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Tactical Compromises: Authoritarian Survival Mechanisms of Sudan's Inqaz Regime (1989-2019)

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The American University in Cairo

Graduate Studies

Tactical Compromises:
Authoritarian Survival Mechanisms of Sudan's Inqaz Regime (1989-2019)

A THESIS SUBMITTED BY

Dalia Abdelnabi

TO THE

Political Science Department
Comparative Middle East Politics and Society (CMEPS) MA Program

SUPERVISED BY

Prof. Sean Lee - American University in Cairo

Spring 2024

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
CMEPS Master of Art Program

Declaration of Authorship

I, Dalia Abdelnabi, declare that this thesis titled, "Tactical Compromises: Authoritarian Survival Mechanisms of Sudan's Inqaz Regime (1989-2019)" and the work presented in it are my own.

I confirm that:

- This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at thisUniversity.

- Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any otherqualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated.

- Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed.

- Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work.

- I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

- Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clearexactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself.

Signed:

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16 January 2024

THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO
الجـامـعة الأمـريكيـة بالقـاهـرة

Tactical Compromises:
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Sudan's Inqaz Regime (1989-2019)

A Thesis Submitted by

Dalia Abdelnabi

to the

Comparative and Middle East Politics and Society (CMEPS) M.A.

Graduate Program

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Abstract

How did the Inqaz regime survive a civil war, economic crises, mass upheavals, and political stagnation for thirty years? This question guides the study's analysis of the survival of one of the MENA's most resilient authoritarian regimes. Authoritarian durability is an adaptive risk-taking process of implementing politically costly plans to survive in power. This research investigates authoritarian survival through power-sharing reforms and coup-proofing tactics. The study highlights the role of the autocratic ruling coalition in maintaining regime durability and argues that intra-elite dynamics are key to understanding an autocrat's exit without a clear successor. To this end, I investigate the changes in the ruling coalition's composition under the Inqaz regime across several periods punctuated by critical junctures and question the role of these changes in prolonging the regime's life. The guiding lens through which I tackle the regime's resilience is the theory of coup-proofing. I complement the analysis with the political marketplace approach to better understand the last phases of the regime's cycle. The primary method of analysis is process tracing, connecting path-dependent events and finding their plausible causes, as adaptability-to-survive is a central focus. The study relies on secondary sources and over a dozen semi-structured interviews with Sudanese and non-Sudanese scholars and journalists. The study finds that the Inqaz regime survived in power through a series of elite reconfigurations and fell when its coup-proofing tactics backfired. In the end, the security elite triad came to the improbable yet tactical agreement that their survival hinges on the autocrat's removal.

Keywords: *authoritarianism, regime survival, regime failure, political marketplace, Sudan, coup-proofing, authoritarian durability, ruling coalition, elite fragmentation*

Dedication

To the people of Sudan, whose resolve and patience are unparalleled.
To the martyrs who fell during the uprisings in Sudan's modern history.
To the oppressed souls living under the wrath of power- and dollar-thirsty kleptocratic regimes.

Acknowledgments

Writing a dissertation is a "labor of love" (Grant and Osanloo 2015, 12). If I were not in love with the topic, I would not have gone thousands of words this far to convey my interest. However, it is not a pretty kind of labor, nor is the act of writing and proofreading a hundred pages remotely comparable to idyllic romantic love. I did not wake up every day for the past few weeks thinking, "Ah, another lovely day full of researching and writing; I can't wait to write this section with 50 open tabs and PDFs". In fact, there were days when it was hard to follow through. Even my laptop started wheezing as its sleep hours shrunk down. Every time I fell into a rabbit hole, I'd tell myself, it can't be this complicated. But then I remember what Prof. Ibrahim ElNur would repeatedly tell me, whenever I dropped by his office to share an update on the research's status. "What did you get yourself into?", he would say, referring to Sudan's interlinked complex issues. The challenge of trying to make sense of that complexity is what made the process enjoyable.

In a nutshell, what you are now holding, or e-reading, is the end product of this "labor of love" and not the whole process in its full complexity. It is a shame that the latter often gets forgotten. Well, at least it is sometimes good that people can hardly remember the 'struggle'; my spouse will most definitely not forget my whining and will make sure to remind me when I pursue a Ph.D. Still, I am incredibly grateful that the text finally flew out of my jumbled, messy brain and landed on paper.

Before I invite you – whoever you are – on this trip, I do have to thank the crew members aboard, if you will. I would not have been psychologically and emotionally ready to embark on a months-long, deadline-free-zone journey if it were not for the constant nudges and thumbs-ups elicited by my husband, parents, close friends, supervisor, and readers. I am very grateful for everyone I have annoyed with thesis-related rants over the course of 2023, a year whose last three months have been unbelievably heavy.

Special thanks go to the brave souls who gave feedback on the project in its embryonic phases: my CMEPS colleague, Jodor Jalit, who pushed me to spell out my ideas on board

at AUC Library and read different iterations of the research; Mona Massoud, Dorothea Günther, Janaan Farhat, Jérémie Langlois, and other supportive friends who motivated me when I doubted myself and reassured me that I could get the job done in time. I am very thankful for the interviewees' time and generosity in sharing detailed accounts, valuable references, and insider information, and for entrusting me with communicating their viewpoints.

I would also like to thank the team at the Political Science Department at both AUC and Tubingen University, who work behind the scenes of the CMEPS program. I am grateful for the DAAD Scholarship and University Fellowship, which afforded me the opportunity to pursue this MA degree. I am also thankful for being given access to AUC's Library, where I found and borrowed hard-to-find books, as well as scores of journal articles and e-books, over the course of the past two and a half years.

Last but not least, my heartfelt gratitude extends to life's small pleasures, from petting stray dogs to being engulfed in a warm hug from a loved one. I refuse to take any of these for granted, especially not during the hard times the people of this region of the world are going through.

Without further ado, I hope you enjoy reading my labor of love.

Cited work:
Grant, Cynthia & Osanloo, Azadeh. 2015. Understanding, selecting, and integrating a theoretical framework in dissertation research: Developing a 'blueprint' for your "house". *Administrative Issues Journal.* 4. 10.5929/2014.4.2.9.

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List of Abbreviations

CLTG	Civilian-led transitional government
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
DDPD	Doha Document for Peace in Darfur
DLM	Darfur Libration Movement
DPA	Darfur Peace Agreement
DUP	Democratic Unionist Party
ESP	Economic Salvation Program
FFC	Forces of Freedom and Change
GoS	Government of Sudan
ICF	Islamic Charter Front
ILM	Islamic Liberation Movement
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JEM	Justice and Equality Movement
FOO	Free Officer Organization
KUSU	Khartoum University Student Union
NCP	National Congress Party
NIF	National Islamic Front
NUP	National Umma Party
NISS	National Intelligence and Security Services
PCP	Popular Congress Party
PDF	Public Defense Forces
RCC	Revolutionary Command Council
RSF	Rapid Security Forces
SAF	Sudanese Armed Forces
SCAF	Supreme Council for the Armed Forces
SCP	Sudan Communist Party
SLM	Sudan Liberation Movement
SPA	Sudanese Professional Association
SPLA	Sudanese People Liberation Army
SPLM	Sudanese People Liberation Movement
SSO	State Security Organization
SSC	Supreme Security Council
TMC	Transitional Military Council

Introduction

The Limits of Authoritarian Survival

1.1 Research Puzzle and Question

In late December 2018, demonstrations erupted and spread across the Sudanese state, initially protesting dire economic conditions and, after three months, calling for President Omar Hassan Al Bashir to step down. Bashir first came to power in a coup in 1989; after thirty years of evading crises in office, he tried his luck one last time to cling to power and declared a state of emergency. On 11 April 2019, the Supreme Security Council (SSC) announced that they had removed the incumbent and sided with the masses.

This brief retelling of Bashir's ouster evokes the spirit of the Arab Spring; it zooms in on the long-standing autocrat's last weeks in office as he fights the forces of democratization before finally falling. In so doing, the narrative overlooks some crucial contextual facts. It is true that the 2018/2019 protests played a part in nudging Bashir out of office, but there were multiple large-scale demonstrations before 2019 (Awad 2022, 1). The worsening economic performance in 2018/2019 was among the grievances that pushed people to take to the streets in the peripheries and the center; yet, the economic

slump had already been underway since the separation of South Sudan in 2011. During Bashir's third decade in power, elite factionalism over the unconstitutionality of his desire to run for a third term exposed the incumbent's weakened position as early as 2013. Politics at the upper echelon of power were far from stable. Indeed, there were ten alleged coup plots and two failed attempts during Bashir's rule.[1] Viewed in this light, the success and the specific timing of ousting the incumbent demand an explanation for at least two main reasons. First, the events following Bashir's removal until the writing of this study suggest that Sudan did not undergo regime change[2] in 2019, as scholars of democratic transitions would predict. Second, building on the Egyptian examples of 2011 and 2013 (Kinney 2021, 515-6), removing an incumbent requires more than social unrest and protests: it requires a calculated agreement among "deep state" senior elites, one that can be the first step in retrenching authoritarianism in a poorly masqueraded guise (Stacher 2020, 7-8).

Why did the appointed guardians in charge of coup-proofing the regime choose not to side with the autocrat in 2019 and not earlier? What happened in the weeks leading up to the SSC's announcement of removing Bashir holds one of the keys to why coup-

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[1] According to Statista, since 1956 and up until the last coup of October 2021, Sudan has experienced 35 coup plots as well as successful and failed attempts. These include 15 carried-out coups, 5 of which were successful. This means that over the span of 65 years, almost every two years, there was a plot or attempt against the regime, on average. If we disregard alleged plots, there have still been 16 coup attempts since independence, according to Power and Thyne's dataset of coups around the world since 1950. Sixteen attempts, six of which were successful, is the highest number of coup attempts in the MENA region and Africa. Sudan comes in third place after Bolivia and Argentina. See Powell and Thyne (2011).

[2] "Regimes" are understood here, following Higley and Burton, to be "basic patterns in the organization, exercise, and transfer of government decision-making power." (1989, 18) Changes in these patterns may not amount to 'regime change' as it is commonly conceptualized as a fundamental break with the norms and practices of the former leadership group. According to Geddes et al., regime change is coded when one of three events happens (2018, 6).

proofing malfunctioned in this particular instance. However, to fully grasp the roots of this malfunction, we must closely study the regime's survival tactics since assuming power in 1989 and what changed by 2019 that led to the incumbent's removal. Doing so facilitates a better understanding of the limits of power-sharing alliances and the effectiveness of survival mechanisms through coup-proofing tactics in and beyond the Sudanese context.

This study poses the following research question, ***under what conditions can coup-proofing tactics prevent regime failure[3] in some instances but not others?*** Applied to the Sudanese case, the question reads, *why have the Inqaz regime's coup-proofing tactics failed in preventing the 2019 coup?*

To take stock of how and why the regime's coup-proofing tactics backfired in 2019, the study analyzes how the changing tactics managed to work effectively prior to 2019, while highlighting the damaging trail they left behind. The study contends that both the timing of the incumbent removal as well as the regime insiders' incentives to proceed with his removal must be inspected; it argues that the long-term effects of coup-proofing measures can prove detrimental to the incumbent autocrat's chances of survival in power as instances of successful coup-proofing tend to be foiled with latent, time bombs bound to explode at a later regime stage. Hence, this particular analysis of the Inqaz[4] regime's

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[3] The distinction between regime fall and failure is not obvious at first glance, but by regime failure, I mean what Barbara Geddes argued happens as a result of one of three events, competitive elections in which the newly elected government is different from the previous autocratic government; the incumbent is removed through unconstitutional means, including a coup; and, finally the policies governing how a new successor is selected radically change (Geddes et al. 2012, 6).

[4] The Inqaz regime, sometimes referred to as the Salvation or Ingaz regime, is the regime that ruled the Sudanese state from 1989 to 2019, under the leadership of Omar al-Bashir.

storyline aims to tease how and why the regime had entered a crisis phase in the last few years in power, and why the incumbent's political budget was in decline. In that sense, the study attempts to investigate the breakdown of coup-proofing tactics and trace the steps along the process through which the guardians in charge of coup-proofing agree to remove the incumbent autocrat.

1.2   Research Argument

The focus of this study is summarily the limitations of coup-proofing in maintaining authoritarian regime resilience. As such, the analysis traces the instances when various coup-proofing tactics successfully worked over the course of the regime's lifespan to save the selected authoritarian regime from regime failure and when they hit a roadblock. coup-proofing is not failure-proof. The study concurs with other works that highlight the negative repercussions of coup-proofing tactics, which eventually play a role in bringing about the overthrow of the autocrat. However, the study argues that the political and economic structure that supports coup-proofing is key to understanding how and why coup-proofing limits come about.

The core argument of this research, laid out above, supports its objective to embed the empirical facts of micro-regime changes theoretically.[5] It does that by demonstrating that in a given authoritarian regime, regime survival entails constant change through internal calculations and reconfigurations in the senior elite ranks in order to avoid a

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[5] Some autocratic regimes undergo a change in degree of authoritarianism rather than type. In a notable study, Luhrmann and Lindberg asserted that regimes can undergo sudden or gradual episodes of 'autocratization,' a label fit to describe qualitative changes from bad to dire in already authoritarian regimes (2019, 1096), and also in democracies with adjectives.

sudden, wholesale regime change. Applied to the selected case, we find that the Inqaz regime's thirty-year rule demanded various elite management tactics to match the phase through which the regime was going and according to the rules of the political marketplace. These survival mechanisms led the regime to qualitatively change, or 'deepen' the regime's authoritarianism[6] over the years, despite having the same autocrat in power.

1.3   Case Selection & Research Relevance: Why Sudan

Sudan has been bracketed out of the scholarship on the MENA region and Arab world, as it straddles both the African and Arab Middle Eastern identity components. For instance, although Sudan was not part of the 2011 Arab Spring uprisings,[7] it was not a late bloomer or coming so late to practicing anti-regime protests in 2018/2019.[8] Rather, Sudan arguably arrived at the anti-regime revolts decades before the Tunisian, Egyptian, or Libyan uprisings that overthrew their rulers. The two Sudanese intifadas prior to the "Arab Spring 2.0" (Grewal 2021, 103) in 2018/2019 were earlier versions of Sudan's own "Khartoum Springs" (Berridge 2015, 10); the first successfully removed General Ibrahim Abboud in 1963 and General Jaafer Nimeiri in 1985. Nonetheless, these two uprisings were not revived in the literature on the Arab Spring, thereby highlighting Sudan's

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[6] Durability and longevity entail constant change. One concept that tries to capture that is "deepening autocratization" which assesses "the processes of internal change that allow for 'variance in the quality of governance' that ultimately enable autocrats to remain seated" (Sinkkonen 2021, 1173).

[7] Interestingly, Sudan has seldom been mentioned to have 'escaped' the first wave of the Arab Spring but it forced itself on being noticed in the second wave of the Arab Spring (Grimm 2019)

[8] Compared to Algeria's Hirak movement, for instance. On the divergent paths that the Sudanese and Algerian uprisings took after their initial spark, see Sharan Grewal's 2021 article, "Why Sudan Succeeded Where Algeria Failed", where he argues that in Sudan the civilian forces managed to push for a "pacted transition" while the Algerians could not (102-103).

peripheral position in vehicles of knowledge production. Moreover, compared to other MENA countries, Sudan's domestic politics has been ignored and far less discussed in scholarly circles, save for the nefarious civil wars, South-North secession, and the ongoing conflict in Darfur. Although several scholars have written about the politics of Sudan's Islamists, with some extending the period under examination to 2011, to my knowledge, there are no book-length studies that systematically examine the entire length of the longest-standing authoritarian regime in Sudan, from 1989 to 2019. Unless scholarly interest mimics news cycles about Sudan, forthcoming studies on Sudan's political affairs in the last decade will likely emerge to elucidate the recent humanitarian and political crisis unfolding since April 2023.

The present research aims to make the case for Sudan's incorporation in studies on the Middle East, instead of fixating on its "liminal status" (Lynch et al. 2022, 19). It is lamentable that Sudanese politics have been under-studied in the field of comparative politics,[9] given the wealth of insights that Sudan's late authoritarian regime provided to the discipline. The Inqaz regime's lifespan combines almost every aspect that has been over-researched in other MENA countries. Studying its rise and fall provides insights into power-sharing agreements between Islamist parties or organizations – a fixture of

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[9] A cursory evaluation of browsing results shows that the scholarly body of work on Sudanese regimes since independence is eclipsed by the abundance of historical works focused on civil wars and peace-building processes. Indeed, the Inqaz regime is especially under-researched, partly because Western scholars were not welcome in Khartoum (De Waal African Arguments 2015) and partly because Sudan's hot political matters were mainly related to peace-building, security studies, and civil war, which, at the time, contrasted with the neighboring MENA states' own political headlines. As such, Sudanese politics became subsumed in African affairs, and authoritarian politics under Bashir went under the scholarly radar. Thus, in contrast to the conlict-resolution and peace studies literature and historical texts, this study provides what the author hopes to be a comprehensive overview of modern Sudanese politics since 1989 for a political science audience.

Arab regimes – and the other large elephant in the room, the military establishment. It also has insights into authoritarian regimes' upgrading and adaptability, especially because the Inqaz regime witnessed two uprisings and coups preceding its rule, as well as multiple coup attempts and mass demonstrations during its rule. Finally, the research highlights the limits of coup-proofing tactics' effectiveness in the presence of a decentralized political marketplace, an increasingly salient perspective to understand neo-patrimonial networks in the MENA region.

Interestingly, writing about Sudan after Bashir's ouster, the 2021 coup and the 2023 outbreak of civil war affords an opportunity to look past the euphoria around the 2019 uprising and soberingly assess the survival of regime remnants. The case provides an invaluable chance to review the post-2019 events in Sudan guided by country-specific and region-specific events: the famous 'Sudan Syndrome'[10] as well as the Arab Spring's two waves (ElBadawi and AlHelo 2023, 18). The dynamics on the ground in Sudan can be likened to post-2011 Yemen and Libya where identity cleavages are also salient[11] and in the sense that they are undergoing 'state-making' through 'war-making', as Charles Tilly would see it (1985, 170). However, the sectarian, ethnic, and tribal fault lines in each of the three countries vary and, therefore, each case sheds light on the unique contextual preconditions for their current developments.

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[10] More on that in the second chapter, but, in brief, the Sudan Syndrome is used to describe the recurrence of coups in Sudan following unstable transition periods of democratic, parliamentary rule and popular uprisings.
[11] This is a central scope condition to this study.

Lastly, the case of the Inqaz regime in Sudan demonstrates that the three concepts of durability, resilience, and survival should not be treated separately. On the contrary, with an adequate set of theoretical and methodological tools to unpack each, the case shows that it is possible to construct a way of understanding the reinforcement links connecting resilience to durability and survival. By so doing, the case analysis opens the door for further comparative research (e.g. Sudan and Libya or Yemen; Sudan's May and Inqaz regimes).

1.4   The Study's Structure

The study is organized into six chapters and a conclusion. Besides the first chapter, which delves into the theoretical framework, the remaining five chapters roughly begin and end at the precipice of a critical juncture. The study advocates periodization, which treats a given regime's lifespan in a piecemeal fashion, rather than viewing the Inqaz's 30-year rule as a homogeneous lump sum. During each of the four periodizations of the Inqaz regime's life cycle (1989-2019), the research question guides the line of inquiry.

The first chapter situates the study within the relevant literature on authoritarian survival and coup-proofing and lays the theoretical basis, methods, and significant concepts drawn upon in subsequent chapters. The second chapter discusses the contextual preconditions that shaped the Inqaz regime's power seizure through a coup in 1989, after capitalizing on the political scene's flaws and the Sudanese state's weaknesses. The third chapter details how the Inqaz regime clung to power from 1989 to 1999 through different '*tamkeen*' and coup-proofing strategies. The fourth chapter looks at the regime's survival tactics after a major split restructured its ruling elites, between

1999 and 2005. The fifth chapter examines the regime's selective accommodation of political forces between 2005 and 2011, a period of oil-led prosperity and a respite from war with Southern Sudan. The sixth chapter examines the final pre-endgame strategies that Bashir scrambled to put in place to delay his fall and promote regime survival on a tight budget. Lastly, the conclusion recapitulates the study's overarching argument and briefly assesses the post-2019 political arena until the outbreak of war in April 2023.

It is important to remind the reader that this study provides a version of the story of the Inqaz regime's phases in power. The following chapters aim to engage the academically oriented reader in unpacking the theoretically compelling durability of Sudan's longest-standing authoritarian regime. Most importantly for all kinds of readers, the study aims to shed light on how Sudanese politics reached the current low point, by weaving a thread running through the Inqaz's 30-year debilitating rule. Although the sheer human cost that hundreds of thousands of displaced, injured, orphaned, and martyerd Sudanese have paid over the past few decades may not be an indexed variable in studies on authoritarian durability, this one included, it should never be forgotten.

Chapter 1

Literature Review, Theoretical and Conceptual Framework, and Methods

This chapter lays the theoretical and methodological foundations for the rest of this study. It first assesses the state of the art on authoritarian durability, resilience, and survival in the field of comparative politics, signposting seminal studies of the MENA region. After a critical review of the literature, the second section elaborates on the components of the theoretical lens adopted for the study and earmarks the concepts that reappear in subsequent analysis. Lastly, the third section briefly investigates the chosen methodology, taking into consideration the limits and ethical concerns they pose. The chapter aims to demonstrate that the chosen theoretical and methodological frameworks underscore and elucidate the complexity of Sudan's case.

To scholars familiar with the literature on authoritarian regime resilience, durability, and survival, long-standing autocrats never cease to amaze and compel them. Scholars have drawn analyses to understand the mechanisms that enable autocrats, and the regimes they oversee, to avoid falling. How do authoritarian regimes survive crises? This broad question motivates the following review of the literature. To that end, this section provides a cursory glimpse into the extensive body of work dealing with common survival practices for authoritarian regimes, specifically in the MENA region. It also

provides a critical narrative of the prominent arguments and their guiding logic. The review signals along the way where there are theoretical ambiguities and methodological gaps, as well as where this study fits in and adds to the vast body of scholarship.

2.1 Authoritarian Survival - A Literature Review

Driven by a motive to understand how power is maintained under authoritarian regimes, much of the literature on authoritarianism grapples with three general themes: typologizing different authoritarian regimes; understanding the logic of authoritarian regime practices and institutions; and, lastly, the mechanisms of dealing with customary regime problems and autocracy-specific regime crises.[12] The definitional strand of the literature is preoccupied with categorizing authoritarian regimes according to specific, discernible criteria. Depending on the concentration of power in the hands of authoritarian leaders, authoritarian regimes are categorized into single-party, personalist, and military-based regimes, based on the size and background identity of the ruling clique (Geddes 1999). Geddes' categories remain dominant in datasets that facilitate large-N studies, primarily concerned with either overlaying observable patterns or explaining outlier phenomena. Each of these three types has been tested for a range of variables, such as longevity prospects, economic performance, democratization chances, and post-exit scenarios (Albrecht and Ohls 2016). For instance, studies' findings that correlate regime longevity with regime type tend to rely on the numerical variable of 'years in office' and regime type, found in easily accessible datasets. Typologies are useful

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[12] Regime crisis denotes "an urgent situation requiring immediate action by the incumbents to maintain power" (Gerschewski 2022, 3). By regime, I mean "the particular constellation of people and institutions that govern the state (Talmadge 2015, 18).

insofar as they facilitate conducting small or large-N comparative studies and deriving empirically sound findings from observed correlations or patterns shared among similar cases across and within regime types. However, typologies are abstracted from a simplified version of reality, in which the actual lines separating regime types are blurry, as new scholarship emphasizes. Instead of fixating on regime types, which can converge in their practices even if they have structural or institutional differences (Sinkkonen 2021, 1174-1175), it is arguably more helpful to study authoritarian regime practices and institutions than give them confined labels.

While sometimes converging with studies on authoritarian regimes "with adjectives"(Ali 2022)[13] the departure point of the second and third body of scholarly work is an interest in identifying where risks of regime fall emanate and understanding how authoritarian regimes address these risks. These studies are in dialogue with one another and, as such, fork into two strands: the first delineating threats posed by the ruled masses, the ruling elites, and exogenous factors, and the second unpacking the various institutions, practices, and mechanisms that authoritarian regimes employ to overcome those vertical, horizontal, as well as exogenous threats, which can become crises.

Authoritarian regimes face two persistent problems: control of the masses and of the ruling elites. To curb the vertical threat of the masses, whose mobilization with forces from the opposition can be fatal, authoritarian regimes use a combination of repression, cooptation, and legitimation tactics (Gerschewski 2013, 13). Repression is the "actual or

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[13] If this reflects anything, it is that as scholars struggled to fit real-world regimes into the suggested categories minted in the literature, they found that they had to qualify the chosen type to approximate the observed reality.

threatened use of physical sanctions against an individual or organization…for the purpose of… deterring specific activities" (Davenport 2007, 2). As a survival instrument, repression is a choice (Edel and Josua 2018, 289), often a short-term solution, as it tends to be substituted with subtler means of control, given its incendiary potential. The other tools available to achieve stability include cooptation and legitimation.

Some autocracies imitate the basic skeletal structure defining procedural democracies and therefore have institutions normally found in liberal democracies, except that they are stripped bare of their supposedly democracy-promoting functions (Schedler 2006, 5). For instance, studies concerned with 'competitive' authoritarian regimes[14] – those that bother to proceed with window dressing to maintain a somewhat acceptable international presence – try to investigate the role that these institutions play in maintaining power and mitigating mass- and elite-based risks (Levitsky and Way 2002, 62). Although advisory councils, parliaments, parties, and elections in authoritarian regimes have been rich areas of investigation, as institutions whose primary function is to prolong the regime's lifespan, there is no clear consensus on their role in stabilizing or destabilizing the regime over time. Given the huge variation across cases in these institutions' origins and other intervening context-specific variables in a regime's political environment, it is difficult to single out the effect of these institutions on regime survival (Smith 2005, Brownlee 2007, Ginsburg and Moustafa 2008, Lindberg 2009).

From a power-sharing perspective, the aim of these formal institutions is to

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[14] Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way, 2002."The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism," *Journal of Democracy*, pp. 51-65

maintain a minimum level of "intra-elite cohesion" (Gerschewski 2013, 16). These are stabilizing tools that ensure a minimal form of power-sharing and a level of unity among ruling elites, without which the regime could collapse (Reuter and Szakonyi 2017). Maintaining elite cohesion, which can be defined as "rulers' ability to maintain the loyalty and cooperation of allies within the regime," is crucial to ensure an autocrat's survival (Levitsky and Way 2012, 870).

In studies of cooptation, beyond studying the role of formal institutions, which have also been found to be channels for sharing spoils and distributing rent, others have looked into the informal strategies autocrats used to co-opt elite opposition by forming patronage networks and sharing policy favors and/or political rent (Gandhi 2008; Gandhi and Przeworski 2006). Those include corruption, clientelism, and patronage: the pillars of neopatrimonialism. Neopatrimonialism dictates that the ruler entertains various circles of loyal elites in different sectors, be they from the upper layers of the military, security, business, or bureaucratic sectors. Appointments of opposition figures in official posts are one manifestation of the "menu of manipulation" that autocrats use to appease the opposition (Schedler 2002, 36). Cooptation is understood as the "capacity to tie strategically relevant actors (or a group of actors) to the regime elite" (Gerschewski 2013, 22). It is a manipulative tool to prevent troublesome opposition figures from the selectorate from becoming vocal opponents. Coopted members tacitly agree to join the regime and practice politics according to its rules (Linz 1973, 191).

Lastly, legitimation is also important to stabilize authoritarian regimes, although legitimacy claims "passive obedience and compliance" are required Gerschewski 2013,

18). Legitimacy claims differ, as some regimes rely on ideology to maintain their support base while others may depend on the masses' loyalty to the personhood of the autocrat (i.e., legitimacy through personification). One of the indirect enhancers of authoritarian legitimacy stems from "the international context", particularly political turmoil and crises in democracies, as they can be packaged as proof that authoritarian regimes operate better than democracies (Sinkkkonen 2020, 1185). Additionally, autocracies can support one another, especially if they lie in a neighboring region or share interests given their strategic regional position.

2.2 Overcoming Horizontal Threats: Authoritarian Survival Via Power-Sharing and Coup-Proofing

The literature on authoritarian resilience acknowledges that ruling alone, without a minimal support base among elites, is nearly impossible (de Mesquita and Smith 2012, Svolik 2012). Despots rise to and stay in power in coordination with an elite clique, without whom the autocrat can be overthrown. In Alistair Smith and Bruce de Mesquita's three-dimensional approach (2011, 31) to the concentric "ruling circles" (Schlumberger 2008, 625-626) around political leaders, there are three groups of people in any political setting: the nominal selectorate, the real selectorate, and the winning coalition (de Mesquita and Smith 2011, ibid). The nominal selectorate can be thought of as interchangeable support bases drawn from the masses (ibid, 32); the 'real selectorate' is the influential few whose opinions actually matter in both selecting the leader and supporting policies; and lastly, the winning coalition is the essential core, without whom

the leader would not survive (ibid). In authoritarian settings, this third and most essential of these concentric circles can be called the 'ruling coalition'[15] since it not only 'votes' the ruler into power but also represents the "leadership group" ruling along with the autocrat (Geddes et al. 2014, 313). As defined by Milan Svolik, the ruling coalition is "a set of individuals who support a dictator and, jointly with him, hold enough power to guarantee a regime's survival." (Svolik 2012, 2) and "be both necessary and sufficient for the survival of the government" (Svolik 2009, 480). The "survival of leaders and regimes" is influenced by this "twin problem of power sharing and control", but mainly by the problem of power-sharing "among regime insiders" (Svolik 2012, 5). Thus, the ruling coalition is the few most essential elite members whose actions and interests are critical to the survival of the regime.

Given the high-stakes environment of palace politics, autocrats are constantly wary of internal dissent, trying to fend for themselves when the ruling coalition is fragmented. Elite cohesion is hard to achieve, given that the precarity of power-sharing within ruling coalitions in autocratic regimes seems to entail eventual factionalism, which, in turn, preordains taking drastic measures to maintain each faction's survival at the cost of the other's demise. In her book on alliance formation during civil wars, Fotini Christia shows that what drives fractionalization, splits, takeovers, alliance changes, and alliance formation are the relative power distributions between and within groups (Christia 2012, 6). Intra-elite dynamics operate in a manner not unlike the Hobbesian state

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[15] The naming convention is arbitrary, but it probably dates back to how USSR's Joseph Stalin's inner circle came to be known as the "select group," the "close circle," or the "ruling group."

of nature, a war of all against all, wherein one wrong move can dictate the demise of one political actor or the other (Bratton & van de Walle 1997, 86). Power-sharing is highly precarious and cannot be guaranteed one day to the other, especially within inner circles close to the dictator (Geddes et al., 97-99, 2018). Actors in such risky and ever-changing environments pick their allies based on power considerations and threat perception. Allison Cuttner builds on that line of thinking by arguing that autocrats choose who to target for elimination following a sensitive decision algorithm that also takes into account the relative power distribution, expected outcome, and opportune timing when they are at their weakest (Cuttner 2022, Sudduth 2017). The other players in the elite-dictator relations are the elites and their own selfish considerations for their survival with a powerful winner.

