The Underpinning Determinants of Voting Behavior: The Case of Sudan

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ABSTRACT: This article tries to examine the underpinning determinants of voting behavior in Sudan. It adopts a descriptive method and an inter-disciplinary approach with empirical explanation to verify the hypothesis that "voting behavior in Sudan is a function of religious sectarianism and ethnicity more than other determinants, such as ideology, class or socio-economic status." It discusses the interrelationship between voting behavior and other relevant concepts, such as political behavior, electoral behavior, and political culture. It explains how several determinants/factors converge on influencing the voting behavior. The article notes that the vigorous influence of ethnicity and religious sectarianism over the political behavior in Sudan resulted in apparently irrational voting behavior. These two determinants have marked the political behavior in Sudan since it regained independence in 1956. However, the Uprising of 2018 ushered in an emergence of a new conscious generation that might lead to a paradigm shift for political and voting behavior. The article proposes the adoption of Consociational democracy with proportional representation and parliamentary system to guarantee the representation of minorities and sustain a fair share of power and wealth to put an end to instability and wars. In the case of Sudan, it is advisable that more attention should be paid to the development of political culture and efficacious civic engagement in politics should be boosted to increase conscious political participation to pave the way for sustainable democracy.

KEYWORDS: voting behavior, electoral behavior, political behavior, political culture, ethnicity, religious sectarianism

Introduction

■ A subject like this is one of the most difficult ones in political science as it embraces dimensions on which many disciplines overlap. "Electoral behavior has attracted the interest of an extraordinary range of disciplines, as social and clinical psychologists, sociologists, psychiatrists, and economists, as well as political scientists, have added to the body of empirical knowledge" (Stokes, 1972, p. 390).

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Sudan (after the secession of the South in 2011) is a nation with the population of about 40 million, with over 400 tribes, more than 300 languages and dialects, and over 100 political parties. This reflects how far the political scene in Sudan is beset by party fragmentation – considering the fact that the majority of Sudanese people are of no party affiliation. Other factors appear here– such as ethnicity and religion – that influence voting decisions. Since gaining independence in 1956, the country fluctuated between extreme systems – from the left-wing totalitarian system, through the right-wing militarily backed one-party system to short-lived democratically elected civil governments. This mosaic, multi-ethnic, and multi-cultural third-world country provides a unique field for empirical and comparative research.

Although literacy has been on the rise in recent years by over 55%, the reality is that the tribe in Sudan has been politicized in the rural areas whereas politics is tribalized in the urban canters. Ethnicity influences political behavior in a vigorous way drifting down the political reality to contradictions and distorting the political process. The article explains how, paradoxically, with the growing rate of literacy, the political behavior is still influenced by ethnicity and factors related to the prevailing political culture.

Methodology

The article employs a descriptive method to explain the complexity of the Sudanese reality, which is overwhelmed by such dichotomies as the fact that despite an increase in literacy with growing tribalism; traditionalists score the highest votes compared to modernists and secularists, etc. I adopt an inter-disciplinary approach to interpret the interplay of different factors influencing voting behavior. Therefore, I review such theoretical perspectives as – the psychological, the socio-psychological, and the rational choice theories. I apply this to the case of Sudan with respect to the impact of religious sectarianism, tribalism, ethnicity, ideology, and party identification on voting behavior. I support this by a descriptive and empirical analysis using quantification based on the election results of 1954, 1965 and 1986.

From a descriptive perspective, the article explains how short-lived democracies died in Sudan due to factors influencing political behavior and electoral/voting behavior as well as the nature of the political culture that characterizes the voting behavior. Although Sudan shares a number of factors with other African countries, it distinguishes itself by religiousness mixed with 'sectarianism' – apart from ethnicity and tribalism. The article categorizes the ethnic and religious sectarianism as a form of "social forces," along with a synthesis to portray the areas of convergence among the variables affecting the voting behavior.

I adopt a special criterion for categorizing political parties, with respect to elections and voting behavior. According to this typology, political parties and groups here fall into two categories: (1) the "traditional" political parties: this includes all those which are not doctrinal or non-ideological. They usually lean on such sources of allegiance or motives of affiliation as the clan, the tribe, broad ethnicity or race, regional or local community or the like. They also include independent candidates who are usually, and more likely, dependent on local or narrow belonging such as the clan, tribe, or the like. Elections in Sudan have rarely been won by any independent candidate thanks to belonging to "modern" associations such as a professional group, class, occupation, or for his socio-economic status; (2) the other category includes doctrinal or ideological parties. In the empirical analysis provided by this article, traditional parties refer to sectarian/religious parties and ethnic and regional/racial groups – particularly with respect to those of the South, East or the Nuba ethnicity in South Kordofan state. There are also "independent" groups as they had not adopted any ideological orientation in their rhetoric, slogans or programs. The second category includes such parties as the Communists and the Ba'athist, besides the Muslim Brothers.

The interplay of these variables – political behavior, electoral behavior and voting behavior – entails the integration of the micro unit of analysis – the individual – with the macro one, which might include "many institutional-structural, social-psychological, and directly political variables that influence the voting decision" (Encyclopedia, 1968; Marszałek-Kawa & Plecka, 2019). Also scholars, using both aggregate statistics and survey data, have come to seek insights into the macro aspects of the political process. This includes "the viability of political competition" (Key, 1956), the conditions of democratic consent (Janowitz & Marvik, 1956), the extent of cleavages and consensus in political systems (Lipset, 1960), the function of representation (Miller & Stokes, 1963), and the nature of democracy itself (Key, 1961).

Conceptual framework

As a matter of conceptual contextualization, electoral behavior, voting behavior and political participation correlate and converge on the central concept of "political behavior," which is partly manifested in voting. In general theoretical terms, one cannot discuss political voting without considering other relevant concepts and dynamics, such as political behavior, political culture, elections, and political participation or civic engagement in politics.

Political culture

Political culture is defined by the *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (1972) as "the set of attitudes, beliefs and sentiments that give order and meaning to a political process and which provide the underlying assumptions and rules that govern behavior in the political system". It encompasses both the political ideals and operating norms of a polity. Therefore, political culture is thus the manifestation in aggregate form of the psychological and subjective dimensions of politics. It is the product of both the collective history of a political system and the life histories of the members of the system and thus it is rooted equally in public events and private experience (Freedman, 1968, p. 218).

According to G. Almond (2011) it is also "the set of attitudes, beliefs and sentiments that give order and meaning to a political process and which provide the underlying assumptions and rules that govern behavior in the political system" (Almond, et al., 2011, p. 48). Here, the media impact interacts with political culture in influencing the individual's perception of politics, the political system and, hence, the individual's attitude to (or decision on) political participation – including voting. Media agenda setting and media framing of public opinion matter here. In addition, media campaign activities have "a positive effect on voter mobilization and voter turnout…" (Sarah et al., 2018, p. 98).

