Opposition Party
and Women’s Political Participation
in Northern Sudan

A Case Study of the Umma Party

Picture source: CIA World Fact Book
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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ABSTRACT
This thesis is a qualitative study based on interviews conducted in early 2007 and aims at getting an understanding of the political environment from an opposition party’s point of view in Northern Sudan.

The study is also trying to illustrate how good governance and democracy are building on each other and that good governance is a pre-requisite for democracy. In this perspective Sudan has a long way to go. The main assumption is that women are key to good governance and internal democracy and a democratic society. If the party excludes women, it can not be representative, participatory or equitable and inclusive.

The thesis is therefore looking at the structures of one opposition party, the Umma Party, and women’s political participation in the party. This description is then analysed in light of Good Governance’s characteristics of participation, representativeness, equity and inclusiveness in the political society arena. The following questions were asked and answered:

- What are the basic features of the political environment within which Sudanese opposition parties operate?
- What are the leadership structures and decision making processes of the Umma Party in North Sudan?
- How do women access these structures and processes?

The main finding is that the Umma Party and Sudan do not fulfil the characteristics or the indicators to claim good governance or democracy – not within the party and not within the country.

Key words: governance, good governance, party, political party, opposition, women, Sudan, Umma, participation, party system, equitable, inclusive, participatory, representative
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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>ADB</td>
<td>Asian Development Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women</td>
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<td>CPA</td>
<td>Comprehensive Peace Agreement</td>
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<td>DUP</td>
<td>Democratic Union Party</td>
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<td>GDI</td>
<td>Gender Development Index</td>
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<td>GGEPP</td>
<td>Good Governance and Equity in Political Participation</td>
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<td>GNU</td>
<td>Government of National Unity</td>
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<td>GoSS</td>
<td>Government of Southern Sudan</td>
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<td>HDI</td>
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<td>IDEA</td>
<td>International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance</td>
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<td>MDGs</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
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<td>NCP</td>
<td>National Congress Party</td>
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<td>NIF</td>
<td>National Islamic Front</td>
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<td>SPLM/A</td>
<td>Sudanese People’s Liberation Party/Army</td>
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<td>UN</td>
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INTRODUCTION

At the Millennium Summit in 2000, the United Nation’s (UN) General Assembly passed the Millennium Declaration with its resulting Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs are a set of eight goals, with targets and indicators, to be achieved by 2015\(^1\). MDG 3 is addressing the promotion of gender equality and empowering women, with the target to eliminate gender inequality in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015. One of this Goal’s indicators concerns the number of women in national parliaments. In order to achieve the MDGs, proper governance at all levels of the decision-making processes is essential.

After the cold war the concept of Good Governance increased in use by donors with the aim at guaranteeing a certain level of accountability and transparency, in other words putting certain conditions on the development aid processes. There is no consensus on the exact meaning of Good Governance and NGOs, international aid agencies and donors are defining the concept in slightly different ways. However, there is a widespread consensus defining the major characteristics of Good Governance, describing it to be accountable, transparent, responsive, equitable and inclusive, effective and efficient, follows the rule of law, participatory and consensus oriented.

Göran Hydén has divided Good Governance into different institutional arenas, which are civil society, political society, government, bureaucracy, economic society and judicial system. In turn, each of these arenas is broken down into dimensions. The arena discussed in this thesis, the political society arena, includes the dimensions of legislation, party system and elections. I have further narrowed down the party system dimension to focus on political parties, elements vital to the political society and the party system. Hydén argues that the political society can be analysed in terms of its representativeness, competitiveness, effectiveness, influence and accountability. Political parties and the internal democracy thereof is a subject of research in addressing Good Governance.

In general political parties have certain roles in a society, for example they recruit and train the politicians and leaders of tomorrow, they channel and communicate opinions and policy both top-down and from the grassroots level to the political leadership. When looking at the internal functioning of a political party, you ask questions such as if the party has a constitution; how is it organised; what the decision-making processes are; how minority groups are integrated into the party.

If a country is democratic or not is sometimes based on the occurrence of free and fair elections and the regular occurrence of them, but democracy also involves freedom of speech, association, assembly, religion, and movement. Good Governance can be linked to democracy and in a consolidated democracy the elements and characteristics of Good Governance can be found to a larger extent than in non-democratic societies.

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\(^1\) See Annex I for a full list of the MDGs, targets and indicators.
The characteristic of Good Governance that directly concerns women participation in political parties, political society and subsequently Good Governance is the idea of inclusiveness and participation which requires the involvement of citizens in politics and/or in the (development) process as well as Göran Hydén’s indicator of representiveness. This includes participation by both men and women and could be either direct or through legitimate institutions or representatives. Moreover, participation means freedom of association and expression as well as an organized civil society.

Sudan is the largest country in Africa and is led by Lieutenant General Omar al-Bashir since 1989. Sudan is considered one of the most restricted countries in the world with a very troubled past and current situation. North and South Sudan have been in civil wars most of the time since the country gained independence from the British in 1956. In 2005, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed and put an end to the last civil war which started in 1983. The CPA stipulates a referendum where South Sudan will vote on unity with the North or becoming an independent state. The CPA also states that elections have to be held before the end of the fourth year of the interim period. In the light of this, the interest in political parties has been growing and the international community has recognized that the political parties need to build their capacity in order to be able to compete in the upcoming elections.

The role of women in Sudan is mainly reduced to the home and domestic work. However, there is an active women community and there are opportunities for women to obtain both primary and higher education. The Ahfad University for women just celebrated their 100 years anniversary in Khartoum and Khartoum University also enrol female students. However, these women often originate from the higher levels in the society. The women in the rural areas of Sudan or the ones from the lower social spheres in Khartoum or other urban areas do not have access to such education and the work outside the family and domestic household area. Women have played an important role in the economic and social life in Sudan during the years of war; however, they have often been excluded from the political life. Legislative councils and traditional authorities are still dominated by men.

Not all political parties in Sudan and are registered and there are an estimated number of 20 main parties in Northern Sudan. The thesis is focusing on the Umma Party which was established in 1945 but has roots back to the area of the al-Mahdi\(^2\) (1881-1898). The Umma party has several women in the higher levels of the decision-making processes and was accommodating to answer questions and participate in this research.

Today when addressing issues in developing countries, especially socio-economic and political matters, it is unavoidable not to use the MDGs as reference, benchmarks and guiding principles. After several years working abroad and at times in the thematic areas of state building and government support, my interest for Good Governance and especially the role of women in Good Governance has grown and therefore decided to use this topic as focus on this thesis. In order to further narrow it down I limited the scope of the thesis geographically to

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\(^2\) Muhammad Ahmad, also known as the al-Mahdi led the al-Mahdi uprising against the British from 1881 to 1898 when the British forces defeated the Mahdists.
North Sudan and thematically to the political society arena and its dimension of party systems and political parties within the definition of Good Governance.

**Objective of the thesis**

The objective of the thesis is to analyse, in light of Good Governance’s characteristics of participation, representativeness, equity and inclusiveness of the political society arena, women’s political participation in an opposition party in Northern Sudan. Therefore, the questions to be answered are:

- What are the basic features of the political environment within which Sudanese opposition parties operate?
- What are the leadership structures and decision making processes of the Umma Party in North Sudan?
- How do women access these structures and processes?

**Limitations**

Due to time constraints, access and availability of sources and limitations in the scope of the thesis, this research is focusing on the Umma Party, and not other political parties, in today’s North Sudan. The Party’s activities and organisation at the state or district levels are not included and I am referring to the Umma Party as the entire party and am not making differences between its factions. The thesis is not addressing the other arenas and characteristics of Good Governance.

Sudan is a country with rapidly changing socio-economic and political environment – at least in terms of the peace process and developments within international relations. The information gathering process was completed in mid 2007 thus the thesis is not including and taking into account events after this time period.
WHAT IS THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE THESIS?

This chapter will discuss the theoretical approach of the thesis. I discuss the concept of Good Governance and then continue with the political society and narrow this institutional arena down to political parties with different characteristics of internal party organisation. The last part links women’s participation to Good Governance.

Definition of Good Governance

The concept of Good Governance occurred in the 1980s within the economic and social development field and the expression has been used increasingly after the cold war. There are a few different definitions of (Good) Governance, but the common understanding is that Governance describes the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are or are not implemented.

Good Governance is being used especially in the context of development issues and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) defines governance as “the exercise of political, economic and administrative in the management of a country’s affairs at all levels”. Furthermore, UNDP states that “governance comprises the complex mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, mediate their differences and exercise their legal rights and obligations”. Good Governance defines an ideal towards which all countries and stakeholders should work. According to the UN Good Governance can be understood as a set of eight major characteristics;

1. Accountable
2. Transparent
3. Responsive
4. Equitable & inclusive
5. Effective & efficient
6. Follows the rule of law
7. Participatory
8. Consensus oriented

These characteristics assure that corruption is minimized; the views of minorities are taken into account, and; that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making. It is also responsive to the present and future needs of the society.

In 2004 Göran Hydén, Julius Court and Kenneth Mease published the results of a World Governance Survey, which was conducted by the United Nations University (UNU) and UNDP. The survey uses the following definition of governance: “Governance refers to the formation and stewardship of the formal and informal rules that regulate the public realm, the arena in which state as well as economic and societal actors interact to make decisions.”

Governance can be found at all levels in the society and the term governance can be translated into different concepts in regard to the activity, for example when talking about

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3 United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (Date n/a): What is Good Governance?
5 United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (Date n/a)
6 Hydén, Göran; Court, Julius & Mease, Kenneth (2004): Making Sense of Governance – Empirical Evidence from 16 developing countries. p 11
Governance of projects we can use the term Management but when we discuss political activities it might be more appropriate to use Governance.\(^7\)

**Characteristics**

The characteristics which are most relevant for this study are *Equitable and Inclusive* and *Participatory*.\(^8\) With Equity and Inclusiveness it is understood that all members of society feel that they have a stake in it and do not feel excluded from the mainstream. This provides all groups, especially the most vulnerable, the opportunity to maintain or improve their well-being. *Participation* means freedom of association and expression as well as an organised civil society. Everyone has the right to participate and be engaged in political and civil society activities. Participation includes involvement by both men and women and can be either direct or through institutions or representatives.\(^9\)

**Institutional arenas: Political Society**

Hydén divides Governance into six institutional arenas:

1. Civil Society
2. Government
3. Economic society
4. Political society
5. Bureaucracy
6. Judiciary

This study is focusing on the political society, which, according to Hydén, is “where citizens are represented and their views are aggregated and packaged into specific policy demands and proposals”.\(^10\) Hydén discusses Party System, Electoral System and Legislature under the Political Society arena and includes political parties within the party system.

The political society can be analysed in terms of the *Representativeness* of legislature; *Political competition*; *Aggregation of public preferences*; *Role of legislative function*; and *Accountability of elected officials*.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted by UN General Assembly in 1948, addresses representativeness. For example, Article 21 states that *everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives*. It further gives emphasis to the right of everyone to *equal access to public service in his country*; and that the *will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures*.\(^11\)

The electoral system and the political parties are important in implementing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The political parties can support the resolution through

\(^7\) Ibid, page 17  
\(^8\) Definitions used by UNDP, Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Wikipedia. See Annex II for definitions of the other characteristics  
\(^9\) The ADB’s idea of participation refers to the involvement of citizens in the development process, thus the beneficiaries of a project need to participate in order for the government to make informed decisions and respect the needs of the citizens as well as social groups can protect their rights.  
\(^10\) Hydén, Court, Mease (2004). p 77  
introduce fairness in the way they represent the people and make the party lists gender-equal and representative of everyone.

Party System
Jackson and Jackson define the party system as the network of relationships among parties in a state.\(^{12}\) The political society needs a manageable and functioning party system, however the party system in some places is under-institutionalised whereas in others it is over-institutionalised\(^{13}\). An under-institutionalised party system is common especially in a transitional society. The political parties are often weak and fragmented and dependent on one single charismatic individual for leadership and guidance. In Africa, political parties have a tendency to define themselves along ethnic lines and high turnover of political parties contributes to hampering institutionalisation\(^{14}\).

Non-competitive systems are where a single party is the only legal party. A competitive party system on the other hand, is classified by the number of parties that compete for and are given access to, legislative power. In a dominant one-party system, a single party regularly wins almost every election. If three or more parties regularly receive more than 15% of the votes, a multi-party system is considered to be in place. Sometimes countries go from one system to another, e.g. when a state has applied a non-competitive system and decides to move to a competitive system.\(^{15}\)

Hydén, as well as Mainwaring and Scully, stresses that parties are important to the political society since they mediate between citizens and government and is often essential in forming government as well as representing an effective opposition\(^{16}\). The rules that determine how a party system works have implications on the legislatures.

Political parties
A political party is a political organization that tries, usually through participating in election campaigns, to achieve political power within a government. Parties often promote a certain ideology and vision, but can also represent a coalition among different interests. The definition for a political party that is used in this study is taken Giovanni Sartori and is formulated as follows “A party is any political group that presents at elections and is capable of placing through elections candidates for public office.” Jackson & Jackson states that “in democracies, parties provide citizens with choices about the personnel and policies of their governments. In authoritarian states they do not.”\(^{17}\)

Timothy Scully states that domination of a party is shaped by political means such as rallies, propaganda, elections and mass media. Conflicts are expressed primarily through political

\(^{12}\) Jackson, Robert J; Jackson, Doreen (1997): A comparative Introduction to Political Science p. 320
\(^{13}\) Over-institutionalised party systems: wherever political parties become rigid and unable to accommodate changes in the economy or society, the party system may pro\(v\)e a hindrance to renewal and thus threaten political stability.
\(^{15}\) Jackson & Jackson (1997) p. 320-321
\(^{16}\) Mainwaring, Scott; Scully T.R. (1995): Building democratic institutions: party systems in Latin America
\(^{17}\) Jackson & Jackson (1997) p. 314
parties, and this organizational concentration can be a possibility to reach agreement between parties\textsuperscript{18}.

