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## THE SUDAN CIVIL SERVICE: ONE CENTURY OF DEVELOPMENT

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper seeks to explore and explain quantitative growth of the Sudan Civil Service throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The basic contention is that such growth is explainable in terms of political regime orientations and responsiveness, on the one hand, and citizens' demands for services on the other. It adopts an historical approach involving comparison of civil service growth across political regimes. Thus, the colonial regime established law and order and cared about provision of services and infrastructure through bureaucracy. The first post-independence regime localized the civil service and created too many ministerial posts, departments and jobs to cope with escalating demands for services and development. The next socialist military regime, in line with its ideology, chose to enlarge the public sector and introduce far reaching measures of decentralization resulting in more responsive governance that led to further growth of bureaucracy. The final escalation of civil service growth took place during the period of 1989-2000 and continued up to the present. At the outset the incumbent Islamic government sought to downsize the large public sector, but ended up introducing a federal system for the first time in the country leading to more autonomy and responsiveness, eventually increasing public employment.*

**Keywords:** Sudan civil service, Colonial administration, Localization, Decentralization, Civil service growth.

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### Contribution/ Originality

This study is the only one to investigate the phenomenal growth of Sudan Civil Service during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Such growth is explained in terms of political regime orientations, citizen's escalating demands for services and development and, most important, increasing tendency to decentralize governance leading to more participation and responsiveness

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Sudan had early experience with a modern civil service for a significant part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century during the Turkish-Egyptian rule of the country lasting from 1820 to 1885. But the Mahdi's Revolution put an end to that experience and installed an Islamic regime which restored traditional administrative systems with some traces of bureaucracy. The reconquering of the country by British and Egyptian forces in 1898 ushered in a colonial era generally dubbed as the 'Condominium rule' whereby the two colonial powers shared sovereignty over the country. By 1953 a three year self-government period was granted to national political parties after which the country gained independence from both colonial countries in 1956 and continued to be ruled by national governments up to the present. Throughout the colonial period the civil service was strictly bureaucratic. Yet, during the period since independence it largely continued to resemble a bureaucratic organization but with many features of political patronage. However, the most salient feature was its continuous tendency to grow in numbers and functions during all eras.

### 1.1. Problem Statement

Throughout its modern history the Sudan Civil service continued to grow regardless of political regime. Some of that growth was well justified because it remained as the most important institution for the county's governance, modernization, nation building and development. But in some other instances it was in response to political expediency in lieu of rational managerial considerations for organizational growth. This paper purports to answer such questions as: how had the civil service grown from a tiny organization at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century to become such a huge organization by its end? What were the main factors in the civil service environment responsible for its quantitative and qualitative developments? A general overview of the quantitative growth of the Sudan civil service can be seen in the following table:

Table-1. Growth of personnel of Sudan Civil Service 1920-1999

Year	Number of employees	Comments
1920	3980	Mostly British and Egyptian
1930	5430	Mostly British with some Sudanese and Egyptians
1953	9218	The same composition
1956	9915	Sudanese British, Egyptian and others
1958	14373	Mostly Sudanese
1968	152, 836	Sudanese
1999	700000 (estimate)	Sudanese

Source: Dani Ahmed (2001) based on data from the ministry of human resources.

It is evident that the total number of civil servants had continued to escalate, from less than four thousand in 1920 to just below ten thousand in 1956 to seven hundred thousand employees by the end of the Century. According to Ahmed (1987), if we go back to 1900 the number of civil servants was very small amounting to no more than 932 employees.

## **1.2. Objectives of Paper**

The principal objectives of this paper comprise the following:

- 1- To explain how the Sudan civil service has experienced a phenomenal growth in numbers of employees throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.
- 2- To identify the main factors responsible for the rapid growth of the civil service.
- 3- To survey the major attempts at administrative reform and capacity building.

