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# Achievement of Food Security with Reference to Federalism in South Sudan

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## ABSTRACT

South Sudan is a country facing food insecurity and famine. The overall objective is therefore to guarantee food security for all. This research is to assess the extent to which achievement of food security and federalism have connection. Food security is when all people, at all times have access to food for an active life and federalism is where several states form unity but are independent in internal affairs. The research uses reviewed data and so it is qualitative. With reference to food insecurity the root causes are natural and man-made. Natural causes include drought and man-made causes an armed conflict and limited budgetary allocation to the agricultural sector. South Sudan is endowed with abundant natural resources for sustainable agricultural development. However, the centralized system has not been helpful in the effort to achieve food security. In contrast, federalism is seen as a vehicle of development and federalism is a popular demand of the people of South Sudan. Nevertheless, the Transitional Constitution 2011 does not highlight federalism as a system of governance. The revitalized agreement, in contrast, recognizes federalism as the demand of the people. The result of the research shows that federalism is a suitable system of governance for South Sudan. However, the research is not conclusive and so further research is recommended to determine the strength of association between achievement of food security and federalism.

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# Achievement of Food Security with Reference to Federalism in South Sudan

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## ABSTRACT

*South Sudan is a country facing food insecurity and famine. The overall objective is therefore to guarantee food security for all. This research is to assess the extent to which achievement of food security and federalism have connection. Food security is when all people, at all times have access to food for an active life and federalism is where several states form unity but are independent in internal affairs. The research uses reviewed data and so it is qualitative. With reference to food insecurity the root causes are natural and man-made. Natural causes include drought and man-made causes an armed conflict and limited budgetary allocation to the agricultural sector. South Sudan is endowed with abundant natural resources for sustainable agricultural development. However, the centralized system has not been helpful in the effort to achieve food security. In contrast, federalism is seen as a vehicle of development and federalism is a popular demand of the people of South Sudan. Nevertheless, the Transitional Constitution 2011 does not highlight federalism as a system of governance. The revitalized agreement, in contrast, recognizes federalism as the demand of the people. The result of the research shows that federalism is a suitable system of governance for South Sudan. However, the research is not conclusive and so further research is recommended to determine the strength of association between achievement of food security and federalism.*

**Keywords:** federalism, famine, food, budget, agriculture, livestock, fisheries, land, insecurity.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

South Sudan is a country in Sub-Saharan Africa. With reference to food, Sub-Saharan Africa is the only region in the world currently facing widespread food insecurity as well as persistent threats of famine (Devereux and Maxwell, 2001). For South Sudan the overall objective is to guarantee food for all as a measure in achieving food security (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, 2012). For an understanding it is appropriate to define what food security is. Food security can be defined as when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (FAO, 1996). The definition of food security seems to be comprehensively inclusive of the various activities in the effort to achieve food security. It suggests sufficient food production and income to access food in order to be food secure. On the other hand food insecurity is a situation of the lack of access to enough food (Saad, 1999). It is to be noted that food production is associated with agriculture and policy makers in Africa have since recognized the importance of agriculture in achieving food security (Maxwell, 2001).

Achievement of food security with reference to federalism is an attempt to assess the extent to which federalism promotes agricultural development and hence the achievement of food security. As food security has already been defined, it is then appropriate to define what federalism is all about. According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary, federalism is defined as a system of government in which several states form a unity but remain independent in internal

affairs (Thompson ed. 1995). The research focuses on the relevance of food security to federalism. It is to assess what connection federalism has to food security. This research is therefore an attempt to assess the extent to which food security can be achieved through federalism which has been a popular demand of the people of South Sudan (Johnson, 2014).

## II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses secondary sources and reviewed data. It is qualitative in contrast to quantitative data collected through a questionnaire survey of a sample of respondents. It can therefore be affirmed that the research methodology is qualitative which depends on literature review. Various literatures on food security and federalism will be reviewed. This will include literature on food security and federalism in South Sudan. This is for the realization of the extent food security can be achieved with reference to federalism in contrast to a centralized system of government.

