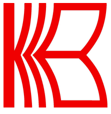

Three decades of social housing policies in Khartoum: Between violence, clientelism, and social consensus

Alice Franck

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Issue Topic

Alice Franck

Three decades of social housing policies in Khartoum: Between violence, clientelism, and social consensus

This article aims to contribute to the general debate on social housing policies in cities in the Global South by expanding on the case of Greater Khartoum. It analyzes the three decades in power of Omar al-Bashir (from 1989 to 2019), corresponding to a movement in terms of housing policy for the disadvantaged social groups, which can be linked to the regime's broader choices on another level. Based on long-term fieldwork, this article discusses the way in which programs for the eradication of informal housing, the allocation of plots of land, and social housing are, temporally and spatially, connected in the Sudanese capital. In response, it examines the regime's violence in the city and the difficulty of formulating resistance from the peripheries.

In the days following the announcement of the fall of Omar al-Bashir on 11 April 2019, after a reign of almost thirty years and several months of protests,[1] several actions to occupy empty land and empty housing were undertaken in several parts of the Sudanese capital, testifying to the fact that for many inhabitants, access to housing in Khartoum remains an urgent priority. A resident of Soba (a vast neighbourhood to the south of the city of Khartoum) told me that as on 12 April, the day after the fall of President al-Bashir, city dwellers started heading to undeveloped areas of Soba Aradi in order to appropriate a plot—to "mark the land"—with chalk marks, bricks or other building materials: "Just in case. Because you never know, and even if there is only a one-in-a-million chance of obtaining that land, you have to try."[2] This story corroborates another, in the north of Omdurman[3] this time, where empty housing estates belonging to the Housing Fund were apparently broken into and squatted in the weeks following the fall of the

1. Omar al-Bashir, who came to power in a coup d'état on 30 June 1989, established a military-Islamic regime known as the "Salvation Revolution" (*Al-Ingaz* in Arabic).
2. Declaration by I Kamal, a resident of the neighbourhood, August 2019.
3. Omdurman is one of the three cities which, with Khartoum and Khartoum North, form the Greater Khartoum conurbation, established at the confluence of the Blue and the White Nile.

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regime.[4] These two reported statements, although anecdotal, call into question, on several levels, the urban policies implemented in the Sudanese capital over a thirty-year period. First, they underline the efforts deployed and the "successes" of this regime with regard to the treatment and eradication of informal housing[5]—which now apparently represents less than 20% of the housing in the Sudanese capital,[6] while it generally predominate in the cities of the South, especially in the Arab world.[7] In Khartoum, the fall of Omar al-Bashir seems to have been interpreted as a signal or an opportunity for a potential easing of the government authorities' control over urban property, which prompts us to analyse the forms of this government control over land in the city,[8] and to examine the urban policies of informal housing eradication, land ownership regularisation and housing programmes for the disadvantaged social groups, which were implemented over three decades. This article has two objectives. Firstly, it sets out to contribute to the general debate on housing policies in the broadest sense (allocation of plots and housing), implemented in the precarious neighbourhoods of the cities of the South,[9] by describing the case of an African capital with more than 6 million inhabitants.[10] From this perspective, the article analyses the way in which the processes of informal housing eradication, plot regularisation and allocation

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4. This housing occupation was reported to Lucie Revilla, whose thesis work is partly presented in this special report published in *Politique africaine*. It was apparently carried out by one of her informants and took place in May and June.

5. Known as *'ashwa'ia* in Sudanese Arabic, this expression, with a pejorative connotation in the urban context, refers to something unpredictable, and is systematically translated locally by "*squatter area*", with reference to the illegal nature of the occupation of property, before defining the substandard materials used, the self-production of housing, or otherwise designating the (migrant) populations which inhabit these neighbourhoods.

6. G. Hamid, *4th Scientific and Professional Conference: Towards Sustainable Urban Development*, Khartoum, Sudanese Institute of Architects (SIA), 16 April 2016.

7. A. Deboulet (dir.), *Repenser les quartiers précaires*, Paris, AFD, 2016; M. Ababsa, B. Dupret and É. Denis (dir), *Popular Housing and Urban Land Tenure in the Middle East: Case Studies from Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey*, Cairo, The American University in Cairo Press, 2012; D. Sims, "The Arab Housing Paradox", *The Cairo Review of Global Affairs*, No 11, 2013, pp. 38-42.

8. This government control over urban property covers both ownership of the land, owned almost exclusively by the state, and the conditions for granting leases, which are also controlled by the state.

9. Social housing was the subject of considerable research in the 1980s and 1990s. See recently M. Jourdam-Boutin, « Les programmes de logement public à Yaoundé : entre laboratoire libéral et manifestations urbaines du clientélisme dans un Cameroun post-austérité » [online], *Urbanités*, October 2018, <http://www.revue-urbanites.fr/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Urbanités-Jourdam-Boutin-article.pdf>, consulted on 24 June 2020; A. Biehler, A. Choplin and M. Morelle, « Le logement social en Afrique : un modèle à (ré)inventer ? » [online], *Métropolitiques*, May 2015, <https://www.metropolitiques.eu/IMG/pdf/met-biehler-choplin-morelle.pdf>, consulted on 24 June 2020.

10. Central Bureau of Statistics, *Sudan in Figures 2013-2017*, Khartoum, Central Bureau of Statistics, 2018.

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in Khartoum are connected in terms of time and space, with the production of "social housing", to use a terminology that fit with the one employed by the Khartoum urban authorities (*Iskan asha'bi*).[11] Moreover, since the significant growth of the urban fringes of Greater Khartoum was largely linked to the persistent armed conflicts in the marginalised regions of the country, and led to the arrival of populations perceived by the regime as a threat,[12] these populations would be subject to special property control and placed under close social and security-oriented supervision by Omar al-Bashir's regime over a thirty-year period. The social housing policies of Greater Khartoum must therefore be analysed in the context of an authoritarian state. Secondly, this article therefore aims to analyse the main characteristics of this "authoritarian situation"[13] by considering the rationales, concrete practices and changes in these housing policies as a materialisation of state domination imposed within and upon the urban space. We will implicitly note the difficulty of expressing demands for social justice from the outskirts of Khartoum.

Each of the three decades of Omar al-Bashir's rule, extending from 1989 to 2019, corresponds to a trend in social housing policy in the urban fringes, which is linked to broader political and economic choices of the regime. These three stages will determine the framework of our analysis: the 1990s were years of the assertion of power, massive evictions and the establishment of a discriminatory urban policy vis-à-vis the IDPs (internally displaced populations), especially from the South Sudan. The 2000s corresponded to a normalisation (and a rise in property prices) in the urban fringes that developed during the preceding period, and the start of social housing programmes, related to the new oil revenues and the increase in the authorities' financial resources. The economic upturn would contribute to increased expectations among city dwellers, whose hopes would soon be dashed in the following decade. The economic recession, which began with the separation from South Sudan (July 2011) and the loss of the majority of the oil revenues, would limit the scope of the social housing programmes, while paradoxically accentuating the importance of urban property revenues for

11. We will see that there are three types of housing produced by the state: "social housing", presumed to be intended for the most vulnerable populations, "low-cost" housing, which is intended for the most privileged segment of these same outskirts (mentioned as the middle class in the grey literature on Khartoum), and "investment housing", which is intended for the affluent classes.

