Original Paper

Popular Uprisings in Sudan: Revolutionary Processes Intercepted

Abdu Mukhtar Musa[1*]

[1] Department of Political Science, Omdurman Islamic University, Khartoum, Sudan

Professor Abdu M. Musa is the author of 9 books, notably - Darfur: from a Crisis of a State to Super Power Clashes (400 pp., in Arabic, Doha: Aljazeera Centre for Studies). He received his undergraduate and postgraduate studies at University of Khartoum, Sudan. (Currently he is a professor of political science at the Dept. of political science: Islamic University of Omdurman, Khartoum State, Sudan—Africa). drmukhtar60@gmail.com

Abstract

This article tries to go beyond the general features of the Sudanese three popular Uprisings of 1964, 1985 and 2018/19, to explore their root causes. It argues that the revolutionary processes in the Sudan have been impeded by such factors as: (1) lack of visionary leaders; (2) inter-elites dissensions; (3) intra-party schisms and inter-party conflicts (over interests); and (4) absence of coherent programmatic and mass political parties. Since independence in 1956, the Sudan has been trapped in a vicious circle—oscillating between democratic and military rules. So: "why does democracy fail in Sudan? It compares the different settings that differentiate the Uprising (of 2018/19) from the previous two, with especial emphasis on the latest one—one of the most successful non-violent civil resistances. The article explains that those uprisings could have escalated into full-fledged revolution but were let down by the civil elites who disappointed any prospects for revolutionary achievement". Hence, the article rests on the hypothesis that "the political elite are responsible for the failure of the popular uprisings in Sudan". The article provides empirical explanations for this hypothesis and suggests adoption of consociationalism which is more likely to suit the highly diversified Sudanese society with deep ethno-political polarization.

Keywords

uprising, revolution, militant Islamists, exclusion, marginalization, transition, democracy

1. Introduction:

It was a controversial issue among the Sudanese intellectuals whether the Sudan's Uprising of Dec. 2018—Apr. 2019, is a "revolution" or an "Uprising" ("*intifada*")? But, since the masses took to the streets in tens of towns in Sudan yearning for comprehensive and radical change, it could be maintained that the uprising had paved the way for a real "revolutionary" change—albeit it was in need of a charismatic leader with a vision for radical change and capable of mobilizing the nation amidst great difficulties and conspiracies that were being waged by the elements of the deposed Militant Islamists' Regime (MIR) led by Gen. Omer al-Beshir. History reveals that revolutions usually take a long time to realize their ultimate goals and achieve substantial transformation. The great French Revolution (1789) is a good example; it took a decade (1789-799) to lay down the first stepping stones. In his distinguished 1970 article "*Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model*" Rustow "broke from the prevailing schools of thought on how countries became democratic, disagreeing with the heavy focus on necessary social and economic pre-conditions for democracy." (Rustow, 1970) (Note 1) He argued that "national unity was the necessary precondition for democracy." (Rustow, 1970) (Note 2) This may be true with respect to Western democracies or advanced states; however, it differs in the case of the Third World states where unity without awareness—including conscious political behavior and participation, based on appropriate culture—does not provide a fertile soil for sowing the seeds of a sound democracy. This is because "other things may not remain the same or equal" as such drivers as ethnic identification may influence political behavior and voting attitudes.

Two past surveys of revolution list literally hundreds of events as "revolutionary" in character. "Nonetheless, these events still have a common set of elements at their core: (a) efforts to change the political regime that draw on a competing vision (or visions) of a just order, (b) a notable degree of informal or formal mass mobilization, and (c) efforts to force change through non-institutionalized actions such as mass demonstrations, protests, strikes, or violence." (Tilly, 1993) (Note 3) The Sudanese Uprising—under consideration—encompasses almost all these processes, notably: efforts to change political regime; formal or informal mass mobilization; … use of such actions of mass demonstrations, protests, strike, etc. Actually the Sudan's "Revolution" cuts across different types of revolution as well different definitions/theories of revolution. This will be explained throughout the analysis in this article. But it is suffice here to argue that this multifaceted nature of the Sudanese revolution (of 2018/19) might be partly attributed to:

1) The long duration of the regime that was toppled by the Uprising (30 years: 1989-2019).

2) For the very compound nature of that regime: some sort of alliance between the army and the "Radical Islamic Fundamentalism" so that I labeled that regime as the "militant Islamist regime" (MIR). The two sides (the allied military and the civilians) called their regime *(Al-Engath)* or "Salvation" which assumed power by a military coup—they alleged—to rescue the Sudanese people from bad conditions—whereas, in reality, they led them to the worst.

3) Al-Beshir's regime was a hybrid of a religious ideology and authoritarianism, in its first years, and

2

turned into theocratic totalitarianism influenced by Hassan Abdallahal-Turabi (the master mind of their new sacred mission of "Civilizational Project"). However, few years later—while raising Islamic slogans—it deviated from the religious line and indulged into power, wealth and corruption, while excluding all those who are not loyal to their regime or members of the Islamic Movement.

4) It was not only a matter of class conflict, periphery-center dispute, ethnic politics, racial discrimination, military dictatorship, but also monopolizing the wealth by one group (members of the Islamic Movement) and excluding all other sectors of the society.

5) The nature of resistance to this authoritarian militant Islamist regime was also diverse—it was cross-ethnic and cross cultural (this is detailed later on in this article).

A great deal of **literature** has been written on explaining the nature and origin of revolutions. Some outlined three major "phases" or "generations": "The first generation, falling roughly between 1900 and 1940, and including the work of LeBon, Ellwood, Sorokin, Edwards, Lederer, Pettee, and Brinton, carefully investigated the pattern of events found in revolutions, but lacked a broad theoretical perspective." (Goldstone, 1980) (Note 4) The second generation, falling roughly between 1940 and 1975, has dominated the recent study of revolutions; it included Davies, Gurr, Johnson, Smelser, Huntington, and Tilly, and drew heavily on broad theories from psychology (cognitive psychology and frustration-aggression theory), sociology (structural-functionalist theory), and political science (the pluralist theory of interest-group competition). (Note 5)

In the third generation some scholars had introduced new analytical approach for revolution, namely: "Barrington Moore, Jr. and Eric Wolf. Important contributions were also made by Gillis, Neumann, Rosenau, Kelly and Miller, Hermassi, Migdal, Landsberger, Linz, Prosterman, Russell, and Chorley. These writers did not advance theories of revolution per se; however, they raised specific issues and achieved major insights which have formed the basis for the third generation's theorizing." (Goldstone, 1980) (Note 6)