## **2. A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

There are numerous theories and approaches pertaining to the explanation of the continuous growth of the public sector in other countries. The first is the view that increases in government expenditures come as a response to demands by the average citizen for government services (Rosen and Ted, 2008). It is often argued that politicians, particularly in liberal democratic countries, will have to be responsive to citizen's demands for services if they want to be reelected. But citizens want more government services and regulation. However, it will be seen that the same tendency existed in the Sudanese case but as a result of decentralization and grass roots participation. Another popular explanation is the Marxist view that increase in government expenditure was due to the stage of late capitalism characterized by exacerbated crises. Governments must increase expenditures to deal with economic crises and to finance the welfare state to avoid labor rebellion (Rosen and Ted, 2008). But it should be underscored that in the present case expansion of the public sector was mostly associated with socialism and not with capitalism and with military governments rather than democracies, as will be explained. A third view is the view that blames bureaucratic organizations for the tendency to increase expenditures and job creation for no apparent reason other than self-interest (Hamad, 1983). In the present case even if such a tendency existed it could not be detected because it appears that all decisions leading to soaring of expenditures and numbers of civil service personnel were initiated by politicians. Finally Wagner's law to the effect that as time goes by there will be a tendency for public sectors to grow as a proportion of national income because income elasticity of demand for government services is more than one (Hamad, 1983). In addition, the civil service is part and parcel of its social environment; more specifically its political environment in which it is deeply enmeshed (Peters, 2001). Decisions concerning the goals to be achieved are responses to political demands while decisions about structure and functioning as well as administrative reforms always originate in the political system to serve its objectives in the final analysis (Downs, 1985). It can be seen that these theoretical explanations are quite useful in explaining growth of government. However, in this paper the general approach is to explain how each political regime left its imprint on the civil service in terms of functions, programs and organization thereby leading to continuous growth in numbers. Thus, in this paper successive political regimes will be portrayed as producers or suppliers while citizens will be presented as consumers. Public policies leading to civil service growth will be construed as responses to popular demands, ostensibly to solicit

political support and enhance legitimacy. It is assumed that the growth of civil service and public expenditures go in tandem.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

The present paper will adopt an historical and qualitative approach methodology. For that purpose the 20<sup>th</sup> century period will be divided into three eras: the colonial period up to 1956; post-independence period up to 1985 and finally the period between 1985 and 2000. Statistical time series data is available for some years but not for all years particularly in the case of the last two decades of the Century.

#### **3.1. First: The Civil Service during the Colonial Era (1900 to 1956)**

Between its beginnings in 1900 and the dawn of independence the Sudan Civil Service had remained as a simple organization designed and directed by the colonialist political system to serve its colonialist goals comprising: establishment of law and order, development of certain sectors of importance to economic development of the colonial center, particularly irrigated cotton farming in the Gezira Scheme and a railway system which could be used for transportation of exports and imports as well as for military campaigns to deal with frequent rebellions. In addition the colonial administration cared about the provision of a minimum level of services including education, health, water and electricity; but this was a late development after the 1920s and was confined to the more developed central regions. It is useful to note that all of these economic activities were administered through departmental management; so they were part and parcel of the civil service. Yet public enterprises during the colonial era were very efficient and making some profits despite their civil service management approach in contrast to the post-independence periods when they were administered as public corporations enjoying more commercial autonomy. But although the political system was dubbed as 'condominium' where sovereignty was to be shared between Britain and Egypt, yet in practice the country was ruled by a British Governor General wielding legislative, judicial and executive powers in his hands. He was assisted by just three secretaries: Legislative, Judicial and Financial secretaries who were all British. The country was divided into provinces; each province was ruled by a governor assisted by district inspectors and deputy inspectors. The British occupied all senior jobs at the center and the provinces (Abushouk *et al.*, 2004). A policy of indirect rule was adopted to rule the country's vast territory at minimum cost. Thus, for the first 20 years the colonial civil service was run by military officers at its higher echelons both at the center and the provinces. However, most of the officers and the officials at senior management posts were either Egyptian or British. Some few Sudanese were employed at the lower echelons of the civil service. Meanwhile, the administration relied heavily on tribal chiefs and the tribal organization to maintain law and order as well as for collection of taxes (Abu and Ahmed, 1964). Meanwhile the central regions were ruled directly through the civil service. The job classification system introduced by the British continues to

