From illegal squatter settlement towards legal shantytowns: Negotiations of power and responsibilities in Khartoum Shantytowns

Mohamed Bakhit

Introduction:
The article intends to investigate how services and development programs in shantytown areas have been designed and executed in this specific way (e.g. El-Baraka shantytown in Khartoum capital of Sudan). Also it examines the perceptions and ideologies behind the particular selection of services and who actually determines the priorities and takes on the responsibilities involved.

Sudan is the largest African country[1]; covering about one million square miles, with a population of 39,154,000 according to the 2008 Census(Central Bureau of Statistics, 2009), growing at rate of 2.8 percent per annum. The population is linguistically, religiously, environmentally and economically diverse. According to the Census of 1956, there are 56 main ethnic groups, sub-divided into 597 sub-tribal groups, and these speak 115 tribal languages (Salih, 1987), although the majority of the population use Arabic as the lingua franca. Religiously, 55-58 percent (according to the census of 1956) of the total population is Muslim; Christians amount for about 10 percent of the population, while the remainder follows various kinds of traditional beliefs. Geographically, the country ranges from tropical forests in the South to sandy deserts in the North, and is rich in natural resources. Sudan is currently a significant oil producing country with an output of 500,000 barrels per day, and is a major primary agricultural producer.

Despite its richness in resources, Sudan like many other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa has witnessed many years of political instability and civil wars since its independence in 1956. The country has also suffered from many other prolonged problems like: ethnic conflicts, high rates of poverty, vast population displacement, the unequal distribution of social services, immense levels of immigration, many kinds of environmental disasters, and poor quality of the government services (education, health, and bureaucracy).

---

[1] This fact will change in July 2011, when South Sudan will announce its independence from the rest of the country.

Indeed about 13.5% (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2009) of the total population of Sudan currently lives in the capital Khartoum. Migrants to Greater Khartoum[2]come from all parts of Sudan, due to its concentration of services and economic growth. The first waves of migrants arrived at the capital in the period of 1960-1970. These were economic migrants, and the majority of them originated from northern parts of the country, searching for employment in the newly established commercial and industrial sectors in the capital. Moreover the majority were educated, as only 23% of all migrants to Khartoum (aged:20-24 years) in 1971 were without any education (Galal-aldin, 1980). The majority chose to live within the city, or in small villages near peripheries, until these were gradually swallowed up by the urban area. But the statistics show that a small number also came from areas of western and southern Sudan (between 5-8%) to work as un-skilled workers, and they lived near the industrial zones, in illegal squatter settlements. Later on the government, under pressure from local residents, evacuated them and planned new legal fourth class settlements on the outskirts of the city. These formed the nucleus of the present shantytowns.

The second wave of migrants arrived during 1980-2000 pushed by the civil war in the south and Darfur, and drought and desertification in western Sudan. Millions of people were displaced from their original areas and relocated in the capital city. They lived in different areas, some in any vacant land inside the city, others preferring to settle on the periphery of the city, near old legal shantytowns, but all of them inhabiting squatter settlements. One study estimates the number of illegal squatter settlements in Khartoum in 1991 as more than 50 settlements, occupied by about 1.5 million IDPs (Banaga,2001).

Agency and power in shantytowns

In the shantytown areas there are three agents (i.e. local people, government and NGOs) acting in the same sphere. Although in the end their obvious purpose is to serve the local people of shantytowns and provide them the services and development programs they require, each agent has it is own unique character and specific ideology, meaning they act differently in order to achieve their respective priorities. Furthermore, to be successful they are obliged to negotiate and share their power and responsibility. Moreover the

---

[2] The most common term for the three towns comprises the capital territory: Khartoum, Khartoum North, and Omdurman. Khartoum itself is the official capital.

three agents each has its own course of historical developments and resources, and therefore clashes and disputes are likely to happen as unilateral successes and achievement occur.

"Agency" in this paper stands for the "*freedom of the contingently acting subject over and against the constraints that are thought to derive from enduring social structures*"(Loyal and Barnes , 2001). Human beings have agency, i.e. they act independently of, and in opposition to, structural constraints, and thus are able to re-construct social structure through their freely chosen actions.

