History repeats itself: uncovering recurring patterns in Sudanese politics

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ABSTRACT: Following its independence in 1956, Sudan confronted the tasks of constructing a distinct national identity, establishing effective governance and economic systems, and addressing internal ethnic conflicts stemming from the condominium era. In terms of ethnicity, the post-colonial history of Sudan can be segmented into two phases: sectarian politics, primarily observed in northern Sudan from 1956 to 1999, with the south not experiencing sectarianism in the same manner; and ethnic politics prevalent in South Sudan from 1955 to 2011 and in North Sudan from 1999 to the present. However, the postcolonial history of Sudan is actually a replay of a set of patterns that kept governing the politics of the country for centuries.

KEYWORDS: Sudan, modernization, multi-ethnicity, post-colonialism, neo-traditionalism, recurring, pattern

Introduction

■ **The war of 15 April 2023 may appear to be the reincarnation of the Golden Apple of Discord disguised in the Framework Agreement between the army and the civil powers. However, careful and strictly scrutinized study of current and past and ancient history of Sudan will eventually reveal that this war is the natural child of the political system of Sudan that has been running for centuries, and that it is how business has been, and should be expected to be, done in postcolonial Sudan. This paper will present arguments on how some sets of recurring patterns dominate Sudanese politics from antiquity to the present and** probably the future, and that these patterns should be accompanied in analyzing and understanding past and current political developments and any future solutions, or peace and reconciliation arrangements.

The subject of this paper are the features of the political system of Sudan. The main hypothesis of the paper is that Sudanese political system has deep roots in the more distant and more recent past, and it is determined by previous institutional and political solutions and establishments, in particular the ones devised during the colonial era; as a result, a set of recurring patterns appear to have the determinant say in the overall outcome

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of the behavior of the postcolonial political system. The objective of the paper is to identify these recurring patterns and analyze their impact in shaping the postcolonial history of the country.

One of the key causes of the situation in Sudan is the post-colonial model of an ineffective state in Africa and its inability to function as an engine of development (Lizak, 2006, pp. 69–78). The multi-ethnic post-colonial state in Sudan is one of the most well-known examples of failed "state-building" and crippled "nation-building that is stuck in deep security and instability challenges. But in this context Sudan is not a unique exceptional situation. Lizak (2012, pp. 42–69) highlights that multi-ethnic African countries face very serious security problems that must be addressed by African elites.

In countries peripheral to the global economy, countries have sometimes had to find their own, non-Western ways of reaching a modernized economy. Elites in countries such as China, Poland, Africa and Asia had to experiment in various ways to develop their countries (Leszczyński, 2013). However, legitimate questions arise on the post-colonial state in Africa and its relationship with modernization, and what modernization has done to the political and social fabrics of African states, and whether there could have been other paths for Africa. For instance, Lizak (2006, p. 73) asks if Africa developed at its own pace, would the states emerging there have a different character. Sometimes it is possible to use local cultural heritage to develop a non-Western path to modernization. In Asia, many countries developed economically on different principles than in the West. A key element in South Korea was the Confucian way of trade and economy (Lee, 2011, pp. 50–86).

The post-colonial Republic of Sudan is the homeland of the first great kingdoms of sub-Saharan Africa. Over the millennia, it has also developed rich and diverse cultural traditions as diverse as its landscapes, from equatorial rainforests to the Sahara. Due to their enormous size, the various regions of the country had complex histories, both internal and external, with connections across Sudan Africa, across the Sahara to Egypt, to the Red Sea world, the Ethiopian Highlands and East Africa (Edwards, 2004, p. ix).

In order to understand the dynamics between modernization, ethnopolitics and instability in post-colonial Sudan we need to go far back and discuss the basics of Sudan's history and geopolitics. Most studies divide the history of Sudan into stages and civilization periods; and this lists of seven distinct historical eras in Sudan usually comes around:

1. Ancient Sudan (before c. 8000 B.C. – c. 350 C.E.)
2. Christian Sudan (c. 350 – c. 1500)
3. Islamic Sudan (c. 1500–1821)
4. Turkish Sudan (1821-1885)
5. Mahdist Sudan (1881-1899)
6. Anglo-Egyptian Sudan (1899–1956)
7. Independent Sudan (1956 –2023)

The following is a short and concise description of the most important impacts of each era on the current situation in Sudan.