dominate employment in the civil service up to this day, at least as far as its general features are concerned. It was based on a simple overall classification into: first professional and administrative class, second sub- professional and administrative class and third was the clerical class. Recruitment at the entry of the first class required attainment of university degree. It represented the civil service proper and is treated as a lifelong career service. Joining the second class requires secondary school or college qualifications while admission to the third was based on either secondary school qualifications or intermediate school certificates, it is treated as unclassified. Labor jobs were similarly treated as unclassified. However there was flexibility in leaving the door open for capable individuals to join the upper class on condition that they pass a special civil service examination (Abu and Ahmed, 1964). Thus recruitment to the civil service was based on educational attainment in lieu of job duties and responsibilities. The Milner report of 1920 rationalized the civil service structure on the basis of indirect rule, recommended the upgrading of education to graduate Sudanese who can replace Egyptians in the civil service as well as for other walks of life and put an end to military rule through appointment of civilian Governor Generals (Abushouk Ibrahim and Anders, 2004). It also introduced the job classification system mentioned above. This situation persisted until 1937 when steps were taken to start a system of rudimentary local government. On the dawn of self-government in 1953 a full-fledged system of local government was introduced on the basis of a report by Dr. Marshal of Birmingham University (Al-Teraifi, 1986). Throughout the colonial era in the Sudan (1898- 1956) the number of Sudanese in the higher echelons of the civil service was quite limited and they were mostly confined to junior posts as such jobs were occupied by British and Egyptian expatriates at the top echelons. But after 1947 a policy of gradual admittance of the Sudanese into senior jobs was enacted in order to prepare the country for the approaching period of self-government. Yet there was no serious attempt to introduce a program for qualifying or training of the Sudanese to replace expatriates. The British saw no need for training because independence was scheduled to be granted in 1967 but it was won in 1956, a decade earlier than scheduled. The following table reflects developments in civil service personnel for some selected years during the colonial era.

**Table-2.** The Number of Civil Service Classified Employees during Colonial Period

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>Number of Employees</b>
1901/2	953
1920/21	3960
1930/31	5410
1939/40	5918
1940/41	6076
1946/47	6668
1953/4	9218
1954/55	10046
1955/56	9915

Source: Ahmed Fatima (1984) who obtained it from the Civil Service Department where she used to work.

It can be observed that the growth of the service was steady and amounted to tenfold increase between 1901 and 1956.

### **i) Localization: Sudanization**

Localization as a general term or Sudanization as a specific term carry the same meaning implying replacement of expatriates by Sudanese nationals in civil service jobs. The year 1953 witnessed the beginning of self-government whereby Sudanese political parties formed the government following the Westminster model of parliamentary democracy. Henceforth the incumbent government formed by Sudanese political parties adopted a policy of speeding up the process of localization through replacement of Egyptian and British expatriates with Sudanese officials as well as by expatriates from countries other than the two colonial powers (Abu and Ahmed, 1964). Officers in the middle echelons of the civil service were promoted to fill the vacant posts resulting from departure of British and Egyptian expatriates while officials from other countries were recruited on contract terms for the same purpose. Following independence in 1956 most senior posts were promptly localized through promotion of Sudanese nationals to fill such posts regardless of qualifications or experience (Ahmed Fatima, 1984). Hence, although the policy could be rationalized in terms of political expediency in order to get rid of all signs of colonial sovereignty, yet in practice it resulted temporarily in lowering the efficiency and effectiveness of the civil service. But that was a limited impact because there was no collapse in service provision. By 1962 there were almost no expatriates left in the Sudan civil service.