### 2.1 Causes of food insecurity

Food insecurity occurs because of some root causes which, in South Sudan, may be classified into two categories. One category of root causes of food insecurity is natural and the other is man-made. Natural causes of food insecurity include climate change which an individual may have no control such as drought, erratic rainfall and forest degradation that constitute challenges to food security (Söderlund and Pottinger, 2001). Population pressure is one cause of land degradation which threatens to diminish food production thereby exacerbating food insecurity (Mortimore and Tiffen, 1995).

In contrast, man-made causes of food insecurity include an armed conflict such as the civil war in South Sudan where more than two million people are displaced and parts of the country are on the brink of famine (International Crisis Group, 2016). Approximately 7.5 million people need humanitarian assistance which underscores urgent need to address the primary driver of

man-made humanitarian catastrophe in South Sudan (Human Rights Council, 2018). The conflict is caused by leaders who could not opt for a political solution to the crisis because of insensitivity to the suffering of the people (Temin, 2018). Also, one root cause of food insecurity can be poor budgetary allocation to the agricultural sector, one of the main sources of food production. In the Draft Budget Fiscal Year 2018-19, budgetary allocation to agriculture and food security sub-sectors is about 0.2 per cent while the security sector gets about 19.7 per cent of the total budget (Ministry of Finance and Planning, 2018). Paradoxically, this is when insecurity is so rampant that armed groups are roaming freely in residential areas robbing people of their property at gun point with impunity (Human Rights Council, 2018). The Sudan People's Liberation Army Command Council Secretariat (2017) also confirms that there is indeed lawlessness, impunity and human rights abuses. This is despite the security sector getting a lion's share of the total budget while the agricultural sector is left with a tiny budget that can hardly make an impact on agricultural production in achieving food security. According to the Human Rights Council, the man-made conflict in South Sudan has caused disruption to agriculture which is the basis of food security. It is clear that one root cause of food insecurity in South Sudan is the ongoing armed conflict that has forced farmers to flee from rural areas seeking safety in towns or across international borders. This means farms are forcefully left fallow with the subsequent prevalence of food insecurity.

### 2.2 Food security situation in South Sudan

In 2006, food and agriculture framework policy was approved by the Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly. The document lays down the vision and mission of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (2006) for the development of the agricultural and forestry sectors and one key strategic goal was the achievement of food self-sufficiency/self-reliance by 2011. However, as the year 2018 is ending, the food security situation in South Sudan can best be described as

dire. The food security situation has visibly worsened in parts of Sub-Saharan Africa and famine has been declared in South Sudan (FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO, 2017). Clearly, South Sudan seems a long off to achieve food security with the ongoing crisis of armed conflict and low budget to the agricultural sector.

### III. RESOURCES IN SOUTH SUDAN

South Sudan has the potential for sustainable agricultural development for food self-reliance and a high standard of living because of abundant

#### 3.1 Budgetary allocation

The Table below shows budgetary allocation to the various sectors in the fiscal year 2018-19.

Sector	Budget	Percentage	Priority
Accountability	29,543,566,507	36.0	1
Security	15,926,747,651	19.7	2
Public Administration	13,560,278,916	16.7	3
Education	7,802,567,591	9.7	4
Rule of Law	4,770,443,435	5.9	5
Social and Humanitarian Affairs	3,256,671,546	4.0	6
Infrastructure	2,856,520,512	3.5	7
Health	1,616,975,511	2.0	8
Natural Resources and Rural	1,114,330,966	1.4	9
Livestock and Fisheries	41,977,618	0.1	
Agriculture and Food Security	130,256,664	0.2	
Tourism	19,993,885		
Wildlife Conservation	868,419,232		
Environment and Forestry	47,130,693		
Land Commission	6,552,874		
Economic	889,391,448	1.1	10
Grand Total	81,337,494,083	100.0	

Source: Draft Budget Book, Fiscal Year 2018-19, Ministry of Finance and Planning, Republic of South Sudan, June 2018, [grss-mof.org](http://grss-mof.org)