Ancient Sudan (before c. 8000 B.C. – c. 350 C.E.)

The era of ancient Sudan, which could be referred collectively as the Kush era, played an important role in shaping the current political, demographic and geographical composite of the country. In fact, we will come to see that during this era the most important patterns of Sudanese politics have been set and deeply engrained in the fabrics of the political systems that sprung in the following eras and centuries, whatsoever what the system was. Moreover, Nubia, the ancient northern part of Sudan, had a significant impact on the development of the entire human civilizations in ancient communities along the Nile. It turns out that "Egyptian culture" comes from Nubian roots. In Africa, pottery was first created in Nubia, and the tradition of the pharaohs with their cult symbols, began with the Nubian rulers (Ross, 2013, p. i). The ancient inhabitants of Sudan took advantage of the strategic location on the Nile to develop agriculture and trade, and overall the cultures of Nubia built the earliest cities, states and empires of inner Africa (Emberling & Williams 2020, p. 1). This caused these areas to become the center of social and economic life, and many kingdoms and political organizations were formed around coalitions and confederations of tribes, constantly expanding geographically and integrating more and more tribes and peoples into the dominant kingdom in the area.

A story that summarizes centuries of history

The most famous story of this era is Arkamani's coup against the priests. Mark (2014) tells us that in ancient Kush, before the rule of King Arkamani

(also Arqamani or Ergamenes) in the late 3rd to early 2nd century BCE, high priests of the god Amun had the authority to choose and determine the duration of a king's reign. As the king's well-being was linked to the land's fertility, these priests could decide if a sitting king was unfit to rule. In such cases, they would send a message, ostensibly from the god Amun, informing the king that his time on earth was over, compelling him to take his own life. The priests in the capital city, Napata, held significant power, akin to the priests of Amun in Egypt. It was believed that Amun could communicate directly with the priests in Kush, leading the kings to obey divine orders and sacrifice themselves for the perceived welfare of the people. From his side, Arkamani, educated in Greek philosophy, defied the priests command by entering the forbidden location of the kingdom's golden temple. Displaying kingly determination, he led an armed force to the site, massacred the priests, abolished the traditional practices, and implemented his own. Arkamani liberated his kingdom from these Egyptian customs and priestly influence, implementing laws that distinguished his kingdom culture. While the cult of Amun persisted, priests lost authority over kings. Egyptian architectural designs were retained but adapted to reflect Kush culture. The kingdom transformed under Arkamani, introducing queens who ruled independently without male dominance. Previously, kings' wives had varying influence, but under Arkamani, these queens, known as Kandakes, exhibited significant autonomy, even leading armies into battle (Mark, 2014).

The word "Kandake" referred to the sister of the king of Kush, who played a significant role in the matrilineal system of succession, producing another heir, effectively becoming a queen mother. She ruled in her own court, probably owned land, and held a prominent secular position as regent. Some Kandake ruled independently and bore the title "qore", a term common to male rulers. The kendake of the north has its equivalent in the west in Darfur, Meram, which means princess. Both kendeka and meram were used again during the revolution in Sudan in 2018–2019 to refer to Sudanese women who played a significant and active role in the revolution.

This single event in history of Arkamani is very significant. It gives insight into a modernizer ruler. He challenged and destroyed the traditional regime in which priests had power over the king and irrational beliefs triumphed over logic. Although some scholars, as Mark (2014) explains, have doubted this story, it highlights for us some important aspects that will dominate state policy for the rest of history. First, the strong role of religion in the country's politics. Secondly, the role of the educated elite in the country's politics, here they were the priests of Amun and Arkamani. Third, the acculturation and dynamic interaction of the Sudanese elite with prevailing external cultural and ideological trends. Fourth, the tendency to expel foreign influences and intrusions, accompanied by internal unity and self-identification. Fifth, the brutal nature of the political system and the role of the armed forces in the struggle for power, which was evident in Arkamani's seizure of power and regime change. Sixth, matrilineal succession and the role of women in politics.

