Major Research Paper

What caused Bashir's fall in 2019?
---A comparative analysis between Sudan's protests during the Arab Spring and those starting from 2018

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Abstract

On 11 April, 2019, Sudan's president Omar Hassan al-Bashir was forced to step down by his own internal-security apparatus after a series of demonstrations since 2018 that demanded urgent economic reforms and the fall of the regime. The former president ruled the country for about three decades and witnessed numerous protests during his tenure. He also faced protests during the Arab Spring but his regime remained intact in that wave of protest. This paper is to explore what has caused al-Bashir's fall in 2019. By comparing the period of Arab Spring and the period of 2018-2019, this paper put forward two hypothese to try to explain the successful ousting of al-Bashir in 2019. And through the analysis, this paper has found that it is in interaction between political opportunities and structures that we see the shift in the possibility for the successful ouster of al-Bashir.

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Introduction:

The last decade has witnessed numerous episodes of civil protest and resistance in different regions around the world, especially in Northern African and the Middle East during the Arab Spring. Although some resistance to governments was successful in attaining its goals, many episodes failed to make a difference. There are many studies on why some civil resistance is successful, while other episodes are not. They focused on the organizational characteristics and the broader social and political context of civil resistance. Many scholars focused on whether the resistance is violent or not. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, most scholars held the view that "the most forceful, effective means of waging political struggle entails the threat or use of violence.[1]" They also viewed violence as the last resort in desperate situations. But during the past two decades, most successful resistance was actually carried out in a non-violent way, using tactics such as sit-ins, protests, boycotts, civil disobedience and strikes[2]. The most striking examples may be the non-violent uprisings in both Tunisia and Egypt during the Arab Spring, which have successfully ousted their decades-old regimes.

In 2011, a book written by Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan first started to compare the dynamics and outcomes of violent and non-violent campaigns. In the book, they examined 323 cases from 1900 to 2006, emphasizing the importance of the quality and quantity of participation in the non-violent resistance. And they also conclude that non-violence is more effective by comparing violent and non-violent uprisings in different countries, especially in their case studies. Although they mentioned that non-violent resistance

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[1] Chenoweth, Erica & Stephan, Maria J. (2011). Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict. *Columbia University Press.* Pp.4.
[2] Ibid.

in some countries fails during one period and succeeds decades later, they did not explore this further. As scholars gradually pay more attention to the effectiveness of non-violent resistance, it is important to know that not all non-violent campaigns are successful. And even more puzzling, within the same context, non-violent protest may have been unsuccessful in one instance, and successful in another. Sometimes they failed in a certain period but succeeded decades later. There is thus still much to learn about what determines/contributes to the success of non-violent protest. Can within case episodes help us better understand the variance between unsuccessful and successful case? What determines a lack of success and a subsequent success?

Sudan's case during the Arab Spring and in 2018-2019 is a good example. In both periods, protesters were seeking regime change but they failed during the Arab Spring while succeeded in 2019. On 11 April, 2019, Sudan's president Omar Hassan al-Bashir was forced to step down by his own internal-security apparatus[3] after a series of demonstrations beginning 2018 that demanded urgent economic reforms and the fall of the regime.

Omar Hassan al-Bashir had ruled the country since 1989 after he led a successful and bloodless coup against Sadiq al-Mahdi, then president of Sudan, with the help of the military and the National Islamic Front (NSF). During his long tenure, protests and political challenges were not new to him, but his regime remained intact until 2019.

The protests that started from 2018 seem to be different. Bashir was ousted by his internal-security apparatus after this wave of protest. The protest rapidly spread to other cities. Police used tear gas to crack down on protests and there were many injuries and deaths. Many

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[3] Hassan, Mai & Kodouda, Ahmed. (2019). Sudan's Uprising: The Fall of a Dictator. *Journal of Democracy*. 4(30): 89-103, Pp. 90.

people were arrested. Following these events, allies of the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) announced that they would withdraw from the government. On 22 February, Bashir announced a state of emergency, the first in twenty years. The protest continued in March and April. Just days before Bashir's fall, the photo of a young woman standing on top of a car went viral and was seen as a symbol of the protest. Then on 11 April, Bashir was ousted from presidency.

As we can see from Sudan's case, the protests from 2011-2013 did not bring regime change while those in 2018-2019 did. What contributed to the different outcomes between these two waves of protests? By comparing these two episodes, this article seeks to explore what Sudan can teach us about success and lack of success in non-violent protest movements. Although many scholars have studied the determinants of success of social movements, their conclusions are often based on Western experience. Or they have looked at large comparative universes, neglecting more determinants of success in specific cases, and especially as made evident by within case comparisons. In developing countries like Sudan, the social and political contexts are different from those in the global North. Hence, the determinants of success may also vary, including in a manner large N studies are rarely able to capture. This article seeks to examine the protests in Sudan in two different episodes in order to know more about the determinants of success of social movements in non-Northern countries and to make contributions to the further development of contentious politics.

