

## **Omar Al-Bashir: his Governance Crisis and the Outbreak of Revolution in Sudan**

**Jacky Li Chun Leung** - Department of Islamic History and Civilization, Academy of Islamic Studies,  
University of Malaya, 50603, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

**Mohd Roslan Mohd Nor** \* - Department of Islamic History and Civilization, Academy of Islamic Studies,  
University of Malaya, 50603, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Received: 27/02/2021

Accepted: 20/04/2021

### **Abstract**

While we want to assess whether a person is suitable to lead a country, usually we will think about an important keyword—the ability of governance. However, it is an irrational expectation if we are asking a national leader to be self-disciplined and accountable to the people and the country. On the other hand, the people always got the same question, why a lot of leaders performed better at first but they usually faced with negative comments or the trials at last, or even being imprisoned for a long time?

The major character in this article is Omar Al-Bashir, he is a former president of Sudan, he has been overthrown by the people's force in 2019—a so-called successful “revolution” in Sudan. The overthrown of Omar Al-Bashir showed an example of unsuccessful governance in causing to this successful revolution. The article aims to show the governance weaknesses of Omar Al-Bashir in Sudan, and discuss how these weaknesses caused the revolution.

**Keywords:** Sudan, Omar Al-Bashir, Governance, Revolution, Islam.

---

\* Corresponding Author: [m\\_roslan@um.edu.my](mailto:m_roslan@um.edu.my)

## **1. Introduction**

How to become a suitable leader? It seems to be a simple question, but it is a complicated question in reality. The people always hope their national leader to treat them well, or provide some benefits or social welfares to them, but they do not try to explore a question how to define the word “well”, “benefits”? Every people get their own interpretations on it, but they have their unique standards. Most of the leaders usually want to gain prestige and support from people because they aim to legitimate the ruling power, but are all of them just working for the people selflessly? We cannot get real thoughts from other people, because we are not them. Reversely, the drafting of national law aims to prevent any illegal behaviors, which may do harm to the social order and economic degression. Unfortunately, it is just applicable to the mature democratic countries because at least they understand the importance of restricting power usage and running the rule of law on the national management.

But a lot of African leaders could not achieve this requirement in the past half-century, the Strong Man theory is still applicable to all of the African countries now. Those ambitious dictators always survived from the coup d'état successfully, which is a normal political pattern in Africa's politics. (Martin Meredith, 2014) It could be explained by a messy social structure complicated race and religion, which might be unfavorable to the power concentration of those African leaders, thus they usually ruled their countries autocratically. As far as we know, most of the African countries are running in the modern presidential system, the constitution allows people to enjoy the rights of suffrage, but it is more talk than walk. The reality is far from our imagination, democracy in the African countries is mostly underdeveloped, the people could not enjoy benefits from a so-called democratic politics, but they suffered disadvantages from uncontrollable autocratic regimes first. Notwithstanding the North African states have experienced revolutions just several years ago particularly after Arab Spring, which have caused political instability or social suspicion. Paradoxically the successful of Sudanese revolution is not highly related to Arab Spring, but the leadership weakness is a key factor.

## **2. Literature Reviews**

In the past few decades, some analyses about governance failures of Omar Al-Bashir have been carried out by scholars, but the analyses are quite scattered. If the researchers need to explore the responsibility of Omar Al-

Bashir, they need to consume more times on getting these books. Indeed, the analyses about Omar Al-Bashir are usually in thematic form, or being put together with other different topics in a same book. For instance, Mahmood Mamdani has written “Saviors and survivors Darfur, politics and the war on terror” to illustrate the cause and effect of Darfur crisis. In fact, although the Darfur crisis can be traced back to the rise of Sultanate of Darfur and inappropriate colonial governance, it is necessary to point out the mismanagement of Republic of Sudan and particularly incapable leaders as the causes of Darfur Crisis. But we need to emphasize the role of Omar Al-Bashir in worsening to the humanitarian crisis, because his personal selfishness made the Darfur people to be more difficult to get a safe and harmonic life until now.

Peter Martell has written “First raise a flag how South Sudan won the longest war but lost the peace”, it is exactly the History of South Sudan, including the analysis of South Sudanese independence movement. South Sudan question is definitely shared similar mistakes with Darfur crisis by the Khartoum government the failure management in ethnic minorities, but rivalries on the oil profits is also one of the notable causes. It drove away the south Sudanese from Sudan.

It is also not difficult to search the books about Hassan At-Turabi, because he is not only a politician, but also a famous preacher and scholar, unfortunately it is difficult to find academic analyses about him. For instance, “Hasan Al-Turabi Islamist politics and democracy in Sudan” wrote by W. J. Berridge, this book mainly focused on the political stance of Hassan At-Turabi to different political issues, including the political line, jihad, reformation, and his ideal of Islamic country. “Hassan Al-Turabi” wrote by Peter Woodward and published in “The Oxford handbook of Islam and politics”, is an academic paper and briefly discussed the idea of Hassan At-Turabi. “Hasan Al-Turabi the last of the Islamists” wrote by Abdullahi A. Gallab, is exactly a biography of Hassan At-Turabi, it covered his life experience, political viewpoints and rivalries with key politicians. Those who want to explore the modern history of Sudan, especially the ideological conflicts in Sudan, this book is worth to be recommended for the researchers to read.