12. The conflicts between the North and the South, in particular the second war with the South (1983-2005), but also the Darfur conflict (since 2003), in the Nuba Mountains and the Blue Nile (2012), and the civil war in South Sudan (since 2013) have led to major flows of forced displacements of people to the Sudanese capital.

13. M. Morelle and S. Planel, « Appréhender des 'situations autoritaires'. Lectures croisées à partir du Cameroun et de l'Éthiopie » [online], *L'espace politique*, No.35, 2018, <https://journals.openedition.org/espacepolitique/4902>, consulted on 24 June 2020.

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the administrative authorities and their employees who had access to them by increasingly employing the clientelistic practices that have long been associated with them.

This article is based on extensive experience in Khartoum and regular fieldworks on land and property issues since 2001,[14] in addition to a field survey specifically concerning the Khartoum State Housing Fund in February 2020, involving interviews with six civil servants (the director, the project manager, a data analysis technician and a counter clerk), observations of a lottery committee and a project visit, and the gathering of documentation.[15] The analysis of social housing programmes based on this field survey conducted in the post-revolutionary period sheds light on the power relations forged over a thirty-year period in this city, reflecting the urban morphology and land patterns of the Sudanese capital,[16] but also providing insights into the revolutionary events of the past year and social justice issues in the transitional period.[17]

1990-2000: violence of the assertion of central authority over the city and its new inhabitants

After seizing power in June 1989, Omar al-Bashir's Islamist regime had to cope with the unprecedented urban growth of Khartoum. The capital grew from 1.3 million inhabitants in 1983 to more than 3 million in 1993, with annual growth rates of about 8%, leading to massive urban sprawl. The populations converging on Khartoum at that time were mostly internal displaced people forced to leave their regions of origin, partly because of the depletion of natural resources, especially after the great Sahelian drought of 1984-1985 which significantly affected rural areas of the country, and partly because of the resurgence and intensification of the armed conflict between the North

14. The Al-Ingaz regime's first decade in power is covered in interviews conducted at a later date with city dwellers and the Planning Minister of that time, supplemented by second-hand data from the scientific literature.
15. These are both promotional/information documents on the housing programmes developed by the Fund (and the allocation rules), statistics and neighbourhood maps also produced by the Fund, but on its own behalf, and documents concerning the allocation of social housing to beneficiaries, and the regularisation/renegotiation of instalment payments.
16. É. Denis, « Khartoum : ville refuge et métropole rentière. Mégapolisation des crises contre métropolité », *Cahiers du Gremamo*, No.18, 2005, pp. 87-127.
17. The Sudanese revolutionary movement, which led to fall of the Omar al-Bashir regime, started in provincial cities in December 2018 before swiftly reaching the Sudanese capital which, in April 2019, became the epicentre of the protests. In August 2019, an agreement was finally reached between the military and the civilian forces leading the protests, establishing a transitional government for 36 months.

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and South of the country after 1983. This influx of IDPs, which permanently altered the regional and ethnic composition of the capital,[18] posed an enormous challenge to the government, especially since it coincided with a period of severe economic crisis in the country.

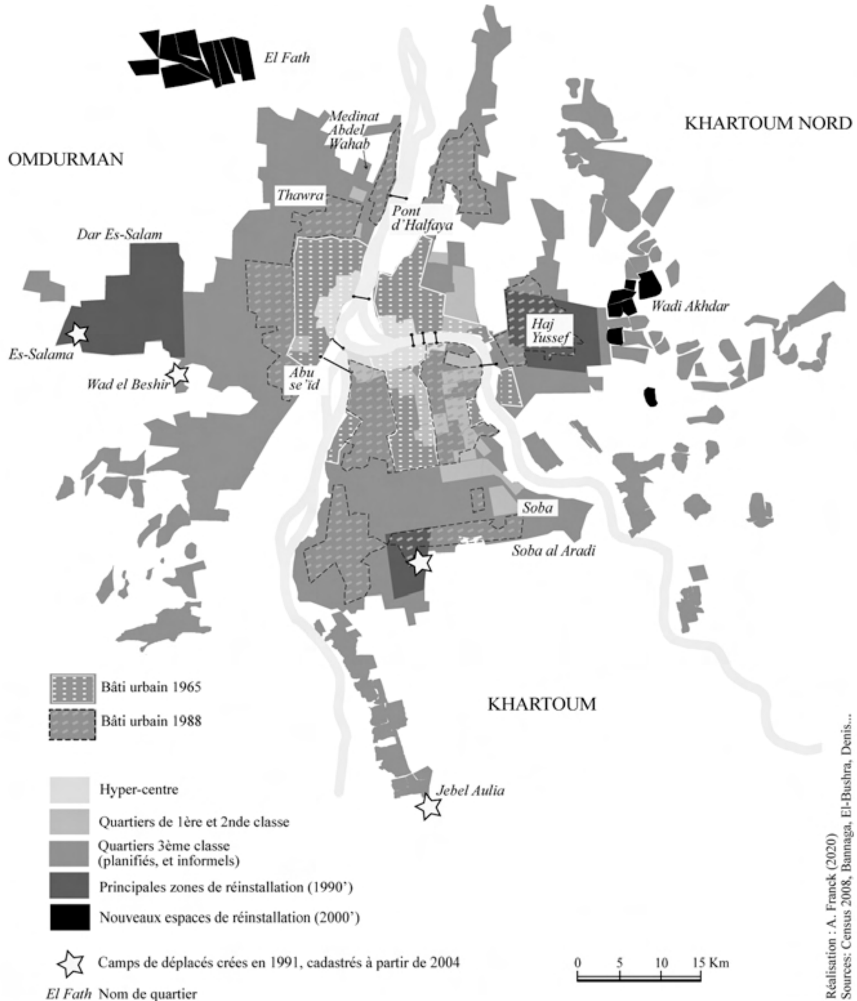
Informal housing eradication policy: evictions and relegation to urban fringes

The state of public finances in the 1990s made it impossible to contemplate the production of housing in general, and for the disadvantaged social groups in particular. In this respect, the Islamists' accession to power did not herald a major change in relation to the successive regimes since independence. Between 1956 and 1980, no fewer than ten public housing projects were carried out, producing under 1,600 housing units in total. No projects were undertaken in the 1980s, and the few that were launched in the 1990s were not completed due to insufficient financing and poor project management.[19] The government, which was unable to keep up with the rate at which the displaced populations were arriving and often settling anywhere they could in extremely precarious conditions, focused on eradicating the informal housing that was estimated to concern 60% of the urban area's residents at that time.[20] "Bulldozer" operations were swiftly launched by the regime, followed by the relegation to the urban fringes of populations that were considered less suitable for assimilation into the urban fabric and incompatible with the regime's Islamic "civilisational project".[21] This treatment of informal housing became systematic and differed according to the date of arrival of the displaced populations in Khartoum. Distinctions were thus made between displaced people from the Sudanese Sahelian regions, who were also stigmatised but very largely Muslim, and the populations displaced by war, who came from South Sudan and were mostly Christians and/or animists. Being later arrivals in the Sudanese capital, they would find it harder to obtain legal rights on the spot, or to be allocated a plot in the peripheral resettlement areas.[22]

18. É. Denis, "Khartoum…", art. cit.
19. A. M. Ahmad, A. E M Sultan, M. M. Abdalla, A. O. Malik, M. A. Said, E M Mukhtar and N M El-Mufti, "Low-Cost Housing Projects in Khartoum with Special Focus on Housing Patterns", *Habitat International*, Vol. 26, No.2, 2002, pp. 139-157.
20. UN-Habitat, *Urban Sector Studies and Capacity Building for Khartoum State*, Nairobi, UN-Habitat, 2009.
21. M. Lavergne, « La violence d'État comme mode de régulation de la croissance urbaine : le cas de Khartoum (Soudan) », *Espace, populations, sociétés*, No. 1, 1997, pp. 49-64.
22. Among the peripheral areas for the resettlement of displaced populations, there are three cities of peace (*dar al salam*). The conditions for allocation of plots would benefit "environmental" displaced populations more than those displaced by war (South Sudanese). See A. de Geoffroy, *Aux*

In 1990, four camps for displaced persons,[23] specifically intended to accommodate Southerners, whose presence in the city was considered temporary, completed the tools of this urban relegation policy (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Managing Khartoum's growth



Map designed and produced by Alice Franck, 2020.

marges de la ville, les populations déplacées par la force : enjeux, acteurs et politiques. Étude comparée des cas de Bogotá (Colombie) et de Khartoum (Soudan), PhD thesis in Geography, Paris, Paris University 8, 2009.