Moreover, political culture influences political behavior through political socialization. Political behavior is also influenced by partisanship (party identification/party allegiance). It is difficult to measure which factor has the greatest share in influencing political behavior as many other factors intervene, such as religion, class, ethnicity, socio-economic status (SES), party allegiance or the quality of democracy.

Political behavior

Settle (2014) defines political behavior as "the study of the way people thinks, feel, and act with regard to politics" (Settle, 2014). The area of research in political behavior embraces a spectrum of issues and concepts including public opinion, ideology, partisanship, political knowledge, participation, campaigns, the media and polarization. Hence, in dealing with political behavior, political scientists raised questions such as: do political campaigns and the media influence the electorate's vote choices? What drives public opinion? How sophisticated is the public thinking about politics? Can people make reasoned political decisions? Why do people vote?

As regards the issue of voting behavior, several concepts, such as electoral behavior, political participation, and political culture, overlap and converge on "political behavior". In other words, electoral behavior, political participation, and voting behavior are in the final analysis manifestations of political behavior. This overlapping necessitates an interdisciplinary approach that combines sociology, psychology, mass media and economics besides politics in the analysis.

According to the International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences (1968) political behavior analysis refers to several modes and methods of inquiry in the discipline of political science that have the following four general characteristics (Encyclopedia…, 1968):

1. Political behavior analysis takes the individual person's behavior – broadly conceived as including not only his/her acts but also his/her orientations to action (identifications, demands, expectations, evaluations) – as the empirical unit of analysis… Nonetheless, individual political behavior is seen as deriving its meaning and significance from the institutional context in which it occurs.
2. Political behavior analysis chooses a frame of reference that is shared by behavioral sciences, notably anthropology, psychology, and sociology… it is bound to consider the possible effect of social, cultural, and personal factors on political behavior.
3. Political behavior analysis chooses propositions about politics that lend themselves to operational formulation for the purposes of empirical research.
4. Political behavior analysis chooses methods and techniques of inquiry that permit as rigorous treatment as possible of theoretical

formulations and empirical data for the purposes of description and the testing of hypotheses.

Theories of political behavior, as an aspect of political science, attempt to quantify and explain the influences that define a person's political views, ideology, and levels of political participation. Theorists who have had an influence on this field include Karl Deutsch and Theodor Adorno.

There are three main sources of influence that shape political orientation, which creates long-term effects. Generally, the primary influence originates from family. As stated previously, children will often adopt their parents' ideological values. Some theorists have argued that family tends to be the strongest, most influential force which exists over one's lifetime; one essay has credited most of the student activism of the 1930s to the influence of parents: Clark, William Roberts, Matt Golder, and Sona N. Golder 2013, "Power and politics: insights from an exit, voice, and loyalty game".

Secondly, teachers and other educational authorities figures have a significant impact on political orientation. From as early as the age of four up to 18, children spend about 25% of their time involved in educational processes (Gidengil; Elisabeth; Hanna; Valaste; Maria, 2016). Post-secondary education significantly raises the impact of political awareness and orientation; an October 2004 study of 1,202 college undergraduates across the United States showed that 87% of college students were registered to vote, compared to a national average of 64% of American adults. A study at Santa Clara University also showed that 84% of students there were registered to vote. It should also be emphasized that childhood and adolescent stages of personal growth have the highest level of impressionability (Giengil et al., 2016).

Thirdly, peers also affect political orientation. Friends often, but not necessarily, have the advantage of being part of the same generation, which collectively develops a unique set of societal issues; Eric L. Dey argues that "socialization is the process through which individuals acquire knowledge, habits, and value orientations that will be useful in the future" (Dey, 2018). The ability to relate on this common level is the means to shape ideological growth.

Short-term factors also affect voting behavior; the media and the impact of individual election issues are among them. These factors differ from the long-term factors as they are often short-lived. However, they can be just as crucial in modifying political orientation. The ways in which these two sources are interpreted often relies on the individual's specific political ideology formed by the long-term factors.

Most political scientists agree that mass media have a profound impact on voting behavior.

Second, there are election issues. These include campaign issues, debates and commercials. Election years and political campaigns can shift certain political behaviors based on the candidates involved, with different degrees of effectiveness in influencing voters.

Furthermore, there is the influence of social groups on political outcomes. A number of political sciences studies aimed to analyze the relation between the behavior of social groups and the political outcomes. Some of the social groups included in these studies have been age demographics, gender, and groups. For example, in U.S. politics, the effect of ethnic groups and gender has a great influence on the political outcomes (Stokes, p. 392).

Electoral behavior

According to Mackenzie (1968), elections constitute the basis of a legitimate claim to hold office. Elections "may be considered as one procedure for aggregating preferences of a particular kind …a form of procedure, recognized by the rules of an organization, whereby all or some of the members of organization choose a smaller number of persons or one person to hold office of authority in the organization" (Mackenzie, 1976, p. 1–2). However, boundaries are clearly demarcated here. It implies dealing with persons "acting within systems of ethical norms and legal procedures".

Stein Rokkan holds that elections are also "institutionalized procedures for the choosing of office holders by some or all of the recognized members of an organization" (Stein, 1968, p. 6).

It is generally recognized that the tenets of true democracy – since the Athenian time to date – should embrace the principle that "all governments owe their just powers to the consent of the governed and that in numerous societies this consent may be expressed by representatives freely elected on a basis of universal adult suffrage" (Mackenzie, 1968, p. 5).

Electoral behavior here raises such questions as "what do men think they are doing when they participate in elections?" (Mackenzie, 1968b). The article does not deal with "electoral behavior" as a central concept here because it could be envisaged as a dependent variable. It is a product of – or influenced by – political culture, the degree of political

participation or engagement, electoral systems, as well as manifested in voting or voting behavior – to a large extent. In other words, voting behavior in this context is inclusive to electoral behavior – though elections may take other forms or means apart from voting. Scientists believe that "the study of electoral behavior may be viewed as concerned more narrowly with the formation and expression of individual preferences" (Stokes, 1968b).

However, elections remain only one of many different procedures used to ensure legal succession to office in different organizations and societies. This means distinguishing election from appointment or co-option. In England, "election" is a good word; "patronage" is a bad word, and "co-option" lies in between. (Mackenzie, 1968c). A person co-opted would be a colleague; a person appointed could be a subordinate…; a person elected would hold an office of authority, which may include authority over those who elected him. Therefore, election does not necessarily entail voting; in certain societies, the proper procedure for election is by council, in others by acclamation, and in yet others by voting (Mackenzie, 1968).