Diana Childress’s “Omar Al-Bashir’s Sudan” and William Webb’s “The Dictator: the bloody history of Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir” are probably the first two books to account for the dictatorial ruling of Omar Al-Bashir and his effects to history of Sudan. However, it is difficult to get

access and have a read on them. William Webb's book is still difficult to get access now, but Diana Childress's book can get little information from internet. From the Google Book, we can see that Diana Childress attempted to show the failure of governance in Sudan, particularly his irony censorship and national propaganda over the country. To show how Omar Al-Bashir consolidated his power, Diana Childress addressed the searching of diplomatic friends to gain the support internationally as a power source to legitimize Omar Al-Bashir's presidential position.

### **3. Research Methodology**

The paper will use qualitative methods to undergo the study on Omar Al-Bashir. To assess the role of Omar Al-Bashir's governance failure in accelerating the outbreak of revolution, this paper will apply the Islamic governance theory which has been conducted by Wan Ahmad Fauzi to assess how Omar Al-Bashir lost support of people. For the reasoning on successful revolution, this paper will also focus on three major keystones: suspension over Hassan At-Turabi, full control over the people and violent management over the ethnic minorities to illustrate how Omar Al-Bashir himself directly caused to the outbreak of revolution. So it will be an abductive analysis (Brianna L. Kennedy and Robert Thornberg, 2018).

Omar Al-Bashir is really too famous on his erroneous governance and is always being reported on the newspapers, books and social media. Thus the information is easy to be found on newspapers, journals and books. But the purpose of this paper is to abduct the causes of governance failure in leading to the outbreak of revolutions by three specific examples, thus the analysis method needed to be more rigorous. Textual analysis will also be used in this paper too. Unfortunately, the spreading of Coronavirus in 2020 barred the researchers to get some important and referable books, as the researchers want to prevent any possibility of getting infected by others, thus it indirectly restricted the quality of research.

### **4. The ideal of Islamic democracy in Islamic countries**

Before giving out an analysis about the weakness of governance and the success of Sudanese revolution, we need to understand that, no one can give out the criteria on "good governance" accurately, because it subjects to personal feeling or life experience. However, people usually would give out some similar vocabularies such as democracy, accountability, responsibility, rule of law or separation of powers. (Jones M. Jaja, 2014) It is far beyond inadequate of giving out a definition to the word "governance" it means "*the*

set of traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised.” (Ali Farazmand, 2018) Another explanation is, the leader is “able and capable to rule the society”, (Petr Vymetal, 2007) it is a kind of action, method or function of governing. (Ali Farazmand, 2018) The human is the executor, the political system is to visualize the ideas and run in the government and country, the institution is a place for human to execute the political idea and run the political system. The political idea is usually commented on by scholars and experts, of course every leader should have unique ideas to run in the government, but theoretically they should prioritize the welfare of people at first. Governance is a term of politics to comment and analyze the quality of leader (no matter he is the national leader or the local leader) in administrating a country or a place.

An effective government can deal with the crises tactically, the crisis is not only from natural hazards such as flooding, drought, or diseases, but also the potential crisis such as poverty, uprising or the public discontents. Every country, state or dynasty has a chance to experience different kind of crises, but the key is how did the leader try to solve the crisis? Has the leader tried to solve these problems? Did the leader successfully detect the main point of each crisis? Could this leader deal with the crisis selflessly? These are very important questions while the national leader is facing with ruling crisis.

From the Islamic perspective, being a good leader is not only to treat the people well, but they emphasize the following of Prophet Muhammad’s teaching. The Islamic leader should learn a lesson from Prophet Muhammad’s biography of how to become a good leader, understand the Islamic teaching from Al-Quran and Al-Hadith, and show loyalty to the God (Allah). Prophet Muhammad has been regarding as a good example of leader, or a good model, to learn and practice in daily life.

According to Wan Ahmad Fauzi bin Wan Husain in his article, he concluded that the ideal Islamic leader (or Caliph in ancient dynasties) should be trustful, accountable, faithful, promote the Islamic value and honest. The leader should have discussed with the cabinet to make sure the decision-making (Shura) to be fair enough towards the family, the community and the country hierarchically. (Wan Ahmad Fauzi, 2020) In other words, he is talking about the role of leader’s characteristic in affecting to the political variations, the leader should bear the responsibility for any occurrence of social change, regardless this change is positive or negative.

From perspective of the secular politics, we usually demand the leader to be trustful, accountable, loyal, honest and particularly able to promote fair and equal value in society, which is similar to the criteria of Wan Ahmad Fauzi. However, the difference among them is the secular society does not need to consider the concept of Caesaropapism, but it asks people to follow the rule of law and respect the differentiation (social diversity). The religious policy is just part of secular politics, which is to guarantee the freedom and rights of religion to every people.