According to this power game, autocrats have to reluctantly form pacts[16] with the real selectorate as well as the winning coalition of powerful political, economic, security, tribal, or religious elites. Additionally, members of the "selectorate" need to be bound to the "winning coalition". However, the closer the allies, the more powerful and dangerous they are to the autocrat's survival. That is why the ruling coalition's members have historically been the overthrowers of dictators. Between 1946 and 2008, coups comprised 68% of the nonconstitutional mode of exit from office for autocrats, as opposed to popular uprisings, assassinations, and foreign interventions (Bou Nassif 2020, 25-27). This is both

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[16] I adopt Barbara Geddes definition of 'pacts' whic are "agreements among contending elites that establish formulas for sharing or alternating in office, distributing the spoils of office, and constraining policy choice in areas of high salience to the groups involved, while excluding other groups from office, spoils, and influence over policy." (Geddes 1999, 121).

good and bad news; good because the data supports the idea that the longer an autocrat stays in power, the more difficult he is to overthrow (Bienen and Van de Walle 1991, 98-99). It is bad for the autocrat[17] because that means that he becomes hostage to a power game with contenders from whom he has to protect himself for years. To guard against being overthrown by his closest "rival allies" (Carboni and Raleigh 2021, 417), an autocrat has to strike a balance between power-sharing and coup-proofing without going too far in either direction so as to avoid elite defection (Besley and Kudamatsu 2008; Gandhi 2008; Gandhi and Sumner 2020, Roessler 2011, Francois et al. 2015).

As the literature on power-sharing demonstrates, the autocrat's bigger dilemma is not to contain the masses but to find and co-opt potential traitors within his ruling bloc. Those rival allies[18] can launch a coup to dethrone an autocrat. The definitions of a coup d'etat generally converge on one outcome: the removal of the incumbent. However, while Geddes et. al limit the action to "members of the *military* of the regime being ousted" (2018, 6), Svolik and Roessler consider the leader's "inner circle" to be equally eligible (Svolik 2012, 41) and add that a coup is generally "accompanied by the threat or actual use of force" (ibid). However, although it still registers as a coup if regime insiders replace and outlive the removal of the autocrat, the 'change' in leadership does not amount to regime change. The overthrow of an autocratic leader can give way to "an uninterrupted succession in office of politically affiliated authoritarian leaders", or what Milan Svolik

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[17] It is even worse news for the people because it indicates that it is nearly impossible to have a long-standing autocrat willingly relinquish his seat.

[18] The definition that Carboni and Raleigh provide is, "elites whose independent leverage is important to the legitimacy and reach of the government, but whose authority and strength may compete with the leader" (2018, 420)

terms "ruling coalition spells" (Svolik 2012, 42). In other words, coups that successfully remove the autocrat are not wholesale changes that dismantle the regime's structure. Rather, they can merely amount to "incumbent ejection" (Stacher 2020, 26).

Regardless, the chances of successfully mounting a sudden offensive vary depending on the type of authoritarian regime (i.e., personalist, single-party, or military), among other factors. How can a measure of counterbalancing accurately gauge vulnerability to coups (Pilster and Bohmelt 2012, 360-361)? Holger Albrecht's 'coup risk' article attempts to measure the likelihood of a coup attempt and argues that it increases "when opportunities exist and/or when military or political elites breed increasing motivations to oust the incumbent" (Albrecht 2015, 660). This definition seems to imply that coups target the incumbent and do not necessarily bring about regime change. Dictators rule in a "hazardous environment", where being removed by a small group of officers is a constant possibility that nearly always carries a probability of success (Geddes et al 2018, 99). However, it is important to note that coup risk can also haunt the ruling coalition if the faction within the military that launches the coup is unrelated to the ruling leadership; in this case, the coup can bring about regime change.

Coup risk is generally highest in the first months of assuming power; however, the threat is never abolished, no matter how long the consolidation has been established (Svolik 2009, 478; Albrecht 2015, 668). In a high coup-risk environment, the regime's interest lies in actively and intentionally weakening the military from the inside, all the while monitoring its activities and planting spies to keep a check on potential coup plotters within the elite coterie. Additionally, driving wedges within the coercive

apparatus,[19] which includes the intelligence services, police, and other security institutions, also serve as a deterrence tool since they "check and balance each other" (Belkin and Schofer 2003, 596).

Coup-proofing can be damaging to the military's operations, especially armies' battlefield effectiveness.[20] The practices and activities that promote and enhance a given military's battlefield effectiveness are the same ones that can be a launchpad for a coup (Talmadge 2015, 5). While Talmadge's argument is not surprising and is, in fact, in line with other studies (Thompson 1975; Finer 1988), she makes an interesting parallel between professionalized armies and coup-proofed ones. The more capable the military is to win wars, the less likely it is to be prevented if its officers launch a coup. In other words, a negative relationship exists between 'battlefield effectiveness' and coup-prevention measures.

The military's loyalty has to be ensured, still. Thus, while regime survival and coup prevention weaken the regular army, its loyalty is nonetheless essential for the survival of the authoritarian ruler (Barany, 2016; Bellin, 2012; Holmes and Koehler, 2018; Koehler, 2017). However, what explains whether or not the military stays quartered or defects or defends the autocrat remains ambiguous (Croissant and Selge 2016; Lutscher 2016). This begs the question which the Arab Spring's divergent outcomes illustrated and what Hisham Soliman (2021) poses in his study of military defections. In a small-N

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[19] Greitens (2016, 12) defines state coercive institutions as "the specific set of institutions that collectively hold responsibility for internal intelligence and security.". Hisham Kandil's definition is also worth mentioning; so is Haidar Ali's Sudan-specific discussion of their evolution.

[20] "Battlefield effectiveness" denotes "a state's success at the operational-tactical level of military activity" and how well it can train units to master basic tactics and complex operations (Talmadge 2015, 4).

comparative study, Soliman argues that in addition to coup-proofing measures, the regime has to employ 'defection-proofing' measures as well (Soliman 2021, 36). His simple answer is that officers would not defect to stand with the masses when the military develops "financial dependency on the regime" (Soliman 2021, 42). They can also defect when "there is greater uncertainty about the regime's willingness to provide spoils" (Reuter & Szakonyi 2017). Moreover, to Erica De Bruin, officers who are not carrying out the coup themselves weigh out the following options to decide whether or not to resist the coup: "the likelihood the coup will succeed, the costs of it doing so, and the costs of using violence to stop it" (2020, 7). As Eva Bellin argued about the robustness of authoritarianism (ROA) in the MENA during the Arab Spring, one of the two[21] most important factors determining whether the coercive apparatus would side with the incumbent and shoot at the protestors is the "institutional interests of the military", which can be disaggregated into institutional and individual economic interests (Bellin 2012, 131), which Soliman frames as "Military Owned Businesses" (MOBs). This further supports the assertion that a cornerstone of coup-proofing includes promoting the military's material benefits in an effort to ensure their loyalty despite fragmenting and weakening their structure. Still, the effectiveness and effects of coup-proofing are contextually dependent, as the Arab Spring led scholars to believe (Lynch et al. 2022, 45-46).

In addition to appeasing the coercive apparatus, an autocratic regime must

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[21] The other factor is the "level of social mobilization" (ibid)

reconcile the competing interests of the ruling elites. To do so, authoritarian regimes try to have a power-sharing format that distributes rents or benefits and at the same time ensure that the elites do not have the means to jeopardize the survival of the regime and its leader. However, while coup-proofing has been exhaustively covered in the literature, the realm of 'elite management' under authoritarian regimes still requires further unpacking. Who are those elites and what threats do they pose? And why do autocrats have to manage their cohesion? How are they managed? There is a growing body of scholarly work addressing why, how, and when these elite management tactics change, though there is a dearth of studies that systematically and empirically illustrates the process of arriving at choosing different tactics at different points in the regime's lifespan. This study attempts to do that and further investigates the regime's survival chances, given the outcome of elite management tactics when they result in a reconfigured power-sharing arrangement. The chosen Sudanese case provides an excellent view how the regime managed a fractious ruling coalition and maintained the loyalty of a coercive apparatus, across several phases, each with different circumstances. It provides insights that bring the coup-proofing literature and authoritarian elite management studies into conversation with one another.

Coming full circle, the research question animating this study is, *Under what conditions can coup-proofing tactics prevent regime failure in some instances but not others?* While it would be a stretch to argue that coup-proofing alone saved the chosen regime at critical junctures, it is worth noting why the security guardians in Sudan did not agree to remove the autocrat until 2019. The literature on contentious politics cannot explain why

Sudan did not experience regime failure in instances when the Inqaz regime became increasingly vulnerable to widespread protests. In contrast, this study attempts to demonstrate that coup-proofing tactics, which were timed in conjunction with ruling coalition reforms, conferred survival gains following each critical juncture in the regime's lifespan. To that end, each chapter looks carefully at power dynamics within the ruling circle and tries to answer these three questions:

- What is the mechanism of elite management in this period?
- How has the ruling coalition been altered, and what does its changed composition reflect?
- What are the (positive and negative) effects of these changes (understood as power-sharing and coup-proofing measures) on regime stability?

This approach affords the study a fresh perspective on how regime survival and failure come about through carefully timed tactical compromises. It departs from the belief that authoritarian regimes are born, or rather reincarnated from the ashes of previous regimes, with a time bomb that a careful insider observing intra-elite dynamics would know when its preset detonation would go off. In this particular phrasing, there is an element of a 'fated' end that cannot be stopped, but time bombs are man-made and can be remodeled. For the sake of the allegory, suppose the insider is the autocrat himself. There is a good chance he would reset the time to delay the end, even if that meddling is at the expense of a bigger explosion. How he, along with his aides, adjusts the bomb's settings is, quite literally, a matter of survival and it is what interests scholars of authoritarian durability. The 'fall' is merely the last chapter, and it may not have a

resounding effect, but, as an event, it gives clues to what used to work and no longer functions well. From this viewpoint, a given authoritarian regime is in a state of continuous descent and 'resetting' within the ruling coalition and to the coercive apparatus. Thus, the bulk of this study focuses on pre-fall reconfigurations and evasions of crises.

2.3 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework: Regime Cycles, Coup-proofing, and the Political Marketplace Framework

Given that the research focuses on the durability of authoritarian regimes from the standpoint of long-standing autocrats' dynamic survival mechanisms, the theoretical lens guiding this research also follows a dynamic model of three overlapping components specialized in tackling multiple layers[22] of analysis, each capturing a crucial aspect of the subject at hand.

The first layer, the regime cycle framework (RCF) lies one step above the intra-elite behavior level to gauge the regime's internal evolution over time, with the senior elites being the central players. This analytical lens focuses on the ruling coalition's actors and their actions, to paint a plausible explanation of the variation in intra-elite dynamics over time. RCF provides a rough sketch of elite management approaches during each phase in the regime's lifespan. Each phase corresponds to a regime epoch of a distinctive character, which informs the ruling elites' survival toolkit vis-a-vis changing circumstances.

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[22] Not to be mistaken with 'levels of analysis' in the field of International Relations.

The second layer is concerned with the tools the autocrat and his core elites use to maintain regime stability, namely, coup-proofing tactics. Tracing the choices and combinations of coup-proofing tactics reflects a change in the power-sharing alliances among elites and the power centers they yield and represent.

Lastly, the third layer brings into focus the driving material factors driving senior elites' behavior, especially as the regime enters its final 'endgame' stage.[23] This final layer is the political marketplace framework, which fittingly reflects the fragility of neopatrimonialism as the autocrat's material resources dwindle and opportunists' loyalty cannot be purchased. Those three interlaced components converge in their treatment of authoritarian politics as a high-risk, elite-dominant environment propelled by the formation and annulment of elite coalitions and patronage networks.

I. Regime Cycles:

In line with the assertion that political change tends to be "cyclic rather than purely progressive or regressive",[24] it follows that one of the lenses in the theoretical framework outlines what "regime cycles" look like. The "regime cycle framework" describes the general mode of conduct that authoritarian regimes implement to maintain political stability and control and stay in power, at distinct stages of their rule. The four phases

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[23] The term "endgame" is used in Koelher & Albrecht's article, Milan Svolik's book on coups, and Hisham Bou Nassif's book, *Endgames: Military Response to Protest in Arab Autocracies*. The term was first coined by David Pion-Berlin and Harold Trinkunas (2010) who used it to describe a situation wherein uprisings shake autocrats' grip on power while simultaneously posing a choice to the armed forces to either defend the status quo or defect.

[24] See Hale & Alberto Alesina, Nouriel Roubini, and Gerald Cohen, Political Cycles and the Macroeconomy (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997)

are consolidation, accommodation, fragmentation, and crisis (Carboni and Raleigh 2021, 416) and they each reflect shifts in "senior elites and their alignment with leaders" (ibid). These four phases can overlap as there are no exact start or end lines; the phases and their characteristics act merely as guiding frames to situate empirical cases within those theoretical constructs. Some long-standing autocrats can witness several iterations of the cycle.

The regime cycles approach's basic assumptions state that survival and durability are but the result of strategic moves and changes done within the 'minimum winning coalitions' (Riker 1962, 32-33). The approach emphasizes that 'regime change' in authoritarian regimes does not always result in overhauling the underlying "structure of power" (Carboni and Raleigh 2021, 417). Rather, what is more likely to happen after a given critical juncture[25] or crisis is a "reshuffle" among the politically relevant elite (Albrecht and Schlumberger 2004, 39), who lie within the sphere of influence of the "governing authoritarian elites" (Svolik 2009, 478). Besides tracing the mechanism of managing these two elite circles, the approach situates the regime's internal logic justifying elite management tactics (e.g. the choice of, for instance, dismissing a high-ranking general as opposed to jailing a prominent political figure or hiring pro-government militias instead of forming a presidential guard force) within the specific phase it is undergoing. Applied to the case at hand, the regime cycles framework inspects cyclical reforms within the Inqaz regime's ruling coalition and teases what contextual

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[25] A critical juncture can be defined as "a major event or confluence of factors disrupting the existing economic or political balance in society" (Acemoglu and Robinson (2012), see also Capoccia and Kelemen (2007))

factors influence the decisions backing fluctuation in their ranks from one phase to the other.

II.   Coup-proofing:

Since this research inquires about the underlying reasons for both the Inqaz regime's survival for three decades and its fall in 2019, it relies on the theoretical lens that is most associated with regime survival in Africa and the Middle East; namely, coup-proofing. The central contribution of coup-proofing is that by raising the barriers of cooperation among regime elites and armed institutions, especially, the formal military, the incumbent is hard to remove. The autocrat's mission is to maintain his rule as long as possible, even if that entails modifying the ruling coalition. Accordingly, he has to monitor and efficiently block potential coup plotters among the senior elites in the ruling bloc. As mentioned earlier, coup-proofing is conceptualized as a mechanism for regime stabilization and survival, facilitating the continuous containment of intra-elite crises in authoritarian regimes.

Coup-proofing includes many tactics, prime among which is what Hicham Bou Nassif enumerates as divide-and-rule, counterbalancing, ethnic stacking, and promotion of military (or security) material interests (Bou Nassif). The tactics can be used in various combinations. For instance, one tactic acknowledges how coup plots spread in secret factions and therefore targets the communication channels of the military's vast institution (Matthews 2022, 664). Structural counterbalancing (Powell 2010) includes "diversifying the chain of command" and creating paramilitary or parallel armed groups

such as "presidential guards, militarized police, and militia" (E. De Bruin 2020), so as to obstruct any collective action attempt by coup plotters. These parallel militarized institutions are dangerously contracted out by the state to act with impunity on behalf of regime elites (Raleigh and Kishi 2018, 1-2). As Raleigh and Kishi (2018) demonstrate, the other threat of pro-government militias[26] is that they do not have a formal institutional structure that enforces a strict line of command. Their loyalty can be bought by the highest bidder, in the "marketplace of loyalties" (De Waal 2009, 103), since they thrive in a setting conducive to supporting "unaccountable agents and actions" (Raleigh and Kishi 2018, 582).

With these two theories, the dual issues of regime survival throughout crises as well as the timing of the incumbent's fall, are somewhat clarified. However, one crucial piece remains missing: funding. Ensuring the ruling coalition's and coup-proofing guardians' allegiance requires enough funding. As such, the autocrat's financial maintenance of power-sharing and coup-proofing techniques over time is essential as well. Changes in elite ranks in response to coup risk or financial strain follow a cyclical pattern, as the first theoretical component suggests, and the second concurs; however, these changes also tend to resemble fluctuations in what Alex De Waal describes as the political marketplace.

III. Political Marketplace Framework (PMF)

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[26] The definition that Raleigh and Kishi adopt for pro-government militias or PGMs is (2018, 4), "groups with either a political link to the regime or President, an allied association with state forces, and/or a regional or ethnic tie to the regime or President."

The political marketplace is defined as "a system of governance run on the basis of personal transactions in which political services and allegiances are exchanged for material reward in a competitive manner" (De Waal 2016, 1). This system of 'transactional politics' is conjoined with actors of the "security arena" (ibid, 3), whose material interests shape political outcomes. Inspired by ground-level observations of the neo-patrimonial politics of Sudan and the Horn of Africa, this framework, which also works in phases, reads political economy changes as reconfigurations in the political marketplace. It predicts three outcomes following critical political junctures in a regime's cycle: "centralized authoritarian kleptocracy'; 'oligopoly' — either collusive or rivalrous—and 'free market'" (ibid, 6).

In short, what this interlaced theoretical framework proposes is that an authoritarian regime enters its last regime phase, or endgame scenario, when its coup-proofing tactics can no longer be centrally funded and are, instead, left to the rules of the political marketplace. This progression toward decentralized funding (independent of the autocrat's clique) for the security sector responsible for coup-proofing the regime, increases the likelihood of regime failure and jeopardizes the autocrat's survival. Thus, this study argues that seemingly impregnable coup-proofed authoritarian regimes entering their final stages are prone to regime failure when the autocrat's political budget dwindles.

2.4 Methodological Framework: Process-Tracing Supplemented with Semi-Structured Interviews

To achieve the study's goals, I relied on qualitative research methods, namely

process tracing and semi-structured interviews. Process tracing is most helpful when the aim is to engage with richly detailed events since one of its central pillars is its belief that a good explanation of a social phenomenon is incomplete unless it documents in detail the "plausible causal pathways connecting the independent and dependent variables" (Gonzalez-Ocantos and LaPorte 2019, 2). Unlike other methods within the camp of qualitative positivist methodologies, which can similarly accomplish the job of verifying the possible causal links between variables, process tracing tries to string together details about actors and their contextualized actions to provide "mechanismic explanations" to the purported relation between the independent and dependent variables (ibid, 5-6; Hedström 2008, 320). In sum, the method facilitates understanding regime survival in action, all the while using relevant evidence to "affirm some explanations and cast doubt upon others," (Bennett and Checkel 2014, 16).

Applied to the present study's within-case analysis, process-tracing entails a careful analysis of how the Inqaz regime fell over time. It recommends taking a long shot and moving the camera along the regime's trajectory in power to explain this episode toward the end. While the 'end' is a central focus of the research, especially the culmination of specific events in the final months of the regime's life, the majority of the work pays attention to how the regime weathered multiple crises *before* 2019. In this sense, the 2019 'fall' is treated as a snapshot in a long chronological order. To that end, I conducted process tracing of critical events available in multiple secondary sources (books, newspaper articles, and recorded interviews on YouTube). Even then, it is important to remember that the long shot can not pick everything that went wrong with

the Inqaz regime since 1989 and led to the endgame scenario in 2019. That is, I do not claim to provide an exhaustive rundown of the bottom-up (e.g. contentious politics) and top-down explanations. After all, no method can provide a holistic 360 view of the studied case, but process tracing can greatly improve a theoretically informed, analytic narrative.

I complemented my reading of books and reports with twenty-one semi-structured interviews, eight of which were with four people twice, both in person and online. Those interviews, most of which are safely recorded after consent, were with English- and Arabic-speaking scholars who have extensively studied aspects of the Inqaz regime before its fall in 2019 as well as notable Sudanese journalists who reported on the regime's performance and witnessed key turning points in its political conduct over the years. The use of *semi-structured* interviews allowed me to be flexible with the questions I prepared beforehand, yet nonetheless ready to steer the interview back to the main line of inquiry. The interviews began as a learning endeavor to help me avoid the problem of missing data, or "missingness" (Gonzalez-Ocantos and LaPorte 2019, 2), as a foreign scholar who is not as fluent in Sudanese politics as my interviewees are. However, because the sample of interviewees is chiefly from scholarly networks, the interviews quickly became intellectually engaging discussions littered with the interviewees' liberal use of concepts in the literature and references to further readings. Whether they were conducted online or in person in public spaces,[27] the rich conversations reaffirmed the

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[27] One interview was at AUC Tahrir campus while the others were in different coffeeshops around Maadi and New Cairo, where my interviewees were only recently based, after having left Sudan in mid-2023.

complexity of the Sudanese case as well as the difficulty of approaching it within the bounds of a single theory. They also highlighted the critical junctures preceding the beginning of a new regime cycle phase and confirmed that the Inqaz regime underwent multiple internal revisions that they themselves sensed as scholars or citizens of Sudan.
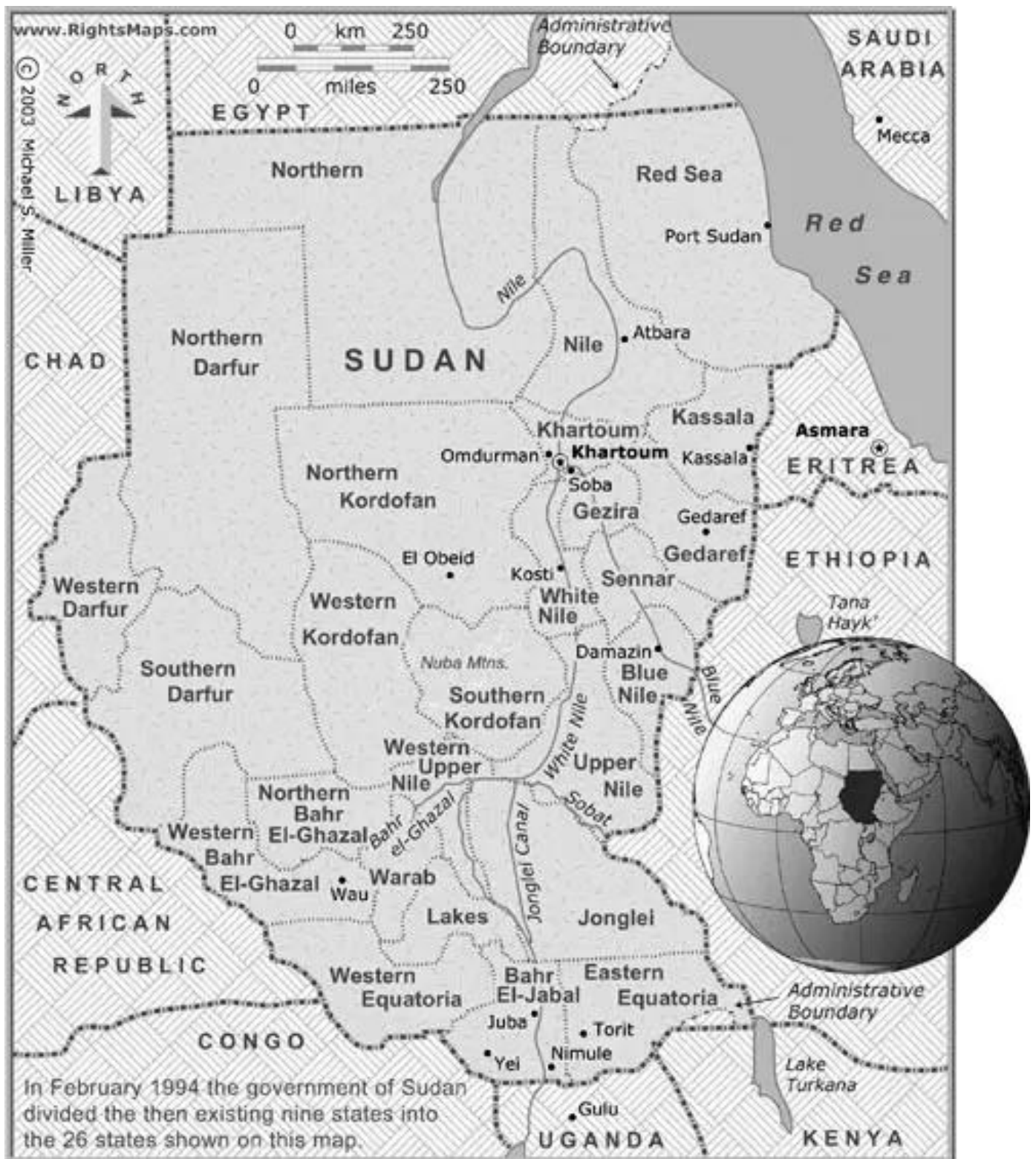
Figure (1) Map of Sudan 1956 to 2011.

Chapter 2
Not Coming to Terms with Sudan's Diversity (1953-1989)

"There is nothing in common between the various sections of the community; no body of shared beliefs, no identity of interests, no local signs of unity and above all, the Sudan has failed to compose a single community." - Aggrey Jaden 1965

"...conventional models of state-building that are based on trying to achieve an end-state that accords with an idealised, western view of a state, are not only doomed to failure but also miss or even undermine what can actually function in these countries." - Alex De Waal 2010

"Successive Sudanese governments - parliamentary and dictatorial alike - have cherished the ideal of the Sudanese Arab so much that they have insisted on assimilation, rather than pluralistic inclusion and acceptance of difference, as the only approach to national unity. In trying to pursue their agendas in the context of civil wars, they have turned Arabization and Islamization into martial policies" [emphasis mine] (Sharkey 2007, 42)

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2.1 Introduction

Sudan's political history is fascinating. After revoking Anglo-Egyptian colonialism in 1953, the country experienced two popular uprisings, two military dictatorships, two civil wars, and three democratic episodes, before the Inqaz regime seized power in 1989. Unlocking this rich political trajectory is essential to understanding the story of the rise and fall of the last regime (1989-2019). The purpose of this chapter is to provide a cursory historical background to persistent issues and conflicts that the Inqaz regime later exacerbated. The chapter highlights the complex socio-historical factors that shaped Sudanese society and politics and the institutions the Inqaz regime later inherited from post-colonial predecessor governments. Of special importance are the power disparity between the center-and-periphery in Sudan since independence; the political party system and its social roots; the security sector's – specifically the military institution – role in politics; and the Southern "problem". The chapter demonstrates that the fragmented

political parties, infiltration of the military, and the political elites' mismanagement of conflicts in Sudan's peripheries[28], among other persisting issues plaguing Sudan, had their origins in the first 36 years prior to the Inqaz regime's seizure of power in 1989. The chapter is divided into four sections. The first section briefly reviews Sudan's crises-in-the-making, before the country's independence in 1953. The second section focuses on post-independence partisan politics and how complicit the traditional parties were in engaging the armed forces to launch two coups in 1958 and 1969. The third section focuses on the May Regime of Gen. Jaafer Nimeiri and its legacy. Lastly, the fourth section briefly reviews the interim period of 1985 to 1989, before the Inqaz regime took power by force. Besides tracing the origin of coup-proofing practices that the Inqaz regime later upgraded, the chapter contends that regime survival heavily depends on forging tactical alliances, as Sudan's authoritarian history portrays.

2.2 Pre-Independence Colonial Legacy

Among scholars of the Horn of Africa and sub-Saharan Africa, Sudan is considered "Africa writ small" or a "microcosm of Africa" (Abd Al-Rahim 1970, 233). Indeed, looking at a map of the African continent, Sudan is geographically huge in its special median position, sharing borders with nine African countries.[29] Its society is also

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[28] In colonial times, the term peripheries typically referred to the southern provinces, Darfur, southern Kordofan and parts of Blue Nile. After independence, these regions along with others in the Nuba and the eastern provinces were marginalized. Thus, in this study, the term is used to refer to all of these marginalized areas, while the 'center' primarily denotes Greater Khartoum.

[29] Sudan is contiguous with Egypt, Libya, Chad, Central African Republic, Zaire, Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Eritrea. The closest neighboring countries on the other side of the Red Sea are Saudi Arabia - merely 150 km away from Port Sudan - and Yemen.

highly diverse, with at least a hundred spoken dialects (El-Battahani 2017, 279) and over 550 tribes (Gore 1989, 269).[30] Sudanese society resembles a mosaic, rather than a melting pot, divided along several cleavages, some of which cross-cut one another: religious, ethnic, tribal, cultural, racial, ideological, and linguistic lines.

The multiplicity of cross-cutting identities inside Sudan has always been framed as an intractable governance problem, which oftentimes resurfaces as "conflicts of identity and wars of vision" (De Waal 2015, 73). Sudan's journey towards finding, or rather creating, a national identity post-independence, has been mired in a long struggle, not least because of its colonial heritage. Like the majority of African countries, Sudan's borders are artificially created, having been imposed by colonial powers.[31] The country gained self-governance in 1953 (al-'Abbasi 2011, 72) after being under Turco-Egyptian rule (1821-1885), the Mahdist state (1891-1898), and the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium (1898-1956) (Collins 1976, 4); the last colonial experience left indelible marks.

Under British indirect rule, the colony of Sudan was harvested for maximal exploitation, without the least concern for long-term consequences. To govern the largest country in Africa,[32] the British imposed a layered system of administration that combined direct and indirect rule or, (*idara ahliya*) native administration (Sidahmed 2011, 172). The form of native administration relied on tribal affiliations (al-'Abbasi 2011, 63), as the

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[30] This figure can be disputed, as it relies on Harold MacMichael's method of data collection in the 1920s. Given that MacMichael was a British administrator in Sudan, his colonizer's standpoint has to be considered with a pinch of salt (Mamdani 2009, 146-147).

[31] The inherited borders of Sudan up until 2011 were those agreed upon in 1924 (Harir and Tvedt 1994, 33).

[32] Sudan was the largest country in Africe until South Sudan's separation on 9 July 2011. Sudan currently ranks third after Alegia and the Democratic Repblic of Congo.

British found it easier to coopt potentially disruptive or nationalistic "traditional authority" figures by tying them into lucrative government patronage networks (Leonardi and Abdul Jalil 2011, 190). Having a *nazir, amir, omda,* or *sheikh*[33] was "cheap and effective in maintaining law and order" (Harir and Tvedt 1994, 34) because these regional chiefs carried out administrative tasks such as settling disputes in special courts and collecting taxes (Leonardi and Abdul Jalil 2011, 190-191). These problematically fused judicial and administrative tasks were distanced from the colonial officer, whose point of contact was limited to said chiefs (Harir and Tvedt 1994, 34). In turn, the loyal, corruptible chiefs' interest lay in maintaining good relations with the colonial power to secure their spoils both from the community they oversee and their patron (Leonardi and Abdul Jalil 2011, 191).

Economically, the British set up the Sudanese economy to have "extractive institutions" (Acemoglu, Johnson, and Robinson 2001, 1376). For instance, during WWII, Sudan supplied many essential goods to British officers overseas (Niblock 1987, 111). Sudan's "monoculture economy" (Collins 1976, 9) was nearly wholly dedicated to irrigated agriculture and the production of cotton as the main cash crop to meet the needs of the British textile industry (Mamdani 2009, 145). Following other "colonial-capitalist" models, the British recruited labor from poor rural regions and invested in the profitable center (Berridge et al. 2022, 29). To take an example, the Gezira Scheme, located south of Khartoum between the Blue and White Nile, devoted over two million fertile acres to the

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[33] Note the Turkish and Arabic origins of these words.

production of cotton (Sikainga 2014, 104). Every state institution was geared toward the continuation of this economy, including the "bureaucracy, infrastructure, development planning, and educational and health welfare systems" (ElBadawi and AlHelo 2023, 9), in addition to efficient transportation and communication systems (e.g. railroads, ports, and post system) (Collins 1976, 6).

Staffing these sectors required creating trained and professional calibers, educated in British schools and colleges like Gordon Memorial College (later Khartoum University) (ibid). Yet, since the rationale behind creating these institutions was only for extractive purposes, neither education nor all job sectors were open to every Sudanese citizen. In fact, the educational facilities were very limited and, by virtue of their northern location, favored the education of Arab males from the north to staff administrative jobs. Unskilled Southerners mainly staffed menial positions (Sharkey 2007, 29), yet were essential as agricultural labor for cash crops (Sikainga 2014, 104). The intentionally "lopsided" recruitment system (ElBadawi and AlHelo 2023, 9) produced "a tiny intelligentsia in the South", which later translated into fragmented, elite-led politics in the South and general alienation from the North (Woodward 2012, 152). In the South, Christian missionaries took charge of education alongside conversion activities. As a result, the North became home to a small class of an educated riverain elite[34] while the South had a Christianized missionary elite (Harir and Tvedt 1994, 33).