This concept of an agent ties agency directly to power. A "acting against the constraints" (Loyal and Barnes , 2001) pre-supposes being able to intervene in your community, or to refrain from such intervention, with the anticipated effect of influencing a specific process or state of affairs. Action depends largely upon the capability of the individual/groups to "make a difference" to a pre-existing state of structures or course of events.

An agent ceases to be such if he/she or they lose the ability to "make a difference," i.e. exercise some sort of power.

Accordingly, the position of local people in the shantytowns is a very critical one; they are the subjects of the services and development, but still an agent responsible for providing them. Indeed, this double role is sometimes confusing even for local people themselves. Contributing to this is the existence of other agents also participating in this endeavor, sharing in the decision-making and the allocation of resources. They are often obliged to act differently in specific situations as decisions makers and providers, when they depend on their resources, in other situations as recipients and dependents, when the government or NGOs design and provide the services and developmental projects in question.

The global slums:

Mike Davis's book Planet of Slums, considered one of the most important references to appear in the last decade, reviews the most significant approaches and policies dealing with the three agents: slum populations, governments, and international donors. He concludes his book by asserting that "*the root cause of urban slumming seems to lie not in urban poverty but in urban wealth*" (Davis, 2006) .

He starts by blaming the IMF and World Bank in imposing financial regulation upon Third World countries, which led to agricultural

deregulation and harsh financial discipline, pushing a huge number of rural laborers to urban slums even as cities ceased to create new jobs. He also blamed the new wisdom of the late 1970s and early 1980s mandate that the state ally itself with international donors, and then, NGOs, as advocated in the thoughts of English architect John Turner, stressing a sites-and-services provision of basic infrastructure to support upgrading of self-help housing. Amidst great propaganda about "helping the poor help themselves" " (Davis, 2006, p.72)), the purpose was to make houses affordable to low income households without the payments of subsidies, in contrast to the heavily subsidized public-housing approach. However Mike Davis criticizes this approach for its paving the way for a withdrawal of state and local government intervention and support of slum dwellers, and putting them at risk of market fluctuations.

The author also criticized the recent approach of Hernando de Soto" (Davis, 2006, 80) a Peruvian businessman, who become a global expert in the neo-liberalism approach of the 1990s. De Soto asserted that third world cities are not so much in need of investment and employment as suffering from the lack of property rights. The slum dwellers, de Soto argues, are in fact wealthy, but they are unable to access their wealth (which is possible by improving real estate in the informal sector, or turning it into liquid capital), because slum dwellers do not possess formal property title. Titling, de Soto claimed, would instantly create massive equity with little or no cost to government; part of this new wealth, he suggested, would supply capital to micro-entrepreneurs to create new jobs in the slums, and shantytowns would then become "acres of diamonds". But Mike Davis also here makes an important critique, by pointing to the fact that titling accelerates social differentiation in the slum and does nothing to aid tenants, the actual majority of the poor in many cities. It even risks creating a large underclass population that is denied access to any form of affordable or acceptable housing.

Finally, the author goes further and criticizes the national elites for creating patterns of land use and population density which reiterate the older logic of colonial oppression and racial dominance. He notes that throughout Third World cities, postcolonial elites have inherited and greedily reproduced the physical footprints of segregated colonial cities. Despite the rhetoric of national liberation and social justice, national elites have aggressively adapted the racial zoning of the colonial periods to defend their own class

privileges and spatial exclusivity. Indeed one might say poor rural populations have just replaced the former native's colonies.

The issue of government- local people relations in worldwide slums was also the focus of an important report written by a UN-agency. The Challenge of Slums: Global Report on Human Settlements 2003, represents the first global assessment of slums by International NGOs.

The report proves that the total number of slum dwellers increased substantially during the 1990s (Human Settlements Programme, 2003). It is further projected that in the next 30 years, the global number of slum dwellers will increase to about 2 billion. Meanwhile the urban population in less developed regions increased by 36 per cent over the course of the last decade.

