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Mapping Social Accountability:
An Appraisal of Policy Influence on Service Delivery in South Sudan

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RESEARCH FOR A PEACEFUL, JUST AND PROSPEROUS SOUTH SUDAN

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Executive Summary

This study appraises institutional data, including government's approved budgets, educational enrollments, health conditions and mortality rates in order to map how social accountability and service delivery efforts relate to policy decisions in South Sudan. The analysis demonstrates how less informed policy atmosphere may lead to profound social injustice in the population. Key policy points include:

- Except for the security sector, health/water, education, and production have not received adequate funding as the government promised in its core expenditure priorities.
- Several years later, the country's health conditions remain poor due to low funding, with sharp state differences; though there seems to be more funding in the security sector, insecurity has high-rocketed in some states; literacy and school enrollment rates are relatively low.
- States' population sizes and needs differ considerably; yet, GoSS' financial disbursements have not systematically corresponded to such differences among state populations presumably due to little implementation of existing goals and lack of policy guidance.
- More service-oriented GoSS institutions lag behind their policy-oriented counterparts in average spending.
- Though the disbursements have more or less increased over the years since 2006, states' average approved budget was as low as 12.6 percent of the total national budget in 2008, with an average spending of 16 percent. Overall, this means that for every \$1 increase in state expenditure GoSS spends additional \$4, averaging at \$0.87(+0.15 or -0.15) for every dollar the nation earns in oil revenue.
- The assessment suggests stark policy analysis gaps in the GoSS' calculus of proportionate budgeting, a situation that may result in systemic social imbalances in an-already impoverished society, and which may potentially invoke resource-based tensions across distinct social groups.
- These results invoke policy suggestions, including the need to recognize the importance of population-specific experiences in public resource allocation exercise, all with the aim to ensure social equity, promote peace and stability in the population, and to focus more attention on states and service oriented institutions' fiscal needs.

Introduction

In 2005 the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) was created primarily to ensure ‘united, peaceful, prosperous and progressive South Sudan’. Its authority would then endeavor to demonstrate “exemplary, responsive, and *accountable leadership* in which the rule of law and human rights are upheld, with transparent and an *efficient government* that is *accountable to the people at all levels*.” In 2006, GoSS’ key development goals included eradicating poverty, improving population health and basic education, improving security, guaranteeing equitable wealth allocation, and achieving a decent living standard for South Sudanese. As well, the GoSS’ expenditure top priorities during the interim period include security, roads, primary health care, basic education, water, and production (Ministry of Finance, 2008).

Given the above plans, hopes for the future and expectations on the government in the historically subjugated population considerably elevated. For the government, performing upon this function optimally does not only reside in heeding citizens’ political and service demands, but also by relying on rigorous, objective analyses of population-specific experiences in order to formulate more robust policies. The principal objective here is for the government to prioritize and make certain of equitable distribution of available resources across sub-populations so as to attain efficiency and effectiveness in delivering social services for peace, stability, and prosperity.

And when the government fails to emphasize the importance of key population variables in its service-delivery programs by drawing upon coherently informed studies, fewer comprehensive achievements are likely to be realized, potentially resulting in an ineffective social development, subjecting some pockets of the governed to systemic injustice and possibly creating resource-based tensions/competitions in the population. These views easily abound because the absence of impartial practices in the distribution of public resources challenges peace-building efforts and perpetuates instability (Zaum and Cheng, 2007).

This study evaluates the GoSS’ budgets and spending distributions in the 2006-2011 period, paying a great deal of attention to how state (populations)- and institution-specific conditions influence resource allocation in the GoSS. How do South Sudanese state populations and public institutions differ in government’s budget allocation or spending on the basis of specific needs and mandates? How has persistent violence in Jonglei State impacted its budget level from the central government? The analysis tests the assumption that the GoSS lacked core policy parameters on population- and institution-specific variables in its service-delivery agenda in the studied period. The study is not a financial audit, and rather aims at associating social justice with a particular resource-based policy environment. The ubiquitous presence of a non-coherent public policy atmosphere in South Sudan partly relates to a gamut of short-term capacity handicaps that the post-conflict governments normally face (UNDP, 2010). The significance of the study lies in its emphasis on suggesting quality policy environment, which promotes justice, social security, prosperity, peace, and stability in the South Sudanese population. Population- and institution-level data, spanning several time-points, dating back to the signing of the CPA, are used to inform this analysis (*the larger report due in the first quarter of 2013 contains an in-depth discussion on the methodology used*).