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[34] The word "riverain", which means related to a riverbank (i.e., the Nile river), is generally ascribed to three main ethnic groups in Sudan from the "Shayqiyya, Ja'aliin and Danagla" riverain region, which includes Khartoum (El-Tom 88-89). It refers to the "relatively homogeneous core located in the north and east" of Sudan where "all national leaders have emerged" (Woodward 2021) - as The Black Book later demonstrated (Mamdani 2009, 199-200).

Education was just one aspect among many highlighting the deliberate discrimination during the colonial period of the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium. To take a stark example, South Sudan's per capita GDP was around USD 39 in 1956; in comparison, the poorest North-West region's per capita was 76 USD in 1956 (ElBadawi and AlHelo 2023, 9). The roots of unequal development between the North and South extended beyond the provision of services and engaged with "identity formation" (Mamdani 2009, 146). In the typical Foucauldian application of biopower over the colonized bodies, the colonial power made sure that the ethnic, racial, religious, and tribal roots were officially recorded in census data, public documents, and identification cards for schools, birth certificates, and courts (al-'Abbasi 2011, 41). The colonized subjects' new sense of self-consciousness became self-identities (Mamdani 2009, 146), whose political salience would ebb and flow over time. The two most incendiary identifiers – race and tribe – were later misused to fan the flames of violence in specifically the western and southern parts of Sudan.

One clear manifestation of how the colonial administration manipulated the "segmental cleavages" (Lijphart 1977, 3) in Sudan was the Closed District Ordinance of 1922, which prevented the free interaction and passage of citizens from some western parts such as Darfur and between North and South (Harir and Tvedt 1994, 33). Efforts for integration came much later in the 1940s when it was too late to reverse structural inequalities and revoke an artificially demarcated North-South divide. The racial and

ethnic dimension of the "Southern policy"[35] is one among many irreversible colonial legacies (Collins 1976, 8).

Despite the Southern policy's implications on de facto dividing Sudan, the form of government the colonial power used was nonetheless centralized (al-'Abbasi 2011, 84-85). Yet, given the adoption of indirect rule as the British modus operandi, Sudan's governance system resembled that of federations rather than unitary states; there was enough room for each colonial officer appointed to rule over Darfur or South Sudan's three regions, for instance. In this sense, the idea of adopting a federal system, post-independence, was grounded in real practices yet not ratified on paper. Indeed, drafting this particular issue in the constitution after independence was a major point of contention.[36]

2.3 Independence

SSudan gained its independence on January 1, 1956, emerging as the biggest country in Africa. The British colonization's 57-year governance of Sudan (from 1899 to 1956) demarcated its borders and drew the blueprint of the country's institutional framework, civil service, agricultural sector, educational system, and, of course, the structural foundations for the political system. Independent Sudan's chosen government

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[35] The Southern Policy was designed to divide the non-Muslim areas of Sudan from the political fervor in the northern regions as well as eventually annexing the South to other East African British colonies (Collins 1976, 8). It was also introduced to "curtail the spread of Islam and the Arabic language in the southern Sudan" (Sikainga 2014, 103). For more on that, see page 173 in Robert O. Collins, *Shadows in the Grass: Britain in the Southern Sudan, 1918-1956* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983).

[36] The three governors appointed to rule Southern Sudan warned against having a unitary constitution post-independence (Woodward 2012, 150).

type, much like other former British colonies, was a parliamentary democratic system modeled on the Westminster style. The prescribed Westminster style of democracy (adopted in 1953, three years prior to formal independence in 1956) emphasized both a unitary state rather than a federation and rule by majority rather than proportional representation. This flawed formula – overlaid on an already weak state (Woodward 1990, 231) – subsequently angered and muted the already underrepresented minorities and precluded their chances of checking or balancing the power of the main sects concentrated in the riverain north. Unlike what the cover of Newsweek magazine on 23 Feb 1953 claimed, independent Sudan was not poised to be a 'bright spot in a dark continent' (Newsweek 1953, Vol 41). On the contrary, the country was poised to experience a series of late-onset crises that had long been brewing under colonial rule.

Independence did not mean the same thing to all Sudanese. In fact, for some elites and their constituencies, independence was an interim stage before fusing the country with Egypt while others sought to free Sudan from Egypt (Woodward 2012, 149), and advocated the creation of either another Mahdi state or a secular state. Celebrating independence in 1956 meant different things, but most importantly, as Alex De Waal writes, "for many Southerners, there was nothing to celebrate at all" (2014, 74).

This lack of consensus reflects the country's inchoate sense of nationhood (Sharkey 2003, 122). The Sudanese population struggled to reconcile its hybrid cultural composition under a single national identity in 1956 because the country is neither wholly African nor Arab, Muslim nor Christian. Even within the Arab Muslim groups, there are different regional dialects. Indeed, those who favor 'Arabism' were not so certain what

the identity would denote in the Sudanese context, where there is more than one race, one religion, one language, and one culture (Sharkey 2007, 26-27). In newly independent Sudan, the three crises of "identity, national unity, and governability" (Khalid 1990, 3) were manipulated to further the interests of the dominant elites, who have been primarily from the "Riverain Arab-Muslim Power Bloc" (El-Battahani 2009, 57).

Despite the fuzziness around the national identity, the clique of educated northerners was on a mission to normalize their exclusive right to wield political power. Accordingly, in popular political culture, "Sudanese" was modeled on "riverain" notions, and further endorsed by "dichotomies such as *Awlad Al Balad* (sons of the land) versus *Janubi* (Southerner) and *Gharbawi* (Westerner), and *Awlad Arab* versus *Abd* (slave) or Nubawi (Nuba)" (Harir and Tvedt 1994, 36). These racist pejoratives persisted well into the 2000s, passed down through generations, treated as second and third-class citizens, and denied the same privileges and rights as the riverain northerners. These slurs also support the claim that the southern elites desired Sudan to be "African and de-Arabized" (Harir and Tvedt 1994, 10). Thus, the elites' failure to collectively concoct an identity that combines both the Arab and African components together is at the root of the multiple conflicts that later took place between North and South and in Darfur, the Blue Nile, and Kordofan. The North-South and center-periphery disparities in wealth and administration were apparent even in their early stages, yet subsequent governments failed to address them (De Waal 2015, 74).

The limited class of politicians who emerged in the 1940s began their careers (as colonially educated students) in the Graduate Congress (later evolved to be electoral

Graduate Circles[37]) at Khartoum University (Harir and Tvedt 1994, 34-35). The four main parties that were established during colonial rule were the Umma, the Nationalist Unionist Party (later Democratic Unionist Party, DUP), the Sudanese Communist Party, and the Islamic Movement, which went by different names[38] (El-Affendi 1991, 46). The first two are considered traditional parties due to their domination of politics during the country's brief democratic episodes and multiparty elections as well as their clearly identifiable social base. The Umma Party, established in 1945, has its stronghold in the Mahdi family, whose followers were collectively known as the *Ansar*, or Ansar al-Mahdi. The family had good ties with the British and were allowed to heavily invest in cotton plantations (Collins 1976, 6). They had an anti-unionist stance and rejected calls for union with Egypt upon independence from British colonialism (ibid). The Ansar's rivals since the 1940s had been the Ashiqqa, who aligned with the Khatmiyya Sufi sect (Harir and Tvedt 1994, 34-35). They formed the DUP, led by al-Mirghani family, and held a pro-Egyptian stance (Woodward 2011, 151). Although established enemies given their differing views on separation from Egypt, the Umma and DUP nonetheless shared a common ground in promoting their elitist riverain political views (Woodward 2012, 151) as well as a shared character determined by an "alliance between the intelligentsia and the religious establishment" (Sikainga 2014, 167). Together, they represented the interests of the "traditional establishment" (Sikainga 2014, 167) and subscribed to "*effendiya* nationalism", which was nurtured in the Graduates Congress and further enhanced

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[37] Dawair al-khirijeen (Graduates Electoral College) which was closed to university and college graduates.
[38] Islamic Liberation Movement ILM (ibid 48)

when they were recruited for administrative jobs and worked under colonial rule (Sharkey, 2007). In that respect, they were both looking inward to their own immediate class of followers and also had a narrow understanding of nationalism that did not include the "ethnic mosaic" of diversity that is Sudan: the working class, and the disenfranchised and oppressed in the South and peripheries (Medani 2011, 143).

The first elected government inherited a state formerly mismanaged by a foreign power with selfish interests yet was expected to get the wheels rolling smoothly immediately. The 1953 elections secured the NUP (National Unionist Party) an outright majority with 51 seats, followed by the Umma party with 22 seats, and the South with 9 seats (al-'Abbasi 2011, 76) in the parliament's lower house. These awarded seats should not be mistaken for the voters' political literacy of the parties' developmental programs (Harir and Tvedt 1994, 39). Far from it, support for Mahdism translated into votes for the Umma party and likewise for the DUP (Woodward 2012, 151) because the followers of the Umma and DUP, respectively, had "blind loyalty to the leader of the religious sect" (Harir and Tvedt 1994, 39), who was unelected (Woodward 2012, 152).

Regardless of the internal weaknesses of the political parties, the 1953 and 1956 elections[39] were formal steps toward practicing a limited kind of parliamentary democracy that theoretically had the chance to tackle tough national issues. However,

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[39] In the 1953 elections, the two traditional parties, the NUP and Umma party, dominated the parliament and agreed to ally to form a coalition government after independence. However, it was not long before the NUP's leader and prime minister, Ismail Al-Azhari, had a defeat inflicted by his unstable party. Thus, after independence in 1956, when Al-Azhari formed a coalition with the Umma as promised, he was forced to resign by July 1956, because the NUP split, formed a faction called the Popular Democratic Party (PDP), which formed its own coalition government with the Umma party (Umma-PDP) under the Umma prime minister, Abdullah Khalil (Woodward 2011, 152).

efforts to draft a constitution that addresses the three interlinked "crises of identity, national unity, and governability" (Khalid 1990, 3), especially the question of the South's federation, were stymied. The main parties felt threatened by calls for the taboo 'federalist movement', which they tried to postpone until after independence by coopting Southern MPs (Harir and Tvedt 1994, 40), neglecting how "intellectual discourse" can quickly shift into "violent confrontations"(Gallab 2008, 56). More importantly, post-independence, the economy suffered from a sharp decline in global cotton prices[40] as well as a 50% drop in the volume of cotton exports in 1957 and even lower in 1958 (Mahhouk and Drees, 1964). These sharp fluctuations in foreign trade affected Sudan's domestic stability. The Umma party, whose wealth was concentrated in the production of cotton, tried to cover revenue deficits by seeking foreign aid from the United States in 1958, much to the dismay of rival political parties, students, workers, and farmers (Collins 1976, 9) who could see through the coalition government's composition, which reflected "an alliance of the agricultural capitalists and the religious aristocracy" (Ali 1989, 119).

In 1958, in anticipation of a humiliating vote of no confidence over the issue of foreign aid, and also in avoidance of the South's persistent question, the Umma Prime Minister, Abdullah Khalil, asked the military commander, General Abboud, to take over power (al'Abbasi 2011, 156-157). With that, the first democratic episode in Sudan was cut short by a democratic political party that buckled down under economic pressure and internal opposition. Unaware - or perhaps insufficiently concerned - of the consequences

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[40] According to the IMF, the price fell from "77 U.S. cents a pound in March 1957 to a low of 30 cents a pound in February 1959" (Mahhouk and Drees 1964).

of having the armed forces partake in governance, the Umma party's irresponsible leaders were the curators for what later came to be termed the "Sudan Syndrome" (ElBadawi and AlHelo 2023, 18). What Abdullah Khalil did, in effect, was provide the armed forces with a pretext to not only meddle in domestic affairs instead of staying quartered, but also to provide an exit/shortcut in the future for other political parties to similarly relinquish their democratic mandate and chase parochial material interests.[41]

With this Umma-midwifed-coup, General Abboud welcomed Khalil's request and clung to power for six years (1958-1964). During those years, Abboud's regime imposed a direct 'caretaker' military rule which adopted a non-party framework of governance (Woodward 2012, 155) and replaced parliament with a Supreme Council of Armed Forces that had legislative, executive, and judicial powers (Berridge 2015, 15). The November regime, as it came to be called, inherited a weak economy and had little support so it applied textbook practices of repression and cooptation:[42] it purged coup plotters, jailed several political figures like Al-Azhari and Khalil (Berridge 2015, 16), and tightened its grip on civil society[43] by outlawing demonstrations, silencing workers, and passing a law to detain any dissenter without trial unlimitedly (Collins 1976, 11). The colonially

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[41] This parochial vision paid no regard to the competing forms of nationalism and sectorial demands coming from trade and labor unions, which found their voices with the Sudanese Communist Party.
[42] Of importance here is the "Sudan Defence Ordinance" and the "Sudan Defence Regulation", both issued in 1958. Sidahmed Abdelsalam writes that "the first decreed that 'whoever acted for the formation of parties or called for a strike or acted to overthrow the government or spread hatred against it be either sentenced to death or long imprisonment". The second gave the Minister of the Interior access to private mail, press censorship, and the authority to compel citizens to give any information requested by the police." (Sidahmed 1997, 72).
[43] Abboud's regime outlawed "the Workers' Trade Union in 1958, dissolved the University of Khartoum Students' Union, dissolved the Gezira Tenants Union, banned the Communist Party, and intensified its war against the guerrilla forces in the Southern part of the country" (Gallab 2008, 56).

designed security apparatus[44] helped Abboud consolidate his power to an extent, but in the process, the public image of the police force and security personnel became associated with protecting the regime's interests rather than the people's safety. Moreover, Abboud's regime did not stop the enrichment of corrupt army officers meddling with middlemen facilitating foreign investment (Collins 1976, 11). On the contrary, given the weakened state of the economy, the regime became preoccupied with building monetized patronage networks instead of addressing pressing economic issues revealing the unequal distribution of wealth and power.

Abboud oversaw the early signs of Sudan's fragmentation and mismanagement as well as the early war-making side of building a nation-state in practice (ElNur 2012, 4-5). The centralized authoritarian regime's attitude toward the South had no regard for its call for federalism; more importantly, it sought to reverse the British's segregation of the South by forcibly integrating it via Arabization and Islamization (Sidahmed 1997, 74), disregarding the linguistic and religious differences with the North (Berridge 2015, 17). The continued repression and marginalization of the South sparked a secessionist movement, exacerbated the intensity of the civil war, and highlighted the "southern question" in northern political debates. When protests arose on October 21st and 22nd 1964, the regime initially responded by ordering the police to violently disperse demonstrators.[45] However, within a week, civilian forces revealed the regime's weakness

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[44] The British created a *mukhabarat* unit to collect data on the political parties' activities and control dissent if and when the educated Sudanese form nationalistic movements like their Egyptian neighbors. The first such intelligence unit was founded in 1926 under the name of "Public Security". It included the police force (Ali 2011, 87-88).

[45] The police forces' murder of one student, Ahmad al Qurayshi, inside Khartoum University on October

and managed to immobilize the state by calling for a successful nationwide strike. By 15 November, Abboud resigned (Sidahmed 1997, 75-78).

Freed from military rule, Sudan had another chance at parliamentary democracy. However, the October honeymoon was doomed to be short-lived. Once again, the forces spearheading the transition, coming together under a 'United Nationalist Front', were divided. On the one hand, the traditional political parties were eager to resume their parliamentary posts, with merely new party leaders and little to no revised plans. On the other hand, the uprising's civil society forces, representatives of the "modern forces"[46], pushed for radical reforms.[47] Ironically, the political scene in 1965 resembled pre-1958, save for the addition of two new variables: the increased tension in the South and the rise of alternative yet polarized political visions represented by a leftist group of parties[48] calling for a secular, socialist Sudan and the Islamic Chater Front (ICF), calling for an Islamic state (Medani 2022, 99-100). However, the latter coincided with the political left in rejecting a return to military authoritarianism but diverged in wanting modernization tailored in an Islamist manner (Berridge et al. 2022, 170). The role that the SCP played

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21, is considered the straw that broke the camel's back. The funeral evolved into an anti-regime protest (Berridge 2015, 22).

[46] The term generally refers to "the institutionalized socio-political organizations—the trade unions, the professional associations, the civil service, and the army" (De Waal 2016, 175). In the 1958 context, it denoted the students union, trade union, professional associations, youth, and democratic political parties. They represented the "educated and professional civilian bodies" (Berridge 2015, 4) who sometimes represented alternative visions of political life than political parties. The term "*al-quwa al-Haditha*" (Arabic for modern forces) contrasts with the "old forces", who stood for Abboud's military regime; that explains why the October Revolution's battlecry was "la za'ama li-l-qudama", or as Gallab translates (2008, 57) "there is no leadership from now on for the antiquated".

[47] Those included undoing Abboud's footprint and purging top officials in the army and security sector (Sidahmed 1997, 79-81).

[48] Arab Socialists, Arab Nationalists, and Democratic Socialist Congress, in addition to the older Sudanese Communist Party (SCP)

during the October uprising and the interim period was envied by the Islamists[49], who sought to both mimic the Communists' recruitment tactics and get rid of them (Medani 2022, 100-101).

None of the parties competing in the 1965 parliamentary elections seized an absolute majority and, due to their constant partisan conflicts, were locked in a game of forming a series of short-lived coalition governments. The outstanding issue was drafting a constitution that added a silhouette of unity to the nation (Abbashar 2022). The coalition governments first did what they do best: silencing a prominent opposition voice by force and spawning new factions from intra-party frictions. The democratically elected government outlawed the Communist Party and a faction within the Umma party tried to convince the prime minister, who was from their own ranks, to resign in order to form another coalition party under the new leadership of Sadiq Al-Mahdi in 1966 (Abbasi 2011, 214-217). The merger of two parties calling for new elections in 1968 and the resulting struggle to agree on the new coalition's prime minister further hampered the government's duties and provided an impetus for the bloodless coup on 25 May 1969.[50]

In May 1969, a group of leftist army officers successfully carried out a coup masterminded by members of the Free Officers Organization (FOO) established in 1952,

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[49] I follow Abdullahi Gallab's definition of the applied form of Islamism in Sudan and the distinctive reference to NIC/NIF/NCP Islamists not as *Islamiyyun* but, rather, as *Islamawiyyun* in Arabic. The term denotes a "determined choice of an Islamic doctrine, rather than the simple fact of being born Muslim." (Gallab 2008, 6-7).

[50] The May 1969 coup could be perceived as a byproduct of the 1965 parliamentary elections, whose victors were yet again consumed in personal ambitions and internal competitions and had their hands tied about the war in the south.

in partnership with the other forces of the political left (Communists, Nasserists, Baa'thists, and Nationalists) within the armed forces. In a manner not dissimilar from other Arab militaries at the time, a political party was able to infiltrate the military and create its ideologically affiliated cells - in the case of the Communist party, since 1957 (al-'Abbasi 2011, 130) - in order to protect its party's interests in case authorities obstructed or posed a direct threat to their vision (Niblock 1987, 237-238). That was indeed the case in 1965 when the Communist Party was banned. Under the purview of protecting and reinstating the demands of the October Revolution, six of the thirteen-member Free Officers' Council took it upon themselves to put an end to political parties' failures (al-'Abbasi 2011, 220-221) and create a "breakthrough regime" in the style of the 1952 Free Officers movement in Egypt (Woodward 2012, 155). The May Regime was indeed a fundamental turning point in Sudan's political trajectory (Gallab 2008, 67), in the sense that it ominously conditioned its authoritarian future.

2.4 Uncontrolled Liberalized Autocracy - Nimeiri's May Regime (1969-1985)

In In the typical fashion of military coups, the Free Officers' coup outlawed all political parties and formed a Revolutionary Command Council (RCC). From the start, the RCC clashed with the SCP, which maintained that the 'revolutionary' character of the coup had to materialize by allowing the modern forces to partake in political life (Woodward 2011, 156). However, the RCC favored a Socialist union to a return to multi-partyism and, therefore, maintained a fierce grip on political rights and social liberties

(Gallab 2008, 67-68); in the end, the outcome of internal struggles[51] between dismissed members of the SCP from the RCC and standing members of the RCC manifested in a 'correctional' coup in October 1971 (al-'Abbasi 2011, 227). Within three days, the chairman of the RCP, Colonel Jaafer Nimeiri, quickly restored his power[52] in a counter-coup and resolved to turn his wrath on communist-affiliated coup plotters (Bechtold 1976, 269). To that end, he liquidated the Revolutionary Council and the SCP; in a "watershed" moment in Sudan's history of political violence (Berridge 2015, 41), he executed the coup plotters (Lewis 1971, WPFS).

To consolidate his power and preemptively prevent the reoccurrence of coups, which were numerous,[53] Nimeiri heavily invested in upgrading the security apparatus and created an intelligence bureau that directly followed his commands, while the Ministry of Interior kept the 'public security' branch of intelligence. Not only did Nimeiri endow the security sector with a central position in Sudanese politics, but he also set a precedent of creating parallel security organizations (Ali 2011, 2). Nimeiri learned early on that he could not rely on the army alone for his survival (El-Battahani 2016, 3) and, as such, he created a presidential guard called the National Security Forces (NSC), whose

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[51] The disputes began before the 1969 coup, to which the SCP was not totally supportive. Nimeiri and other members in the RCC wanted the SCP to dissolve itself and become part of the mass movement that is the SSU and even join Egypt and Libya in a pan-Arab union. The SCP was resolutely against this proposition and dismissed members began plotting a takeover (Woodward 2021). Funnily enough, Nimeiri was initially aided by Libya in 1971 to capture the Communist coup plotters yet in 1985 Libya did not help him again, and even called his regime, "dictatorial, fascist" (NYTimes 1985).
[52] With the notable help of foreign powers such as "the British company, Lonrho" as well as Sadat's Egypt and Ghaddafi's Libya (El-Battahani 2016, 3). Atta El-Battahani also writes that "Khalil Osman, a Sudanese millionaire businessman with close links to army officers, also played a key role in this event"
[53] See D.M. Wai, "Revolution, Rhetoric and Reality in the Sudan", Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol.17, 1979.

personnel were largely drawn from the South (Mamdani 2009, 187). Under the May Regime, the state's security sector became dedicated to regime survival rather than public security (Karadawi 1991, 31).

Resolving the ongoing civil war in Southern Sudan was another survival tactic for the May Regime. Nimeiri managed to bring the "southern problem" to a brief halt through the Addis Ababa Agreement in March 1972 with the southern rebels. The agreement stipulated that the south would have regional self-government "within the united Sudan" (Salih 1991, 46), which nonetheless guarantees "autonomy on cultural and religious policies" (Roessler 2016, 114). However, although northern politicians had no avenue to criticize the agreement (Woodward 2021), it was, in effect, subject to the whims of the autocratic peace-maker and was not signed with the South's goodwill in mind.[54] Nimeiri was true to maintaining a riverain class of political elite and did not regard the south as a rightful beneficiary of economic development (Woodward 2011, 160). Indeed, in under ten years, Nimeiri was vocal about his plans to pump oil and dig a canal in Jonglei, a region in the south, bordering Ethiopia (Woodward 1990, 160). Although these plans were vehemently opposed in the South (Arop A 2006, 40), dissent fell on deaf ears until Nimeiri unconstitutionally divided the South into three administrative districts (Salih 1991, 64) – to better control the newly discovered oil fields (de Kock 2011, 12) – and ignited yet another spark of violence (Al-Teraifi 1991, 94). Since the agreement was "Janus-faced" from the start, it soon revealed its true colors (Mamdani 2009, 187).

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[54] That is because the south was perceived as a problem while the main issue obstructing economic development of the south was "northern dominion, or equitable nation-building" (Fluehr-Lobban 2012, 34).

Without the organizational base the SCP imparted on the May Regime until 1971, Nimeri turned to *technocrats* (Woodward 2012, 156) and employed "corporatist" strategies that favored large-scale economic reform programs (Berridge 2015, 41). Staffing and recruiting loyalists in all sectors were crucial; thus, Nimeiri oversaw the purge of communists from top bureaucratic positions and replaced them with a group of highly educated elites who, nonetheless, had to be loyal to his cult to avoid being fired (Gallab 2008, 70-71). The same rule applied to the security apparatus, which initially recruited Nasserists, Baathists, Communists, Arab Nationalists, and other leftist groups, before shedding the ideological skin and expanding to include qualified loyal calibers (Ali 2011, 88-89). Nimeiri often shuffled his cabinet members to abort any effort to form factions and relied on the SSU (Woodward 1990, 151).

The regime's initial antagonism toward political parties did not wane, but the management style changed over time. Having realized that banning them merely moved their fierce opposition to exile,[55] Nimeiri set about to coopt all political forces and have them participate in politics from within a single political organization: the Sudan Socialist Union (SSU). Thus, in contrast to Abboud's non-party formula (1958-1964) and the multi-party democratic periods of (1953-1958) and (1964-1969), the May 1969 regime ushered in a single-party system and facilitated the personality cult of *al-Ra'is al-Qa'id* [the president leader] (Gallab 2008, 70-71). Following an Umma-planned armed attack to oust Nimeiri in 1976, Nimeiri invited his opponents from old and new parties (Woodward 2011, 158-

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[55] The National Front was formed by party leaders who went into exile. These included Sadiq al-Mahdi, leader of the Umma party, Hasan al-Turabi, leader of the National Islamic Front, and Sharif al-Hindi, leader of the National Unionist Party (Woodward 1990, 150-151).

159) to join the "National Reconciliation" program in 1977 (Berridge 2015, 6). After meetings between Nimeiri and the leaders of the National Front (Gallab 2008, 72), it soon became clear that Nimeiri's plans for reconciliation were merely a scheme to divide the Front and play off these parties. Yet, while the Umma and NUP leaders rejected this "marriage of convenience" (Medani 2022, 101) and fell out of favor with Nimeiri, the Islamists were committed to being coopted (Woodward 1990, 152).

To the National Islamic Charter (NIC) (later to be NIF in 1985) and its leader, Hasan al-Turabi, Nimeiri had "interrupted the Islamist project" with the 1969 coup (Gallab 2008, 81). Moreover, the 1971 failed coup was proof that Nimeiri could not be removed but ought to be hijacked from within. The Islamists' eventual partnership with the May Regime, despite its atrocities, was packaged as a necessary evil, or as Turabi chose to call it, *fiqh el darura*[56] (ElNur 2009, 73). Indeed, it was a pragmatic move from the NIF to infiltrate the regime through state institutions and recruit strategically important members from the military, since there seemed to be no other way to prepare for assuming ultimate leadership. The NIF started recruiting members from the military[57] in 1977, coinciding with the National Reconciliation program. To Nimeiri, the tactical alliance with the Islamists was an attempt to outmaneuver the Umma and DUP, whose social base dominated northern Sudan (Medani 2022, 101). The power-sharing agreement with the Islamists[58] also provided the ideological tenor that Nimeiri's personalist, "one-

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[56] Arabic for theology of necessity, but it can be understood as an Islamized pretext for pragmatism.
[57] ElNur writes that the NIF intensified their recruitment after Nimeiri established the Da'wa Islamia (Islamic Call) conference with the African Islamic Centre in 1983 (2009, 72-73).
[58] The parallels between Nimeiri and Egyptian President Anwar ElSadat cannot be overstated. Sadat also turned to the Muslim Brotherhood to curb the tide of Nasserites and Arab Socialists after Nasser's death

man rule" style of authoritarian rule sorely missed (Sidahmed 2011, 172). In this context, the NIF inspired Nimeiri to mold new ideological grounds for his legitimacy (Niblock 1991, 39; El-Affendi 1991, 120), and at the same time, cleverly delegitimize rival versions of an Islamist or Sufist Sudan.

To the international world, Nimeiri was seen as a peacemaking anti-Communist who actively sought and gained the support of the West (El-Affendi 2012, 302). Nimeiri adopted a "pro-western" neoliberal approach to economic development (Niblock 1987, 282-283); however, combining it with a one-party rule proved fatal[59] in terms of borrowing loans from the IMF and indebting the country. Similar to Egypt's Sadat, Nimeiri opened the door[60] for members of the civil bureaucracy and the military to fill the ranks of a new class that found its way to richness through patrimonially-linked commercial enterprises (Woodward 2021); corruption reached new highs as the nation's foreign debt climbed further (Berridge 2015, 42), extending to rural areas (Woodward 1990, 175).

Nimeiri quelled the South and coopted the Islamists, but the two had divergent visions for a unified Sudan. He had to choose to which side the May Regime would lean, but either choice was doomed to be incendiary. In 1980, Nimeiri affirmed his subscription

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in 1970. While Sadat was refurbishing his image as the pious, religious president, the Muslim Brotherhood seized the brief opportunity of being able to work openly, to expand their social base. In an ironic turn of events, both the NIF and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt were behind the real and proverbial end of the incumbent's political life (i.e., Sadat's assassination in 1981 and Nimeiri's downfall in 1985).

[59] as it did in some Latin American countries like Chile

[60] Nimeiri signed the Mutual Defence Treaty of 1976 with Egypt's Sadat. Aside from its overt implications of attaining Egyptian military support for the May Regime in case of instability, the treaty also meant that Sudan would choose the economic "Open Door" policy to the West (Woordward 2021, Perlego).

to an Arabized, Islamized project by publishing "The Islamic Way: Why?" (Gallab 2008, 73) and appointing the NIF's leader, Turabi, as Attorney General in 1979. That same year, in 1980, there were constitutional amendments to the 1974 constitution to prepare for the 1983 September laws (Woodward 1990, 157). Nimeiri issued a Presidential Order that made Sharia[61] "the sole guiding force behind the law of the Sudan"(Lesch 1998, 55), thereby fueling the Second Civil War with the South (Ronen 2005, 88).

A few months later, Nimeiri issued another presidential decree, which Turabi and the NIF were behind, that converted the Sudanese banking system to comply with said *sharia* laws (Burr and Collins 2010, 23); even foreign banks had to follow this 'Islamic formula' to attract foreign investment and be further connected to Islamic banks in the Gulf (El-Affendi 1991, 117), where most remittances flow from Sudanese expatriates (Medani 1997, 168; Medani 2022, 107). It was crucial for the NIF's ascendancy to dominate the Islamic banking system and disrupt "the traditional structure of the central riverain elite" (ElNur 2009, 70). The volume of remittances was triple the volume of exports, reaching 1.7 billion USD after the oil hikes of 1973 and 1979 (ElNur 2008, 65). Currency dealers, especially those linked to the NIF, profited greatly (Medani 2022, 108). However, while the NIF was emboldened through the convenient pact with the May Regime, the clock was ticking for Nimeiri's descent from power after 1983 (El-Affendi 1991, 119).

It was not long before Nimeiri turned on the Islamists early in 1985 (Woodward 1990, 163). The "crisis-making period" of the May Regime was fast approaching its end

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[61] What was so provocative of the application of Sharia laws in Sudan were "the *hudud* punishments of lashing for alcohol use, stoning for adultery, flogging for morals offenses, and amputation for theft" (Fluehr-Lobban 2012, 25)

as Nimeiri sidelined his allies and sought Western financial aid (ElNur 2009, 62). If he

aimed to stay in power until Chevron's oil would bring economic relief by 1986, he was

too late (De Waal 2015, 76). In April 1985, during a short trip to Washington, Nimeiri

heard of large-scale demonstrations calling for his downfall; he tried returning to

Khartoum but was advised to land in Cairo. The military sided with the public's demand

and seized Nimeiri's absence to preclude his return (Mo 2014, 41).

The May Regime's fall was influenced by four main reasons: foreign trade deficit,

no gold or enough cash reserves, massive external debt, and devaluation of the pound

(58). In addition, the controversial September Laws put an end to the Addis Ababa

agreement, which had been cumulatively violated.[62] He tried to reschedule the debt

payments of the 1970s, rather than stop the endless cycle of borrowing and large

spending. The activity of "endless financial juggling to remain politically solvent" will be

mimicked again by Bashir after 2011, as the fifth chapter will demonstrate (De Waal 2015,

76).