Taking an optimistic attitude, the report praises the governmental approaches in dealing with slums, describing them as shifted from negative policies such as forced eviction, neglect and involuntary resettlement, to more positive policies such as self-help and upgrading, facilitating and rights-based policies. The report suggests that informal settlements, where most of the urban poor in developing countries live, are increasingly seen by public decision-makers as places of opportunity, as 'slums of hope' rather than 'slums of despair'.

The report also discusses approaches in dealing with slums, and considers slum upgrading to be among the most important strategies. In fact it has received greater emphasis in recent years, however, remains only one solution among several others. The failure of past slum upgrading and low-income housing development has, to a large extent, been a result of inadequate allocation of resources, the report stresses, accompanied by ineffective cost-recovery strategies.

The report suggests that there is great potential for enhancing the effectiveness of slum policies by fully involving the urban poor and those traditionally responsible for investment in housing development. In addition, the report claims that it has long been recognized that the poor play a key role in the improvement of their own living conditions and that their participation in decision-making is not only a right, thus an end in itself, but is also instrumental in achieving greater effectiveness in the implementation of public policies.

Another remarkable contribution in this regard is a recent article about town planning policies, which suggests ideology and not objective science or a

genuine desire to promote development is at the root of development policies in African countries. It identifies and discusses four ideologies (Njoh, 2009): indigenous elitism (pre-colonial era – 1884); European racism (colonial era, 1884–1960s); modernism (1960–1980s); and globalism (1990s–present); these have been at the root of public health elements of town planning in Africa since the pre-colonial era. The article argues that with the exception of indigenous elitism, all the ideologies are alien to Africa. Furthermore, the author asserts that the problems associated with ideology as the basis of development policy are magnified when the ideology is of the imported rather than the native variety.

In summary the article uses the case of public health elements of town planning schemes to argue that development policies in sub-Saharan Africa often fail because they are typically driven by ideology rather than objective science or a genuine desire to promote meaningful development. In fact, ideologically-based policies are also implemented in many other aspects of town planning, e.g. shantytowns, and the same failed results are likely to occur.

In order to investigate the relations between the three agents and the provision of services and development programs, it is necessary to explore the stages of development that have taken place in the El-Baraka shantytown historically.

The stage of squatter settlement

This period extended from the late 1970s until upgrading of the area in 1992. People lived on the basis of ethnic enclaves; every ethnic group having its neighborhood ruled by an ethnic group leader(sultan), some of them appointed by local people and approved by their chiefs in the areas of origin, whereas others appointed themselves or only by their close relatives[3]. It depended on whether the system of the respective ethnic group was centralized (e.g. Shilluk) or segmentary (e.g. Dinka). At that time, relations between ethnic enclaves were filled with tensions and clashes, which were solved partially after the formation of the tribal leaders' council, which also dealt with disputes between individuals of different ethnic backgrounds.

Services and security were provided by the NGOs and the people themselves. Health centers, water wells and food assistance were provided

---

[3] Interview with Sultan: William, Elbaraka shantytown, Khartoum, 15/8/2010.

by many international NGOs. Meanwhile security was run by the people themselves, in chaotic ways, which gave the area its reputation of criminality. "Kartun Kassala" (the former name of the area) was associated with drug dealers, illegal local alcohol distribution, prostitution and theft. That might have been one reason for the eagerness of the local people to plan and legalize their settlement. To make matters worse, the government took on destructive role in squatter settlement, considering it an illegal form of settlement, and indeed on several occasions destroying whole areas, in pursuing what I called "demolish-legalize policy". This policy always tended toward legalizing some settlements by planning or upgrading them, usually in remote areas, and toward demolishing the squatter settlements located near the center, or on high value real estate areas.

In 1988, the capital was overwhelmed by floods and heavy rains, causing the wholesale destruction of the shantytowns, since they were constructed of only mud and cardboard. As is usual under such disaster circumstances the poorer sections of society suffered most. Such people tended to live in mud houses and 82 per cent (Davies and Walsh, 1997) of the damaged and destroyed houses were built of these materials. Those affected moved to a nearby new market and took shelter in its empty shops. Meanwhile the government represented by the prime minister refused to visit the area [4], unlike other nearby legal shantytowns, because it was not legally considered a part of the city.