23. The main difference between the camps and the other resettlement areas is that, in the camps, the displaced populations do not become owners.

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Generally speaking, the massive and ruthless evictions affected all the populations that arrived in the 1980s, the very great majority of whom came from marginalised regions of the country. In September 1992, the *New York Times* expressed concern, publishing an article which revealed that 400,000 people had been evicted during the year and that the authorities planned to relocate a further 400,000.[24] Like those carried out elsewhere, the motivations for these relegations were political and security-oriented as well as economic:

> "The aim is not so much to displace as to immobilise certain populations outside the city. Accepting the principle of relocation means normalising the fact that certain categories of city dwellers cannot live in a city in which the commodification of land creates exclusion."[25]

Consequently, evictions first took place in pericentral and central (first- and second-class[26]) areas of the Sudanese capital in order to reserve these coveted areas for future developments benefiting more solvent populations with close links to the regime.

On the arid urban fringes, hundreds of thousands of third-class land plots (between 200 and 350 m^2) designed to be swiftly connected to utilities and services (which would often only occur more than a decade later) were allocated and occupied (in the form of emphyteutic leases), not always by the most vulnerable populations. This is because resettlement on sites-and-services schemes, or in camps for displaced populations depended on criteria such as the date of arrival in Khartoum, being part of a family, and obtaining administrative documents (certificates of birth, residence, marriage, etc.) which are always harder to acquire for displaced persons from war zones. Moreover, the selected families also had to be able to pay administrative charges (around 200 dollars),[27] to which the costs of plot registration and boundary marking (around 500 dollars) were added at a later date—amounts which were inflated by corrupt practices.[28] Evicted persons who were not "accommodated" had to rent or illegally occupy new areas in increasingly peripheral locations.

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24. J. Miller, "Sudan Is Undeterred in Drive to Expel Squatters", *The New York Times*, 9 March 1992.
25. J. Blot and A. Spire, « Déguerpissements et conflits autour de légitimités citadines dans les villes du Sud » [online], *L'espace politique*, No. 22, 2014, <https://journals.openedition.org/espacepolitique/2893>, consulted on 24 June 2020.
26. Since the colonial era, socio-spatial divisions in Khartoum have formed part of an urban fabric comprising three classes determining the plot size. The first-class plots are more than 800 m^2, second-class more than 500 m^2 and third-class between 216 and 350 m^2.
27. Although may seem a derisory sum for the allocation of a 300 m^2 plot, it nevertheless remained unaffordable for many displaced persons.
28. S. Pantuliano, M. Assal, B. A. Elnaiem, H. McElhinney and M. Schwab (dir.), *City Limits: Urbanisation and Vulnerability in Sudan. Khartoum Case Study*, London, ODI, 2011, p. 21.

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The resettlement projects corresponded to the old "sites-and-services" model, widely used on the outskirts of cities in the South, and very popular in periods of fiscal austerity.[29] Moreover, this model was greatly facilitated in Khartoum by the fact that the Sudanese state has been the chief landowner in the country (98%) since the implementation of the Unregistered Land Act[30] in 1970. In this model, the violence of eviction is justified by the initial illegality of the occupation of land, its potential dangerousness[31], and the subsequent allocation of fully serviced plots in some cases, as described by Dr Sharaf El Din Bannaga, former Minister in charge of these operations from 1989 to 2001, during our interview in August 2005:

> "When I was minister, we were not thinking of creating gardens.[32] There were more urgent matters, and in particular the issue of squats. To my way of thinking, the aim was to offer these people decent conditions, to give them developed land and favour those who had been there for a long time […]. In themselves, the camps were not a bad idea: people were allocated a plot, and there were water cisterns nearby. It was better than the squatted areas. The problem was in the implementation of these initiatives. The government never succeeded in communicating with the people. The authorities arrived and forcibly displaced people. And yet, it would not have been hard to explain the situation to them beforehand, via the popular committees. The ideas were not bad, but the government never managed to communicate; that's the problem."[33]

The eviction and resettlement operations would continue and permanently impact both the urban morphology and the individual and collective trajectories of the inhabitants of the informal and peripheral neighbourhoods of Greater Khartoum. In 1997, Marc Lavergne noted that for certain IDPs, this was their fourth or fifth forced intra-urban displacement,[34] and in 2009 Jacobsen, who conducted an extensive survey of a sample of 212 people in the urban fringes, noted that 56% of his sample had been subject to a forced intra-urban displacement, notably during the 1990-1995

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29. Among the very numerous works, see, for example, D. Sims, "The Arab Housing…", art. cit.; and the pioneering works of C. Rakodi, "Housing in Lusaka: Policies and Progress", *in* G. J. Williams (dir.), *Lusaka and its Environs: A Geographical Study of a Planned City in Tropical Africa*, Lusaka, Zambia Geographical Association, 1986, pp. 189-210.
30. This act made all unregistered land property of the state and created a hierarchy with regard to the system of private property. Only land that was registered and had been occupied for a long time would be fully owned, while the other land was subject to emphyteutic leases.
31. In 1988, a season of torrential rains and extensive flooding destroyed entire neighbourhoods, providing a justification for the intra-urban displacements that would follow.
32. By using the word "garden", Sharaf El Din Bannaga is expressing a certain contempt for the subject and indicates the priorities of that period with regard to urban planning.
33. Interview with Dr Sharaf El Din Bannaga, former Minister in charge of these operations from 1989 to 2001, August 2005 in Khartoum.
34. M. Lavergne, « La violence d'État… », art. cit.

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period.[35] 50% of these displacements were related to resettlement programmes, 30% to the inability to pay rent, and 13% occurred because the owners of the houses wanted to regain possession of them.