Nimeiri took great risks in turning to "new ideological and institutional forms" to

maintain his 16-year rule (Woodward 1990, 197), which, by durability standards, is a

decent duration. His rule "turned Sudan inside out and upside down" (Woodward 1990,

164), because he went from the far left to the far right too quickly and implemented

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[62] Roessler (2014, 114) enumerates those violations as "unilateral division of the South into three regions
and repudiation of the South's economic independence; appropriation of oil income generated by oil
exploration in the South (that should have gone to the southern government); Nimeiri's interference in
the southern High Executive Council (including the arbitrary dissolution of the body and the southern
regional assembly in 1980 and 1981); and attempts to redraw the north– south border in a bid to transfer
oil- rich and agricultural- rich areas to the North".

policies that seemed diabolically inconsistent with one another unless they were viewed

through the lens of authoritarian regime survival.[63] True to the autocratic rulebook,

Nimeiri was adept at "changing his political colors" to stay in power (De Waal 2016, 175).

He changed his ruling coalition from having the political left on his side and sidelining

the traditional parties before attempting to coopt them in a tactical alliance that disrupted

their union and gave a new breath of life to a decrepit SSU. Yet, in the end, despite the

limited scope of Nimeiri's "liberalized autocracy" (Berridge 2015, 6), the regime had a

deficit in both the political budget and political capital (De Waal 2016, 194-195); that is, it

suffered from low legitimacy in addition to a decline in financial resources to keep

guarantors of the regime's survival in line. Although Nimeiri managed to bring the

security apparatus, especially the military, under his control, he found it difficult to

maintain their loyalty when the economy's state worsened. His legacy can be

summarized as establishing a securitocracy wedded to an increasingly neoliberal

economy, swaying even further to the Arabized and Islamized version of nationhood or

identity (Woodward 1990, 181), and providing the NIF a platform to expand their

membership base to the "petty bourgeoisie" through Islamic banks (Woodward 1990,

182-183), infiltrate the "security organs and the army" (El-Affendi 1991, 129; AbdelAziz

and Abo Ranat 1993, 268-270) and practice politics within the regime (Gallab 2008, 74).

Indeed, they developed a secret leadership organization, a 'super tanzim',[64] that steered

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[63] El-Affendi succinctly describes Nimeiri's fickle politics in the following manner, "His political orientation had by then turned full circle in an odyssey that succeeded in disappointing all groups that cooperated with him" (1991, 119)

[64] Abdelwahab El-Affendi, in his 1991 book "Turabi's Revolution" uses this term to describe what Turabi himself alluded to in his writings and later on in recorded interviews. The super tanzim was basically the

the NIF from behind the curtains (El-Affendi 2014).

The legacy of the May Regime (1969-1985) proved to be an essential stepping stone for the Inqaz Regime of 1989-2019. The former's authoritarian achievements left long-lasting impressions on the latter's practices once in power. The parallels between the two regimes, as will be elaborated in subsequent chapters, included mandating the security apparatus to loyally protect the regime and its leader; unleashing the shocking forces of neoliberal capitalism on the economy; and, encouraging opportunism to coopt political parties, thereby paralyzing the normal activities of political parties in an already fragmented party system. Indeed, it could be argued that since the 1970s, the May Regime's tight grip on political parties as well as the modern forces stymied this civil force from effectively learning to practice democratic negotiations and instead fostered a sense of insecurity and distrust among civil society actors. Among those affected were the NIF, who became convinced that carrying out political change is only possible if it is wedded to force and violence.

The NIF had the exclusive chance to assess their predecessors' flaws and plan to counteract their actions, having mobilized against Abboud's regime, worked closely with the traditional parties in the interim periods of 65-69 and 85-89, and functioned from within Nimeiri's regime. They had the advantage of not only having relative political freedom to operate both overtly and undercover under the May Regime while other parties could not, but also of witnessing both coup-proofing in action and intra-elite

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small clique of Islamists who had special ties to security agencies and business affairs and were not subject to democratic elections within the NIF/NCP.

rivalries up close.

2.5 Interim Governments 1986-1989

Once again, three decades after independence, Sudan's political parties[65] had an open field to experiment with democratic governance, albeit under nonideal economic circumstances. Once again, divisions and delays dominated the political scene. With a not-so-cohesive party system and a less cohesive state, the future was wrought with trouble for the next government in line, as it had to battle party factionalism and corruption (Salih 1991, 51). The "mood of despair" and disillusionment with liberal democracy set in quicker after Nimeiri's ouster in 1985 than after the October uprising of 1964 (Woodward 1990, 228). There were mounting debts of over USD 500 mn (ibid, 205-206) and Sudan was "suspended from the IMF" (De Waal 2022, 150). The government that was formed in 1986 was under Sadiq ElMahdi's leadership, and it faced multiple problems over the span of its four-year rule. Besides the ongoing war in the South, there was increasing destabilization in the western provinces, where in 1983/1984 a drought hit the neglected region. For four years, Sadiq was "either unable or unwilling" to repeal the September 1983 laws (Fluehr-Lobban 2012, 26), even though it was a critical issue of contention obstructing a peace agreement with the SPLM.[66]

The largest opposition party in parliament was the NIF, which emerged as the "third most popular party in riverain Sudan" (ElNur 2009, 68-69). Though the NIF

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[65] After Nimeiri's removal, nearly forty new parties were formed (Mamdani 2009, 193).
[66] See 'The Manifesto of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement', http://splmnsudan.net/en/themanifesto-of-the-sudan-peoples-liberation-movement, which was produced in July 1983 after the formation of the rebellion.

frequently attacked Sadiq's government[67] and accused it of indecisiveness in passing

austerity measures, Sadiq's Umma party allied with the NIF against the DUP after the

latter's peace negotiations with the SPLM were welcomed by demonstrations in

Khartoum (El-Affendi 1991, 189). Only then did Sadiq state[68] that the September laws

would be hard to repeal (Fluehr-Lobban 2012, 26). Army officers did not appreciate how

the prime minister left the civil war in the South subject to indecisiveness and

factionalism (Verhoeven 2015, 95). In February 1989, following the resignation of the

minister of defense in opposition to Sadiq's reliance on militias to combat the SPLA, 150

senior military officers sent a one-week ultimatum to Sadiq to reform government and

either get supplies for the army or begin peace talks with the South (Roessler 2016, 123),

implicitly threatening that noncompliance would bring forth a coup (El-Affendi 1991,

189).

The NIF had to move as it was faced with two threats: a potential coup, carried by

the military's existing rival factions, to put an end to Sadiq's weak government or an

agreement with the SPLA that would suspend *sharia* laws. There was no lesser of two

evils because both posed an existential threat to the *tanzim*'s survival as well as their

project to Islamize Sudan (Roessler 2016, 123). The *tanzim* was not going to allow another

coup to stand in its way (Wakoson 1998, 87). It may appear counterintuitive that the

Islamists chose to seize power by force, although they could arguably have won through

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[67] They launched several protests they called the "revolution of the Quran" to object to freezing Islamic law (El-Affendi 1991, 189).
[68] He said, 'The dominant feature of our nation is an Islamic one, and its overpowering expression is Arabic, and this nation will not have its entity identified . . . except under an Islamic revival' (Yusef Fadl Hasan 2003, 215).

elections, given their huge leap gains in consecutive elections; however, the Islamists faced political isolation in case their nemesis from the political left launched their own coup or if *sharia* laws got repudiated.[69]

On June 30, 1989, the NIF launched their coup. The coup leaders vowed to salvage Sudan from its untreated economic woes and political ailments that former governments failed to proactively address. The NIF intercepted the repeal of the September laws and, by so doing, jeopardized the peace negotiations with the SPLM. Sudan was back to a time of uncertainty, but the NIF's vision to revolutionize the state and society soon became apparent, as the next chapter will elaborate.

2.6 Conclusion: Coup as a Mode of Change; Coup-Proofing as a Mode of Stability

While not going too far into the distant past to establish the origins of state institutions in Sudan and the processes of peace- and state-making since its independence, this chapter paints a rough sketch of the dominant themes and dynamics characterizing Sudanese politics since independence and until 1989. In tracing Sudan's deep-seated problems, the chapter briefly analyzes some of the prominent, recurrent issues that the post-1989 political order inherited and, at least theoretically, sought to eradicate.

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[69] In January 1987, the NIF issued a document called, "Sudan Charter: National Unity and Diversity". In it, the NIF's position on diversity in Sudan appeared ambiguous as it maintained that Sudan had multiple religions and cultures, yet asserted that Muslims have "a legitimate right, by virtue of their religious choice, of their democratic weight and of natural justice, to practice the values and the rules of their religion... in political affairs". Implied, of course, is the argument that the only correct or righteous leadership had to be theirs, and not, the other Muslim sects represented by the Umma and DUP. National Islamic Front, The Sudan Charter: National Unity ana Diversity (Khartoum: January 1987). See F. M. Deng and P. Gifford, op. cit., for full text, 78- 89 and also in Gallab's *First Republic* (2008, 169-177).

The chapter's main takeaways can be summarized as follows. First, the political parties that governed Sudan since independence have both misrepresented the collective interest and misdealt with their intra- and inter-party opposition. Instead of setting a tradition of democratic conflict resolution and peaceful crisis management, political parties chose to escape from addressing their divisions and leaned on military intervention when they feared a loss or dilution of power. This recourse was sure to repeatedly backfire as it created a highly coup-prone political system that politicized the military institution to suit the riverain-dominated political parties' parochial interests. The DUP and Umma Party, the established or traditional parties, failed the Sudanese people at large and merely served the interests of their followers. Second, the unequal distribution of power and wealth between the center and peripheries has been a fixture of the Sudanese state. Since British colonialism, the "topography of wealth and administration" has markedly favored the metropolitan elites living in and around Khartoum, in both staffing administrative positions and distributing material benefits, in sharp contrast with the peripheries (De Waal 2015, 74). Third, the modern forces, or more generally, the civil forces that fueled the two major uprisings in 1964 and 1985 were essential in calling for regime change but could not bring about real structural change without addressing Sudan's identity dilemma.

Lastly, coups are central to Sudan's political trajectory. This chapter's brief historical overview critically dispels dominant assumptions about military coups and regimes. Contrary to the common military-first approach to understanding authoritarianism in MENA region states, Sudan's military political involvement can fool

onlookers not familiar with "civilian praetorianism" (Ben Hammou 2023, 2). The fact that the three coups were not purely masterminded by the military points to how the institution was used as an incubator or cauldron for different parties' ideologies. As Abdullahi A. Gallab wrote, "Behind every military coup in [the] Sudan—successful or abortive—has been a civilian political party or a group of conspirators, while within every military regime were groups of civilian as well as military collaborators" (2008, 65). This suggests that the traditional civil political parties were rather politically immature to realize that the democratic field takes years of development; they were impatient and preferred immediate change using military force instead of tolerating the rival party or opposition in power for a parliamentary term. The Umma Party in 1958 and the Communist Party in 1969 both willingly chose praetorianism. This phenomenon of sharing power with a professional military as a means to short-circuit parliamentary conflicts is not a traditional coup by any means; rather, it is a type of civilian-recruited coup, masterminded and plotted until zero hour by civilian parties who willingly request that the military institution seizes power - as they prefer that option to see their rival parties in government. Thus, although the takeover is coded as a coup and the subsequent governments holding power are labeled military regimes, they were, in reality, civilian-recruited coups directly requested from the military institution by political parties. As Janowitz (1977, 49) wrote, sometimes "organized factions" can execute coups, hinting at the ideological and politicized factions that parties recruit within the military institution. It is important to distinguish between a regular coup, both planned and carried out by a faction of the military (i.e., a putsch), and a "fusionist coup" that combines civilian

masterminds and military personnel (Beshara 2005, 8) instead of conflating them under one label and therefore misreading history.

Chapter 3

Inside the Kizan's 1989-1999 Tamkeen Corporation

"...the regime positioned itself as a cultural and political minority by a name they chose by themselves and with a religious marker which was political in essence… although they advocate that Islam is din wa dawla (a religion and a state), it became evident later that their relationships are based on kinship" (Gallab 2014, 43).

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3.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the NIF's first decade in office after their ascension through a coup in June 1989. It analyzes the central tenets that enabled them to consolidate their rule before encountering a major schism within their ranks in 1999, marking a new epoch in the regime's lifespan. The NIF's tactics to coup-proof their regime during the 1989-1999

consolidation phase are of particular focus. The NIF's first-decade [70] in power sums up the sociopolitical legacy of the first Islamist Republic in the MENA region.[71] As the chapter will detail, the Inqaz regime did not challenge Sudan's decades of minority rule and, instead, usurped the state's faint chance of securing peace with southern Sudan. Before the ruling Islamists split in 1999, the Inqaz regime capitalized on the *tanzim*'s organizational power and disciplinary advantage in controlling the levers of the Sudanese state and changing its character in the process, with devastating long-term consequences.

There are four building blocks in this chapter. The first section discusses the rationale behind the 1989 coup and highlights its success and uniqueness compared to the November and May coups. The second part tackles the Inqaz regime's survival plan to militarize society and dominate the economy through a dual policy of *tamkeen* and Islamist-tinted securitization. The third part documents some Islamists' ambivalent reception of those tactics and concludes with an analysis of why moving toward a post-Turabi regime was necessary to avoid regime fall. Finally, the last section analyzes the effects of the chosen coup-proofing tactics and argues that, while effective in strengthening the regime's clasp on power, the immediate and long-term negative repercussions had a high cost that will become more apparent in subsequent chapters.

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[70] In texts by Sudanese authors and in interviews, the first decade is often referred to as *Al-Ashriya Al-Oula.*

[71] If Iran is discounted from the MENA region's list of countries, then its theocracy would not compete with Sudan's Islamist project.

3.2 The 1989 Coup

On 30 June 1989, one day before the scheduled cabinet meeting to review the September Laws and three days before a delegation would meet with the SPLA to draft a resolution[72] to the South-North civil war, a military coup led by fifteen officers took place (Burr and Collins 2003, 16; Medani 1997, 167). The coup leaders declared themselves Sudan's saviors, named their coup the Salvation Revolution, or *Thawrat al-Inqaz,* and formed a Revolutionary Salvation Command Council (RSCC or RCC for short) to operate as a cabinet (Gallab 2014, 118). In his first address as the coup's leader, Brigadier Omar Hassan al-Bashir criticized the democratic episode between 1985 and 1989 and condemned the historic failure of fragile party coalitions under the leadership of a time-wasting Sadiq to bring about political stability and economic development in Sudan, let alone resolve the crisis in southern Sudan, among other unstable regions.[73] The message had some gaping holes: if the military decided it was time to have stability and abolish the "fake democracy," what were the coup leaders going to replace it with? (Bashir 1989, 1:13)

The RSCC's first actions were telling; it imposed a state of emergency, paused the 1985 constitution, abolished the parliament, banned all political organizations[74] including

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[72] The agreement was supposed to settle the issue of self-governance in the South, which would touch on applying sharia in all of Sudan.

[73] Bashir, Omar. "Recording of the First Address of the National Salvation Revolution, 30 June 1989" YouTube video, 1:10-2:30. June 20, 2012. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L5NG85MlFIw. البيان الاول لثورة الانقاذ الوطني السودان 30 يونيو 1989

[74] Interestingly, this move ushered the formation of alliances among rival political parties sharing the plight of being banned. The Umma and DUP formed the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in exile,

the NIF, rounded up the leaders of political parties[75] in Kobar prison, including Turabi (Abdelsalam 2010, 96), confiscated their properties (Kaballo 1993, 106), and closed newspapers. After sacking 28 senior army generals, Bashir appointed himself "head of state, prime minister, defense minister, and commander-in-chief of the armed forces" (Salmon 2007, 14). More importantly, the RCC issued a constitutional decree to assume control of all state institutions (Kaballo 1993, 106).

To many observers, the coup's front-facing fifteen middle-rank officers were little-known and seemed politically unadept. Soon, however, clues began to be dropped about the masqueraded coup's masterminds: the Islamists. Like Nimeiri's coup of 1969, the Inqaz coup was not "a national non-partisan revolution" (Sidahmed 2011, 168) but rather instigated by a political party that had infiltrated the military as early as 1977 when Nimeiri openly coopted the NIF. Yet, how the NIF carried out the coup was different (ElNour 2019, 20), as it not only masterminded the plan to the minutest details[76] but also relied on its military wing to put the plan into action (Berridge 2015, 134-135), as 200 militia members supported the coup on 30 June (Sidahmed 2011, 167). The NIF had patiently and shrewdly invested in a security apparatus since their tactical alliance with the May regime so that when the time came to seize the state, they would be ready

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reminiscent of the National Front that formed during Nimeiri's time before the National Reconciliation.

[75] It is noteworthy that the Inqaz regime managed to maintain its grip on power without coopting political parties, unlike Nimeiri who cleverly conceded after eight years in power to disrupt the National Front formed in exile. The Inqaz managed to be the sole dominant political force and, in so doing, united the opposition against them.

[76] The secretive plan to launch the 1989 coup was curated in the small, invisible council rather than openly discussed in the shura council. Indeed, as Abbasi writes, some members did not know the timing of the zero hour.

(Roessler 2014, 119). They could have single-handedly launched the coup, but they "engineered a facade of military rule" (Verheoven 2015, 84), a cover to their identity, so that regional powers, like Egypt, would not cut their plans short (Abdelsalam 2010, 104-5).

The Islamists collaborated with the SAF, which they had already infiltrated in the 1970s; however, they planned to instrumentalize the army as a cover initially and then, once they consolidated their rule, ask the army to return to its barracks by 1993 (Abdelsalam 2010, 95). This flexibility had never happened in Sudan[77], and the NIF did not have a clear plan for how power, once shared with the military, would be so quickly bequeathed to the *tanzim* by a certain deadline. What happened instead was an expansion of the military's influence – at times, dominance – instead of the movement's hegemonic exercise of power. Thus, the NIF's significant compromise to safely carry out the 1989 coup was their inability to cede a power-sharing agreement with the military. Failure to balance intra-elite dynamics and concede to the interests of both the NIF and the military would soon prove to be most difficult, especially as this partnership was not a democratic one between equals.

In any case, the NIF's strategic deal to conspiratorially seize power by force (Mamdani 2009, 193) with the military as their cover was, in effect, a step ahead or an upgrade[78] to the November and May coups (Clarke 2023, 1344). Although the three coups

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[77] Power-sharing with the military backfired, as it did in Abboud's and Nimeiri's cases. There were signs. In 1993, the army refused to step down, and Bashir became a civilian president, although he rejected revoking his military uniform.
[78] As Killian Clarke argues in his study, violent revolutions, or in this case revolutionary coups, tend to have more success in consolidating their rule and protecting it from counterrevolutionas, compared to

shared a continuity of "the political elite-military symbiotic relationship" (Wakoson 1998, 58), in the case of the Inqaz coup, the officer leading the state accepted directives from the political organization that selected him to be the regime's face, unlike Abboud's resistance to Khalil and the Umma party and Nimeiri's distance from the Free Officers and SCP. Indeed, one could say the regime type during the first decade was a duopoly with both Turabi and Bashir at the helm, while Bashir's ceremonial role was largely overshadowed by internal decision-making dynamics.

To further complicate matters, prior to the coup, the *tanzim* underwent structural revisions that changed its decision-making process. In the 1980s, Turabi created "a secret apparatus not accountable to anybody within the broader Islamist organization", except, of course, for himself (Gallab 2008, 79-80). This "super party" or "super *tanzim*" was composed of a small clique of handpicked senior Islamists who disavowed the purported flat hierarchy of the NIF and its Shura council and created a secretive council where select members decided on sensitive issues (El-Affendi 2014 AlNilin). After seizing power in 1989, the super *tanzim* effectively became the Leader's Office (Abdelsalam 2010, 130), the Inqaz regime's shadow government (Roessler 2014, 124). For the first decade, a cadre within the *tanzim* was practically governing the cabinet behind the scenes, thereby forming a state within a state. Although the NIF itself was formally dismantled in 1993, when Turabi decided it no longer had a rationale to exist (Sidahmed 2011, 169),[79] both the

nonviolent revolutions (2023, 1344). This study casts a grim shadow on the 2018/2019 nonviolent protests that replaced Bashir's authoritarian government with an ill-fated civilian interim government that soon fell prey to a seemingly "restorative" counterrevolution in 2021 (ibid, 1345)

[79] In its stead, the National Congress Party (NCP) was formed.

super *tanzim* and the NIF's networks remained and were useful in connecting the regime with the peripheries (Roessler 2014, 124). The duopoly – of Bashir facing the public from the Republican Palace while Turabi ruled[80] from his place in Manshiyya – was complete (Abdelsalam 2010, 117).

The *tanzim*'s first few months in power were undoubtedly the hardest, since they, like any coup leaders, scrambled to consolidate their rule to preemptively prevent the occurrence of a counter-coup. Before turning one year in power, the Inqaz weathered an estimated four coup attempts (Salmon 2007, 35), which indicates that factions within the army were disinclined against the NIF's governance. Nonetheless, the NIF appeared to have planned for the "consolidation phase" (Raleigh and Carboni 2021, 420),[81] which they approached by taking ruthless measures against coup plotters[82] and dissenting members of the selectorate to ensure the regime's survival. Still, the permeating "coup risk" and fear of losing power hindered the NIF from salvaging Sudan from the throes of economic crises and political fragmentation.

Theoretically, the NIF's grand scheme to promulgate their Inqaz agenda rested on four tenets "a new politics, economic liberalization, an Islamic revival, and a U-turn in foreign relations" (Verheoven 2015, 84). Regarding their 'Islamist' foreign relations, the

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[80] initially ruled from his prison cell in Kobar for the first four months. There is an oft-repeated phrase that Turabi allegedly told Bashir before 30 June 1989, "Head to the Republican Palace as a president while I head to prison for incarceration".

[81] According to Raleigh and Carboni (2021), consolidation is the period during which political survival is "at its height" (420). The aim of successful consolidaion is the creation of " an 'unbalanced equilibrium' between a dominant leader and his coalition" (422) - which is how the 1989-1999 phase ended after Bashir consolidated his power and made the remnants of the NIF subservient to him rather than Turabi.

[82] The Inqaz regime executed "28 army officers and 54 rank-and-file soldiers" for a purported coup attemtp (Sidahmed 2011, 173)

NIF tried to fashion Khartoum as the Islamic world's new capital, open to Arab and non-Arab Islamists worldwide[83] to meet for annual conferences, but they went too far (Abdelsalam 2010, 375-376). After relaxing visa requirements for Arabs entering Sudan, the NIF hosted controversial figures unwelcome in their own countries, such as Osama bin Laden (Mantzikous 2010, 48-49), effectively earning Sudan the disgraceful mark of being a state sponsor of terrorism (Johnson 2011, 18). The NIF also chose to side with Iraq against Kuwait in the Gulf War, thereby ostracizing Sudan from the international world (ElNur 2009, 71). Spurring a domestic Islamic revival took multiple forms, prominent among which were policing society to comply with religious teachings (e.g. women's dress) and popularizing the call for *jihad* against mutinous infidels in the South.[84] As for the novelty element to the Inqaz's manner of doing politics, it was their *tamkeen* policies[85] to take over all state institutions that changed the very "structure and genome of political authority" in Sudan (El-Battahani 2022, 88) Combined with privatizing the economy, *tamkeen* unlocked a new level of corruption that Sudan had never yet witnessed. All in all, these four tenets reinforced one another but rendered the state friable once put into action.

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[83] To give a few examples, Khartoum hosted talks between Fath and Hamas in the 1990s. The heads of the Palestinan authority and Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) were frequent visitors. (Abdelsalam 2010, 377).

[84] Jihad was also a cover to take back oil-rich fields under SPLA control (Hasan 2022, 258).

[85] Alden Young views tamkeen as economic consolidation and provides an interesting assessment of its intellectual preconditions. See Young, Alden. "The Intellectual Origins of Sudan's "Decades of Solitude," 1989–2019." *Capitalism: A Journal of History and Economics* 2, no. 1 (2021): 196-226. https://doi.org/10.1353/cap.2021.0007.

As demonstrated in the following sections, the policies that sentenced Sudan to exile from regional and international actors and distanced it from opposition parties barred from practicing politics were the ones that, in time, fragmented the Inqaz's ruling coalition (El-Battahani 2022, 93). The following discusses the Inqaz regime's comprehensive survival plan to militarize society and dominate the economy through a dual policy of *tamkeen* and Islamist-tinted securitization.

3.3 The Tamkeen Corporation

Aware of their elitist, minority status, the NIF promptly set about to dominate vital state institutions in the months after the coup, so as to ensure their survival. Faced with "a strong secular education system, unions and institutionalized political organizations, Sufi orders representing moderate Islam" (ElNur 2009, 67), the *tanzim* had to overturn the old system and build their own, through *al-tamkeen* (Arabic for enablement or empowerment)[86] (Dawalbit 2013, 371-372). The superficial goal of *tamkeen* was to undo the dysfunctional remnants of both multipartyism and military rule for the sake of the public's interest. In reality, the actual target was a radical replacement of the traditional parties' as well as their supportive social bases with the narrow base of Islamist loyalists (Khalid 2010, 110), regardless of the former's professional merit or the latter's job-specific competency (Abdelsalam 2010, 352). *Tamkeen* was, in essence, a purification project to "systematically dismantle the Ansari and Khatmiyya networks to weaken the political

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[86] Tamkeen was a bundle of policies that, despite the term's religious connotation, were too violently applied and too damaging to the principles of meritocracy that, following the end of the Inqaz regime in 2019, there was a "Tamkeen Removal Committee" to unhinge remnants of *tamkeen*'s networks in state bureaucracy and private companies (Verhoeven 2023, 18).

support of the sectarian parties" of the Umma and DUP (Roessler 2014, 119), and undo

"post-independence Sudan" (ElNur 2009, 63).

The Islamists went beyond the obvious targets, such as the ministries, whose

composition[87] bore clear signs of affinity toward the NIF. Months after assuming power,

the NIF forcibly retired nearly sixty-seven thousand out of eighty-nine bureaucrats/civil

servants from civil service (Khaled 2010, 72) in what came to be known as the "random

massacre" (Abdelsalam 2010, 109). To later win majorities in parliamentary elections[88] –

and dole out patronage – the Inqaz divided Sudan in 1991 into nine federal states and, in

1994, into 23 states. After the NCP became the ruling party[89] in 1993, *Tamkeen* became

NCP-domination of the military, police, and intelligence, among other powerful

institutions (ElNur 2009, 71-73).

One of the radical aspects of *tamkeen* was that it did not leave any door unopened.

Indeed, the Islamists could have paused the appointment of their trust network (*ahl al*

thiqa, people of trust) in all state apparatuses after having secured the allegiance of cabinet

members, the security forces, and civil servants from all walks of life,[90] but they did not

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[87] As Burr and Collins write, "The Minister of Information and Culture Ali Mohammed Shummo was a well-known political opportunist with close ties to NIF. The Attorney-General Hassan Ismail al-Beili, Finance Minister Dr. Sayed Ali Zaki, Agriculture Minister Professor Ali Ahmad Ginais, Industry Minister Dr. Muhammad Omar Abdalla, and Commerce and Supply Minister Faruk al-Bushra were all close friends of Hasan al-Turabi. Housing Minister Major General Muhammad al-Hadi Mamoun al-Mardi (retired) was an engineer with profound religious convictions and sympathetic to NIF." (Burr and Collins 2003, 11). It is worth noting that Ali Osman Taha, rather than Turabi, made that first cabinet selection (Interview with Turabi by AlJazeera, 2010).

[88] In 1993, Bashir dissolved the RSCC and ruled as a civilian president. Until formal parliamentary elections were held in 1996, there was a 300-memeber appointed Transitional National Assembly (Fluehr-Lobban 2012, 30).

[89] Prior to resorting to forming a political party, the tanzim had a Congresses' system, but it failed to infiltrate the constituencies of the Umma and DUP and there was a move toward embracing limited multi-partyism in 1998.

[90] Universities and government departments were purged; tens of university staff were dismissed.

(Kaballo 1993, 106). They went even further and refashioned a parallel system of justice and staffed it with loyalists (Massoud 2013, 127), to primarily ensure their security, rather than emulate an Islamist project[91] and have Sharia at the core of a nonautonomous legal system (Burr and Collins 2003, 19). In that sense, *Tamkeen* was more than just the liquidation of the old elite (Muhi ElDin 2006, 180); rather, it was a partisan patronage system that fostered trading merit with loyalty - to "the highest bidder" (De Waal 2016, 172). It is credited with producing a vicious "syndrome of despotism, corruption, and state dysfunction" (ElBadawi &ElHelw 2022, 27) as it revolutionized the logic of governance in Sudan to favor opportunism. Not unexpectedly, the price to oversee inflated and parallel institutions and keep loyalists in line left little to spend on service provision. To take education as an example, the percentage of GDP spent on education in 1990 was 1.3%; in 1995, 0.8%; and in 2000 1.1%, a sharp decline from the 1980s 4% and 4.8% (ElNur 2009, 87); likewise, spending on health in the 1990s was a meager 0.7% (ElNur 2009, 97). Because the NIF effectively turned state institutions into "partisan institutions", either direct party offshoots or subservient to the NIF's orders (Taha 1993, 309), the level of embezzlement of state revenue between 1989 and 1999, was incredibly shocking,[92] yet it speaks volumes about the Islamists' management of state apparatus as private economic enterprises (ElNur 2009, 75).

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[91] Turabi admitted in the 1990s in an interview in London that the Islamic Fiqh can only answer 25% of the modern world's social issues. In that sense, the Civilizational Project that the NIF proposed was acknowledged to be out of place and time (Dawalbit 2013, 390-391).

[92] For well-documented reports, see the General Auditor to the People's Assembly cited in (Ibrahim 2003, 156-157). These illegal acquisitions of state revenue became more apparent after leadership divide in 1999 but seriously acting on them was only made possible after 2019.

In short, the 'new politics' of social and institutional remaking during the first ten years had two main defining features: staffing state institutions with Islamists and loyalists as well as forming parastatal institutions with devolved power from official state institutions. Although *tamkeen* successfully upended the post-1956 political order and reconfigured the political playing field, it neither led to a more egalitarian political or economic system nor did it end the two-sided coin of the riverain's supremacy and the systematic marginalization of the peripheries. As Alex De Waal writes, "the intersection of Islamist principle, neo-liberal economics, and extreme austerity" reflected on the center and peripheries very differently, as though the latter do not belong to the same state or are not governed by the same government (2015, 74). Moreover, by merging the state with the party, or making the two wedded inseparably, there was a lot of risk in case the latter's interests were detrimental to the overall good of the state's economy. As Medani perceptively warned, the policies that the Islamists had been undertaking "were consistent with the business interests of the Islamist bourgeoisie" (Medani 1997, 173).

3.4 Tamkeen in the Economy

In the 1990s, the *tanzim*, under the purview of the NCP, managed to control the state's economic levers through a capitalistic privatization project, that was otherwise known as "Islamizing" major economic enterprises. Following their Nimeiri-era domination of Islamic banks, the NIF network continued capitalizing on its sizeable Islamist business class to have larger shares in the economy. The blurry "boundaries between public, private and party" meant that Islamists aggressively applied neoliberal measures (e.g. floating the pound, cutting subsidies, and privatizing state enterprises)

with the aim of chasing out the businesses of the old elite (ElNur 2009, 70). The policy was successful in so far as Islamists and opportunists-loyalists earned the label of "market crocodiles" (*tamasih al-suq*) (Medani 1997, 175) as they owned nearly "one-third of the 4000 firms and commercial establishments registered during 1984–1994" (El-Battahani 1996, 17) and benefitted from preferential loan terms and tax exemptions, among other measures (Medani 1997, 174). However, privatizing the economy failed to attract foreign investments and prevent the decline in remittances; in fact, the policies impoverished many Sudanese and prompted food riots in a number of cities in 1993 (Medani 1997, 173-174), even before the added economic damage of US sanctions in 1997 (Young 2021, 88).