### **3.2. Second: Post-Independence (1956-1970)**

A significant proportion of the civil service growth and structural changes took place during the period between independence and 1985 which can be divided into two almost equal parts: the period between independence and 1970 dominated by democratic and military political regimes, and the period between 1970 and 1985 during which only one military national socialist regime reigned. The most profound changes that took place ever in the Sudanese civil service took place during the second era. It is important to remember that throughout the colonial period the government organization and the civil service remained a simple organization staffed by a limited number of administrators and political colonial servicemen. A small group of expatriate politicians reigned over the vast territory of this country assisted by a limited number of civil servants as already explained. However, following independence the civil service, for political as well as genuine reasons, expanded rapidly. Between 1956 and 1968 the number of civil service employees increased threefold (Council of Ministers, 1968). The Commission reported that:

‘The powers which used to be exercised by the Governor General and his Council have been divided between 17 ministries and 24 departments besides tens of corporate bodies, local councils (84) and provincial authorities’ p 44.

At least four prominent reasons can be invoked for this mushrooming growth of civil service institutions. First of all the nature of Sudanese politics, characterized by a notorious instability of political regimes and governments as well as absence of predominant political parties that can govern the country without needing the support of other parties, resulted in frequent changes at the level of ministerial posts. They eventually exploded into tens of ministries with corresponding increase in the number of departments. The purpose was mainly to enhance political support by offering lucrative posts to potential supporters. It is important to underscore that some unexplainable growth in numbers of political bodies, civil service bureaus and units as well as regional and local governments has been sustained up to the present. Second, some of the growth of Bureaucratic departments, local and regional governments as well as public enterprise, particularly when based on genuine rational reasons was a result of political demands and rising expectations. Both politicians and the general public expected the civil service to extend the delivery of services which were virtually non-existent during the colonial period and to spearhead the process of development since at that point in time it was the only institution capable of shouldering those responsibilities. Third, as the civil service was the only educated and trained institution it was expected to design and implement development programs. A major development program known as the 'Ten Year Plan 1959/60 to 1969/70' was launched and partially implemented resulting in expansion of the civil service, local governments and public enterprises (Eissa Garoot, 1977). Such expansion was naturally accompanied by a corresponding growth in the number of civil service jobs and expenditures (Ahmed, 1987). Fourth, as another consequence of Political instability and the expansion of educational institutions unemployment of graduates became a permanent feature of the labor market towards the late Sixties. Hence the incumbent government adopted a policy of guaranteeing civil service jobs to all graduates regardless of the availability of actual jobs in the form of job responsibilities. This resulted in an unnecessary addition of personnel to the civil service at a time when it could have been avoided through manpower planning to regulate the output of the educational system. Finally, the civil service was negatively affected by 'purges' targeting top civil servants who, following regime changes, were charged with collaboration with the defunct political regime; particularly after a popular revolution in October 1964 when many civil servants were accused of collaboration with General Aboud's Military government. This measure deprived the civil service from many of its most experienced individuals who had been trained by the British. It is useful to note that the group of retired and purged civil servants migrated to oil rich countries. Observers agree that their migration represented the beginning of mass migration to the Arab oil rich countries which had a negative impact on the quality of civil servants through depletion of the most capable administrators and professionals (Eissa Garoot, 1986).

### **3.3. Third: Developments between 1970 and 1985**

In 1969 a group of officers led by general Numeiri seized power from a liberal democratic regime. It adopted a socialist course of development in favor of a large public sector, decentralization and an effective civil service. Immediately after ascendance to power the socialist government adopted a policy of confiscations and nationalizations of businesses, particularly of foreign businesses in the modern sector, so that the government practically owned or regulated most of the modern sector of the economy. In addition to the inefficient public sector driven development this policy dealt a blow to business confidence and virtually shut off all foreign direct investment into the country up to the end of the Century. Enhancement of the role of the public sector in development was based on the ideological socialist orientation of the regime. According to [Al-Teraifi \(1986\)](#) the number of such enterprises amounted to over 60 enterprises. After 1970 the government did not confine itself to the traditional civil service functions but ran commercial, agricultural and industrial economic activities.