Decentralisation and growing importance of the State Planning Ministry in Khartoum

While the use of force characterises the policy during the first decade of the Islamist regime, the assertion of its power over the capital was also reflected in an institutional reform enabling the implementation of these major programmes in the city. The new regime's "recruitment" of Sharaf El Din Bannaga—an urban planning engineer educated in England but working in Saudi Arabia for a United Nations agency and a committed Islamist—reflected a change of course and a reappraisal of urban development issues (long considered of secondary importance in Sudan), even though the primary objective remained conserving the revenues and loyalties generated by granting valuable plots of land in urban centres to private actors or party members.[36] Bannaga would become a member of the Khartoum State cabinet, agreeing to head the Ministry of Engineering Affairs (1989-1994), with responsibility for initiatives to address the population growth of Greater Khartoum.[37] Under his leadership, this ministry became the Ministry of Housing, Construction and Public Utilities in 1995, which he was forced to leave in 2001 but with which he maintains close ties to this day.[38] The ministry then became the

35. K. Jacobsen, *Internal Displacement to Urban Areas: The Tufts-IDMC Profiling Study. Khartoum, Sudan: Case 1*, Oslo/Geneva/Talloires-Montmin, Norwegian Refugee Council/Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre/Tufts University, 2008.
36. J. Post, "The Politics of Urban Planning in the Sudan", *Habitat International*, Vol. 20, No. 1, 1996, pp. 121-137.
37. Sharaf El Din Bannaga's ideological and technical commitment to the issue of informal housing is discernible in his four publications on this subject. Sharaf E. Bannaga: 2002, *The Displaced & Peace Opportunities in Sudan (With special reference to the Khartoum experience)*; 2000, *Al-Shorouk*, *the organization of village in the State of Khartoum*, Ministry of Engineering Affairs in cooperation with the Habitat Group at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology; 1996, *Mawa, Unauthorised and squatter settlements in Khartoum: history, magnitude and treatment*, Ministry of Engineering Affairs in cooperation with the Habitat Group at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology; 1992, *Amal I and Amal II*, the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology.
38. His departure from the ministry is apparently related to the split between Omar al-Bashir and Hassan al-Turabi, the ideologue of the Sudanese Islamic movement, and the shift in favour of those loyal to Omar al-Bashir which took place in the regime after this rift (interview with Dr Sharaf El Din Bannaga, former Minister in charge of these operations from 1989 to 2001, Khartoum, August 2005). The links that he still maintains with all the departments in the Planning Ministry and the associated technical departments are apparent in the consulting assignments that he carries out there and the training of a number of civil servants at his private engineering school. In this way, he also embodies the involvement of party members in private companies linked to public programmes (interview with the director of the Housing Fund, February 2020, in Khartoum).

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Ministry of Physical Planning and Public Utilities. The changes in the names of the ministry in charge of the Sudanese capital also reflects the growing importance of urban development as a public issue.

In 1991, the Doxiadis Plan, devised by the foreign consultancy firm of the same name, was adopted, providing an international legitimacy for the urban development programmes undertaken by the government. Until then, the master plans produced by the succession of foreign consulting firms intervening in Khartoum had remained inoperative due to explosive urban growth, mistrust of imported planning models, and the fact that they were managed by central government departments (e.g. the State Town Planning Board) devoid of any real executive power and lacking a strong local presence.[39] This change of priorities in urban planning, forming part of a broader trend in development, also went hand-in-hand with decentralisation, which was one of the bases of the reforms undertaken by the Omar al-Bashir regime. In Sudan, this decentralisation involved a redeployment of the central authority on various levels, leading Marc Lavergne to talk about "trompe-l'œil decentralisation".[40] This was especially blatant in Khartoum State (*wilaya*), the demographic and economic hub of the country, which, more than any other *wilaya*, would embody the regime's political project.[41]

Khartoum State, with its enhanced prerogatives and directly links to central government (the *wali* is appointed by the President), and with it the Ministry of Planning and Land Administration of the *wilaya*, saw a massive influx of party members (first from the National Islamist Front, followed by the National Congress Party) who continued, transmitted and systematised a clientelistic land policy. In this way, the smallest administrative level formed by the popular committee (*lajna shaʿbīa*)[42] would play an important role at the neighbourhood level, especially for the allocation of plots and housing, and for other formalities related to the deployment of urban services.[43] These committees were responsible for providing the Planning Ministry and Khartoum State with the residence certificates required by city dwellers engaged in plot allocation or regularisation formalities. The promotion by

39. J. Post, "The Politics of Urban Planning…", art. cit.
40. M. Lavergne, « Le nouveau système politique soudanais ou la démocratie en trompe-l'œil », *Politique africaine*, No. 66, 1997, pp. 23-38.
41. A. Choplin, *Fabriquer des villes-capitales entre monde arabe et Afrique noire : Nouakchott (Mauritanie) et Khartoum (Soudan), étude comparée*, PhD thesis in Geography, Paris, Paris University 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, 2006.
42. Regarding the functioning of the people's committees, see Lucie Revilla in this issue.
43. L. Crombé and G. Sauloup, « Autoritarisme, hybridation et pratiques du pouvoir dans le Grand Khartoum : une étude des services de l'eau et du commerce de rue » [online], *L'espace politique*, No. 30, 2016, <https://journals.openedition.org/espacepolitique/4018>, consulted on 24 June 2020.

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this regime of what it referred to as “people’s participation“[44] via the involvement of these committees would above all enable the regime to reach all segments of urban society and develop alliances and allegiances therein, even in the most precarious neighbourhoods.

Since these operations to reduce informal housing through the massive allocation of plots of land did not keep up with the pace of urban growth, the importance of “contacts”—at the neighbourhood level or in the government—and the amount of fees that beneficiaries had to pay to ensure a successful plot allocation procedure (*in situ* or on a resettlement site) excluded the most vulnerable populations and increased their land insecurity.[45] Phenomena associated with the resale of obtained plot allocation rights soon appeared in a market concerning the urban lower classes, and fostered speculation:

> “Khartoum suffers from significant property speculation that cannot be brought under control. When I was Minister, I distributed many plots for 10 dollars. I believed that this would be favourable to the poorest and stabilise the market. In the end, they all resold their plots. I failed”.[46]

This speculative trend, which began in the precarious neighbourhoods in the late 1990s, added to the burdens imposed by the plot allocation criteria (date of arrival, administrative documents, etc.) and created selection among the poor: between those who could pay the fees involved in the plot allocation procedure, or even purchase the allocation rights of families that were even more vulnerable—jobbers, informal small-scale vendors, the unemployed for whom renting was more affordable than the payment of a large single amount (even to become an owner)—and those for whom illegal occupation remained the only possible alternative.

During this first decade in power, however, the scale of the plot allocation/regularisation would “counterbalance” the violence of the urban projects and constant relegations to the urban fringes suffered by the displaced populations arriving in massive numbers from 1985 onwards. In all, more than 700,000 third-class plots were allocated in the outskirts of the Sudanese capital between 1990 and 2010, the vast majority of them during the first decade[47] (Table 1).

44. M. Lavergne, « Le nouveau système … », art. cit.
45. A. de Geoffroy, *Aux marges de la ville…*, *op. cit*.
46. Interview with Sharaf El Din Bannaga, August 2005 in Khartoum.
47. K. Jacobsen, *Internal Displacement to Urban Areas…*, *op.cit.*

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Table 1. Number of third-class plots allocated and regularised between 1990 and 2010

Greater Khartoum city	Peripheral plots allocated according to the sites-and-services model	Plots regularised ("replanning" and "incorporation" operations in town-centre neighbourhoods)
Khartoum	105,000	82,900
North Khartoum	120,000	80,500
Omdurman	130,000	200,700
Total	355,000	364,100

Source: Ministry of Physical Planning and Public Utilities.