From the very beginning, we can witness a tendency in the Sudanese state to expand and integrate new areas and geographies. There is also the practice of ruling the country through tribal confederations. There is also the dynamics of the Sudanese state with external powers from the North. The Sudanese kingdoms of this era saw the beginning of a dynamic and complex relationship with Egypt in the north. This pattern will continue between Sudan and Egypt until the present. The pattern of invasion and colonization from Egypt would also continue and would not end even after the country gained independence in 1956, taking into consideration the Halaib Triangle dispute.

Recurring patterns of Sudanese politics

We can assume that the kushite period practically had set the main patterns that will dominate in subsequent eras. Overall, we will see 18 patterns of Sudanese politics that will appear throughout the country's history. They are summarized in Table 1. Reccuring patterns are also divided into three groups depending on their turbulence in relation to destabilization: stabilizing, destabilizing and double-edged (dual effect, it can be both stabilizing and destabilizing).

We included climate change here along with geopolitics and external challenges because, in general, climate change is an outsider to internal dynamics, it does not emerge organically from internal dynamics (at all). External challenges are double-edged. In themselves, they can directly stimulate interactions within the internal system. Other times, internal interactions in the system stimulate external challenges to intervene in the system.

Table 1. Recurring patterns of Sudanese politic

Generał domain	Reccuring patterns	Turbulence domain
Policy and management:	1. Diversity and unity through tribal confederation. 2. Strong nationalizm against invaders and colonialists.	Stabilizing
	3. The center always exploits the periphery, which leads to the concept of center versus periphery. 4. Weakness of the central government resulting in constant rebellions and civil wars.	Destabilizing
	5. Gradual and continuous integration of Sudan's territories into one state. 6. Gradual and continuous incorporation of more Sudanese nations into one state. 7. Elitism (coalition of the five: ruler and members of the royal family, the educated elite, tribal leaders, religious leaders and the army) and the rule of the few and educated, with limited political participation of the masses.	Dual
Political power dynamics and conflict:	8. Militarism and the strong role of the army in politics. 9. Tribalism and the role of ethnicity in politics, often centered around kinship. 10. The violent and brutal nature of gaining and exercising power.	Destabilizing
Religion and culture:	11. Strong role of religion in politics. 12. Cultural and social norms, including the role of women in politics and succession to the throne. 13. Acculturation and import of external ideology leading to Sudanization of the imported culture. 14. The disappearance of religion and language at the end of an era.	Dual
Economic challenges:	15. Economic difficulties, the country generally runs on a deficit budget.	Destabilizing
External and geopolitical challenges:	16. External colonialism from the north. 17. Climate change	Destabilizing
	18. Dynamic and complex relations with Egypt.	Dual

Source: own elaboration.

A coalition of five doing the same politics over and over

We will not go into the historical details of the remaining six eras. We will only mention events with the greatest historical implications.

After Kush came the era of Christian Sudan (c. 350 – c. 1500) with the three kingdoms of Nobatia, Makuria and Alodia. To the east were the Blemmy tribal confederations that controlled the eastern deserts (Welsby, 2002). The Arabs came from Egypt and invaded the northern kingdom in 652, but the Sudanese managed to repel the Egyptian invasion and a treaty was signed to establish peace, which remained almost unbroken until the 12th century. Although Islam later became the dominant religion, the legacy of Christian Sudan is still present (Adams, 1991). The most interesting story

of this era is the coming to power of the first Muslim king Kanz al-Dawla, who ascended the throne of the Nubian kingdom of Makouria in 1317. Some accounts say that his accession to the throne came through his mother, who was a descendant of the ruling family, where the process of inheriting the throne is through the son of the ruler's sister.

After that came the era of Islamic Sudan (ca. 1500–1821). From Egypt, Islamic influence extended in three directions, across the Red Sea to the eastern coastal areas, up the Nile valley to Sudan. The Christian Nubians, who had resisted Muslim expansion for almost six centuries, gradually lost ground between the 12th and 14th centuries. The spread of Islam in Sudan occurred mainly through the efforts of the Sufi brotherhoods. This era witnessed two powerful Islamic states in Sudan: the Funj dynasty of Sennar in the center

and the Fur Kayra dynasty of Darfur in the west. These two Islamic sultanates became the building blocks of the Sudan of the Turkish era and later of the Anglo-Egyptian and independent Sudan of 1956 (Levtzion & Pouwels, 2000).