Political parties perform a variety of tasks in a society which may vary depending on the political system within which they operate. According to Jackson & Jackson parties normally add an element of stability to a political system by legitimising the individuals and institutions that control political power. Furthermore, Jackson & Jackson argue that political parties help to organise the government and electorate; for example the parties mobilise the electorate by recruiting candidates, conducting campaigns, stimulating voter participation; provide policy direction to governments, and train future leaders. Some other functions, which the parties perform are:

- Recruitment, nomination, election and training of political office holders;
- Interest aggregation and articulation;
- Political socialisation;
- Communication;\textsuperscript{19}
- mobilising public support; and
- running government, or when not in power, organising opposition to the government.

Parties in authoritarian states present a dilemma for the political leaders. They are needed to provide support, but participation and mobilisation must be strictly controlled to prevent the party from becoming a mechanism to challenge the leader\textsuperscript{20}.

**Internal functioning of political parties**

According to Karl Magnus Johansson's chapter in Politiska Partier\textsuperscript{21}, it is vital to know about the power relations and processes within a political party organisation in order to understand the party.

A political party often finds itself in conflicts over its goals, for example to only see to its own party or to compromise with other parties in order to increase its influence.

Through institutionalisation an organisation will be kept alive and can cope with difficult phases such as shifts in generations, leadership changes and elections defeat. Within an organisation, such as a political party, there is a need for delegation of work and specialisation and thus also a bureaucracy and expertise.

Parties in a democracy are expected to be internally democratic but the level of internal democracy varies and it is difficult to measure the level of democracy within a party\textsuperscript{22}. A political party is often a complex organisation with different internal organs and it is not always clear how the tasks and the responsibilities are divided among them. In addition there are formal and non-formal aspects within a party with power constellations that might occur parallel to the existing ones.

\textsuperscript{18} Scully, Timothy (1995): Building democratic institutions. p 37  
\textsuperscript{19} Jackson & Jackson (1997), p 319  
\textsuperscript{20} Jackson & Jackson (1997), p. 344  
\textsuperscript{21} Erlingsson Gissur Ó; Håkansson, Anders; Johansson, Karl Magnus & Mattson, Ingvar (2005) Politiska Partier. p. 25ff  
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid p. 35
Organisational structure
Many parties have often a more hierarchical than decentralised organisational structure and often the units correspond to the administrative divisions of the nation. National parties would have national, provincial and district level divisions. The main function of the party units at the local level is to support the party and party leadership. The party units are expected to carry out policies and directions, expand and strengthen the party, enrol members etc.

Most parties have affiliated bodies or party wings like youth; students; women; farmers; trade unions. Some parties also have cells to advise the party on different matters e.g. on socially disadvantaged groups. Sometimes the leaders of these groups are elected.

Party congresses
At congresses party members meet to discuss issues of importance and they often take place on a regular basis. Matters such as decision-making structures, attendance (district level participants, geographical representation, ethical groups, sex, religious groups etc.) and how to raise issues of concern to the members are determined at these meetings.

Party constitution
The party constitutions normally prescribe rules relating to the election of party leaders; formation of decision-making bodies; procedures for decision-making; selection of candidates; rights of members and their responsibilities and management of funds etc.

Leadership selection
The top party leader is often chosen by general consent or contest. Contest is often used in the democracies of the West. The top leader in a party is often called president, chairperson or general secretary. The leader often assumes his or her role by virtue of his or her role in founding the party, and/or the popularity, reputation, image and appeal s/he have among the electorate. In some parties, party leaders are routinely re-elected at the national party conventions or conferences. When the party is in power, often the position as party chief is combined with the position as head of government and state.

The selection of leaders below the supreme leader varies. The selection of members of the highest decision-making body is important. Sometimes, this body even directs the leader since core members work out the party line. The level of internal party democracy is dependent on how these members are chosen.

In political life today there are needs for expertise within parties. Politicians have to be professional and knowledgeable. This might result in a gap and the leaders loosing contact with the members. Leaders might get isolated and only meet the needs of those within the party who share the same opinion as him/her.

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23Suri K.C (Lead Author) (2007): Political Parties in South Asia: the challenges of change. p. 91
A party leader gets his/her mandate from the party it represents but sometimes s/he tries to have a certain amount of freedom in order to bring forward his or her own will. Party leaders might not always have the same motivation for their actions as the broader part of the members.

In some parties, power is concentrated on one individual leader where leader and party are adjoined and the leader exercises charismatic authority. There is little room for disagreeing or questioning the party chief since his or her word is final in party affairs. A party with such a leader-centrism doesn’t need a strong organisation and sometimes the leader may not even allow any institutionalisation of the party. This may cause problems for party structures to survive beyond the life time of the supreme leader.

The role of family members in building, sustaining and running a party can be a widespread phenomenon in a political party, which can also be linked to leader-centrism. The leadership position is usually transferred to a family member such as son, daughter, brother etc. Thus, parties are then treated more or less as personal property.

In political life today there are needs for expertise within parties. Politicians have to be professional and knowledgeable. This might result in a gap and the leaders loosing contact with the members.

**Candidate selection**
Candidates for party representation are sometimes selected by consensus among the top party leadership. Some parties receive applications from aspiring candidates. The applications are then scrutinised by a core group of leaders. The group can also consider other names that they deem valuable, for example a person important for the party, a popular figure in the constituencies etc.

The nomination process can be considered as a warm-up exercise to prepare the provincial and lower-level units for the up-coming election campaigns.

Control of the candidate nomination is important when discussing the power relations within a party.

**Policy/Programme Development**
The top party leadership generally develops the party’s policies, programmes and election manifestos, sometimes also known as party platforms. These are presented to the highest-decision making body before being made public or presented to the party conventions for approval.

**Membership**
Mass parties are open to anyone who seeks entry and many parties are pluralistic and secular, reflecting the larger society. However, in parties that are oriented to a particular religion, culture, caste or ethnicity membership would reflect this. People should be free to
join a party, quit it, join another or form a new one and common requirements for joining a party are age, acceptance of party ideals/policies and no membership in any other party.

Training programmes for members can be in the form of election campaign volunteers, youth-wing leaders and people’s representatives.

Rights, benefits and responsibilities
Members can normally participate in party meetings and they can elect or be elected to party positions at different levels. If the party is in power, members can claim nominated positions in public offices.

Party membership also comes with some responsibilities, for example the member is expected to participate in party programmes, defend and propagate party views, contribute money and help raise funds, coordinate party activities in localities, enrol members and vote and support the party in elections.

Communication
Party communication is often occasional, irregular and fragmented. Both formal and informal communication channels exist in parties. Formal communication takes place through party meetings, party conferences, delegates’ meetings or general body meetings. Party publications and usage of multi-media are also important communication tools. Informal communication is for example when party members get opportunities to informally interact with party leaders.

Financial resources
Political parties are funded by contributions from their membership and by individuals and organizations which share their political ideas or who stand to benefit from their activities. Some nations give political parties public funding for advertising purposes during election periods.

Parties are often required to submit financial reports to be discussed at different levels at the party conference or such reporting is carried out by the executive committees or there is an internal audit committee to prepare or scrutinise accounts.

Parties spend a big portion of funds on election campaigns e.g. to fund promotion materials and logistics. Some of the expenditure is funded from the central party funds. Often the candidates themselves raise much of their funding.

Women and political participation
After decades of activism for full gender equality, women still occupy on average less than 10% of leadership positions in government and businesses in the world. As questioned in the speech of Dr Kumi Naidoo What does it say about the quality of our democracy when women are so heavily under-represented even in long-standing democratic countries, let alone in
those that are fledgling democracies? The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly. The convention is often described as an international bill of rights for women. As of 2 Nov 2006, 185 countries, over ninety percent of the members of the United Nations, are party to the Convention.

Moreover, the member states of the UN has committed to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. One of the Goals, MDG 3, is directly related to gender equality and the empowerment of women. This Goal sets the target to Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015 and will measure progress towards this target by identifying Ratio of Girls to Boys in Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Education; Ratio of Literate Women to Men 15-24 years old; Share of Women in Wage Employment in the Non-Agricultural Sector; and the Proportion of Seats Held by Women in National Parliaments. The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is monitoring the last mentioned indicator.

**Governance and Democracy**

The definitions of democracy are many but the common characterisation is free and fair elections. In addition, democracy provides the citizens with freedom of speech, association, assembly, religion, and movement. Many of the characteristics of Good Governance and Democracy are similar but the two concepts are not the same, however, they are to some extent are linked to each other.

According to UNDP, human development and the MDGs can not be sustained without Good Governance and the public, private and the civil society sectors are all subject to Governance. All three sectors of the society are critical for sustaining human development. Hydén argues that governance is a prerequisite for democracy and that the elements of good governance provide opportunities for democratisation.

There are elements of Good Governance found in countries that have a less democratic government, for example Jordan received Partly Free by Freedom House’s Freedom in the World Survey and in Hydén’s World Governance Survey it was one of the countries receiving the best score.

**Summary**

The institutional arena Political Society includes the Party System, which in turn depends on political parties. One of the indicators for the Political Society is its representativeness which is also related to the political parties. The characteristics of Good Governance relevant to this thesis are Equitability and Inclusiveness as well as Participation. Gender aspects, the role of women and their active participation are part of these characteristics.

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26 UNDP (1997). p. 5f
27 Hydén, Court, Mease (2004). p 192
Political parties fulfil functions such as mobilise the electorate by recruiting candidates; conducting campaigns; stimulating voter participation; provide policy direction to governments; train future leaders; recruitment, nomination, election and training of political office holders; Interest aggregation and articulation; Political socialisation; Communication; mobilising public support; and running government, or when not in power, organising opposition to the government.

Major points to look at when analysing the internal functioning of political parties are its leadership structures, decision-making structures and the members’ access to these structures.

The assumption of the thesis is that if a political party wants to operate in a democratic society it is favourable if it applies democratic features and applies good governance. The figure below shows a summary of the different components of governance and a basic relationship between them fitting into one system. In this context this thesis analyses the political society in terms of the political parties and their internal structures and representiveness of women.

Figure 1: Relationships between the different areas of Good Governance

Source: Thesis author’s illustration of the relationship between the areas of good governance.
HOW DID I CONDUCT THE RESEARCH?

This thesis is a descriptive case study with a qualitative rather than a quantitative approach. The study targets the internal structures of the Umma Party and the role of women within it. I consider women’s participation in political parties as an important aspect within the political society and a vital part of the characteristics and indicators of Good Governance. This thesis analyses the political society in terms of the political parties and their internal structures and representiveness of women.

My interest in political parties in Northern Sudan started during some time spent in Khartoum in 2006 when I was exposed to the activities carried out in order to implement the CPA, especially the elections and political party system were discussed extensively. In this regard, Sudan is an interesting country to use as case study. Moreover, the Umma Party is one of the major political parties in Sudan and an important, well institutionalised opposition force and as such an interesting entity to study.

The research process was divided into several stages. After discussing the proposed topic with knowledgeable people in Sweden and in Sudan in the early months of 2007, I started to do a literature review, assessing and evaluate several articles and information found on the Internet, research studies, magazines and books. Based on the literature review I conducted interviews with actors within the Sudanese political parties’ arena using an interview guide as a guidance tool. Once I had completed the collection and gathering of information I compiled, analysed and verified it, subsequently resulting with the drafting of this thesis.

Pre-consultation in Sweden and Sudan

In February 2007 I met with Mr. Per Karlsson, Portfolio holder for Sudan, Uganda and Rwanda at Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). I also met with Ms. Åse Fosshaug-Palme and Mr. Seif Omar at Forum Syd and I had two meetings at The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA). I first met with Ms. Rita Taphorn, who is working as a Programme Officer for Political Parties and Women in Politics and then with Mr. Emad Yousef, Project Manager for Arab States.

During these consultations we discussed the importance of supporting political parties, and especially women’s political participation, in the upcoming elections and the formation and institutionalisation of political parties in Sudan. There was a genuine interest also due to the fact that there is little known about the internal functions of the political parties in Sudan and especially of women’s involvement and participation.

Discussion on sources

To formulate the theoretical approach, I used Göran Hydén’s book Making Sense of Governance – the World Governance Survey which is a study conducted by the UNU in

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28 Please see Annex III for the list of people consulted and Annex IV for list of respondents.
29 Please see Annex V for the interview guide.
30 During 2007, several initiatives regarding women’s political participation, among others from International IDEA, have started to be conducted in Sudan.
Tokyo and UNDP and was carried out in 16 countries. The book outlines the different institutional arenas of Governance. Due to its complexity and thoroughness I used this book also as a guiding principle when I built the rest of the theoretical chapter and looked for sources to support the identified approach and definition. In this regard, I used *Politiska Partier* by Gissur Ó Erlingsson, Anders Håkansson, Karl Magnus Johansson and Ingvar Mattson as well as *A Comparative Introduction to Political Science* by Robert J. Jackson and Doreen Jackson, *Building democratic institutions: party systems in Latin America* by Timothy Scully and *Parties and Party Systems* written by Giovanni Sartori. I consider all of these books of high academic level and good complementary reading and sources for inspiration for a theoretical framework.