Some scholars noted that "until … recently, revolutions have invariably failed to produce democracy. The need to consolidate a new regime in the face of struggles with domestic and foreign foes has instead produced authoritarian regimes, often in the guise of populist dictatorships such as those of Napoleon, Castro, and Mao, or of one-party states such as the PRI state in Mexico or the Communist Party-led states of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Indeed, the struggle required to take and hold power in revolutions generally leaves its mark in the militarized and coercive character of new revolutionary regimes." (Gurr, 1988) (Note 7) However, in Sudan two previous popular uprisings (1964 and 1985) had resulted in two democratic regimes. This was also supported by other cases elsewhere: "It is … striking that in several … revolutions—in the Philippines in 1986, in South Africa in 1990, in Eastern European nations in 1989-1991—the sudden collapse of the old regime has led directly to new democracies, often against strong expectations of reversion to dictatorship." (Note 8)

One scholar explained this: "The factors that allowed democracy to emerge in these cases appear to be several: a lack of external military threat, a strong personal commitment to democracy by revolutionary

3

leaders, and consistent external support of the new democratic regimes by foreign powers." (Note 9)

John Foran has made an excellent contribution to the literature of **theorizing** revolution particularly with respect to the Third World. In his "*Taking Power: on the Origins of Third World Revolutions*" he examines the causes behind some three dozen revolutions in the Third World between 1910 and the "present" [late 20th century]. Through an interdisciplinary approach he explains "why so few revolutions have succeeded, and so many have failed." (Foran, 2005). (Note 10) His book treats particular sets of revolutions in the Third World—including the longest revolution in the World—the Chinese Revolution (1919-1949). He believes that the twentieth century must be judged an age of revolutions. He noted that "… the locus of these revolutions has been firmly rooted in the Third World…" (Note 11)

Many scholars agree that the real revolution is a "social" revolution particularly that "transforms economic and social structures as well as political institutions" (Charles Tilly, 1995). So it may be held that a comprehensive study of the concept of revolution entails interdisciplinary approach. Hence, it is notable that the most distinguished contributions in the theorization of revolution are made by the scientist who combined politics with sociology and psychology along with history, anthropology and comparative perspectives. To cite some examples: ThedaSkocpol, John Foran, Ted Robert Gurr, Karl Marx, Jack Goldstone, Barrington Moore, Samuel P. Huntington, Richard Tilly, Eisenstaedt, etc. Skocpol's" States and Social Revolutions" became one of the most widely recognized works of the third generation; Skocpol defined **revolution** as "rapid, basic transformations of society's state and class structures [...] accompanied and in part carried through by class-based revolts from below", attributing revolutions to a conjunction of multiple conflicts involving state, elites and the lower classes. (Note 12)

Generally, in political science, a revolution (Latin: revolution, "a turnaround") is a fundamental and relatively sudden change in political power and political organization which occurs when the population revolts against the government, typically due to perceived oppression (political, social, economic) or political incompetence. (Bullock, Trombley, 1999) (Note 13) It also simply means "a successful attempt by a large group of people to change the political system of the country by force." (Note 14)

Notable revolutions in recent centuries include the creation of the United States through the American Revolutionary War (1775-1783), the French Revolution (1789-1799), the Spanish American wars of independence (1808-1826), the European Revolutions of 1848, the Russian Revolution in 1917, the Chinese Revolution of the 1940s, the Cuban Revolution in 1959, the Iranian Revolution in 1979, and the European Revolutions of 1989. (Note 15)

With respect to the Third World some scholars noted that the anticolonial and anti-dictatorial revolutions, ranging from Angola to Zaire, became so numerous and affected so many people that the parochial practice of defining revolutions in terms of a few cases in European history plus China became untenable (Boswell, 1989, Furan, 1997). In addition, whereas the "great revolutions" had all

led fairly directly to populist dictatorship and civil wars, a number of the more recent revolutions … seemed to offer a new model in which the revolutionary collapse of the old regime was coupled with a relatively nonviolent transition to democracy (Goldstone, 2001).   (Note 16)

2. Modeling the Case of Sudan: a Framework for Analyzing Dynamics and Processes

The causes of revolution in Sudan differ from that set of factors specified by such scholars as Skocpol (1979). In the case of Sudan: lack of justice, deprivation, marginalization, ethnic politics and racial discrimination matter. This, of course, in addition to other factors/causes common to almost all the underdeveloped countries—notably: corruption and dictatorship.

In the twentieth century the Sudanese people waged two successful popular uprisings—in October 1964 and April 1985—where the two upheavals toppled two dictators: General Abbud and General Nimeiri, respectively—though the first two revolutions had not enjoyed the highly sophisticated global media enjoyed the latest one (Dec. 2018-Apr. 20190. However, the latest Uprising differs from the two previous ones in many aspects. al-Beshir's Militant Islamist Regime (1989-2019) had ousted all key figures from the bureaucracy and regular forces. Then the ruling militarized Islamists deposed the majority of different ranks in the regular forces who are not members of the Islamic movement or not loyal to their ruling political party (the National Congress Party: NCP). Then they politicized the civil service. So, we had had a deeply indoctrinated system that excluded those who are not members of the Islamists' ruling party. Therefore, it is not easy to dismantle or uproot al-Bishir's totalitarian system by the mere removal of its leading figures. Accordingly, the functioning of the "counter-revolution" was obviously inevitable and a myriad of challenges were inescapable.
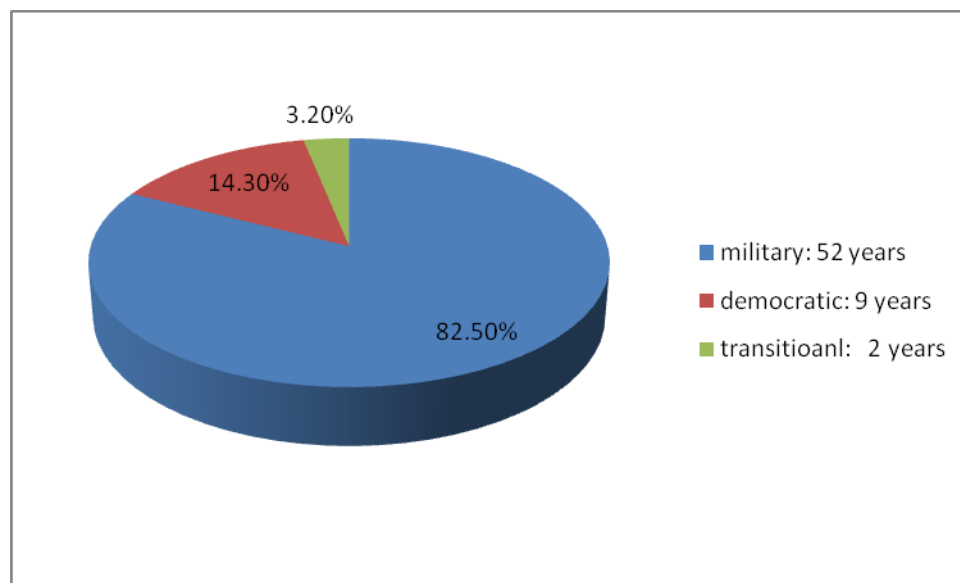