Voting behavior

Voting behavior is the product of or is influenced by pre-elections processes and variables – such as political participation (participatory behavior), partisanship, and political culture. In other words, it depends on other variables. It is a manifestation of "political behavior". It is also a part of "electoral behavior". However, electoral behavior is broader as it includes other activities and players, such as party politics, mobilization, electoral rhetoric, campaigns, media role or the like.

According to Stokes (1968) voting is "a means of aggregating individual preferences into collective decisions". It refers to how people decide how to vote. This decision is shaped by a complex interplay between an individual voter's attitudes and social factors. Voters' attitudes include characteristics such as ideological predisposition, party identity, the degree of satisfaction with the existing government, public policy leanings, and feelings about a candidate's personality traits. Social factors include race, religion and degree of religiosity, social and economic class, educational level, regional characteristics, and gender.

The degree to which a person identifies with a political party influences voting behavior, "How Identity Shapes Voting Behavior" (Jenke & Huettel, 2016). Voters' decision-making is not a purely rational endeavor but it is profoundly influenced by personal and social biases and deeply held beliefs as well as characteristics such as personality, memory, emotions, and other psychological factors (Caplan, 2007).

The existing body of literature does not provide an explicit classification of voting behavior types. However, the research following the Cypriot referendum of 2004, identified **four distinct voting behaviors** depending on the election type. Citizens use different decision criteria if they are called to exercise their right to vote in **i)** presidential, ii) legislative, iii) local elections or in a **iv)** referendum (Andreadis et al., 2005). It is remarkable that in national elections it is usually the norm that people vote based on their political beliefs. Local and regional elections differ as people tend to elect those who seem more capable to contribute to their area. A referendum follows logic as people are specifically asked to vote for or against a clearly defined policy (Andreadis, 2005).

Interestingly, an older study in postwar Japan identified that urban citizens were more likely to be supportive of socialist parties, while rural citizens were favorable of conservative parties. Regardless of the political preference, this interesting differentiation can be attributed to affective influence (Kyogoku & Ike, 1960). Richard Rose and Harve Massavir point out that voting covers as many as six important functions:

1. It involves the individual's choice of governors or major governmental policies;
2. it permits individuals to participate in a reciprocal and continuing exchange of influence with office-holders and candidates;
3. it contributes to the development or maintenance of and individual's allegiance to the existing constitutional regime;
4. it contributes to the development or maintenance of a voter's disaffection with the existing constitutional regime;
5. it has emotional significance for individuals; and
6. for some individuals, it may be functionless, i.e., devoid of any emotional or political significant personal consequences.

Research on voting behavior may also need to benefit from political psychology. Political psychology researchers study ways in which **affective influence** may help voters make more informed voting choices with some proposing that affection may explain how the electorate makes informed political choices despite low overall levels of political attentiveness and sophistication (Goldman,

1966). In connection with it, Marcus, Neuman & MacKuen (2000) noted that research in political science "has traditionally ignored non-rational considerations in its theories of mass political behavior, but the incorporation of social psychology has become increasingly common. In exploring the benefits of affect on voting, researchers have argued that affective states, such as anxiety and enthusiasm, encourage the evaluation of new political information and thus benefit political behavior by leading to more considered choices" (Marcus, Neuman & MacKuen, 2000).

Others, however, have discovered ways in which affect, such as emotions and moods, can significantly bias the voting choices of the electorate. For example, evidence has shown that a variety of events that are irrelevant to the evaluation of candidates but can stir emotions, such as the outcome of football matches and weather, can have a significant impact on voting decisions (Healy, 2010).

Moreover, several variables have been proposed that may moderate the relationship between emotion and voting. Researchers have shown that one such variable may be political sophistication, with higher sophistication voters more likely to experience emotions in response to political stimuli and thus more prone to emotional biases in voting choices. Affective intensity has also been shown to moderate the relationship between affect and voting, with one study finding a doubling of estimated impact for higher-intensity affective shocks (Miller, 2011) and (Parker, Isbell, 2010). Therefore, voting behavior is the last phase of the electoral behavior. They are both processes that are a manifestation of political behavior. It is an intermediary variable as it is also a manifestation of political culture and political participation.

Synthesis

In developing states, in particular, apart from the rigorous influence of social forces on voting behavior, there are other factors with considerable impact as well. To cite some: political culture and political participation. These are also influenced by such factors as political socialization, the media and partisanship. "Studies of both adult electors and children have shown that partisan ties often extend back deep into childhood, with the family as the main agency of political socialization" (Stokes). Adult studies relying on a recall of early partisanship have repeatedly shown that large majorities of electors continue to hold the party allegiances of their parents (Greenstein, 1965).

Generally, these concepts: **electoral behavior**, voting behavior, political behavior, political culture, and political participation, are so interrelated with respect to political processes and the functioning of the political system. For more than half a century, they have been the subject of joint thematic interest for interdisciplinary studies along with multi-method research. For instance, Mariam and Gosnell (1924) surveyed electors in early 1920s, and by mid 1930s, several commercial opinion-polling organizations were engaged in sample surveys. However, the true potential of such studies was first clearly displayed by Erie County (Ohio) project of Lazars Feld and his associates (Lazars Feld et al., 1944), which was also the first "panel" study involving the repeated interviews of the same electors. This and a companion study (Bereleson et al., 1954) inspired local electoral surveys in other countries (Degras et al., 1954) and were of great influence in the later nation-wide studies by the University of Michigan Survey Research Center Group (Campbell et al., 1954; Michigan…, 1960).

Parallel to this were the electoral studies conducted by Lipset and his coauthors (Lipset et al., 1954), who examined the voting patterns of different ethnic, racial, religious, class and other groupings. These studies took into consideration the psychological factors, which might intervene between social characteristics and political behavior. They also reviewed the evidence of higher participation among certain sociologically defined groups in Western nations, offering explanatory hypotheses, which were based on inferences from what was known of these groups (Sills, 1968, p. 389).

These studies also noted that "since there is typically more variation of voting behavior than of social structure, short-run political variations are difficult to explain in terms of social-structural factors and that the conservative role of party loyalties can preserve the political tradition of local areas over long periods of time despite gross changes of social structure and economic activity" (Key & Munger, 1959) Sudan is a good example in this context.

Some other scientists (Berelson et al., 1954; Campbell et al., 1954) gave more attention to psychological factors such as party identification, issue orientation, and candidate orientation as three factors in the field of psychological forces immediately influencing electoral behavior and treated the length the causal dependence of these forces on antecedent social, economic, cultural and other factors. Furthermore, the British Community studies conducted by Milne and Mackenzie (1954;

1958) also gave close attention to the party images formed by electors, although these studies are less clear on the relation of such perceptual factors to the voter's behavior (Sills, 389). Hence, the issue addressed in this paper entails studying the impact of different sociological, psychological and political factors on voting behavior.