In 1820, Muhammed Ali the new ruler of Egypt, began a campaign up the Nile with a mission to annex the territories of Sennar, Kordofan, and Darfur (Edwards, 2004, p. 277). That initiated the Turkish era (1821–1885) under which Sudan became part of the Ottoman Empire. This introduced new administrative structures and economic influences that contributed to the development of cities and trade. However, Turkish Sudan's colonial policy also had negative effects, such as exploitation of natural resources and lack of consideration for local interests (Warburg, 1991, pp. 193–215).

The Turkish era ended by the Mahdist Revolution who ruled the country between 1881–1899. One of the most important implications of this era is the commence of a sectarian rivalry between the Mahdist family and sect and the Khatmiya family and sect. Consequently. This set the basis of the sectarian division in politics in the country, which stretched from the years before 1956 to 1989 (Holt, 1970, pp. vii–viii).This era also reinforced the pattern nr 11 of religion in politics as it also the Sufi brotherhoods more and more powers that will shape the culture and politics of the country in the following centuries. During Mahdist rule, open fighting between local inhabitants and Mahdist troops appears to have occurred in several areas (Edwards, 2004, p. 284), confirming patterns 4 and 10 of weak central government, civil wars, and violent political arena.

As with the defeat of the Funj Sultanate by the Turks, the British conquered the Mahdists in 1898 due to their superior military strength. Despite the defeat, the Mahdist rebellion and the Mahdiyyah era remain the first major nationalist movement, creating a platform for future nationalism (Essien & Falola, 2009, pp. 27–28). Second, this era was able to integrate both geographic and demographic areas from all corners of the country. For the first time, an indigenous Sudanese state was able to unite all areas of modern Sudan.

The Anglo-Egyptian Condominium, the joint British and Egyptian government that ruled Sudan from 1899 to 1955, have a profound impact on the modernization of the country and the shaping of its current political landscape (Henderson, K.D.D., 1946). The most important implications of the condominium rule are: First and foremost, it established the country on the world map by giving it geographical boundaries and a mix of peoples, tribes and ethnic groups. However, it froze and disrupted the integration of the southern population through the closed area policy, intentionally disrupting pattern nr 6 of gradual and continuous incorporation of more Sudanese nations into one state. Second, the country experienced a much higher degree of modernization. This came as a continuation of what had begun in the Turkish era. Modernization concentrated particularly in the center of the country. Third, the creation of a modern primary school education system and the creation of secondary education to produce a Western-educated elite. This educated elite will shape the political fate of the post-colonial country. Fourth, colonial rule left traditional forces intact, and by the time of independence their power had steadily increased. Fifth, the educated elite, together with the traditional authorities, cooperated to create the Sudanese nationalist movement, which led to the peaceful liberation of the country and the establishment of the Republic of Sudan on January 1, 1956.

In general, throughout all the eras from Kush to the condominium, the country was ruled by a coalition of five, which included: a ruler and members of the royal family, the educated elite, tribal leaders, religious leaders and the army. Trade was conducted by a merchant class closely integrated with the ruling coalition. The country's political and social fabric has not been affected by the modernization process that began in the Turkish and condominium era. On the contrary, all modernization activities strengthened the dominant social forces and gave the coalition of five increasingly stronger positions in the country. However, two important things happened during the condominium: the co-existence and social integration of the peoples in the country was deliberately modified, and the dynamics and composition of the coalition of five was drastically modified, and this will shape the dynamics of post-colonial Sudan as we will see below.

A tale of two generations: when the Sectarian becomes ethnomilitant

Both politics and ethnicity have shaped each other in post-colonial Sudan. But the seeds of this were planted during the colonial period, when ethnic identity and separation of peoples were politically enforced within the state. Although this form of state arose from the colonial experience, it persisted after independence and emerged as

a specifically African form of state (Mamdani, 2018, p. 286). The colonial state in Sudan rule was based on the British colonial concept of indirect rule. This concept was developed elsewhere and many decades before the British arrived in Sudan. When the British came to Africa, they brought an arsenal of colonial management lessons drawn from 19th-century colonies such as India, Malaya, and the West Indies (Mamdani, 2022, p. 86).