Figure 1. Reveals the Ratio of Democratic Rule to the Military in Terms of Duration
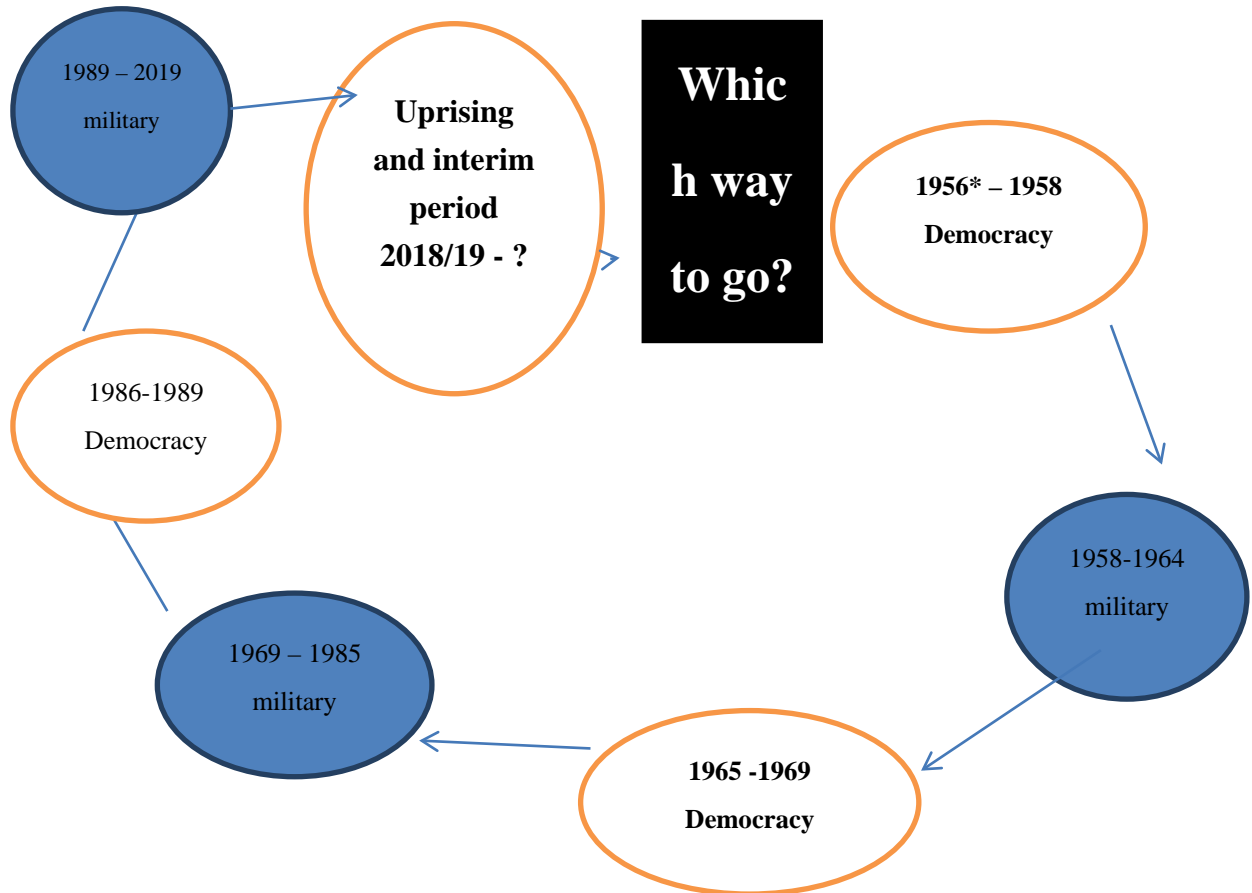
*(illustrated by the author)

5

Figure 2. The Sudan's Syndrome (the Vicious Circle)

*The independence of January 1956 was preceded by multi-party elections in November 1953. So the first democratic experience was three years—taking into account that it was terminated by General Abbud's coup in November 17, 1958. The first elected Parliament unanimously declared independence on December 19, 1955 and was officially celebrated on January 1, 1956. The years: 1965 and 1985 were transitional.

2.1 Why Does Democracy Fail in Sudan?

From Figure (1) which both illustrate an oscillating and turbulent political reality in Sudan a central question arises: why does democracy fail in Sudan? This article argues that one of the major causes of this "vicious circle" is related to the political parties in particular and the Political elite in general. Actually all successful military coups which governed the country six folds the time of democracies were a result of political parties' failure. The political parties who won elections and were in office created crises and then "invite" the army to assume power:

(1)   In November 1958 when the Umma Party (UP) came to know that his partner in the ruling coalition, the People's Democratic Party, was planning to ally with the opposition Party, the National

Unionist Party, to topple Abdalla Khalil's cabinet—by vote of no confidence-because "the country was in political crisis", called upon General Abbud (the Commander-in-Chief) to assume power.

(2)   In 1969 the Sudanese Communist Party politically backed General Nimeiri to assume power because the Islamists joined forces with the "traditional" Parties (the UP and the Democratic Unionist Party: DUP) in the Parliament and voted for dismembering those of the Communist Party. Although the court verdict cancelled their decision, the parties behind the decision declined to execute the verdict triggering a political crisis ended by Nimeiri's coup in May 25, 1969. The Communists "fleshed the bones of the military rule" (Note 17) with radical thought and a program for action. However, two years later (in July 1971) the Communists led a coup attempt against Nimeiri who managed to abort it and came back after three days and sentenced the leaders to death.

(3)   In 1989 the Islamists who were minority in the Parliament (ranking third) manipulated the dissensions among the (UP&DUP) coalition government—along with security crisis, economic deterioration and corruption—intrigued with their officers in the Army and took over the government on June 30, 1989.

(4)   In 2019, in the post-Uprising transitional period, also one faction of the civil coalition—which was excluded or not represented in the Transitional Government (TG)—organized a sit-in at the Republican Palace on October 16, 21 and called upon the the Commander-in-Chief, Gen. al-Burhan to dissolve Hamdok' cabinet (will be detailed later on).

The failure of the political parties in office to sustain proper democratic practice always led to military coups. Then the masses revolt against the military regimes. The military responds to the will of the people. A transitional government is formed, elections organized; a democratic regime takes office. Differences arise among coalition governments, with political corruption and poor performance, military officers capture power with such justifications as chaos, political unrest, economic deterioration and the unity of the county is at risk…etc. Thus a vicious circle persists over decades (see Figure No.2).

After every successful popular uprising the political parties in power let the people down causing a frustrating set back to democratic rule. Consequently, the country has been undergoing chronic political crises since independence in 1956. The symptom of this crisis is manifested in perpetual political instability—where the army governed more than six folds of the short-lived democracies. This situation of a "country in crises" had been a product of the failure of the elite—namely the political class. This political instability provides empirical evidence that the ruling political elite are responsible for these recurring political crises in Sudan. Hence, it is obvious that the political parties bear the greater part of this responsibility as they have failed to consolidate democratic and stable political system.