But it is the traditional part of political views, we are talking about the modern politics, the traditional views could be transferred to the cultural part, but not all, because the political system should also co-ordinate with the time and social progression synchronically. The modern political condition is a core subject to be concerned by every citizen persistently, while the traditional culture view is an external subject in politics, which is to remind us of preserving the traditional heritage in society. So the governance is a kind of political arts, the leader should know how to balance the political interests among the politicians and the people (different stakeholders), and respect to cultural diversity. Even if the leader (regardless he is a king or a government official) is not on duty, these former leaders also needed to behave themselves more disciplined and consistently in daily life. Sometimes the morality of national leaders will directly bring out potential effects to their career and make people to be confused on social value. So becoming a national leader is not an easy task, it is a kind of arts to co-ordinate (or “communicate” would be better) with different stakeholders in the society (and also the international society), or to attend every aspect skillfully.

But how the governance weaknesses successfully transferred to the revolution, is a good question and worth us to examine the case of Omar Al-Bashir.

### **5. Background of Omar Al-Bashir and his country**

Omar Al-Bashir is a former Sudanese president, his full name is Omar Hassan Ahmad Al-Bashir, he came to the power after the coup d’etat in 1985 together with his partner Hassan At-Turabi.

Before the rise of Omar Al-Bashir, Sudan became a British colony and under the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan regime. The Sudanese attempted to overthrow the colonial government and established their own country, but they failed. Accompanied with the decline of colonial powers after two great

wars and spiritual inspiration of Muhammad Ahmad Al-Mahdi's nationalism campaign in 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Sudanese declared independence from Britain in 1956, but it did not imply the Sudanese could enjoy a peaceful and stable life, the newly formed country soon faced with the political and economic problems. The Sudanese attempted to construct a democratic country, chronically 1956-1985 could be regarded as the exploration period the Sudanese attempted to seek a democratic country. Unfortunately, the keen power struggle among different stakeholders communism, Islamism, tribalism, southern Sudanese, Darfur people and secularism interrupted the national progression.

Jaafar Muhammad An-Nimeiri is a former Sudanese president, he had been elected as president three times, and tried to improve the socio-economic problems. Politically it was not a good phenomenon to see the leader could be reelected as president for more than three terms, because it will increase the possibility of forming a corrupted group which would hinder the national development in long term. He had introduced Islamic law throughout the country in 1983, but he is still being described as an autocratic military president, he failed to solve the socio-economic problems, especially the anti-Khartoum government rebellions in South Sudan. The introduction of Islamic law provoked the southern Sudanese to start longstanding anti-Khartoum campaign, because they wanted to defend their homeland, their own culture and religion from being assimilated by the Khartoum government. (La Verle Berry, 2015)

The rise of Omar Al-Bashir in 1989's coup benefited from this environment, but the most important factor was the rise of Islamism in 1980s and the cooperation with Hassan At-Turabi, because they chose to politicize the religious issues for their advantageous political condition. (Marie Besancon, 2017) In late 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Sudanese government wanted to consolidate the Khartoum's regime and its legitimacy, and also the sovereignty over southern Sudan, thus launched the Islamization campaign in the society.

Unfortunately, sometimes the leader just wanted to use the Islamic law as a political tool to consolidate the power the dictator would like to control people in the name of religion, and it is a common way in the history of human civilization, this could be explained by the political psychology. Religious politics would bring out moral correctness to the people and they would self-censor spontaneously whether the behavior was suitable or favorable to the government. The people usually behave manner righteously, so that they will not face the trial. In this case, different country

will have different kind of social interpretation to control the social order, it may ritualize the people by civil education to understand the importance of following the rule of law to social stability, but some countries may prefer ritualizing the people via religious education, because the religious teaching usually teaches us the importance of promoting the virtues and preventing the vices, regardless the type of religion. They believe that it will be more useful than civic education, especially in Islamic countries. However, if this kind of social feeling utilized by an ambitious leader with ulterior motivations, which is a shameful character, then the consequences would be hazardous.

The co-operation between Omar Al-Bashir and Hassan At-Turabi could be described as a mutual speculation, Omar Al-Bashir had never regarded Hassan At-Turabi as a reliable partner on his political career. Omar Al-Bashir wanted to become the president, he needed a reliable partner to accelerate the road to presidency. Hassan At-Turabi aimed at transforming his country as a moderate Islamic state and thus chose Omar Al-Bashir to be his partner to instigate the coup in 1985. Thus this mutual speculation contributed to the co-operation between Omar Al-Bashir and Hassan At-Turabi and seized the power from Jaafar Muhammad An-Nimeiri successfully.

### **6.How did Omar Al-Bashir create the hazardous governance crises to himself?**

In his term of presidency, he has created the governance crises, which could directly cause to his fall: the suspension over Hassan At-Turabi, the full control over the people and the failed management of southern Sudan.

#### **1. The suspension over Hassan At-Turabi**

Hassan At-Turabi is a faithful Muslim, he was a member of Muslim Brotherhood, which had been founded by Hassan Al-Banna in early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Muslim Brotherhood is an Islamism party in Egypt, but it faced with catastrophic crises regularly. The members scattered in different cities in the world, Hassan At-Turabi might be one of the lucky members to escape the great plague from the Egyptian government.