2000-2010: Oil boom, from social housing programmes to investment housing programmes

Enhancement of the peripheral neighbourhoods developed in the preceding period and continuation of relegation measures

Sudan's entry into the circle of oil-producing countries at the very start of the 2000s transformed the Sudanese economic situation and confirmed the liberal reforms initiated by the regime from the mid-1990s onwards.[48] The adoption of more political and economic openness by the regime contributed to this period of improvements. The exercise of power took on new forms of "hybridisation of authoritarianism".[49] This decade saw a metamorphosis of the Sudanese capital, which was the main outlet for the oil revenues: the city centre grew skywards, and towers with an extremely modern architectural profile started to appear. This process was referred to as the "Dubaïsation of Khartoum".[50] Luxury projects started to be built by public-private partnerships, notably on agricultural land in the city centre, but these new urban dynamics gradually reached the outskirts, now accessible via the rapidly expanding road network. For the first time, the arid fringes of the capital in turn became prime areas for urban speculation, attracting gated housing

48. R. Marchal and E. Ahmed, "Multiple Uses of Neoliberalism: War, New Boundaries and Reorganization of the Government of Sudan", *in* F. Gutiérrez and G. Schönwälder (dir.), *Economic Liberalization and Political Violence. Utopia or Dystopia?*, London/Ottawa, Pluto Press/International Development Research Centre, 2010, pp. 173-208.
49. L. Crombé and G. Sauloup, "Autoritarisme, hybridation…", art. cit.
50. A Choplin and A. Franck, "A Glimpse of Dubai in Khartoum and Nouakchott: Prestige Urban Projects on the Margins of the Arab World", *Built Environment*, Vol. 36, No. 2, 2010, pp. 64-77.

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developments for the affluent classes, in sharp contrast to the immediate environment of precarious neighbourhoods.[51]

Investments in land development and infrastructure therefore reached the outskirts (water and electricity supplies, road networks), including the low-class neighbourhoods that had developed during the preceding decade, and helped to raise property prices there. This caused the speculative trend that had begun in the low-class neighbourhoods at the end of the 1990s to intensify during the 2000s.

The days when urban development was limited to allocating plots to poor and marginalised populations at low prices seemed to be over. And yet, the allocation of undeveloped plots would continue, but in increasingly peripheral areas, e.g. in the vast El Fath neighbourhood north of Omdurman, 60 km from Khartoum city centre, earmarked to house people evicted from all parts of the capital, and the new arrivals, particularly displaced persons from Darfur[52] (see map, Figure 1). The eviction programmes were resumed, but this time they were more targeted, concerning areas that were formerly peripheral and were now in demand on the real estate market.[53] In addition, they did not spare certain legally settled areas such as camps for displaced persons whose planning was programmed (land registration, destruction, allocation of plots on the spot for some, resettlement and eviction for others). As other studies have noted, contemporary evictions are increasingly market-driven[54] and are no longer limited to the central and pericentral areas.

These evictions occurred in a context in which oil revenues and the signature of the peace agreement with South Sudan (2005)[55] had aroused growing expectations among the inhabitants of Greater Khartoum. For populations that originated from the South, these expectations were combined with uncertainties. The eviction operations also faced greater resistance than in the preceding decade from populations that had been settled in the city for more than ten years, as at Soba Aradi where the evacuation of the area with a view to resettling the inhabitants in El Fath ended in more than ten deaths.[56]

51. Y. Elhadary and S. Ali, "A New Trend in Urban Housing: Gated Communities in Khartoum", *American Journal of Sociological Research*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 2017, pp. 45-55.

52. The Darfur conflict, although simmering over a long period, erupted in February 2003 and generated new flows of displaced persons to Greater Khartoum.

53. Regarding speculation in the working-class housing market, see A. Franck, « Le Grand Khartoum sans Sudistes ? Recompositions post-CPA dans le quartier populaire de Mussalass (Omdurman) », *Égypte/Monde arabe*, No. 14, 2016, pp. 85-111.

54. J. Blot and A. Spire, "Déguerpissements et conflits…", art. cit.

55. Regarding the return flows of South Sudanese after peace and independence, and their impact on the working-class real estate market, see A. Franck, « Le Grand Khartoum sans Sudistes… », art. cit

56. "Soba Massacre, or the Unwise Khartoum State Land Policy" [online], *Sudan Tribune*, 19 May 2005, <https://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article9671>, consulted on 24 June 2020.

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However, attempts to resist remained rare and were almost always in vain. Furthermore, they seldom came from populations cumulating several marginality factors (regional and ethnic origins, low financial and occupational status) and whose right to remain in the city could be considered tenuous.

At the same time, the improvement in public finances and the opening of the property market to local and foreign investors presented new opportunities and renewed the approach to housing for the disadvantaged social groups.

The Planning Ministry ventures into middle and low-class property development

Following the rise in property prices, and the growing importance of the Ministry of Planning over the preceding decade, the small department of the Ministry of Engineering Affairs dedicated to housing, created in 1965, became the Housing Development Fund in 2001, an independent institution (but with very close links to the Ministry of Planning and Khartoum State) which was now responsible for establishing a more ambitious social housing programme than merely allocating undeveloped housing plots. Rather than providing beneficiary families with an third-class land plot, the new approach was add basic housing modules to it: a bedroom, a kitchen and a bathroom. This was considered to be a basic "house" which could be developed in the future according to the size of the family and its finances.

In terms of financing, the programme represented a major change. Firstly, for the beneficiaries, the ownership of a social housing unit was based on purchase of the home over 12 years (the land was donated free of charge by Khartoum State via the Ministry of Planning). After selection, the beneficiaries had to pay 20% of the total purchase price, with the remainder of the amount being paid quarterly over a maximum period of 12 years, at the end of which they would own their house and the plot (emphyteutic lease).

Secondly, on the programme level, the financing of social housing (*Iskan asha'bi*, 60% of the housing in the projects) and the connection of urban services and utilities would be supported by the sale of "low-cost housing" (*Iskan iqtissadi*)[57], representing 40% of the housing in the projects, built according to the same procedures and sold at the market price to more solvent populations wanting to acquire housing in these same peripheral areas. The construction and sale of a third type of housing, named "investment housing"

57. The term "low-cost housing" should interpreted as a commercial argument, with reference to the marketing of these housing units on the traditional real estate market. For this type of housing, the price of the land is included in the selling price of the dwelling, in contrast to social housing where only the construction costs are charged to the beneficiaries.

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(*Iskan istithmari*), designating apartments designed for more affluent clients, would also contribute to the financing of social housing programme.

The launch of this programme shows that the production of formal housing, including third-class housing, which accounts for 80% of the housing stock in Khartoum,[58] has, in the context of a surging property market, become a profitable investment for the Khartoum State authorities. Between 2002 and 2017, 39,811 social housing units were built and allocated, and 30,360 low-cost housing units were built and sold. Although this corresponds to less than 10% of the construction market and is not sufficient to meet the demand (in 2010, the housing shortfall was estimated at 60,000 units per annum[59]), the Planning Ministry, via the Housing Fund, is now directly involved in low-class property development.

This turnaround in favour of the allocation of housing units rather than plots of land was justified by local and international urban planners by the fact that most of the undeveloped plots allocated apparently remained undeveloped ten years later, since the vulnerable status of the populations in question prevented them from meeting the costs of building a housing unit.[60] However, given that the administrative fees related to the formalities for the allocation of an undeveloped plot (between 200 and 700 dollars in the 1990s) had partly contributed to the exclusion of the most vulnerable people, as we have already shown, what can be said of a system in which these same people are obliged to make a down payment corresponding to 20% of the building costs (or about 1,500 dollars in 2003), added to which instalments have to be paid over a 12-year period, amounting to a total value, in 2003, of 7,500 dollars, i.e. a far larger amount than before?