One can divide or categorize the political parties in Sudan into four types with respect to their relation to democracy:

The **first** category or group: comprises those parties which do not believe in democracy or not keen to adopt it: e.g., the Islamic Movement (a branch of Muslim Brothers). The movement adopted one-party

7

system (the National Congress Party: NCP) ushering in a hybrid type of regime—a mixture of totalitarian system (tried to adopt an Islamic rule) and a military dictatorship with repressive security organ.

The **second** category: are those political parties which cannot survive under democracy, e.g., the Sudan Communist Party, the Arab Socialist *Ba'ath* (Resurrections) Party, and the Nasserites, because they have no popular base or mass support for the nature of their ideologies (secular or leftist/communist) which are unacceptable in a conservative society as Sudan with Muslim majority (nearly 97% after the secession of the South in 2011).

The **third type:** are those parties which are not able to practice real democracy and lack "within-party" democracy. Their party leaders stay in office for life—a hereditary system of leadership based on sectarianism and patriarchy. Some developed a sort of a "personality cult" where the "reverent" leaders are above criticism or removal from office. Based on religious obedience to the "Sheikh or *molana*"; there is no transfer of power. The Umma Party (of al-Mahdi's *Ansar* or adherents) and the Democratic Unionist Party (of Al-Khatmiyya Sufist/s/ sect) are a good example for this type.

The **fourth** type is the ethnic parties which represent a definite ethnic group or a marginalized minority (such as the Beja, the Nuba Mountain Union, Darfur Front for Development, etc.). They ran for elections in almost all the three democratic "intervals"—got only few seats in the parliaments. This type also includes the armed struggle movements in Darfur—notably the Justice and Equality Movement, and Sudan's Liberation Movement. The two broke up into more than 30 factions. Even if they are to develop into political parties, they would not be considered as mass parties, but rather remains as regional or ethnic parties as they represent specific areas and tribes or ethnic groups.

The common characteristic of all these four types of political parties in Sudan is that they cannot develop a sound political culture and, hence, cannot contribute to the functioning of an effective political process. In the final analysis, they are not qualified to consolidate real and sustainable democracy.

Generally one can numerate the following observations on political parties in Sudan:

(i)   They suffer from acute factionalism or multi-party schisms;

(iii) The majority of parties lack institutionalism and democratic values that characterize modern political parties;

(iv) Most—if not all—political parties have no program for change or how to build a coherent society and stable state. They lack nationwide appeal);

(v) Almost all political parties lack the practice of within-party democracy and suffer from structural deficiencies.

So, the current political parties in Sudan are in crisis. The inefficient political process and poor political culture is—to a great extent—a product of this crisis. In order to have a solid political party system the present political parties in Sudan are to restore their internal cohesion—by reunification of its broken-away factions and adopt within-party democracy.

2.2 Analysis and Interpretation

With regard to the case of Sudan it is significant to look closely at the nature of the social structure and the social forces interacting in the political process. Generally, the Sudanese society is more traditional than modernized where tribe is still a powerful socio-political entity and so influential in shaping the individual's political behavior. Globalization is being manifested in using the sophisticated tools rather than refining the life style—including political behavior.

Due to the drastic economic deterioration in the rural areas as a result of lack of equitable development and negligence of many regions, many were forced to migrate to the capital (Khartoum). This had furthered economic imbalances, increased disparity between the centre and the peripheries and the social fabric was severely shaken. Those newcomers to the capital and major towns—with no income or a source to earn their living—settled on the outskirts in shanty towns to lead a miserable life and suffer from lack of adequate basic services; and at the same time impacting the size of the labor force at the production areas where 80% of the Sudanese people depend on agricultural activities.

Agriculture was severely affected by the policies of the former Islamist Regime particularly with regard to unfair pricing policy. "Under the previous government of Gen. Omer al-Beshir, the middlemen used to buy our agricultural products at very cheap prices and sell them to other marketers or exporters at high prices besides the authorities imposed high taxes on our products. Accordingly, many producers were forced to abandon farming and migrated to the capital or other places." (Note 18) With the emergence of the armed struggle movements in Darfur and other parts of the country—which were an outcome of injustice, deprivation and marginalization—many frustrated and jobless young people joined them. Some joined the radical terrorist groups outside Sudan and some desperately endeavored to cross the Mediterranean to Europe where some of them died in between. So a generation is lost being a victim of the mistakes of the political elites in a country rich of resources but poor in leadership who lack vision and patriotic conscience.

This state of affairs was complicated by two factors:

(1) Exclusion and marginalization took place on ethnic and regional basis paralleled by—or combined with—ideological prejudice.

(2) The failure of the ruling elites to manage resources properly and manage diversity equitably.

One of the outcomes of the wrong policies of Gen. Omer al-Beshir's MIR was the impoverishment of many segments in the society (46% under poverty line). (Note 19) A great deal of portion of the middle class—notable the intelligentsia, intellectuals and professionals—sought personal or individual "salvation" and left the country. Some formed opposition and took bastions in other countries.

Moreover, those policies of exclusion and deprivation on ideological and ethno-political lines resulted in vertical societal division:

- Ideological polarization: is based on membership to the Islamic Movement and its NCP.

- Ethno-political polarization: the government of the Islamic Movement dealt with the poorest areas on ethnic basis. Thus ethnicization of politics divided the country on ethnic/political basis. This was clear

9

with respect to areas populated with groups of non-Arab origin (known as "African"). This is more obvious in the case of Darfur. (Musa, 2009) (Note 20)

Even the paramilitary or official militias were mostly formed on tribal basis: the "Janjaweed" is a good example (made of Arab tribes who were used to fight against the armed opposition movements which were dominated by the non-Arab tribes, some with extension in Chad). So when al-Beshir was toppled on April 11, 2019, there were more than five armies in Khartoum: the regular Sudanese Armed Forces (i.e., the Sudan official Army), and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF—led by General M. H. Dagalo, nicknamed Hemeidti). Then each of the other major armed opposition movements have got its own army (the Sudan Liberation Army, Justice and Equality Movement, Sudan liberation Movement, The Sudan People's Liberation Army/North—originally part of the Late Gerang's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) which includes two armed factions: one in the Blue Nile state led by Malik Agar, and the other in the Nuba Mountains of South Kordofan led by Commander Abdel Aziz Al-Hilo.(Musa, 2009). (Note 21)

3. Preludes to the Sudan's *Revolution* (2018/19):

For thirty years in power, Sudan's General al-Beshir had ruled by military force and cracked down on his people. On June 30, 1989 the then Brigadier Omer Hassan Al-Behsir, toppled a democratically elected government of al-Sadiqal-Mahdi. Supported by the Muslim brothers, led by the late Hassan Abdallahal-Turabi, General al-Beshir deposed all those who were not Muslim brothers. This purge included the civil service as well as all regular forces—particularly the members of security, besides the top-ranking officers of the army and police. In addition to this he created his own militias. Over time, members of the Islamic Movement controlled all institutions, including civil service, the regular armed forces and financial institutions. They excluded all other segments in the state—even those who were not partisans.