Islamizing the economy in that manner should be understood in relation to maintaining regime survival, which requires more than an ideological belief and a strong security sector. Survival demands funds to keep the patronage network in line, thanks to whom the NCP party became a corporation of interests with an ideological cover (Gallab 2008, 80). After all, the Inqaz was "a minority regime" (ElNur 2009, 74) that managed to seize power over a highly heterogeneous society (Medani 2022, 92-93); it can only be expected that the *tanzim* was so consumed with safeguarding its 'Salvation Revolution' by any means. It is worth noting here that during this period, the Islamists earned the name *kizan*, the plural for *koz* (Arabic for scoop). Though originally used to denote the role of Islamists in facilitating the interpretation of a vast ocean of Islamic knowledge, *kizan* evolved to describe the Islamists' greed.[93]

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[93] Several Islamists from the NIF and NCP would agree that the Sudanese Islamic Movement - the NIF as a political party, movement, and organization - was severely injured by the 1989 coup and what came after, as they dealt the movement enough damage to its "credibility and moral standing" that it was soon

The Islamists' plan for the economy, the Economic Salvation Program (ESP), was supposed to be a radical restructuring program to achieve self-sufficiency, by both boosting the agricultural output of non-cash crops (i.e., wheat rather than cotton) and reducing imports (Verhoeven 2015, 105). Although this ill-planned economic endeavor accrued some short-term benefits, which turned out to be merely a rebound from the drought-stricken 1980s (World Bank 199x), its boons came at the cost of silencing the modern forces, most notably the labor unions (Verhoeven 2015, 103). More importantly, the Inqaz's self-reliance strategies, coupled with unprecedented shifts in foreign policy that prompted economic sanctions, contributed to further regional and international isolation (ElNur 2009, 79) and reduced foreign trade (Kaballo 1993, 106-108).

The ESP was an "adventurous policy" that had increasingly negative side effects; it worsened the economic condition, exacerbated Sudan's wars, and further isolated the country when it most needed aid (ElNur 2009, 71-72). By the mid-1990s, the economy showed severe signs of being strained by the civil war's high cost, combined with the ESP's unsustainability (ElNur 2009, 84; Verhoeven 2015, 108). When hyperinflation reached new highs (2,000% according to Medani 1997, 175 and 2,280% according to Kaballo 1993, 108), the regime followed a strict stabilization program after 1995, and, as always, the losers in the constant competition over resources were the peripheral regions. It was not lost on the Islamists to build an elaborate security system to prevent insurgencies in the peripheries from reaching the center.[94]

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discredited among the Sudanese (Gallab 2008, 77).

[94] It is interesting to note that the Inqaz dispersed the army units that refused to shoot at protestors in

3.5 A Cornucopia of Parastate Actors: A Strong Yet Decentralized Security Grip

Combatting the insurgencies in the peripheral regions served to improve the Islamists' survival chances and consolidate their coercive grip because, as the literature argues, political violence, in the short run, is effective in raising the cost of dissent (Saideman and Zahar 2008, 11-12). The Islamists were successful in creating a "coercive-intensive state" (Gallab 2014, 45), but employing a strictly military solution in contentious regions was costly (Fluehr-Lobban 2012, 29). To decrease the cost of consolidation through violence, the Inqaz expanded its pool of recruited fighters. The NIF both created and hired pro-government militias and forces instead of relying on the SAF, thereby weakening the latter's institutional power (El-Battahani 2022, 81) and revealing a decline in the *tanzim*'s trust in the military (El-Battahani 2016, 3).

The diffusion of authority from the regular police and SAF to pro-government militias and paramilitary and community forces was fiscally sound in the sense that it was cheaper to hire locally organized militias than to transport full military units (Flint and De Waal 2008, 23), who were demoralized from the civil war with the South, to remote areas in the far reaches of Sudan where roads are scarce.[95] Parallel security actors

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1964 and 1985 outside of Khartoum (Berridge 2019, 171-172) and presumably replaced them with some of the militia forces of the NISS. To the regime, protecting Khartoum, where the majority of the ruling elite are concentrated, is equivalent to protecting the regime. Thus, any motion to bring forces close to the capital can be understood as the regime registering a source of high risk to its survival. Contrary to the relative peace that the riverain center enjoyed, the peripheral regions were subjected to violence from the NISS, among other state violence perpetrators (Berridge 2013, 867).

[95] In 1999 Sudan had the lowest density of roads of all least-developed countries in the world. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Statistical Profiles of the Least Developed Countries (New York: United Nations, 2005). Available at https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/ditctab20051_en.pdf (accessed December 2, 2023)

minimize the risk of having enlisted soldiers or officers defect to join insurgencies or become empowered and popular within their unit. More importantly, using contractless militias makes it easier for the government to drop responsibility for dubious crimes (Mahé 2016, 145).[96]

The use of subcontracted militias predated the NIF's assumption of power by four years (Flint and de Waal 2008, 23). In 1985, Gen. Siwar Al Dahab, who was the head of the TMC before Sadiq's civilian government took over until 1989, armed a tribe -and allied tribes[97]- with ties to the TMC and the Umma party to protect their cattle and fend off attacks from robbers (Salmon 2007, 12). These loose, decentralized networks of militarized tribes soon expanded to absorb existing militias elsewhere in Sudan following their official legalization through the November 1989 Popular Defence Forces Act when the NIF took hold and made them directly accountable to Bashir. By 1999, the resultant People's Defense Force (PDF), numbered around 150,000 and was tasked to protect the June 30th Revolution in the North and the South, besides containing dissent by arming tribal militias in the peripheries. Not only did the PDF become an indispensable force[98] for the Inqaz regime to control dissent wherever it stems, but it was also in character with

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[96] but not as easy to disarm them, post-conflict - if they commit atrocities (Salmon 2007, 9).

[97] The original tribe was Misseriya Arab and the affiliated ones were the Rizeigat and the Misseriya Humr (Salmon 2007, 12). Those tribes were Arab Baggara ethnic groups of cattle-owning nomads living in southern Darfur. The militia force they formed – and was later incorporated into the PDF – were called the *muraheleen (murahiliin)*, the Misseriya word for "travelers".

[98] According to Salmon (2007, 12), the PDF originated from two former paramilitary forces: "tribal militias units recruited in western Sudan and the Transitional Areas" in mid 1980s and the other was the NIF's own armed militants, who provided an "ideological core" to the former larger force. Even after its disintegration following the peace treaty with the SPLA in 2005, the PDF's network came to be useful in recruiting other pro-government armed militias in Darfur, the Transitional Areas, and elsewhere.

the NIF's revival of Islam in society.[99]

In an effort to militarize[100] and Islamize society, the Islamists increasingly "put faith in violence" (Gallab 2014, 109) and provided security manuals based on Salafi interpretations of scripture (Dawalbit 2013, 376). This explains why the resumption of civil war with the South was waged under the pretext of *jihad* and why the PDF was generally known to recruit *mujahideen* (fighters of a holy war), which were often high school students obligated under the Public Security Law to enlist in military camps of the PDF (Dawalbit 2013, 377). Additionally, in line with the Inqaz's policy of creating parallel systems to compete with existing ones, the Islamists introduced "Shura Councils" to take over the system of traditional leadership in rural communities. Staffed by loyalists, Shura leaders operated like tribal and spiritual leaders, but they also led prayers and parroted the calls for *jihad* against Southern Sudan, thereby effectively becoming warlords (El Zein 2003, 13).

As for restructuring the security system to crush northern opposition, the NIF relied on intelligence services to monitor senior elites and collect information on active civil society members. There were many remnants of Nimeiri's State Security Organization (SSO) who were later re-incorporated into the Sudan Security Bureau's (SSB) intelligence service between 1985-1989. The Islamist Minister of Interior,[101] tried to reorganize the security and intelligence agencies and enlisted Major General Bakri

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[99] By 2015, the PDF's Islamist glory will be eclipsed by the Rapid Security Forces (RSF), replacing the "PDF era" with the "RSF" era (Berridge et al 2022, 67).

[100] Even in discourse, the regime used the term "al-shaab al-mugatil" (the fighting populace) to refer to the Sudanese public (El-Battahani 2016, 3)

[101] Colonel Faisal Ali Abu Salih

Hassan Salih, another defender of the Salvation Revolution, to restructure the SSB. Gen. Salih did so by creating the nefarious Internal Security-Security of the Revolution (IS-SOR), staffed by NIF members ill-known for their brutal conduct. The IS-SOR[102] became an autonomous agency whose line of command extended to the NIF rather than the Ministry of Interior (Burr and Collins 2003, 14-15).

The IS-SOR operated as a *mukhabarat* force or secret police and had extensive latitude to detain and arrest suspects without charge for up to nine months (HRW 2009); if suspects were to face charges, they would appear before the newly created "Revolutionary Security Courts" (HRW 1991). Aside from the fear of trial, dissenting members of the opposition were made aware that they could be subject to police torture in "ghost houses" (Burr and Collins 2003, 90). To enforce compliance on ordinary citizens, the NIF created and commanded a parallel police force called the "Public Order Police", composed of the most loyal and competent units of the PDF, in order to suppress demonstrations (Burr and Collins 2003, 19), but more importantly, to crack down on any improper behavior.[103] The increased capacity of the intelligence forces enabled the regime to also monitor the army (Ali 2011, 14-15) and, hence, made it doubly hard "for a military coup to take al-Bashir off guard" (Berridge 2019, 171-172).

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[102] The IS-SOR predated the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS), which was created in 2004.
[103] In a conversation with journalist Lobna Ahmed, she jokingly mentioned how the Public Order Police would crash into women's beauty salons in Khartoum to preach women to cover up and not wear makeup, fully aware that when they crash into salons and hairdressers, they would certainly see women unveiled and under-dressed. They also behaved like the Saudi " Committee for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice"(Arabic: 'Amr Bil Marouf' force), which would round up idle male youth during prayer time and drop them off to the nearest mosque.

Yet, Bashir *was* caught off guard when, in June 1995, senior members of the NIF planned an assassination attempt against Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Addis Ababa (ST; Sharfi 2018,). The Sudanese government was accused of masterminding a plot carried out and financed by the Sudanese Intelligence Bureau against a neighboring country (Sharfi 2018, 456). Some of the perpetrators of the failed assassination plot were executed, and some fled, but the masterminds within the NIF remained (Johnson 2011, 18-19; Abdelsalam 2010, 378). As parallel institutions proliferated, their leadership sometimes failed to coordinate with one another on what they perceived to be the right policy or plan of action. This incident highlighted the incoherence of having multiple power centers within the *tanzim*, besides having a duopoly with Bashir and Turabi at the helm. Bashir and a faction of the NIF could see that their single-minded plan to seize power fell short of actually governing. Years of their mismanagement on the ground fed multiple disagreements within the Islamists' ranks.[104] The following section documents the ambivalent reception of the Salvation Regime's economic and political "unsustainable" policies (Mahé 2016, 144) and concludes with an analysis of why moving toward a post-Turabi regime was necessary to avoid regime failure.

3.5 The *Mufasala* and the Degeneration of Turabi's Islamism

I It was generally assumed that Turabi and members of the "Leader's Office" held the reins of power in Sudan (Abdelsalam 2010, 130), but the power balance between "ideologues and pragmatists" soon became an intra-elite rivalry (ElNur 2012, 64) that

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[104] The political order that the 'Salvation Revolution' produced failed to deliver on its promises to the extent that, after Turabi's dismissal in 1999, some Islamists admitted that it was "a disaster" (Berridge 2017, 77), largely because it was driven by a ruthless survival agenda (ElNur 2009, 83).

Turabi failed to address in time. Even though the 'sheikh' was famously known to be a mercurial character,[105] he was respected, and his directives were often followed blindly. However, Turabi made the error of not listening carefully to the different views shared by his aides in the NIF. While they resisted the notion of decentralization, Turabi had excessive confidence in his strategies to gradually change Sudan's political order from a dictatorship over a unitary state to a federal democracy (Abdelsalam 2010, 192-193). To Bashir and his first vice president (Abdelsalam 2010, 442-3), this ambitious 'democratization' process was not as welcomed as Turabi's steps to democratize the NIF's membership base in the 1970s and 1980s and transforming it from an elitist to a mass party (Gallab 2014, 58-59).

After 1995, what used to be rumors that there were ongoing internal disputes within the NCP became a reality when some dissenting members issued the Memorandum of Ten (Mohi ElDin 2006, 496). This event marked the famous *mufasla*, which denotes the "split that occurred among the Islamists' ranks and contributed to the fall and demise of Turabi" (Gallab 2014, 25). The NCP's Shura council adopted the Memo's reforms and made a move to place Bashir as the ruling party's chairman, so as to gently sideline Turabi (Sidahmed 2011, 170). As Speaker of the National Assembly, Turabi tried to pass new constitutional amendments to curb the president's mandate and create a rival post for a prime minister (Sidahmed 2011, 170-171). He was one step away

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[105] Apparently, Osama bin Laden is reputed to have called Turabi a "Machiavelli… he doesn't care what methods he uses" (Gallab 2014, 133). As Gallab writes (2008, 105) "there are two Turabis: one for export, and the other for local consumption".

from sidling Bashir altogether (Mahé 2016, 144), when Bashir[106] cut the scene short, and dissolved the National Assembly on 12 December 1999 (al-'Abbasi 2011, 296-7). Like the timing of the 1989 coup, the December 1999 palace coup was executed in the eleventh hour, to usurp an impending crisis. Though Turabi rejected the declared state of emergency and tried to file multiple lawsuits[107] to contest the measures taken against the National Assembly and against him, in particular, his isolation was consensually planned by a strong faction of the NCP (Sidahmed 2010, 171). His time in power was over.

3.6 The December 1999 Decisions

The December Decisions ought to be understood within the context of regime survival. Turabi's proposed constitutional amendments were threatening, not just the cohesion of the NCP but also the regime at large. If Turabi was the most important man in Sudan between 1989 and 1999, his challenge to Bashir could be framed as a direct attempt to grab power. In that sense, the case of the 1999 palace coup demonstrates that Bashir, and some NCP members, perceived Turabi's suggested executive constraints, among other measures, as a direct challenge to their survival in office. "Threat

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[106] The interview I had with Dr. ElMahboub Abdelsalam seems to suggest that Bashir made the December Decisions only after having been convinced by Nafie Ali Nafie and Ali Osman Taha that he would be supported in this move against Turabi. Bashir had started to notice first-hand the shortcomings of the Islamists' *mashrou hadari*, especially after 1995, and he grew more adept at ruling and managing the state. In Bashir's 1999 recorded interview with AlJazeera, he asserts that he was dismayed with the duplication of power centers - although he continued this same strategy of divide-rule-and-multiply well into the 2010s. Regardless, after 1999, Bashir's image in the elites' and public's minds changed from an unknown officer who relied on Turabi's teachings and directives.

[107] After all, Turabi was a law student at the University of Khartoum in the 1950s and had his MA at the University of London (1957) and Ph.D. in law at the Sorbonne in Paris (1964) (Roessler 2016, 120)

perception" in political science and political psychology, in particular, can be loosely described as a (un)conscious calculation and sensitivity toward others whose actions we find to be dangerous (Marika Landau-Wells 2018, 27). The definition intentionally lacks a concrete measure of what level of danger is registered as a threat, but acting upon threat leaves a clear trace. In the case of Bashir, who, like any autocratic leader was in high-alert mode[108] on a daily basis, he moved just in time. As for Turabi, he later admitted that he erred in placing his trust in some of his acolytes whom he himself taught "the idea of *wa a'ido*[109] (and prepare against them) (Gallab 2014, 62). Turabi's students were like "the kittens that ate their own father" (Gallab 2014, 26-27), as Dr. John Garang[110] is reputed to have said.

3.7 Conclusion

Between 1989 and 1999, the Inqaz regime's management of rival elites was significantly different from the November and May dictatorships, in magnitude and breadth, yet highly inspired by their former practices and mistakes. Following Nimeiri's footsteps in countering armed insurgencies and political opposition that could topple their young regime, the Islamists set about to build a "parallel" or deep state (Assal 2019, CMI), composed of institutions tasked with consolidating their grasp on power. The NIF practically restructured the Sudanese political and economic scene to a fault. Besides empowering and expanding the organizations within the security sector, the Islamists

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[108] By that I mean that his mapping of the threat environment has to be accurate because even the smallest mistakes can backfire. Besides the most serious threat level (i.e., a coup attempt), lesser evils can also be severely destabilizing.
[109] ayah (verse) number 60 from Surah (chapter) 8 al-Anfal.
[110] Dr. John Garang was the leader of the SPLA from 1983 to 2005.

also tried to infiltrate or shut down the sources where the concentration of the "modern forces" was high, primarily the civil bureaucracy, unions, media, and professional syndicates.

Although the Inqaz partially fulfilled their Salvation Revolution's aims in building three of the four pillars of revolutionary autocracies, "a loyal military, a powerful coercive apparatus, and the destruction of rival organizations and alternative centers of power in society" (Lachapelle et al, 2020, 558), they struggled to maintain "a cohesive ruling elite", the fourth and arguably most crucial pillar (ibid). More importantly, the single-minded focus on staying in power led the political authority of the Inqaz regime to fragment and fractionalize the state's institutions to become clientelistic networks serving the regime's top tier of political elites. The performance of formal state institutions deteriorated, and the informal apparatuses were empowered. From a regime cycle standpoint, the initial consolidation period, which lasted until roughly 1995, stabilized the regime but being regionally and internationally isolated was definitely an exogenous pressure that exacerbated the internal rift between Turabi and his acolytes. After 1995, the regime entered a factionalization phase whereby elites tried to reorganize the distribution of power. Before morphing into a crisis, Bashir cut it short and reconsolidated the regime's power and his own. In the end, the palace coup of 1999 concluded the Islamic Movement's 10-year experiment to manage Sudan through a duopoly, a power-sharing agreement with Islamist ideologues and pragmatic military officers.

The immediate aftermath of the split was reflected in the reconfigured, downsized ruling coalition members. Post-1999, the *tanzim*, or what remained of it, was "to continue

as the regime's political and intellectual engine, in a reworked partnership with the generals" (Verhoeven 2015, 121). Still, Bashir's aides were concerned that Turabi and his newly formed Popular Congress Party (PCP) could launch a counter-attack. Although there was no direct counterrevolution, the major schism – that ousted Turabi from the ruling circle – had other fatal repercussions. The next chapter tackles how the post-Turabi reformed ruling coalition refashioned regime policies to maintain their grip on power and forestall regime failure without the Godfather of the Inqaz Revolution.

Chapter 4

Inqaz 2.0 and the Retreat of the Islamist Project (1999-2005)

"...unlike military and democratic governments before, [the NCP] was able to exploit the oil boom to feed and enlarge patronage networks and, …through improved economic conditions and new infrastructure and subsidies, subdue some of the grievances of middle and upper-class Sudanese living in Khartoum and its surroundings. …Oil also gave the regime the resources to erect a stronger security apparatus to suppress and harshly crackdown on political opposition and civil dissent" (Patey 2023, 4).

"The burden and incidence of neglect and oppression by successive Khartoum clique regimes have traditionally fallen more on the South than on other parts of the country. …Under these

circumstances, the marginal cost of rebellion in the South became very small…, zero or negative; that is, in the South, it pays to rebel." - John Garang, 1983

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the repercussions of the 1999 palace coup that removed the Salvation Revolution's mastermind.[111] It specifically inquires into the altered power-sharing agreement among the winning coalition to see how it affected the regime's survival chances. As the previous chapter indicated, the beginning of a factionalization phase was set in motion by the *mufasala*, which eventually reconfigured the ranks of the Islamist elites in power by 1999. Following on the heels of the widening internal rift, the December Laws seemed necessary, from a coup-proofing logic for regime survival; more interestingly, the palace coup set the stage for a renovated "Inqaz 2.0" (Verhoeven 2015, 99), a debugged model that broke loose from the first decade's defective mold while upgrading its practices for regime consolidation.

The chapter is organized in the following manner. The first section builds on how the changes following the December laws marked an evasion of a crisis that could have led to further fragmentation among the ruling elites. It examines the altered composition and behavior of the post-1999 downsized ruling circle. From a regime cycle standpoint,

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[111] The palace coup raises interesting questions about what amounts to a regime shift versus 'regime change' and what gets coded as regime change when it is, in fact, only an "incumbent ejection" (Stacher 2020, 26). In large-N datasets, regime change is conjoined with leadership change as well as regime practices. What happened in 1999 was both, because the unofficial head of state, Turabi, was removed from power. Likewise, the post-1999 regime's practices, non-ideological legitimation tools, and even degree of repression changed after 1999, marking a significant break with the 1989-1999 regime period that ought to have been accounted for in datasets. That is, despite retaining the same official head of state and the 'ruling party', the ruling clique's members changed, and a faction from within the regime basically formed an opposition front. In short, the December Laws of 1999 in Sudan would have been coded as regime change only if Turabi and Bashir's official titles were disregarded.

sidelining Turabi as a rival ally enabled Bashir to consolidate his power as an uncontested president by appointing loyalists in key positions and purging Turabi followers. Similarly, the rift informed the behavior of former Turabi's acolytes siding with Bashir after 1999, who had to change their practices, from downscaling their Islamist-tinted policies to joining Bashir's pragmatic approach to doing politics, especially in the realm of foreign policy.

The second section discusses the larger political economy context characterizing this phase. The turn of the millennium marked another crucial event in Sudan's political trajectory: exporting the much-awaited crude oil discovered in the 1970s, whose pipeline system was laid down in 1997 (Gagnon and Ryle 2001, 2). Oil arrived as a blessing "at a time of political, economic, and military exhaustion" (ElNur 2009, 90). Indeed, the resource provided godsend economic relief to the state's frayed economy and the regime's legitimacy as it used it to increase salaries and launch several hydroagricultural projects (Verhoeven 2015, 141). More importantly, oil greased the NCP's patronage network of warlords and mercenary militias to contain dissent wherever it arose. As unbridled capitalism gained momentum, petrodollars also helped the regime purchase and manufacture weapons to fight the SPLA (de Kock 2011, 13), and rebel movements in Darfur, before settling on a price for peace with the South (Flint and De Waal 2008, 202). In this vein, the third section tackles the regime's militaristic approach toward the eruption of violence in Darfur since 2003, as negotiations with the SPLA/M were underway, leading up to the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

4.2 The Aftermath of the Split

As the previous chapter elucidated, members of the ruling coalition of the 1989-1999 consolidation phase had major policy disagreements. Besides the internal power struggle that alienated some senior members of the *tanzim* from Turabi, his Islamist policies created more economic and political challenges for the regime and the state than they solved. In the end, a faction of Turabi students[112] outmaneuvered him and sided with Bashir to save their interests. Why they chose to proceed in power without the legitimating force of Turabi's Islamism cannot be divorced from two facts: first, Bashir had the "incumbency advantage" (Roessler 2011, 334) and sat atop the regime's official *verkhushka* [pinnacle of power]. Second, oil revenues began trickling down and were expected, in true Sudanese fashion, to follow where powerholders led. Besides prizing material rewards, some *tanzim* members with a security background were not ready to trade the NCP's uncontested concentration of power for risky semi-democratic power-sharing ideals that Turabi began proposing in the later 1990s (Ibrahim 2004, 292–293). Thus, the post-1999 NCP members siding with Bashir[113] were arguably driven by power and money (Berridge et al. 2022, 185).

Removing a key member of the ruling coalition was a high-risk coup-proofing tactic, but it proved successful by a simple measure: the nonevent of a coup. The post-Turabi regime proved resilient not only because it did not experience mass upheaval

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[112] Ali Osman Taha, Nafie Ali Nafie, Ghazi Salah ElDin, and others.
[113] In an interview with ElMahboub AbdelSalam, he said the ruling elites at the time fought over who would have Bashir listen to his advice. In another interview, Adel Hamad mentioned the prominent names of this period were Ali Osman Taha, Nafie Ali Nafie, Ghazi Salah ElDin, Majzoub Khalifa, Yassin Omar, Mostafa Islamil, and Ibrahim Ghandour, but he emphasized that the military 'wing' had a greater authority than loyalty to the tanzim.

following the palace coup in 1999, but also because it had the means to crush dissent, be it armed or nonarmed. Still, even the lack of small-scale anti-regime mobilization following Turabi's ouster begs to be investigated, because someone of Turabi's standing could have posed a greater threat. Among the salient explanations for doing business-as-usual, Turabi-less, is that the ruling coalition did not further disintegrate after this rift;[114] that oil production was underway and trumped ideological allegiances; and that Turabi himself neither had the willingness to be locked in a fight with elites whose cooptation and repression tactics he knew (and probably taught) first-hand nor did he get enough chances to stir the tide against the regime, as he was frequently arrested after 2000 (Berridge 2017, 298). In the end, Turabi found himself comfortable as an opposition figure, self-dissociated from regime atrocities that he once helped engineer. However, the Godfather of the Salvation Regime was not so forgiving of the 1999 betrayal. Besides forming a formal opposition party, the Popular Congress Party (PCP), along with a number of NCP ex-members, Turabi found other, more mischievous ways to discreetly oppose the regime, as the third section will elaborate.

Not unexpectedly, after the palace coup, the ruling elites' networks split into in- and out-group factions.[115] The in-group, spearheaded by the Bashir-Taha[116] partnership

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[114] To Dr. ElMahboub Abdelsalam, the remaining elites understood that if Turabi's ejection from the topmost tier of the ruling coalition was essential for the Inqaz regime's survival, even if it had to accept some major concessions, it could not withstand another split. Thus, with the public face of the Islamic salvation project removed, in his stead, the remaining elites worked to prevent further destabilization or fragmentation within their ranks.

[115] The distinction between in- and out-group rivals is in order. By in-group elites I mean those who are formally appointed members of the ruling coterie and by extension, out-group elites are ostracized former in-group members as well as groups excluded from government.

[116] It's sometimes called the Bashir-Osman partnership. Verhoeven makes the argument that it resembled

(Verhoeven 2015, 99; Verhoeven 2023, 12) sought to groom members of the out-group network, so as to entrench the reformed regime's power. Accordingly, Bashir purged pro-Turabi ministers and discontinued the 'Islamic Popular Conference' (ElNur 2009, 73). Lack of tolerance extended to any dissenters within the ruling elite coalition; for instance, when the Darfurian junior minister[117] at the Ministry of Justice, Amin Banani Neo, protested in the media on 6 February 2001 that the group that removed Turabi was following in his footsteps and had a security-mentality, he was immediately removed the following day (Gallab 2008, 162). Similarly, following the government-backed atrocities against civilian Darfurian, the Minister of Peace, Ghazi Salah ElDin became disenchanted in late November 2003 and was subsequently sidelined without second thoughts (CAUS 2003).

After purging ambivalent members at top government and state levels, Bashir replaced them with loyalists, primarily drawn from the security sector. Indeed, he appointed ten heavyweight senior security elites, including some former Islamists,[118] as ministers in his reformed cabinet, thereby giving the regime a securitarian, rather than an Islamist, character (Verhoeven 2015, 121; Ali 2011, 9). In addition, the regime applied a divide-and-rule approach to coopt the opposition. For instance, to coopt notable

a coalition between the SAF with Bashir as its chief officer and the NCP or tanzim with Ali Osman Taha as its representative, who also had great influence in NISS. Verhoeven also points to how these two men symbolize a merger between the "two most powerful ethnic groups, Ja'aliyyin and Shaigiyya" (Verhoeven 2023, 12-13).

[117] A junior minister is a state minister of Justice or a minister of state for Justice.

[118] In 1999, Bashir appointed Nafie Ali Nafie, a prominent Islamist figure during the NIF's time who was also the former head of the Security forces 1989 -1996; and Qudbi Al Mahadi former head of external security and head of Security 1996 –1999. Others include Alhadi Mohamed, Ibrahim Shams lDin, Altayib Ibrahim Mohamed Khayr, Bakri Hassan Salih, Majdhub al-Khalifah, Ali Nimayri, Awad Ahmed Aljaz and Ali Ahmed Karti the new Minister of state for justice.

members of the opposition, the post-1999 regime expertly negotiated "separate deals with weaker dissenting groups within each party" (Gallab 2008, 163-164). At least one analysis of the post-1999 regime's accommodation of Sadiq's Umma Party and Turabi's PCP finds that the regime managed to "double contain" their voices "by letting different factions of the Umma Party fight amongst themselves" and the leaders of both parties would fight over garnering supporters in the western regions (Gallab 2008, 163). The other tactic involved direct cooptation of members of the traditional parties and sects, namely the DUP led by Mirghani and the Umma Party led by Sadiq. As Magdi El Gizouli wrote (2019), the DUP, "signed a settlement pact with the government in 2003" and, while Sadiq resolutely stood his ground, his eldest son Abdelrahman, was slowly being coopted and later became "assistant" to Bashir in 2011. His other son, Bushra Sadiq Al Mahdi, became an officer in the NISS. Thus, the ruling NCP tried to nonviolently coopt some members of the Ansar and Khatimyya after 1999.

From 1989 to 1999, the NCP laid the foundations to dismantle the social and economic bases of the traditional Sufi political class. *Tamkeen* worked; it was a sound coup-proofing and power consolidation project. Its forceful application during the first decade managed to radically shift the structure of power centers in Sudan through sidelining and disempowering the traditional class of power holders as represented by the Khatimyya and Mahdiyya Sufi sects and instead empowering the military and (in)visible security forces (Berridge 2013, 866). Even in the 1990s, the Inqaz regime had already begun relying on warlords to recruit militias and armed movements to ruthlessly

crush insurgencies in the peripheries, regardless of its use of jihadist pretexts.[119] Yet, if

the overarching goal of the 1989-1999 consolidation phase was to unmake the old elites'

dominance, the goal of the 1999-2005 phase was to unmake Turabi's Islamism and

prolong the regime's life. Thus, the Inqaz 2.0 regime, under Bashir's leadership partnered

with senior security figures, coopted members of the traditional sects, and tried to show

that it relaxed its grip on the media and opposition parties (al-'Abbasi 2011, 304-305).[120]

4.3 Elite Management Rulebook: Patronage, Kleptocracy, and Security

Beyond curbing Turabi's camp to consolidate power, the second task for the

reformed ruling coalition was to find a legitimating force besides a diluted form of

Islamism.[121] Unlike the first decade's agenda that "fixated upon the policing of public

morality" (Berridge et al. 2022, 185), those Islamists who stayed with Bashir abandoned

this course and chose pragmatism (Berridge 2017, 305). In that vein, the reformed

Islamists of the NCP increasingly relied on patronage, made possible by the increased

inflow of petrodollars rather than Islamic banks. With Bashir as the NCP's leader, he

added his network of army officials and security elite that he had collected when he

served in the army to become an extension of the NCP's patronage networks, and the two

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[119] It is worth noting that funding to the PDF and other "Islamist" militias dropped after 1999. The PDF's recruitment declined and material and nonmaterial donations to its *mujahideen* similarly declined. According to an ICG report, the PDF's access to military supplies and funds is not linked to the armed forces but rather to companies affiliated with the NCP (ICG 2006, 7-8). It follows that after the fallout of the Islamists' ideologue and godfather, the PDF became more heavily dependent on its existing funding networks as well as funds from the NCP's top tier (Salmon 2007, 27).

[120] The fact that Turabi could form a political party is telling. There were also some newspapers that criticized the government within a certain limit (author interview with Ghassan Ali Othman).

[121] Author interview with Ghassan Ali Othman

became enmeshed over time. In that sense, the NCP after 1999[122] departed from its former "ideologically driven, institutionalized" form and became a "patronage-based party that placed few checks on Bashir" (Hassan and Kodouda 2019, 92). This change is in line with how state governance increasingly resembled a "militarized, corrupt, neo-patrimonial" kleptocracy (De Waal 2019, 9).