Theories of Voting Behavior

The Sociological Model (Columbia School of Voting Behavior). In 1939, the discipline of psychology entered the field of election studies when Paul Lazars Feld along with other colleagues at Columbia University planned a systematic study of presidential elections of 1940 in Erie County (Visser, 1994) of New York State. This pioneering study explaining factors influencing individuals' voting decisions was the first to be based on survey methods and compiled in the form of a book, entitled: "The People's Choice: How the Voter Makes Up His Mind in a Presidential Campaign". This study conducted by scholars at Columbia University's Applied Bureau of Social Research ultimately led to the emergence of the sociological model of voting behavior also known as the Columbia Model of voting behavior (Antunes, 2010; Hutchings & Jefferson, 2018). The basic assumptions of this model are explained in three major works: "The People's Choice: How the Voter Makes up His Mind in a Presidential Campaign", "Voting: A Study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Campaign", and "Personal Influence: The Part Played by People in the Flow of Mass Communications", published in 1944, 1954, and 1955, respectively (Antunes, 2010).

This theory of voting behavior focuses on the individual and the social structure surrounding him/her. Thus, it places votes in social context and then studies the effects of variables such as social class, religion, nationalism, language, and rural-urban divisions (Scott & Marshall, 2009; Hutchings & Jefferson, 2018; Antwi, 2018). According to this theory, individuals learn their partisan predilections corresponding to the political orientations of the group to which they belong (Aiba, 2003).

The Columbia team of researchers selected a panel of 600 respondents whom they interviewed seven times before the elections (Bartels, 2010). One of the goals of this study was to ascertain the impact of mass media on voters' decision-making process. The results shocked the researchers as 546 out of 600 respondents had already made

their voting decisions even before the campaign started. Thus, in its analysis the research team put more emphasis on external factors, especially the influence of voters' primary groups. According to the findings of this study, social forces determine voting decisions. The researchers found that social groups' active members (opinion-makers) interposed between the media content and the members of the social groups, thus disseminating media messages in the less involved (less active) group members in a way appropriate for the political standards of the group members (Visser, 1994).

The research team discovered that social groups to which voters belonged played the decisive role in voters' decision-making process. The investigators argued that the relationship between voting behavior and voters' social groups was so strong that voters' choices could be explained by just focusing on three elements: religion, the socio-economic class or status, and a place of residence. The combination of these three was termed as the "Index of Political Predisposition" (IPP). The case of Sudan supports this empirical finding. It showed that instead of election campaigns and debates on issues by the candidates, the undecided voters or those who changed their mind during the campaign were pressurized by their fellow social group members to vote for a particular candidate (Antunes, 2010).

It also found out that voters' choices "...were rooted in the strong loyalties of social class and religion reinforced by interactions with like-minded acquaintances" (Bartels, 2010). The researchers claimed that these predispositions activated by the electoral campaigns were linked with social characteristics called IPP (Hutchings & Jefferson, 2018).

The second study reaffirmed the fundamental role of religion, socio-economic status, a place of residence, and race in shaping voting behavior. According to the proponents of this model, the family has a deep impact on the political socialization of children and their attachment to a particular party. According to David Denver, as quoted by Dinas (2017, p. 266), it is through family socialization that people come to know about the "goodies and the baddies" in the political environment surrounding them. Thus, partisan inclinations among people precede a rational and articulate understanding of politics. Children's views shaped by their parents remain the same even after they no longer live with their parents. Research studies have established that the level of partisan

similarity between children's and parents remains high and wears away slowly during adult life.

This approach gets hold of attitudinal (psychological) factors as dependent variables caused by the daily experiences of the individuals in social relations (Aiba, 2003). Therefore, political parties and candidates have little chance to change voters' attitudes in their favor (Visser, 1994). According to the authors of the Columbia team, "a person thinks, politically, as he/she is, socially. Social characteristics determine political preference" (Visser, 1994, p. 46).

Like class, religion also shapes people's perceptions. The difference between the two is that class shapes perception based on the redistribution of resources while religion does so on other grounds (Evans & Ball, 2018). Being a member of a religious group is something more than just identification with this group. A devoted member of a religious group is supposed to take part in specific religious services and adhere to certain behavioral norms enforced through "social control or social pressure.: Deviation from certain norms may lead to some consequences for the group member. Thus, there develops a link between the membership of a religious group and voting, which then leads to the "social predisposition" of casting votes for particular parties/candidates (Elff & Roßteutscher, 2017, p. 202).

Psychosocial Model (Michigan Model of Voting Behaviour). Following Columbia School (and due to some shortcomings therein), the next important development in electoral studies came from a team of researchers at the University of Michigan (Bartels, 2010). A group of scholars at the University of Michigan, while criticizing the Columbia Model, developed an alternative model of voting behavior known as the Michigan Model of voting behavior (Visser, 1994). This model was developed as a result of studies on 1948, 1952, and 1956 presidential elections carried out by researchers like Campbell, Kahn, Gurin, Miller, Converse, and Stokes in the Survey Research Center (SRC), the University of Michigan. The findings of these studies were compiled in the form of well-known books like "The People Elect a President", "The Voter Decides", and "The American Voter". Several other institutions (Antunes, 2010) then took the theoretical work started by SRC forward.

The SRC team again conducted post-election interviews to evaluate the impact of different sociological, psychological, and political factors on voting behavior (Bartels, 2010). The findings of this study were presented in 1952 in the form of

"The People Elect a President" (Visser, 1994, p. 46). After this study, the SRC conducted four national surveys from 1952 to 1958 and teams of inter-disciplinary researchers analyzed the data. Unlike the surveys of the Columbia team, the samples for surveys conducted by the Michigan team were taken from across the country (Bartels, 2010).

The psychosocial model focuses on political factors as the determinants of voting behavior (Antunes, 2010) as it links voting decisions to the psychological predispositions of voters like their party identifications and attitudes towards the candidates, etc. (Scott & Marshall, 2009). The model identifies six psychological factors that may influence voters' decision-making process. These factors are: (I) Party identification, (II) Concerns with issues, (III) Personal attachment to candidates, (IV) Conformity to the group standards, (V) Sense of efficacy, and (VI) Sense of civic obligation to vote. Of these six factors, party identification, candidate orientation, and issue orientation are considered the most important ones (Aiba, 2003). Party identification means the psychological attachment of a person with a specific political party. Issue orientation means a voter's attitude toward issues highlighted during an election campaign, while candidate orientation means voters' attitudes toward the personal qualities and performance of a particular candidate.