Key Results

GoSS vs. States

In light of the above assessed differential population needs, presented are summary results of budget distributions in South Sudan. This summary entails budget variants between GoSS and states, and *service* and sovereign/*policy* institutions. Table 1 illustrates comparative budget distributions between GoSS and States. No individual level state budget records were found for 2006 and 2007. However, there are aggregated state budget data for the 2005-2011 period.

¹Table 1: Annual Budget Comparisons between GoSS and States, 2005-2011 (in South Sudanese pounds)

| Year | GoSS | States | GoSS to States Ratio |
|--------------|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 2005 | 221,164,987 | 231,121,152 | 0.957 |
| 2006 | 3,056,002,274 | 525,546,238 | 5.815 |
| 2007 | 2,304,885,159 | 631,610,393 | 3.649 |
| 2008 | 5,075,059,309 | 637,602,757 | 7.960 |
| 2009 | 3,144,758,040 | 1,089,895,729 | 2.885 |
| 2010 | 4,357,028,344 | 1,219,072,203 | 3.574 |
| 2011 | 4,240,159,877 | 1,526,950,618 | 2.777 |
| Total | 22,399,057,990 | 5,861,799,090 | 3.821 |

Data Source: Annual budget (GoSS, 2011)

- Overall the central government allocated 22.4 billion pounds for its headquarters institutions and only 5.8 billion pounds to its ten states (about 600,000,000 per state) over the CPA era.
- The state's budget was slightly higher than GoSS' in 2005, but in 2006, GoSS' budget drastically rose by 13.8 times compared to only 2.27 times for the states.
- The states' approved budget represented as low as 12.6 percent of the overall national budget in 2008, with 16 percent of the government's total, actual expenditure constituting that of states between 2008 and 2010.

Service versus Policy Oriented Institutions

In Table 2 average institutional budgets and spending distributions are presented.

¹The budget figures we have developed between states and central government do not reflect services and goods the central government directly provides at the local levels, making them both service and policy agents. And while we acknowledge that some central government's ministries use portions of their budgets to directly provide services in the states, we are unable to empirically assess such contributions due to lack of data. Perhaps future analysis may incorporate such missing component.

²Table 2: Budget and spending (in million South Sudanese pounds) distributions of selected institutions

| Institution | Budget | Expenditure | Expenditure as a percent of budget | Nature |
|-----------------------------------|--------|-------------|------------------------------------|---------|
| Min. of Agriculture | 35.54 | 32.30 | 0.91 | Service |
| Min. of Cabinet Affairs | 37.15 | 73.82 | 1.99 | Policy |
| Min. of Coop & Rural Dev. | 14.81 | 12.15 | 0.82 | Service |
| Min. of Finance | 70.53 | 348.35 | 4.94 | Policy |
| Min. of Gender and Social Welfare | 7.22 | 6.24 | 0.86 | Service |
| Min. of Education | 272.68 | 256.75 | 0.94 | Service |
| Min. of Health | 142.00 | 68.92 | 0.49 | Service |
| Min. of Internal Affairs | 284.37 | 409.19 | 1.44 | Service |
| Judiciary | 36.26 | 27.39 | 0.76 | Service |
| President's office | 91.80 | 159.59 | 1.74 | Policy |
| Min. of Presidential Affairs | 9.70 | 31.25 | 3.22 | Policy |
| Vice President's Office | 11.80 | 28.54 | 2.42 | Policy |
| Presidency | 150.45 | 293.20 | 1.95 | Policy |