This new type of indirect rule government played the role of a double edge policy; creating and strengthening differences and enforcing traditional rights. Mamdani (2012, p. 1–2) explains that indirect rule was intended not only to recognize difference but also to shape it. Another important aspect in the work of Mamdani (2012) is the concept of the native and the settler. The land in the colony was defined solely as a combination of different homelands, each home to a designated native tribe. In Africa, including Sudan, the colonial authorities divided the population of each unit ("tribal homeland") into ethnic natives and ethnic immigrants. In some cases, tribal and ethnic identities have been deliberately invented. Then two sets of laws were introduced, civil law covering the entire state, and traditional and customary laws, which are limited to the tribal homeland. As far as possible, each tribe was governed by its own customary law. For Mamdani, this definition of lands, peoples, natives and migrants was the birth of an institutionalized politics of ethnic division that had never existed there before the colonial state. For him, it was no longer just "divide and rule". This was: define and rule. Postcolonial states and elites will have to cope with this environment. In Sudan, direct rule has created a politicized tribal identity that has hindered the integration process of Sudan's peoples.

After gaining independence in 1956, Sudan had to face the challenges of building its own national identity, developing its governance system and economy, and resolving internal ethnical conflicts created by the condominium.

From an ethnic point of view, the history of post-colonial Sudan can be divided into two periods: sectarian politics (mainly in northern Sudan 1956–1999), the south was never Sectarian in this sense; and ethnic politics (in South Sudan from 1955 to 2011 and North Sudan from 1999 to the present).

Sectarian politics arose from the dynamics of the struggle within the new Five coalition. The condominium managed to modernize two factions of the coalition: the educated elite and the army, wh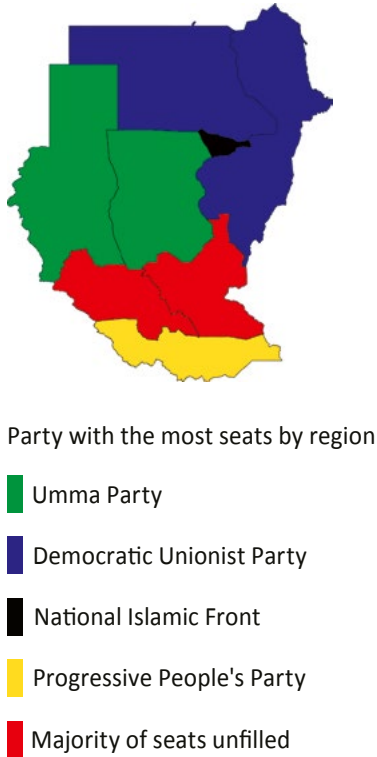ich were stationed in urban centers, close to decision-making institutions. The remaining three factions: religious leaders, tribal leaders and merchants (who replaced the royal families) felt threatened. So, they invested in their popular control over the vast rural population on the periphery in order to regain control of the newly independent state. Their real battlefield was the infiltration of two modernized factions, the graduates of the educated elite and the generals of the modern army built by the colonial government. By the mid-1970s they seemed to have won, but soon they began to lose much ground to the by product of their struggle against modernization. The new faction of traditional forces became radicalized and quickly began to modernize, and in the 1990s these new players managed to take control of the country and set it on a neo-traditionalist course. This time, however, the byproduct of radical traditionalists was ethnical politics driven by the same coalition of five. However, this time, the tribal leaders in the periphery are backed by the many ethnomilitant groups that are rising in numbers and power. The new composition of the neo-traditionalist coalition of five from 1999 is now: the army, the educated elite, religious leaders, ethnomilitiant tribal leaders. These neo-traditionalists succeeded in the first two decades of the 21st century to tighten the grip on the political system and the whole country.