Furthermore, I used a publication produced by International IDEA on *Political Parties in South Asia: The challenges of change* for the identification of the internal structures of a party. Due to the limited time and scope I concentrated on a few of the dimensions this publication is examining as outlined in the theoretical chapter. The study is a very useful tool in analysing different internal structures within a party, since it outlines the areas in a very clear way.

In addition to the books, I also reviewed information from different reports, studies and articles produced by different UN organisations or publicised in Journal of Democracy and Journal of Development.

**Empiric Chapter Sources**

To provide a background to the Sudanese political society I used several books such as the *Root Causes to the Sudanese Wars*. This book is written by Douglas H. Johnson and gives a systematic description of the Sudanese society over the past 100 years.

The book *Gender Politics in Sudan* was written in 1996 by Sondra Hale and is one of the most comprehensive and thorough studies conducted on women in Sudan. Sondra Hale is a leading academic on Women’s Study in Sudan. This book, however, did not give me a direct insight of the situation today nor in the political life, but it gave me a good understanding of the role of women in the Sudanese Society.

The UNDP study on Good Governance, Women and political participation – a 21 Century challenge is a source document for many UN staff working on political participation in developing countries.

Dr. Haydar Ibrahim of Khartoum University is one of the leading political science scholars in Sudan and his draft report on Study of Political Parties Structure and Programs has also been a source of information.

There are a few global reports which provide a good overview of the situation in a country – at least in terms of statistics. The Human Development Reports (HDRs) include statistical data put together to two indexes: the Human Development Index (HDI) and the Gender Development Index (GDI). UNDP is only publishing the HDRs but the ownership lies with the author of each chapter. In addition, Freedom House and Transparency International are producing reports judging the level political freedom and corruption in a country. However,
when referring to data you have to take into consideration the basic infrastructure in South Sudan which is very poor, let alone the statistical resources. Thus the data from Sudan disclosed in these reports is mainly based on information gathered from North Sudan, and even this information is not always complete.

I also used a study of Political Parties Structure and Programs conducted by the Sudanese Studies Centre with a team of Dr Haydar Ibrahim Ali Mr Akram AbdAlgoyoum Dr. Amani Al Taweel. The study was funded by the UNDP project Good Governance and Equity in Political Participation (GGEPP).

Consultations and Interviews in Sudan
Following the initial activities in Stockholm and the assessment of the written information I went to Sudan and conducted several interviews with key actors within the Sudanese and the international community working on political parties and women’s political participation in Sudan, this also included members of different parties.

The selection of the Umma Party as the focus of the thesis was then based on a very pragmatic approach. It was mainly based on the information available and the accessibility of female and male members of the Umma Party to interview. However, it should be recognised that this selection might not be representative since the sample group is small and the respondents belong to a certain part of the political society. But, as mentioned above, the Umma Party also has significant support and power within the Sudanese political society and is therefore very interesting for a case study like this.

The information gathered about the Umma Party was mainly conducted through the interviews and some information provided in writing, which needed to be translated into English. Of course I have had to take into consideration that the information received from the parties is most probably subjective to the individual purposes and needs to be evaluated carefully.

To compose the thesis, I met with a total of 21 people in Sudan out of which were 15 were interviews with women and men active in the political society in Sudan, this included six respondents from the Umma Party and nine from other parties. These interviews covered members of several political parties (also parties which are not analysed in this study and thus also not reflected in the findings) and were carried out during March and April of 2007.

One of the major challenges was to arrange the meetings and to open up the doors for further interviews. This was best achieved with the Umma Party where I met with a few selected key informants. They were selected on the basis of role and experience within the party but also on willingness to meet with me. Another challenge when conducting the interviews was that the meetings often were postponed, delayed or cancelled in the very last minute.

To structure the interviews, I composed an interview guide, which was an important tool in conducting the interviews since it outlined the key questions and areas of discussion and also gave a few detailed questions to guide the conversation. The questions were asked in an open-ended manner in order to let the respondents answer as comprehensive and open as
they wished. The guide provided a consistency in the interviews. I consider the interviews as more or less self assessments and/or reflection of the party and it is not easy to draw any conclusion based on this since the respondents are politicians with an agenda and accustomed to promote the party.

Once I had collected the information, I concentrated on analysing them and draw up the findings in this study. To the extent possible, I also tried to validate the findings through other sources or through discussions with knowledgeable people in Sudan.

This qualitative study aims at collecting comments, quotes, stories, perspectives and document experiences from women politically active in Sudan and it was not supported by a quantitative study due to the limitations of this thesis. For example, to collect data for a quantitative study, questionnaires would have had to be designed, translated, disseminated to respondents and then the data would have had to be entered and evaluated before analysed in connection to the qualitative date. The financial resources as well as the timeframe did not support such an undertaking.

In my opinion, the methodology does not provide for any generalisations to be drawn since the target group was too small and narrow. If this had been a quantitative study in form of a survey I could have provided conclusions that were more representative.

The research is carried out in a sensitive political society and I had to choose my sources rather carefully, but sometimes be satisfied with the opportunity to meet with any representative at all, in order to be able to conduct interviews and meet with people to discuss the topic. The Sudanese society is heavily dependent on family ties and the network you have – as a foreigner this is not easy to achieve. However, I was persistent and used the contacts I had when trying to get the same contact person recommended from different people with different background. This was especially important for me in order to get indication of the people’s relevance for the study.

When conducting research in a country like Sudan, it is crucial that you as a researcher are aware of certain barriers. For example, can I assume that I am getting objective answers from the interviewees? Or do they tell me what they think I want to hear? Can I as a non-Arabic speaking outsider get the “right” information? Can I as a non-Sudanese really understand this complex political society, especially when all the respondents belong to the political elite in the country? My honest answer is no to all these questions. However, that doesn’t mean that I don’t think I was able to get a snapshot and a glance at the role of women in the political life in Sudan. It would be interesting to conduct a more comprehensive study based on a mixed methodology on this topic with extensive resources available.

Moreover, I was not invited to Sudan or the Umma Party to conduct this research. I believe that if I had been officially invited to do an assessment of the internal structures and the participation of women within the party, the responses would have been different and greater cooperation achieved.

31 One thing that could have been improved with the interview guide was to include standard questions such as age, educational level etc.
I also had limited access to books and thus the sources mainly originate from the internet and personal interviews. It was even more important to evaluate and assess all the sources, especially the interviews and the ones originating from non-independent sources, and try to get them confirmed by other more independent sources.

Furthermore since I do not read, write or speak Arabic I have had to limit the research to English language sources. In addition, the interviewed people used different terminology for the functions within the party, this may be due to language barriers. In order to avoid confusion I have chosen the terminology which seemed to be the most common one.

Finally, if time had allowed, I would have carried out a full verification process of the thesis and the findings. This would have included circulating the draft paper to relevant people and preferably organise a group discussion especially to improve the analysis and key findings.
OPPOSITION PARTY AND WOMEN’S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN NORTHERN SUDAN: A CASE STUDY OF THE UMMA PARTY

The situation in Sudan today

In 1956 Sudan gained independence from British and Egyptian rule. The decades that followed have been dominated by different authoritarian regimes leaving little space for a free political life. Today, Sudan is ruled by Lieutenant General Omar al-Bashir, who came to power in 1989 through a military coup.

North Sudan has dominated the economic, political and social spheres over the South especially after independence, which has been one of the major reasons for the civil wars between North and South Sudan. The first war was fought from 1955 to 1972 and the second war broke out in 1983 and finally came to an end in 2005 when the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed. In the second war it is estimated that more than four million people were displaced and around two million killed. However, the conflict in the South was nearly coming to an end when another conflict broke out in 2003 in the western parts of Sudan; namely in the areas called Darfur. The conflict is still ongoing and attempts to reach a peace agreement have only partly been successful. The eastern parts of Sudan have also experienced violence in recent years and the East Sudan Peace Agreement was finally signed in October 2006 and settled the conflict.

Today, Sudan is the largest country in Africa and has a population of about 35.5-40 million with a life expectancy of 57 years. The capital, Khartoum, is located where the Blue and the White Niles flow together and consists of three major parts; namely Omdurman, Khartoum and Khartoum North. Close to 40% of the Sudanese live in urban areas and nearly as many are under the age of 15. The population is divided into different tribes, ethnic and religious groups. Sudan ranks number 141 out of 177 countries on the Human Development Index (HDI) in the 2006 Human Development Report (HDR) and on the GDI the country ranks.

Sudan’s political history and current situation

The British-Egyptian colonization of Sudan in the second half of the 19th and the first half of the 20th century resulted in improved infrastructure and increased efforts in educating some Sudanese resulted in an emergence of a middle class. In the 1920s a national opposition movement started to organise demonstrations and hand out leaflets with the objective to achieving independence which resulted in the establishment of a Graduate’s Congress in the 1930s. This Congress was open to any graduate with secondary school education or higher.

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32 The figure varies from source to source. The figure 35.5 millions is from Human Development Report 2006 and 40 millions from Central Intelligence Agency’s The World Factbook.
34 Sunni Muslim (70%) indigenous beliefs (25%) Christians (5%). Ethnic groups Black (52%), Arab (39%), Beja (6%) and other (3%).
35 information for the year 2004
In 1938 a Graduate’s Conference was held where the foundation of the future of political parties in Sudan and the country’s independence was laid.\footnote{Johnson, Douglas H. (2004): The root causes of Sudan’s civil wars. p. 23}

As stated above, the Republic of Sudan obtained independence in 1956 after three years of transition period under the leadership of Ismail al-Azhari. The years 1956-58 were governed by Umma Party-led coalitions until General Ibrahim Abboud took power after a coup and a six year military rule followed. In 1964, after several years of mobilisations the students’ protests had become a powerful force and General Abboud was removed from power in the so called October revolution in 1964. A transitional government was put in place and elections, which were won by the Umma Party and the Democratic Union Party (DUP), were held in 1965. The Communist Party and some smaller groups were able to gain representation in the parliament and a woman was able to win a seat as a member of parliament for the first time.

The civil war in South Sudan, which had started in 1955, and economic problems were major impediments for the government and in May 1969 General Jafaar Nimeiri took power in a military coup and ended the civilian government and established a military dictatorship. The regime applied a system of control which developed Islamic trends. In the beginning Nimeiri was supported by the Communist Party, but the protests against him increased and in July 1971 the Communist Party tried to overthrow the regime – but failed. As a response, Nimeiri changed the constitution and made his Sudan Socialist Union the only legal political party in Sudan and met further protests with brutal methods. Thousands of people were killed and many political figures belonging to the opposition parties had to live in exile.

The first civil war was ended by the signing of the Addis Ababa Agreement in 1972 and the Southern regions were granted self-government. In the 1970s Sudan’s economy got stronger and industries expanded, however the new economic initiatives were not sustainable and failed. This resulted in an economic crisis and Nimeiri initiated a national reconciliation to try to avert a potential political crisis. Sadiq al-Mahdi of the Umma Party, the DUP as well as Hassan al-Turabi’s Muslim’s Brotherhood were brought back to the political arena.

The economic situation continued to worsen and the Islamic parties’ influence grew. In the early years of the 1980s the administrative arrangements in South Sudan were changed and a decree to apply Sharia Law in South Sudan was passed. In 1983 the second civil war in South Sudan broke out with Dr. John Garang de Mabior as the leader of the Sudanese People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) and later of the Sudanese People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM).

The poor economical and political situation resulted in Nimeiri being overthrown in 1985 in a military coup. Contemporary with this event, Sudan was declared bankrupt by the International Monetary Fund. The military who had taken power opened up the political scene to elections and in April 1986 Sadiq al-Mahdi of the Umma Party became prime minister in a coalition government with Hassan al-Turabi and the National Islamic Front (NIF).\footnote{NIF was a party formed out of the Muslim Brotherhood in 1986.} At this time, forces emerged representing marginalized groups; amongst others women who were able to form an electoral cadre and boost their power in political organizations.
The political and economic situation in Sudan was not stable and the coalition government collapsed and was reformed with the same player. The war in the South resulted in people fleeing, women and children were brought as slaves to the North and the situation was worsening by a drought and famine in 1988. In 1989, Sadiq al-Mahdi lifted the enforcement of Sharia Law in the South and as a response the National Islamic Front left the government coalition since the party was of the opinion that this was against Islamic principles.

On 30 June 1989, Lieutenant General Omar al-Bashir removed Sadiq al-Mahdi from power in a military coup, backed up by the National Islamic Front and its leader Hassan al-Turabi. The new government suspended the constitution; dissolved parliament; banned trade unions and political parties; and suppressed press and judiciary. In the second half of the 1990s, the National Islamic Front changed its name to the National Congress Party and became the ruling party. The administration of the country also changed, among others, 26 states were created; the executives, cabinets, and senior-level state officials were appointed by the president; and the budgets were controlled by Khartoum.

Under al-Bashir, the government in Khartoum alienated itself from the major players on the international arena, for example al-Bashir expressed support to Saddam Hussein and offered a safe haven for Osama Bin Laden.

On different occasions during the years al-Turabi tried to control the presidential powers, planned national uprisings; and criticised the Government on issues such as Darfur. These actions put him under house arrest and in prisons.

In 2000, presidential and parliamentary elections were held and were widely considered flawed. The opposition parties boycotted the elections as a protest against the regime. Al-Bashir won 86% of the votes for the presidential position. In January 2001, al-Bashir and the NCP invited other parties, among them the Umma Party, to join the new government; however they declined the offer stating that they do not want to support totalitarianism.