The stage of upgrading

At this stage the first contact between local people and the government was established, implying recognition by the government to shantytown settlers as part of the capital city. Local people agreed to participate effectively in the upgrading measures, because they had observed the benefit of planning/upgrading in other neighboring areas. This participation included the selection of experts (ereef), local individuals who helped the planning bureaucrats directly, and local committees who contributed by informing the whole community about the procedure of legalizing their homes.

In fact, the bureaucratic procedures of registration; investigation; providing documents and paying the fees, were very complicated for the majority of

---

[4] Interview with: Saymon Ushan Ding, in 21/3/2009, Elbaraka.

people, but it represented a first step towards integrating them in city life, a style of life characterized by trusting "papers" more than "talking".

A lot of negotiations took place between local committees and the government about how many families had the right of settle in the area, and consequently about the size of each house in the area. Today differences still exist between the size of houses in the various quarters, for example, quarter No.2 has the smallest allocated space per house(217 m²), because the majority of its inhabitants were from the same ethnic group(Fur). They wanted as many people as possible to settle together, and did not want members of their ethnic group moving to other quarters. As for the planning authority, it was obvious that they were concerned mainly with re-structuring the area to be more organized physically, meaning that in the negotiations they did not intervene on the make up of the population or its distribution. Instead they left all those issues in the hands of the local committees and the people, which gave the local population the feeling of being participants, and local committees the feeling of being decision makers rather than just recipients.

The period of upgrading extended to about two years(1992-94). It included opening new streets, new open spaces, compensating non-eligible inhabitants forced to leave, and moving other eligible settlers to new houses. All of this happened with the participation of experts and local committees together with planning officials. It was the first real interaction between the two agents, interaction that included negotiations and sharing of responsibility, it was the first time the local people felt that their collective agency could make a difference.

Again the upgrading stage does represent the inclusion of shantytown people in the formal city boundaries in official or legal terms; however it is clear that the balance of power remained in favor of the government. In effect, upgrading gave legality to settlements but preserved the status quo hierarchy of the urban setting. In fact the upgrading stage gave the low status of shantytown settlers its legitimacy and institutional dimension.

The stage of upgraded settlement

When the upgrading stage finished a new reality emerged. The local committees became the official representatives of local people, because of their role in upgrading; and in providing the most needed service such as water, electricity etc. Conversely the position of tribal leaders was

weakened; restricted only to personal issues, even that depending on the acquiescence of the individuals.

The population in El-Baraka now stands on about 38,580 people (National Cenusu 2008), which represents about 75.5% of the total population of El-Baraka in 1993 according to the National Census (1993). This decline is a direct result of the upgrading of the area in 1994. But shantytowns are still the most densely populated areas in the capital city, largely because average house size in third class areas (the lowest grade for the middle class) is about 360-400 m², in addition to the fact that in shantytowns usually there is more than one family per house, as a result of the low-income jobs available to inhabitants.

Also the role of the NGOs diminished considerably under the pressure of the government, which accused NGOs of implementing foreign agendas. This was largely a product of Arabic- Islamic ideology of the government after the Islamic movement took power in 1989. The first action by the government after upgrading was to change the name of the area to "El-Baraka", an Islamic name denoting clearly the government's strategy for the area.
People started to have more relations with other shantytowns, especially with the old one "core area", impressive permanent houses appeared, shops packed with diverse goods. The huge change came with the appearance of electricity (2008). Although before that people used private generators for lighting at night, with electricity connection, people had their first taste of a different urban life, with an enormous array of electronic devices becoming accessible.

All schools were transferred into the hands of the government (i.e. 10 schools), except one belonging to the Catholic Church, and a growing number of private schools sprang up, run by the educated young generation. Other member of this young generation born and raised in the area, started to engage in lucrative economic activities inside and outside the area, such as driving small three wheels vehicles (rakasha). Meanwhile, a large number of their peers were working in government institutions in the lower ranks, for example, of the police and the army. The NGOs also continued their efforts in the field of health, as there was no medical centre in the area funded by the government, while some NGOs supported small developmental programs through local partners.

