

**Hadendowa Political Entitlement and Territory  
Development with Special Reference to the Relations with  
Governments  
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**Abstract**

This research is an attempt to trace the history and reality of Hadendowa political entitlement and territory development in relation to the successive Governments before and after Sudan independence (1965). Territory development has been dealt with within the context of livelihood stability. Famines history in Hadendwa area has been analysed within the Governments respond to famine situation. Special attention has been drawn to Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement signed between Government of Sudan (GOS) and Eastern Front (EF) on 15, Oct. 2006, in Asmara, Eritrea, under the auspices of the Government of the State of Eritrea.

The research has reached the following conclusions; (i) the role of Governments to develop, the Hadendowa area after Sudan independence seems to be generally limited; (ii) the Hadendowa requests to successive Governments to develop their area before and after Sudan independence bargain heartily with the socioeconomic, environment, and cultural articles of Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement; (iii) Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement; and (iii) Eastern Sudan Reconstruction and Development Fund is expected to play a tangible role in developing and rehabilitating Eastern Sudan during the period from 2008 – 2011, if allocated resources are managed well.

**1. Introduction**

This research traces the political entitlement and territory development history through analysing the relations between the Hadendowa ethnic group and the Governments in the context of political geography. The overall aim is to investigate the role of the Hadendowa in building up their recent territory. The specific research objectives are to: (i) trace the relations between the Hadendowa and the other Beja groups, in the context of land ownership; (ii) evaluate the Hadendowa relations with the

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Governments, before and after the Sudan independence (1956), in the context of State national boundaries and Hadendowa social territory in the frame of political entitlement; (iii) trace the history of the frequent drought and famine phenomenon with special reference to the Governments role and assistance during the time of famine and food shortages; (iv) assess the way the Hadendowa perceived, approached and managed the development process; and (v) evaluate the outputs and achievements gained by Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement (ESPA) signed in December 2006.

In order to understand the characteristics of the Hadendowa political entitlement and territory development, it is necessary to examine both the roles of Governments of Sudan and Hadendowa tribe. The analysis and the discussion will be presented through an interdisciplinary approach. This approach is highly needed to trace these roles which are based on historical backgrounds of Hadendowa relations with neighbouring tribes and Sudan's central governments, and to evaluate the Hadendowa territory development in the context of Governmental attempts to develop the region of Red Sea Hills (RSH), eastern Sudan, and the region vulnerability to famine disasters.

This research is based on a wide range of literature, which includes different areas and approaches, e.g. political entitlement, drought, poverty and famine, national and international aid, territory development, sustainability, disaster mitigation, vulnerability, hazard, and food security.

Ample research has been conducted in the Red Sea Hills to study both human and physical geography (Salih, 1976, Manger, 1996). The majority of the research has been done by the Red Sea Area Programme (RESAP<sup>1</sup>) (Abdel-Ati, 1991, Bakhit, 1988, Vagenes, 1995), Government and NGOs documents and reports; PhD. and MA researches (Elsiddig, 1992, Hayati, 1994).

## **2. Red Sea Hills: Environmental Set up**

The Red Sea Hills in Eastern Sudan cover an area of approximately 125,000 square kilometres. Three main ecological zones could be detected: the coastal plain, the RSH (3400-4200 ft) and the Western

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<sup>1</sup>This is a joint research programme between the Universities of Khartoum (Sudan) and Bergen (Norway). It represents an interdisciplinary approach to study the problems of the Red Sea Area of Sudan as part of the Sahelian Zone. The programme is financed by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs being part of its Environment and Development Programme in Africa.

plains. The mean annual rainfall rarely exceeds 150 mm (Map 1) and is characterised by a high degree of variability, both in time and space. The major soils are rocky while sandy alluvial plains are characterised by high salinity, especially in the coastal area (Abu Sin and Hayati, 1994).

The Beja, who constitute the majority of the population, are pastoral nomads. The Hadendowa group is the largest of the five Beja tribes<sup>1</sup>, with a population of about 500,000 (Ibrahim, 1988). Their livelihood is based on animal husbandry, depending upon scanty grazing resources along the narrow coastal plains and on the seasonal valleys and deltas of the Toker and Gash streams. Cultivation by flush irrigation is practiced on the deltas. During the off-season of farming, a limited labor migration to the nearest towns is also maintained.

The Hadendowa territory has been developed on the bases of an accumulated pool of cultural knowledge and organisational capacities. During a long historical process, where the need for efficient innovations was very high, the cultural knowledge has been formulated in a traditional norm called "*salif*"<sup>2</sup>. However, during the severe droughts and famines the Hadendowa failed to keep their livelihood and regulations in balance with the environment.

In mid eighties of the previous century the region was hit by severe drought and famine. Food aid agencies as well as Governmental and Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), such as Sudanese Red Crescent, Oxfam, were involved in the Hadendowa area with vast relief operations during the famine period. The overall objective was to overcome the harsh famine situation, and develop adaptive abilities not only with the recent disaster but also the future environmental hazards. Eradication of hunger, poverty alleviation, protection of the environment and safeguarding the vulnerable Hadendowa were the specific objectives of their relief operations and development domains. The relief operations succeeded in reducing the number of the dead during the disaster period. Yet, this success left several negative effects upon the people's ability to cope with future environmental hazards. The gap between the immediate relief response and the delayed implementation of developmental

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<sup>1</sup>Hadendowa is one of the Beja tribes which are: Hadendowa, Amarar, Bushiyien, Halenga and Bani Amir. Hadendowa is considered as the biggest one.

<sup>2</sup>Salif is a system of cultural mechanisms that bear on regulating the relationship within the community on one hand and the relationship of the community with the local resources base on the other (Bakhit, and Hayati, 1995).

domains has a negative impact on the indigenous development system, and/or the social sustainability.

### **3. A Theoretical Framework: Famine Vulnerability**

The condition and factors which govern vulnerability and which define the relation between risk exposure, coping capacity and recovery potential are the main questions, which determine a frame-work of famine vulnerability. From different points of view these questions have been addressed and analysed (Offe, 1984, Liverman, 1990, Watts, 1991, Bohle, 1995). Vulnerability has been discussed in ecological terms in relation to political economy and class structure, and as a reflection of social relations including ethnicity, castes, generation and gender.