The hypothesis postulated by Johan Post in 1996,[61] concerning the allocation of plots to people who did not require them, or at least not immediately (and especially not until the neighbourhood was connected to water and electricity supplies), bears repeating, and could explain why a large number of plots had not been developed, due to their owners awaiting the arrival of services and utilities, and for prices to rise in order to increase their value. All the more so since allocations to civil servants in compensation for their low wages, or to other actors as a reward for services rendered or to consolidate allegiances, increased considerably under this regime.

This is illustrated by the story of H. Married to a foreigner, who was not allowed to purchase property in Sudan, she was entitled to apply for

58. G. Hamid and A. Elhassan, "Incremental Housing as an Alternative Housing Policy: Evidence from Greater Khartoum", *International Journal of Housing Policy*, Vol. 14, No. 2, 2014, pp. 181-195.
59. *Ibid*.
60. *Ibid.*; UN-Habitat, *Urban Sector Studies…*, *op. cit.*
61. J. Post, "The Politics of Urban Planning…", art. cit.

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a "subsidised" allocation of land for her children, and she did so. In 1998 she obtained the right to "subsidised" first-class land (a plot of more than 800 m^2), which corresponded to her social level and showed that third-class land was not the only land concerned by such "allocations". Her application was subsequently lost and therefore, in 2002, she applied to the Planning Ministry, assisted by brother, an army general, who supported her application. Their contact person in the Ministry therefore included her in the newly started social housing programmes:

> "I did not want this housing unit in Haj Yussef, a long way from the city centre, without services and a third-class plot. But my brother told me, if you don't take it, you'll have nothing else. So I accepted. The plot that the Fund allocated to me was good: it was located on the main street, near the bread oven and the mosque.[62] I finished paying the instalments in three years. As soon as I had the housing, the project engineer came to see me; he told me that he was interested in my housing unit for members of his family, that it was better for me if the plot was not empty, that his family would maintain the house, enlarge it, and that one day, when urban services arrived, the house would have gained value, and that by accepting I would be doing a good deed. He used a lengthy Islamist discourse to convince me. When I sold the house years later in 2017, I realised that the engineer working on the project had been renting my house to his supposed family for years."[63]

This testimony corroborates the hypothesis that third-class plots were sometimes allocated to people who did not need them (the inclusion of H. in a social housing programme was inappropriate). It also underlines the importance of arbitrary events (in her case, the loss of a first-class plot), contacts and social status in administrative formalities of any kind, and the corrupt practices of certain civil servants (in this case renting out property to vulnerable people). The social housing programme that was launched would develop and prosper along the same clientelistic lines as the previous system of land allocation (which continued to exist).

Who "deserved" a social housing unit in Khartoum?

The beneficiaries of the social housing programme were selected according to a points system that largely adopted the main principles of the previous system (see Table 2). Applications were open to families of Sudanese nationality (single people and couples without children could not apply unless

62. Normally, the location of the housing lot in the project (on the main street, near the bus station, etc.) is left to chance and the selected beneficiaries draw lots for the section that will be allocated to them in a specific committee.
63. Interview with H., Cedej-Khartoum, November 2016; supplemented by an interview in Khartoum in February 2020.

they could prove their infertility). Priority was given to length of residence in the capital and to civil servants, especially retired ones.

All the Fund civil servants that we met stressed the fairness of the criteria taken into account and that the selection procedure is supervised by an independent committee of seven people. According to the interviews conducted, many of them appeared to be former managers in the Ministry of Planning, and the conditions of their appointment or reappointment could not be clarified through the fieldwork. Some civil servants at the Housing Fund assured me that the composition of the committee changed every year, while others asserted: "They change of course. When one of the committee members dies, he is replaced by another".[64]

Table 2. Decisive criteria for the awarding of "merit" giving entitlement to social housing[65]

Criteria	Points	Criteria	Points
1. Born in Khartoum	10	9. Each child	4
2. 10 years' residence	3	10. A civil servant in the public sector	7
3. Residence for more than 10 years and less than 15 years	5	11. A retired former civil servant	10
4. More than 15 years' residence	7	12. Private-sector employee	5
5. Marriage: First wife	5	13. Entrepreneur	3
6. Marriage: Second wife	3	14. Housed by a relative	2
7. Marriage: Third wife	2	15. Rental	3
8. Marriage: Fourth wife	1		

"– Applicants must be born in Khartoum or have resided in Khartoum for 10 years before their interview with the committee.
– Their places of work and residence places must be within Khartoum State (enclose the requested documents) […]
– The applicant's family must be settled in Khartoum.
– The applicant must not have obtained land in a housing project in Khartoum.
– The applicant must not own land or a housing unit at the time of their interview with the committee.[66]
– **The minimum number of points to obtain a social housing unit is 25."**

Source: Housing Development Fund website <http://iskan.sd/web/housing/public_merit>

64. Interview with A., civil servant in the Housing Fund since 2003, Khartoum, 19 February 2020.
65. The allocation of social housing generally borrows from terminology relating to law and justice; the criteria of merit (*isstiqaq* in Arabic) here refers to a culture and a philosophy, notably religious, with regard to the poor. It should be noted that there is nothing in the criteria about measuring the applicant's income, nor assessing his or her their solvency. The application, the absence of real estate and the payment shall prevail. Widows with children are considered special, priority cases, as they are in the Muslim religion.
66. The Sudanese bureaucracy is highly developed, enabling both verifications and the avoidance of verifications. The Land Administration is represented on the Housing Fund's allocation committees.

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The document then describes specific cases in detail, including two derogatory situations. First, for the attribution of merit, the committee could decide to take account of other cases, in particular, the cases sent to it directly by the Fund's managing director, who could refer people to the committee after they had passed a social examination carried out by the specialised administrative department for approval of their merit. Second, people who had obtained approval directly from the Planning Minister did not have to meet the abovementioned criteria.

These two derogatory situations illustrate the potential for people in high-level positions to bypass the requirements of the housing allocation programme for the most vulnerable people in a context in which housing production in the urban area was insufficient to meet the demand, and in which civil servants were likely to be put under significant pressure.

At the lower administrative levels (civil servants at the Housing Fund, on the selection committee, or otherwise on the popular committees in the neighbourhoods that provide applicants with certificates proving their the length of residence), all kinds of corrupt practices abounded, contributing to the exclusion of the poorest people, and especially those with the fewest political connections. For example, during the committee for drawing housing lots that I was able to observe,[67] two of the seven beneficiary families had not obtained a merit score, and their applications were marked "confidential" instead of mentioning the number of points obtained, which normally justifies the allocation of housing. Another family whose points easily justified the allocation of a housing unit had received the Minister's approval to pay only half of the amount demanded in advance, which shows that each stage of the procedure can be subject to negotiation.

At the entrance to the Housing Development Fund, by the tea vendor's stand, a discussion is under way between a man who acts as public letter-writer for housing applicants, a housing applicant and myself. The applicant is angry:

> "My advice for your research is to go into the neighbourhoods and ask who the houses belong to; you'll find that they belong to people who don't need them since 10 years. And you'll find that a single person has bought the housing units of numerous persons who were supposed to receive them. […]. The person who deserves the housing will appear before the committee but won't have the money to pay the down payment and the instalments. There will be houses in the names of different people [the beneficiaries], but the money will be paid by a civil servant working for the Fund".[68]

67. Committee drawing housing lots at Abu Se'id 73 on 19 February 2020. Committee which takes action once the selected persons have paid the 20% advance payment, and must then draw lots for a housing lot on a project.
68. Informal discussion in front of the Housing Fund building, 18 February 2020.