Different perceptions of services and responsibilities

The three agents differ in the manner and purpose in which they provide shantytown people services. These differences have their origins in their diverse perceptions and understanding of the character of local people and the area. Meanwhile, local people's perception is heavily influenced by their backgrounds and ideology, specifically by their rural background and urban aspirations, which shape their perceptions and priorities toward services. At the same time the government is motivated by a different perception, again arising from their middle class background and their living in other parts of the city, so their priorities diverge from those of the other two agents. NGOs concerns are motivated by their western experience of humanitarian works, which influences their designs and funding of services and development projects.

Indeed, it is vital here to deal in detail with the respective background of each agent, to understand its ways of dealing with services, and to analyze their priorities.

Local people's perception of services

The perception of local people is influenced by their desire to become a part of urban society, therefore having the same services like other parts of the city. Nonetheless there are different social categories settled in the shantytown, meaning different perceptions can co-exist in this environment. Namely, there are traditional people, the second generation and the educated middle class, the latter having a louder voice in many cases. They understandably assume that their view represents the whole area, especially because they tend to form the local committees. Yet for other categories the desire for more urban services is fundamental, as all of them have the desire to stay in the shantytowns at least for the foreseeable future.

With the background of these strong motivations, people of shantytowns want services that create links between them and the other parts of the city, like upgrading and electricity. Upgrading is important for it gives them recognition and the ownership of their houses. Electricity is vital because it represents the visible difference between the rural and urban lifestyle, in the sense that they can not imagine living in an urban area without having electricity. Then law and order, education and water follow in the list of services for the people. A consequence of these priorities is that perhaps most of the local resources at people's disposal have been directed toward

the demand for upgrading and electricity. In fact the procedure of gaining ownership of the houses during the legalization of settlements was very expensive, it included having many documents, then there were fees for registering the ownership of the house, it was not possible to exempt any house owner unless by permission of the Minister of Urban Planning, which was difficult to gain. With regard to electricity, people started to use it even before upgrading, by connecting to small private generators. In fact it was one of the most lucrative economic activities before the area was connected to the public network. Even connection to this network is very expensive, being provided by private companies, that currently charge 83 SD(about 35$ US) per month in fees and 1500 SD(about 500$ US) in total for connecting one house, forcing many neighbors to share the electricity from one house. However, there is rarely any house without electricity, meaning most of the economic resources of local people are directed toward this service.

While water is a priority for the people, still it is in insufficient supply. The majority of wells has been dug by NGOs, but is still a pipe network administered by the local committees, and many local people are dissatisfied with their management.
As to education, although the government has opened 10 primary schools in the area since planning, all of them have an Islamic name, but these are out numbered by private schools. This reflects the fact that many local people are ready to pay the monthly fees(about 3$ US per child) for their children to attend private schooling, as opposed to the semi-free public schools, because they expect access to higher qualification for their children at the end of the primary level.

Health institutions are run mostly by NGOs. Some are international and some are local NGOs, there is no governmental health institution, even private clinics are located outside the area. People need more medical institutions but seem to be waiting for the NGOs to provide these as they used to. For example, I attended a "health day"[5] in the El-Baraka area, where hundreds of people came to have free medical treatment, at which doctors and assistant staff which agreed to work voluntarily, were not able to examine all of the people waiting in line.

---

[5] The health day was organized by two local NGOs founded by members of the educated youth, in cooperation with medical staff from heath centre located outside the area. The day included also health education lectures about major health problems in the area such as malaria, HIV, and circumcision.

Government perception of services and responsibilities

Obviously, the ideology of government is driven by the urban middle class way of life. On the one hand it intends to physically change the shantytown to comply with the standards of a modern city, in line with the educated modern character of Northern middle class which even embraces much of western culture, consequently it changes the shantytowns to fourth class areas, moreover changing them from pathological, to poor urban areas. On the other hand middle class identity in Sudan has had an Arabic- Islamic character over the last two decades, which determines all the policy and activities of the government and is promoted by the government (Beck, 1998). Furthermore, changing the identity of shantytown people to Arabic Islamic serves as a mechanism for keeping them under control, and perpetuating their low status , since acquiring a high position in the Islamic-Arabic hierarchy is difficult if not impossible as it depends largely on genealogy (i.e. having Arab origins).