Vulnerability is a multi-layered and multidimensional social feature defined by determinate political, economic and institutional capabilities of people in specific places at specific times. Bohle (1995) believes that a theory of vulnerability should be capable of mapping the historically and socially specific realms of choice and constraint which determine risk exposure, coping capacity and recovery potential. Accordingly, the space of vulnerability is defined by three distinctive processes (Fig. 1). A tripartite causal structure of hunger is identified, namely human ecology, expanded entitlements, and political economy. Each can be grasped only as congeries of social relations and hence each point of triangulation represents a network of ideas, which often carries important complementarities and areas of overlap with the other two co-ordinates. The causal structure of vulnerability is defined in the following way:

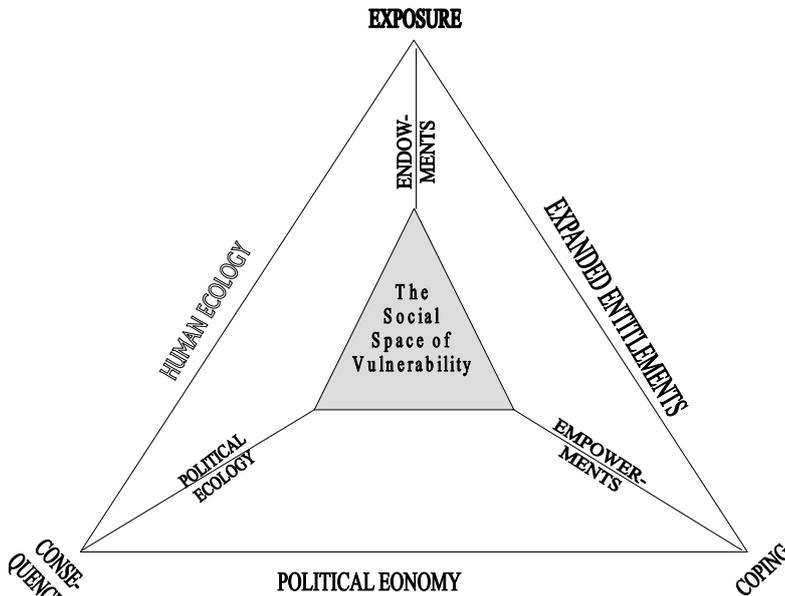


Fig. 1: The Causal Structure Of Vulnerability  
Source: (Bohle,1995)

### A) Human Ecology

In the most general sense this refers to the relations between nature and society. Emphasis, however, is put on the way in which the transformation of nature by human labour is rooted in the specific ecosystem properties (climatic, pedagogical, ecological etc.) of the environment of which society is based. Human ecology deals with the application of ecological concepts on the study of society as recognition of how social organisations and reproduction (population growth) have direct implications for sustainability and how the environment is experienced in term of risk and threats. Human ecology is the way of understanding both the risk environment which vulnerable groups confront (political ecology) and the quality of their resources endowments.

### B) Expanded entitlements

Food is obtained through production, exchange, or donation the entitlement of a person stands for the set of different commodity bundles that a person can acquire through the use of various legal channels of acquirement open to someone in his position. Entitlements are employed in an expanded sense to include not only ownership bundles and

endowments, but also wider social entitlements and the necessary empowerments by which entitlement are secured, fought and contested (empowerment) (Sen, 1987, Drèze and Sen, 1989).

### **C) Political economy**

Particular resource endowments and patterns of entitlements are always embedded in a macro structure provided by political economy. Political economy is the notion that specific configuration of class process confers disaster tendencies which are important in grasping the specific risk experienced by vulnerable groups (Sen, 1981, Watts, 1991).

## **4. Hadendowa, Sudanese kingdoms, External Powers and Sudanese Government relations**

The Hadendowa territory has old historical relations with the other Beja tribes, old Sudanese kingdoms, external powers and Sudanese Governments before and after the independence (1956). Through these relations, the Hadendowa at the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> century had succeeded in formulating and stabilising themselves in the mountainous area.

Throughout the history, the Hadendowa lacks the political entitlement from all “external powers” i.e. foreign and Sudanese Governments. The term "political entitlement", (advocated by Bhol, 1995) is considered in the sense of the Governments, as a system based on a well-defined territory and established rules, protecting and assisting to develop the people's reproduction patterns by providing them with the needed services in order to make them more prepared for disaster as well as to sustain them whenever the disasters take place. However, the Hadendowa area has been lacking for years the infrastructure or services as tools of development.

### **4.1 Pre - Fung Kingdom (1504 - 1821)**

The Hadendowa history in the pre-Turkia<sup>1</sup> period can not be separated from the whole Beja history. According to Newbold (1935), the Beja have been in their land at least since some time between 4000 and 2500 BC. They are one of the indigenous African groups who were observed by the Egyptians of the sixth dynasty. Gold mining in Gebiet Mines attracted the interests of the Egyptians, Hellenists, Greeks, Romans, Meroitic, Axumites and later Muslim Arabs to colonise the Beja area. Regardless of the results of the conflicts and wars, whose result was the change and the

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<sup>1</sup> Pre –Turkia used here for the period before the Turko-Egyptian period in Sudan (1821-1885).

colonisation of the area, the most important fact in those periods was that the Beja have interacted and mixed with those nations, especially with the Arabs.

As traders, animal herders and later as gold searchers, the Arabs came to the area of the Beja, and their relations with the latter were not always peaceful. Wars and conflicts occurred from time to time. According to Hassan (1967), in 831 AD the Arab expansion and mining activities were frequently interrupted by the Beja. However, in 855 AD the Arabs were able to definitely conquer the Beja area, an act to further expansion and settlement of Arab in the Beja-land. The history of the Arabs settlement at that time may explain why the Hadendowa consider Barakwin, the grandfather and the founder of the group, of Arab origin.

During this period, the name of the Hadendowa, as an ethnic group dominating a specific territory, has been mentioned. According to Ibn Haugal, 972 AD, "The Hadendowa are nomadic and without permanent settlement. With their livestock they roam an area whose length is measured by about two months, whereas the width is the distance between the Red Sea coast and the River Nile. Their winter camps are on the seacoast and salt marshes; their summer camps are spread along the valleys that exist in the central areas in their country. They spend the rainy season in the proximity of the Nile, emigrating their country in a westerly direction to a country that has few trees but abounds with grasses and water poles, their language is tongue that is common to all Beja" (Manger, 1996).

#### **4.2 Fung Kingdom (1504 - 1821)**

The relation between the old Sudanese kingdoms and the Hadendowa also shows the interest of the earlier in the Beja land. The recurrent attempts of armed forces of Fung Kingdom of Sinnar (1504 - 1821)<sup>1</sup> to subdue the Hadendowa, came to failure. The hilly Hadendowa territory had played a defensive role in protecting the group from any subdues. During this period, especially in the last two centuries of the period of the Kingdom, the Hadendowa succeeded in extending their territory in the southern side up to Kassala and Atbara River. This extension assisted them to release themselves from the physical isolation and confinement and to secure

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<sup>1</sup> Islamic Sudanese Kingdom established on the base of unity between two Sudanese tribes: the Jalyyin and the Funj. The Kingdom divided into two administrative areas: the northern part ( from Arbaji up to Hagar Al Assal) was ruled by the Jalyyin from Hagar Al Assal and the southern one (south of Arbaji up to sinnar) was ruled by the Funj.

more lands such as the Gash Delta, which are more fertile and perform a reliable eco-potential for both agriculture and herding activities (Bakhit, 1988;1991).