In short, the same power-sharing formula of the *tanzim* inside the NIF acting as a corporation during the first decade still held true, with some changes to regime practices, discourse, and policymaking. Although the NCP did not deviate from protecting the "northern cultural and religious dominance" (Ibrahim 1996, 312), the NCP corporation was now chiefly managed by Bashir, his close aides from the NCP, and "influential business interests" (Kodouda 2016, 6), under the protection of "national security organs and…the military" (ibid). With the ruling coalition reformed and regime fall preemptively prevented, the Inqaz 2.0 regime turned to the economy to curate another dimension to their legitimacy, besides minimal openness.

4.4 Inqaz 2.0 Legitimacy Stemming from Hydropolitical Economy & Reformed Foreign Policy

As mentioned earlier, the Inqaz 2.0 did not aim to break off with the established, tried-and-tested *tamkeen* formula for economic and power consolidation; rather, it attempted to undo some of the mistakes of the first decade, especially the flawed economic and foreign policies. To that end, after 1999, long gone were the "We shall eat

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[122] the NCP represented the remnants of the NIF after its dissolution in 1993 and the split that caused the Turabi-loyal faction to form the PCP (Gallab 2008, 157) - Nafie and Ali Osman. Among the ones who became disillusioned afterwards was Ghazi Salahuddin.

what we grow… we shall wear what we produce" populist propaganda associated with the 1990s austerity measures wedded to *mashrou hadari* (civilization project) (ElNur 2009, 78-79). With regard to foreign policy, Inqaz 2.0 eschewed its fundamentalist, Islamist discourse to avoid being targeted by the US during its war on terror following the 9/11 attack (al-'Abbasi 2011, 303). In fact, the head of the Sudanese Intelligence Bureau, Salah Gosh, cooperated closely with the CIA to share sensitive information on Islamists who took shelter in Sudan in the 1990s (Shane 2005). Moreover, to mitigate the state's decade-long ostracization from the regional and international scene, the regime tried to mend its relations with Egypt and the US, among others.

Investments followed. The welcomed comeback of kleptocrats – reminiscent of the 1970s – in Sudan's liberalized economy enabled the regime to gain much-needed legitimacy from an enriched, Greater Khartoum-based "significant minority", which Minister of Planning Abdel-Rahim Hamdi worked hard to please (Verhoeven 2015, 100). In sum, the post-1999 regime revised its development strategy to gain legitimacy through 'economic' results, albeit limited in the scope of distribution.

Not all Sudanese were equal beneficiaries of the country's boosted economic growth.[123] The metropolitan civilians lived a starkly different lifestyle than that of their counterparts in South Kordofan, the Blue Nile, or Darfur. The concentration of wealth in the administrative capital also coincided with subsidized fuel, electricity, and bread. Since the ruling clique continued to be drawn from the riverain central government in

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[123]The regime focused on launching several hydroagricultural projects including dams built by Chinese and Indian firms (Verhoeven 2011, 122).

Khartoum, their members took it upon themselves that their most important constituency, the "middle-class enclave," remained satisfied (Verhoeven 2015, 100). Hence, they did not bother to develop the eastern or western provinces away from Khartoum and its 'immediate environs' in the Hamdi Triangle. While the "economic core" of Sudan remained centered on the Hamdi Triangle, the "outlying provinces constituted a burden: a welfare bill and a security threat, but a source of natural resources" (De Waal 2015, 74).

Not unsurprisingly, the advent of petrodollars increased the pace of corruption as it pushed the NCP's patronage network to new frontiers.[124] It is futile to question the mismanagement of oil revenues, which could have been better utilized to develop the agro-industrial sector. Given the regime's survival logic, petrodollars were not squandered as long as they were channeled to expand the regime's opportunistic allies, including tribal and militia leaders on Sudan's borders and contentious regions. According to Alex De Waal, the organization of the political marketplace that emerged during the oil boom era was a "centralized authoritarian kleptocracy" (De Waal 2019, 9), which expanded the base of crony capitalists in the following sectors: "oil, construction contracts, import-export trade, urban consumables, and private security" (ibid). Yet, while the growth of Khartoum's budget quelled the center, it simultaneously enticed actors such as the SPLM/A and the JEM to compete in the political marketplace to get a taste of Khartoum's prosperity (ibid).

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[124] Author conversation with former student activist Ahmed Farouk, who said the public could 'smell the stench of corruption'. One clear manifestation of the marriage of power and money in the 2000s was Ali Osman Taha's renovated house (ST 2021).

During the 2000-2005 period, Bashir not only continued expanding and enriching the existing security sector with a shifted allegiance toward his clique in the NCP, but those years also witnessed a heavy-handed securitarian character to the regime's treatment of conflicts. Though Bashir hired army officers, from among other security actors, he could not build unconditional trust with the SAF, which, owing to its diverse demographic composition (De Waal 2023), had not only witnessed defections from its ranks but has historically sided with civilian forces and facilitated both post-Abboud and post-Nimeiri's transition periods. The regime relied instead on hiring mercenary militias to fight insurgencies in the peripheries so as not to have sympathetic units of its armed forces join insurgents, as others like Dr. John Garang did. In addition to hiring militias, to keep a lid on grievances from spilling over, the regime relied on intelligence services. Therein comes the increasing importance of the NISS, which was yet another coup-proofing layer that Bashir required to ensure stabilization. How the post-1999 regime floated above the continuous wars in the peripheries and therefore avoided immediate regime fall chiefly can be attributed to its strengthened NISS and its increased funds to keep the peripheries busy and the center cash-content. In that sense, Inqaz 1.0 and 2.0 had continuities in their treatment of marginalized provinces.

The next section discusses how the 2000-2005 regime managed, funded, and contained political instability in regions like Darfur. The section also analyzes how the NCP engineered a coercive apparatus that, in later years, became a burden to maintain. The advent of oil money, in this context, awarded the ruling clique with resources to not only discriminately manage economic growth but also to keep wars in the peripheries

ongoing whilst protecting the center from spillovers.

4.5 Turabi's Wrath? The War in Darfur

TTurabi's wrath following his exclusion found its way to a neglected province in the peripheries: Darfur. Recall that the *mufasala* did not merely culminate in Turabi's ejection from the ruling coalition in Khartoum; more dangerously, at the subnational level, the Islamist elite that had infiltrated the state in the 1990s was also split. Many Turabi followers[125] resided in Darfur (ElNur 2009, 68), and, following his fall from grace, he "symbolized the interests of Darfur" while the NCP reflected riverine interests (Mamdani 2009, 198-199). The NIF's student base at Khartoum University had a sizeable group of Darfurian students who, following the 1989 coup, were recruited to practice politics at the national level (Mamdani 2009, 196). For instance, Khalil Ibrahim, former Health Minister, went back to Darfur after 1999 and in 2003 formed the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), which was one of the two main rebel groups in Darfur (Roessler 2014, 105). The JEM's composition "has al-Turabi written all over it" (Fluehr-Lobban, 298), since most Islamist Darfurians joined the PCP (Berridge et al. 2022, 188). In 2000 and 2002, the JEM published *The Black Book: Imbalance of Wealth and Power in Sudan.*[126]

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[125] Darfur was the host province for the NIF's "secret tanzim" between 1985-1989 (Abdelsalam 2010; El-Affendi 1991, 141).

[126] Interestingly, it is possible that the *Black Book* was inspired by another anonymously published booklet that Southerners distributed in 1982, following the division of the South into three districts and the promulgation of the notorious September laws. The booklet warned President Nimeiri 'not to tamper with the south and to let it run and manage its own affairs and to let the region exploit its own resources for its regional development.' (Arop A 2006, 40). Although it is argued that Turabi might have been behind the Black Book (Berridge et al 2021, 297), the JEM's spokesman Khalil Ibrahim repeatedly attacked Turabi in 2006 (Flint and De Waal 2008, 106).

The two small volumes circulating discreetly in Khartoum spoke volumes about bent-up grievances in Sudan's West and hitherto unspoken injustices elsewhere in marginalized regions.[127] The book provided hard facts and data about the systematic hegemony of the riverain northern elites over the rest of Sudan, which, like Darfur, was pre-developing compared to Khartoum (Flint and De Waal 2008, 102-103).

By 2003, the Inqaz faced a tribalistic civil war[128] in the West and a political 'blockade' that they themselves failed to resolve through vacuous treaties (Flint and De Waal 2008,). The year was one of the bloodiest years in Sudan's modern history. It was the year when the coalition between the Darfur Liberation Movement (DLM) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) launched attacks on military bases and the 'Darfur Civil War' officially started. Whether it was a proxy war between Bashir's and Turabi's factions or a byproduct of center-periphery tensions (Medani 2011, 138), Darfur was home to unimaginable atrocities committed against its inhabitants for years (Berridge 2017, 289). After the first outbreak of violence, Bashir said, "Our top priority will be the annihilation of the rebellion and any outlaw who carries arms against the state". To Bashir, the JEM's rebels were not representative of the Darfurian people; he described the "small group" of those 'outlaws' as "hirelings, traitors, agents, and renegades" hired by "enemies of Sudan" (AFP 2003). Since 2003, armed operations escalated between the pro-

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[127] It also challenged their social imaginary. Charles Taylor defines a social imaginary as, "the ways people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations" (Taylor 2004, 23).
[128] Members of the Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa ethnic groups took up arms and began attacking SAF points in Darfur, in protest of Darfur's condition.

government militias[129] and Darfurian armed militias, committing avoidable atrocities for years.

Not unlike the regime's approach to dealing with the South, its policy to contain insurgency in Darfur increasingly relied on "marketized militarism" (Berridge et al. 2022, 77) or "counterinsurgency on the cheap" (De Waal 2016, 179; Berridge et al. 2022, 69). The regime depended on hired militias, rather than the military, to combat the Darfurian rebels for obvious coup-proofing reasons. It also had to use the NISS to closely monitor Darfur sympathizers within the army. Indeed, in March 2004, the regime intercepted a "suspected" coup plot planned by "ten middle-ranking officers all from Darfur and neighboring Kordofan" and arrested Turabi and top PCP members on account of "inciting regionalism and tribalism in Darfur" (Mamdani 2009, 200).

The ruling clique within the NCP had obvious alternatives, as its inconsistent peace-making policies indicate. Indeed, although the regime chose to hire militias to oppose the insurgency in Darfur (Flint and De Waal 2008,), it wanted to discontinue this strategy on the Southern front. Building on its warped legitimacy, the ruling coalition sought to end the ongoing civil war against Southern Sudan and signaled the beginning of a transition phase during which the regime would accommodate the inclusion of a broader base of political actors.

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[129] the most infamous of which was the Janjaweed led by Musa Hilal, who, in the jihadist, Arab-supreacist fashion of the 1990s, wanted to reform Darfur's demography and "empty it of African tribes" (Flint and De Waal 2008, 37).

This opens the floor to many questions:[130] What made Darfur a less worthy power-sharing partner, as opposed to Southern Sudan? What did the SPLA/M do differently to be included? (Rossler 2011, 423-424). The next section illustrates how this policy discrepancy - crushing recent dissent in one region and seeking peace in another with a much longer bloodier history[131] - had a simple economic rationale.

4.6 The Runway to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement with the South

T he Inqaz regime's heavy-handed approach toward the South in the 1990s was an extension of the policies that both the May Regime and Sadiq Al Mahdi's transition government adopted. Ever since Nimeiri opened Pandora's box and the pan-Arab, pan-Islamist discourse came out in the open, the NIF did not shy away from issuing radical statements, going as far as welcoming the South's secession. Indeed, merely two weeks after assuming power, Bashir announced that the separation of the South was not off the table and that the issue of sharia could be settled through a referendum (Fluehr-Lobban 2001). The assimilationist model heralded by northern politicians for decades was suddenly disavowed, signaling a shift in policies. The decades-long debates around identity and the permanent constitution's background framework (secular federalism versus Islamic unitary state) were abruptly terminated, and in their stead, the Inqaz regime decided that the Islamist way was the only way. To Southerners, the GoS's

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[130] An abstracted question would read as, what is the threshold of threat from excluded groups that the central government required in order to include them in a power-sharing agreement instead of further shutting them off?

[131] There were millions of displaced people as a result of the First and Second Civil Wars. By 2002, an estimated two million Southerners had been killed. The GoS approved aerial bombings of Southern areas in order to extract oil (Medani 2011, 138). The 1990s' conflict with the South was over the quest for wealth and power, and so was peace in the early 2000s.

policies were often referred to as 'Arab colonialism' (Fluehr-Lobban 2012, 33). However, by the early 2000s, the GoS appeared more receptive to internationally mediated peace treaties with the South. This shift begs the question: why did the NCP change its approach and seek peace with the SPLA/M now after systematically repressing the South? (Verhoeven 2015, 124-127)

From a pragmatic vantage point to regime survival, peace with the South checked many boxes. It was an opportunity to showcase to regional actors and the international community that the post-1999 regime had a peacemaking leadership. It was also a chance to intercept an impending threat emerging from a nascent cooperation between the SPLA and Darfur-based insurgent groups (Flint and De Waal 2008, 91). Indeed, on 20 February 2001, Turabi's PCP signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the SPLA, which promised the South "the right to self-determination in Sudan in exchange for joint opposition to Bashir." (Salmon 2007, 21). That move toward reconciliation with "infidels" shocked Islamists who believed in Turabi's jihadist rhetoric for years (Gallab 2008, 115) and landed Turabi in prison, but it triggered the NCP to approach the SPLA/M to work out a peace agreement (Flint and De Waal 2008, 117). Thus, in 2002, the NCP actively, with Ali Osman's guidance, worked toward peace with the SPLA/M. In 2002, the NCP and the SPLM signed the Machakos Protocol and began a lengthy process of peacemaking that would eventually culminate in the CPA (Fluehr-Lobban 2012, 37-38). The SPLA's leader, John Garang, understood that devolution was necessary and may have had some hopes for post-CPA negotiations about the other marginalized areas. Yet

discussing any form of power-sharing with Darfur or the Three Areas[132] was strictly out of the question for the NCP.

4.7 Conclusion

By 2000, the Inqaz regime had radically reconfigured its ruling elites to remain in power. This period was characterized by greater domination in favor of Bashir, who, together with Ali Osman Taha, created a centralized authoritarian kleptocracy to operate the state's machinery. The latter was well-greased with petrodollars to finance a growing patronage network. The reconfiguration foreshadowed the extent to which Bashir was willing to tactically compromise in order to survive. Bashir needed to ally with several notable members of the NCP after the 1998-1999 split, but, as the fifth chapter will discuss, he would dispense with these "old hawks" in 2013/2014 when their presence jeopardized his survival (ST 2010). Continuous revisions of the NCP's membership would later raise the question of what the party's role has evolved to be if its founding members were sidelined and its ideological foundations significantly diluted.

Regardless of its evolutionary forms, the ruling coalition changed so that the regime could remain in power, resorting to nearly any stabilization mechanism. To that end, the 2.0 version of the Inqaz regime (Verhoeven 2015, 99) built on the existing structural imbalance in political authority and economic development that have long been the real culprits behind armed violence in peripheral regions (El-Battahani 2022, 81). Power struggles were displaced "from within the regime to society" (Roessler 2011, 315):

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[132] The Three Areas are also referred to as the Transitional Areas. They are Abyei, Blue Nile State, and Southern Kordofan/Nuba mountains.

in that case, to Darfur. Although silencing dissent and using political violence to crush armed insurgency were feasible policies in the short run, they incrementally added to slow-burning grievances that, in time, would spread from peripheral provinces to the center. While the regime was narrowly focused on the contentment of the center, new generations of militia recruits in the peripheries grew up acquainted with the fact that the surest way to reach power-sharing negotiations or become integrated into existing patronage networks (i.e., secure a piece of the proverbial pie) is to raise arms, against the government if needed. In short, the regime's survival-first approach increased "the social zoning of the Other", be they armed insurgents in Darfur, the South, or the Blue Nile or within the NCP (Gallab 2008, 23).

Chapter 5

Accommodating Peace with Oil (2005-2011)

"Signing the CPA was sold as a tactical concession for strategic long-term gain *to NCP supporters as part of a broader regime transformation to the public"* (Verhoeven 2014, 129).

"Resource wealth thus appears to shape the behavior of elites. In the face of dwindling public resources or insecure political futures, given the availability of wealth from appropriable resources, they could greet with equanimity a future of political disorder" (Bates 2008, 28).

5.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the brief period of relative peace that brought the South's SPLA/M into the central government in Khartoum. This transitional phase coincides with Sudan's decade of oil boom and is distinctly different from the two previous ones

(1989-1999 and 1999-2005). Within the regime cycle framework, the years between 2005 and 2011 fit the general description of the "accommodation" stage, which "occurs after a crisis, reshuffle or significant internal change, as leaders… build elite coalitions with the ultimate goal of securing an agreed distribution of authority that benefits enough senior and subnational elites" (Raleigh and Carboni 2021, 420).

The chapter focuses on the effect of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) on political governance in Sudan and how the agreement's reception in warring regions in the east and west gave way to an even broader and larger "arms-and-patronage" race (De Waal 2019, 11). To that end, the core question guiding the first two sections is how the regime instrumentalized the CPA to prolong its rule and how the agreement aggravated the competition among armed groups in the peripheries, most specifically in Darfur. The third section traces the increased empowerment of and reliance on a "balance of terror" to barely govern the state against the backdrop of competing and incompatible elite bargains (El-Badawi 2021, 42). Behind the cover of peace-making and oil rent, Bashir's expansive patronage network became too conspicuous to a disillusioned civil society. As the fourth section illustrates, Bashir's coup-proofing strategies showed signs of fraying at the seams, paradoxically when he became the principal power broker, or "central business manager" at the center of a web connecting all political players (De Waal 2019, 11). The last section highlights how power concentration and corruption marred the 2010 presidential elections and sped South Sudan's secession.

5.2 The CPA as an Instrument

A fter two years of negotiations,[133] on 9 January 2005, the NCP and SPLM/A signed the long-awaited Comprehensive Peace Treaty (CPA) to end the decades-long North/South civil war. The signing ceremony showed photos of exuberant Bashir, Taha, and Garang holding their hands up in a sign of solidarity and unity. In reality, the CPA promised *conditional* unity, which Garang emphasized in his speech more so than Taha, who stressed the magnanimity of the North in signing this agreement (Johnson 2011, 111-112). Indeed, without delving too much into the agreement's details, the CPA promulgated a seven-year trial period for a "two systems, one country formula," by the end of which the citizens in Southern Sudan would vote in a referendum to decide on unity with or separation from the North. In that sense, despite the optimism that the CPA promised, especially concerning self-rule and equally sharing oil revenues, it had built-in time bombs. From an authoritarian adaptability standpoint, the agreement was yet another stopgap stabilization measure[134] for the Inqaz regime's survival.

It is not a coincidence that the CPA became a reality during the oil boom. Even though it was framed as a resolution to the military stalemate after twenty-one years of civil war, the negotiations' timing has a pragmatic element, given that previously, during the Inqaz's first decade, negotiations with the SPLA/M were almost unthinkable; the

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[133] The CPA is the last in the line of a series of previous agreements: the Machakos Protocol of July 2002, the Agreement on Security Arrangements of September 2003; the Agreement on Wealth Sharing of January 2004; the Protocol on Power Sharing of May 2004; the Protocol on the Resolution of Conflict in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile States of May 2004; and the Protocol on the Resolution of Conflict in the Abyei Area of May 2004.

[134] by "Stopgap Measures" I mean applying temporary fixes or solutions that have an impending expiry date that the regime knows is inevitably coming. The head of the regime, the incumbent Bashir in this case, does not necessarily like to prepare for an endgame scenario and delays reform as much as he can (hoping, perhaps, to die before having to relinquish power voluntarily).

regime narrowly focused on a zero-sum military solution, notwithstanding its economic burden. Thus, the sudden change of heart cannot be divorced from the overall logic guiding the Inqaz regime, which entered its second decade in power looking for allies to buttress its legitimacy. In that respect, partnering with the South and earning international accreditation for having a peacemaking leadership[135] were domestically and internationally useful in removing the dust from a decade of Islamist fundamentalism. More crucially, the Khartoum government wanted to implement its "hydro-agricultural mission"[136] without being embroiled in war (Verhoeven 2014, 129-130). After all, the Inqaz could not disregard that the SPLA had driven out the oil company Chevron in the 1970s and denied Nimeiri from enjoying oil wealth (El-Battahani 2016, 3).

The CPA was perceived as a stepping stone for the regime to rise above decades of civil war and embrace oil wealth unruffled. Yet, given that the regime did not have bigger plans beyond elections to appear democratic, it neither seriously implemented basic tenets[137] of the CPA nor extended the government's trust-building scheme with marginalized groups besides the SPLA. Indeed, even the SPLA was not conceived as a permanent power-sharing partner: when Garang died in a mysterious airplane crash

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[135] It is hard to overlook the cynicism around peace agreements in Sudan. One Darfuri rebel movement's leader referred to the government's peace-making endeavors in an interview with Sharath Srinivasan in 2008 by saying, "They create these agreements to say, 'we did something'… they wanted it personally recorded to them that they sorted one of the most difficult problems in the world" (Srinivasan 2021, 68-69).

[136] This mission included building a series of dams.

[137] For instance, the CPA stipulated that the people of the South should elect representatives to fill four levels of government; they did not do so until 2010 (Carnegie 2011). Moreover, the government postponed the national presidential elections scheduled for 2009. The wealth distribution was not allocated fairly as per the agreement's stipulations.

merely weeks after the signing of the agreement, the Khartoum government did not actively try to convert his pro-separation successor, Salva Kiir, to embrace national unity.[138] Thus, despite the huge potential that peace with the South held for Sudan, the regime parochially traded the CPA for short-term stabilization through wealth- and power-sharing.[139]

Concerning power-sharing, the regime expanded the ruling coalition in 2005 to include members of the SPLA, who sought to win seats during parliamentary elections to become part of the "national unity government" (Gallab 2008, 164). Unlike coalition governments of the past, this 'unity' government only had the ruling party at the steering wheel, for the NCP led in the parliament with an absolute majority of the seats (52%), while the SPLM gained 28%, much to the dismay of some Southerners (Sudan Tribune 2005).[140] As the NCP retained the upper hand, it simply dominated all the major ministries (fifteen ministries, including the energy and mining ministry) and left the remaining eight to the SPLM.[141]

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[138] Garang's death rippled through Southern Sudan. He articulated a vision for a united Sudan and tried to impart that to the SPLA/M during his leadership. However, merely twenty-one days after his inauguration as First Vice President of Sudan, Garang mysteriously died in a helicopter crash – an event that cast a long shadow on Sudan's future (al-'Abbasi 2011, 305).

[139] It may be useful to recall that power-sharing in a post-civil war setting refers to "those rules that, in addition to defining how decisions will be made by groups within the polity, allocate decision-making rights, including access to state resources, among collectivities competing for power" (Hartzell and Hoddie 2003, 320).

[140] The remaining 14% had northern parties, most notably Turabi's PCP and the DUP each had 4 seats, or less than 1% of the total 450 seats. Source: http://archive.ipu.org/parline/reports/2297_E.htm

[141] The NCP had five 'sovereign ministries (Presidency, Interior, Justice, Defence and Federal Government); six economic ministries (Energy and Mining, Finance, Irrigation, Agriculture, International Cooperation and Animal Resources) and four service ministries (Labour and Public Service, Culture and Youth, Social Welfare and Guidance and Endowment). The SPLM had two sovereignty ministries (Council of Ministers and Foreign Affairs), three economic ministries (Foreign Trade, Investment and Transportation) and three service ministries (Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Higher Education). The CPA Monitor-Monthly report on the Implementation of the CPA," *UNMIS*, March 2006.

As the South soon realized, a peace agreement that does not depend on justice cannot bring peace based on mutual trust. In fact, it can hardly be argued that the political class in the north genuinely pursued trust-building with the South or that the NCP leveled the playing field for the SPLM, let alone other political parties in the north (El-Battahani 2022, 67). On the contrary, centralization was still trumped over truly sharing power with allies and rivals alike. From that perspective, accommodating the SPLA into the central government did not fundamentally disrupt the distribution of power so long as the NCP put the rules of the game.

Power-sharing entailed wealth-sharing, though with little transparency around "oil production, licensing arrangements, and income" (Johnson 2011, 112). The NCP approached wealth sharing as "damage control" in case of separation,[142] while the SPLA saw it as a chance to "make unity attractive" (ibid). In the end, the NCP agreed to share oil wealth in an equitable manner (50-50) with the SPLA; however, in reality, they did not agree on non-oil and oil resource sharing (e.g. water) - only oil revenues (ibid, 115). In the end, the government in South Sudan did not oversee the fair distribution of oil revenues and instead emulated its northern counterparts in resource mismanagement (Moro 2013, 8).

5.3 The CPA Othering Darfur and the Transitional Areas

If the central government's systematic neglect of the peripheries gave way to simmering, low-intensity insurgencies in previous decades, the regime's embrace of the

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[142] It is worth noting that of all natural resources, 'oil' is considered a highly dangerous resource for secessionist movements (Barron and Collier 2003, 5).

SPLA, the largest 'othered' rebel group, in an unprecedented power-sharing arrangement in 2005 was incendiary. To the rebels in Darfur, the negotiations leading up to the CPA meant that the NCP, and the riverain elite for which they stand, do not preclude the marginalized regions on a religious or tribal basis and are instead selectively picking domestic allies, yet Western Sudan was still not one of them.

The CPA felt like a betrayal of a once 'othered' group, the SPLA, to another, but the agreement made perfect sense to the Khartoum government. From a regime survival approach, the Inqaz could not have conceded to the demands of the JEM in Darfur, because doing so would open the door for other rebel groups to call upon the central government to share or devolve political power to their respective regions as well. Unhinged concessions in a highly centralized state - despite the aura of federalism - would be a recipe for havoc, as more actors scramble for power without recourse to an institutionalized system of governance that allows them to legitimately gain power. As Ali Osman Taha revealed to Hilde F. Johnson in 2003, in a discussion about the Three Areas[143], he said, "Self-determination for all three areas? What then about the East and about Darfur? Where will it end? It will lead to a total fragmentation of the state" (Johnson 2011, 118). Following that logic, Bashir's ruling coalition in Khartoum carefully forged tactical agreements, sometimes compromising on the precedent stances but never compromising on the survival of their deep state[144] (Cartier, Kahan, and Zukin 2022, 6).

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[143] The Three Areas, also called the Transitional Areas, are Abyei, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile.
[144] There are many definitions of the term "deep state", but I adopt what the Sudanese Professional Association (SPA) in 2019 targeted and defined as "the intricate apparatus of organisations and corporations, charities and networks, that had simultaneously supported the regime and parasitised upon it." (Berridge et al 2021, 89)

Warlords and tribal leaders tacitly understood the thin line between provoking the central government to concede to their demands or show them its wrath. Take the example of Musa Hilal, the infamous "poster child for Janjaweed atrocities in Darfur" (HRW 2008). Hilal, a tribal leader (*sheikh*) from the Mahameed clan of the Rizeigat Arab tribe of northern Darfur [2] and an NCP member, formed the "Arab Gathering" as a stronghold in North Darfur[145] to crush unrest following the dissemination of *The Black Book*. He was among those warlords that the GoS recruited[146] to lead the Janjaweed and fight against rebel groups in Darfur in 2003 (Sudan Tribune 2008), and then denied having done so (Johnson 2011, 149). His Janjaweed forces, who have the government's prerogative to support themselves by looting the population's land and assets (ElNur 2009, 94), committed unimaginable atrocities, "crimes against humanity" (UNICID 2005). However, much to the surprise of the international community, in 2008/2009, Bashir rewarded him with a seat in the National Assembly (Africa Express 2017) and promoted him to become his special advisor for the Ministry of Federal Governance (HRW 2008) and (ST 2008). According to the logic of the political marketplace as well as the prolonged 'accommodation' mentality guiding the (1999-2011) phase in the regime's cycle, brokering a patronage deal with a potentially problematic Janjaweed leader is a low price to pay for the region's stability and a feared militia's loyalty.

The only problem with such non-ideological brokerage deals is their short lives

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[145] https://newrepublic.com/article/71627/the-monster-darfur

[146] Needless to say, relying on Hilal did not quell the Darfurian conflict; rather, it endorsed a military solution, rather than a political solution or peaceful negotiations, to the region's civil strife (Rice and Borger 2008, The Guardian).

and variable terms of renewal as market prices increase. Hilal's relationship with Bashir began deteriorating in 2013 when Bashir appointed Hilal's relative and commander of another Border Guard unit as the head of a presidential guard called the Rapid Security Forces (RSF). Even though that same year, the SAF left the gold-rich area of Jebel Amer in northern Darfur within Hilal's influence, a year later, Hilal angrily left the NCP and accused the regime of corruption when it neglected his political demands (i.e., access to more money or power, presumably). Hilal, who made annual profits of over 50mn USD, thanks to the leniency of the central government, decided to go even further in his fight against Bashir in 2015 (Sudan Tribune 2015). After a political scene in which Hilal practically threatened the central government and blockaded polling stations for presidential elections, Bashir conceded to Hilal's political demands in return for disarming his militia once and for all, again not a solution but a stopgap measure (Mamdani 2009, 298).[147] It seemed that tensions subsided when Hilal transported his tribesmen to vote for Bashir; however, in 2017, Bashir ordered Hilal's arrest, when he allegedly formed ties with Libya (Sudan Tribune, 2015).

To go back to Darfur's special case, the time for waging full-fledged peace there had not yet come. Though the regime signed the Abuja Agreement on Darfur in 2006, the process itself was marred as it brought only the insurgents and government and left out the Arab tribes (Mamdani 2009, 292). As such, the agreement could neither bring nor guarantee peace, not least because the two main rebel groups split into over twenty

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[147] https://sudantribune.com/article53303/

factions, again reflecting the 'divide-and-multiply' approach in practice (Mamdani 2009, 39-40). The key problem of the Abuja Agreement, and subsequently the Doha Document for Peace and Development (DDPD), was that in both cases, the same mistake happened; the signatories were not unarmed civilians willing to uproot causes for conflict and establish sound governance (Srinivasan 2021, 250-251) but rather militia leaders ready to resume violence to settle who gets what (El-Battahani 2006, 10). For the time being, during the oil boom, it was still possible to keep conflicts in the peripheries simmering and delay a political solution in Darfur and East Sudan[148] that could lead to self-determination or brokerage over real power-sharing. On paper, it was easy to recommend that the Khartoum government use the same model designed for the South to settle the conflict in Darfur, as Turabi said in an interview (AlJazeera 3 Sep, 2007); however, the rules of 'accommodation' under the NCP's authoritarian regime considered such a settlement non-negotiable.

5.4 The Oil Boom and the New Economic Mission

The oil boom propelled Sudan's economy forward, but the regime had its eye on its survival first and foremost (Verhoeven 2014, 136). Sudan's annual growth rate averaged 6% (ILO 2014). Although the country began exporting oil only in 1999, by 2007, its oil revenues hiked to nearly 4 billion USD, and growth reached 10%, making Sudan "one of the world's top twenty oil-producing nations" overnight (Hassan and Kodouda 2019, 95). The stars had aligned again for Sudan when global oil prices tripled from $55

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[148] There was also a peace agreement between the Khartoum government and Easter Sudanese rebels in 2006. Like the other peace agreements, the Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement did not uproot the region's grievances.

in 2005 to \$145 per barrel in 2008 (Hamilton 2009, 229). However, the resultant huge growth in government revenues did not alter the NCP's approach to survival in power. Indeed, as the years went on, unevenly distributed economic growth revealed the regime's lack of intent to wisely utilize the inflow of petrodollars. Instead of channeling funds to develop productive sectors (Sidahmed 2013, 162), the regime embraced the "rentier effect" for which oil is infamous (Ross 2001, 327). Sudan effectively became a mono-product economy, as oil's share in export revenue rose above 95% and made up about 50% of total government revenues (IMF 2013). Still, just as British colonialism favored the riverain center when it launched the Gezira project, the NCP's Minister of Planning, Abdelrahim Hamdi, drafted an economic plan that read as though Sudan was only composed of Greater Khartoum. The notorious idea of brushing over much of Sudan's territory and devoting economic resources to developing the "Dongola-Kordofan-Sennar axis" would later be referred to as the "Hamdi Triangle" (Verhoeven 2014, 137).