From the above Table it can be confirmed that the Natural Resources and Rural Sector of the economy which includes livestock and fisheries, agriculture and food security sub-sectors is one of the least of priorities for development. The budgetary allocation to the agriculture and food security sub-sector is about 0.2 per cent of the total budget for the fiscal year 2018-19. Worse still is the allocation to the livestock and fisheries sub-sector, which is 0.1 per cent of the total

natural resources which include arable land for agriculture, forestry, livestock and fish (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, 2012). The importance of agriculture cannot be underestimated and governments in Africa are expected to devote up to 25 per cent of their total budgets to the agricultural sector (Maxwell, 2001). However, in South Sudan it is clear that not up to 25 per cent of the total budget is devoted to the agricultural sector.

budget. It is confirmed that fisheries in South Sudan has been a neglected natural resource sector for many years (Ministry of Anima Resources and Fisheries, 2012). It is difficult to understand how such a neglect of development of natural resources can enable the achievement of food security in South Sudan. It is clear that the neglect of agricultural development as evidenced by the lowest priority given to the agricultural sector is a man-made root cause of food insecurity

in South Sudan. However, this trend can be reversed through a radical approach. The radical approach is the adoption of a federal system of governance for resources to trickle down to where they are most needed for development at the grassroots.

### 3.2 Federalism in South Sudan

The debate on federalism in South Sudan will hardly go away. This is because there are advocates and non advocates of federalism. For the two opposing sides, each thinks it has a case to make. However, the case of either side may not have been understood properly.

In the context of South Sudan the advocates of federalism believe that federalism can resolve the root causes of the conflict (African Union, 2014) that is seen to exacerbate food insecurity. In contrast, according to African Union the non advocates of federalism fear that federalism will lead to disunity and ultimate disintegration of South Sudan. This paper attempts to allay this fear and confusion with reference to development and the achievement of food security.

The geographic and demographic size of a country and its communal heterogeneity and complexity can make federalism both attractive and a political imperative for the country (Elaigwu, 2006). However, there is no pure model of federalism but, rather, several practical variations within the common framework of federal systems (Majeed, 2006). As such, each constitution reflects its country's history, culture and political experiences as well as its population characteristics with the objective to build a modern nation-state (Kincaid, 2005, pp.409 - 448). Building a united country out of a deeply divided society needs the deepening and widening of democracy, engagement in the massive tasks of economic development, eradication of poverty and promotion of equality (Murray, 2006).

Worldwide support for federalism is greater today than ever before because of a growing conviction that it enables a country to have the best of both worlds of shared rule and self-rule (McKay, 1983).

As can be seen, federalism is to serve the purpose of equitable power and resource sharing for the benefit of people of one country regardless of regional, state, ethnic, cultural and political backgrounds.

Arguably, federalism is not the creation of tribal homelands like the dreaded apartheid "Bantustans" in South Africa which non advocates of federalism in South Sudan fear the most. In South Africa there was a policy of transforming the reserves into African homelands (Harries, 1989, pp. 82 – 117). Examples abound of federalism in practice and functioning in countries such as India, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Switzerland, Germany and the United States of America (Kincaid and Tarreds. 2005).

## IV. ADVANTAGES OF FEDERALISM

Some of the advantages of federalism with reference to food security in the context of South Sudan may include:

1. Resolution of conflict arising out of ethnic and cultural diversity that impacts agricultural production for food security,
2. Consolidation of unity in diversity,
3. Acceleration of socio-economic development for prosperity and lasting peace that encourages farmers to return to till the land to increase crop production, and
4. Creation of fruitful competition between federal states with the ultimate aim of achieving food security in South Sudan.

## V. DISADVANTAGES OF FEDERALISM

In contrast, disadvantages of federalism with reference to food security may also include the following:

1. Implementation of federalism that lacks the concept of potential root causes of conflict that may have impact on food security,
2. Politicization of federalism without consideration of objective reality of development and food security, and
3. Lack of implementation of articles of federalism as may be stipulated in the

constitution will likely cause conflict in the country and the subsequent food insecurity and famine.

