**REDEGN Merowe**

**Notes on Data Collection**

The research was led by Prof Asim el Moghraby (University of Khartoum), coordinated by Dr Mark Zeitoun (University of East Anglia), and executed by Dr Mohammad Jalal Hashim (University of Khartoum), Azza Dirar (University of East Anglia), and Zaher Moussa Akkash (the Environmentalist Society). Research assistants came from each of the four communities

Most background data was collected through a comprehensive review of English and Arabic-language academic literature, policy and activist documents, and media articles. Conducted from October 2013 to January 2014, topics reviewed included: a) issues related to the Merowe Dam itself (construction, technical facts (planned and actual electricity production, management regime, etc.); b) international norms relevant to dams (e.g. from the World Commission on Dams, emerging ‘good dams’ guidelines, international law); c) dam activism (lessons learned in particular from Southeast Asia and Latin America); and d) justice, both theory (social, environmental), and local traditions (i.e. Islamic, Sudanese, Nubian). This forms the basis of Section 3 of this report. Background data also relied on the team members’ insight on the project from previous anthropological and archaeological research.

Empirical evidence was collected through questionnaires (see Merowe Questionnaire Data.xlsx and related documents) and interviews (see Dirar – Notes of SSIs.docx and Zeitoun – Notes of SSIs.docx). The questionnaires served to establish the baseline required to evaluate impact and to crosscheck facts. Two hundred questionnaires were completed by the research assistants in January and February 2014, with roughly 50 at each of four locations: relocated Hamdab (referred to locally and henceforth in this report as ‘New Hamdab’), relocated Amri (‘New Amri’), relocated Manasir (‘Makabrab’) and the Manasir who refused resettlement to remain at the reservoir shore (‘local option Manasir’). Respondents were roughly 50% men and 50% women. The questionnaire was developed and agreed by the team (including the research assistants). As shown in Annex C, the twenty questions relate to four topics: compensation; livelihoods before and after the flooding; housing and basic services; and social unrest. The research team agreed that questions about justice were best avoided through this largely impersonal method of data collection.

Semi-structured interviews were then conducted by Azza Dirar and Mark Zeitoun. These loosely following the structure of a) recollection of events; b) thoughts on justice; and c) relevance of external actors and norms. At least 17 groups or individuals were interviewed in Khartoum or in the relocated or original villages, and consisted of school teachers, farmers, businessmen, women, activists, former water ministry officials, academics, students, and engineers

Semi-structured and group interviews were also collected during a workshop held in Khartoum on 6 March 2014. The workshop brought together roughly fifty academics and people affected by the dam The opinions, thoughts and knowledge of all of these were sought following a presentation by the research team of the preliminary results. Roughly fifteen people took the opportunity, including activists, and otherwise non-affected historians, biologists, archaeologists, etc.

**Strengths and weaknesses of the research**

The quality of the research derives from the individual strengths of the team members. Perhaps most importantly, the team benefitted from the excellent relationship established by one of the team members (and of course with the Research Assistants, who were from the communities concerned) with the Dam-affected peoples. This provided a level of trust and insight into a sensitive topic with potential safety concerns for all those involved, and without which very little quality data could have been collected. The research has also been assisted by the team members’ good relationships with former ministerial authorities, and scientific and academic communities in Khartoum, which permitted access to people who have been directly involved in the displacement since before it occurred. The team’s ability to identify and interpret Arabic documents was of course also crucial.

Perhaps the greatest weakness of the research is the lack of interviews conducted with governmental officials. While one former official at the ministerial level and one at the state level were interviewed, no officials from the current national government – or, crucially, from the Dams Implementation Unit – were interviewed. The team agreed that the sensitivity of the perspective (explicitly ‘justice’) would compromise the depth of the study, and suggested it be left for a later research phase. Some of the claims made against the government (and against the DIU in particular) have not been triangulated, as a result. Furthermore, the data was collected during a relatively short period and to a degree by ‘outsiders’. While the excellent relationships the research team had with the DAP provided trust and insight in some communities, this was not universal. The presence of a young foreign-educated Sudanese woman, and visibly ‘western’ and non-Sudanese man undoubtedly influenced the interviewees. Bias has been tempered, however, by the presence of the more traditional researchers (local Sudanese men), and the numerous interviews collected.

It is also believed that some of the responses were affected by the seasonality. Additional nuance or different opinions may have been provided, for example, following a particularly bountiful or poor harvest, or harsh summer. There is furthermore the risk of ‘confirmation bias’ induced by the design of our research (notably the employment of Schlosberg’s environmental justice frame).