But, perhaps, of more importance to our issue was the military socialist regime's enactment of a policy of decentralization in development management and service delivery. Thus in 1971 the government introduced the so called 'People's Local Government system' by virtue of which substantial powers were devolved to provincial and local councils. This policy was accompanied by a strategy of community development and people's participation in development. The most direct consequence of this was the creation of two more tiers of government which were allowed to recruit and manage separate but not independent civil services. The civil service in Sudan has always remained a unified civil service whereby the same terms of service, rules, regulations and rewards apply regardless of tier of government for which one works while transfers remained possible between different jurisdictions. However, the most visible outcome was the rapid escalation in numbers of civil servants so that civil service employment at regional and local governments' levels surged ahead of central government employment.

It must be born in mind that by virtue of community development as an approach to people's participation in managing development, grass roots organizations were allowed to build schools and hospitals as well as to start other development activities through self-help efforts. Participation and self-help ultimately resulted in an insatiable demand for services resulting in rapid increase in numbers of services facilities built through self-help or started through popular synergy. Demand soared so rapidly that the civil service was unable to cope with it by making available the required personnel to man the facilities; particularly professional personnel such as teachers, doctors technicians and nurses who were already in short supply and continuously being depleted through the impact of emigration to oil rich countries which started to take the form of an increasing brain drain throughout the Seventies following oil price hikes of 1973.

Another very significant landmark in the growth of the civil service was the conclusion in 1972 of the Addis Ababa Agreement which finally put an end to the war that continued to rage on since 1955 between the Southern Sudan rebels and the Sudan Government. The enactments of



policies based on it resulted in the creation of self-government institutions in South Sudan comprising a Regional Assembly, a Regional Ministerial Council and a civil service with wide autonomous powers being granted. It is needless to point out that the implementation of the Agreement resulted in a period of peace and stability that allowed for sustained development throughout the decade while at the same time helping to expand further the public sector including both the civil service, public enterprise and regional and local governments. Towards the mid-Seventies an [ILO/UNDP \(1975\)](#) report wrote that:

‘Sudan, more than most countries of the World, is an administrative state. In addition to the regulatory administrative and public sector functions of government, the state operates or controls the greater part of modern sector production’ (Chapter III.9 p 1)

The Mission went on to enumerate 60 corporations in different sectors employing some 100000 employees, the central government ministries and departments employed another 120000 while provinces and local governments employed 60000 personnel. When we add army and police employment in government goes up to 400000 employees. Eventually, this uncontrolled escalation in numbers of civil servants had at least two predictable consequences; thus on the one hand it resulted in underemployment and underutilization of human resources, while on the other hand it resulted in saddling the strained government finances with colossal financial burdens which thwarted development efforts through diversion of most of public sector resources to wages, salaries and fringe benefits for employees. The personnel budget amounted to more than 60% of the general budget. Many attempts at rationalizing the personnel management in government resulted in failure. Thus a Job Evaluation and Classification Scheme was introduced in 1978 but resulted in more confusion than rationalization ([Al-Teraifi, 1986](#)). Ostensibly it was aimed at evaluating the job and not the job incumbent but was misinterpreted as aiming at the latter. Politicization was probably the main reason behind its derailment despite the fact that it was overdue by then. First and foremost an independent organization from the Civil Service Department (CSD), which was the organization responsible for personnel management in government, was created for this purpose. This predicament led to lack of essential information because the CSD declined to cooperate with the new organization. Second, the Ministry of Finance should have been involved in it but was also alienated despite its very serious implications for budgeting. And, finally, manipulation by politicians who were planning to reap political gains from it; after the classifications and evaluations were completed they continued to give in to the pressures of labor trade unions, who either went on strike or threatened to do so, by approving wage increases whose implications were to give the same increments to all other job categories. Eventually the costs of the scheme soared beyond the capacity of the government treasury to provide funds and had to be called off and started all over again under supervision of the Civil Service Department and the Ministry of Finance. In fact it was virtually abandoned and the classification system based on educational attainment continued to be maintained up to this day ([Ahmed Fatima, 1984](#)). This is one important reason behind some unnecessary job creation.