Sectarian politics is manifest in the division in northern Sudan between two Muslim religious sects, Ansar, centered around the Umma Party, and Khatmiya, centered around the Union Party. This division dominated Sudanese politics from 1956 to 1999 and the partition of the sects was mainly ethnical at the core. North and East ethnic groups have always voted for the Union Party, while ethnic groups in the West and Nuba Mountains have always voted for the Umma Party. But the center (the most developed and modernized) was divided into 3 groups: Umma Party, Union Party, modern parties backed by the educated elite, mainly extremist left (communist and social Pan-Arabists) and extremist Islamic right. This is clearly visible on map nr 1.

In 1956, modernization already provided new tools, but the condominium strengthened tradition and wanted to push the new elite out of politics. The condominium built the political system on a tribal confederation. Geographical integration was extended, but demographic integration was interrupted, isolating the south, which had been an arena of exploitation for centuries. Its inhabitants were isolated and its economy was neither developed nor integrated with the colonial economic

infrastructure. Reinforced religion in politics. This was a deliberate policy, done deliberately under condominium rule.

Map 1. Party support by area of the country in the 1986 Sudanese elections

Party with the most seats by region

■ Umma Party

■ Democratic Unionist Party

■ National Islamic Front

■ Progressive People's Party

■ Majority of seats unfilled

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1986_Sudanese_parliamentary_election.

After independence, the educated elite had influence in a small number of urban centers. Early post-colonial rule did not change the imbalance between the various regions of Sudan (Niblock, 1987, p. 204). The educated elite was highly radicalized and spread among political parties, free officer groups in the army, trade unions and professional organizations, and regionalist parties. All secessionist guerrilla movements were part of this response to a system of government that perpetuated and deepened social and regional imbalances. These radicals targeted dominant traditional forces (Niblock, 1987, p. 205). To defend their position, the traditionalists have developed a system that can ensure their dominance. For example, the ruling coalition of the People's Democratic Party and the National Umma Party made changes to the electoral law in 1958 that ensured it would win no matter what (Niblock, 1987, pp. 211–212). The radicals on their side decided on coups and political violence. The economy of the post-colonial state was not much different from the colonial economy.

All governments concentrated their modernization and development efforts in central provinces and urban areas. That amplified the center vs. periphery pattern. This will lead to the dominance of the army in post-colonial history and the separation of the South.

The most important development in post-colonial Sudan is that the army entered the political arena and formed four governments, the last of which emerged in the coup d'état of October 25, 2021. These political adventures of the army have had a significant impact on destabilizing the country and on the army's doctrine and combat strategies. We can clearly see that the focus of the army is not on safeguarding the country's borders and integrity but it engaged in finding internal, regional and international alliances to control power. In addition to that Post-colonial Sudan is plagued by all previously established patterns. Table 2 below shows a vicious circle pattern prevails in this era. Democratic government, military regime, people's revolution, provisional government, democratic government, military regime and so on.

In table 2 categorization of the political system is based on identifying the underlying social base that supports and benefits from the regime. The technocrats of the 2019 transitional government are in fact a mixture of modern civil society formations and traditional groups. It was the broadest political coalition to form a government in Sudan. It was an impossible transaction: bringing together all the conflicting and opposing groups from the modernized groups and the traditional establishment. The ethnomilitants who joined this government are several militias from the southwest and east of the country. Each militia is composed primarily of a specific ethnic group or tribe

What follows in is not intended to provide a detailed account of the politics and policies pursued by each government between 1956 and 2023. Rather, we will focus on aspects that highlight some of the key dynamics that may confirm our assumptions about the recurring patterns in Sudanese politics. As in table 2, analysis of this era shows newer recurring patterns that are specific to governments of this era. A typical civilian government would be elected and bring the traditional establishment to power. Then the government will enter political crises, ruling through coalitions. The economy will deteriorate. The situation in the south and other rebel areas will worsen militarily. The government will become weaker and weaker. One party will conspire with its sleeper cells in the army to stage a coup and seize power through the army.