As a positive aspect in building up their territory, the Hadendowa considered themselves as the strongest Beja group. They believe that they have the ability and capability to protect and defend their territory from any neighbouring Beja tribes, and to some extent, from Sudanese Kingdoms and Governments as well as any other colonial power. This belief stems out as a consequence of successful conflicts with other Beja ethnic groups. Their historical conflicts against Beni Amir enabled them to extend their influence and dominate the whole area of Tokar Delta on the Eastern side. On the Western side, they succeeded to defeat the Bishareen and the Atman and they were able to extend their influence into the fertile soil of *Khor* Arab. Occupied lands, gained out of these conflicts, were also reliable eco-potential territories. This in fact shows that the wars, in which the Hadendowa were engaged, were traditional strategies beside migrations, to survive and to adapt with limited resources in the highlands.

#### **4.3 Turko-Egyptian rule (1821-1885)**

During the Turko-Egyptian rule (1821-1885), the Hadendowa territory was subjected to continuous changes and reductions due to their weak resistance against the existing rule. The Turko-Egyptian succeeded in occupying the Gash Delta in the first years of their ruling period, but they found it difficult to establish a permanent civil administration, because of the frequent disputes between them, to control the national territory and the Hadendowa, who defended their gained lands and group's territory. Furthermore, the Turko-Egyptian rules imposed high taxes, which actually the Hadendowa never paid regularly, and which was also considered as one of the main reasons behind these conflicts (Newbold, 1935).

In order to have more control on the Gash delta as well as to weaken the Hadendowa power and their fighting spirit, the Turko-Egyptian rule supported the Halanga ethnic group against the Hadendowa. Furthermore, at the same time, they had established Erkwit administrative centre to control the northern part of the Hadendowa territory. The greatest loss of

the achieved Hadendowa territory, during this rule, was the establishment of the *Toker Delta Cotton Growing Scheme*<sup>1</sup> by Mumtaz Pasha.

#### **4.4 Mahadia Revolution (1881-1898)**

Under the leadership of Osman Digna, the Hadendowa showed sympathy with the Mahadia revolution (1881-1898), which provided them with an opportunity to take revenge on their enemies: the other Beja tribes as well as the Turko-Egyptians. Beside that, they found the chance to join in the Mahadia national army in order to defend not only their territory but also the whole Mahadia State. The experience with the Mahadia army had assisted the Hadendowa to build a strong army and a well-organised political group among the Beja. In order to have access to eco-potential lands outside the limit of the highlands, they succeeded again in extending their territory in the Southern part, up to the Gash Delta, which were in demand for a long time. However, soon after that, Kassala town was occupied by the Italians in 1894 (Holt *et al.*, 1988).

The chance provided by the Mahadia to the Hadendowa to participate in the State army with other Sudanese ethnic groups under the first Sudanese National State had developed, for the first time, among the Hadendowa national awareness, ideas of nationalism and unity. However, the Hadendowa shared in Sudanese nationalism within different levels of identities as Hadendowa, Beja and then Sudanese. Nationalistic ideas did not bar the Hadendowa's strong attachment to their land and territory. Actually, the spread of the nationalistic ideas among the Hadendowa had assisted them to develop new political strategies to organise and govern their territory. Giving themselves the leading role, they succeeded, with the other Beja groups, in creating "the Beja Conference" as a political body to defend their rights against the other Sudanese groups. The consequences of this political movement could be seen in *Haduot*<sup>2</sup> Political Party, after the abolition of the Beja Conference. The Hadendowa unity with the other Beja groups could also be considered as a political coping strategy. This, in fact, indicates the development of the Hadendowa ideas towards building their territory. The Hadendowa kept

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<sup>1</sup> The scheme was established to cultivate cotton. The availability of alluvial soils, flush seasonal irrigation, by Baraka stream, man power (Bani Amir and Hadendowa) attracted the Turko-Egyptian interest to invest on it.

<sup>2</sup> Haduot is a Political Party which took part in the last democratic national election for the Constitutional Assembly in 1985.

peaceful formal relations with other Beja ethnic groups and the Mahadia in order to have more control on their territory.

#### **4.5 Condominium rule (1899 – 1956):**

The Hadendowa territory was also subjected to continuous changes and decimation due to their conflictual behaviour during the Condominium period (1899 - 1956)<sup>1</sup>. The main problem that the colonial Government faced in the Hadendowa area was the administration of the traditional leadership. The solution of the leadership problem will consequently solve all other problems in the reproduction process. The Condominium Government firmly controlled the traditional leadership e.g., three *Nazirs* were dismissed shortly after their appointment, because they failed to carry out their duties for the maintenance of law and order and the collection of tax during the period 1900-1904 (Elsiddig, 1992). All of them were more loyal to their territory and tribal interests than to the Government, which shows the Hadendowa strategy of keeping distance from the Government by negligible co-operation and not fulfilling their nightmarish duties of tax collection. At the same time, they tried to keep more attached to their territory. However, the completion of Kassala railways<sup>2</sup> in 1924, as well as the establishment of the Gash Cotton Scheme in the Gash Delta in 1926 by Kassala Cotton Company, created a new chance for good relations between the Hadendowa and the Government. The railways provided some jobs and small scale marketing points. Moreover, the Scheme land distribution satisfied the Hadendowa ambitions. Among the other Beja groups, to whom the land was distributed, the Hadendowa had the largest part (Abdel Ati, 1996). Although other groups shared with them the land ownership, the part they gained was officially legalised by the Government for the first time.

The social objective of the scheme was to settle the nomads, mainly the Hadendowa; however, the West African immigrants (*Fellata* and *Hausa*) the ones who benefited more from the settlement plan, because the company allocated a large part of land for West Africans and considered them as tenants in 1928, after two years of crop failure which resulted from the Hadendowa preference for livestock herding and the low productivity of their agriculture. Later on, the Hadendowa themselves,

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<sup>1</sup> The Condominium period (1899 - 1956) is the British-Egyptian colonial period, which was between the Mahadia State and Sudan independence.

<sup>2</sup> A consequence of the rise of cotton production in the Gash region was the construction in 1924 of a railway between Kassala and Port Sudan (Holt and Daly 1988).

when they found it difficult to cultivate their allocated lands, employed the West Africans as sharecroppers (El Mustafa *et al.*, 1991).

Other Beja groups' participation as well as the settlement and the high income of the West Africans in the Scheme, did not change the social leadership in the area. The Hadendowa maintained the leadership role in the Gash Delta for two reasons: (i) the Government extended the native administration system to the cosmopolitan villages of the Delta, which gave the Hadendowa Nazir (Momhamed El Amin Tirik) the right of jurisdiction over all the tenants in the scheme beside the Hadendowa; (ii) the Government started to give more attention to the Hadendowa expected socio-economic development in the Delta (Newbold, 1935).