Meanwhile it is still important to distinguish between government and the Northern middle class groups who dominate the city and the country as a whole. Although the government consistently claims representation of the middle class groups, in fact not all members of these groups share this view even if they belong to the government. At the same time the government is trying hard to win over the Northern middle class by adopting part of their ideology and vernacular, especially the Arabic Islamic basis.

For all these reasons, the priorities of the government in providing the shantytowns services tend to be urban planning of the area without much provision for which groups or individual are going to live in the area. The second priority is law and order, since the area before upgrading was considered a source of criminal activity; and indeed police use more violence and assume more authority in the shantytowns than is common elsewhere. Besides that I have noticed that most of the young educated class aspires to studying law, and that students who drop out of formal education prefer to work in the police and army.

The third priority is education. For the purposes of making the identity of the shantytown residents conform more closely with Arabic- Islamic culture, schools were considered as an ideal device. Consequently the government prohibited NGOs from working directly in the shantytowns and closed all

their schools, before introducing 10 primary schools, some of them supported by Islamic NGOs.

The fourth priority is directing political support towards the government. The local committees have been used as a means of achieve this, along with civil society organizations such as youth organizations, and also some religious institutes like the Zakat Institution (Islamic tax collector). The aim here is clearly to make political affiliation with the government the only way for shantytown people to participate in and influence the provision of government services. As a result the majority of local committee members are also members of the National Congress Party (NCP) the ruling party in the country. Indeed to be qualified for membership of a local committee, candidates have to show they embrace Arabic-Islamic culture even if they are not Muslims.

NGO perceptions of services and development projects

The main ideology behind the efforts of the NGOs in the shantytowns comes down to a humanitarian perspective. Originally local people were perceived as IDPs suffering from war and natural disaster in their original regions, and all programs and services were planned to give basic humanitarian relief. After government planning and upgrading, these were followed up by several development programs. When we examine the nature of services and aid currently provided by NGOs, it is easy to conclude that they provide a poor quality and quantity of services. However one important reason for this is the policy of government towards the work of the NGOs, which in practice places obstacles in their way and generally hinders their activity. On the ground there are surprisingly few projects and services offered by the NGOs (mostly medical services), and even these are small when compared to their budgets and the number of potential beneficiaries. Meanwhile, they remain staffed by relatively large numbers of middle class employees or foreigners.

I attended a course offered by UNAMIS[6] at the El-Baraka community police station. It was about the psychological needs of people affected by disaster, held strangely enough, by lecturers wearing army fatigue and speaking in English through a translator. But what struck me most was the lunch provided. While the lecturers as UN staff enjoyed catering apparently

---

[6] United Nation Missions in Sudan.

from one of the most expensive restaurants in Khartoum, the participants received sandwiches. It was clear that they considered themselves outsiders. Indeed they told me that they had held the same course for police officers in the Ministry of Interior, which they considered had been received just as well.

The incorporation of local people in services and projects provided by the NGOs is very limited, because NGOs staff patronizingly assume the people to be needy and without the resources or ability to determine their own priorities. NGOs come to the area with ready-made programs and policies, which leave very little room for locals to direct projects towards what they need. Thus in the end, local people look on what is offered by the NGOs as extra free services; they benefit from them but they are not necessarily exactly what they need [7].
Although NGOs and government are considered to be opposing influences in the shantytowns context, in fact they have some features in common. They both engage with the shantytowns as outsiders, and although they have differing ideologies, they both look on the locals as not being able to choose what they want. Indeed, perhaps their common failing is their inability to acknowledge the free agency of local people.

What do people want? What do people get?

Regarding the above, the discussion revolves around what the local people want, and weather they are able to get what they want? As mentioned earlier, there are at least three distinct categories living in the shantytowns: older first generation, their second generation children, and the educated who have tended to take leadership roles.