He was born in a religious family in Kassala in 1932, it was the British protectorate period. The ethnic stratification and religious righteousness drove him to sacrifice his daily life for the nation. (John L. Esposito and Emad El-Din Shahin, 2018) Hassan At-Turabi was an Islamist, but he was not a totalitarian Islamist. He embraced the ideas of Muslim Brotherhood in



early life to create an Islamic government based on Islamic law (Shariah). He suggested importing the western political style to reform his society and country institutionally, he hoped the country would adapt to the global cultural gap. He tried to co-ordinate traditional Islamic politics with the western political concepts in the central government. So he has been described as the liberal conservative Islamist, which is a contradicted adjective. (John L. Esposito and Emad El-Din Shahin, 2018) The former political party National Islamic Front succeeded from Muslim Brotherhood ideologically, it could be described as the satellite party of Muslim Brotherhood.

He was open to the non-Muslims, but he thought that the non-Muslims should be the ruled class under the Islamic government, because he suggested the political exclusion towards the non-Muslims a pure Muslim-dominated government, in order to consolidate the legitimacy of the Islamic government. (Liv Tonnessen, 2009) The most important is, although Hassan At-Turabi had not achieved his goal at last to implement the idea of Muslim Brotherhood on Sudan's politics, it implied he had his own standard and ideal criteria to the national leader, and could bring out the invisible political and moral stress to Omar Al-Bashir.

He even suggested Islamic evolution but not Islamic revolution. The woman could have the rights to become an Imam and lead the prayers in mosques, he encouraged the women to get the job and participate the public affairs, (Abdulkader Tayob, 2006) he even allowed the arts, cinema, music and singing activities in Islam. (W. J. Berridge 2017) His acceptance of the western political style might imply some elements of democracy (Shura), which would also be unfavorable to Omar Al-Bashir the ambition of becoming a lifetime president without any limitation. For the dissolution of Shura Council and the establishment of National Congress Party in 1994, Hassan At-Turabi wanted to reform the Islamic party and regain the confidence of the Sudanese. In 1990s, Hassan At-Turabi was a super leader in Sudan, he was the second most influential man in the Sudanese government, which would threaten to the power of Omar Al-Bashir.

To Omar Al-Bashir, Hassan At-Turabi was just his stepping stone, he might not plan to co-operate with Hassan At-Turabi at first, the co-operation just resulted from the political needs. He worried Hassan At-Turabi to ask him the political reward after the coup, Omar Al-Bashir forgot honour at the prospect of profits. In this case, he was not a trustworthy person. To Omar Al-Bashir, the emergence of Hassan At-Turabi was a threat, he wanted to

degrade or even eliminate At-Turabi's influence in Sudan. Ideological differentiations and political ambition of Omar Al-Bashir cursed Hassan At-Turabi's desire transforming Sudan into his ideal country was just a dream, and he would surely be purged by Omar Al-Bashir. In fact, although Hassan At-Turabi was an Islamist, at least his progressive and mild idea would help to improve the situation of Sudan, but he failed in the power struggle, he also failed to save his country at last. In 2000, Omar Al-Bashir removed his political influence in the party. Hassan At-Turabi established the opposition party Popular National Congress, but he failed to avoid Omar from becoming more dictatorial. Once Omar Al-Bashir privatized National Congress Party in 2000 (Azza Mustafa M. Ahmad, 2014), Omar Al-Bashir would not listen to his advice, and marched to the road of dictatorship. The arrest and imprisonment of Hassan At-Turabi could be described as a small victory to Omar Al-Bashir. After that no one could limit the power of Omar Al-Bashir, Omar Al-Bashir became an uncrowned king in Sudan, he did not know the important role of becoming a capable leader in enhancing political harmony and socio-economic progression.

## *2. The full control over the people*

The methods of controlling the Sudanese by the government are quite multi-dimensional. To guarantee the security of power control and full access of power to the local, Omar Al-Bashir understood the importance of getting legitimacy to consolidate the power, because his presidential chair is also usurped from the former president, he knew that he was no different from the previous usurpers, so he chose to fool the people. Once Hassan At-Turabi lost the advantageous condition on his political career, National Congress Party had been privatized by Omar Al-Bashir.

He allowed Salafism especially the militant Salafism, to appear inside his country. He surely knew the disadvantages of tolerating the radicalized Salafism to social development, but his main point was his presidential power. (Einas Ahmad 2015) He aimed to spread the fear feeling among the people, so the Sudanese would not speculate a chance to challenge or overthrow the president. A famous religious case could illustrate the religious dictatorship in Sudan, Mariam Yahya Ibrahim Ishag's apostasy case.

Mariam Yahya Ibrahim Ishag's case could be described as a family tragedy, but the most important is Omar Al-Bashir's authority via national control over the religious affairs. Accompanied with the rise of Islamism extremism and the Strong Man leadership, Mariam became a tragic figure in Sudan.

She was born in a Muslim-Christian family, her father is a Muslim but she was raised in her Christian mother, she was charged for the apostasy of her Christian life and marriage. She had been given three days to convert, but she refused and adhered to her Christian life. The Sudanese court said that her father is a Muslim and she is naturally (biologically) to be a Muslim. At last she was freed from death sentence and fled to America with an aid of the Italian government. From her perspective, the religious prosecution is unacceptable, but it showed that the Sudanese government wanted to display the authority in front of the people accompanied with the co-operation of Islamic extremism and its religious stress in the society. Mariam's case made Sudan face negative commentaries from the international society, especially freedom of religion issue and autocratic governance. This is just one of the religious control cases over the Sudanese. In fact, it is also a kind of political control to the people, Omar Al-Bashir used Mariam's case to threaten people psychologically to reach the creation of natural self-censorship among the people, which could reduce his ruling cost.