However, under the colonial Governments, Turko-Egyptian (1821-1885) and Condominium (1899-1956), which were ambitious to develop the productive situations in the area, the establishment of the Gash Delta Irrigation Scheme and Toker Delta Cotton Growing Scheme limited the pastoral seasonal movements from the highland area to the Gash and Toker Deltas. Since the Hadendowa were mainly located in the highland areas, they were badly affected compared to the other groups of Beja. Both Gash and Toker schemes, regardless to their agricultural production, negatively affected the animal herding among the Hadendowa, because these projects had been established in the most productive pastoral lands. In fact, though they gained the advantage of high possibilities to be seasonal workers, as cotton pickers, or to be enrolled as sharecroppers, the role of animal herding among the Hadendowa had been, to some extent, neglected by the Government's plans.

### **5.5 The First democratic regime after independence (1956-1958)**

The lack of the Hadendowa political entitlement during the national period after Sudan independence (1956) remained the same as that during the colonial period. The unstable political situation of the first democratic regime of (1956-1958) failed to promote infrastructures in the Hadendowa area. That is basically because (i) Governing the State after the independence as well as the parliamentary life were generally accompanied by political instability. Furthermore, The Government development plans were similar to those of the Condominium rule, where the highland area of the Hadendowa was generally neglected; (ii) the economic policy, in the first five-year plan (1957-1961), during the first parliamentary Government, concentrated on enlarging the country's agricultural capacity. Cotton produced in Gezira scheme had been seen as

a capital resource, and consequently the Managil Extension to Gezira was planned (Bertoncin *et al.*, 1995); (iii) the years 1957-1958 witnessed poor cotton production and a fall in its prices in the world market, which led to economic downturn. This economic downturn accompanied with other factors led to the failure of the Government (Holt *et al.*, 1988).

### **5.6 The First Military Regime (1958-1964)**

The second Government in Sudan was the first military regime (1958-1964). The regime's ten-year plan (1962-1972) for social and economic development failed to achieve all its objectives. That is because (i) the plan concentrated on the agriculture sector in general and on cotton in particular, which remains vulnerable to the risk of the world market prices; (ii) the plan was over-ambitious and incomprehensive; (iii) the budget surpluses failed to reach the necessary level to fund the special development budgets, which led to terminating some projects and confidence (Holt *et al.*, 1988).

However, during this regime the Hadendowa highland area witnessed slight development in education and health services localised in Sinkat Province. These services in the Province still represent about 40% and 30% for health and in education, respectively.

### **5.7 The Second Democratic Regime (1964-1969)**

In the field of services, nothing had been added during the period 1964 – 1969. The main problem facing this regime was mainly political, which was reflected in the unsuitability of the economic policies and plans. Before such plan aims had been fulfilled and some time before their implementation, a political change took place (El Siddig, 1992).

### **5.8 The Second Military Regime 1969 – 1985:**

In 1969 the Government was changed by a coup headed by a "Free Officers" movement within the army. It was the longest Government period, which extended till 1985. Despite the continuous changes in the Government's policies during this period, the Hadendowa area witnessed the establishment of Kassala Port Sudan highway road, which is considered as one of the biggest infrastructure investment, "and the preparation to realize the dream of the Sudan as a breadbasket of the Middle East" (Bertoncin *et al.*, 1995). Indeed, the Hadendowa did not have big trade business or transportation companies to utilise it. However, the highway road provided them with the chances of small business such as coffee shops and restaurants. Furthermore, the road facilitates the

migration process from rural areas to urban centres like Port Sudan and the other towns in the area, which developed rapidly and extensively during this period.

This period also witnessed the scenario of service deterioration, political neglect and marginalisation of the poor to remote areas such as Eastern, Southern States and Darfur Regions. The poor resources and the low productivity in the eastern region, especially the Hadendowa area, were the main cause behind this neglect. The continuous neglect by the Government contributed negatively to the Hadendowa reproduction system.

### **5.9 The third Democratic Regime (1985-1989)**

Strong popular strikes in 1985, due to the dissatisfaction with economic policies and the continuous civil war in the south, had led to the overthrow the Government (Holt *et al.*, 1988). After one year as a transitional period, the new era of the fifth Government, which was the third parliamentary one (1985-1989) took place. The Government found it difficult to provide any sort of development in almost all Sudan, due to the political instability which resulted from the borders of inherited international debt, civil war in the South, famine, rural poverty and weak economic development policies. The Government time was mainly consumed in facing the big change in the Sudanese society, the massive social mobility and demographic changes. Furthermore, the short period of rule was also one of the causes that determined the Government chance to provide something.

### **5.10 The third Military Regime 1989**

The old story of the frequency from military to parliamentary Governments and vice versa, in the near history of Sudan, had appeared again. In June 1989, the parliamentary Government was changed to a military one, due to a military coup (the third military Government).

The relations between the Hadendowa and the current regime, manifest themselves in the way the regime respond to the chronic problems and the frequent disasters in the Hadendowa area. The inherited modest infrastructure in the area has a long history, as we have seen. Developing infrastructure performance should not be only the responsibility of the current regime, but all previous ones are supposed to share the responsibility.

The worsening of the present situation is basically due to the fact that the public structures are in a serious disastrous condition and are drifting away from being local and regional matters (Manger, 1996). In Sinkat Province, the performance of the Governmental Departments, (Soil Conservation, Range and Pasture, Forestry, Animal, Health and Rural Water Corporation) which are responsible for developing the primary production systems, on which the reproduction has been based, is very modest.

Generally, the inherited capitalism policy from the colonial rule has been used by the National Governments as a holy guide for development plans. The majority of the development plans during the National Governments rule, including the existing one, have been based on the fact that the developed regions have the best chances to be developed, e.g. Gezira and Khartoum capital, and the less productive ones remain neglected.

The attempts to develop the infrastructures in the Hadendowa area took place during the military regimes: e.g. (i) the education and health during the Major-General Ibrahim Abboud regime (1958-1964), (ii) the highway road during the Colonel Numairi regime. (1969-1984). However, the infrastructures, like railway lines as well as the highway itself, were part of the National plans. The location of the Hadendowa area between Port Sudan, the Country's main harbour, and the other productive areas, e.g. Gedaref, Kassala, Gezira etc, gives the area better chances to have some benefit from it.

Although the existence of the poor situation resulted from political neglect and marginalisation, the Hadendowa political leaders participated in most of the different political Government systems: they competed in the parliamentary Governments election, they participated in the Sudanese Socialist Union during Numairi regime; and they have members in the current Government before and after the Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement (ESPA) signed in 2006.

## **6. Famine disasters and lack of entitlement**

In the last hundred years, Hadendowa groups were subjected to continuous famines due to the frequent lack of political entitlement from the Governments and the drought periods. Although the Government's policies towards the Hadendowa area were characterised by grave marginalisation and unfair distribution of infrastructures and services compared with other areas, like Gezira and Khartoum, i.e. the Governments played some roles at the time of famines. In most cases, this

role didn't exceed the distribution of relief food, while establishment of development programmes is highly needed.