For instance, the first generation perception derives from their rural life experience, and consequent urban life experience. Equally, their needs are a mixture of the two lifestyles; however the decision makers in the shantytown are the local committee members. Besides that other providers of services are urban based institutions (i.e. NGOs, Government), which tend to fulfill typically urban needs and neglect the rural based needs of the first generation population. An example of this is the use of locally brewed

---

[7] Such programs are offered by NGOs like the Sudanese Environment Conservation Society (SECS), War Child Holland.

alcohol (marisa) in the area by different ethnic groups, both Muslim or Christian. Indeed the local beer is considered an integral part of social life and communal activities in different rural areas in Sudan (Manger, 1987). In contrast, by the standards of the urban northern middle class using alcohol is against the Islamic law and constitutes uncivilized behavior. It is common to see police raids on premises of making and consuming alcoholic products. In order to fulfill their needs local people are obliged to live under threat of punishment by Islamic law and/or of being scorned by other groups in the city for their less-than-urban qualities. Apparently many local people choose to fulfill their needs nonetheless. The biggest open space in the area is used every afternoon as an ad hoc market for alcohol products and other traditional products (e.g. roasted meats).

Family planning programs are another example of how NGOs have tried to impose their ideas upon local people. While people traditionally prefer to have as many children as possible, mainly for social prestige and as social capital for the future, most programs of medical centers in the area run by NGOs advocate family planning. Although these are voluntarily programs, a lot of pressure is put on the people to join them. And any family refusing to join is reminded of the price of having many children, especially with the growing cost of education, starting from the pre-school level. Indeed local people are increasingly likely to join such programs, even against their better will.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, it seems clear that the alternatives of local people to satisfy their needs are limited by the work and ideology of their own agency and of the other agents providing the respective services. Furthermore, the urban-rural differences in lifestyles heighten the differences between the local categories.

Ideally the equal status of the three agents, would lead to the co-operative designing and establishment of public services and development programs, and indeed to equal sharing of responsibilities and power. Furthermore recognizing the local differences between the three local groups (i.e. first generation, educated, and youth), remains the key for developing effective public services in the world of the shantytowns.

References:

1/ Salih, M. A. Mohamed. "The Crescent, the Cross and the Devil's Flute: Islam and the Present Political Turmoil in the Sudan". A Lecture Presented at the University of Lund, 1st October, 1987. *Unpublished*.

2/ Republic of Sudan, Central Bureau of Statistics. "Statistical Year Book for the Year 2009". Khartoum: Sudan Government, 2009.

3/ Galal-al-Din, Mohamed El-Awad. "The Nature and Causes of Labour Migration to the Khartoum Conurbation". In *Urbanization and Urban Life in the Sudan,* edited by V. Pons, 434-44. Khartoum: DSRC, 1980.

4/ Bannaga, Sharaf Eldin I. "The Displacements and the Chances of Peace". Khartoum: African University Press, 2001.

5/ Loyal, Steven and Barnes, Barry. ""Agency" as a Red Herring in Social Theory". *Philosophy of the Social Sciences,* 31(2001): 507.

6/ Davis , Mike. "Planet of Slums". London: Verso, 2006.

7/ United Nations Human Settlements Programme. "The Challenge of Slums: Global Report on Human Settlement 2003". London: Earthscan Publications, 2003.

8/ Njoh, Ambe J. "Ideology and public health elements of human settlement policies in sub-Saharan Africa". *Cities* 26 (2009): 9–18.

9/ Davies, H.R.J. and R.P.D. Walsh. "Historical Changes in the Flood Hazard at Khartoum, Sudan: Lessons and Warnings for the Future". *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 18(2), (1997):123-40.

10/ Beck, Kurt. "Tribesmen, townsmen and the struggle over proper lifestyle in northern Kordofan". In *Kordofan Invaded: Peripheral Incorporation and Social Transformation in Islamic Africa,* edited by Endre Stiansen and Michael Kevane. Leiden: Brill, 1998.

11/ Manger, Leif O.(ed). "Communal Labour in the Sudan". Bergen: African Savannah Studies, Department of Social Anthropology, University of Bergen, 1987.