Starting by December 19, 2018 up to April 11, 2019, tens of thousands of people took to the streets of Khartoum, the capital of Sudan, and some other 25 towns of the 18 states of the country demanding the termination of al-Beshir's 30-yeare militarized Islamists' rule. Tens of demonstrators were killed by the security forces and hundreds were injured. Some of the killers are said to be armed forces, in civil suits and veiled, who belong to the Islamic Movement—described as "militias"—known as "*Katayib al-Zil*" (the Battalions of Shadow).

On April 6, 2019, trade unions—mainly the Professionals' Association (established August 2018)–called upon the people to join the protesters to be one million in number—to start a sit-in at the headquarters of the Sudanese army in Khartoum. The date coincides with the commemoration of April 6, 1985 when a popular uprising succeeded—with a support from the army—in terminating a 16-year military rule by General G.M. Nimairi. A prompt response brought the number to more than what was expected reflecting how far was the dramatic decline of al-Beshir's popularity—taking into account the fact that the regime's militias used firearms to disperse the demonstrations. This also reveals how far

10

the Sudanese people were fed up with the president's continual pledges of reforms and economic recovery while living a reality of crises, corruption without any accountability applied. (Note 22)

3.1 Mismanagement of Resources

mismanagement of natural and human resources included exclusion of the competent elements from the state machinery and replacing them with the members of the Islamic movement—the majority of them lack the appropriate qualifications and expertise. This had led to deterioration in the public services in general. Many developmental projects broke down. Agriculture and industry (factories) were damaged. This immediately impacted exports and reversed the balance of trade to acute deficit. (Note 23) Consequently, the Sudanese currency dropped from SDG 12 against $1 when this regime assumed power in 1989, to 90,000 by late 2018. As a result the government embarked on loans from abroad. About 70% of the factories stopped production. (Note 24)

The Sudan, with vast area (1.8 million km2), more than 121 million of animal wealth, has got long borders at the Red Sea (800 kilometers), many rivers—notably the river Nile—Gum Arabic, cereals, audible oil seeds, mineral resources—notably gold, etc. "Sudan enjoys multidimensional ecologies that provide immense fertile land of about 80 million hectares, a large number of livestock, natural pasture of about 24 million hectares, forest area of about 4 million hectares …rivers and rains with annual amount of 575 million cubic meters." (Note 25) The Sudan ranks five in the world in terms of natural resources, but paradoxically it is one of the poorest country in the world—reflecting a structural weakness and inertia with respect to the leading elites who lack vision, and will for exploiting such rich resources. If these rich resources are efficiently managed, the Sudanese would enjoy a prosperous life.

3.2 Mismanagement of Diversity:

Mismanagement of diversity is related with the issue of the crisis of identity where the Sudan has more than 400 tribes, the majority of them have been either under-represented or suffered severe marginalization or deprivation.(Musa, 2018) (Note 26) The situation has been aggravated by discrimination—in opportunities, jobs and development—on ethnic basis. This had ignited grievances and eventually insurgency. (Note 27) Thus, the ruling political class is responsible for what the Sudanese people have been suffering from—poverty, miserable life, crises, conflicts and wars—since independence. Therefore, the revolution was a product of an accumulation of many factors along with grave political mistakes committed by the ruling elites.

3.3 Repression, Exclusion and Marginalization

Marginalization and exclusion had triggered rebellion and the emergence of the armed opposition—in the South: in 1955—1972, then 1983—2004 (terminated by the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, CPA, in January 2005); in the Nuba Mountains: in 1983 which ended with the CPA, but broke out once again by Abdel Al-Aziz Al Hilo in 2012 and ended only, after the Uprising, by the Juba Peace Agreement in October 2020; Darfur: started resistance since early 1990s but took arms by 2003; besides the Blue Nile, led By Agar and the East. Most of these movements sought backing from abroad leading to the internationalization of the internal (periphery-center) conflict. This was worsened by repression and

11

rampant corruption.

With the removal of al-Beshir from officein April 11, 2019—by a military-supported Uprising—these forces (the armed struggle movements) joined the "Transitional Government" (TG) on the basis of a formula set by Juba Agreement in October 2020. They asked for great shares in the institutions of the TG. As some of them called for some sort of reconciliation with the deposed regime's Party (the National Congress Party) a wish against the will of the people who toppled the Islamist regime, the political scene has become complicated. Divisions appeared among the components of the Transitional government particularly following a failed coup attempt in September 2021—which was denounced by Gen. Abdul-Fattah al-Burhan, the Head of the Sovereignty Council, accusations were exchanged indicating that some of the civil components of the Transitional Government were involved in that attempted coup. This had deepened divisions among the civil component of the TG including its political incubator (the Forces of Freedom and Change: FFC).

Consequently, a new faction produced by that split formed a bloc known as "FFC -2", signed a new "National Charter" and named itself "National Consensus" group. They accused the main FFC members who formed the government as only "four parties, who hijacked the revolution, excluded the majority—the vivid forces of the revolution" organized a sit-in at the Republican Palace in Khartoum on October 16, 2021 demanding the resolution of the cabinet and forming a new one of independent technocrats". Many believe that this new FFC faction (of the National Charter) was influenced by the adherents of the deposed regime (the Islamists) and that they called the army to take over by resolving the civil cabinet—led by Abdallah Hamdok—and form a technocratic one. All these state of affairs had a great negative impact on the coherence and stability of the Transitional Government and threatened the democratic transition. (Note 28)

4. Sudan's Revolutionary Movement (2018/19 -): Characteristics and Challenges

4.1 Characteristics:

1. One of the most remarkable characteristics of the Sudan's Revolution (of 2018/19) it was a non-violent civil resistance.

2. The majority of the protestors are young who revealed amazing fearlessness.

3. Considerable participation of women who were as brave as the male protesters. Twelve girls were killed during the demonstrations in different parts of the country.

4. It was not led by a definite political party but rather a sudden outbreak of a collaboration of all sectors of society, of cross-ethnic groups, who took to the streets motivated by strong yearning for emancipation from a rule of dictatorship, repression and corruption.

5. It has revealed that: because the Islamic movement had excluded "all people", the whole society united against them. It was a direct reaction to the Islamists' authoritarian and exclusive political behavior when they were in power. (Note 29)

6. being peaceful constituted a "soft power" for the revolution. This peacefulness of the revolution

12

stripped the defunct regime from justification to use excessive force to crush the demonstrations. The world international community and world public opinion has sympathized with the demonstrations—leaving the Islamists' regime without any backing or legitimacy.