Since 1890 till now, the area has witnessed seven famine periods (Table 1). The intervention of the Governments, and later of the NGOs, to provide some assistance and food dose not help because the supplies usually reach the area after the peak of the famine. Regardless of their important role in overcoming the famine disaster, these materials and food stuff were provided from outside of the Hadendowa territory. This in fact shows the modest food productivity as well as the continuous famine risks that the Hadendowa groups are facing. Table 1, shows the history of the famine, the local name and what it means.

**Table 1, the Famine periods in the Hadendowa area in the last century.**

Year	Local name	Meaning
1890-1894	<i>Sanat Sitta</i>	This Arabic term refers to the Muslim annual moon calendar, and means "the sixth year". The year 1306 which corresponds to the year 1894.
1920-1921	<i>Kurbajet</i>	Because authorities used Kurbaj (Whip) to threaten people in order to organise the food distribution.
1940-1941	<i>Fouliya</i>	The name refers to the Egyptian Beans (fool) which were distributed as relief food during the famine.
1949-1950	<i>Sirar</i> <i>Hoyokiya</i>	Tibedawi name for a shooting-star which appeared during the famine period
1968-1972	<i>Kiloiate</i>	The relief rations were distributed by kilograms to the families.
1984-1985	<i>Khawajda</i>	Named according to the origin of the relief aid authorities, who were white men, locally named khawajat, (sing. khawajda).
1990-1991	<i>Not named</i>	That is because continuous relief operations reduced the misery of the famine.

Source: Harbi, 1990; Hayati, 1994.

The Haedndowa area witnessed seven famines during the last century between the following years: (1890 - 94, 1920 - 21, 1940 - 41, 1949 - 50,

1968 - 72, 1984 - 85, 1990 – 91). The continuity of famines could be attributed to three factors: (i) low food productivity; (ii) lack of food accessibility; and (iii) lack of food affordability. Hadendowa area's low food productivity reflects the physical vulnerability and limitation of the agricultural development inputs provided by the governments. While lack of food accessibility reflects itself only when the famine took place and the grain prices increased. Lack of food affordability could be considered as a main cause, since the Hadendowa area generally lacks job opportunities as a result of un-availability of capital investments or small developmental domains.

In order to overcome the severe famine situation the Hadendowa started to use another political strategy, which was beyond the locality of their determined territory and beyond regional unity with other Beja ethnic groups. They asked the British and Egyptian rule for more rights, i.e. a grazing concession in Eritrea, free grains and cereals, reduction the tax and other support. (Patel, 1992). However, the Hadendowa requests to the British and Egyptian rule show two main points:

- The Hadendowa started, for the first time, to ask the existing rule for their rights, indicating that they had rights to be given. In fact this may be attributed to the spread of the ideas of Sudanese nationalism, which developed rapidly after the Second World War and continued up to the Sudanese independence in 1956;
- They asked permission to make use of Eritrea's pastures, which indicates that they started, as nomads, to deal with international limits and boundaries, which used to be open, and which now under the control of the colonial powers in both countries had been closed (Base, 1995)

During the famine of 1968 -72 the Hadendowa were expecting more support from the national Governments because they had the political entitlement, like other Sudanese ethnic groups. This entitlement forces the Government to have a direct responsibility and to interfere whenever disasters take place. However, the continuous neglect from the Governmental side had led the Hadendowa to take the initiative to remind the Government, and ask for their rights. Moreover, the Hadendowa submitted a memorandum to the Internal Commerce Ministry, showing the bad food situation, before disasters took place (Hayati, 1994). The Minister directed the memorandum to the Kassala Province, to solve the

food problem according to the available possibilities. The long procedures delayed the Government interference. Moreover, this delay, accompanied by long drought periods played a great role in worsening food nutritional situations. Yet, huge numbers of migrants moved towards towns at the beginning of 1970. The year 1972 witnessed the movement of over 20,000 persons from the hills to Port Sudan and Sinkat (Patel, 1992). To solve this bad situation, the Government of Nimeiri intervened in 1973 by providing over 5,000 tons of grain, which were distributed to the affected groups. The relief food was distributed among the rural area councils in Kassala Province who represent the Governmental bodies.

From the above mentioned there were clear evidences of an increasing rate of poverty among the Hadendowa. During the famine of *Kiloiate* (1968-1972), the poverty showed its dramatic increase. Although there was sorghum in the market, the majority of the Hadendowa, who mainly lost their animals, migrated to miserable situations around towns, and could not afford to buy food. Between the sixties and seventies, the Government did not realise that the rapid urbanisation in Port Sudan, Sinkat and Kassala, was based not on the town's attraction to rural people, but rather on pushing factors from rural areas.

In spite of all the previous lessons, the drama continued. The long period of drought during the sixties and seventies negatively affected food productivity. The primary production systems broke down. Animals have been subjected to a continuous threat and hunger since the beginning of 1970, and most of them died and the survivors had low productivity. The dramatic decline continued up to the 1980's.

The complete failure of the summer rains in 1984 resulted in poor sorghum yields and animal production. Malnutrition, vitamin A deficiency and other diseases spread among the Hadendowa, especially in rural areas. In 1984, the famine "*Khawajda*" badly affected both humans and animals. It was estimated that about 50% (350,000) of the total population was affected (Table 2), 90% of animals were lost (Abu Sin, 1991). According to the UNICEF (1989) 85% of children under five years were below international standards of nutrition in Sinkat, Haya and Durdeb.

**Table 2 the percentage of the affected people in the study area during the famine of 1984**

<u>Town</u>	<u>Urban population</u>	<u>Rural population</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Aectedff</u>	<u>%</u>
Port Sudan	213,000	155,000	368,000	*	-
Rural Port Sudan	10,000	38,000	48,000	17,000	35.4
Sinkat	18,000	45,000	63,000	53,000	84.1
North Toker	17,000	86,000	103,000	58,000	56.3
South Toker	22,000	10,000	23,000	*	-
Haya	18,000	25,000	43,000	35,000	81.4
Durdeb	4,000	45,000	49,000	27,000	55.1
Halayib	14,000	67,000	81,000	16,000	19.8
Total	336,000	471,000	778,000	206,000	-

**Source: Patel, 1992. Note: \* missing information.**

From Table 2, it seems clearly that the highland area, like Sinkat, Haya and Durdeb, with an average of 74%, was more affected than others, which shows people vulnerability to famine. Rural poverty, low development activities and low income and the neglect of the area were the main factors of this vulnerability. At the same time, this shows the highland Hadendowa's system fragility in the years of low rainfall as well as the lack of other alternatives.

Moreover, at the time of famine, late 1984 and early 1985, when these huge numbers of affected people were looking for support, the Government of Nimeiri was facing a critical political situation, resulting from the instability in the South as well as from continuous economic deterioration. To hide the misery of the famine, the Government refused to admit the fact that famine had struck the area. Fortunately the Government was overthrown in April 1985.