In the 1990s oil, which was found in the area making out the “transitional areas” along the North-South border in 1973, was starting to have an impact on the economy. Moreover, al-Bashir gained control and power of politics in Sudan and became open for negotiations with the South to settle a peace. After a ceasefire in 2002 negotiations resulted in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement which was signed on January 9, 2005 between the Government of the Republic of the Sudan and the SPLA/M.

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA)
The CPA outlines an interim period that will culminate in a referendum to be held before 2011/within six years to decide whether South Sudan will gain independence or continue in a “union” with the North, enjoying a certain amount of autonomy.

38 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics_of_Sudan
40 Ibid.
The CPA stipulates how Sudan will be governed and administered during this period. It also states that general elections as well as elections for the post of the Sudanese President and the post of President of the Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS). These elections should be held simultaneously within the end of the fourth year of the interim period, thus at latest in 2009.

The NCP and SPLM formed the current power sharing government called the Government of National Unity (GNU). In July 2006, Dr. John Garang of the SPLA/M was appointed President of GoSS and Deputy to al-Bashir. However, less than a month later Dr. Garang was killed in a helicopter crash and this position is now held by Salva Kiir Mayardit. During the CPA interim period the GNU is composed of both South and North Sudanese officials. The National Legislature, whose members were chosen in mid-2005, has two chambers; the National Assembly and the Council of States. All members of the National Legislature serve a six-year term. The National Assembly consists of 450 appointed members who represent the government, former rebels, and other opposition political parties. The Council of States has 50 members who are indirectly elected by state legislatures.

Sudan is currently preparing for some of the steps outlined in the CPA. For example, the Government is working together with the World Bank and several UN Organisations to conduct a census to be carried out before the elections in 2009. Moreover, the Political Parties’ Act was passed in Parliament in 2007 and an Election Act has been drafted but the endorsement is still pending, thus it is still not clear what kind of election system that will be applied.

Some aspects of Good Governance in today’s Sudan

Good Governance faces several challenges in Sudan. For example, Sudan ranked 149 out of 159 countries surveyed in Transparency International’s 2005 Corruption Perceptions Index. According to Freedom House’s Freedom in the World Survey, Sudan scored a 7 out of 7 on both political rights and civil liberties and thus receives the status “Not Free”.

Freedom of the press in Sudan is limited and journalists have to exercise self-censorship. Some papers do criticise the government to a certain extent but they are sometimes shut down or journalists are detained without explanation. Islam is the state religion and Sharia Law is applied in North Sudan.

The government controls the administration of public universities and teachers and professors in both public and private institutions practice self-censorship. The government is putting a lot of restrictions on international and national non-governmental organisations to implement programmes and projects in Sudan.

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41 State Governors, National Assembly, the Legislature of Southern Sudan, and State Legislatures all over Sudan as well as the presidential elections.
42 As of October 2007
43 http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2005
44 http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2005&country=6837
45 This occurs when stories are published on civilian deaths in Darfur or blasphemy or other things that the government thinks is negative for them.
Women in today’s Sudan
After independence, women have had access to jobs, education, benefits, and political participation according to Sondra Hale’s book *Gender Politics in Sudan*. But conservative men see such public women “as a threat to social order and the status quo”\(^\text{46}\). Furthermore, according to Sondra Hale, the government in Sudan during the 1990s allowed women to work outside the home but only if they *had no children and if their income was needed by the family* [...] and the jobs *should not threaten the power structure and should be “appropriate”*\(^\text{47}\).

Sudan is a conservative country and during many years (and it still exists) proper social conduct is being monitored in the country. This results, amongst others, in police raids of popular cafés in Khartoum and controlling of women’s proper behaviour and clothing.

The situation for women in today’s Sudan is complex. Women have access to education including higher education, especially in the urban areas. Many students at Khartoum University are women and Ahfad University for Women just celebrated its 100 year anniversary in 2007. However, rules regarding family matters such as marriage, divorce, and inheritance are derived from Sharia. Women are often harassed because of the way they dress or behave and, although it is legally forbidden, female genital mutilation is common\(^\text{48}\).

The CPA addresses women and inclusiveness in the power-sharing protocol, for example it states that the parties acknowledge the need to *promote the welfare of the people and protect their human rights and fundamental freedoms*\(^\text{49}\); and the signatories pursuit of good governance, accountability, transparency, democracy, and the rule of law at all levels of *government to achieve lasting peace*\(^\text{50}\). Furthermore, Article 1.6.2.16 addresses the Equal Rights of Men and Women and states inter alia *the equal right to enjoy all civil, political, economic, social, cultural and human rights and fundamental freedoms outlined in different conventions*. However, Sudan is not part of the CEDAW convention since the government argues that the convention is against the values of the Sudanese culture.

Political parties in Sudan (at the national level)
Political parties in Sudan started to develop during the first half of the 20\(^\text{th}\) century. Today there are an estimated number of around 20 political parties at the national level. As a response to the CPA and the upcoming elections, efforts to develop and strengthen the capacities and structures of the parties are currently ongoing. Political parties in Sudan have to register with the political parties’ registrar in Khartoum according to the Political Parties Act of 2007. However, the act is heavily criticized by the opposition parties. Some of the major political parties refused to register protesting that the Act is unfair since the NCP does not have to register. Moreover, there is a dispute over the ownership of the party names\(^\text{51}\) and in addition the opposition parties have major difficulties with financial resources to fund the

\(^{47}\) ibid. p. 199
\(^{48}\) Other examples on how women are discriminated are that a woman who charges a rape can face prosecution if her case is unsuccessful in front of a court. Unmarried, pregnant women, who cannot prove a rape charge, are subject to charges of adultery which is a capital crime in Sudan.
\(^{49}\) CPA Power Sharing Agreement paragraph 1.4.3
\(^{50}\) CPA Power Sharing Agreement paragraph 1.4.5
\(^{51}\) When registering the first party to register will keep their name and can thus “steal” the name of other parties.
election campaigns since the NCP has controlled the financial recourses in the country during the past 20 years.

The Political Parties’ Act states, amongst other issues, that membership in a party has to be open for any Sudanese who support the goals and principles of the party; the party’s manifesto shall not contradict the CPA and the Interim National Constitution, and; Its leaders and leaders of its institutions at all levels shall be democratically elected subject to representation of women on the basis of percentages specified by the political party. Moreover, the party’s sources of funding shall be transparent and public; and the party shall abide by democracy, Shura (consultation) and its principles as a means for political exercise and peaceful transfer of power. Furthermore, the party’s means to achieve its goals shall not include the establishment of covert or overt military cells within the party itself, the armed forces or within any other organized forces. Every political party shall have a statute and rules/terms of references containing the programme/manifesto and the organization of all its political, organizational, financial and administrative matters in harmony with provisions of the constitution and this Act. Finally, every political party shall hold a general conference at least once every five years.

Women’s political participation
According to UNDP’s Arab Human Development Report 2005, women’s political participation in governments in the Arab States has generally been symbolic (one or two female ministers in most cases); limited to smaller portfolios (usually ministries of social affairs or ministries relating to women); and conditional (the number of female ministers fluctuates with numerous changes of government).

Moreover, the number of women holding a seat in parliament does not always stand for if women are democratically represented or not. It can even reflect concessions to a group of women supported by the State against other women on the fringes of dominant political forces. Thus, the existence of women’s group does not necessarily express a social movement but could instead be an elite balance of power, economic interest, and internal and external political considerations.

The first exclusively women’s organisation in Sudan was the Cultural Association of Girls which was established in 1947, and women’s political participation started to get structured with the Graduates Congress. Their engagement was further established in the early 1950s when some urban educated women organised themselves into the Sudanese Women’s Union (SWU) and over the years the Union has achieved some political and economic rights for women. However the SWU has not spread to the rural areas of the country and all government in Sudan have considered the Union as an unwelcome opposition force.

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In Sudan, women received the right to vote and be elected in 1964. In 1965 the first woman was elected member of the parliament. Some parties, like Umma and SPLM, apply quota to increase female participation in the party activities. South Sudan has decided to apply a 25% quota for women in the South Sudan Parliament in contrast to the North. This caused intense discussions in Khartoum during the spring of 2007.

According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Sudan has 18% female representation in the National Assembly and 4% in the Council of States. The global average is 17% and in the Arab States, the figure is close to 9% which is the lowest in the world.\textsuperscript{56}

In a draft study by the University of Khartoum/Development Studies and Research Institute in 2006\textsuperscript{56} some of the basic factors behind the poor representation of women in the Sudanese parliament were stated as below:

1. The high rate of illiteracy in the Sudan and especially among women.
2. The negative inherited beliefs about women and their natural position as a housewife which is incompatible with political life.
3. The prevailing belief that women have no leadership attitudes, skills and knowledge compared to men.
4. The negligence of women to their rights, and their attitude that parliament membership is exclusively a male affair.
5. Traditionally, women have not been allowed leading roles in the political parties and unions resulting in their exclusion from decision making positions.
6. A tendency for women to vote for men since there is a common belief that men perform their jobs better than women.

Sudan has had female representatives in the parliament since 1965 with exception of a few years in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

\textbf{Table 1:} No female representatives in parliament 1965-2001\textsuperscript{3}

\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
Year & Legislative Body & Number of member & No. of Women \%
\hline
1965 & Constitutional Assembly & 233 & 1 & 0.16
1968 & & 233 & 0 & 0
1972 & Peoples National Assembly & 255 & 14 & 5
1974 & Peoples National Assembly II & 250 & 11 & 4.4
1978 & Peoples National Assembly III & 304 & 17 & 5.6
1980 & Peoples National Assembly IV & 319 & 18 & 5.9
1982 & Peoples National Assembly V & 153 & 13 & 7.0
1986 & National Assembly & 301 & 2 & 0.7
\hline
\end{tabular}

\textsuperscript{55}The numbers are compiled by the Inter-Parliamentary Union on the basis of information provided by National Parliaments by 28 February 2007. The percentages do not take into account the case of parliaments for which no data was available at that date. PU web site 12 mar-07.

\textsuperscript{56}University of Khartoum/Development Studies and Research Institute (2006); draft report titled Assessment of capacity building needs and surveying attitudes of women in parliament. Good Governance and Equity in Political Participation Project – UNDP Sudan
The Umma Party

Background
The Umma Party was founded in February 1945 by a group which called itself the Sudanese Patriots and originates from a religious sect called Ansar; a group of ethnic leaders; and a group of educated elite. Umma stands for Nation and the Imam of the Ansar was the founder of the party. He was a charismatic leader and the role of leadership was concentrated to him.

The Umma party is leaning towards the creation of a state based on liberal democratic principles and guided by Islamic principles. Disagreements within the party have led to divisions and creation of factions\(^5\).  

The structure of the Umma Party
Today the Umma Party is led by Sadiq al Mahdi and some of the several factions of the Umma Party are headed by relatives to him. The Umma party has been asked to share power with the NCP, however the party is refusing this since, according to the respondents, that is contradicting to the Umma Party’s policies of working for the will of the people and not with a totalitarian regime.

Organisational Structure
The Umma Party has a unit in each state with the aim to decentralising the party and its decision-making structures. Each local unit is a mirror image of the central structure.

The main decision-making entities within the Party are the general conference, chairman/party leader, general secretariat, the political bureau, central committee, executive body and coordinating council.

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5 Salih, Mohamed (2003). p. 104
The Umma Party has held seven General Conferences and the most recent one was in 2003. The General Conference is supposed to meet every four years but due to security problems this has not been carried out.

The General Conference is composed of representatives from the whole country and at the last meeting around 3500 people participated, including representatives of women which made up 20% of the participants and youth. The villages – or area councils – elect the representatives from their geographical area. The number of local representatives depends on the area population. According to the respondents, more than 20% of the members at the last General Assembly were women.
**Party Constitution**
The party constitution originates from 1945, but several additions have been made thereafter. The additions are being approved at the General Conference.

**The Chairman**
Since 1964 the Umma has an elected chairman/president/party leader. The current chairman is Imam Sadiq al Mahdi who has been a prominent leader of the Party through much of the last 40 years and was re-elected in the last General Conference.

The chairman has two assistants and currently one of them is a woman. He also has six Advisory Groups to assist his work; these are on Investment, Disciplinary, CSOs, Elders, Social Affairs and “Conflict-Resolution”.

The al-Mahdi family has a strong political history especially within the Umma Party. The current president has ten children and out of these four are actively involved in the party. Several of the family members have been targeted by national security and even put in prison or lived in exile.

**The Secretary General**
The Secretary General is elected by the Political Bureau, has four assistants out of which two are women and reports to the supreme coordinating council. The Executive Body is assisting the Secretary General and is composed by fourteen members which are heads of the specialised committees. Out of these fourteen, two are appointed by the Chairman and twelve are elected by the Political bureau. Five of the fourteen are women.58

**Central Committee**
The Central Committee is composed of approximately 600 persons participating in the General Assembly Conference. According to the respondents, it has been problematic to increase the number of women represented at the Central Committee so the Party Leadership intervened and decided that each region with more than two representatives should have one woman participating as well. The Central Committee elects the Political Bureau.

**Political Bureau**
In turn the Political Bureau constitutes approximately 98 people, out of which 17% are women, and is elected by the Central Committee. The Political Bureau is the highest decision making body on day-to-day activities and also elects the Secretary General. The Bureau conducts regular meetings that can be attended by observers on a monthly basis.