There were many other initiatives aimed at administrative reform, often sponsored by international organizations. The first genuine attempt at reform was made in 1966 when the government appointed a Civil Service Reorganization Commission (CSRC) which diagnosed the problems of the civil service [Council of Ministers \(1968\)](#). It identified shortcomings such as lack of effective organization, lack of forward planning and need for training. In addition it focused on reform of the Civil Service Department and the planning organization as well as the planning process [\(Najmal, 1986\)](#). In 1971 as part of a governmental reshuffle and reorganization a Ministry of Public Service and administrative reform was established to take care of civil service issues and to reform its management practices; but was later on dissolved following the failure of the Job Evaluation and Classification Scheme. The ministry was created on the basis that effective development program implementation required, more than anything else, human resource development. In 1972 the Ministry invited a UN mission headed by Dr. Sharif which recommended invitation of another mission to draft an administrative reform program. First, the mission underscored the point that recruitment in the civil service should be made only to fill vacant posts in the civil service thus bringing to an end the Unemployment Relief Policy enacted during the liberal democratic era. But perhaps the most important outcome of the mission's report was the recommendation of a job evaluation and classification scheme in order to ensure that merit in the civil service should be related to performance of job duties in lieu of academic qualifications; and the recommendation to install organization and methods units in all ministries and government organizations to act as advisories on administrative reform programs designed by the Ministry [\(Najmal, 1986\)](#). But as already explained the first project was derailed by political interventions while the second was drained by international migration because trainees were highly demanded in Arab oil rich countries so that most of them left after one or two years of receiving the training programs. Other recommended reforms were generally implemented. It is useful to note that if the reform program was completed it would have resulted in stemming the unnecessary inflation in job creation. Another important outcome of the administrative reform programs was the establishment of the Public service Recruitment Board in 1974 to implement application of the merit system in recruitment. Examinations and interviews were introduced for the first time. It was supposed to act as a central institution for recruitment at all levels and tiers of government. Before that government departments carried out recruitment independently with academic qualifications being used as the major criterion [\(Al-Teraifi, 1986\)](#).

The fourth prong of the reform program was directed at training and development. The first steps were taken in 1972 to set up a training council and a staff college to train the top echelons of the civil service and to enhance the performance of existing training institutions. This culminated in the inauguration of the Sudan Academy for Administrative Sciences in 1980. Other civil service institutions were also set up [\(Najmal, 1986\)](#). The following table projects an incomplete picture of escalation in the numbers of civil servants.

Table-3. Numbers of employees of the Sudan Civil Service 1956/7-1979-80

Year	Classified Civil Servants	Unclassified Personnel	Regional Governments
1956/57	12127		
1958/59	16803		
1963/64	25042		
1964/65	27609		
1965/66	31283		
1966/67	49432		
1967/68	52642		
1968/69	49447		
1969/70	46250		
1970/71	42405	41815	
1971/72	57002	43678	
1972/73	64095	51396	
1973/74	66752	36069	
1974/75	67355	49547	
1975/76	n. a	N. a.	48192
1976/77	45267	93421	N. a.
1977/78	N. a.	N. a.	N. a.
1978/79	N. a.	N. a.	N. a.
1979/80	83200	N. a.	832

Source: Ahmed (1987), Abu and Ahmed (1964), and Ahmed Fatima (1984)