In the beginning of the third parliamentary Government, 1985-1989, ruled by El Sadig El Mahdi, "Sudan Call<sup>1</sup>" was announced to the world showing the grave famine situation and requested urgent support. Although the international aid Agencies responded quickly to the call and provided huge amounts of food items, the delay of announcing the famine

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<sup>1</sup> Sudan Call was an information message presented for the world, declaring that the area (study area) was facing a food crisis, showing the critical famine situations and asking support for the needy people.

by Nimeiri Government did not only cause an enormous loss of lives, but also created and maintained the serious famine conditions. This had a negative effect on Hadendowa coping strategies. According to historians, the “*Sanat Sitta*” famine of 1894 was considered the worse famine in Sudan history (Dahl, 1988), however, the effects of the famine of the “*Khawajda*” 1984 was even far worse.

As a response to the “Sudan call”, the aid Agencies played a tangible role in providing abundant amounts of food relief, medicines, clothes, tents and plastic sheets to the affected groups in the Red Sea Hills. Since that time, in the RSH the presence of the Non Governmental Organisations as well as the European expertise has become part of the internal system in the whole Sinkat province. Besides relief operations, studies for development plans were made, and the establishment of development programmes was started in the years 1986-1989. Since then, the role of aid agencies has enlarged in both relief and development, while the role of the Governments started to decrease.

The role of the third parliamentary Government of El Sadig El Mahdi in providing services to the highland area was limited for reasons mentioned before. However, this Government established the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC). Its role was to deal with the existing famine disasters which had spread in the whole Sahel zone in the Sudan (Red Sea Hills, Kurdofan and Darfur) as well as to prepare for disasters in the future. The early Warning System Department<sup>1</sup> is one of the most important and active among the RRC departments.

In June 1990, the “Sudan Early Warning System Bulletin” predicted low productivity of sorghum and mentioned that the stored amounts of sorghum were not sufficient as there were 4 million persons in the Sudan were vulnerable to famine. The Remote Sensing Satellite also indicated a month delay in the start of the rainy season for the whole country. Neither the Government nor the development programmes run by the NGOs, strongly responded to this warning. And their out-put when the disaster took place seemed to be limited. During the period from January to August 1990, the prices of goats declined (50%) while sorghum prices increased (500%) (ayati, 1994). Although sorghum was available in the markets, it was not affordable for most of the people in the Highlands

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<sup>1</sup> The Department role was to study the current socio-economic aspects in the whole of Sudan and predict the areas which will be subjected to population movements or food shortage.

(Patel, 1992). This limited out-put reflects the lack of Hadendowa political entitlement, on the one hand, which assisted to create a silent famine disaster, a term advocated by Arnold (1988), and worsened the general food situation which forced, later, the NGOs to restart food distribution, on the other.

In RSS, the most challenging problems for sustainable development, since 1970, have been the following:

- The massive increase in the rate of urbanisation, where the population has increased from 16,000 in 1973 to 380,000 in 1990. This represents an increase of 138% with a population annual growth rate of 8%, compared with a drop of 18% in the rural population (Abu Sin, 1991). The town of Port Sudan alone accounts for about 80% of the Red Sea State population (Abdel Ati, 1996).
- The immigrant groups, some of whom are still living in squatter settlements around towns, are no longer participating in the primary production systems. Most of them have no work, and those who are working are performing marginal activities, that produce very low income, and cannot afford purchasing food. This has increased the level of poverty as well as the level of vulnerability.
- The frequency of drought and famines imposed a critical test on nomadic life in the whole State, as the loss of livestock forced a large number of people to desert this mode of living.
- Water availability for both humans and animals appears to be a problem facing people in both urban and rural areas.

Indeed, the Government must overcome these problems through development plans on both national and local levels. The NGOs, involved for the time being in development activities, also have a role in the solution. However, a great responsibility lies on the shoulder of the Hadendowa themselves.

### **7. How the Hadendowa Perceive Development**

Requesting their rights after Sudan independence, by means of the quoted Memorandums, the Hadendowa have been forcing a lot to develop their

area. Individual messages, group memorandums, and conference recommendations were submitted to all Governments. However, for more than 40 years, the services they had been seeking since independence till the signing of Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement, in 2006 were similar, and concentrated on water, health, education and income generation activities for economic development.

The services the Hadendowa are seeking actually represent territorial needs. The water shortage is one of the main problems facing both human and animals, especially during the dry season. Bearing in mind rainfall fluctuations, water availability depends on successful water storage projects, which are highly recommended. Health is also important, since the nutritional situation has generally declined. Malnutrition diseases and vitamin A deficiency are widespread in the area. Education among the Hadendowa nomads is a problematic issue, problems concerning high rates of dropout, few schools and long distance between school and nomad's settlements (Jaily and Hayati, 1998). This gives an idea of the very slow service development process in the area throughout the periods of all governments, whether military or parliamentary, and manifestly explains the continuing neglect of this part of the Country.

As a coping strategy, the Hadendowa expressed their views through ethnic union groups and political leaders participating in all Governments Parliaments after independence. Their needs show how they perceive development. To deal with Governments and keep control over their territory, the Hadendowa in collaboration with other Beja groups established a political party during the first Government named "Beja Conference"<sup>1</sup>. The first contact with the government was in 1958, after the first meeting of the Beja Conference. An Early warning system<sup>2</sup> was the Conference approach to deal with the Government. Taha Balia, the Conference Secretary, in the name of the territory had warned that

*"The region is lacking essential services, while at the same time other regions are enjoying and benefiting from them. The general health situation in the area is characterised by food deficiency in both food availability and food quality.*

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<sup>1</sup> The first Beja conference was held in 1958 to discuss the services situation in the Beja area. The conference participants were the traditional leaders (El Nuzar, El Omad, Al Shyuokh, and the Beja politicians in the Sudanese Parliament: (Dirar, 1958).

<sup>2</sup> The purpose of a warning system is to inform as many people as possible in the area at risk that a dangerous and/or damaging event is imminent and to alert them to actions that can be taken to avoid losses (Mileti, Drabek and Haas, 1975).

*The food lacks vitamins and proteins. This leads to weak immunity of the Beja and makes them vulnerable to diseases” (Dirar, 1958).*

Some basic needs were highly recommended by the Conference, which include:

- Decentralisation or local rule in the Beja area, because it gives the local people a chance to participate in the rule of the region. This is a legal essential necessary right for protecting the Beja interests in the region.
- Mobile judges to cover the entire region, and to address the problems of the people.
- Veterinary services to be expanded to cover the rural areas. This expansion should involve care, medicine, and development of animal production.
- Promotion and development of mining wealth and transportation systems.
- Construction of dams on the *khors* and digging of wells for agricultural activities.
- Development of the education services by establishing technical institutes to solve the Beja student’s problems.
- Establishment of new schools through a committee representing the whole region in order to determine the suitable places for schools, i.e. where the tribes live.
- Development of adequate nutrition through collaboration with the Ministries of agriculture, social affairs, animal production, education, and each Ministry participate (co-operatively) on the basis of its specialisation.
- Increasing the number of hospitals in rural areas, where there is a gathering of tribes. The hospital should have enough numbers of cars to transport the sick persons from the hilly areas and valleys to hospitals.
- Giving the Beja people priority for work opportunities in their region.