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58 The structure of the General Secretariat is captured in Annex VI.
Coordinating council
The Coordinating Council is the leadership of the party and consists of approximately 30 people, which are the president with his deputies and assistants; the Secretary General and his deputies, advisors and assistants; the Head of the Political Bureau and the deputies; and the Heads of the Specialised Committees. Out of these people about six are women.

According to the respondents the Political Bureau is higher than the Coordinating Council, however if a decision has to be taken urgently and there is not enough time to call for a Political Bureau meeting, then the coordinating council can meet ad hoc and take the decision. If the action has to be executed before there is time to consult the Political Bureau then the action will be conducted and the Bureau will be informed – if actions can be delayed then the decision can be presented to the Bureau for approval or rejection.

Policy/Programme Development
A Programme is about to be developed according to the respondents but no details were provided.

Membership and support
The Party has traditionally enjoyed the support from the rural areas but lately the party has spread also to urban areas. According to the respondents the support at the Universities is especially big and the youth groups are being active.

Umma is a big party with similar problems to the ones which exist in Sudan as a country. It is based on regions and is strongest in Darfur and Kordofan. The support is less dependent of tribal belongings; however, it is subject to some tribal influence according to one of the respondents. The Party is dominated by Islamic tradition but is open for all religions. Furthermore, none of the respondents could clarify the number of members, the criteria for membership or if a membership fee was applicable.

Financing
The Umma party finances itself by self financing since there is no other funding source; hence the individual people are financing their own activities. According to the respondents, the current government has, over the years, confiscated the party’s resources and destroyed the businesses of rich Umma party supporters, therefore the party can not rely on any substantial donations. However, there are a few Umma party branches in Europe with support and some financial assistance is derived from these sources. The party produces financial reports to track the general financial transactions for the party.

Women’s political participation
During the al-Mahdia area, in the late 19th Century, a strict and traditional teaching regarding the role of women was practiced. However, the movement also promoted the role of women in the resistance against the British rulers and women were in particular assigned positions related to health and food; but they were sometimes also part of the direct fighting. The role of
women evolved and in the first half of the 20th century they played an important role encouraging the men to oppose the colonisation.

In 1964-65 the Political Bureau had a man representing the women. He attended the meetings and then briefed the women on the issues discussed. However, this lasted only one year and thereafter a woman was allowed to attend the meetings. At the General Conference in 1986 it was decided that a 10% female participation quota was to be applied at all levels of the party and between 1985 and 1989 the Umma Party appointed a female Minister for Social Affairs. In 1985 the Women Bureau of the Umma Party was established and one of the respondents was appointed head of it.

The respondents have seen a change over the past years in the educational level of the women, especially in rural areas. In the 1980s the leading women in the villages were teachers or midwives, but today there are more literate women and in some parts they are also economically strong. But these women are not recognised by the communities, thus, according to one of the respondents, it is useful to have a well-known name and coming from a renowned family and use this, to reach out to the men and women at the local level, especially to advocate for issues of interest for women.

The respondents all agreed that politics in Sudan is male dominated and it is difficult for women to be politically active. The general perception is that women should be concerned with issues related to children, family and fashion. Despite this traditional view of women, the respondents all claimed that their families have been supportive of their engagement but at the same time it has been hard on them, especially when the respondents were imprisoned.

One of the women interview had been politically active since she was young and she did not think that she would be active once she had children – but she was wrong and continued her political involvement. She said that this has sometimes been on the cost of the children and that they sometimes blame her for not being there for them. However, today, out of the ten children she has together with the co-wife, four of them are politically active and all are committed to politics in one way or the other.

In the Umma party, many of the politically active women have family members who belong to the Umma, but not necessarily in leadership positions. Sometimes women have to change political direction to please the family in order to confirm their active participation.

In early years there were one-month camps for girls to educate them about the Umma Party. Today, students organise shorter trainings for women which do not require overnight stays since they have to respect the dormitory curfews. One of the respondents also said that this traditional view of the role of women is noticeable also within the party and that she has been negatively discriminated towards. Moreover, political active people experience problems in their "normal" lives and professions. Some people have been sacked from their jobs due to their political involvement, according to one of the respondents.

An increase in the quota was decided at the 2003 General Assembly meeting where all levels of the party should include the participation of at least 20% women. At that point 17% of the
members in the Political Bureau were women. According to the respondents the quota has been achieved in several aspects but it can still be improved. The respondents also discussed in favour of the possibility of applying a 30% quota, despite that the male members are not in favour of this, arguing that the party would loose elections if they put forward too many women as candidates. Women across the political parties have initiated cooperation to include a 30% quota in the electoral law.

**Women's entry and career in the Umma Party**

According to one of the respondents the “normal” way that women enters the more active participation in the party is during their studies at secondary school where they start attending meetings, events, workshops etc.

Other women are more active during opposition periods (also from abroad) and have then access to positions when the party has been in power.

One of the respondents interviewed has been an active member of the Umma Party since her years at university. Her father was working at Afhad University and she interacted with Sidiq al-Mahdi already at an early age which has helped her to have a good relation with him today. She has not been very active during opposition periods, though. Her participation has been mainly when the party has been in power or in recent years when some steps towards a more open political party environment has evolved. She doesn’t like opposition period and considers this time as dirty and lying and great problems with personal security.

She was first active in the party during when she was a student. After a few years with different level of activity she became the Executive Director of the Women's Sector. She was also part of forming small community based units to give women a voice and greater participation. During these years she also organised literacy classes, she worked with the Youth Union and she was the Executive Secretary of the Umma Party's NGO Section. In order to implement these activities, she had to use her own resources. When the NCP took power in 1989 she was targeted regularly by the new government and she did not take up activities again until the environment for political parties allowed it.

Today the interviewed person is Head of the Studies and Research Committee. The Chairman has the right to appoint two of the members of the Executive Body out of which she is one. She believes she was elected because of her early and long engagement in the party and the President has confidence in her. In her opinion she also thinks that it help that she is an outspoken woman and has the ability to oppose the leader and still enjoy his respect.

Furthermore, the respondent believes that she holds the position within the Party because she is qualified. She doesn’t believe that she has had any advantages or disadvantages because of her sex. However, politics is still very men dominated. Media is targeting her in a positive way and she is frequently featured in the TV and news papers.

The respondent elaborated on the role of women and their political participation. She said that women are active within the party but there are social constraints and they can not always rely on the Party Leadership to be supportive.
Furthermore, the respondent said that she wants to be close to the people and members and she thinks it is difficult to achieve democracy in a country if the political parties are not advocating and applying internal democracy.

Another woman interviewed is the daughter of one of the founder of the Umma Party and he was also the Secretary General and Member of Parliament during democratic periods. When the respondent was young she started to read about different parties and choose the Umma Party. She started to be active in different ways as a student and found herself being an outspoken person and started to be a speaker at several events. However, she considers her real activities to have started during the Numeiri regime when the Umma Party was operating underground and no one really knew about her activities. This gave her the freedom to move around and carry out activities that others could not.

Although the last years have been better in regard to security, the respondent has experienced some difficult times. For example, she was altogether three times imprisoned, the longest time for three months in 1989. Other security difficulties include the confiscation of her computer and car by the police.

Between 2000 and 2003, she was the spokesperson of the party; however this was not always easy since she was not provided with appropriate equipment to effectively carry out the job. Today she is the Social Affairs Advisor to the Chairman elected by the Political Bureau. Out of four assistants to the Secretary General she is one of them and she is a member of the Political Bureau.

The third respondent is the second wife of al-Mahdi and has been politically active since the 1960s, especially since the coup in 1969 when many men where imprisoned and the women had an important role to play continuing the party activities. This work was carried out in secret and they were about ten women who operated “under ground”. The activities (such as protests) conducted in Khartoum were replicated in other cities until the Government started to imprison the women as well. During this time she was responsible for the Umma Party’s foreign affairs and relationship with other political parties.

In the 1960-1970s the respondent was put in prison twice; first time for six months and the second time for 1.5 years. She was also sentenced to death but was pardoned and then left to the UK for a short time to try to support the Party from abroad. However, her husband and she thought it was better to fight from within and came back to Sudan – only to return to the UK a few years later after her husband was imprisoned for opposing the use of Sharia Law as a political tool. They continued the work from an office in London, but the work was hampered there as well since she suffered two assassination attempts and had to use close protection.

In 1985 she was then the first woman to become an elected member of the General Secretariat and she was responsible for the organisation of the party and the constituencies in Khartoum. Today she holds one of the two elected senior members seats within the Political Bureau, she is also a member of the Elder/Wise People and Assistant to the Chairman for issues concerning the Civil Society.
The forth woman interviewed was younger than the others and saw herself as the new generation of political active women within the Party. She is Assistant to the Secretary General on issues concerning Foreign Affairs and relationships with other political parties. The respondent said that the older generation of women within the Umma wants to address gender issues, but they want to take it slowly whereas the younger generation is more aggressive and outspoken. However, there is a lack of solidarity amongst the women and the driving force is coming from individual women rather than the institution and there is little progress in organising the women or on how women can work effectively with women issues and include the men at the same time.

The respondent is the daughter of the al-Mahdi and started to become politically interested in the 1980s as a Student Member of the Umma Party but it was not until in the 1990s as she became increasingly active and she wanted to be of use to the party.
**ANALYSIS**

The objective of the thesis was to analyse, in light of Good Governance’s characteristics of participation, representativeness, equity and inclusiveness of the political society arena, women's political participation in an opposition party in Northern Sudan.

**What are the basic features of the political environment within which Sudanese opposition parties operate?**

The political and socio-economic situation in Sudan is not very positive. The country is large and diverse; it lacks identity and unity; and the long wars and conflicts have ruined, not only the physical infrastructure, but also the socio-economic developments. Sudan has very limited experience with democratic structures and has seen, especially over the past two decades, an extremely non-democratic regime which controls and monopolises all spheres of life. This is leaving little space for different views, ideas and criticism to be expressed and has made active political participation outside the NCP more or less impossible. Subsequently, it is difficult for the Sudanese to make a peaceful and gradual change to a more open society without the active initiative from the current government.

Freedom house ranked Sudan as “not free” which is based for example on the limited participation of the citizens; that the process is not equitable and inclusive; and the government is not representative of the people. The restriction the government is putting on the media, education institutions; and civil society makes it extremely difficult for a diverse political life. Sharia Law also has implication on the freedom of religion and puts limitations on women’s active participation in activities outside the household and/or family.

Sudan is experiencing unrest in many parts of the country and this is sometimes used by the government to cover other problems. For example, the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement is hampered through the consistent fuelling of the crisis in Darfur. This conflict is bringing attention away from the developments between South and North Sudan and the milestones set out in the CPA. This is in the interest of the North Sudanese Government since vital events in the CPA, such as the elections and the referendum are a threat to their power.

Al-Turabi and the power struggles between him and al-Bashir show how politics in Sudan is exercised – the people within the country’s top leadership changes their support and if it is not inline with the president’s position then the person is put under arrest.

The oil revenues might have had an enabling effect of the peace talks between North and South Sudan since al-Bashir gained a certain confidence and opened up for negotiations. Currently, the revenues are helping al-Bashir to secure his position, thus has implication for other parties to participate in the political arena.

The states remain economically dependent on the central government. This is something that is still obvious and much of the public financial management has not been decentralised and is controlled at the central level. This is often having a negative impact on the socio-economic
developments in the rural areas where funding for areas such as education, health and infrastructure are delayed and does not reach the beneficiaries.

For many years Sudan was a politically non-competitive system but is now, through the comprehensive peace agreement, in the process of giving more space to a variety of parties. The political parties act allows more parties to be registered and participate in the planned elections. However, financial resources for these parties are very limited and the country is still very much dominated by one party. In Sudan there are several established parties which have a solid basis within the population, but also many new parties that challenge them. Sudan is in the process of institutionalising the party system but more work is needed.

Political parties are important in a country and vital to a democracy. The whole idea of a democracy is that you have a choice. The current government in Sudan is facing the dilemma with political parties since they have agreed to the CPA but still wants to remain in power and do not want the opposition to be able to challenge the current leadership. At the moment it does not seem as if conflicts in Sudan are mainly solved through dialogues and political parties. The citizens, if not satisfied with the government’s performance do not have the means of removing it through elections and in a peaceful manner. There also seems to be problems between parties to reach agreement and consensus.

Political parties can add certain stability to a country, but it can also be the cause of unrest, especially in non-democratic countries or where democracy has not been consolidated. This is a realistic threat in Sudan as well. It is not a country which enjoys great stability and the political parties, if pushing their agenda too far and then considered a threat to the current regime, can cause serious unrest.

The party system in Sudan is under-institutionalised with limited experience in implementing democratic values and approaches. The respondents were encouraging improved internal democracy not only within the Umma Party but also the other parties in order to act as an effective opposition force.

The CPA provides for an opportunity for the opposition parties to carry out election campaigns to gain power within Sudan and maybe even form a government. The election campaigns will also offer a channel to promote their ideology and vision for a Sudan after the current government. This can also support better communication between the opposition parties and the Sudanese citizens.

The current government has used methods such as propaganda and mass media control to stay in power and undermine opposition parties. The opposition parties, such as Umma, can also use these means – if they get the access – to challenge the current ruling party.

There are difficulties for opposition parties in Sudan to perform tasks such as to stimulate voter participation and train future leaders. With the limited resources and freedom to operate it is problematic to undertake the tasks such as the recruitment, nomination, election and training of political office holders; interest aggregation and articulation; political socialisation; communication; mobilising public support; and running government, or organising opposition
to the government. The opposition parties, including the Umma Party, have done what they can to undertake these tasks given the circumstances.