7. The revolution was well organized and the protesters showed strong cohesiveness and bravery to overcome the continual efforts of the security excessive use of force to disperse the demonstrations.

4.2 Challenges to Transition (2019 -):

Two years after the outset of the transitional government, the FFC faced a great deal of criticism for being weak due to fragmentation as some important components started to break away—notably one of the major founders of the federation of the so called "the Professionals" Association" which organized and led the demonstrations that broke out since late December 2018. This association had later on—following the relinquish of General al-Beshir—constituted the main pillar for the FFC which comprised over 180 components which included: political parties, trade unions, professional associations, and various civil society organizations—some of them were active for several years waging opposition against the Islamist regime. It defected from the FFC in July 2020. The Sudanese Communist Party—a major founder of the Professionals' Association—defected from the FFC on Nov. 6, 2020 denouncing the deviation of FFC from the Charter and applied the conditions imposed by the IMF. (Salih, 2021) (Note 30)

  The Sudanese Communist Party justified its defection from the FFC because it rejected this "soft landing" which stabs the people on the back. "These groups of soft landing have been hindering the march of the revolution." (Edris, 2021) (Note 31) It is also believed that these groups held meetings with some regional forces - such as the United Arab Emirates - and that they were trying to link the Sudan's economy with the global capitalism which would impose on the country the conditions of the IMF which will impede any national scheme for real development and renaissance. (Note 32)

A thoroughly demilitarized transitional regime was the top demand of people who accomplished a sit-in at the military headquarters in Khartoum for nearly three months (April 11—June 30, 2019). They also called for the detention of all members of the former regime, and filing suit of corruption as well as of killing civilians over the four months of protests (December 19, 2018-April 11, 2019). It was only by September 1, 2019, that a cabinet was declared with Dr. Abdallah Hamdok named as Prime Minister.

In spite of being able of deposing one of the strongest military dictatorships in the area, the Sudan's revolution faced many difficulties and challenges. To single out some examples:

First: Internal divisions in the FFC: one of the greatest challenges that have faced the Transitional Government was the split of the main leading political coalition of the post-Uprising transitional government. These forces which led the protests against al-Beshir's regime included—at the outset—more than 180 organizations and political parties. As General al-Beshir was forced by the army generals to step down in response to the people's will, the number the actually active parties in the political scene dropped to about 70—out of over 100 parties, besides the Professionals' Association, started consultations about the formation of the institutions of the (TG). This process took several

13

months (from April to August 2019) during that time only over 40 political parties remained directly involved in the process of the formation of the TG.

By August 19, 2019 Dr. AbdallaHamdok was unanimously nominated as Prime Minister. Then by early September 2019 the coalition of the (FFC) named the members of the Cabinet Ministers and the civil component of the Council of Sovereignty (CS) which was staffed by half military and half civilians and to be presided in the first half of the 39-month-long transitional period by the military (General al-Burhan as the General Commander-in-Chief) and the second half was to be presided by a civilian figure. The formation of the transitional parliament along with the nomination of state governors and other major institutions of the state was postponed till an Agreement was signed with the Rebel Movements (later on re-named as "the armed struggle movements"). But this Agreement (Juba) was signed only more than a year late (on October 3, 2020). This delay resulted in administrative vacuum all over the country leading to deterioration in security, economic conditions, services and tribal conflicts.

In mid May 2021 about 20 political parties met in the House of the Umma Party to discuss the "reformation of the FFC to broaden the base of participation as the coalition witnessed many defections and the performance of the civil executive became weak." (Note 33) This split increased over weeks till it culminated into an outcry—in the second half of 2021—that the Revolution had been high jacked by only four political parties." (Note 34) Consequently, tens of parties—including the two major opposition movement of Darfur (the Justice and Equality Movement, led by Jebreel Ibrahim, and the Sudan Liberation Movement, led by Mini Arko Minawi) met on October 16, 21, signed a charter and declared the formation of the "National Consensus" (NC). They are labeled as "FFC-2" as they broke away from the mainstream FFC which organized and led the protests of the Uprising (2018/19). After witnessing split this main faction is known was "the FFC- the Central Council" or (FFC-1)".

Then the new faction waged a campaign of criticism against Hamdok's cabinet of being controlled by only four parties while excluding the majority. On October 16, 2021, this FFC-2 (the National Consensus) organized a sit-in at the Republican Palace in Khartoum asking for the dissolution of Hamdok's cabinet, dismantle the monopoly of the four parties and broaden the participation in the TG to be representative to the different revolutionary forces.

Thus, the TG became heavily engaged in intra-FFC dissensions on one side, and the TG's civil components being at loggerhead with the Military elements of the Council of Sovereignty (CS) on the other. The dispute between the two sides was sparked off on September 21, when the two sides exchanged accusations of collusion with the leaders of the aborted military coup in Khartoum. This had ignited distrust between the two sides (the military and the civilians). The FFC-2 (NC) alleged that they represent the majority of the revolutionary forces which were excluded by the four parties dominating the executive, the states' governors, and the civil component of the (CS).

The FFC-2 (NC) managed to mobilize many people for the sit-in at the Republican Palace. They used religious rhetoric to rally the religious sects (the Sufist/s), and many social forces through an Islamic

14

appeal that the FFC-1 are secularist—thus instigating many sectors of society to rally against Hamdok's cabinet and called upon the President of the CS, Gen. Abdul-Fattah al-Burhan, to dissolve the TG and form a new one with broad representativeness.

To counter this rally of the FFC-2 (NC), the FFC-1 (the mainstream of the political incubator of the TG) mobilized its bases - through the Resistance Committees (established in 2018) in different quarters in Sudan and organized a one-million demonstration on October 21 (commemorating the Revolution of October 21, 1964) where more than ten were killed and tens were injured. This one outnumbered that organized by the FFC-2 (NC), apart from demonstrations in several towns in Sudan—sending a strong message to the military and the world public opinion that the majority of the Sudanese people support civilian rule and reject any military intervention under any pretexts. On 13.11.2021 the FFC-1 organized another demonstrations rejecting al-Burhan's formation of a 14-member Council of Sovereignty on11.11.21, with (9) members civilians and (5) military.

Tension grew as differences between the two FFC's factions increased on the one hand and that between the civil elements of the TG and the Military elements of the CS. Attempts failed to mend fences between the conflicting parties. Taking into consideration the East was still under Beja's blockade (was ended on October 31, 21), crises in basic needs were on the rise, the sit-in continued paralyzing life at the city Centre, war of media was heated; tensions on the rise, and a deadlock was reached.