The central theme of this model is partisanship or party identification. According to this model, partisanship is durable association with a political party that does not necessarily mean formal registration as its member or constantly voting for it (Antunes, 2010). It argues that partisanship is the outcome of the pre-adult socialization of individuals under the influence of their parents. The scholars proposing this model argued that individuals develop partisanship under parental influence just like their acquisition of religious beliefs. For substantiating this claim, they claimed that the survey data showed that an overwhelming majority of their respondents were likely to identify themselves with parties with which their parents identified themselves (Hutchings & Jefferson, 2018).

In Sudan, although no survey study has ever been conducted to evaluate or verify the parental impact on their sons' political or voting behavior, the Uprising of December 2018 ushered in a general trend of criticizing the "traditional" sectarian parties and revealed a deviation from the parents' line. The youth, who constituted the spearhead of the Uprising, started criticizing those political

parties for not meeting their aspirations nor coping with contemporary changes. This is a significant indication if one considers the fact that young people constitute a majority of the population of Sudan. It should be pointed out that – according to official statistics of the latest census – the population under 25 years old accounts for 61.5% (2011). However, the matter requires adequate empirical verification to predict how far the "traditional" parties in Sudan will suffer in the future in terms of losing a great deal of past supporters.

Generally, the central idea of the psychosocial model is that voters' evaluation of candidates in elections is mainly guided by their psychological sense of attachment to a political party (Green & Baltes, 2017). It argues that partisanship provides shortcuts to voters due to which they require less amount of information to process. They do not need to take pains in understanding complex ideological and issue positions as political parties provide them with cues about them (Bowler, 2018). Partisanship provides simple and important signals to voters while making complex political decisions (Bonneau & Cann, 2013). According to the psychosocial theory, party identification becomes part of the identity of voters like their national identity.

Rational Choice Model of Voting Behavior. The third and last model of voting behavior is the Rational-Choice Model, which tries to explain individuals' voting behavior in economic terms (Antunes, 2010). This model claims that individuals' voting behavior is an outcome of cost-benefit analysis (Scott & Marshall, 2009). The Rational Choice Theory of Voter Behavior is one of the earliest attempts at assigning an economic explanation to voters' decision-making (Downs, 1957). Based on the assumption that people are rational actors, the decision to vote is guided by self-interest and utility maximization. As defined by the theory, utility is "a measure of benefits in a citizen's mind which he uses to decide among alternative courses of action" (Downs, 1957, p. 36).

The theory's core is that the individual will vote when the expected benefits outweigh the costs and abstain when they do not, implying that a utility function guides the decision to vote. The most influential introducers of Rational Choice Theory in electoral studies were economists Anthony Downs, Duncan Black, and Kenneth Arrow. Anthony Downs' seminal book (An Economic Theory of Democracy) is considered to be the foundational work for engaging the Rational Choice Model for the study of voting behavior. In this book,

Downs argues that voters would assess candidates and their electoral platforms and would vote for the party based on promises it made to deliver (Stegmaier, Lewis-Beck & Park, 2017). The proponents of this model argue that voters adjust their affiliation with political parties during every election while keeping in view economic conditions and political parties' approach to them (Antunes, 2010).

Downs expressed this point in the following words: Our main thesis is that parties in democratic politics are analogous to entrepreneurs in a profit-seeking economy. So, to attain their private ends, they formulate whatever policies they believe will gain the most votes, just as entrepreneurs produce whatever products they believe will gain the most profits for the same reason. To examine the implications of this thesis, we have assumed that citizens behave rationally in politics. This premise is itself a second major hypothesis (Downs, 1957, pp. 295–296). Downs further argues that neither political parties nor voters are interested in ideologies. According to him, ideologies – for parties – are the means for getting votes while for voters – they are the means to reduce the costs of political information. Voters simplify the choice between parties because they do not need to get thorough information about a party's potential activities if it came into power.

The determinants of voting behavior in Sudan

It is difficult to measure which of the various factors/determinants have the greatest share or highest impact on voting behavior. The variation in communities, the nature or type of the political system, the level of political culture and the quality of democracy, and many other variables contribute to the complications. In some societies, such factors as class, gender, age, and socio-economic status may be more effective.

In other societies, one may find a different set of forces, such as social forces (ethnicity, tribe, religion and sects), more influential in voting behavior. In the third type, one may find that party affiliation, ideological belonging and professional associations are more decisive in voting decision. Therefore, the case study method is advisable here. With respect to Sudan, it is a traditional political community with some features of modernity that started to show up gradually in the urban centers. However, this relative modernization process has

not had discernible impact on political/voting behavior yet.

Some scholars advocate the sociological model of the determinants of voting behavior, which relates to "the social position of the individual, including gender, age, social class or education. The size of the association of these factors with voting decisions might be relatively stable over time, although it can change in response to structural changes at the contextual level" (Lazarsfeld et al., 1948).

Moreover, the determinants also include "the role played by social-psychological elements, mainly ideological predispositions. One of the central elements of the original social psychological model of voting behavior was party identification." (Campbell et al., 1960); However, in multiparty systems "…ideology plays a similar role in the decision-making process of voters" (Inglehart & Sidjanski, 1976).

One may argue that the determinants of political behavior in Sudan are also the determinants of voting behavior. Sudan's case – to a greater extent – corresponds with the empirical findings of the theory of the "Columbia school of Voting Behavior", which states that social forces determine voting decisions. In Sudan, social forces are manifest in such traditional groupings as clans, tribe, racial and ethnic entities, as well as religious sectarianism (Sufi Tariqas).

As has been pointed out in the theoretical background of this study, the central concept in the study of voting behavior is the "political behavior", which constitutes the orbit of various factors interacting in the political system or interplay in political process. For instance, political culture is reflected in political behavior: the quality of political participation depends on the degree of political culture; party politics reflects the level of the elites' political culture, and so forth.

Political participation in Sudan is largely motivated not only by partisan affiliation but also by religious/sectarian belongings. Political attitudes are partly shaped by deep loyalty to *Sufi* traditions or allegiance to the leader of *Sunni* religious sect. Tribe or ethnicity and other forms of traditional reference groups play a considerable part in shaping political behavior and attitudes in Sudan.

Unfortunately, this conscious group mind of the Sudanese people has always been let down by the political elite. The political institutions are lagging far behind the peoples' drive for conscious political participation. A new generation appeared within the so-called "traditional" political parties,

namely the *Umma* Party (UP, of the *Mahdists*) and the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP, of the *Khatmiyya* religious sect). This young generation has exerted pressure on the old leaders to give way to the youth to assume leadership and modernize the parties to cope with the changed circumstances and to enable broader participation beyond the limits set by the mentality of the parochial sectarian leaders.