### 5.1 *The Transitional Constitution, 2011*

In the Transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan, 2011, amended 2013 and 2015, Article 1 (4) stipulates that, “South Sudan is governed on the basis of a decentralized democratic system and is an all embracing homeland for its people. It is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-lingual, multi-religious and multi-racial entity where such diversities peacefully co-exist”. Furthermore, Article 1 (5) stipulates that “South Sudan is founded on justice, equality, respect for human dignity and advancement of human rights and fundamental freedoms”.

The Transitional Constitution does not say the system of governance is federalism but it is “a decentralized democratic system” as noted above. However, the decentralized democratic system seems to be a quasi federalism because it looks like it is midway between centralized and federal system. There are autonomous states in South Sudan in the decentralized system but the states have limited powers. For example, the states have no powers to have their own judiciary, police, prisons, wildlife and fire brigade services. Those are the prerogatives of the central government. The states also have limited powers to tax to raise the needed revenue for socio-economic development in the respective states.

Although, “South Sudan is founded on justice, equality, respect for human dignity and advancement of human rights and fundamental freedoms” human rights are being violated with impunity. According to the Final Report of the African Union Commission of Inquiry on South Sudan (2014), “the investigations reflect that violations documented were committed in a systematic manner and in most cases with extreme brutality (Article 358, p.112)”.

The UN Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan (2018), in addition,

confirms reports of human rights violations in South Sudan. This clearly shows that what is in the Transitional Constitution, 2011, is not what is happening in practice on the ground and this may mostly be due to the conflict in South Sudan. In federalism violations of human rights with impunity on ethnic lines may hardly occur in the manner reported in the AU and UN Report 2014 and 2018 respectively. This suggests that federalism is an appropriate resolution of the conflict in South Sudan. It will be seen that federalism is a popular demand of the people.

### 5.2 *Revitalized Agreement*

The Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (IGAD, 2018) is one milestone in addressing the governance issue for sustainable peace, democracy, development and prosperity for all.

In the Preamble of the Revitalized Agreement, “Cognizant that a federal system of government is a popular demand of the people of the Republic of South Sudan and the need for the RTGoNU to reflect this demand by way of devolution of more powers and resources to lower levels of government”, the Parties resolve to “Initiate a Federal and democratic system of government that reflects the character of South Sudan in its various institutions taken together, guarantees good governance, constitutionalism, rule of law, human rights gender equity and affirmative action (Article 6.2.2)”

In the Preamble above it is clear that there is a desire for a resolution to the conflict in South Sudan. However, it remains to be seen what concrete steps will be taken to realize the contents of Article 6.2.2 in attaining national unity.

In the Manifesto of the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (2012), the Chairman said, “A new nation comes with new challenges. We must face challenges with innovative solutions and a bold approach”. Indeed, South Sudan needs an innovative and bold approach such as the one in which to explore federalism in promoting peaceful

co-existence, democracy, development, national unity and food security for all.

### *5.3 Federalism for development and food security*

Problems faced in promoting development to achieve food security include corruption, government's inability to deliver public services, the lack of equality of opportunity, repression and the absence of human and political rights as a result of narrow elite that have organized society for their own benefit at the expense of people (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2013). This seems to suggest that the challenge to development is not the lack of policies and resources but the insensitivity of the tiny minority of elite who concentrate economic and political power in their own hands to the disadvantage of the vast majority of people who are left to live in abject poverty.

In South Sudan the call for federalism is informed by the desire of many to benefit from resources and to access services (African Union, 2014). According to the African Union, all people in different parts of South Sudan have expressed a desire for a federal system of governance as a way forward and a solution to the problems faced.

The relevance and importance people attach to federalism in South Sudan cannot be overstated. It is clear that federalism is the preferred option of governance. This seems to be because the centralized system has failed to meet the aspirations of the people of South Sudan. People are aware they are not getting basic services and some areas have not been reached by government (African Union, 2014).