Consequently, on October 25, 2021, General al-Burhan dissolved the TG (the cabinet and the CS), suspended seven articles in the Constitutional Charter, declared the state of emergency, released all ministers, state governors, as well as the undersecretaries, detained some ministers and put Hamdok under house arrest. The FF-2 (NC) commended the decisions, described them as a correction to the path of the revolution and ended the sit-in. whereas the FFC-1described al-Burhan's decisions as a "military coup". Nonetheless, demonstrations broke out in hundreds of thousands—in Khartoum and several towns all over the country—denouncing the coup and calling for reinstating Hamdok's civil cabinet. Despite being peaceful, 40 were killed and hundreds were injured in three protests (on October 21, Oct. 30, Nov. 13 and Nov. 17, 2021). (Note 35) In the face of continual demonstrations and international pressure Gen. al-Burhan signed a "Political Agreement" with Hamdok on November 21, 21 - ending his house arrest, releasing political detainees, declaring a commitment to: form a technocrat cabinet, completing the institutions of the transition and organize elections by July 2023.

Second: the Economic crisis: the situation was actually one of pervasive economic deterioration. This includes the heavy debts inherited from the deposed regime (over $50 billion). (Note 36) Hyperinflation scored three digits "(412%) by June 2021". (Note 37) This triggered further public discontent. (Note 38) This was aggravated in September 16, 21 when the Beja ethnicity in the East of Sudan started a blockade to the Port, the Air Port of (Port Sudan) town—aggravating the economic crisis. The leaders of the Beja ethnicity said that the blockade was a reaction to the procrastination on the part of the central government of Khartoum to respond to the demands of the people of the Eastern region as

represented by their major tribal leaders, namely Muhammad al-Ameen Terik" had put forward some demands as conditions to terminate the four-week-long blockade of the Port, notably: cancelling the track of the East included the Juba Peace Agreement signed in October 2020 where they believe that the agreement had underestimated the injustice inflicted on the region by the successive central governments of Khartoum since independence. (Note 39)

Third: challenges and threats by having many armies:

The existence of the Rapid Support Forces/RSF (led by Gen. M. H. Dagalo *Hemedti*), side by side with the official Sudan's Armed Forces indicates there are "two armies" in Sudan. This had triggered controversy as General Hemedti seems reluctant to accept the idea of amalgamating his forces in the national army. The danger here is that this force is based on the previous Janjaweed militia which was formed by the deposed President Al-Beshir to support him and protect his regime against the Armed Struggle Movements of Darfur. Another problem is that many believe that the RSF is dominated by one tribe (the Mahameed, a branch of the Rezeigat—Arab nomads) and mainly led by one family (the commander is Gen Abdul-Rahim Dagalo—Hemedti's brother). However, General Hemaidti negated the triabalized nature of his forces and claimed that it is a nation-wide force. Nonetheless, the existence of the RSF after the revolution has become politically unacceptable, legally illegitimate and socially hazardous.

Political activists had been continually "accusing the RFS of participating in brutish assault on those at the sit-in where 110 were killed, tens were injured, raped or thrown into the Nile with their bodies fastened with stones" (Note 40) In fact the RSFs had committed atrocities and crimes against humanities in Darfur since its formation in 2013. Many reports confirmed that these forces "used to attack citizens in Darfur and it had terrified people and committed violations." (Note 41)

5. Conclusions

It is notable that the Sudanese elites are lagging far behind the Sudanese people's ambitions and awareness. In several cases of upheavals the masses paid a lot for emancipation and provided opportunities for a full-fledged revolution, but were always let down and disappointed by the elites. The article provided empirical explanations for how those setbacks took place opening the door for a military comeback—sustaining a "vicious circle" that I dubbed as "Sudan's syndrome".

It was obvious that from the outset the civil alliance which led and organized the protests (starting from Dec. 18), lagged unity of vision, leadership and program. It failed to produce a competent and coherent cabinet; underwent factionalism (the Professionals' Association broke away and so did the Sudanese Communist Party—from the first months, the remaining component split into two factions—FFC/1and FFC/2, with the later allying with the military and elements of the deposed regime) along with exchanging accusations with the military component, besides multiplicity of crises, all weakened the TG and impacted the revolutionary process.

According to the analysis conducted in this article democratization in Sudan is threatened by two

obstacles: (A) the first one is related to the political institutions—notably the political parties; (B) the second is related to elites and leadership. Of course there are other factors but all—in the final analysis—are related to these two factors, either directly or indirectly, such as poor political culture, tribalism and ethnic conflicts or the like.

To enhance the process of democratic transition in Sudan the political parties are to:

1) Amalgamate into a few and strong political parties (instead of being over hundred in a country with only 40 population;

2) Adopt strategic plan for its internal restructuring and reformation;

3) Should have visionary leaders;

4) Adopt a smart strategic political partnership.

Hence, given these crises and challenges—including factionalism and elites' dissensions—real concessions and sacrifices are needed for the sake of public interest. So, it remains a matter of ethics, commitment and patriotism. Actually, the climate brought by the revolution is quite inducing for exerting effective efforts in rebuilding political parties and civil society organizations which both can act as democracy-building institutions.

Therefore, one can hold that the future of democracy and stability in Sudan relies heavily on maintaining the above mentioned requirements: visionary leadership, post-revolutionary institutions building, rebuilding political parties on sound basis to tackle their structural and functional deficiencies discussed in this article, building coherent and conscious civil society organizations to function in a free democratic climate to contribute effectively to democratization and nation building.

It is also advisable for the case of Sudan to adopt consociational democracy—to be adapted to the Sudan's conditions– in a presidential and federal system, and with proportional representation system of elections. This is because as the Sudan is a highly diversified society—especially ethnically—is in need of such an appropriate formula of power-and-wealth sharing.

References

Bullock, A., & Stephen, T. (1999). *The New Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought* (3rd ed.).

Clifton, B. K. (1996). Theory and History of Revolution. *Journal of World History*.

Davies, J. C. (1962). Towards a Theory of Revolution. *American Sociological Review*.

Eisenstaedt, S. N. (1977). Theory and Dynamics of Civilizations and Revolutions. *Daedulus*, *106*(4). MIT Press. http://www.jstor.org.

Eisenstaedt, S. N. (1978). *Revolution and Societies: A Comparative Study of Civilizations*. New York: Free Press.

Foran, J. (1993). "Theories of Revolution Revisited: Toward a Fourth Generation". *Sociological Theory*.

Foran, J. (2005). *Taking Power: On the Origins of Third World Revolutions*. UK, New York, Cambridge University Press

17

Foran, J. (ed.). (1997). *Theorizing Revolutions*. Rutledge Taylor & Frances, UK.

Goldstone, J. A. (1980). Theories of Revolutions: The Third Generation. *World Politics*, *32*(3).

Goldstone, J. A. (2001). Toward a Fourth Generation of Revolutionary Theory. *Annual Review of Political Science*, *4*.

Goodwin, J. (1989). Explaining Revolutions in Contemporary Third World. *Journals.sagepub.com*. https://doi.org/10.1177/00323292890100403

Goodwin, J. (2001). *No Other Way Out: States and Revolutionary Movements, 1945-1991*. Cambridge University Press

Gurr, T. R. (1970). *Why Men Rebel*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Gurr, T. R. (1988). *War, Revolution, and the Growth of the Coercive State, Comparative Political Studies*.