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A far smaller supply of social housing than the demand, combined with these numerous misappropriations, and the obligation to pay a significant sum to enter the programme, contribute, once again, to the exclusion of the most vulnerable populations from the social housing programmes in Greater Khartoum, and especially from the most coveted projects (often those "closest" to the centre) in a very tight real estate and rental market. The violence of the bulldozers is replaced by the violence of the market. The people who are excluded are now forced to rent more frequently than in the past, since illegal settlements are increasingly difficult to establish, while the most disadvantaged segments of the urban population that have managed to join the programme are increasingly peripheralized.

A pro-poor programme?

To be effective, the cross-financing system on which the social housing programmes are based requires healthy sales of the "low-cost" housing units, located in the same areas and built to identical specifications. However, these commercial lots[69] were more attractive (and therefore more profitable) when the social housing units were inhabited, when social relations had started to develop in the neighbourhood, after the arrival of basic services and when schools had been opened, generating a certain urban mixing like in the oldest programmes. In other words, there was a time lag between the allocation of the soical housing and the sale of the low-cost housing, since the production of the former increased the attractiveness of the latter on which the system's profitability was based. This phenomenon would help to maintain these programmes between 2000 and 2010 and to establish a form of "social pact" between the regime and the city dwellers in low-class neighbourhoods.

The Housing Fund would also develop over this period. The number of engineers working for it increased: from 10 in 2003, to 15 in 2006 and 50 at present.[70] Two real estate agencies were created at the Housing Fund. One is devoted to the sale of "low-cost" housing and attempts to compete with the private real estate companies which sprang up in the 2000s, particularly those positioned on the market covering the urban fringes and the middle classes, like Sogatra.[71] The second agency is dedicated to "investment" housing. This

69. The purchase of an "low-cost" housing unit implies an initial down payment of 60% of the total price and instalments paid over three years, rather than 12 years as in the case of social housing.
70. Interview with F., engineer in the Housing Fund since 2003, place?, February 2020.
71. A. Franck, « Insécurité foncière généralisée à Khartoum : quand les titres de propriété ne protègent plus des prédations publiques » [online], *Métropolitiques*, November 2016, <https://www.metropolitiques.eu/IMG/pdf/met-franck.pdf>, consulted on 24 June 2020.

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means buildings, and therefore apartments intended for the affluent classes, which initially developed in the central and pericentral areas, and compete with another segment—private luxury property development—which also grew rapidly during the decade marked by the oil boom. The Housing Fund claimed that the construction of such projects was justified by the system of cross-financing of social housing and by the goal of reducing urban sprawl. However, this type of housing would gradually take precedence over the two other forms, and especially over the production of social housing, particularly during the following decade. In 2007, only 143 investment housing units were completed, whereas in 2020 apparently more than 1,461 have already been built and put on sale.[72] Although the number of these constructions remains far smaller than the number of social and low-cost-type housing units produced, it is above all the acceleration in the production of the "investment" type and, on the contrary, the slowdown in the other two types between 2010 and 2020 that is remarkable (Table 3), underlining the Fund's repositioning in a less working-class and more profitable real estate market.

Table 3. Housing production by the Housing Fund between 2002 and 2020

Type of housing	Number of housing units delivered per year over the 2002-2007 period	Number of housing units delivered per year over the 2007-2010 period	Number of housing units delivered per year over the 2010-2020 period
Social housing	5,489	9,149	41
Low-cost housing	921	8,375	62
Investment housing	27	45	118

Source: Housing Fund/G. Hamid and A. Elhassan, "Incremental Housing…", art. cit.; UN-Habitat, *Urban Sector Studies…, op. cit.*

2010-2019: Importance of property revenues to Khartoum State, priority to investments and stoppage of social housing production

A period of economic recession began with the separation from South Sudan in 2011, which would have contradictory effects on the real estate sector and more generally on the dynamics of land predation in the country. Far from tempering the long Sudanese tradition of regarding land and housing property as a repository of value, the economic recession, and especially

72. Figures provided by the Housing Fund.

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the spiralling inflation and the accompanying devaluation of the Sudanese currency[73] would, on the contrary, reinforce it. The most visible signs of overheating in the real-estate sector are seen in the urban landscape, where construction sites continue to spring up throughout the capital. A 2014 circular of the National Bank of Sudan ordered the country's banks to refrain from financing real estate, and in particular purchases of land and housing for investment purposes, thereby trying to limit the overheating of the sector (which fuelled a rise in land prices in the city), and to preserve investment resources for productive sectors.[74] However, the loss of oil revenues caused public finances to plummet, resulting in an increase in the land sales at the level of the federated states, which were their main source of revenues. For example, in 2012, the Planning Ministry of Khartoum State apparently sold plots of land worth a total amount of around 132 million dollars, i.e. a 30% increase relative to the Ministry's total revenues.[75] In a context of declining resources and an increase in urban land prices, Khartoum State would be less and less inclined to allocate social housing programmes covering large areas, and the emphasis would be placed mainly on investment housing projects (Figure 2). This is because the Housing Fund is not concerned by the aforementioned 2014 circular and can continue these real estate investment activities. The land allocated to it was now peripheral, but the projects scheduled to be built there were on a new dimension, reflecting the extension of coveted areas in the Sudanese capital.

The "Abdel Wahab city" housing project, named after the former Planning Minister (2001-2008), will comprise 230 buildings and 3,500 apartments. Located to the north of the city of Omdurman, to which access is now facilitated by the extension of Nile Street to Omdurman and the construction of Halfaya Bridge, this project will propose two-bedroom apartments of around 120 m^2 for 40,000 dollars.[76] Another project for 1,216 apartments is also under construction in Soba, this time in the outskirts to the south of the city of Khartoum. In these precarious outskirts with good road links, the Housing Fund is also developing new models of investment housing: single-storey housing developments with a courtyard. While the construction programmes for apartment buildings and investment housing units

73. In 2015, the Sudanese currency is estimated to have lost 42% of its real parity against the major currencies, 40% in 2018 and 70% in 2019, which was accompanied by a cash shortfall.
74. UN-Habitat and Ministry of Environment, *Sudan's Report for United Nations' Third Conference On Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, (Habitat III), 2016*, Nairobi/Khartoum, UN-Habitat/Ministry of Environment, 2014.
75. *Ibid.*
76. This is an exorbitant amount in a city in which most inhabitants earn between 20 and 30 dollars per month. By comparison, a "low-cost" housing unit in a similar peripheral area costs four times less.

