

Occasional Talk

Alden Young

Drexel University, Philadelphia

Planning and the Territorial Perspective, 1945 until 1951

Thursday 30 October 2014, 12-2pm

Room S1, Alison Richards Building

Using files from the National Records Office in Khartoum, as well as files from the Sudan Archive in Durham, I argue that finance officials created Sudan as an economic unit. Following the end of the Second World War, nationalist pressure on the administration in Khartoum forced the government of Sudan to apply for a development grant. This grant was to be spent on the development of Sudan; however, no one in the Sudanese administration knew exactly what that meant. In the process of trying to evaluate development proposals submitted by the different branches of the government, senior finance officials were forced to come up with a rubric in order to compare their appropriateness. They adopted a "territorial perspective," which stated that projects would be compared on their ability to contribute to the overall welfare of the country, and could not be structured to benefit a particular people. While projects could be located in a particular location, the project impact on the central budget had to be calculated before it could be funded. This informal rule meant an end to "indirect rule" as the governing logic of the Sudanese state.

Alden Young is an assistant professor of African History and the Director of the Program in Africana Studies at Drexel University. He is now working on a manuscript entitled *Sudan By the Numbers: the Financial Engineering of Independence*. Dr. Young studies the history of development planning in the territory, which became Sudan, as a lens to look at the interplay of decolonization, economic development and the process of state formation in post-WWII Africa.

He has also begun working on a new project tentatively titled *Elite Retreat: Sudanese Bureaucrats, Intellectuals, Traders and the Search for an Alternative to the State* which follows the decisions of these three groups of elites to alternatively attempt to reform or abandon the state-building project during the two decades between the popular Sudanese revolts of 1964 and 1984/85. Prior to coming to Drexel, he was a postdoctoral fellow in the Africana Studies Department at the University of Pennsylvania. He completed his PhD in the History Department at Princeton University in 2013.