Huntington, S. P. (1968). *Political Order in Changing Societies*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Irving, E. F. (1997). *A History of Mass Communication: Six Information Revolutions*. Focal Press, 1997.

Le Bon, J. (1913). *The Psychology of Revolutions*. New York: Earnest Benn Limited.

Moore, B. (1993). *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and peasants in the making of the modern world*. Boston: Beacon Press

Moore, B. (2014). *The Dialectics of Revolution*. Cambridge University Press.

Musa, A. M. (2009). *Darfur from State Crisis to Super powers Clash*. Doha (Qatar): al-Jazeera Studies Centre.

Skocpol, T. (1979). *Explaining Revolutions: In Quest for Social-Structural Approach*. New York: Free Press.

Skocpol, T. (1979). *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sylvester, A. (1977). *Sudan under Nimeiri*. London, Sydney and Toronto: The Bodley Head.

Tilly, C. L. T., & Richard, T. (1975). *The Rebellious Century, 1830-1930*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Tilly, R. (1995). *European Revolutions, 1492-1992*. Blackwell Publishing.

Weitman, S. (1992). Thinking the Revolutions of 1989. *British Journal of Sociology*, *43*.

Notes

Note 1. Dankwart A. Rustow, "Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model", Comparative Politics. New York: Vol. 2, No. 3 (Apr., 1970), pp. 337-363.

Note 2. Ibid.

Note 3. Tilly 1993, Goldstone 1998. In: Jack A. Goldstone, Toward a Fourth Generation of Revolutionary Theory", Annual Review of Political Science. Vol. 4: 139-187, June 2001). Charles Tilly's latest Work, From Mobilization to Revolution, defines revolution in terms of both the level of

political violence and the extent of displacement of the political elite.

Note 4. Jack Goldstone, Theories of Revolutions: The Third Generation, World Politics. Vo. 32. No. 3 (April 1980, p. 425.

Note 5. Ibid.

Note 6. Ibid.

Note 7. (Ted R. Gurr 1988), in: Jack A. Goldstone, Toward a Fourth Generation of Revolutionary Theory", op. cit.

Note 8. Foran & Goodwin 1993, Weitman 1992, and Pastor 2001), in: Goldstone, op. cit.

Note 9. Ibid.

Note 10. John Foran, Taking Power: On the Origins of Third World Revolutions, UK, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Note 11. Ibdid.

Note 12. For further definitions and theories of revolution (concept and definitions) see: John Foran, "Theories of Revolution Revisited: Toward a Fourth Generation", Sociological Theory 11, 1993:1-20; See also (to cite only a few examples): (Skocpol 1979), (Goldstone 1980, 1994, 1998), (Tilly 1993), (Eisenstaedt 1978, 1992, 1999), (Davis 1962), (Gurr 190), (Huntington 1968), (Goodwin 1989).

Note 13. The New Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought Third Edition (1999), Allan Bullock and Stephen Trombley, Eds. pp. 754-746.

Note 14. https://www.collinsdictionary.com. Retrieved: October 6, 2021.

Note 15. Wikipedia.org. retrieved: October 6, 2021

Note 16. Goldfarb 1992, Diamond & Plattner 1993). In: Jack Goldstone, "Towards a Fourth Generation of Revolutionary Theory", op.cit, pp. 139-187

Note 17. Anthony Sylvester, Sudan under Nimeiri. London, Sydney and Toronto: The Bodley Head, 1977.

Note 18. Interview conducted by the author with, Adam Musa, a previous farmer at Gedaref state (Eastern Sudan) who gave up farming for the unfair government's policies, Khartoum: 20.9.2021.

Note 19. Sudan Central Bureau of Statistics 2015. There are many other factors for persistent poverty in Sudan including the concentration of socio-economic development in a few areas.

Note 20. Abdu Mukhtar Musa," Darfur from State Crisis to Super powers Clash"(2009), Doha (Qatar): *al-Jazeera* Studies Centre (in Arabic).

Note 21. Ibid.

Note 22. Social media frequently published news about the huge wealth being accumulated by al-Beshir's family and relatives.

Note 23. What proves the assumption that mismanagement is one major factor of Sudan's poverty is that—according to international reports/standards—Sudan ranks 78th worldwide and the 1st among the Arab states in terms of resources.

Note 24. https://www.bbc.com.10.2015, retrieved on 28.11.2021.

19

Note 25. https://www.wikipedia.org

Note 26. Abdu Mukhtar Musa, "The Tribal Impact on Political Stability in Sudan", Contemporary Arab Affairs, Vol. 11, Number 1-2, pp. 1-22. issn 1755-0912. www.ucpress.edu/journals.php?p=reprints. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1525/caa.2018.000010.

Note 27. Abdu MukhtarMusa," Darfur from State Crisis to Super powers Clash, op. cit., pp. 3-69.

Note 28. This part which covers the current events of the time of the transitional period was monitored by the author; a direct observation and close follow up.

Note 29. The protesters of Uprising (Dec. 19, 2018-April 11, 2019) were repeating such a phrase as "We will trample down any Islamist" (*AyyiKoaz, nadussodoas*).

Note 30. Abbas Muhammad Salih, "Militarization of Politics: Rethinking Gen. Al-Burhan's Coup of October 25, 2021". https://studies.aljazeera.net/ar/article/5192.

Note 31. Tayseer Hassan Edris, "Have the Elites of Bargaining upset the Revolution?" Al-Maidan Newspaper (the organ of the Sudanese Communist Party). No. 3787, Khartoum: 27,4 , 2021.

Note 32. Ibid.

Note 33. https://www.aljazeera.net. 27.9.2021.

Note 34. This included: the Sudanese Congress Party, The Democratic Unionist Party, the Socialist Arab *Ba'ath* (Resurrection) Party and a faction of the Umma Party.

Note 35. Figures were usually released by the "Physician doctors" Central Committee".

Note 36. For Sudan debts see: www.aawsat.com, 18.5.2021.

Note 37. Sudan News Agency (SUNA): 18.7.2021. Retrieved on 18.7.2021.

www.swissinfo.ch. 18.7.2021. Retrieved on 13.12.2021.

Note 38. http://Mubasher.aljazeera.net, 20.9.2021.

Note 39. Al-Arabi Al-Jadid (the New Arab), newspaper, 7.6.2019, and Al-Anadhol: 8.7.2019.

Note 40. www.noonpost.com, 7.1.2018: On March 2021 the Human Rights Watch reported that in the period September 2020 to February 2021 the RSFs detained tens of civilians and denied them access to lawyers and their families throughout their detention, which ranged from a week to over a month. Two detainees said RSF guards physically ill-treated them. The HRW managed to interrogate four of the detainees who confirmed the violations.