Figure 2. Medinat Abdel Wahab

Translation of the advertising signboard: Khartoum State, Ministry of Urban Planning, Housing Fund. The apartments of engineer Abdelwahab Mohammed Othman. 3,500 apartments. © Alice Franck, 10 February 2020.

have continued, the supply of land for social housing projects has started to run out:

> "For six years now we have had no more land for social housing because the *wali* [governor of Khartoum] had the idea of building vertical housing units.[77] The problem with this type of housing is its financial affordability. The category of person concerned by social housing earns about 20 or 30 dollars per month. They will be completely unable to benefit from this type of housing. We have tried to lower the costs, but whatever we do, the cost remains exorbitant".[78]

The land shortage will be exacerbated by the fact that half of the 9,000 plots at Abu Seï'd 93, south of Omdurman along the White Nile, earmarked for the construction of social and low-cost housing, remain undeveloped due to a conflict between Khartoum State and the owner-citizens regarding the expropriation/compensation procedures.[79] Conflicts between Khartoum

77. This citation shows that in Khartoum the vertical housing(and apartments) model is not considered suitable for social housing. It is systematically designed for a more affluent public. Although there are financial reasons (cost of construction, cost of services such as electricity related to air conditioning, for example), this also reflects debates about urban modernity and the presumed preferences of poor populations.
78. Interview with Farouk, engineer, social housing project manager, Housing Fund, February 2020.
79. The land on the banks of the Nile, as at Abu Se'ïd is among the rare land in the urban area, along with the land in the city centre, acquired with full ownership rights. For more details concerning

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State and city dwellers are increasing, reflecting the growing shortages of land, the public predations associated with it, and the growing resistance of the city dwellers. Legal proceedings related to land are increasing, sit-ins and protests are organised in various neighbourhoods of Khartoum, and press articles on the corruption related to land in Khartoum are more numerous, reflecting the demise of the relative social pact seen during the economic boom period.

This stoppage of social housing projects is not solely attributed to the shortage of land or a lack of political will on the part of the *wali*, but can also be explained by the fact that inflation has led to a sharp rise in building prices and the loan instalments paid by the beneficiaries over 12 years have been devalued, ultimately amounting to derisory sums. In other words, for the people already included in the programme, social housing is becoming very affordable due to the impact of inflation, but it is increasingly difficult for the Housing Fund to cover its costs and carry out new projects. This is illustrated by the acceleration in re-assessments of the down payment amount needed to gain access to social housing, and by shorter loan terms, reduced from 12 to 10 years (Table 4). Cash payments (without monthly instalments) for social and low-cost housing are increasingly common, enabling a 10% reduction in the total amount for the buyer or the applicant.

Table 4. Initial amount to be paid by the selected beneficiaries to "enter" the social housing programme (20% of the total amount payable over ten years, 256,000 SDG in 2020)

	Amount in SDG (Sudanese pounds)	Estimated amount in dollars based on the black-market exchange rate at the time
2003-2009	3,500 SDG	1,500 dollars in 2009
2010-2012	4,500 SDG	562 dollars in April 2012
In 2015	7,900 SDG	790 dollars in August
In 2017	16,706 SDG	759 dollars in November
In 2018	28,885 SDG	722 dollars in February, 608 dollars in November
2019-2020	40,000 SDG	400 dollars in January 2020

Sources: Housing Development Fund and the Sudanese press for the black-market exchange rates.

these conflicts, see A. Franck, "Urban Agriculture Facing Land Pressure in Greater Khartoum: The Case of New Real Estate Projects in Tuti and Ab Se d", *in* B. Casciarri, M. A. M. Assal and F. Ireton (dir.), *Multidimensional Change in Sudan (1989-2011): Reshaping Livelihoods, Conflicts and Identities*, New York/Oxford, Berghahn Books, 2015, pp. 33-51.

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With a view to reducing the losses, and given the shortage of land allocated for third-class housing, the Housing Fund limited the number of new beneficiaries selected in 2016, and since 1st January 2017, no further down payments have been accepted. At the same time, proceedings are underway to re-assess the amounts to be paid by the beneficiaries selected in previous years. In the absence of new projects, a long waiting list of beneficiaries (between 2,900 and 4,000 families according to the Fund civil servants questioned) has developed, some of whom have started to pay. The long wait of these beneficiaries can be added to the disillusionment of everyone affected by the stoppage of the programme, who have also been hit hard by the economic crisis and by the spiralling price of rentals, together with growing discontent towards the Housing Fund, Khartoum State and the regime in general. In a context of economic crisis, the circle of beneficiaries of the regime's clientelism, which contributed to the establishment of a social consensus, has been significantly reduced, making these clientelistic practices unacceptable for those who were suddenly excluded from them.[80] While studies of the revolutionary movement of 2018-2019 underline the importance of prior mobilisations, and in particular the protests against property despoliation in the popular uprising that would lead to the fall of Omar al-Bashir in 2019, they also show that this resistance did not originate in the poor peripheral neighbourhoods of the capital,[81] but clearly among the people who had previously benefited in some way from the clientelistic practices of the regime, ultimately helping to keep it in power.

It is therefore no coincidence that the transitional government appointed in August 2019 decided to relaunch the social housing programme in Greater Khartoum in September of that year. The revival of the programme created huge congestion at the headquarters of the Housing Fund and the Planning Ministry, which, beyond its symbolic nature, bears witness to the importance of these pro-poor programmes for city dwellers in search of housing—not necessarily for the most vulnerable people, because we have seen how they were excluded from this—but for the countless families longing to be homeowners. One of the transitional government's aims is to ease the tensions

80. C. Deshayes and R. Chevrillon-Guibert, « Économie politique du régime et de la révolte. Entretien avec Raphaëlle Chevrillon-Guibert » [online], *Noria*, January 2019, <https://www.noria-research.com/fr/economie-politique-du-regime-et-de-la-revolte/>, consulted on 24 June 2020.
81. M. Étienne, K. Medani and C. Deshayes, « La révolution soudanaise ou l'apogée d'une décennie de contestation de l'ordre politique. Entretien avec Clément Deshayes » [online], *Noria*, 2019, <https://www.noria-research.com/fr/la-revolution-soudanaise-ou-lapogee-dune-decennie-de-contestation-de-lordre-politique/>, consulted on 24 June 2020.

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and the social crisis at the least cost. For this purpose, via the Housing Fund, it has made sufficient land available for urban development to accommodate 5,000 social housing units at AlFath 4. To compensate for the remote location of this project, the plots will be larger: up to 350 m^2. Two other areas will soon be added to this stimulus plan. For the sake of social justice, priority is given to people who have been waiting for a long time before adding any new beneficiaries to the lists, whose selection will be closely monitored. "The current *wali* wants to keep a close eye on the allocation of social housing, whereas the *wali* in power before the revolution wanted to stop the social housing projects".[82] The clamour for justice—one of the central the demands of the last year's revolutionary movement—seems to have been heard by the transitional government, which has opened a commission of enquiry in Khartoum into the numerous cases of property corruption in Greater Khartoum involving officials of the former regime. In February 2020, however, the Housing Fund's personnel remained unchanged, were still as poorly paid, and the constantly increasing flow of applications for the allocation of social housing is raising doubts about the eradication of deeply rooted clientelistic practices. ■

Alice Franck
Paris 1 University Panthéon-Sorbonne/UMR Prodig

Résumé

Trois décennies de politiques de logement populaire à Khartoum : entre violence, clientélisme et consensus social

Cet article souhaite contribuer au débat général sur les politiques de logement populaire dans les villes du Sud en développant le cas de l'agglomération du Grand Khartoum. Il revient sur les trois décennies au pouvoir d'Omar al-Bashir (de 1989 à 2019) qui correspondent à un mouvement en matière de politique de logement des classes populaires et s'articulent à une autre échelle avec des choix plus larges du régime. Basé sur un travail de terrain de longue durée, cet article aborde la manière dont s'articule, dans le temps et dans l'espace, les programmes d'éradication de l'habitat informel, d'allocation de parcelles et de logement populaire. En écho, il interroge la violence d'un régime dans la ville et la difficile formulation d'une résistance des périphéries.

82. Interview with F., engineer, social housing project manager, Housing Fund, February 2020.