However, there was a paradigm shift starting from the first decade of the third Millennium with the Internet and social media becoming accessible worldwide. In Sudan, students' politics was of great significance particularly under the military dictatorships and totalitarian rules (1958–1964, 1969–1985, and 1989–2019), where out of 66 years of independent democracy only two transitional governments survived the total of nine years. Students' politics, which continued in the campus – although sporadically undermined by security interventions – sustained the continuity of democratic traditions. Some sort of political culture developed among students and relatively conscious political behavior was maintained among this educated group, better off than in the society where the political parties were banned by the three military regimes.

Hence, a trend of political consciousness developed and accumulated over the years. The three military dictatorships that governed the country since gaining independence (1956) were toppled by popular revolts. The October Revolution of 1964 led by students and supported by the masses, ended the six-year military rule of General Ibrahim Abboud (1958–1964). The second was the 16-year-old military regime of general J. M. Numairi (1969––1985), who was compelled by a week-long popular unrest and demonstrations to surrender to the upheaval (*al-intifada*) and handed power to a civil rule after a one-year transitional government. The third was in December 2018 – April 2019, which toppled the 30-year-long Militant Islamist Regime (MIR) of General Omer al-Beshir (1989–2019).

It must be noted that human and social factors which enable effective participation, such as demographic patterns or a stage of social development as indicated by the degree of "detribalization," should be taken into consideration. However, a high level of education and literacy is not always necessary for the effective participation in direct elections. Also, in the case of Sudan, some note that the extent to which an individual can participate effectively depends on how he (she) can master the following four steps (Nhial, 1973, p. 81):

(i) He (she) must comprehend the notion of delegating authority. To this end, the Sudanese use the council in a clan or a tribe, whereby their tribal leaders may represent individuals, notably in the rural areas. It is a part of the traditional custom of decision-making;

(ii) He (she) must comprehend the notion of formal elections for an "Assembly." This aspect was undoubtedly the most difficult. Traditional men, such as nomads, could not readily perceive why it was necessary for them to formally select a delegate who could not represent them as they already had a tribal leader. Yet, in the south of Sudan, for instance, this difficulty was overcome by efforts on the part of native leaders in explaining that it was necessary to elect representatives to talk to the government on their behalf, voice their grievances, provide services and achieve development;

(iii) The voter must be able to comprehend the registration and voting procedures. As the example of the people of the south of Sudan showed, these matters can be taught relatively easily;

(iv) Voters can make a reasonable choice if they are made familiar with the candidates and issues (Nhial, 1973, p. 98);

(v) One may claim that the Sudanese voters with little effort of mobilization and campaign are kept well informed and§ are more familiar with local and national issues than voters in many other countries – particularly in the Third World.

Even though the Sudanese public enjoys a relative degree of political awareness, has a desire to change and is inclined to political participation; the elites used to manipulate this trend to achieve their own interests. Candidates give high or unrealistic pledges to the voters but only a few of are kept. During canvassing and voting times, whether under totalitarian or democratic regimes, people are taken by vehicles to attend a political rally of a candidate or to polling stations. The focus is greater on women, who, in a patriarchal society like Sudan, vote as their fathers or elders order them to.

However, such deeds (of manipulation) are not expected to survive any longer, as a wave of awareness has been boosted during the last three decades due to many factors – namely, an increase in literacy and the growth of the educated class, the impact of globalization and the intensive interaction through the social media. This is in addition to the fact that most of the population in Sudan today is conscious young people with new visions and aspirations, who pose a challenge to the "traditional" parties to retain the same size of voters as they had enjoyed in the past.

Empirical explanations

The determinants of voting behavior are inseparable from the determinants in civic participation in politics. Many factors either influence or foster political participation or motivate people to engage in political processes. However, there are variations in the degree of impact of different factors or determinants in different states – namely established democracies vs emerging democracies. The Sudan provides a good example in this context.

The case of Sudan ascertains the empirical evidence made by the study conducted by the Columbia team of researcher on the "impact of mass media on voter's decision-making process". It came out with a finding emphasizing external action, notably" the influence of voter's primary groups" (Bartels, 2010).

Although ethnicity is so influential in political and voting behavior in Sudan, it is not the only important factor. Sectarianism and "sophism" (a religious path of the Sunni Muslims) are also powerful factors. However, the two sets of factors (i.e., ethnicity and religion) are not always separable in political manipulation or vote seeking campaigns. Candidates are more likely to combine both in their competition.

In Sudan – as indicated before – it is not the socio-economic status, or class or professional identification that influence political, electoral, or voting behavior. Other factors, such as ethnicity and religion, play a decisive role here. However, the political leaders always try to manipulate this religious sentiment and adopt a rhetoric that touches on it by, for example, pledging to serve Islamic institutions – such as mosques, Khalawi (traditional religious schools), or even a promise to apply Sharia' – as the Islamic Movement does by raising slogans for these promises. The major issue here is ethnicity along with party identification. Religion comes next, particularly when rivalry takes place on the ideological basis – notably the right versus the left (secularists and communists). Here, voters are bound to political leaders based on religion, ethnicity or race more than on other bases – geographical, class, professional or the like.

Table 1. The parliamentary elections in Sudan (1954): the House of Representative

The party	Seats scored	Notes
The National Unionist Party	51	Sectarian (Khatmiyya* Sophists)
The Umma Party **	22	Sectarian (Mahdism)
Independent Southerners	04	(prior to secession)
The Socialist Republicans	03	Doctrinal (ideological)
The Southern Political Alliance	03	Regional/racial
Anti-Colonial Front	01	nationalist
Total	**97**	

 * Khatmiyya (the Mirghaniayya): a sophist religious sect originated outside Sudan and was brought in by Muhammad Othman Al-Mirghani. Most of its disciples belong to East Sudan, the North besides the central Sudan, as compared to the disciples of the Mahdi, who, although coming from the North, are the residents of the West (Darfur and Kordofan) beside the White Nile state in central Sudan. The word '*Khatmiyya'* is the name of the Tariqa (a sectarian/sophist path).

** Umma: means 'nation'.

Table 2. The elections in the second democracy in Sudan: 1965–1969

The party	No. of Seats	Notes
The Umma Party	82	the Ansar* of the Mahdi
The Democratic Unionist Party	71	Khatmiyya Sophist sect
Independent candidates	15	no party affiliation
Nuba Mountains Union	10	Ethnic group
The Sudanese Communist Party	00	Marxist ideology
SANU* Party	10	Southern party (pre-secession)
The Beja Congress	10	Ethnic
Islamic Charter Front	05	Muslim Brothers (doctrinal)
The Southern Liberal Party	02	Southern Party (prior to secession)
Unity Party	02	–
Total	**217**	

 * ***Ansar***: is an Arabic word, means the disciples of Muhammad Ahmed Al-Mahdi, the leader of Mahdism in Sudan. He was sophist and then turned into a revolutionary and Islamic activist who led an Islamic revivalism in Sudan in late 1880s. He defeated the Turko-Egyptian Khedive rule and established the Mahdist State in 1885.