The permission of Osama bin Laden a famous former terror leader of Al-Qaeda, in temporary staying in Sudan also caused Sudan to be blacklisted on the terror-sponsored state from the American government in 1993.<sup>1</sup>They allowed Osama bin Laden to stay in Sudan for five years, in some extents reflected attitudes of the Sudanese government. The rumours said that Sudanese government wanted to use Osama bin Laden's wealth to suppress the Christians in Sudan, then Sudanese government could unity the Muslims to form a strong Islamic government. In the same time, it also helped Osama bin Laden to develop his terror career in Sudan.<sup>2</sup>In some extents, Sudan needs to pay little responsibility for the occurrence of 911 terror attack in this case. Until the revolution occurred in 2019 and downfall of Omar Al-Bashir, the American government removed Sudan from the blacklist of state-sponsored terrorism in 2020, it is estimated that the diplomatic normalization between Sudan and Israel might be an important reason to explain the removal of being blacklisted. However, we can see this heavy diplomatic cost for the permission of Osama bin Laden in Sudan.

Other than the Sudanese government's tolerance on extremism and the occurrence of Mariam's case which could illustrate the autocracy of Al-Bashir by spreading the fear feeling among the Sudanese, Omar Al-Bashir

---

1.<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-54609375> (16th December, 2020)

2.<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/oct/17/afghanistan.terrorism3> (15th December 2020)

had repressed the freedom of speech, publication, media permanently. Self-censorship was required to be one of the duties to those journalists, the government had the rights to intercept the telecommunication service to gain more details of anti-government force in grassroots level, sometimes the journalists had been tortured brutally by the law enforcers, these were the notorious examples. (Abdelgadir, 2012) The human rights organizations have criticized the inhuman treatment of the Sudanese government in the past, but they failed to pressure the Sudanese government and enhance the improvement of human rights under Omar's regime. The international trials are also discussing Omar Al-Bashir's violation on human rights, the examples are too bloody and atrocious. The situation was worse after the downfall of Hassan At-Turabi and the privatization of National Congress Party by Omar Al-Bashir, because no one could able to challenge his power. Once he sensed that he was already an uncrowned king in Sudan, the people's opinion was no longer to be heard and considered during the decision-making process, and deteriorated the ruling quality.

The most serious thing was the control of election; it is one of the famous political controversies in Sudan. In Sudan, the presidential election aims to choose the president to lead the country effectively, and the parliamentary election aims to choose the lawmaker to represent the local people and express opinions in the parliament, then the parliament can exert its important function to improve relation between government and people, to supervise the government policies and to improve decision-making which can improve the living standard. Two types of elections would be scheduled regularly if there is no dictatorial interception in Sudan. However, Omar Al-Bashir abolished these concepts: democratic, transparent and fair election. He just regarded presidential position and number of controlled parliament seats as his political tools to consolidate power. Two ways of elections was just a disguised tool to show the "democracy" in front of the foreigners. Omar Al-Bashir did not want to see any accidental factor which could defeat him. He emphasized the authority of Khartoum-Islamic-Bashir ideology (Bashirism) throughout the country. He wanted to ensure full loyalty from the top to the bottom including the government officials and the Sudanese. He also wanted to win the presidential election and ensured that the National Congress Party to get a landslide victory eternally. The elections held by Omar Al-Bashir had always been boycotted by the oppositions many times, because they thought that they would not get a fair election. He intimidated and arrested the potential winners or oppositions in the election, brutally

tortured the potential winners, banned the “unwelcomed” parties, forced the media to give out positive comments on him (human-controlled propaganda). The election-related violence began from the pre-election to the victory of Omar Al-Bashir, but he even did not stop the prosecution of the journalists and opposition after the election to prevent any variation.

In traditional Islamic politics, even though the Caliphate system is recommended to be adopted in the real world, the academic discussion on history and politics of Caliphate system, could be regarded as the social requirement towards the quality of national leader. During the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad, he usually consulted with his followers to make the correct decision or improve the administration. Omar Al-Bashir did not practice it, he did not fully consult with his ruling team, he just wanted to eliminate all of the opposing voices, because he was intolerant to these unwelcomed opinions. In the same time, the people were fighting poverty, social violence and religious stratification. Thus, it sowed the seed of Sudanese revolution in long term.

### 3. Violent management towards the minorities the Darfur people and South Sudan

It is impossible to get a country where the ethnic structure is fully consistent, because ethnic diversity is a normal society, asking for a fully consistent ethnic structure is an irrational, unrealistic and ridiculous idea. Usually the leaders would have political or economic purpose if they decide to keep the ethnic and cultural consistently in a country, thus sometimes the unification movement would be blamed as a kind of assimilation movement, people might not able to keep their cultural heritage longer. In the past, the Muslim rulers would allow non-Muslims to practice their own religions, but they needed to submit Jizya (it is a type of taxation and usually levy on the non-Muslims Dhimmi, including the People of the Book or non-Abrahamic religions), then they would be allowed to stay in the Islamic empire. It refers to Al-Quran, “who do not adopt the religion of truth from those who were given the Scripture fight until they give the jizyah willingly while they are humbled.” (Surah At-Tawbah:29) From this, we can see the past rulers understood the importance of tolerating minorities to national stability. Unfortunately, Omar Al-Bashir did not understand the seriousness of provoking minorities to national security. He was blinded by his selfish political purpose, the disastrous crises were awaiting for the people in Darfur and South Sudan.