The political situation in Sudan is very fragile and not sustainable according to the respondents. Sudan has, since independence, been governed mainly by authoritarian regimes and during these periods the Umma party suffered from repression. The Umma party and its members have over the years been targeted. However, after year 2000 and especially after the CPA the party has enjoyed greater possibilities to conduct their activities.

It was clear that the respondents were open to the idea of democracy and that in order to consider a country democratic it is beneficiary if the parties apply a democratic structure. How this democracy would look like and what was meant with democracy was not clear, though.

The respondents raised concern that the elections will not happen as outlined in the CPA. The CPA is not supported by the al-Bashir and one of the respondents was negative about the limited involvement of other parties and stakeholders in the development of the Agreement. Furthermore, the respondent said the CPA is mainly concerned about strengthening the SPLM in order to achieve a secular and African state and did not take the complexity of Sudan into account. Sudanese society is unique and different from Africa and Arab States. The next years’ challenges are big and men and women have to open their minds and work together. Some of the respondents further claimed that the years after 1989 have been very bad for women and that the CPA and democracy is a window of opportunity where the country can be transformed from a one party state to a one people’s state.

The implementation of the CPA is delayed and the sustainability of the activities is questionable. In order to implement such an ambitious plan their needs to be the buy-in from all interest groups and this seems not be the case.

It is difficult for a country like Sudan with such a diversity to transform and satisfy the different interest groups. The history of Sudan does not speak in favour for a peaceful change. Due to the fact that the CPA is not being implemented to the extent envisioned, the fighting in Darfur and the limited experience the country has in democracy it is difficult to see an enabling environment for opposition parties and women’s political participation. It seems though, as of the CPA has at least provided the Umma Party with space to exercise their activities.

Women in today’s Sudan

Women in Sudan today are facing many challenges. In theory women are acknowledged, for example the role of women is emphasised in the CPA, but in reality it is another story. The country is not part of the CEDAW convention because it is supposedly against the values of the Sudanese culture, women are being harassed because the way they dress or behave; and the majority of people in leadership positions are men.

A growing number of Sudanese women are becoming literate and attend University, e.g. the Ahfad University for Women, which has a good reputation and has sustained and expanded its work over the past 100 years. Women are working in different capacities within organisations and companies, although this is still mainly concentrated to Khartoum. There
has been an increase in number of women winning seats in parliament, with the first female member of parliament over 40 years ago (1965) until today with about 18% of the representatives in the National Assembly being women. This is slightly above the global average and clearly above the average in the Arab States.

When discussing women’s political participation you could in general term talk about three ways of the participation:
1. The female voters – including the enabling environment that it is acceptable for women to vote and subsequently to get women to the polling stations to cast their vote.
2. Women involved in political events, activities and political parties.
3. Women are accepted as political candidates and are represented in parliament and decision making processes.

Women that are political active are vulnerable but can also use their traditional role to their advantage. For example, women have demonstrated that they can carry out activities when the men were imprisoned or living in exile. Women’s traditional role as mothers and as more weak and vulnerable than men might have enabled them to undertake more actions than if their detractors had given them the credit for political activism.

As seen with one of the respondents, women pay a price for being active. The children and other family members suffer. Often there is a traditional delegation in the family and it is expected that the mothers will care for the family and the fathers will work outside the home. Accusations and blame seams to be something these women are facing.

Women have to prove themselves and show that they have the capacity and are competent to work politically. Men look at women’s political empowerment as a threat. This lays within the culture and family values in Sudan. People should see the private life of a woman as different from the public life in the political society – but they don’t.

The interviews showed that women in today’s Sudan do experience problems when being political active, not only from society as a whole but also from within the party even when their work can be beneficiary to the party. It became obvious in the interviews that some of the women were also facing problems with dividing their political activities from their professions.

**What are the leadership structures and the decision making processes of the Umma Party in North Sudan?**

To measure the extent and quality of democracy, good governance and internal democracy of a party are all very challenging activities. Proper qualitative and quantitative indicators need to be identified and this was not feasible as part of this study.

The democratic way of achieving power position within a government is through election campaigns. Often this is through promoting an ideology or a vision. If there is no vision it will be difficult to carry forward the message of the party. The Umma Party has structures organising the decision-making and the internal set-up. The party as a player on the Sudanese political arena has been institutionalised and this is probably one of the reasons why it has survived during all these years and been a strong entity within the Sudanese
political life. In order to be able to function in the rather difficult political environment the Umma party has made compromises throughout the years, and hopefully these experiences will help the party in the future and for the next coming elections.

Sudan is facing a big challenge in opening up and parties promoting democratic change are vital. So if the Umma Party is seriously promoting democracy and internal democracy of the party, this will be an advantage for the county. The concern is though, that the Party knows what to say, how to act and what to put on paper - but what it does in reality or how they implement what they say might be a totally different thing.

At the point of research, the Umma Party was not registered in accordance to the Political Parties Act of 2007 but the respondents claimed that they were following the Act's stipulations on the membership; support of the CPA; elections of the leaders; female representation; transparent financial management; democratic values; party manifesto; and general conference. However, as seen in the below sections, some of these terms seems to be subject to limited implementation.

During the interviews it was difficult to get a good understanding of the communication and information sharing mechanisms in place. The impression is that this is mainly done through meetings and it is not clear how the information is fed back to the members. Also, it appears to be no real guidance on recruitment of new members.

The non-formal power constellations appear to be very strong, one indication supporting this statement is that the respondents could not very well articulate the formal structures and how the party was functioning.

**Organisational structure**

With the information received from the respondents, my impression is that the party not yet have a documented and well-functioning structure. Although all respondents spoke fluent English the terminology varied which indicates that at least the English speaking structures have not been fully institutionalised. Also, the structures I received were still drafts and following these drafts and the discussion it appears to be that the main decision-making entities within the Party are the general conference, chairman/party leader, general secretariat, the political bureau, central committee, executive body and coordinating council and looks like this.
The General Conference is the main decision making body for the overall endorsement of policies and major revisions in the party direction e.g. introducing a quota to encourage women’s participation. Decisions taken here are fed through the channels to the other decision-making entities to provide guidance.

It appears that the main role of the Central Committee is to elect the Political Bureau. The Bureau is dealing with day-to-day tasks of the party and is according to the respondents the highest decision-making entity on such issues.

The Executive Body under the leadership of the Secretary General is a source for expertise and knowledge and is most probably where policy and advise on thematic areas are being prepared.

The Supreme Coordinating Council is then the forum where the Umma Party Leadership is meeting and the last entity is the Chairman and the advisory groups.
There are several questions arising out of this structure and some of the most prominent ones are how the relationship and the power structures, both formal and non-formal, look like. For example, the relationship between the Supreme Coordinating Council and the Political Bureau – Which entity is the most powerful one? How easy is it for the Political Bureau to revise decisions the Supreme Coordinating Council has taken and maybe even implemented? Furthermore, what is the relationship between the six Advisory Committees and the Specialised Committees of the Executive Body under the Secretary General?

Also the appointment of people into certain positions in these structures by the Chairman could support nepotism and since apparently several of these positions are populated by family members discrimination against non-family members could be assumed or at least that not the most suitable person has been selected for the position. It is also not clear on how the rest of the positions are elected and the transparency in this regard was not communicated.

With the limited communication and the rather confused decision-making strictures it is difficult to see how the local units at the sub-national level can effectively and efficiently carry out the party programme to the citizens.

**Party congresses**

The Umma Party has held regular general conferences as often as they have been able to over the past 50 years. At these meetings the members meet to discuss issues of concern and take important decisions such as members of the Central Committee. The composition of the meeting attendants to reflect ethnical and religious minorities is not clear but it is positive that, at the last Conference, 20% of the participants were women and that also youth was represented. This shows a certain degree of inclusiveness. The last meeting held was apparently difficult since there were oppressive activities from the side of the regime.

**Party constitution**

According to the respondents the party constitution stipulates decision making procedures, election of leadership, member’s rights and responsibilities etc. but it was not obvious during the meetings and discussions if they understood these procedures. The party is supposed to observe these rules – but often there is a gap between the theory and the reality. As an outside observer this was difficult to assess.

**Leadership selection**

The Umma Party is dependent on one single charismatic individual, and his family, for leadership and guidance. The Umma Party might not define it selves along ethnic lines but it is defined to a large extent along the family and traditional family belonging.

In the Umma Party, the top individual leadership position is the Chairman. Exactly how this position is populated and if any member of the Party could, in reality, become the Chairman is not clear. The current Chairman is part of the traditional al-Mahdi family and most probably has this role due to the importance this family is playing in Sudanese history. No doubt, he has leadership and political skills and is a respected politician within the Sudanese society but
he also has the Umma Party under his control. It is obvious that the Umma Party is dependent on the al-Mahdi family.

The Umma Party is characterised by an elite leadership with highly educated people in power positions who are often close to the party founders. This could be considered as not representative of the membership base. It will be interesting to see how the Umma Party will handle change in leadership and other problems. But generally the party will probably do fine since the next generation leaders are already included and political active in prominent positions.

It is questionable how democratic the selection of the next Chairman will be. More or less, the party has become a personal property of the al-Mahdi family. This supports the characterisation of the leadership to be carried over through dynastic succession and make it rather unlikely that a non-family member would become the next Chairman.

This leader centrim might be one of the reasons why it was difficult to get clear answers from the respondents on the decision-making processes.

The Heads of the Specialised Committees apparently have some say in the decision makings of the party through their membership of the Coordinating Council. There is a need for expertise within the party to advise the Chairman and others about development within a certain area. However, if the expertise lay with a few people, the rest of the members have problem questioning it and the party elite may exercise monopoly of knowledge. With the relatively poor communication infrastructure and education level among the general population within Sudan it is not clear if the knowledge and decisions within the party leadership is understood at the other levels of the parties.

**Candidate selection**

Candidates for party representation appear to be appointed or elected by different entities depending on where they are assigned. However, this was not something that was clearly communicated during the interviews and this suggests a rather poor understanding of some of the areas of the party. The fact that some positions are appointed by the Chairman does not support a very transparent and competitive process in order to identify the most suitable candidate for a certain position.

**Policy/Programme Development**

Apparently there are internal discussions regarding the development of a new programme to meet the new situation in Sudan in terms of elections, more freedom for opposition parties etc. Who would develop the new programme was not determined, however it was agreed that a new policy or programme would need to reflect the Elections Act which had not been approved and should be endorsed at the next party congress (a tentative date for this event had not been set). Given these few details it is difficult to make any analysis of this area.
**Membership**

It was striking that none of the respondents could answer what the eligibility criteria for enrolment in the Umma Party were or if a membership fee was paid. Although the respondents were in high level positions within the party, their inability to answer certain questions regarding membership and other administrative manners, shows of a lack of understanding of the party structures as well as transparency.

When discussing with the respondents, it was difficult to get clear answers on questions such as how many people are part of the different entities and even harder to get how many were women. Again this indicates a lack of understanding of the party’s structure and that the formal structures are not that well understood. I was promised to receive final figures and confirmation of the information; however after several communications such confirmations were never received.

There is some training for the members but again it was not clear on who attends these trainings; who give the trainings; and what subjects are being addressed. The developments in Sudan, applying more strict rules in the past years, also have implications on the activities which can be carried out to train and build the capacity of younger party members. For example that training courses, especially for women, can not involve overnight stays. Training of young members is a crucial part in educating the next generation within the party and it is a missed chance when this can not be undertaken. You could speculate that this will also benefit the members who come from traditionally active families where they receive a lot of training at home and being exposed to political issues at an early age. The party is then loosing young members who have potential but are disadvantaged because they can not access the extensive and comprehensive training packages. This subsequently hampering the diversity and incisiveness of other groups and the party will have fewer new ideas.

**Rights, benefits and responsibilities**

Again, as discussed under the membership sections the respondents did not communicate a great understanding of what the rights, benefits and responsibilities are.

**Communication**

The Umma Party is apparently holding many meetings but it is not clear how messages and information is regularly fed back to the communities or the lower level of the party structures. Also the fact that the person who was the spokesperson between 2000 and 2003 was not provided with equipment to undertake her tasks indicates neglect in this area. In order for the Umma Party to mediate between the Party and the citizens it needs to improve their communication channels.

**Financing**

The current government has had monopoly of the country’s resources and favour businesses which are pro-government. Thus, opposition parties have suffered from decreasing financial recourses and the Umma Party is no exception.
Apparently many of the active members are paying for their own activities which also make it difficult to track the financial flow within the party and grasp the financial health of the organisation. Since I did not get access to any financial statements it is difficult to verify the financial reporting of the party and no details of, for example, annual budget and funding sources were presented.

The Political Parties’ Act appears not be clearly accepted by the Umma Party. At the moment of this study that party had not yet registered but still if we look at some of the aspects of the Act, the Umma party was not communicating information supporting the requirement of the Act. For example, the election of leaders at all levels should be democratic; transparent financial system; and documented organisational structures. At least the respondents could not provide this kind of information in a satisfactory manner in this study.

**How do women access these structures and processes?**

It is important to look at the decision-making structures and women’s access to them when discussing internal democracy. It seems as if the Umma Party is not really clear on its policy on women issues and female political participation. If we view the Umma Party based on equity, inclusiveness, participation and representiveness the party is not receiving very high marks.