** **SANU**: The Sudan African Nationalist Union (a nationalist-oriented party claiming to be trans-ethnic one) in South Sudan.

Table 3. The elections of the 3rd democracy in Sudan: 1986

The Party	Seats scored	Notes
The Umma Party	100	Mahdist sect
The Democratic Unionist Party (DUP)	63	Khatmiyya Sophist sect
The National Islamic Front	28	Muslim Brothers
The Sudanese National Party*	08	Nuba Ethnic group
SAPCO** Party	07	Southern/regionalist
The Sudanese Alliance for S. Sudan	07	–
Independent candidates	06	Non-doctrinal
The Sudanese Communist Party	02	Ideologue
The People's Federal Party	01	Non-doctrinal
The Sudanese African Congress	01	Regionalist
The Beja Congress	01	Ethnic
Rural Solidarity Forces	00	Regionalist group
The Arab B'ath Socialist Party	00	Doctrinal
The People's Progressive party	00	Non-doctrinal
Total	**224**	

*   This party draws its membership purely from the Nuba ethnic group in South Kordofan state. Its leader was (the late) Fillip Abbas Gabboush who ran elections in a constituency in the outskirts of the capital Khartoum inhabited by the Nuba tribes, who were forced out of their residential area of the Nuba Mountains in S. Kordofan because of the war. Paradoxically, he claimed that his party was a "national" one as he won elections in the capital (Khartoum state).

** SAPCO: The Sudanese African Party Congress.

It is notable that many political parties in South Sudan – prior to secession in 2011 – have the word "Africa/n" in their names. This denotes a racial identification, "African/Nilotic," tribes against the "Arab/Muslim" groups of the North (albeit not all of the Northerners are Arab). However, they are held together as one identity by the Arab culture/language and Islam.

Based on this typology, the party identification in Sudan can fall within the following broad categories: (1) the traditional forces of identification: ethnic/racial and sectarian identification. The two components are congruent and manifest traditional belonging (of sub-national identities) that influences both political and voting behavior against "modern" identifications; (2) *modern* identifications: this includes such types of identification as doctrinal, occupational, geographical, class or the like.

Therefore, the tables above show how far political and electoral/voting behavior is influenced by traditional factors and parochial political culture in Sudan.

In table one: the two sectarian parties – the National Unionist and the Umma – scored 73 seats (51+22) out of (93). This translates into more than 75% of the seats in the parliament of 1954. This means these two sectarian parties outweigh all other groups (the independent, the doctrinal and the Southern regional/racial), who all together scored 11 seats out of 97 – about (25%). It is remarkable that even a party with a clear nationalistic appeal (the anti-colonial front) scored only one seat. The independents, who are Southerners (four seats) are counted as regional/racial since they normally gain votes at their constituencies relying on their tribes.

Table (2): the elections result of the second democracy in Sudan of 1986 reveals that: the two major, sectarian/religious-based parties, the DUP, and the Umma, scored 153 seats out of the Parliament's 217 seats. This means 70.5%. Moreover, based on the typology set by this article, it follows that the first category – the traditional one: which includes the DUP, the Umma, the Beja, the Nuba and the independents all together scored 188 seats out of 217. This means 86.6%. In turn, the doctrinal,

nationalistic and ideological scored only 13.4% of the seats. The second group includes the Islamic Charter Front (Muslim Brothers), which got five seats, and the Southern parties (SANU – 10 seats, the Southern Liberal Party – two, and the Unity Party – two). The Sudan Communist Party won no seat. This indicates that Communism is unacceptable to the Sudanese, people who consider communists as "infidel". Those elections results are also an obvious indicator of the dominance of the traditional category – denoting an overwhelming impact of narrow loyalties/allegiances and sub-national identities on political behavior and, eventually, voting behavior.

In table (3): the election results, of 1986, reveal the persistent dominance of the sectarian parties. The Umma Party scored 100 out of 224 seats, about 47%. It is a sectarian party where the majority of its members – and supporters – are those who belong to the sect of the Mahidi's *Ansars* (disciples). The other sectarian party (the DUP) ranked second with 63 seats. The two scored 163, about 72.8%, an absolute majority indicating the great influence of sectarianism on Sudan's politics and political behavior. Referring to the categorization applied to the former elections of 1965, it is notable that the first category (i.e., the traditional) remained dominant.

The Muslim brothers emerged as a new player on the scene by virtue of the new ideas and liberal trend adopted by its leader, Al-Turabi. He adopted a modernizing line; notably – penetrating students' and trade union bodies, new approach to woman participation, etc. They ranked third – after the two major sectarian parties, by winning 28 seats of the geographical constituencies, besides 23 seats out of 50 allocated to the so-called 'graduates' constituencies'. In addition, it is notable that the Ba'athist (leftist) won no seat, whereas the communists got two seats.

Generally, in 1986 elections, the traditionalists got 178 seats (79.5%) and the other group, the doctrinal/ideological and nationalistic, got 46 seats (20.5%). The latter, as compared to the previous elections (13% for the ideological parties) indicates a slight progress towards improvement in party identification type. However, the militant Islamic

movement, which assumed power by coup d'état in June 1989, interrupted this process of developing political culture. It was a real setback for democratization.

Furthermore, based on the above analysis of the empirical data, some significant remarks are worth mentioning:

(I) The two major "traditional" parties in Sudan – the Umma and the Democratic Unionist (DUP) – lack intra-party democracy. Partisan political behavior provides a typical example of patriarchy and patronage as party leaders stay in power for life. They enjoy semi-sacred status that transcend the status of a "charismatic leader" to personality cult. This symbolism – derived from sectarianism based on sophism – is deeply entrenched in the perception and attitudes of the disciples of the 'sophist *tariqa*' (the spiritual path to Allah as guided by the sophist leader). This sectarian-based party endows the leader with sacred prestige – like the case of the leader of the Sudanese Islamic Movement, Sheikh Hassan Abdallah Al-Turabi;

(II) The religious factor is a common denominator for the top three major political parties – Umma, DUP and the Islamic Movement. However, one can discern some differences with respect to their approach to religion as one determinant of political behavior and, hence, having an influence on electoral and voting behavior;

(III) Al-Turabi's Islamic movement tried to present itself as a modern political group. In its rhetoric, it appealed to the youth, penetrated trade unions and students' unions and encouraged women to increase their participation and enter all occupations, as Islam does not prohibit it as long as a woman sticks to the Islamic values – in appearance and behavior. It also recruited students at secondary schools and attracted members from professional associations;

(IV) The Islamic Movement rhetoric is emotionally loaded. They manipulate the psychological affection for Islam in the hearts of people to recruit members for their party. In addition, they mobilize people on the same ground. They portray themselves as keen to preserve Islam and defend it against its enemies – namely the secular West and the Leftists;