Darfur is an old name in Sudan, “Darfur” means “the people in Fur” literally, it originated from Darfur dynasty which was founded by Kayra clan,<sup>1</sup> it had ruled here about two centuries. Darfur locates on the western side of Sudan, nearby the border of Sudan and Chad. In ancient time, it has been an important indication for the travelers or merchants to identify the route between Middle East and West Africa, because Sahara Desert is a directionless landscape, the people need to get a natural indication for the route. The arrival of Islam in 7<sup>th</sup> century largely altered the culture of Fur people, but the indigenous people were still maintaining some pre-Islamic customs. The arrival of Arabs also generated another type of race Afro-African, it means that they are the mixture of Arabs and Africans. This also brought out the conflict of Islamic Arabs legitimism on both politics and economy, the leaders on this land needed to balance the interest of Arabs and Africans. Nevertheless, they were independent from the hinterland of Sudan (the major part of Sudan today), the rulers usually struggled support of Arabs to consolidate the power in Darfur, especially the religious significance. (R.S. O’Fahey and Jerome Tubaina, 2007) There were four dynasties in Darfur in the history, they were Tora (or Tura, but it has been described as a mythic dynasty, little is known about the early history of Darfur), Daju, Tunjur and Darfur, four dynasties ruled over similar area in Darfur region. Sultanate of Darfur was the first Islamic dynasty in Darfur, they have territorial conflict with the Kingdom of Funj over Kordofan. (A.J. Arkell, 1961) The modern Islamization under the Sultanate of Darfur and the ethnic-religious identity imprinted on every Fur people deeply. The Fur people have their own history and culture, and they are proud of it. However, the people in North Sudan also faced with the struggle of farming land (they practice livestock farming, the land of Darfur is more fertile than Nile Valley) and water, as it is a semi-arid land (Sahelian region), the people always face with the threats of lower and variable precipitation they need to struggle for the water in the whole life.

The Darfur problem is quite complicated; the anti-Khartoum campaign has never been stopping since the independence of Sudan. It can be accounted by negative impacts of colonialism (man-made boundary)<sup>2</sup> and the rise of

---

1 P.M. Holt, “A modern history of the Sudan: from the Funj Sultanate to the present day”, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970, pp. 25-26.

2 Artificial boundary does not (or even never) consider the complexity of the race, culture and religion in term of the political management. However, most of the African countries are still using the artificial boundary today. Thus the ethnic conflicts could always been seen on the newspaper and social media.

Khartoum-centered government. The British colonial government put the whole territories of North Sudan and South Sudan under the Angle-Egyptian Sudan regime, it composed different races and religions onto a specific land Sudan, which sowed the roots of Darfur humanitarian crisis lately. Moreover, the British moved natural resources from Darfur to Khartoum, Khartoum became the centre (capital) of Sudan, indirectly claimed that Darfur belonged to Khartoum, Khartoum-centered politics was formed. British ignored the historical and ethnic uniqueness of the Darfur people, but they really differed from the Khartoum's side historically. While Sudan claimed independence in 1956, the Khartoum government wanted to show its legitimacy over the country, Darfur people started to struggle for autonomy or independence. The rise of Islamism in 1980s also stratified the rivalries in Darfur region. The power assumption of Omar Al-Bashir and Hassan At-Turabi implied the Sudanese needed to serve a new ideology "Arab Islamic Bashirism", Omar Al-Bashir used it as the political weapon to command the Sudanese spiritually. The discovery of oil in Darfur in determined the Khartoum's government to command the land of Darfur brutally, they targeted on the oil export. (Philip Mmanyok, 2016)

Nevertheless, some oil fields had been discovered in the past 40 years, and the first oil discovery was in Bentiu (in South Sudan today) in 1977-1978 (Richard Barltrop 2011), but it was not a major cause in leading to humanitarian crisis in Darfur. The major cause of Darfur crisis was the repressive and marginalized ruling of Omar Al-Bashir. The establishment of Justice and Equality Movement led by Dr Khalid Ibrahim Muhammad (former Minister of Health in Sudan) and he formed the anti-Khartoum movement in 2003, (Tsega Etefa, 2019) and Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) led by Suliman Arcua Minnawi in 2006, are two of the anti-Bashir forces in Darfur. They called for the violent resistance against Omar Al-Bashir's regime and Arab Nomads. (Mahmood Mamdani, 2009) They were discontented with this permanent marginalization policy by the Khartoum government Khartoum-centred policy had been criticized negatively as they ignored the feeling of Fur people a long time ago. (Tsega Etefa, 2019) The conflict between Arabs and non-Arabs in Sudan they struggled for the political domination and socio-economic allocation, also drove to the outbreak of Darfur's genocide, especially after the rise of Bashirism. (Tsega Etefa, 2019) The Darfur genocide crisis began in 2003, a lot of villages disappeared in the genocide, over hundred thousand people fled from their hometown to the refugee camps along the border of Sudan and Chad. Now

Omar Al-Bashir faced with the charge of genocide and war crime in the International Criminal Court (ICC), the genocide caused the deaths of 300000.<sup>1</sup> It is the bloodiest catastrophe in the history of human civilization. It is unknown whether Omar Al-Bashir needs to face with imprisonment or death sentence for the genocide in Darfur. The new Sudanese government, which has been established after the revolution 2019, said that they agreed Omar Al-Bashir to face the trial in International Criminal Court for the Darfur Genocide, which implies Omar Al-Bashir will be difficult to get any legal aid from Sudanese.