The fact that with a typical lack of transparency, oil-rent was selectively used to enrich the riverain center, is not surprising. Bashir was undoubtedly privy to embezzlements of state resources; indeed, he must have found a steady stream of revenue during the oil decade that by 2014 he was the highest-paid politician in the world, according to *People with Money* magazine (Gallab 2014, 152) and by 2019, the records revealing how much he had stashed in the banks were staggering. It is difficult to estimate the fraction of embezzlement that his patronage network secured as well, but it is safe to assume that Bashir kept his aides content, or else they would have abandoned him. State

servants, be they civil bureaucrats or members of the security complex, witnessed their salaries increase (IMF/WB)giri. Likewise, the security sector composed of the NISS, SAF, and pro-government militias, as well as direct government beneficiaries (i.e., the NCP and SPLA/M) took their shares from development projects, according to <u>De Waal's analysis (2014)</u>. Bashir coopted subnational elites in the regime's selectorate by doling out appointments and granting informal funds, casually during the bi-weekly open-house visits he usually hosted at his house. The status quo was both unjust and extremely unsustainable to any onlooker (ElNur, 2009, 57), but at least this market-based/marketized patronage model seemed to be working for the time being, until petrodollars ran dry.

5.5 Oil-Greased Elite Management

Although the regime finally had the financial capability to deal with deep structural problems,[149] they still resorted to applying temporary fixes to increasingly proliferating crises of different magnitudes in the East, West, South Kordofan, Nuba, and Blue Nile regions. At its core, the CPA was little more than an officiated "sharing of the spoils" coupled with "a security pact among those who sign to suppress those who do not sign" (Berridge et al. 2022, 114). In that sense, the CPA is just one clear example of how the regime preferred short-term solutions that have an impending expiry date, delaying the time when they face a dead end. Crises seemed normalized or too commonplace, not because they are trivial but because they are managed in a manner that keeps

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[149] Relatedly, the NCP avoided resuming discussions around *sharia* (Fluehr-Lobban 2012, 39), although the CPA was the awaited opportunity to once and for all resolve the mutiny over *sharia* (ibid 297).

marginalized areas and the security complex busy with continuous insurgencies.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, the post-1999 ruling coalition continued the divide-rule-and-multiply approach to coup-proof the regime. With more cash to spare, it was difficult to ensure that none of the security forces could completely dominate the others and only ensure that they could resist one another in case one mutiny or a peripheral insurgency tried to encroach upon the center. When the NISS failed to stop the JEM forces from storming Greater Khartoum in 2008, Bashir removed its four-year leader Salah Gosh[150] (El-Battahani 2016, 5), and appointed Nimeiri-era Mohamed Atta as head of the NISS (McGregor 2020). The shadow of a coup d'etat was short during this period, yet 'coup risk' always affects elite management (Roessler 2011, 302).

In addition to the "rentier effect", the Sudanese economy also had signs of the "repression effect" of oil (Ross 2001, 328). The post-2005 regime empowered the coercive state apparatus, especially after the JEM 2008 attack against Greater Khartoum (i.e., Khartoum and Omdurman) (Berridge et al. 2022, 175 and HRW 2008).[151] Like other authoritarian regimes' defense budgets, Sudan's defense spending comprised over 75% of government expenditure, according to official records released by the Ministry of Finance in 2012 (El-Battahani 2016, 4). Underlying this inflated budget are the parallel state and parastate armed institutions and militias that, even together, have no absolute monopoly on the means of violence. Unsurprisingly, during the oil boom, the different

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[150] Bashir knew that Gosh was very useful, despite being a threatening senior elite with good connections with the CIA. Hence, when Gosh was sacked as NISS head, Bashir made him his personal Security Advisor. Later in 2012, Bashir would dispense with him over suspicion of coup plot yet brought him back in 2018.

[151] https://www.hrw.org/reports/2008/darfur0608/4.htm

members of the security complex (paramilitaries, security units, police, NISS, and some of the pro-government militias) renegotiated their responsibilities and commands and competed over who should get a larger share of oil rent. Most notably, the Janjaweed became Border Guards subservient to the SAF during this period. Together, the guardians of the regime were aware that none of them could launch a coup without risking clashing with other forces (Berridge et al. 2022, 51). Though it is doubtful that they regularly met to discuss their common interest, members of the security complex understood that their interests were aligned with the regime's survival so long as the latter safeguarded the former's financial and political prowess (El-Battahani 2016, 4).

The regime was codependent on the security forces' capacity to keep the peripheries embroiled in wars. The regime permitted the SAF and NISS to engage in additional enrichment schemes (Berridge et al. 2022, 71), as evidenced by the expansion of the Military Industrial Corporation (MIC), established in 1993 through a presidential decree. The enterprise chiefly produced "military hardware and ammunition," but it expanded its operations and ventured into other sectors (pharmaceuticals, car manufacturing, service provision) (El-Battahani 2016, 4). The MIC was one channel for officers to be rewarded in setting up their own businesses and becoming integrated into crony-capitalist networks (ibid).

Tracing the involvement of the security forces in economic activities between 2005 and 2011 is not a simple endeavor, not only because the sector is fragmented but, more importantly, because unpublicized deals that happen off-the-books further complicate the issue of data transparency in an authoritarian setting like Sudan. However, several

sources indicate that the army[152] was, in fact, heavily involved with parts of the economy (Kuol 2020), reportedly controlling over 250 commercial companies in different profitable sectors, from trading in food staples and livestock to engaging in rubber production and gold mining, according to the CIA World Factbook. Senior NCP members were also NISS officers investing in Telecom and commercial enterprises related to surveillance; NISS's chief, Salah Gosh, had an "oil company" (Berridge et al. 2022, 71).

5.6 The Withdrawal of Islamism

As has been hinted at, the very idea of the Inqaz signing the CPA was a clear break with the regime's first decade in power. Though its elite composition changed and toned down its dogmatic Islamist approach to the public, the regime suffered from an identity and legitimacy ambiguity not dissimilar to Sudan's overall ambiguous status as both a war-making and peace-waging state. Double standards disillusioned civil society, which had little freedom to form associations[153] or openly criticize the regime in the still heavily censored press (Amnesty International 2011, 2). Still, the public was privy to the flagrant

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[152] A lot has resurfaced after 2019. The report Breaking the Bank looks into the economic activities of SAF, among other members of the deep state. There is also an investigative report published months after Bashir's ouster, that exposes the RSF's financial network (Aboelgheit 2019). Compared to the other security actors, much less is known about the NISS's economic enterprises, but its chief, Salah Gosh, was well-connected to the CIA and the U.S. government (Berridge et al 2022, 72).

[153] The fact that, until the 2010s, there was no unarmed united front for marginalized regions gives pause for thought. Besides the *Black Book* written by the JEM, regions like the Blue Nile and South Kordofan (Hassan and Kodouda 2019, 93) did not reach out to regions in the West or East to form a national front to call upon the government to address their collective grievances. While the lack of united front is certainly a lamentable, missed opportunity, it suggests that there has been an intentional and systematic alienation of these groups, even from one another. Indeed, if we look at the peripheries' access to basic life necessities and provisions normally found in the center, we would find it hard to imagine how they could have possibly organized a peaceful, nonviolent movement.

corruption schemes[154] unfolding before their eyes; one student-based grassroots organization formed in 2009 to express how disgusted they were with the government and chose the name "Girifna" (Arabic for fed-up). Civil society members' growing impatience was subsequent to the International Criminal Court at the Hague to indict Bashir in 2008 for crimes perpetrated against civilians in Darfur.[155]

The indictment sent ripples internationally as Bashir set a precedent for being the first person ever to be charged with genocide (UN News 2010). Within the regime's ruling circle, Bashir's two arrest warrants, in 2009 and 2010, were received with much disdain. Whether the autocrat sincerely believed the ICC was singling out African leaders is irrelevant; his adamant disavowal of the court ruling can be read as an unwillingness to admit the regime's failure to at least keep a limit to the atrocities in Darfur, which he - and NCP members - continued to claim were blown out of proportion by international organizations (AlJazeera 2012). Still, the indictment meant that he would have to be doubly careful that no one within his elite clique nor regional allies would turn him in if and when he resigned. With the arrest warrant half-dismissed, Bashir proceeded to promote himself domestically for re-election, but it was apparent that having no

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[154] On that note, there are some leaked meetings of top Sudanese officials. A meeting held in August 2014 exposed the NCP's manner of dealing with corruption. The Second Vice President of the NCP blatantly said that instead of adopting a policy of dismissal to combat corruption - which could end up with them dismissing the whole party - they should blackmail corrupt members and ask them to secretly recover embezzled money and give it to the security institutions (Reeves 2015).
155 More is to be found on the ICC's official website, here: https://www.icc-cpi.int/darfur/albashir and the details of the case can be found in the report by The Office of the Prosecutor (ICC 2016)

successor would prove problematic,[156] both to him, personally, and to those who stand by the autocrat and turn a blind eye to the regime's documented violence (Kirk 2012).

5.7 The 2010 Elections

In the lead-up to the 2010 presidential elections, posters had Bashir and Vice President Silva Kiir emblazoned with the ruling NCP's logo. The poster parroted the phrase "*sawa sawa*," which means "together" in colloquial Arabic, implying that the reelection of the incumbent does not threaten the unity of Sudan. Reality begged to differ as the elections' timing - which was pushed from 2009 to 2010 - served to distract the NCP and SPLA/M from focusing on critical negotiations preceding the referendum due in less than a year (Fick 2010, 1).

Without much pomp and circumstance, the elections set for 11 to 15 April 2010 were doomed from the beginning. Not only was the election process for voters extremely difficult (El-Battahani and Willis 2010, 210-211) because each voter had to vote in concurrent presidential, parliamentary, and state elections,[157] but the process was also marred by allegations of fraud, vote rigging, miscounting, and violence (Medani 2011, 143), as well as boycotts by several opposition parties (HRW 2010). Bashir, unruffled by the ICC's indictment for war crimes and crimes against humanity, won the presidential

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[156] Bashir was partly right about his fears of being handed over to the ICC once he was out of power. In 2020, the TMC agreed to sell Bashir out (Samy 2020; News Wires 2021).

[157] The process was indeed so confusing in a country whose last mutli-party elections were in 1986. Voters in northern Sudan had to cast eight ballots, "one presidential, one gubernatorial, three for the national Parliament and three for the state parliament", while voters in southern Sudan had to cast an additional four "one for the southern president and three for the southern parliament", making the total twelve ballots (ibid, 211).

race[158] with 68.24% of the vote, while Silva Kiir won 93% for President of Southern Sudan (UNMIS 2010).

It is worth noting that after the 2010 elections, NCP officials said that Bashir would not run again for the presidency, as though to cajole the public that their longest-standing incumbent president had ever run in free and fair elections. Ironically, Bashir himself did not publicly announce that he would not consider another term in power (BBC Feb 2011). Soon enough, the verdict was out, and in 2013, his Vice President, Ali Osman, said the NCP would decide whether Bashir would run for re-election and that Bashir is rather disinclined toward ruling again (*Sudan Tribune* 2013). It was a poorly acted play, but it demonstrates how hard it was for Bashir to relinquish his meticulously coup-proofed stronghold, having entrenched himself in the middle of a barely balanced web of security forces and armed militias, each vying for power and money (Walsh 2019). As De Waal described the situation, neither Bashir nor his ruling coalition could trust someone else to replace him; maintaining the status quo was a safer bet (De Waal 2019, 11) than being thrown into an unknown scenario that could jeopardize the survival of the deep state (Berridge et al. 2021, 51).

5.8 Conclusion – Sudan's Peaceful Divorce

In January 2011, the overwhelming majority (99.57%) voted for South Sudan to be

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[158] The NCP could have had Salva Kiir and Sadiq Al-Mahdi as contenders to Bashir, if they were keen on having real competitive presidential elections (al-'Abbasi 2011, 314)

for the South Sudanese. In a few weeks, the Arab Spring would sweep across the MENA region. Within six months, on July 9th, 2011, South Sudan would officially secede, taking over 75% of oil production (IMF 2020). Yet still, somehow, Bashir survived both the "dismemberment of the state" and imminent regional instability (El-Battahani 2017, 270). The years of prosperity and unity passed without upending the regime's survival plans; in fact, the 2005-2011 'transitional period' was arguably the launchpad for Bashir to cling to power for eight more years. Besides providing the financial basis upon which Bashir could curb renewable wars in the peripheral regions, the 2005-2011 phase calcified the centrality of the security forces in Bashir's coup-proofing schemes. The phase also renewed the regime's economic legitimacy in the center through hydroagricultural projects (Verhoeven 2015, 127-128).

Separation, which sent "seismic waves" long after 2011 (El-Battahani 2019, 15), was the "wrong answer to the right question" of identity (ElNour 2019, 12-13). Claiming that the CPA "underestimated the degree of ethnic diversity in both the North and South" suggests that the regime approached the agreement in goodwill, hopeful that it would not lead to secession (Medani 2011, 143). Yet, nothing indicated that the NCP in the north was sincere in its endeavor to bring peace[159] and justice to all war-ridden regions, as evidenced by the regime's militant engagement in Darfur. The other insurgents elsewhere in the peripheral regions seemed to be heading in that direction as well after years of marginalization.

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[159] According to Berridge et al (2021, 114), the CPA and other peace agreements were "payroll peace" that only work when there is enough money to go around to keep enough stakeholders satisfied.

The failure of the CPA can be foreseen in how it was implemented and also in the suboptimal context in which it arose. The CPA made it seem as though its implementation had the antidote to Sudan's chronic ills, but the agreement was both undemocratically forged and incompletely implemented. According to Medani (2011, 136), the CPA's major flaws were at least three. First, the agreement was not inclusive of the other inflamed regions[160] in Sudan, such as Darfur and the Transitional Regions, and consequently aggravated their sense of disenfranchisement and marginalization. Second, the two signatories did not come from democratic origins; indeed, the Khartoum government was, in effect, a minority group that came to power through a coup, while the SPLM was a grassroots movement that did not consult with the people of southern Sudan before signing the CPA or previous peace agreements. The concentration of power with the NCP and SPLM signaled the continued marginalization of other regions, as the first point notes. Third and lastly, the specific order of having the referendum on the South's independence after nationwide presidential elections unnecessarily tied the two events together.

If the CPA succeeded in limiting the public's attention to the South-North partnership, its end in 2011 forced onlookers to examine other inflamed frontiers in the east and west and question Khartoum's double standards (Dawalbit 2013, 388-389). The CPA's fateful end further fuelled incentives for conflict over resources and territory.[161]

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[160] Those regions that had been fighting pro-government militias and the SAF since 2003 include not only Darfur but also the states of Kassala and the Red Sea Hills in the east (Medani 2011, 136).

[161] As Harir and Tvedt ominously wrote, "If Sudan is to be divided into two countries, there are no guarantees whatsoever that it might not end up as more than a dozen countries" (1994, 65).

The regime did not have much time left on its clock; its fragmentation and crisis phases were next in line.

Chapter 6

Running Out of Road: 2011-2019 and the Politics of Delaying Decay

"Fiscal dearth…renders it more difficult to induce those who are dissatisfied to continue to participate in the political game, rather than withdraw from it; regional tensions therefore rise, and with them, threats to the integrity of the state…political order is threatened by the conduct of the elite in the core and of politicians in the periphery" (Bates 2008, 108)

"There is no political system in Sudan because those in charge neither want a system nor institutions. There has been an emptying of institutions of their content, and the government is a bloc of opportunists… There is a system of no-system or orderlessness, which is a good recipe for self-destruction." (ElAffendi 2015)

6.1 Introduction

Following the South's secession, northern elites looked defeated. They squandered the last straw to undo the "original sin" of not devolving federal authority to the South since independence, and the country disintegrated on their watch (Khalid 2010, 22). The CPA that shook the Inqaz regime's ideological premise in the early 2000s failed to bring either peace or long-lasting development by 2011; on the contrary, the threat of having yet another identity crisis and more cycles of violence was very much present. The northern ruling elite tried to cover their grave failure to keep Sudan united by propagating that they would no longer be bothered by Southern Sudan's problems (De Waal 2016, 188; African Arguments 2011). However, they were deliberately silent about dragging the Sudanese state to grapple with far graver problems, all for the sake of

avoiding regime failure.

The last phase in the Inqaz regime's lifespan witnessed a dramatic shrinkage in the economy, large-scale street protests in 2013 and 2016, several coup attempts, controversial presidential elections, and petty reconciliation with opposition forces. Within the ruling coalition, there was a surge in Bashir's personalization and concentration of power, thereby fomenting further elite fragmentation. Bashir's personalist autocracy was plagued with increased competition among other actors in the political marketplace (De Waal 2019, 11), especially after the removal of NISS's Salah Gosh and the introduction of a new paramilitary force in 2013: the Rapid Security Forces (RSF) led by Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo or Hemedti.[162]

This chapter assesses the few final maneuvering moves that Bashir and his ruling circle used to delay their fall. The first section investigates how the regime managed to survive and keep the beneficiaries of its expansive and expensive patronage network in line after oil revenues dramatically fell. The second section examines how the post-2011 desperate survival mechanisms rendered some security actors fiscally independent from Bashir and increasingly engaged with cross-border and regional networks bypassing the central government. The third section tackles some of the critical junctures that the regime

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[162] Hemedti, or as Bashir liked to nickname him "Hemayti" meaning 'my safety' in Arabic, was originally a camel trader in Darfur who initially took up arms to defend his trade convoy and retaliate after 60 people of his tribe were killed and their camels looted in the western Darfur region (US News) 1. Although he denies that his men were involved in Janjaweed raids, his armed force was later condemned for being génocidaires in Darfur in 2014-2016. The RSF's suspected atrocities prior to 2019 became much less 'suspected' after April 2023, as multiple testimonies confirm that they are ruthlessly violent with civilians (HRW 2023).
Note: Hemedti appeared in a Channel 4 short film about Darfur's Janjaweed in 2 008/2009 and was interviewed by Sudanese-British journalist Nima Elbagir).

experienced: the Arab Spring in 2011, the 2013 street protests, the 2014-2015 national dialogue and presidential elections, and the 2016 street protests. The fourth and last section analyzes the endgame scenario that unfolded between December 2018 and April 2019.

As the sections will illustrate, from an RCF standpoint, the regime experienced fractionalization within the NCP's elite ranks, followed by a crisis phase that Bashir could not control in 2019. The chapter argues that during its last eight years in power, the Inqaz regime miscalculated the risks of loosening its fiscal grip over the security cabal[163] in charge of coup-proofing. When the regime faced fiscal struggles and decided to sublet the services of the SAF and RSF to regional allies, the "collusive oligopoly" of armed actors carved parallel, informal revenue streams independent of Bashir's fast-dwindling political budget (De Waal 2019, 11).

6.2 Regime Survival On A Tight Budget

As the previous chapter showed, the CPA, among other peace agreements that fell short of their promises, demonstrated that when the regime decides to settle a conflict, it does not provide any guarantee that it would share state power (Hartzell and Hoddie 2003, 319). Trust-building was out of the question for political actors engaging with the regime and its head in post-2011 Sudan; what mattered were credible power-brokerage deals. However, as Bashir's political budget continued bleeding through the 2010s, his brokered bargains with militias, tribal leaders, and warlords in the marketplace of

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[163] The divergent interests of the three main security actors, the SAF, NISS, and, after 2013, the RSF are not explored in-depth yet, but I do not treat them as a monolith, because they will unite when the Bashir's endgame is in the horizon and later disunite.

loyalties lost their credibility (De Waal 2019, 11). The question then becomes, how did Bashir sustain his patronage network and make credible deals despite being on a tight budget?

The regime depended on at least three fronts to delay the thinning out of its budget. The first front was the intentional postponement of oil-related negotiations with the South as much as possible. After separation, the regime lost over 70% of its oil reserves in South Sudan, but it retained the infrastructure and logistics required for the South to export oil (Ali 2023, 880). The South was legally on par with Sudan, yet it realistically still had to transport its oil through the pipelines of its northern nemesis to reach the international world via Port Sudan, the state's primary seaport on the Red Sea. The regime flagrantly played this card of having disputes over oil transport 'service fees,' but it was a short-lived experiment. In 2012, in a recorded interview with AlJazeera,[164] Bashir said that the government of South Sudan refused to agree on the 36$ per barrel and offered only 65 cents per barrel to the Khartoum government in exchange for using the existing oil lines and refineries in the North. In mid-2013, the Khartoum government threatened to stop oil transport through its pipelines and may have funded rebels in the South (Reuters 2013). In a few weeks, South Sudan retaliated by shutting off oil production altogether (ibid). Though it resumed oil production afterward, it sent a powerful message to Khartoum: the South was willing to risk withholding the prized resource from the North altogether.[165] In time, Bashir's regime realized that Khartoum

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[164] The interview: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bMS3zOhXXUc
[165] The dramatic move to shut oil production caused unprecedented GDP decline that no other economy had experienced so sharply and quickly before; in fact, the South's extremely oil-dependent GDP fell by

had to find other economic ventures besides exploring potential oilfields and licensing companies to begin drilling in northern provinces (MEED Editorial 2013).

The second front was eclectic and decentralized, stemming from several activities: "artisanal gold, foreign military deployment, and smuggling" (De Waal 2019, 5). Gold mining took off in 2012. The regime may have thought it was saved when, in under 18 months, it became the third largest producer of gold in Africa (ST 2015), as echoed by Bashir's statement, "We lost oil, and we got gold" (Radio Dabanga 2014). However, although gold mining emerged as a new lifeline, replacing oil (El-Battahani 2017, 284-6), its mining was deeply problematic and poorly managed (Blanco 2023). The gold rush soon added complexity to existing conflicts in the peripheries (Reuters 2013). Indeed, gold made marginalized provinces like Darfur[166] highly lucrative, all the more because the Mining Ministry focused on controlling gold-rich areas like Jebel Amer in the west (Tubiana, 2014; Bartlett, 2016). Gold mining was also coupled with the smuggling and trafficking of arms and vehicles across the border with Chad and Libya (Berridge et al. 2022, 63-64). Together, these activities, which were tied to regional networks, provided employment opportunities and generated huge revenues (Ahmed 2015). However, they were undoubtedly problematic over the long haul, not just for destabilizing marginalized communities in the peripheries (De Waal 2019, 5). The danger lay in having middlemen who engaged in more than one of the three activities: subletting troops, smuggling, and

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49% (De Waal 2014).

[166] Darfur by then was composed of five provinces, but there were also other areas like the Blue Nile which also had gold. There was ongoing violence in Darfur, South Kordofan, and the Blue Nile throughout the 2010s.

gold mining. The decentralized trade network around trafficking and mining resources in the peripheries enriched[167] the RSF's commander, Hemedti, who emerged as Darfur's "gold baron" (Berridge et al. 2022, 190).

The third front entailed strengthening strategic ties with some vital regional allies in the Middle East, namely, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (Berridge et al. 2022, 84) on the one hand and Turkey and Qatar on the other (ibid, 85). The Saudis and Emiratis were both interested in Sudan's SAF troops and RSF units fighting on their behalf in the coalition against the Houthis in Yemen and Sudan's natural resources[168] (EIU 2016; ST 2015). For instance, the UAE was the sole importer of Sudanese gold (Hoex 2020). All four allies invested in Sudan, gave loans, and generally propped up[169] the regime (Burke and Salih 2019). However, the tactical balancing act that Bashir forged with these two camps was unsustainable and incongruent. In addition to the compounded difficulty of being friends with both Saudi Arabia and Qatar after their standoff in 2017 (Salacanin 2017), Saudi Arabia and the UAE had a direct interest in curtailing Islamism in the region. In contrast, Turkey and Qatar represented an Islamist-sympathetic camp (Gallopin 2020). Ultimately, the winning team was the former, not the latter.

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[167] For more on the RSF's financial network, check the incisive report that investigative journalist Mohamed Abouelgheit wrote to Global Witness in December 2019, exposing the RSF's links to regional actors.

[168] Those include agricultural land and fisheries; for instance, the Saudi government made huge investments to own 30% of the Kenana Sugar Company and has land usage rights of over a million feddans for 99 years. As for the UAE, it also pumped some hard currency into the Sudanese economy for Bashir to keep up the veneer of fiscal stability (Abbas 2018).

[169] After his deposal, Bashir admitted that Mohamed Bin Salman (MBS) gave him $90 mn (The New Arab 2019) and that he personally received $20 mn monthly salary (Hussein 2020).

Thus, the regime used the haggling process with the South as a stopgap measure while it was waiting for other revenue sources to emerge (de Kock 2011, 22). These opportunities presented themselves in gig-like forms over which the regime had no control; in a way, the regime bet on the goodwill of its Saudi and Emirati allies (Perry 2018) as well as the decentralized model of injecting the economy - and stuffing notables' coffers - with hard currency[170] through ungoverned cross-border smuggling, unregulated gold mining, and renting armed troops. The risks were high, but the regime seemed desperate to keep up with the security forces' long bill if it was to depend on the security sector's guardianship.

6.3 Managing Elite Fragmentation

Not unexpectedly, fragmentation within the ruling clique struck again. In November 2012, twelve top army officers,[171] along with the Presidential National Security Advisor, Salah Gosh, were arrested over a suspected coup attempt (Gallab 2014, 141). According to leaked cables revealed by Wikileaks, there was a "factional struggle within the riverain elite" (ElGizouli 2012 Sudan Tribune) that dates back to 2008 when Salah Gosh was purportedly trying to displace Bashir and replace him with Ali Osman Taha (ST 2011; 2012). Thus, post-2011, and arguably even before then, the NCP's ruling elites were in discord, with some Islamists fighting to sideline one another (Mohamed 2017, 23); the cracks became more apparent when the government made economic concessions to adapt to the economy's shrinkage. Some NCP elites decided to openly criticize the

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[170] As the value of the Sudanese pound plummeted, accruing hard currency was of growing importance.
[171] Some of whom were "hardcore Islamists" who described the national leadership as corrupt and wanted a return to Islamic values (Ahram).

violent crackdown on the 2013 protestors objecting to slashed fuel subsidies (AlSharq AlAwsat 2013). Ghazi Salah al-Din al-Atabani, a prominent NCP member who was one of the signatories of the Memo of Ten in 1998 and an adviser to Bashir, defected and announced forming the Reform Now Movement (RNM) opposing the NCP (Al-Arabiya 2013; Berridge 2019, 169-170; African Arguments 2013); so did El-Tayeb Mustafa who formed the Just Peace Party (El-Battahani 2017, 281).

Bashir spied on, sidelined, and replaced some of his close aides and founding members of the NCP with less known – and less ambitious – personnel who either served in another ministry or were new faces, pumping "new blood" in the NCP (ST December 2013) (Middle East Monitor 2018; El-Battahani 2017, 291). Any subnational elite who detracted from the regime's dwindling legitimacy had to go; Bashir replaced several governors and state ministers, drawing on opportunists who were not majority Islamists (ElGizouli 2011). Following an emergency meeting of the NCP leadership, there was a reshuffle in the cabinet and the national legislative assembly (ST), which, together, made it seem as though a significant portion of Islamist elites loyal to the Salvation Revolution of 1989 were cast aside by 2013.[172] There were other rounds of reshuffles in 2014 and 2018 (Dabanga Sudan 2018).

Though unjustified to the public, these changes were in line with the logic of elite management during a fractionalization phase, which is hard enough to navigate without the backdrop of an economic slump.[173] The autocrat has to ensure a minimum level of

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[172] Some of these were Nafie Ali Nafie, Awad Al Jaz, Ali Osman Taha, Osama Abdullah,
[173] Not only were the years 2011-2013 a downgrade from the oil decade's boom, but they were also extremely politically charged, given the Arab Spring's cascading effect.

elite cohesion and stay hyper-vigilant about further internal rifts within the ruling circle and potential coup attempts.[174] In Sudan's case, after the colossal event of 'losing the South,' the regime understood it could face resistance that would further hurt its legitimacy and elite cohesion (Langlois 2022, 1315). To that end, spending on "defense, security and police, and the sovereign sector" increased from 2013 to 2014, from "78% to 88%" of the government's budget (El-Battahani 2016, 4).[175] To ensure its short-term survival and maintain a bare level of stability, the regime could not shrink the budget allocated for the security sector, which had thus far bolstered the regime (Berridge et al. 2022, 69; El-Battahani 2017, 283).

Despite the episodic changes of the ruling coalition, the regime had thus far not experienced what is typically termed regime change; indeed, it can be argued that the ruling elite in the ruling coalition changed several times precisely to avoid regime change. In 1999, the ruling coalition removed Turabi and his loyalists and embraced a kleptocratic-securitarian outlook. In 2005, the regime engaged with the SPLA/M to have a transitional period of peace and prosperity. Yet, after 2011, the regime had almost run out of cosmetic renovation options and proceeded with precluding intra-elite competition. Without competent allies within the ruling circle, Bashir focused on short-term calculations: protecting his personalized mode of authority while attempting to build a new broad-based government to replace the old faces of his regime superficially

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[174] Adding to that, Bashir also had to appease the anti-Islamist regional allies in Saudi Arabia and the UAE (Gallopin 2021)

[175] Atta El-Battahani was citing al-Sudani newspaper, the August 2014 issue, which also states that the budget was "62 per cent in 2012", noting the 14 point increase right after the secession (El-Battahani 2017, 288).

(<u>Nour Eddin 2011</u>).

In short, to keep the ruling elites in line after 2011, the regime dispensed with old hawks and brought in toothless aides, all under the protection of a well-funded security cabal. Accordingly, during this Bashir-era, there were qualitative shifts in the manner of governance, mainly a constant crisis-management mode that focused on short-term power deals rather than lasting alliances that could jeopardize the structure of power. Though somewhat effective in forestalling regime failure, those risky changes tipped the power balance in favor of Bashir and empowered rival allies within the security cabal, as the next section demonstrates.

6.3 Engineering A Security Cabal

A s mentioned, the other revenue sources that emerged after 2011 were not a blessing in disguise; they were blatantly problematic,[176] especially when they created parallel networks to the government's existing patronage networks. Besides smuggling's obvious demerits, artisanal gold's natural distribution territorially and small-scale method of extraction soon gave way to a decentralized political marketplace dominated by warlords (Berridge et al. 2022, 65). Despite efforts to restrain exploration licenses and export permits, resource decentralization demoted the Khartoum government's importance as it no longer became a necessary node to reach regional nodes (ST 2013).[177]

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[176] The ecological damage of gold mining is also another aspect worth considering, although it lies outside the scope of this study. For more on the environmental repercussion, see: Eltayeb Ibrahim, A. Wadi and Samir Mohmed A. H. Alredaisy (2015), 'Socioeconomic and environmental implications of traditional gold mining in Sudan, the case of Barber locality, River Nile State', *American Based Research Journal*, 4(7), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/290324995.

[177] Author conversation with Alden Young September 2023

Besides, the government could not - and would not - undo decades of marginalizing peripheral provinces; it relied on short-term brokerage deals with loyalists to fight local rebels over resources (De Waal 2014). However, as the previous chapter alluded to the standoff between Hilal and Bashir in 2014, these deals were fast approaching expiration too.