### 3.4. Fourth: The Civil Service between 1985 and 1999

The period up to mid-1989 was a time of liberal democracy when the multi-party system was restored. As usual during all changes of political regime in Sudan it started by purging the civil service to get rid of supporters of the defunct General Numeiri's government. But generally speaking it was an epoch of political instability where there were frequent changes of governments; consequently there were few achievements to mention. The main author of this paper was a member of two committees: one for drawing out organizational arrangements and job structures for the newly created ministries but could not complete a satisfactory job due to frequent changes in the structures which we were supposed to study. The other case was acting as consultant to a minister where there was an attempt to reorganize the ministry but the minister could not stay in his office long enough to finish the job. Yet, during this same period a Technical Committee for Evaluation of Performance of the Civil Service was appointed by the Prime Minister and reported in 1986. It underscored political neutrality of the civil service and recommended introduction of manpower planning, the need for enhancement of training and some other technical organizational details. But there was no evidence that anything was done to implement recommendations up to the point when the next coup put an end to the liberal democratic episode. In 1989 a military coup staged by the Islamic Front put an end to the short lived parliamentary liberal democracy. This era which has continued up to now was commonly designated as the 'Salvation Revolution'. Needless to point out that the general ideological orientation of the new regime was Islamic. It lost no time in introducing a program of economic and political reform in line with its convictions. An Economic Salvation Conference was convened in about four months from its ascendance to power in 1989 whose salient recommendations

included: downsizing of the public sector in favor of promoting private enterprise, streamlining of the civil service and its functions and protection of economically weak groups (poor) during the process. But in contrast to its anti-socialist policies the new government introduced strategic planning for the first time in the form of the Comprehensive National strategy (1992-2002) which embodied the planned steps towards Islamization, liberalization and privatization. Islamic economic transactions implying interest free banking and financing were declared as the only legitimate transactions. It is useful to point out that at that point even commercial banks were mostly owned by the government.

However, privatization and decentralization were the policies more consistently adhered to by the political regime. By 1990, as a result of former socialist policies, the public enterprise sector constituted the mainstay of the Sudanese economy as it produced about 50% of GDP. There were about 190 government enterprises active in the agricultural, industrial commercial and services sectors including commercial banking and hotels in addition to water, electricity and transportation activities (Ministry of Social Planning and UNDP, 1998). The program of deregulation, liberalization and privatization ultimately included the traditional fields of activities of the civil service by allowing the private sector to compete in areas which were traditionally a monopoly of the civil service or government enterprises such as: health, education at all levels, and postal services. Eventually some government departments were sold off, such as the Mechanical Transport Department and the Government's Stores and Supplies Department, while an important ministry such as the Ministry of Works, where engineers and skilled workers were employed and developed, was dismantled.

According to the Ministry of Social Planning and UNDP (1998) privatization had a positive impact on economic growth as GDP growth rates were significantly enhanced. But on the other hand it resulted in layoffs and consequently significant unemployment. Public enterprises and the civil service were grossly overstaffed to the extent that the new owners who bought the enterprises may layoff between 40% and 60% of the labor force and yet achieve higher productivity with the remaining workforce. In addition some of the privatized enterprises went bankrupt or were not performing well because some government enterprises were so badly planned that they could not be made profitable.

Thus, while the program should have resulted in downsizing of the civil service there were initiatives of more significance working in the opposite direction of job creation. One such policy was known as *tamkeen* (empowerment) by virtue of which the government recruited its supporters into the top and lower echelons of the civil service hierarchy. Jobs were created for this purpose.

But of much more significance or rather the most significant ever in the history of the service was the introduction of federalism as an approach to governance for the first time in the country's history. The country, previously divided into 7 regions was re-divided into 26 states with each enjoying substantial measures of devolution including a council of ministers. The civil service remained unified but employees up to the post of head department, in addition to non-classified

employees, were under the state governments. All civil service jobs above that level, including all senior officials in the states, were made part of the federal government list.

