Has there been any offers of compensations?

What are the mobilization strategies of local community?

Are there any acceptable deals for you from the Government?

Who are the most affected groups in the area

Are there special effects on women?

Interview guide with the government officials/urban planner at the Ministry of planning, Khartoum State:

What are the aims of urban planning policy?

What are the examples of success and challenges of the urban planning?

What are the plans for the semi-displaced areas?

What are the compensation offers for the taken lands?

What are views on the foreign investment in links to development?

Appendix 3 Informed Consent

Approved version to be translated to Arabic

Hereby this is a consent between the student Yousif Badawi Abdelrahman and Mr/Ms. The aim of the consent is to set an agreement between the researcher and interviewee for the seek of an academic research. The study is being conducted in the name of: The politics of land acquisition in Sudan. The student/researcher is affiliated to The Norwegian University of Life Science (NMBU), Department of Environment and Development Studies (NORAGRIC), Supervised by Dr. Poul Wisborg.

You have been selected and asked to be part of this research and I'm fully appreciate your time and collaboration. Your response will be kept confidential only for the seek of the research. No names, personal, individual information's or locations will be reported.

Your participation in the research and interviews is voluntary, you are not obliged to provide any information you do not want to give or answer any questions you do not want to answer.

At the end of the study, you can get copy/summary of the study if you want!

Participant:

Interviewer/researcher

Appendix (4) Agreement between the Ministry of Physical Planning and The Sāgya's Owners in El-Gerief East (28.10.2007)

- 1) The compensation should be 1400-meter square for every cultivated and used feddan, through allocation of free leasehold first-class plots. The Ministry of Physical Planning should approve the compensation proposal in a period of not more than one month
- 2) The compensation should be in an area parallel to the Sāgyas
- 3) The Ministry of Physical Planning should identify the compensated plots before the process of relinquishment from the agricultural land; however, the plots should be accompanied with registration and contract procedures.
- 4) The Ministry commits to prepare the subjected plots with the necessary services (water supply, electricity and roads).
- 5) The Ministry commits and works to harmonize the compensated plots with the geographical fabric of the proposed city of Blue Nile, without planning other land for other purposes between the city and the compensated plots.
- 6) The compensated plots should have investment value and plan standards.
- 7) There should be planned and constructed roads in the compensated areas in harmonization with the proposed Blue Nile city.
- 8) This agreement allows the Ministry of Physical planning to enter the land to finish the planning and cartographic necessities until it starts the registration process.
- 9) The Ministry commits to keep the people of the area with their profession in brick making, through finding alternatives locations. Necessary assistance should be provided before the start of the new season.
- 10) The work on the brick making (*The Kamāyin*) stops upon the signing of this agreement.
- 11) The Ministry commits to plan the ancient and historical area of El-Gerief East according to the regulations of the village organizations.
- 12) There should be commitment to enforce the housing plan that started in 1971 and has not been.
- 13) In case of not fulfilling any of the above obligations, the Sāgyas will be allocated back to its owners before the acquisition and a compensation for any material or moral harm will be paid.

Source: El-Gerief East Sit-in Committee Document

Appendix 5 Names and Types of Injuries of El-Gerief East Residents in the Confrontations with Police 2015-2016

No	Name	Type of Injury
1	Ahmed Mubarak Ahmed	bullet shot
2	Khalil Badr Eldinn	bullet shot
3	Hoyam Yousif	Broke leg
4	Khalid Babiker Khogali	Explosive tear gas
5	Gido El-Sied	bullet shot
6	Essam Saad	bullet shot
7	Abdalla El-Balal	bullet shot
8	Osman Abdel Rahim	bullet shot
9	Muawiyah Abu-Bakr	Explosive tear gas
10	Ibrahim Mustafa	Tear gas
11	Amir Babiker	Tear gas
12	El-Silleh Abdalla	Tear gas
13	Mohammed Hamid Khogali	Tear gas
14	Ali Mohammed El-Khidir	Tear gas
15	Mohammed Ahmed Abbas	Tear gas
16	Khalid Hurashi	Tear gas
17	Hussien El-Gammar	Tear gas
18	Habib Allah El-Gaali	Tear gas
19	El-Tayeeb Hussien	Tear gas
20	Mohammed Elsied Gaddo	Tear gas
21	Bilal Gasm Abdalla	Tear gas
22	Yousif Subahi El-haj	bullet shot
23	Taj Eldinn Elzien	Tear gas
24	Najm Eldinn Mohammed	bullet shot

Source: El-Gerief East Sit-in Committee Document

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