

WEBINAR ON
State Business Relations in Algeria, Sudan and Ethiopia

SATURDAY, MARCH 11, 2023

[REGISTRATION LINK](#)

CONTEXT

The development of a competitive private sector, and the spreading of innovative technologies, are among the most valuable tools at the disposal of policymakers to fuel job creation and economic growth as well as improving service delivery. Moreover, the role of the private sector in spreading widely new technologies is central. To better understand these aspects the Economic Research Forum has conducted a research project on 'Trans-regional Research on Private Sector Development, Digitization and Disruptive Technologies.' The project received generous funding from Carnegie Corporation.

The project builds on ERF's previous work on the nature of state-business relations (SBR) in MENA countries by extending investigations to countries of the region and in Africa. Namely Algeria, Ethiopia, Iraq, and Sudan.

In all these countries, control of the private sector seems to have been a political priority of ruling regimes. A first theme of these studies is to understand how this control was exercised: which mechanisms have been used, how this has evolved over the past decades, and how this might evolve in light of their changing political and economic circumstances.

A second area of investigation, of the political economy type, is to examine why this is so: is the aim to collect rents by exchanging economic privileges for political or financing support? And/or is there a fear of political competition by an autonomous private sector, and an attempt to keep its heights closely controlled by allies?

A third area of interest aim, more in the area of mainstream economics, is to investigate the effect of the crony type SBRs on economic growth and job creation. In all these countries, the scarcity of good jobs, as exemplified by the small size of the formal sector outside the state, has created social tensions, creating forces that have led to, or are leading towards, political contestation and change. The repression of the private sector may have also encouraged the expansion of the informal sector.

A fourth aim of the project is more normative: it asks how can social, political, and economic actors reverse the negative inheritance of the past, and lead the way to more transparency, fair competition, and progress on the economic front?

The objective of these webinar series is to present and discuss the findings and results of the research papers produced under this project among a group of panelists, experts from academia, and international organizations.

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AGENDA

03:00-03:05 **Opening and Welcome Remarks:** Ibrahim Elbadawi, *Economic Research Forum*

The webinar will be moderated by Ishac Diwan

03:05-03:45 **Session 1: State-Business Relations in Ethiopia**

Panelists: Alex DeWaal and Aditya Sarkar, *The Changing Role of Political Finance in the Political (un) settlements in Ethiopia and Sudan (10 min)*

Alemayehu Geda, *Crony Capitalism through the Developmental State Model in Ethiopia: Identifying its Manifestations (10 min)*

Lead Commentator: Adeel Malik (*University of Oxford and ERF*) (10 min)

Open Discussion (10 min)

03:45-04:25 **Session 2: State-Business Relations in Sudan**

Panelists: Kabbashi Suliman, *State Business Relations in Sudan: The Prospects for a Dynamic Private Sector (10 min)*

Ebaidalla Mahjoub Ebaidalla and Mohammed Elhaj Mustafa, *Political Islam and crony capitalism in Sudan: A case study of "Munazzamat al-Dawa al-Islamiyya" (10 min)*

Lead Commentator: Hamid Eltigani Ali (*The American University in Cairo and ERF*) (10 min)

Open Discussion (10 min)

04:25-05:05 **Session 3: State-Business Relations in Algeria**

Panelists: Mouhoub Mouhoud, *The Evolving Political Economy of a Rentier State (10 min)*

Idriss Hadj-Nacer, *From Rags to Riches to Rags Again: Deconstructing the Narratives of Crony Capitalism and Neoliberal Ideology (10 min)*

Lead Commentator: Stephen Hertog (*London School of Economics*) (10 min)

Open Discussion (10 min)

05:05-05:10 **Closing Remarks**

Ibrahim Elbadawi
Ishac Diwan