

PREFACE

In 1977, the Department of Philosophy at the University of Khartoum organized a conference on philosophy, religion, ideology and development. Hakan Tornebohm, who was the first professor of philosophy in the University of Khartoum (from 1957 to 1963) and I (who lectured in the same department from 1961 to 1966 and received my Ph.D. from the University of Khartoum in 1965), welcomed this opportunity to re-establish contacts with the university and the country which we have come to like so much. We made a joint contribution to the conference on "Research, Ethics and Development" (printed in the *Allgemeine Zeitschrift für Wissenschaftstheorie* in 1979). The conference was very well organized by Dr. Kamal Shaddad and his colleagues in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Khartoum. Moreover, it touched upon an extremely important area – the cluster Research and Development—which has not received much attention so far from professional philosophers in spite of the prominence of ideas of development in the last few decades. We decided to pursue the themes which were touched upon in the conference in 1977, and formulated a joint research project with the somewhat grandiose title "Research, Ethics and Development—Research Policy in the Sudan". Dr. Ibrahim Ahmed Omer, Head of the Department of Islamic Studies in the University of Khartoum, who was the main commentator on our contribution to the conference, agreed to be our partner in the project. In the initial phase, we got financial support from the Norwegian General Research Council and the Swedish development organization SAREC, and then for the rest of the project period we got support from the Norwegian development authority, NORAD.

The empirical territory which we have investigated—research policies in the Sudan—is a complex field which has not been systematically explored so far. The knowledge about the area exists above all in the form of personal experience acquired by the actors in the field. This mass of tacit knowledge which is shared by the actors in the field, can be approached in a number of ways, using perspectives and conceptions drawn from sociology, social anthropology, history, geography, and so on. Our way of doing it has been to make use of our experience from philosophy and theory of science. We have not had the task of making an exhaustive survey of research activities in the in the Republic of the Sudan. We have not tried to function as a commission of inquiry into the state of affairs in the country. We have felt that philosophical reflection should be geared towards issues of development, and we

have tried to illuminate some aspects of the cluster Research and Development through a number of interviews with researchers from different fields and institutions in the Sudan.

On the whole we have found it more important, at this moment in the development of the Sudan and the rest of the world, to search for the right kind of *questions* concerning development. To the extent that we have managed to find the important questions, others can and will, we hope, go on to elaborate the *answers* to those questions concerning the essentials of development. There are now a good number of well-established research traditions in the Sudan, the histories of which ought to be written while the founding fathers are still around, to mention only one aspect of the cluster Research and Development in the Sudan. It is indeed our hope that the philosophy of development will one day flourish in the Sudan, combining the empirical and analytical approaches of the theory of science with the question-raising and conceptual methods of philosophy. The international conference on "Queries about Developments", which was organized by Hakan Tornebohm in September 1984, was a step in this direction, and there is more to come.

The core of the project consists of talks with twenty-six researchers and administrators in the Sudan, which have been tape-recorded and transcribed. (Most of the transcriptions were made by Hakan Tornebohm, some by Tore Nordenstam.) In the last few years, Hakan Tornebohm, Ibrahim Ahmed Omer and myself have produced a number of provisional reports and working papers; cf. the list at the end of this book. Hakan Tornebohm has concentrated on working out conceptual models for various aspects of the Development Research cluster; a final report on those theoretical investigations will be published separately. The reader will get a glimpse of his work on those lines in the last chapter of this book. And Ibrahim Ahmed Omer is writing a monograph (in Arabic) on the Islamic conception of development.

In the present volume, the empirical material will be presented with an emphasis on the interviews. The project has been a joint enterprise consisting of Hakan Tornebohm, Ibrahim Ahmed Omer and myself as interviewers, on the one hand, and our interviewees in the Sudan, on the other hand. The result is a common product, a series of talks on development and research in a developing country in the Third World (to use the common and by no means philosophically innocent terminology of today).

Together, the talks give a picture of what it means to do research under conditions of underdevelopment. When editing the interviews, an emphasis has been put on the central theme of research and higher education in the Sudan, but enough surrounding material has (I hope) been included to make

the book readable for those who are not familiar with this country. As editor, I have sometimes summarized portions of the tapes and provided the interview texts with introductions. Most, but unfortunately not all, of the interviewees have had the opportunity of reading and correcting the transcripts.

I and my project partners wish to express our gratitude to all those people and authorities who have made it possible for us to carry out these investigations. We are grateful to the secretarial staff of the Department of Theory of Science in the University of Goteborg for their much-appreciated assistance. The publication of this book has been made possible by substantial grants from the Central Research Committee and the Department of Philosophy in the University of Khartoum, and from the University of Bergen, Norway.

Above all, our thanks are due to our colleagues and friends in the Sudan, who have been so generous, kind and helpful to us.

Tore Nordenstam
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