It appears that the most common way for women to enter the party is during their studies, this, in combination with family tradition, is probably where their political orientation and interest is shaped. It is clear that the interviewed women have benefited from close relations, at an early stage, with the elite of the party. The family connections are clear with all the respondents, they also have higher education and are well articulated.

The women hold, or have held, leading positions within the party and can influence the decision-making process to some extent. But since they are often in close relation with the senior male party leadership and in many areas of Sudanese society women are being pushed to follow their father’s will it is difficult to assess how much of their own ideas they can bring forward.

Some of the respondents expressed the desire to be more actively involved during opposition periods, other during the years when the party has been in power and where there are less security implications. Security is a concern for these women and they have experienced difficult years with imprisonment and intimidation. Such barriers are difficult to overcome to carry out activities as planned and desired by the party members. Operating in an environment where the basic conditions do not exist, such as the guarantee that equipment will not be confiscated or the members be targeted by security forces, hampers the progress of democracy of a country and internal democracy within a party.

Taking this into consideration and the challenges women face in Sudan, the work that the respondents have done for the party is impressive. Their work within and outside the country have probably greatly benefited the party. It is encouraging to hear that the respondents
considered Media to be positive about them, especially in a country where the opposition parties have limited access and support from such channels.

The women interviewed were all confident in their positions and did not show any doubts that they were in the positions due to their capacities and their qualifications. They demonstrated an impressive strength. But the personal relations to the top leadership must have beneficiary for their current positions. The female respondents are not representative of the female population and the impression is that they advocate for their families and personal interest more than of the interests of the general female population or the interest of female members of the party.

Since the Chairman can appoint people for certain positions and he has chosen a woman for some of them it shows a certain degree of confidence in the ability of the respondent to carry out the tasks. The roles which the respondents have are not totally insignificant though. Being the Assistant on Foreign Affairs issues and relationships with other political parties could be considered an important role.

Moreover, since women are present in the Political Bureau and in senior positions this shows a certain degree of space for women's active participation in the decision making processes. The other decision-making entities have female representation but it is not clear how much power they actually have to influence the party programme. It is interesting that one of the respondents also said that the women are often pushed in following the direction of other family members, which supports the anticipation that the politics in Sudan, and especially women's role, is often inline with the wishes and needs of the family and its traditional views. Women are represented as Head of the Specialised Committees or in other entities but mainly in the marginalised areas such as women issues and research.

Apparently, especially when you are a woman and want to reach out to a broader public, it is useful to have a well-known name. In theory everyone, men and women, should be judged based on their competence but the reality is different. If a political active woman is from a family which enjoys a positive reputation and she can use this reputation for the benefit of issues concerning women and promote female political participation than that is a powerful tool and it should be supported. The women interviewed in this study have clearly benefited from their family history, name and support from both male and female members of the family. It is hard to say if they would be in positions where they are if they did not have that framework.

The Umma Party's step in the 1980s to include women to a greater extent in the political sphere should be considered as positive. Thus there was an increase and recognition of women's participation. However, there is a risk that the quota and the female participation is more or less a "cosmetic" initiative in order to fulfil certain standards and improve the reputation but the active participation might not be that great. This is not always very easy to assess.

The idea with a quota is a disputed topic and sometimes it does not say much about the real influence women have within a party and how inclusive it is. The quota seems to be of benefit
within the Umma Party to at least bring some women to the political arena but it might not benefit the role of the women if the changes of the number of women are carried out too fast. If the party applies the quota and in order to fulfil this obligation places women who do not have sufficient capacity to undertake their tasks, then the opponents of the female participation can use this as an argument. The fact that the Umma party at an early stage in Sudan started with a quota is positive but the party might benefit if future changes are strategically carried out.

Financial support and assets are great obstacles for a party to operate. For women this is one more barrier to overcome and will influence their role in operating within the party but also to be able to carry out election campaigns and thus the chance for them to become elected decreases. It also decreases the resources for them to get training in how to conduct an election campaign, how to dress, talk, write speeches etc.

The challenges in the next coming years are huge for Sudan and women need to be part of the work. It is important to promote a democratic decision-making system also within the Umma Party and in some ways there appears to be a system in place which is also accessible to women.

Umma party is one of the most influential parties in Sudan and has a strong base in Darfur. Since this part of Sudan is experiencing heavy conflicts the activities can not be carried out there and thus also not reach out to women.

The general impression is that the Umma Party does not apply very democratic internal structures and women are often put as cosmetics. Training and qualifications are important when supporting women to play effective roles politically. It seems as if there is little confidence that women have the capacity to have leadership positions. With increased education of women, also at the rural areas you can also successfully reach out to women and advocate for their participation – if it is as active party members, as active citizens in their communities or as voters.

Politics is a male dominated area and in a society like in Sudan it is difficult for women to be active and get the support needed. Women’s participation in Sudan goes beyond the planned elections and the timeline for the elections that is currently will be difficult to be kept. I believe that establishing a network of political active women would benefit the participation. But this would then be across the board of all political parties. Also within the parties it is important that the women support each other. The impression in Sudan, and the Umma party is no exception, is that the women advocate for their personal issues and there is little solidarity amongst the women. This can result in unnecessary disputes when individuals look more to their own direct gains and less to the greater benefit for the party or the situation for all women. In a country like Sudan the situation for women is of course highly differentiated since some women are advocating for following the Sharia whereas others are promoters of more liberal values.

Women who are competent and have leadership aspirations should apply their skills and knowledge and build the capacity of other women. Men and women with influence should
advocate for women’s rights to access parliament as well as promote women into decision-making positions and entities.

Few women are political active and the reasons behind this are rather clear and difficult to change in short-term and ad-hoc interventions. Increased investments need to be made into the education system in order for girls and boys to learn how to read and write and adult literacy classes for women and men should be offered especially in the rural areas. Women who are politically interested and active should act as role models and show that women can combine being wives, mothers and politicians – men can be husbands, fathers and politicians so this should be applicable to women as well.

**Summary**
The figure in the theoretical chapter illustrated that good governance and democracy are building on each other. As shown in this study, the Umma Party and Sudan do not fulfil the characteristics or the indicators to claim good governance or democracy – not within the party and not within the country. With governance as a pre-requisite for democracy, Sudan has a long way to go before the country could be considered democratic.

If women in general within the Umma Party and the Sudanese society feel as if they have a stake in society can not be assessed in this study. But with the information presented it is difficult to see that the characteristic of *equitable and inclusiveness* – that all people are able to maintain or improve their wellbeing, including women – can be fulfilled.

*Participation* refers to the freedom of association for both women and men and this is again not demonstrated in Sudan as a natural feature within society. Women do participate to some extent but it is not even close as to be at a level satisfactory to international standards.

The *representiveness* of women within the Umma Party does not reflect the potential of women and it is questionable if the representiveness is not more of a quantitative figure than a qualitative feature of the party or the country. It is difficult to say how much impact these women have in reality.

There are signs of improved good governance within the Umma Party and Sudan, especially with the examples of participation and representiveness within the different decision-making entities and the proportion of seats held by women in the national parliament.

Throughout most of the Sudan’s recent history, the country can not be considered following the principles of good governance. My assumption that if a political party wants to operate in a democratic society it is favourable if it applies democratic features and applies good governance still remains after this study. In my opinion, political parties have to apply Good Governance in order to support democratic values and subsequently internal-democracy. If the party fully or partly excludes women, it can not be representative, participatory or equitable and inclusive. Thus, Good Governance can not be considered in such situation and democratic values are not fully present.
To come back to the questions of this thesis the political environment in Sudan is marked by many years of an extremely authoritarian regime with little or no space for an opposition to grow. The parties have suffered from oppression, intimidation and threats. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement is now opening up for opportunities to start a process towards democracy. The leadership structures and decision making process of the Umma Party are not very clear but the role of the al-Mahdi family is prominent. Women access the party's structures and becoming political active often through family traditions and relations.
CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

The topic of women’s political participation is very interesting and to apply this concept in a country like Sudan is making it even more fascinating. At the moment Sudan is in the middle of two interlinked paths; the first one is the peace-building process and the second is a transition to a more democratic society. This could be a good opportunity for women to achieve greater empowerment and find a role in the political society and in the future of Sudan.

It was very interesting to meet the respondents and learn about the political life in Sudan. In course of the research I interviewed women from other parties as well, however this thesis needed a more focused approach and the results of these discussions have not been included in the paper.

The women I spoke to are all within the higher levels within the society and it is nearly impossible to draw any conclusions which could be applicable to the other levels. Of course the people interviewed wanted to get a message across and put themselves and the party in a good position and there was very little self criticism. The women I spoke to were very impressing people. They have fought a lot and it seems as if they have not gotten everything just because of their names. It has of course helped them, but they have still gone through a great deal to be where they are today. One of the main things that the respondents said that they are looking forward to in the future is to be able to vote in a democratic election. Many of them have never voted since there have hardly been any elections in Sudan.

I really hope that the CPA will be implemented and that free and fair elections will be held. Although, it is difficult to see that the current regime will give up power that easily, but at least now they have to open up the political arena a little bit to allow different players. Once the elections are over, the country will face many other challenges and one is to make the voices of the women heard. A way of doing so would be to establish a Women Political League to act as a forum where women can get together, identify individual strengths and weaknesses and determine on how to be complementing to each other.

Throughout the process of this study I learned a lot and some of the main things I will take with me in the future are; when undertaking a study like this one, it is vital to be invited to do it; substantive efforts need to be made in order to meet the “right” people and preferably meet then several times to verify information; and it is also important that when further questions arise these are clarified as soon as possible with relevant persons. Moreover, the scope of research should be narrowed down, in this case a party could have been assessed in how it complies to the Political Partie’s Act. It would also be interesting to conduct a study on women who come from political active families but have chosen to become a member of a party other than the traditionally family supported party.

But that would be another topic of research.
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Internet links
ANNEX I: MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS – TARGETS AND INDICATORS

Goal 1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Target 1: Reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day
1. Proportion of Population Below $1 (PPP) per Day (World Bank)
2. Poverty Gap Ratio, $1 per day (World Bank)
3. Share of Poorest Quintile in National Income or Consumption (World Bank)

Target 2: Reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger
4. Prevalence of Underweight Children Under Five Years of Age (UNICEF)
5. Proportion of the Population below Minimum Level of Dietary Energy Consumption (FAO)

Goal 2. Achieve universal primary education

Target 3: Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling
6. Net Enrolment Ratio in Primary Education (UNESCO)
7. Proportion of Pupils Starting Grade 1 who Reach Grade 5 (UNESCO)
8. Literacy Rate of 15-24 year-olds (UNESCO)

Goal 3. Promote gender equality and empower women

Target 4: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015
9. Ratio of Girls to Boys in Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Education (UNESCO)
10. Ratio of Literate Women to Men 15-24 years old (UNESCO)
11. Share of Women in Wage Employment in the Non-Agricultural Sector (ILO)
12. Proportion of Seats Held by Women in National Parliaments (IPU)

Goal 4. Reduce child mortality

Target 5: Reduce by two thirds the mortality rate among children under five
13. Under-Five Mortality Rate (UNICEF)
14. Infant Mortality Rate (UNICEF)
15. Proportion of 1 year-old Children Immunised Against Measles (UNICEF)

Goal 5. Improve maternal health

Target 6: Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio
16. Maternal Mortality Ratio (WHO)
17. Proportion of Births Attended by Skilled Health Personnel (UNICEF)

Goal 6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

Target 7: Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS
18. HIV Prevalence Among 15-24 year-old Pregnant Women (UNAIDS)
20. Ratio of school attendance of orphans to school attendance of non-orphans aged 10-14 years

Target 8: Halt and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases
21. Prevalence and Death Rates Associated with Malaria (WHO):
22. Proportion of Population in Malaria Risk Areas Using Effective Malaria Prevention and Treatment Measures (UNICEF):
23. Prevalence and Death Rates Associated with Tuberculosis (WHO):
24. Proportion of Tuberculosis Cases Detected and Cured Under Directly-Observed Treatment Short Courses (WHO)

**Goal 7. Ensure environmental sustainability**

**Target 9:** Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes; reverse loss of environmental resources

- 25. Forested land as percentage of land area (FAO)
- 26. Ratio of Area Protected to Maintain Biological Diversity to Surface Area (UNEP)
- 27. Energy supply (apparent consumption; Kg oil equivalent) per $1,000 (PPP) GDP (World Bank)
- 28. Carbon Dioxide Emissions (per capita) and Consumption of Ozone-Depleting CFCs (ODP tons):

**Target 10:** Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water

- 30. Proportion of the Population with Sustainable Access to and Improved Water Source (WHO/UNICEF)

**Target 11:** Achieve significant improvement in lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers, by 2020

- 32. Slum population as percentage of urban population (secure tenure index) (UN-Habitat)

**Goal 8. Develop a global partnership for development**

**Target 12:** Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system includes a commitment to good governance, development, and poverty reduction — both nationally and internationally

**Target 13:** Address the special needs of the least developed countries includes: tariff and quota free access for least developed countries’ exports; enhanced programme of debt relief for HIPCIs and cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous ODA for countries committed to poverty reduction

**Target 14:** Address the special needs of landlocked countries and small island developing States

**Target 15:** Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term.

**Target 16:** In cooperation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth.

**Target 17:** In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries

**Target 18:** In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications

*Official development assistance*

- 32. Net ODA as percentage of OECD/DAC donors’ gross national product (targets of 0.7% in
total and 0.15% for LDCs)
33. Proportion of ODA to basic social services (basic education, primary health care, nutrition, safe water and sanitation)
34. Proportion of ODA that is untied
35. Proportion of ODA for environment in small island developing States
36. Proportion of ODA for transport sector in landlocked countries

Market access
37. Proportion of exports (by value and excluding arms) admitted free of duties and quotas
38. Average tariffs and quotas on agricultural products and textiles and clothing
39. Domestic and export agricultural subsidies in OECD countries
40. Proportion of ODA provided to help build trade capacity

Debt sustainability
41. Proportion of official bilateral HIPC debt cancelled
42. Total Number of Countries that Have Reached their HIPC Decision Points and Number that Have Reached their Completion Points (Cumulative) (HIPC) (World Bank-IMF)
43. Debt Service as a Percentage of Exports of Goods and Services (World Bank)
44. Debt Relief Committed Under HIPC Initiative (HIPC) (World Bank-IMF)
45. Unemployment of 15-24 year-olds, Each Sex and Total (ILO)
46. Proportion of Population with Access to Affordable, Essential Drugs on a Sustainable Basis (WHO)
47. Telephone Lines and Cellular Subscribers per 100 Population (ITU)
48. Personal Computers in Use and Internet Users per 100 Population (ITU)
ANNEX II: FURTHER CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

Below is a short description of the other Good Governance Characteristics which are not being used in this thesis. The sources for these definitions are from UNDP and Asian Development Bank (ADB).