(V) Religion in the two parties (Umma and DUP) was confined to worship and holding up the party as a single coherent and united entity. Religion also enforces intra-party discipline and internal obedience. This enhances the spirit of patronage and perpetuates patriarchal tradition. For such characteristics, the leftists in Sudan used to label these parties as "reactionaries";

(VI) The sects of the two parties focus on sophist rituals more than on political action. However, during the turnout campaigns the two parties' candidates drew votes on sectarian basis. The leader of the DUP, Muhammad Othman Al-Mirghani, for instance, enjoys extraordinary support (or obedience) from the party's members as a religious leader rather than a political figure;

(VII) By contrast, Al-Turabi used religion for political gains. When he failed to score the highest number of votes in the 1986 elections and ranked third, after the Umma and the DUP, they (the Islamists) instigated their officers in the Army (who they had recruited since secondary schools) and assumed power following the coup d'état in June 1989;

(VIII) The Islamists resorted to religion as the driving force for political behavior, i.e., they politicized religion, giving birth to a new current of political Islam in Sudan. As they assumed power, they turned into a radical Jihadist movement. They went even further by supporting terrorism and harboring terrorists. This extremist political behavior of the Islamic Movement in Sudan manifested itself in their slogans, such as "Either resurrect the splendor of religion, or let the blood shed from all". They portrayed their war against the Southern rebel movement as a religious war that all Muslims (in north Sudan) should join and fight in support of the army. To that end, they established para-military forces and militias. This militarization of the state and society had escalated crises in the state where the armed movements appeared in many parts of the country, such as the Nuba ethnic group, the Negroes of the Blue Nile tribes, the tribes in East (specially the Beja ethnicity) and Darfur, which led to a large-scale war that was eventually internationalized. This extremist and radical political behavior of the Militant Islamic Regime (of

Gen. Omer Al-Bshir) caused isolation and sanctions that affected the economy and the Sudanese people, which eventually led to the Popular Uprising of 2018/2019;

(IX) In Sudan, politics – political behavior, in particular – and religion exert influence through sectarianism. It is obvious that the two main players in the political system of Sudan are the Umma and the DUP. They emerged in mid 1940s, developing out of two sects: the Mahdists and the Khatmiyya *Sufist* paths, respectively. These two major parties are sectarianist with some sort of regionalism and ethnicity in drawing electoral support. The first is the "Umma Party", the adherents of which are the "Ansar" (disciples of Mahdism), and the other is the "Democratic Unionist Party", the members of which belong to the Khatmiya *sufi* Taraiqa (sects);

(X) The Islamic activism was spearheaded by the Muslim Brothers in mid 1960s led by Hassan Abdallah Al-Turabi. Being an offshoot of the Egyptian one in late 1940s, it emerged in the political scene as "the Islamic Charter Front" in 1964 and called for drafting an Islamic constitution in Sudan. It became active in the society through 1970s, during the Military rule of Numairi (ended by a Popular Uprising in 1985). However, after splitting in mid 1970s, the defected faction led by Hassan Abdallah Al-Turabi took part in elections in 1986 – for the first time in the third democracy – under the name of the "National Islamic Front". Then it took the name of the "Islamic Movement" towards the end of 1980s, when it led a coup d'état and toppled the democratically elected government – led by Prime Minister Al-Sadiq Al-Mahdi, the leader of the Umma Party and Mahdist Ansar (adherents). However, Al-Turabi – who pledged to establish an Islamic state and ushered in the "civilizational project" – deviated and derailed into a militant and totalitarian corrupt regime that cracked down on the people who revolted against them in the Uprising of December 2018 – April 2019.

Actually, understanding the mechanisms of Sudan's politics is important to understand the nature of the determinants not only of the voting behavior, but also of the political behavior in general as well as the nature of the prevalent political culture.

One important fact here is that the Sudanese people are faithful, keen in observing the Islamic teachings to a great extent, and are moderate Muslims as well as peace-loving nation. Religion is a central issue in their life. This is why the secularists or the leftists – such as the Communists and Ba'athists – do not enjoy popular support for their ideologies and programs. Therefore, these doctrinal parties have never gained more than three seats in parliamentary elections.

One may argue that the obvious growth of tribal trends and ethnicity in political and voting behavior since gaining independence has weakened the major parties, and today people may vote on the regional or tribal basis rather than being driven by a party program. This is partly because political parties were banned for several years (namely for 30 years under Al-Behsir's MIR), whereas the political elites resorted to tribal leaders to mobilize their basis to support the one-party government. This also implied a great deal of polarization and increased ethnicity. To get appointed for a public post or win elections, the elite found no other way than to appeal to their tribes again – a distortion of the political process and a setback to a society, which has a constantly increasing rate of literacy and growing consciousness.

Conclusion

To introduce "change", the electoral system in Sudan needs reform. It is advisable to abandon the plurality majority system and adopt the proportional representation (PR). It has been a controversial issue in Sudan in the wake of the trend of democratization process implied in the transitional constitution and consolidated by the Comprehensive Peace Agreement 2005. One reason for this controversy was that some forces might lose their traditional monopoly of power, which they used to preserve through direct elections. Some suggested drafting the elections Act for a mixed system of elections: the FPTP and the PR. Some propose allotting 60% for direct elections (FPTP), 15% for PR, and 25% for women. Anyhow, it is debatable and needs thorough study so that the most suitable type of elections for Sudan would be chosen in order to sustain a sound democracy.

By late 2018, the mass mobilization against General Al-Beshir's Militant Islamic Regime ushered in a new era in Sudan's politics. In the wake of continuous demonstrations with heated debate among the elites and the public in social media throughout the transitional period, a wave of

political education ignited the political thought that will pave the way for developing sound political culture in Sudan. The accumulation of such intellectual activism, which paralleled the political interaction in the transitional political process, led to the development of new political awareness which will bring up a new generation in the political sphere.

Given such indications, one can predict that the "traditional" political parties will suffer a lot, not only with respect to recruiting new members, but also retaining the existing ones. The new young generation of the December Revolution (2018/19) is a generation with a new vision and different culture that transcend the traditional narrow belongings – of clan ethnicity, a sect, or a tribe – to national and modern associations. Thus, the political environment is now conducive to the emergence of mass parties, programmatic parties or catch-all parties. New parties may come into existence to embrace these new trends. Some new political parties – in this context – are underway.

The article proposes the adoption of Consociational democracy with proportional representation and a parliamentary system to guarantee the representation of minorities and sustain a fair share in power and wealth to put an end to instability and wars. In the case of Sudan, it is advisable that more attention should be paid to the development of political culture, efficacious civic engagement in politics, and conscious political participation to pave the way for sustainable democracy.

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