These points show that the group adaptive capabilities, which developed through long processes of historical change, in response to food shortage,

had been reduced in flexibility and choice. At the same time, it seems clear that the Hadendowa have evaluated the level of services provided to their territory, disseminated the ideas of the group and then responded to the Government by presenting their case and specifying determined priorities and suggestions as a perceived approach for development. The year 1958 is considered as a reference, when the Hadendowa showed what they had gained from Governments before that time, and they warned regarding the consequences of their being neglected Government.

The Conference recommendations indicate how the Hadendowa see their territory, the way it should be ruled (in a form of Federal State) and their desire to have the chance to develop it by themselves in terms of both job opportunities and local Government. This demonstrates the attachment to their land, which forced them to try as much as they could in terms of gaining full decision making power.

By adopting a comparative approach in evaluating the service situation in their area, the Hadendowa have shown that they have equal rights as other areas, and that they should have these rights at the national level. Income generation activities as well as work requests show that the Hadendowa area lacks the capital investments to absorb the abundant supply of job seekers and demands. Although capital investments will assist in the stability of the territorial system, it shows the fact that the Hadendowa territorial system is in a disastrous situation, especially the production system.

Education and health services, during Major-General Ibrahim Abboud's regime (1958-1964), made some development. This may not only be attributed to the Conference recommendations, but also to the personal interests of the Governing president who is originally from the Red Sea Region.

However, the contacts and alarming messages from the Hadendowa to the Governments were continued especially during the food shortage periods and pre-famine stage. In January 1970, before the famine (*Kiloiate*) situation worsened, the Hadendowa submitted a memorandum to the Minister of Internal Commerce. It showed the worsening food situations and requested urgent solutions. The memorandum contained the following options:

- The possibility of cultivating animal fodder in Khashm El Girba scheme during the summer and transferring it to the highland area.

- Storing sufficient amounts of sorghum in the Durdeb, Haya and Sinkat towns to be used at emergencies before the famine disaster occurs.
- Immediately transferring sufficient amounts of animal fodder from Gedaref in order to solve the problem of animal fodder shortage, and to keep the available amount of sorghum for human consumption rather than for both human and animal consumption.

The above mentioned points indicate that the Hadendowa adaptive mechanisms are based on two facts: (1) the Hadendowa declaration of the importance of the Khashm El Girba and “New Halfa”, Gash and Toker irrigated schemes (in other words the Highland area development is also connected with the development of the other areas). (2) The strategy of storing, which they used to practise when they had purchasing power. Asking the Government to do so, may be attributed to the fact that the people, even the rich, at that time had no purchasing power.

Although the requests were made continuously to the Governments, there seems to be no response other than food relief during the worse famine situations. The memorandum, which was submitted to the commissioner of the Red Sea Province in July 1980, showed no response and thus was further neglected for more than four years. The memorandum asked for the development of services as well as whatever concerns the food production process (Animal herding and agriculture). The following statement is part of that memorandum:

*“We anticipate a visit to all Province's Areas Councils, where we would like to involve all the Governmental authorities in the Province. Such a visit will show them the reality of the situation in the area and give the people of the area a sort of satisfaction and relaxation, as for four years they have not received any visit” (Abu hadia, 1980).*

During the Government of El Sadig El Mahdi (1985-1989), Mohamed Badri Abu Hadia, member of the National Assembly, submitted a memorandum to the Sea Region Director in April 1986. This shows the bad food situation as well as some suggestions to overcome it. These include:

- Digging wells and rehabilitating existing ones.
- Establishing dams on the water courses.
- Establishing welfare centres in order to develop the indigenous

handicrafts and small industries.

The suggestions of this time show some change in the political adaptive mechanisms. There is no emphasises on services development as recommended by the Beja conference (1958), instead the focus was mainly on food and water supply (the first and second suggestions). Education and health were not mentioned because they were not priorities, indicating the bad food situation. To survive there is a need for water and food. They asked for water, and in order to gain food they mentioned two dimensions: (i) food production on the basis of agricultural activities and animal production, and (ii) food affordability from the markets where purchasing power is needed, and therefore the development of handicrafts and small-scale industries as a means to improve their household income.

Mentioning these income generation projects indicates two main points: (1) group poverty and failure of the primary production systems to provide food, as there were no animals to be sold combined with low agricultural productivity; and (2) by demanding small scale industries the Hadendowa represent themselves as a settled society and, indirectly, showed the urbanisation process which took place due to frequent drought and famine.

The 90's witnessed a recognisable role of the NGOs in providing services and assistance in the area. In order to satisfy their needs, the Hadendowa have been making demands to both Government and NGOs, taking advantage of all the available chances. It is important to mention here that these requests show the continuous need for basic services that they have demand since the Beja conference of 1958.

### **8. Hadendowa Political entitlement and development in Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement**

The Government of Sudan (GOs) and the Eastern Front (EF), met in 15, Oct. 2006, in Asmara, Eritrea, under the auspices of the Government of the State of Eritrea to sign Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement in 2006.

The two parties agreed upon signing the agreement, and fully effectively implement the agreement with all of its six items: Political Issues; Comprehensive Ceasefire and Security Arrangement; Consultative Conference on Eastern Sudan agreement; Implementation Modalities and Timeline and General Provisions.

The power-sharing deal gives the Eastern Front one Assistant to the President, one Presidential advisor and one post of State Minister. The Eastern Front also gets eight parliamentary seats in Khartoum and 10 parliamentary seats in each of the three eastern states, among other posts.

As far as the economic, social and cultural policies for reconstruction and development of Eastern Sudan are concerned, the two parties agree upon the following:

- Sustained economic, social and cultural development is the key to the undoing of the longstanding marginalization of eastern Sudan.
- The following shall be the fundamental objectives of development in Eastern Sudan:
  - Rehabilitation of war affected areas;
  - Rehabilitation of social services including health, education and water;
  - Rehabilitation and development of infrastructure;
  - Human and institutional capacity building;
  - Eradication of poverty;
  - Rehabilitation and development of agriculture, industry, tourism, fisheries and other priority sectors;
  - Encouraging investment and job creation;
  - Protecting and enhancing the fragile environment;
  - Protecting and promoting historical and cultural heritages;
  - Ensuring the return and the rehabilitation of refugees and internally displaced people.
  - Ensuring that all development programs address the specific needs of women.
- A fair share of natural resources and affirmative action to address past inequalities as well as sustained social economic and cultural development are the key to a just and lasting settlement.
- The parties commit themselves to involve the people of Eastern Sudan from the beginning of the peace process, and to ensure support for, and active participation in the implementation of, a comprehensive agreement.
- The parties agree, immediately following the signing of this

agreement to establish the Eastern Sudan Reconstruction and development Fund (ESRDF).