As should be expected politically decentralized governments showed more responsiveness to citizens' demands for services. It is useful to point out that the purpose of decentralization was the enhancement of service provision; states could create the required jobs because their budgeting decisions were autonomous. Substantial enhancement of service provision took place particularly in education, health and water services. But naturally job creation increased at exponential rates taking the figure of the total number of jobs to 700000 as already explained. Out of this number more than three quarters of employees were employed by the states towards the end of the Century.

Thus, a [World Bank Sudan: Joint Assessment Mission \(2004\)](#) reported the number of states as 26 states divided into 137 localities. They estimated employment in public service at a figure of 379000 working for the Federal Government, state governments, public universities and public enterprises. There were 30 ministries in the center at a time when each state had 6 ministries. In addition there still remained 71 public enterprises and 25 universities. The civil service has grown by 33-38 times over since independence. It is important to note that these figures did not include Southern Sudan. One of the earliest programs to be introduced was the Civil Service Reform and Revolutionizing program. A department was set up for its implementation manned with experts who were able to introduce a number of innovative legislations, organizational improvements and organization and methods reforms. Many other similar institutions were set up to counteract corruption and to insure effective oversight. Yet they almost invariably suffered from lack of effectiveness.

#### **4. CONCLUSIONS**

The thrust of the discussion in this paper was geared towards a review and explanation of the phenomenal growth of the Sudan Civil Service throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. By way of contrast the number of civil servants increased by about ten times as much between the beginning of the Century and independence in 1956. But the comparable rate of increase was 38 times over since then and up to the end of the Century. It should be emphasized that each post-independence regime used its ideology, its desire to solicit political support and responsiveness to popular demands to continue to expand services and development efforts leading to persistent growth of the civil service. Thus, both post-independence democratic and military regimes that took over from the colonial administration and remained in power before 1970 had no ideology beyond pragmatism. They were motivated by the desire to enhance service delivery and economic growth in response to citizens' rising aspirations following independence. They localized the service and introduced changes in it amounting to a threefold increase in numbers. But the most significant changes in the civil service took place during the second era (1970-1985). The socialist military regime, in line with its convictions of public sector driven development, almost owned or

regulated the entire modern sector through public enterprise. Moreover, it adopted far reaching measures of decentralization and participation in development which resulted in responsive governance and enhancement of service provision. Sudan deserved the designation of 'administrative state' during this era by U.N. missions. Finally, the third and final stage (1985-2000) started with a short lived unstable liberal democratic episode where there were no achievements to be mentioned beyond some attempts at administrative reform. This period was generally dominated by a military Islamic regime that reigned between 1969 and the present. At the outset it introduced programs of privatization, liberalization and deregulation to downsize the public sector in favor of private initiative. But subsequently it enacted a program of federal decentralization resulting in the most responsive governance. There was rapid escalation of services institutions at the regional level so that numbers of employees soared in geometric progression to reach the figures already mentioned. In retrospect it can be usefully stated that the earlier post-independence governments cared about restructuring the civil service and nation building. But the two single party military governments were characterized by stability and long tenures. They contributed substantially to service delivery and development through decentralization and corresponding rapid expansion of public service. Yet there is no implication that military governments are superior to democratic governance; the reverse is probably true; ostensibly their better performance was a result of stability and longer tenures. Administrative reforms were suggested by experts comprising: job classification and evaluation, job description and human resource planning, organization and methods as well as management services with the sole purpose of enhancing efficiency and quality of performance but were generally ignored by politicians who preferred to use their political instincts. Hence, an unavoidable consequence of the rapid expansion of the civil service was to divert financial resources from investment to payment of manpower costs. If regimes had cared to implement those reforms they could have enabled the country to have an efficient, streamlined and capable civil service at lower financial costs. Hence, the recommendation is to implement those reforms as well as other reforms so as to enhance services delivery, development management and build capacity simultaneously.

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