Decentralized governance has occupied a very prominent place in nation building and developmental strategies of developing countries in recent years (Sangita, 2009) and it has been accorded a central place in the discourse on development (Joseph ed. 2009). In contrast, federalism is seen as a method of good governance in which political accommodation

becomes a sound practice in the midst of conflicting ideologies, disparate groups, and seemingly irreconcilable positions (Majeed, 2006). Federalism is also a compromise solution to the claims by increasing number of regions and ethnic minorities for more autonomy in various countries (McKay, 1983). According to McKay centralized governments are spendthrift and insensitive.

Federalism in South Sudan is likely to usher in an era of development, peaceful co-existence and stability. The absence of equitable resource allocation and consequent marginalization of the various groups caused the conflict in South Sudan (African Union, 2014). Also, the African Union has pointed out that economic aspects of the conflict, such as control of natural resources have been a source of frustration among different ethnic groups because access to the resources is determined by patronage and allegiance to the ruling party. This clearly seems to suggest that the centralized system of government is an impediment to equitable socio-economic development and peaceful co-existence for prosperity to all in South Sudan.

In contrast, we have seen that federalism to some extent is perceived to address ethnic and regional diversity for equitable development and harmony. It is therefore understandable that a federal system is likely to address the frustration with the centralized system among the various ethnic groups and regions in South Sudan.

### *5.4 Achievement of food security*

South Sudan is a country endowed with vast natural resources and abundant arable land, enough to make the country the breadbasket of the region (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, 2012). However, the centralized system of government is seen as an impediment to agricultural development. So food security is unlikely to be achieved. For example, according to African Union (2014) about 85 per cent of the total budget of South Sudan is spent in Juba at the



centre while only 15 per cent goes to the states where development is supposed to take place.

It can be seen that agricultural development is the most neglected, getting only 0.2 per cent of the total budget in fiscal year 2018-19. In taking agricultural development as of high priority, at least not less than 10 per cent of the total budget should be devoted to the agricultural sector to realize food security in South Sudan. People all over South Sudan have expressed the desire for a federal form of governance to alleviate the disconnection between the government and the population (African Union, 2014). This clearly suggests that through the adoption of federalism the government will be closer to the people at the grassroots. Agricultural development may become a top priority in budgetary allocation to achieve food security and peace in South Sudan. However, peace and development have proved far more difficult and complex to achieve than, for example, the Afro-optimists envisaged in the immediate post-independence period (Francis, 2008, pp.3 - 15). This is not different from when the people of South Sudan celebrated their independence with jubilation on 9 July 2011 only to be disappointed two years later in 2013 when an armed conflict erupted. According to South Sudan Human Rights Commission (2014) the armed conflict broke out on 15 December 2013 and quickly took ethnic line with devastating effect. Nevertheless, this should not discourage people from exploring a better way forward for peace, development and prosperity through federalism.

## VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

One result of the research is that South Sudan is likely to be better off in adopting federalism than a centralized system of government. This is because a centralized system is wasteful and compounded with insensitivity. The peripheries seem to be neglected in a centralized system. This is shown by the concentration of the budget, 85 per cent, at the center with only 15 per cent to the peripheries, the states (African Union, 2014). The advantage of a federal system is equitable

distribution of resources and power sharing as stipulated in the constitution because power sharing arrangements are constitutional in federalism. Federalism addresses challenges faced in cultural, ethnic and regional diversities in a country. For example, the federal constitution regulates the relations among the component units such as states and between the federal government and the states (Tarr, 2005). Federal systems provide safeguards against the threat of centralized exploitation as well as decentralized opportunistic behavior while bringing decision makers closer to people for the common interest (Shah, 2007).

## VII. CONCLUSION

In the context of South Sudan the research on achievement of food security with reference to federalism shows that federalism is likely to promote the achievement of food security because of equitable distribution of resources to the grassroots while a centralized system is unlikely.

In conclusion, South Sudan is more likely to benefit from federalism than the persistence on a centralized system that is seen as an impediment to agricultural development with the likely consequence of chronic food insecurity and famine.

### *Recommendation for further research*

The research on achievement of food security with reference to federalism in South Sudan is not conclusive. Further research is therefore recommended to determine the extent of strength of an association between achievement of food security and federalism.

### *Conflict of interests*

It can be confirmed that there are no conflict of interests whatsoever in this research.

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