South Sudan (former southern territories of Sudan), on the other hand, could be accounted for the different culture and religion distinctively, together with the Khartoum's ambition over oil production. It is another example to show the failure of ethnic minorities policy under Bashir's regime. The arrival of Christianity in Sudan could be traced back from the first century, (John Obert Voll, Fluehr-Lobban, Carolyn and Richard Lobban, 1992) just around the lifetime of Jesus Christ, the ancient Christians had left a lot of Christian heritages here. In the same time, there are a lot of primitive tribes in South Sudan, some tribes have not converted to Christianity or Islam, they are still keeping the animism practice that is inherited from their ancestors. Ethnically, Dinka and Nuer people are the major races in South Sudan, they do not correlate with Arabs in North Sudan. The arrival of Arab Muslims drove the Christians to move here. Other than ethnic and religious features, obvious climatic differentiation could also explain the conflict between North and South Sudan. South Sudanese enjoyed a hot wet climate, because they locate near to the equator, stable water supply implies the guarantee of economic growth, people would choose to settle near the river or abundant water supply zone. North Sudanese suffered from a hot dry desert, i.e. Sahel region, which hit the economic development and test the people's tolerance to resist against this harsh environment, hence the North Sudanese need to struggle for water supply permanently. So the northern Sudanese are jealous to South Sudan. Same as Darfur people, the combination of South Sudan into Sudan was also a tragedy from British imperialism and the creation of Republic of Sudan previously. The composition of Sudan this artificial-formed country, did not consider the opinions of south Sudanese, and fail to prepare the political variation in the future the rise of Jaafar Muhammad An-Nimeiri and Omar Al-Bashir. The

---

1. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-51462613> (23rd December 2020)s



discovery of oil stimulated the greedy needs of the Khartoum government. The introduction of Islamic law (to the South Sudanese, they regarded it as the cultural assimilation policy) could be said to tie up the national fate with South Sudan under the consideration of oil profit from South Sudan. The Khartoum government was jealous of why the oil could be discovered in South Sudan. From their perspectives, if south Sudanese enjoy autonomy or declare independence, it might imply the territorial separation from North Sudan and lose the oil profit from there. The Civil War launched by South Sudan and based in Jonglei (a state in South Sudan today), aimed to fight against the Khartoum government almost 21 years from 1983-2005. The South Sudanese thought that oil profit had always been “tributing” to Khartoum’s government before the independence, but the people got nothing from the government, the living standard deteriorated gradually. Most of the fortune had been concentrated on a small percentage of ruling class, especially Omar Al-Bashir. (Peter Martell, 2018) Omar Al-Bashir was busy on dealing with two wars the war over Darfur and South Sudan, which increased the military expenditure. In fact, Hassan At-Turabi had warned him to end up the wars as soon as possible, because Hassan At-Turabi thought that it was not a just war according to the concept of Islam. Frequent but endless wars also deepened the socio-economic burden on the Khartoum government. He also thought that Omar Al-Bashir misused the name of Islam to declare the war on ethnic minorities, which was a worthless choice. Omar Al-Bashir refused to hear his advice, and continued to call for jihad campaign against the enemies of Islam non-Muslims in Sudan, (Guy Arnold, 2015) because he wanted to unify the Muslims in Sudan to consolidate his presidential power and strengthen his authority in the country. The result was clear, North Sudan failed in this campaign, South Sudan claimed independence successfully in 2011. It was simple, the South Sudanese were no longer to tolerate Omar Al-Bashir, a tyrant in the eyes of South Sudanese.

Omar Al-Bashir had never tried to stabilize the country and attempt to create a favorable living environment for the people, he always provoked the ethnic minorities and caused unstable sources to the country. The people are powerless to deal with these endless civil wars and repressive policies, they fled to a safe place without any choices. Despite some of them did not suffer negative impacts from Omar Al-Bashir directly, the national burden from these endless civil wars sometimes would be transferred to the people innocently and they were the victims of this insane government. Omar’s

insatiable desire for power made him control anything in his country, he did not allow any variations which could shake to his presidency. He has never expected that the economic crisis in 2019 would be his “last straw that broke a camel’s back”.