Accountable
Accountability includes that the governmental institutions as well as the private sector and the civil society organisations must be accountable to the public and to their institutional stakeholders. In general organisations and institutions are accountable to those who will be affected by decisions or actions. The ADB understands accountability within government as the fact that public officials have to be responsible and answer for the behaviour of the government as well as (be) responsive to the entity from which their authority is derived.

Transparent
The ADB defines transparency as the way that decisions are taken and the implementation thereof are done in a manner that follows rules and regulations as well as that information is freely available and directly accessible to those who will be affected by such decisions.

Responsive
Institutions and processes should try to serve all stakeholders within a reasonable timeframe in order to meet the responsiveness characteristic of Good Governance.

Effective & efficient
Effectiveness and efficiency means that processes and institutions produce results that meet the needs of society while making the best use of resources at their disposal. This also includes the sustainable use of natural resources and the protection of the environment.

Follows the rule of law
Good Governance requires a fair legal framework that is enforced impartially. Human rights, particularly those of minorities should be protected and an independent judiciary and an impartial incorruptible police force has to be in place.

*Consensus oriented*
Mediation and negotiations are needed to embrace the different interests in society to reach a broad consensus of what is in the best interest of the whole community and how this can be achieved. This requires not only the goals and long-term perspectives for sustainable human development but also the means of achieving such goals.

In addition to the above mentioned characteristics, the ADB also includes *predictability* as an element for governance. ADB argues that a country has to have a legal environment that is conducive to development. The government must be able to regulate itself via laws, regulations and policies. These have to encompass rights and duties, mechanisms for their enforcement and impartial settlement of disputes. It is all about the fair and consistent application of laws and implementation of government policies.
## ANNEX III: PEOPLE MET FOR DISCUSSIONS AND CONSULTATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rita Taphorn</td>
<td>Programme Officer for Political Parties and Women in Politics</td>
<td>IDEA</td>
<td>Stockholm, Sweden</td>
<td>8 February 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Emad Yousef</td>
<td>Arab World Project Manager</td>
<td>IDEA</td>
<td>Stockholm, Sweden</td>
<td>12 February 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Aase Fosshaug-Palme</td>
<td>Project Officer</td>
<td>Forum Syd</td>
<td>Stockholm, Sweden</td>
<td>9 February 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Saif Omar</td>
<td>Project Officer</td>
<td>Forum Syd</td>
<td>Stockholm, Sweden</td>
<td>9 February 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Per Karlsson</td>
<td>Portfolio holder/Coordinator for Sudan, Uganda and Rwanda</td>
<td>SIDA</td>
<td>Stockholm, Sweden</td>
<td>8 February 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Markus Boeckenfoerde</td>
<td>Legal Expert</td>
<td>Assessment &amp; Evaluation Commissions</td>
<td>Khartoum, Sudan</td>
<td>2 April 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Lamya Badri</td>
<td>Project Manager – Good Governance and Equity in Political Participation (GGEPP)</td>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>Khartoum, Sudan</td>
<td>Several occasions in January and March 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Manfred Oehm</td>
<td>Programme Officer</td>
<td>Friederich Ebert Stiftung</td>
<td>Khartoum, Sudan</td>
<td>12 March 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Ruth Kibiti</td>
<td>Representative</td>
<td>UNIFEM Sudan</td>
<td>Khartoum, Sudan</td>
<td>14 March 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Samia Elnager</td>
<td>Senior National Programme Officer</td>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>Khartoum, Sudan</td>
<td>Several meetings throughout March 2007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11. Judith D. Goetz  
Associate Political Affairs Officer,  
UNMIS  
UNMIS Khartoum, Sudan  
25 Mar. 07
### ANNEX IV: RESPONDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Ms. Balghis Badri</td>
<td>Professor at Afhwad University</td>
<td>The Umma Party</td>
<td>Afhad University</td>
<td>3 April 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Mr. Siddig Elsadig Elmahdi</td>
<td>Member of Political Bureau; Member of Coordination Council</td>
<td>The Umma Party</td>
<td>Mr. Elmahdi's office, Khartoum Sudan</td>
<td>4 April 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Ms. Mariam Alsadig Almahdi</td>
<td>General Secretary Assistant for Communication; Elected member of Political Bureau</td>
<td>The Umma Party</td>
<td>Omdurman, Khartoum, Sudan</td>
<td>15 April 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Ms. Sara Alfadil Mahmoud</td>
<td>Assistant to the Chairman; Elected member of the Political Bureau</td>
<td>The Umma Party</td>
<td>Omdurman, Khartoum, Sudan</td>
<td>15 April 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Ms. Sarah Nugdulla</td>
<td>Deputy President Assistant</td>
<td>The Umma Party</td>
<td>Omdurman Ahlia University, Khartoum, Sudan</td>
<td>12 April 2007</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**People met belonging to other political parties or entities in North Sudan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Name</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Nafisa Ahmed ElAmin</td>
<td>Women Union</td>
<td>Omdurman, Khartoum, Sudan</td>
<td>16 April 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ms. Afaf</td>
<td>Executive</td>
<td>National Women</td>
<td>11 April 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Position and Affiliation</td>
<td>Organization/Location</td>
<td>Date</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmed Abd Alrahman</td>
<td>Manager, Women Centre for Peace &amp; Development, Congress Party (NCP)</td>
<td>Centre, Khartoum, Sudan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Agnes Nyoka Peter</td>
<td>Secretary of the SPLM, part of the foreign Affairs Committee, Member of Parliament</td>
<td>The SPLM Office, Khartoum, Sudan</td>
<td>14 March 2007</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Theraisa Seresio Ero</td>
<td>Deputy Party Leader State Minister for Environment and Physical Development</td>
<td>Sudan African National Union</td>
<td>10 April 2007</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Philister Baya Lawiri</td>
<td>Chair person, South Women Solidarity for Peace and Development (SWSP)</td>
<td>South Women Solidarity for Peace and Development (SWSP)</td>
<td>5 April 2007</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Nimat Malik</td>
<td>Representative of the Communist Party in the Women Alliance and responsible for the Trade Unions</td>
<td>Communist Party, Khartoum, Sudan</td>
<td>5 April 2007</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Suad Ibrahim Ahmed</td>
<td>Member of the Central Committee, Communist Party</td>
<td>Communist Party, Khartoum, Sudan</td>
<td>5 April 2007</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Ann Itto</td>
<td>State Minister; Senior Member of SPLM; Member of Parliament</td>
<td>SPLM</td>
<td>11 April 2007</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tayseer Elnourani</td>
<td>National relations political office</td>
<td>Bath Party</td>
<td>16 April 2007</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
ANNEX V: INTERVIEW GUIDE (GUIDING TOPICS AND QUESTIONS)

**Personal experience:**
1. Briefly describe your “career” in the political society/political parties.
2. Why did you want to engage politically?
3. What have been the main obstacles/challenges for you to participate in the political society/political party?
4. Do you think you have had any advantages because you are a woman?
5. How are you and your political engagement perceived by:
   a. Other members of the party? (women and men)
   b. Other parties?
   c. Media?
   d. Family?
   e. Friends?
6. How does it work for you having a family and a political career?
7. What kind of (experience) exchange do you have with other women and men participating in the political society in Sudan?
8. According to you, what is the role of political parties in Sudan?

**Women and political participation in Sudan:**
9. Do you think it is important that women participate in the political society? Please elaborate on your answer.
10. How are women politicians perceived in Sudan?
11. What impact does the Sudanese culture and society have on women participation?
12. Has there been a turning point for acceptance of women participating in the political society in Sudan? Please elaborate on the answer.
13. Are there any political society fora especially for women?
14. In which areas are women politicians most strong/weak (traditional areas such as welfare, education vs. defence, finance and foreign policy)?
15. How can women (and girls) be best supported in getting involved in the political society in Sudan?
16. Which role do women have within the parties?
17. How are women seen (as mothers and wives or as a tool...)

**Party:**
19. Is the party registered? Why/why not? How many women are members in “your” party?
20. Who is your constituency?
21. Is your party in any alliances with other parties, organisations etc.? Especially women groups?
22. Internal functioning:
   a. Does the party have a constitution?
   b. How is the party organised?
i. Headquarters with staff?
ii. Secretariat?
iii. National and state level?
iv. Party leader?
v. Party Congress/regular meetings?
vi. Organigram?

**c. Leadership selection**

i. How is the leadership selected? General consent or contest? What is the top-leader called (title and name)? What if the leader can not carry out his/her tasks as leader –nominate someone?

ii. Is the party chief elected at party conventions and conferences by general approval or according to the procedure laid down in the party by-laws.

iii. Can party conventions or congresses elect the highest decision-making body, and this body in turn chooses the party chief.

iv. What about the next highest leader level? What is the decision making body called (e.g. central committee)? How are the members chosen?

**d. Candidate selection**

i. Who selects the candidates? Who has the last say? Do the candidates apply? Is there a fee? What factors are important for a candidate to be chosen (social, ethnic background, competence, standing in the party, winning potential, closeness to the party chief)

**e. Policy/Programme development**

i. Who is developing the policies, programmes and manifestos?

ii. Who approves them? (the highest-decision making body or conventions)? By consensus?

**f. Membership**

i. Membership strength and registers
   1. How many members do the party have and how is the registration of the members conducted?

ii. Eligibility criteria and enrolment
   1. Is anyone able to become a member of the party?
   2. The majority of your membership – what is their background?
   3. What is their motivation to join the party?
   4. What are the criteria to join the party (age, no membership in other parties, acceptance of the party policies?)

iii. Training
   1. have you held any trainings for the members of the party?
   2. are you planning to hold any courses etc regarding the upcoming elections?

iv. Rights, benefits and responsibilities
   1. What are the rights, benefits and responsibilities for the members? (e.g. right to attend meetings? Defend the party policies?)

v. Communication
1. What communication channels are there within the party?
   Informal and formal.

g. Organisational structure
   i. Is the party decentralised or centralised? Why?
   ii. Are the committees at the lower levels autonomous and to which extent? Their policies do not clash with the higher committee, a national policy on the matter does not exist, the issue is of local importance?
   iii. What are the main functions of the party units at the local level?
   iv. Are there any affiliated groups/wings/cells? How is the leader chosen?

h. Discipline
   i. How is dissent and questioning of the decisions of the party leader by members handled?
   ii. Can a member be expelled from the party?

i. Financial resources and expenditure
   i. Income and expenditure
      1. Where does the party get funding for activities and campaigning?
      2. Is it easy or difficult to receive financial support?
      3. If there are affiliated groups, how do they finance their activities?
      4. What governs the distribution of membership fees and contributions?
   ii. Financial reports
      1. How is the income and expenditures reported and to whom?
   iii. Funds for election campaigns
      1. How will the candidates fund their election campaigns?
      2. Will the party contribute to individual candidates?
      3. Is there a limit on expenditures? (Election Commission)

j. Leader-centrism and dynastic succession
   i. Leader-centrism
      1. Do you consider the leader to be a very central figure who holds most of the power?
   ii. Dynastic succession
      1. What is the party’s policy on family members taking over the role as party chief?

k. How do the decision-making structures look like?

l. Women representation in decision making?

m. Women access to leadership positions and decision-making processes.

23. What is the party’s policy on:
   a. Membership
   b. Recruitment, nomination, election and training of political officeholders;
   c. Interest aggregation and articulation;
   d. Political socialisation;
   e. Communication; and
24. What is the party’s policy to discipline members that are not following the party agenda?

25. Do you have sufficient access to equipment, tools and other resources to carry out your activities?

26. How many women are actively engaged in the activities of the party?

27. Have you participated in trainings and courses to strengthen your capacity?

28. Current activities?

**Elections:**

29. What role can women in Sudan play in the upcoming elections?

30. What are the main challenges for women in the upcoming elections?

**Legal framework:**

31. Can you elaborate on the legal framework for political participation and good governance in regard to women? Is it realistic? Is it implemented? What is the background to it?

32. Is there a national mechanism to monitor, implement and create gender equality policies?

33. Any further issues you would like to address?
ANNEX VI: DRAFT STRUCTURE OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL AND THE EXECUTIVE BODY

Source: Thesis Author’s illustration of the structure of the Secretary General and the Executive Body based on draft organigram obtained from the Umma Party and interviews conducted.