In an effort to have some control over gold-rich areas in and around Jebel Amir, Bashir tried to replace Musa Hilal's Border Intelligence Brigade (formerly Janjaweed) by coopting and arming a rival force: Hemedti's troops (Flint and De Waal 2008, 260; Berridge et al. 2022, 65). After becoming formalized, Hemedti's militia became the RSF and evolved from being a pro-government paramilitary force initially under the NISS's command in 2013 (ST, June 11, 2014) into a de facto praetorian "super-paramilitary" guard under Bashir's direct command in 2018 (Matfess 2019;Tubiana 2017; Berridge et al. 2022, 65). Bashir would often hail the RSF's victories in Darfur, which demonstrated how advanced Hemedti's trained troops were compared to the traditional SAF units (El Gizouli 2018; De Waal 2023). Besides being an additional counterweight to the SAF, the RSF was a textbook case of a coup-proofing presidential guard in charge of safeguarding Bashir and preventing any single security force from deposing him without a bloody fight (Berridge et al 2022, 65). Commissioning Hemedti in Darfur came at the heels of deploying his men in the war in Yemen, after which his material and organizational power grew massively as he money-laundered his troops' salaries from USD to Sudanese pounds (Berridge et al. 2022, 66). In time, the RSF's leader became a "political entrepreneur" (De Waal 2020, 6), one of the most powerful and richest men in Sudan as

he was a gold baron, arms trader, and a regionally acclaimed warlord prized by his Emirati allies. Thus, in combating rival rebels managing mines in the peripheries, Bashir directly helped to empower the RSF's lethal force, believing that its commander would remain his loyal protector.[178]

6.4 Outliving Crises Through Stopgap Measures

Despite Bashir's growing personalization and his fragile position at the center of a fractious patronage network, the post-2011 regime weathered consecutive domestic crises that entailed making cosmetic concessions with the opposition and involved being merciless with protestors (El-Battahani 2017, 282). This section briefly investigates a few critical junctures that the regime successfully navigated: the Arab Spring in 2011, fuel protests in 2013, the National Dialogue initiative in 2014, NCP elections and national elections in 2015, and, lastly, civil disobedience in 2016 (Dahir 2016). The regime's response to each of these events reflected how Bashir and his team of increasingly fragmented co-pilots kept the state afloat for seven long years. As his tactical alliances continued to fall apart, managing mediocrity, unaided, did not make for easy sailing. Far from it, Bashir perceptively saw that the post-2011 regime was on the path toward disintegration and failure, yet he seemed stuck in his old ways, unable to challenge what he had established.

The first political challenge that the regime faced immediately after the blow of the

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[178] Perhaps Bashir believed the premise reiterated in *The Black Book*: that coup attempts tended to fail in Sudan because their leaders hailed from non-riverain origins. See Page 8-9 in de Kock, Petrus. 2011. "The Politics of Resources, Resistance and Peripheries in Sudan." South African Institute of International Affairs. https://saiia.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/Occasional-Paper-86.pdf

South's secession was the Arab Spring, which struck Sudan's northern neighbors and deposed fellow long-standing autocrats. In Khartoum, some small-scale protests emerged in late January calling for regime change (Alneel 2021). Bashir's initial reaction to preemptively prevent the revolutionary contagion from spreading to Sudan was to violently crack down on protests, vow to step down if that is what the public wanted, and warn them against being "imitators" since Sudan had its revolutions[179] already (Sudan Tribune January 2011; Berridge 2015, 10). It was not a useful trick, but it appears that, right after the oil boom, notable elites in state institutions did not share the protestors' wish to replace Bashir in 2011, arguably because their financial interests were not yet harmed. Moreover, the protestors' "recent memory of civil war", or at least the 2008 attack by the JEM in Khartoum, may have impacted their willingness to mobilize against a relatively powerful government and ruthless security forces (Lynch, Schwedler, and Yom 2022, 15-16). Still, the Sudanese dispelled this hypothesis in 2013, 2016, and 2018-2019 despite being met with varying levels of violence and intimidating detentions in each instance.

In September 2013, protests against price hikes following reduced fuel subsidies struck the capital yet again (Taylor 2016; Zain 2019), but this time, some regime insiders became sympathetic to the opposition's discourse, thereby signaling to the upper echelon that grievances extended to the regime's ruling coalition as well. Still, the parallel parastatal institutions detained prominent opposition forces and dispersed those protests

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[179] Bashir sometimes referred to the Sudanese people in his speeches as the 'people of intifadas'. meant the 1963 and 1985 intifadas, and arguably 1989 when the Salvation Regime assumed power as well.

before they could gain traction (ElBattahani 2016, 4-5). Lack of cooperation among forces. Those protests could have spiraled out of control as they did in 1963 when a university student was shot in 2016 (Salih 2016). Yet, by December 2016, the Sudanese Professional Association (SPA) changed tactics and resorted to civil disobedience (Copnall 2016) - another tactic that the strikers of old used (Dahir 2016; Zain 2019). The government did not back down on cutting fuel subsidies. However, it blamed its need to comply with IMF terms and, in response to rising poverty rates (Taha2016), the government revoked its plan to increase the prices of pharmaceutical products (Taylor 2016). In that sense, the government made some publicized concessions to tamp down public unrest and dissent. At the same time, in 2018, Bashir pragmatically sought to bring back his intelligence officer, Salah Gosh, after a six-year break to help the barely standing regime stay afloat and stop internal disagreements from spilling over to the public (The East African 2018). Cabinet reshuffles, as alluded to earlier, were a tool for Bashir to replace problematic officers and officials with others who were politically weak and incapable of either instigating protests or launching a coup.[180]

Between those moments of unrest in 2013 and 2016, Bashir delivered the famous "*wathba*" speech[181] (Mohamed 2017, 24; AlJazeera 2014) and invited opposition parties to

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[180] This conjecture that Bashir handpicked politically insignigicant allies to fill strategic positions can be verified by viewing the profiles of new hires, post-2013 and 2016. In a conversation with Mahboub Abdelsalam, he conveyed that this policy of hiring harmless yet inadequate subordinates was not sound in the long run.

[181] *Wathba* is a noun that roughly translates to "a step forward" or "revival". Bashir's speech on 27 January, 2014, can be found in Arabic here: https://shorturl.at/ijqOP. At the outset, the speech signaled that the regime was willing to concede to the opposition's call for reform. However, in reality, Bashir's talking points, though conciliatory in tone, amounted to an unsatisfactory National Dialogue and rigged elections that further prolonged his authoritarian rule. 'Wathba' was referred to in subsequent speeches as a milestone in the regime's steps toward engaging with the opposition.

join the National Dialogue in 2014, attended by Sadiq and Turabi (Mohamed 2017, 26). It was an effort to assuage the protestors and contain dissent at the elite level, but it amounted to nothing that seriously challenged systemic failures or reviewed the government's credibility to the public (El-Affendi 2015).[182] There were some small-scale cosmetic reforms pertaining to the constitution, but the 7+7 formula of The National Dialogue made it more of a National Monologue (Mohamed 2017, 31-32), in which the opposition convened to listen to the government's plans instead of suggesting and implementing reforms (ST September 2014). The litmus test for the Dialogue's impact on politics was the 2015 elections, which were widely boycotted and believed to have been rigged (Smith 2015). Not unsurprisingly, Bashir won 94.5% of the vote, enough to secure him a third term until 2020 and attract donations from Gulf patrons (ICG 2016). Surprisingly, however, the NCP's internal elections prior to nominating a presidential candidate voted for Nafie Ali Nafie as its leader (ST October 2014). Following this division, which indicated a crisis rather than fragmentation at the elite level, Bashir sidelined Nafie and Ali Osman, among others (Mohamed 2017, 14)[183] and brought back Salah Gosh as chief of intelligence (Middle East Monitor 2018). Speaking to Khalid Tigani,[184] he implied that after 2014, the NCP had become a mere appendage to Bashir

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[182] Commenting on the 2014-2015 National Dialogue, Abdelwahab El-Affendi perfectly described the regime's politics of delay when he said in an interview that, "The solution to Sudan's political crisis does not lie in manipulations and dialogues of this kind. The crisis must be directly tackled, first by admitting the current regime's failure and impotence, and second by writing a consensual constitution that guarantees rights and freedoms to everyone and vouches for all political actors in case of a democratic transition. Anything else is temporization and a waste of time." (El-Affendi 2015).

[183] In the NCP, Al Zubair Mohamed Hasan became the General Attorney replacing Ali Osman while Bakri Hasan Saleh replaced Ali Osman as the first vice president.

[184] Dr. Khalid ElTigani is a writer, researcher, and a founding member of the Sudanese National Movement for Change and editor of the online news magazine Elaf.

and his security cabal, as he could see himself being replaced by his allies. This claim is reinforced by the fact that in his inauguration speech in 2015, Bashir repeatedly thanked the security apparatus (AlJazeera Mubasher 6:45-7:10).

In sum, the changing modes of elite management in the 2011-2019 phase helped the regime stay afloat. Beyond cooptation and repression, Bashir looked for further personal protection by introducing the RSF as a new security expert in the peripheries that doubled as a gold-mining mogul. To fund its patronage networks, the government opened new avenues in renting its agricultural land to attract foreign investments from rich Gulf allies and Turkey. It also entailed exporting, or outsourcing,[185] mercenary forces from the SAF and RSF to fight with the UAE and Saudi Arabia in Yemen (Moussa 2023, 476). As for coopting civilian forces, the regime integrated select parties in parliament, such as the DUP (ST 2013), and also protected itself from other oppositional parties by accepting their call for a National Dialogue in 2014, prior to the 2015 elections. Combined, those stopgap measures effectively helped buttress the regime for seven long years, but their effectiveness was fast depleting as the regime approached the last episode of its crisis phase in 2018.

6.5 Decay Reaches the Center – The 2018-2019 Endgame

In late December 2018, nonviolent protests erupted from Ad-Damazine and Atbara and spread across the Sudanese state, reaching Khartoum last (Zain 2019).

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[185] It is useful to point to the literature on "security market diversification" in the MENA region, wherein autocrats attempt to privatize their security sector with the aim of prolonging authoritarian rule. The premise is that "outsourcing security supports practices of authoritarian adaptation" (Moussa 2023, 462).

Protestors were objecting to the tripling price of bread,[186] fuel shortages, rising inflation of over 25%, and the devaluation of the pound (Africa News with Reuters 2019).[187] In a number of cities, protestors set fire to the headquarters of the ruling party, the National Congress Party (NCP) (Hussein 2019). By January 1st, the 63rd anniversary of the country's independence, the newly formed coalition of Freedom and Change brought together 22 political parties, trade unions, youth organizations, and civil society groups (Yaw 2019) and called on Bashir to resign, chanting "Just Fall".[188]

Bashir seemed unbothered,[189] despite receiving a memo from the Supreme Security Council (SSC)[190] (Bloomberg 2019). The protests did not die down. After three months of mass protests in sixteen of the eighteen states, on 22 February 2019, Bashir delivered a brief speech in the Republican Palace's backyard in front of tens of Sudanese officials from military and civilian backgrounds. An hour before the live airing of Bashir's speech, protestors and politicians alike listened to NISS's chief Salah Gosh state in a press conference that the incumbent president would honor the memo that the SSC recommended. Bashir would peacefully step down as head of the NCP and not seek re-election in the 2020 presidential race. Unaffected, the protestors awaited the announcement from Bashir himself.

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[186] Bread was subsidized until February 2018 (FEWS Network 2019).

[187] It is worth mentioning that Bashir's own uncle, Al-Tayeb Mustafa, did not stand by his cousin's side – even in 2013 (Arab News 2013). Mustafa ran a leading Sudanese daily newspaper called, al-Intibaha, and had recently become a critic of the ruling NCP. Since the 2018 demonstrations, Bashir ordered him to stop publishing (Hashim 2016).

[188] In the Sudanese Arabic dialect, protestors were chanting "tasuot bas" (Dabanga Sudan 2019)

[189] To be fair, Bashir replaced some ministers in 2018, in response to the waves of protest (The Associated Press 2018)

[190] The Supreme Security Council is composed of the SAF and NISS.

Rather than confirm the signs of regime failure, Bashir resolutely stood his ground to keep the regime alive – or at least what was left of it. Instead of making political concessions or proposing credible solutions to mass demands, he blithely emphasized his essential role in self-managing a national dialogue. Worse, his message did not specify whether he would run for office in 2020. He pronounced the dissolution of both the national and subnational governments, the declaration of a one-year state of emergency, and, paradoxically, in the same breath, an invitation for a (second) national dialogue. Bashir stressed that unity and conversation with the opposition are the only way forward. He warned that zero-sum options would not spare Sudan "the fates of other people", hinting at Syria and Libya (Zain 2019).

If some members[191] of the ruling coalition and protestors hoped that Bashir would spell out the end of the Inqaz regime's 30-year rule and pave the way for a civilian democratic government led by the Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC), they could not be far from wrong. Bashir's speech animated protestors to continue their peaceful demonstrations. More importantly, it clarified to senior political elites that Bashir was unwilling to listen to their memo's recommendation and was determined to take them with him to the abyss. The regime entered its endgame stage. In six weeks, the minister of defense, Awad Ibn Awf, the head of military intelligence, announced on April 11 that the council had sided with the protestors and put Bashir under house arrest (Mada Masr

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[191] In a conversation with ElMahboub Abdelsalam, he mentioned that Bashir consulted with the *tanzim* before delivering his last speech; whether he cajoled the Islamists to stay on his side or they pushed him to commit political suicide is unknown, but it is interesting that Bashir reverted to the regime's ideological founders rather than its guardians (interview with author, October 2023).

2019)<u>.</u>

What happened in the six weeks between February 22nd and April 6th behind closed doors in Sudan, where heads of the Supreme Security Council (SSC) convened to remove Bashir holds the key (Magdy 8 May 2019, AP News). It was up to the SSC as regime remnants to plan their safety and outline the state's next stage.[192] They turned against Bashir in 2019 because his ejection, though lamented, would not challenge what they had established during his rule. His "ejection," similar to Mubarak's in 2011, gave them time to calm the protestors and secure their interests (Stacher 2020, 26). Besides, Bashir could not keep them aligned with his interests without securing enough funds[193] to do his bidding (<u>Dabanga Sudan 19 April 2019</u>). Still, Bashir could have avoided the mistakes that other Arab dictators committed.[194] After all, his fall was not a simple story of public pressure and military defection. Nevertheless, instead of creating a peaceful exit to safeguard an already inflamed state from going through a rough transition, Bashir subjected defenseless civilians to a security complex and a decentralized network of warlords and armed insurgents. No wonder the SSC launched a counterrevolutionary coup on 25 October 2021, less than two years into the transition.

6.6 Conclusion

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[192] Interestingly, Gen. Jalal al-Dine el-Sheikh, the deputy head of the security service (the second man, after Gosh), "headed a delegation of military and intelligence officials to Cairo, where he sought the support of Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the UAE for a coup against al-Bashir." (<u>Gallopin </u>2020 POMEPS). Days before Bashir was removed, news outlets were already speculating who would succeed him in office (<u>Mada Masr</u> 2019).
[193] The amount of cash that Bashir had when he was arrested was not substantial, compared to what he would normally need to grease his patronage network (conversation with Dr. ElMahboub Abdelsalam 2023)
[194] Tunisia's Ben Ali, Egypt's Hosni Mubarak, Libya's Muammar Gaddafi, Yemen's Ali Abdullah Saleh, and even Syria's still-standing Bashar ElAssad.

This chapter argued that, between 2011 and 2018, certain missteps spelled the regime's failure. The ruling coalition's composition after 2013/2014 was markedly different from the former ones because Bashir alienated and lost his allies one after the other. He no longer had the NCP's old hawks by his side, nor did he have legitimation from established opposition parties or movements like the SPLA/M. He stood alone with his security cabal, but they became an albatross around his neck and increasingly less "wedded to his continued presidency" (Hassan and Kodouda 2019, 97-98). Even formidable coup-proofing has limits, especially if regime loyalists are plucked one by one, leaving the incumbent alone in an already weakened state. The only way he had to save himself and keep them sated was to exploit the peripheries, where the marketplace of loyalties was escaping his control.

Bashir created a "balance of terror" to forestall coup attempts by prioritizing budget spending on three major security institutions, the SAF, NISS, and RSF (Badawi 2021, 42). Nonetheless, these institutions, the last of which came into the fold in the last six years of Bashir's incumbency, could see they had better chances of survival without their patron. In the RSF's case, its leader's ascendancy from a camel trader in Darfur to a domestic and regional warlord rendered his political acuity and wealth formidable. Hemedti committed a justifiable "patricide" in 2019 when he chose not to fight a losing battle against the SAF and NISS to protect Bashir (Berridge et al. 2022, 197); after all, he could ambitiously see himself in Bashir's stead (ST 2019).[195] In a cynical twist of fate,

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[195] Directly after Bashir's removal, Hemedti tried to win the hearts of the people by declaring that he will not be part of the Transitional Military Council. He later did, of course, but several of my interviewees shared the same view that Hemedti seems to have personal ambitions to become Sudan's head of state

Hemedti, the "intruder from Darfur," represents the revenge of the peripheries against the riverain center as he continues vying for the position of the central power broker in Sudan (AFP 2023).

Regardless of the post-Inqaz reconfigured power structure, it is not short of amazing that Bashir weathered tremendous crises yet clung to power for three long decades. Some attribute this achievement to "a combination of moderated ruthlessness, tactical political and intelligence, and luck" (De Waal, Jan 2019); in fact, people began speculating that Bashir had a *faqi* (holy man)[196] protecting him and his clique from regime failure. While his survival was not a source of inspiration to the ruled masses, Bashir left a legacy replete with insights for struggling autocrats in authoritarian regimes. Here is a regime that managed to survive economic crises, international ostracization, elite fragmentation, government-backed genocide, multiple coup attempts, sporadic armed insurgencies in several provinces, and civil war for fifteen years. As this study attempted to show, surviving against all odds heavily depended on upgrading coup-proofing tactics as the regime's ruling coalition changed over time and the coercive apparatus got "reorganized" (Langlois 2022, 1313). In the end, the guardians of the regime overturned the autocrat so as not to fall along with him, but the rules of the game he mastered so well still applied.

(Elagami, Mohamed May 2019, TIMEP; France24). Hemedti's patricide brings to mind this quote from Machiavelli's The Prince, chapter XII: "Mercenary captains are either excellent men of arms or not: if they are, you cannot trust them because they always aspire to their own greatness, either by oppressing you, who are their patron, or by oppressing others contrary to your intention; but if the captain is not virtuous, he ruins you in the ordinary way."

[196] Author's conversation with an interviewee who wishes to remain anonymous, October 2023.

Conclusion

The Inqaz Regime's Legacy and the War No One Wanted

"In Sudan, the interplay between centrifugal competition within the power triangle and centripetal incentives to defend regime stability has defined the rise and fall of governments and the ebbing and flowing of political violence as aspiring state-builders have sought to redraw Sudan's political geography" (Verheoven 2023, 9)

"There's a long-standing joke about Sudan politics, that it changes every week, but, if you come back after 10 years, it is exactly the same" (Berridge et al 2022, 214).

This study's central line of inquiry was focused on understanding authoritarian survival tactics which enabled the chosen case to weather several crises. It zoomed in on cyclical elite management and coup-proofing to see how the ruling clique creatively delayed regime failure multiple times. As the regime progressed from an initial phase of power consolidation in the 1990s, it had to quickly and pragmatically resolve an internal schism that almost fractured the ruling elites' newly forged grip on power. After avoiding the crisis of 1998-1999, the regime seized an opportunity to renew its legitimacy and

strengthen its security sector by accommodating a strategically useful opposition group (the SPLA). In the process, the Inqaz continued to clamp down on other rebel groups and resisted addressing systemic failures and grievances. Following the 2005-2011 relative prosperity and power-sharing phase, the regime struggled to stay in power without further empowering its security guardians. In so doing, the increasingly personalist authoritarian regime took significant risks in enabling actors within the security sector to develop parallel patronage networks untethered to the central power broker in the capital, Khartoum (Hassan 2019, 97-98). The regime underwent two major turning points in 2013-2014 and 2016 that jeopardized its previous consolidation of power and ushered in a period of fractionalization and crisis. When the endgame scenario became irreversible in 2019, the autocrat appeared to be a burden to the security empire he helped create, and his guardians colluded to remove him to save their skin.[197]

Just as Bashir would not tie his fate to Turabi's in 1999, so would not the mosaic of security forces vouch for Bashir's survival in 2019. In a sense, the SAF-NISS-RSF oligopoly, the remnants of the Inqaz regime, outlived Bashir's ouster precisely because the logic of the political marketplace compelled them to apply tried-and-tested elite reconfiguration measures to survive. The 1989-2019 Inqaz regime cemented political bargaining as a mode of governance in Sudan.[198] The regime's central power brokers

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[197] Note that there is often a lack of nuance in studies about authoritarian regime survival as they generally understand the latter as the absence of regime breakdown. That is, the autocrat's survival tends to be conflated with regime survival. However, as the Sudanese case demonstrates, even though the autocrat was removed, Sudan did not experience complete regime breakdown in 2019, precisely because pre-2019 regime remnants stayed put.

[198] I specifically mean the kind of treatment that the Inqaz regime replicated in Darfur, the Blue Nile, and South Kordofan, among other marginalized regions, because the parallel security institutions that the

survived crises for thirty years chiefly,[199] because they could address intra-elite rivalries promptly and regularly update their coup-proofing practices. However, the survival-focused actions they chose have incrementally calcified a destructive logic of governance that became increasingly tied to the autocrat's political budget, which, during the last few years, was subject to unregulated domestic and regional dynamics. In the end, the central power broker, Bashir, could no longer rival his guardians, who, thanks to his favorable policies, created a broad enough patronage network and had exclusive access to generous regional patrons. Bashir ran out of options to expand his political budget[200] to tame them, and they did not wish to risk losing their privileges just to save him for another term in office. Still, it cannot be said that the regime's guardians defected in favor of the protestors calling for democratization. Far from it, they sidelined Bashir yet tried to protect the defective mode of governance he left behind.

The post-2019 phase ushered in a new era of renewed struggles between the center and periphery, between the established military force in the center and militias previously hired on the cheap and held strongholds in resource-rich peripheral regions. The stalemate characterizing the transition period following the political vacuum that Bashir left behind is quite telling (Gallopin 2020, 7-8). Although the 2019-2021 transition

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tanzim, and Nimeiri before them, created, were becoming a fixture of the Sudanese regime before 1989.

[199] I did not shed enough light on other contending factors that helped the Inqaz remain in power, such as factors related to cultural, ethnic, and sectarian politics at the provincial level.

[200] In an interview with Ambassador Khalid Moussa, he mentioned the term "political money" to describe Bashir's dependence on revenues derived from smuggling and trading gold. He hinted multiple times during the interview that some regional powers, most notably the UAE and Saudi Arabia, favored the choice of having Bashir removed to buttressing his fragile rule any longer (Interview with author, 4 October, 2023).

phase[201] is beyond the scope of this study, suffice it to say that the heirs of the Inqaz's deep state – its security guardians, minus the NISS – were very much present and active alongside civilians. Any negotiations that could jeopardize their inheritance from the Inqaz era were cut short. However, the power-sharing deal between the SAF and RSF faltered in 2021 and brought the transition to a halt before their disagreements reached a peak, and, in April 2023, they fought one another and laid "bare the fault lines" along the center[202] and many peripheries (AFP 2023).[203]

The current stage that Sudan is undergoing resembles the "war-making" aspect of "state-making," although it is not clear when the former will ever end.[204] Post-2019 Sudan offers more questions than answers about what the future holds for a country whose people have been through episodes of horrendous atrocities since independence. Future studies could explore what the October 2021 coup (Dabanga Sudan 2021) and the Burhan-Hemedti[205] standoff illustrate regarding the incomplete ejection of inner-circle elites, or regime remnants, following a long-standing autocrat's removal (Malik 2023). The

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[201] See Hager Ali's useful diagrams summarizing information about key events between 2019 and 2023 and her incisive dissection of the political system following the 2021 coup in ECPR's Political Science Blog, The Loop: https://theloop.ecpr.eu/al-burhans-political-system-can-still-sabotage-peace-in-sudan/
[202] Khartoum, which was historically designated to be the management-level headquarters for groundlevel operations of armed robbery elsewhere in Sudan, became another ground site for conflict (De Waal May 2023).
[203] Some say the *tanzim* is behind the April 2023 conflict, hiding behind the SAF. Decades of crony capitalism seeping its way into a coup-proofed SAF made it lose its power to launch combat operations (Recall Talmadge's Battlefield Effectiveness).
[204] Let us not forget that the state of Sudan, like other African states, was essentially "an institutional transplant" and could not be compared with Western nation-states, which came about after hundreds of years of wars (Bayart 1993, 263). This sentiment is shared by Alex De Waal in his Reinventing Peace blog article, "Making Sense of Sudan's War Four Months On" published in August 2023, retrieved from: https://sites.tufts.edu/reinventingpeace/2023/08/24/making-sense-of-sudans-war-four-months-on/
[205] A small note on General Abdel-Fattah al-Burhan is in order. Burhan was also in Darfur during the 2003-2004 anti-insurgency armed solution and dealt with Hemedti then (Copnall 2023).

eruption of violence between the RSF and SAF highlights an unspoken limit to compromises with rival allies, as their conflictual interests shed light on the difficulty of authoritarian power-sharing and the bounds of tactical alliances.

This study raises timely questions about authoritarian regimes in the MENA and beyond, as it touches upon several salient phenomena. Beyond the Sudanese case, this study provides valuable insights into the logic guiding elite management tactics in personalist, single-party, and military authoritarian regimes, all while contesting the artificial boundaries delineating these subtypes.[206] It highlights how the regime's quick responsiveness to threats (i.e., tactical use of repression and cooptation) ought to be studied in its own right. By extension, scholars interested in understanding the impetus and incentives for unlikely alliances under neo-patrimonial regimes would find the analysis of both Nimeiri's cooptation of Islamists and the NCP's selective partnership with the SPLA/M to be fruitful in other contexts (e.g. Sadat's Egypt and Moi's Kenya). Additionally, the study's analysis of successful power consolidation under the Inqaz regime following two instances of regime failure (i.e., the civilian-led removal of two autocrats), highlights the often overlooked process of authoritarian learning and upgrading; more importantly, the periodic qualitative shifts in conducting politics under a long-standing autocrat bring into focus social control tactics, or, what Elina Sinkkonen terms "deepening autocratization"(2021, 1177). This view challenges the dominant approach to framing regime durability in terms of long years of resolutely staying in

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[206] In the Inqaz's case, the regime could be coded as both a single-party and personalist authoritarian regime at the same time but it could also be unhelpfully labeled a military autocracy.

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power; rather it sees durability as a reflection of "staying power" (Slater and Fenner 2011, 16). In the same vein, stabilization, rather than stability,[207] is a crucial aspect of durability because stability implies an end state that may coincide with the status quo, whereas "stabilization refers to a process" (Gerschewski 2022, 23). Thus, "timing and sequencing" are crucial to understanding authoritarian survival and resilience (Pierson 2004, 44) because duration alone does not accurately show how a given regime stabilizes over the years.

The study's reliance on process tracing to provide a "thick description" (Geertz 1973, 312) of critical junctures facilitated the detection of continuities and discrepancies in Sudan's power structures, ones that would otherwise not have been made apparent in a comparative study of two or more countries, let alone a large-N study. It is relatively easy to find a correlation between cabinet shuffles (as symptomatic of intra-elite rivalries and alliances) and authoritarian resilience. However, explaining how the former enhances the latter demands in-depth case studies, as this research illustrates. Methodology aside, the political economy dimension of the study has insights that can travel to other historical and modern-day contexts, where there are identity tensions overlaid on top of the unequal geographical distribution of resources; that is, in contexts where violence dominates center-periphery dynamics and can be analyzed using the

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[207] Within the literature on authoritarian durability and resilience, stability seems the norm, although it requires theoretical unpacking. Indeed, there has not been enough theorization as to how 'stabilization' tactics actually operate, again, because most comparative studies on authoritarian durability and breakdown have focused on regime change (the dependent variable) rather than the independent variables that maintained regime durability.

political marketplace framework (e.g., modern-day South Sudan, Eritrea, Somalia, and Ethiopia, among others).

The case's empirics invite further inspection of military- versus civilian-led coups on the one hand and the conflation between regime type and regime change, on the other. As the study illustrated, cumulative micro-changes in a given regime's political conduct could be coded regime change if we disregard the rigid regime typologies criteria (that often fixate on changing the head of state). The study seconds the newly popularized criticism of ahistorical and decontextualized regime change linearly progressing along the regime-type continuum (i.e., from authoritarian to democratic); it advocates for overhauling the limited frames through which authoritarian regimes have been studied, particularly the theoretical lenses imported directly from the democratization literature that treat authoritarian regimes as residual categories. The literature agrees that regime change is not coterminous with the overthrow of the autocrat, whose absence does not necessarily lead to challenging the existence of regime remnants managing the deep state. However, there is a dearth of studies[208] that unpack how factors restraining cooperation among security elites (or key regime guardians, more generally) also facilitate how they often later become the building blocks reconstituting a similar, if not the same, regime. The Inqaz regime offered that view in its first instance of assuming power in 1989 and again when it partially fell in 2019.

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[208] One notable work is Watermelon Democracy by Joshua Stacher (2020), who argues that Mubarak's ejection left a political vacuum that was somewhere in between regime change and continuity of the regime (28).

Further studies could also explore how the regional factors[209] supporting different parties in the TMC's "dictatorship by committee" (Raleigh and Carboni 2021, 424) played a role in halting the civilian-led transition in 2021 and fanning the flames of violence in April 2023 (Rakipoğlu 2021, 66-67). Another aspect that should merit further investigation is the incredible resilience of protestors in 2013, 2016, 2018-2019, and even post-April 2019. The Inqaz regime had faced growing opposition from restless urban youth since 2011, as the 2013 and 2016 street protests demonstrated. Indeed, it can be argued that if it were not for the sustained street protests in 2018 and 2019, top security elites would not have had the pretext to remove Bashir at this particular moment in time. This study does not delve into how the regime weathered this bottom-up pressure to democratize, yet it does not discredit the power of popular mobilization. However, notwithstanding the civilian forces' insistence on a "pacted transition" (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986, 6) and their conditioning of the TMC's behavior since 2019, the civilian-led transitional government (CLTG) could not break away from the post-Bashir regime remnants to democratize. This pattern of authoritarian comeback or counterrevolution (Slater and Smith 2016, 1474) (in Sudan, Tunisia, and Egypt, to name a few MENA states) begs to be investigated in its own right rather than be merged with arguments building

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[209] Sudan's relations with Gulf countries are an important part of understanding the 2018/2019 period and how it led to Bashir's ouster. As previously mentioned, Bashir walked a tightrope when he resisted pressure to take sides in the GCC–Qatar crisis. His ambivalence undermined the trust of his Gulf patrons and halted Saudi and Emirati financial support for his regime in 2018, which ultimately culminated in his downfall in April 2019 (Reuters). The UAE and Saudi Arabia saw an alternative to Bashir in Gosh and Hemedti, whom they saw as capable allies that could secure their interests in Sudan. In that sense, the sooner that Bashir was out of the picture, the better. Gosh was hoping to seize power but his name was associated with atrocities (Soliman and al-Tayib 2016; Amnesty International 2019). Although Hemedti's RSF is also notorious for war crimes in Darfur (HRW 2015) and atrocities in June 2019.

on the premise of 'regime change without democratization' (Albrecht and Schlumberger 2004).

To do that, researchers need to tease the historical roots of flawed transitions and refrain from using neat categorizations that prepackage case studies before careful analysis. Before answering Alex De Waal's question about the violent standoff between the RSF and SAF in April 2023, "Is there a thread we can trace back through the post-independence era that might help us arrive at an explanation for what is happening in Khartoum now?"[210] political science scholars must look beyond the 2018/2019 inflection point in Sudan's rich history of authoritarianism (De Waal 2023). With much ground to cover in a limited space, this study provides what the author hopes to be a plausible thread with some keys to understanding modern Sudanese politics from an authoritarian survival approach.

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[210] AlJazeera journalist Ahmed Mansour posed a similar question in May as well and argued that the key to understanding the roots of the most recent power conflict lies in the 1970s and 1980s (YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aK_lJQCb5uY)

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