### **7. Conclusion**

From the above discussion, we can conclude that, Omar Al-Bashir was not defeated by the Sudanese revolution solely, he was exactly defeated by his weak governance in Sudan. He did not know the importance of social harmony, especially the successful key of ethnic management in Darfur and South Sudan ought to offer a mild and rational treatment but not performed in weaponized confrontation. Darfur and South Sudanese just got a weaker political condition than Arabs comparatively in former Sudan, but they always bullied by the Khartoum government. Omar did not only lose support from Darfur and South Sudan, but he created financial difficulties on public expenditure by himself in long term, especially the separation of South Sudan. Omar Al-Bashir also failed to understand the freedom of human rights, which is an important pillar to a mature and well-developed society. The most unforgivable mistake was, he had never listened to the advice of Hassan At-Turabi, Hassan At-Turabi regarded as the important partner in his political career and featured as a mild figure in Sudan, Hassan At-Turabi sensed the governance problems inside Bashir’s regime. However, Omar Al-Bashir did not want to share the political fruits with other people, especially his former partner Hassan At-Turabi. He just wanted to monopolize the political power by himself. He did not allow people to challenge him, otherwise the people would face with political trial, jail or even death sentence. He had been elected as president forth times, but he was an uncrowned king in Sudan before the revolution. He should pay responsibility for the national degradation, despite the Sudanese are still being suffered from the negative consequences of the collapse of Omar Al-Bashir’s regime. Unfortunately, the North Sudanese haven’t recovered economic recession from the revolution, they soon faced the spreading of Coronavirus. It is unknown whether they can overcome the economic difficulties of Coronavirus, but they should prepare for the worst consequences after Coronavirus became a global pandemic in 2020, which is out of Omar’s expectation, and also the North Sudanese. The worst is yet to come. The other African countries should learn a lesson from this revolution and try to prevent any possible social unrest to reduce any loss from Coronavirus.

## References

1. Abdelgadir Mohammed, A (2012). "Fences of silence systematic repression of freedom of the press, opinion and expression in Sudan", 2005-2011 (source <https://ipi.media/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Fences-of-Silence-AbdelgadirMAbelgadir-3.pdf>)
2. Abdulkader, T (2006). "Liberal Islam between texts and its modern condition", *Shades of Islamism*.
3. Arkell, A.J. (1961). "A history of the Sudan to 1821", London: The Athlone Press,
4. Azza Mustafa, M. A (2014). "Islam and political parties in Sudan: The National Islamic Front", *Observatoire des enjeux politiques et securitaires dans la corne de l'afrique*.
5. Berridge, W. J. (2017). "Hasan Al-Turabi Islamist politics and democracy in Sudan", Cambridge University Press.
6. Brianna L. K; Robert, T (2018). "Deduction, induction and abduction", *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Data Collection*, Sage.
7. Einas. A (2015). "Militant Salafism in Sudan", *Islamic Africa*, Volume 6 No 1-2.
8. Farazmand, A (2018). "Global encyclopedia of public administration, public policy and governance", Switzerland: Springer,
9. Guy, A (2015). "Africa a modern history: 1945-2015", London: Atlantic Books, 2015, Chapter 34.
10. Holt, P.M (1970). "A modern history of the Sudan: from the Funj Sultanate to the present day", Oxford: Oxford University Press.
11. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-51462613> (23rd December 2020)
12. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-54609375> (16th December, 2020)
13. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/oct/17/afghanistan.terrorism3> (15th December 2020)
14. John L. (2018). *Esposito and Emad El-Din Shahin, "Key Islamic political thinkers"*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
15. John Obert, V; Fluehr-Lobban, C; Lobban, R (1992). "Historical dictionary of the Sudan", Scarecrow Press.
16. Jones, M. J (2014). "Good governance in rural areas: challenges for social security", *India: Elixir International Journal Arts and Social Sciences* 71.
17. La Verle, B (2015). "Sudan a country study", US: Library of Congress.
18. Liv, T (2009). "Democratizing Islam and Islamizing democracy an inquiry into Hasan Al-Turabi's conception of Shura in light of western democratic theory", *Nordic Journal of Human Rights*, Volume 27 No 3.
19. Mahmood, M (2009). "Saviors and survivors Darfur, politics and the war on terror", Cape Town: HSRC Press.
20. Marie, B (2017). "Islam in from the Cold a Muslim Brother's reflections on the past, present and future of the Islamic movement in the Sudan",

Institute for National Strategic Security in National Defense University,  
Volume 6 No 4.

21. Martell, P (2018). "First raise a flag how South Sudan won the longest war but lost the peace", Oxford: Oxford University Press.
22. Martin, M (2014). "The fortunes of Africa A 5000-year history of wealth, greed and endeavour", UK: Simon and Schuster.
23. O'Fahey, R.S.; Tubiana, J (2007). "Darfur Historical and contemporary aspects", pp. 6-7
24. Phillip, M (2016). "Oil and Darfur's blood: China's thirst for Sudan's oil", *Journal of Political Sciences and Public Affairs*, Volume 4 Issue 1.
25. Richard, B (2011). "Darfur and the international community the challenges of conflict resolution in Sudan", New York: I.B. Tauris.
26. Tsega, E (2019). "The origin of ethnic conflict in Africa politics and violence in Darfur, Oromia and the Tana Delta", USA: Palgrave Macmillan.
27. Vymetal, P (2007). "Governance: defining the concept", Faculty of International Relations working papers, University of Economics (Prague), October 2007.
28. Wan Ahmad Fauzi bin Wan Husain (2020). "Insights: the conceptual framework for building the world class good governance ethnics", *Journal of Governance and Integrity (JGI)*, Volume 4 Issue 1,23, November 2020.