Data Source: Ministry of Finance (GoSS Budget, 2006-2010)

- Based on these selected institutions, our findings indicate that service-based institutions have been consistently lagging behind policy institutions in budget allocation and actual spending levels.
- Given example, the national Ministry of Health's approved budget averaged around 142 million pounds annually during the interim period, with its actual spending during the same period plummeting to only 68.92 million pounds, constituting only 48 percent of its aggregated approved budget and only 8.34 pounds per capita expenditure.
- The Ministry of Cabinet Affairs, averaging 73 million pounds per year, spends nearly 2.3 times that of the Ministry of Agriculture.
- Taken together, the presidency (293 million pounds), comprising cabinet affairs, vice president's office, and the office of the president, spends more than most of the other service institutions except the Ministry of Interior (284.37 million pounds).
- Almost all service institutions, except the Ministry of Interior, have consistently underspent their approved budgets over the period, whereas their sister policy institutions have consistently exceeded their fiscal limits.

Budget Allocations and Population Needs: An Empirical Appraisal

Our empirical assessment demonstrating the impact of population needs on resource allocation by the South Sudanese central government over a five-year period (2006-2011) gives the following results:

² Perhaps it would be useful to address some of the reasons that GOSS insists on inequitable budgetary allocation, contradicting its priorities, one of which is the rejection of the last census by the then Government of Southern Sudan.

- We found that key variables, including population size, quality of drinking water, and primary education enrollments, positively influence resource allocations to the states but the evidence cannot be statistically confirmed.
- The other determinants seem to impact the budgets rather downward. In particular, an additional borehole installed in each state reduces their annual budget by over 230,000 pounds. This is statistically significant at 95 percent probability level.
- Installing a new borehole dramatically decreases a transfer by nearly one million or 896,000 pounds on average.
- Finally, each dollar earned from oil revenue increases the GoSS' spending by \$0.87(+0.15 or -0.15).

Key Policy Implications

Our findings pertained to resource relocation analysis simply manifest how lack of policy analyses negatively affected government's budgetary structures and fiscal planning in South Sudan in post-conflict era.

- Because the government has not entirely lived up to its core expenditure priorities, this may lead to the public losing confidence in their government.
- Such is likely to lead to systemic injustice, equally undermining broad-based development programming in the nascent state.
- When insecurity in Jonglei or Lakes State does not necessitate special funding consideration from the central government, the said states are practically headed for failure.
- Though in theory, the conditional transfers are to systematically correspond to and mitigate financial hurdles associated with differential needs of state populations, in practice, the central government has ignored such a relationship; rather, the transfers, like the budgets, are contingent upon unobserved, arbitrary mechanisms.
- The national service delivery institutions suffer similar fiscal challenges just as much as do the states.
- Because the central government has allowed its policy institutions to consistently spend beyond their allocated budgets compared to their more service-delivery oriented counterparts, fewer universal improvements in terms of South Sudanese quality of lives could be realized, particularly in the rural communities where peace dividends are sorely missing.

Policy Recommendations

Lack of clear policies on a number of social issues may result in systemic problems in the population. We give the following recommendations in response:

- The government should spend on the basis of its stipulated expenditure priorities.
- The government may choose to emphasize the significance of population agenda in its public resource allocation in order to ensure social justice and equitable development, while garnering peoples' trust and confidence. Instituting this culture of governance may minimize potential resource conflicts across substrata of the population.
- Among other population parameters, the central government should consider using the 2008 census data for planning until a new census is conducted.
- The government should switch current budget or spending proportions between the central and state governments or increase state's spending to at least 50 percent of the country's annual budget for development purposes and shrink the central government, while sending all service institutions to the states.

- The government should focus attention on providing certain basic services, including clean water, housing, schools, employment, safety, and health centers through more population-based conditional funding.
- The central government is also suggested to ban unreasonable overspending among its spending agencies.
- Finally, an efficient government must commit to and invest in scientific, policy analyses—all to nurture justice, peace, and stability in a nascent state and to optimally meet peoples' aspirations.

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