- The Eastern Sudan Reconstruction and development Fund shall be formally established by a presidential Decree and serve as a principal organ in the planning, monitoring and follow up of the reconstruction and development program. The program does not incorporate national development projects that are undertaken by the national government in Eastern Sudan
- The Parties agree that, in addition to the share of the Eastern Sudan in the Fiscal and Financial Allocation and Monitoring Commission transfers, the national government shall allocate an amount equivalent to USD 100 million as seed money for ESRDF in 2007; and an amount of not less than USD 125 million per annum for the years 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2011.
- The Governor of the Red Sea State is a member of ESRDF Board, chaired by the Minister of Finance and National Economy, and consists of other nine members.

## **9. Conclusion**

This research has showed the history of Hadendowa territory development in relation with the successive Governments and discussed their struggles for the land, as well as for the political rights. Famines history was tackled within the same relation by concentration on the Governmental role, which seems to be generally limited. The relationship between the Hadendowa and the Government, after Sudan independence, could be seen through the requests to perceive their territory development and to develop their adaptive mechanisms and can be categorised at the following levels:

- Political rights (decentralisation) as well as services.
- Development of the primary production system (water supply projects).
- Development of the primary production system and food.
- Food and development of welfare and small-scale income

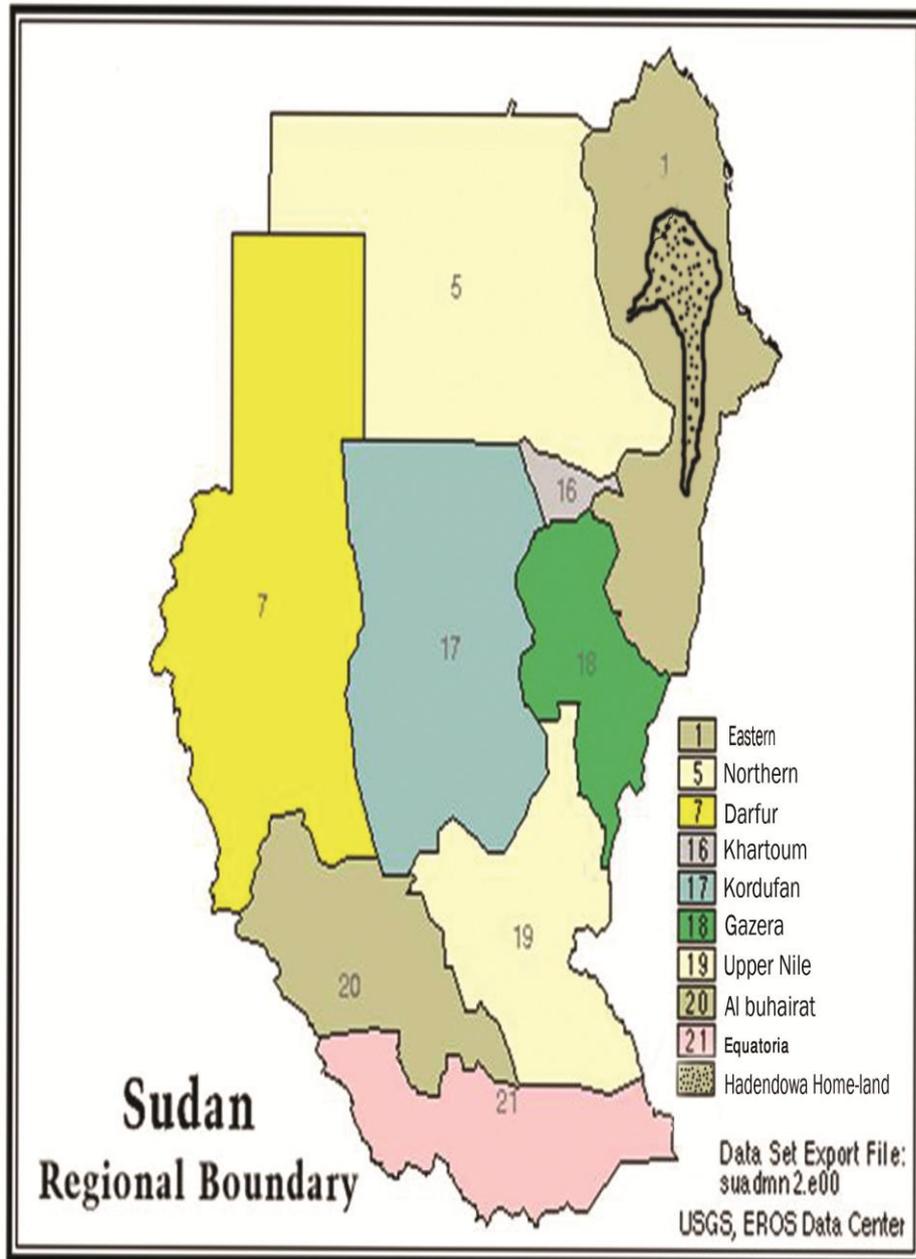
generation activities (handicrafts).

The above mentioned levels show the continued deterioration of the Hadendowa economic situation since independence. The request for decentralisation, which was made in 1958 after independence (1956), has not been mentioned again and the requests for food have increased. Welfare and small-scale industries requests show the failure of primary production systems. Generally, the discussion shows Hadendowa political marginalisation. At the same time, they are either facing the threat of losing access to productive resources or they have already lost them.

Conversely, the NGOs have established a large investment in development programmes in Sinkat province during the drought and famine period. The overall objective is to reduce, in a sustainable manner, the dependency of the local population on relief by improving local coping strategies and strengthening co-operative social structure. The national and local Government, as well as the people in the area (Hadendowa), has a role to play in this development process.

The Hadendwa's continuous demand and struggle to develop their region throughout the history succeeded in the Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement. This reflects itself in the six item agreement agreed upon by the two parties, which include: Political Issues; Comprehensive Ceasefire and Security Arrangement; Consultative Conference on Eastern Sudan agreement; Implementation Modalities and Timeline and General provisions; and development of Eastern Sudan,

A great part of the agreement addresses the sustained economic, social and cultural development in Eastern Sudan. The fundamental objectives include rehabilitation and development of social services (health, education and water), development of infrastructure, human and institutional capacity building, eradication of poverty, agriculture, industry, tourism, fisheries and other priority sectors, investment and job creation, environment protection, protecting historical and cultural heritages, and women development. Eastern Sudan Reconstruction and Development Fund is expected to play a tangible role in developing and rehabilitating all the Eastern Region during the period 2008 – 2011, if the amount of money allocated for it is managed in a wise manner.



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