Table 2. Typology of Sudanese governments 1956–2023

Government/Regime	Civil/Military	Political System	Period in power
First civil period	Civilian, democratically elected	Traditional, right-wing	1956–1958 (2 years)
The first coup	Military dictatorship	Traditional, right-wing	1958–1964 (6 years)
Second civil period	Civilian, democratically elected	Traditional, right-wing	1964–1969 (5 years)
The second coup	Military dictatorship	Left, then traditional	1969–1985 (16 years)
Third civil period	Civilian, democratically elected	Traditional, right-wing	1985–1989 (4 years)
Third coup	Military dictatorship	Political Islam, then neo-traditionalism	1989–2019 (30 years)
2019 transitional government	Hybrid, dominated by the military	Technocrats and ethnomilitants	2019–2021 (2 years)
The fourth coup	Military dictatorship	Traditional, right-wing	2021–

Source: own elaboration.

This happened during the first, second and third civilian governments.

A typical coup d'état will seize power supported by a political party. Further down the road, the generals and the party will go their separate ways. The ruling generals will be divided and will fight each other, resulting in the death of one faction. The leader of the winning faction will be the sole dictator of the country. The military government will face one or more counterattacks, but without success. The military government will fall into constant political crises devoid of legitimacy and popular support. The opposition may unsuccessfully organize a militia and invade Khartoum. The economy will deteriorate. The situation in the south and other rebel areas will worsen militarily. The military regime will end with a popular revolution demanding civilian rule and democracy. Part of the army will support the revolution and take power, removing the dictator. An interim government will be formed to organize elections. Another pattern is that no civilian or military government has ever been able to defeat a rebel group. The rebellion can only be resolved through peace talks.

Conclusion

All the material presented and discussed above clearly confirm the main hypothesis that Sudanese political system has deep roots in the more distant and more recent past, and it is determined by previous institutional and political solutions and establishments, in particular the ones devised during the colonial era; as a result, a set of recurring patterns appear to have the determinant say in the overall outcome of the behavior of the postcolonial political system. We counted 18 recurring patterns globally applying to the entire history of the country and we also found recurring patterns that are specific to the governments of the postcolonial era.

The dominant forces are the military and traditional powers, with the military having the upper hand. Independence era is divided into two periods: the sectorial politics, and the ethnical politics. Both eras have divided the country along the ethnical and religious boundaries. The sectarian era was governed by the traditional powers led by the coalition of five. While the ethnical era was governed by the neotraditional powers led by the same coalition of five in which tribal leaders are backed by ethnomilitant groups from their own ethnicities.

There are three types of governments: democratically elected, military dictatorships, and provisional governments. All of these governments lacked internal stability and were very poor at managing the country. Only the first two interim governments ended their terms as planned and completed their mission of organizing elections.

Both identity and nationality developed rapidly in the post-colonial era, but in a disrupted manner when compared to the pre-condominium and direct rule era. Observing patterns 1 and 2, we find that they are uniquely contrary to the postcolonial Sudanese experience. This is exactly the result of the disturbance created by the direct rule of the condominium. When the colonialists put Sudan on the map, it was not like other times and

other countries, bringing together different nations in one place. Nations have been integrating in Sudan for centuries, after all, the first states existed here centuries BC. All the time they united against the invaders, who nowadays could not survive long on Sudanese soil. The Turks stayed there for only 60 years, and the condominium lasted 55 years. It's a blink of an eye when you look at the country's centuries-long history. This confirms Patterns 1 and 2: Diversity and unity through tribal confederation., Strong nationalism against invaders and colonialists.

Elite political dynamics are alienated from another process that runs parallel: the integration of territories and nations that has been going on for centuries (patterns 5 and 6). In the current dynamics (1999–today), both the geography and the peoples (Mamdani lands and natives) are ethnicized, politicized and militant. What future realities will this create is a huge question. However, over the country's long history these patterns have generally played a stabilizing (and integrating) role. Disturbances to this tendency occurred recently during the colonial state.

Powerful groupings and coalitions of fives come and go, rise and fall, and dominate the world and lose control. Take for instance the Fifth Coalition of the Napoleonic Wars, the founding five of the Non-Aligned Movement or even the South African Mapogo lion coalition that controlled the Sabi Sand region in Kruger National Park. However, in Sudan the coalition of five seems to be clutching to power for centuries and like never wants to let go. When talking establishments, that is a rock-solid establishment to reckon with.

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