Chapter 1. Literature Review

There should be nothing controversial in saying that social movements have outcomes. But "for decades, students of social movements and collective action have apparently paid only scant attention to the outcomes and consequences of movement activities.[4]"Many scholars paid more attention to the reasons and mobilization process of social movements. There has nonetheless been over the last few years regular thought given to this puzzle. There is today, as a result, a fair amount of studies focusing on social movement outcomes and what influences them. Their insights on the issue are explored here.

Early studies

Early studies of social movement outcomes mainly focused on the organizational characteristics of movements and their connection with movement outcomes. Harry Brill (1971) studied a rent strike led by a group of black militants and argued that the failure of the strike occurred because the organizers were more interested in expressing their views than in achieving material improvements. As a result, the movement leaders failed to build an effective organization[5]. Suzanne Staggenborg (1988) examined the consequences of professionalization and formalization in the pro-choice (abortion rights) movement and concluded that the professionalization of leadership tended to formalize the organizations, which had important implications for the maintenance and direction of social movement organizations[6]. Important evidence about the connection between organizational variables

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[4]Giugni, Marco. (2008). Political, Biographical, and Cultural Consequences of Social Movements. *Sociology Compass*. 2(5): 1582-1600. pp. 1582.

[5] Brill, Harry. (1971). Why Organizers Fail. *Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.*

[6] Staggenborg, Suzanne. (1988). The consequences of professionalization and formalization in the pro-choice movement. *American Sociological Review*. 4(53): 585-605.

and the success of social movements can especially found in William Gamson's book *The Strategy of Social Protest*[7]. In the book, Gamson studied diverse protest groups that existed in America from 1800 to 1945 and identified the correlates of successful and unsuccessful challenges. He concluded that groups with single-issue demands were more successful; selective incentives (special benefits offered exclusively to organization members) had positive impact on movements; violence and disruptive tactics were associated with success; successful groups were more centralized and bureaucratized, in addition, whether the situation was peaceful or chaotic did not matter too much in influencing whether a movement was successful or not[8].

His arguments were vulnerable to criticism, however. Jack Goldstone (1980) reanalyzed Gamson's sample and pointed out that Gamson's analysis was based on weak assumptions, arguing instead that the incidence of large-scale crisis determines the timing of protest success[9]. K. Webb et al (1983) also mentioned some of the problems in Gamson's work, such as the small sample size and the simple bivariate tabular analysis[10]. Even Gamson himself revisited his main argument in his 1989 article to include the rise of the national security state and of television and mass media since 1945 and to clarify many people's misunderstanding of his claims about the role of violence in his book[11].

But there are also scholars who partly agree with Gamson's arguments. Homer R. Steedly & John W. Foley (1979) reviewed Gamson's findings and used multivariate statistical

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[7] Gamson, William. (1990). The Strategy of Social Protest. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. 2nd ed.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Goldstone, Jack. (1980). The weakness of organization: a new look at Gamson's The Strategy of Social Protest. *American Journal of Sociology*. 5(85): 1017-1042.

[10] Webb, Keith., et al. (1983). Ethiology and Outcomes of Protest. *American Behavioral Scientist*. 3(26): 311-331.

[11] Gamson, William. (1989). Reflections on The Strategy of Social Protest. *Sociological Forum*. 3(4): 455-467.

techniques to reexamine and extend his argument. They found that "protest groups which threaten to replace or destroy established groups are usually unsuccessful, and those having many strong alliances tend to be more successful than groups fighting alone.[12]" John Mirowsky and Catherine Ross (1981) , for their part, tested eight hypotheses about factors that can be controlled by protesters, third parties and the elements of the situation and found that beliefs and goals of the protest group are significant because if groups are seeking to replace or destroy antagonists and systems, they are less likely to succeed. In addition, bureaucracy of the movement increased the possibility of success in terms of recognition because established groups want to make sure they can continue to survive[13]. R. Scott Frey et al (1992) also reviewed Gamson's work and showed that organizations need to remain unified in order to achieve success because if they are not unified, available resources will be scattered among organizations with different goals, making it harder for them to succeed[14].

Therefore, according to Gamson and studies and reflections on his work, the elements associated with success are largely related to factors controlled by protest groups, such as their beliefs and goals, their level of centralization and bureaucratization and whether they and their alliances can be unified.

Literature in this vein continued to explore effectiveness of the use of violence in social movements is another topic raised by the literature. Doug McAdam (1983) studied the pace of black insurgency between 1955 and 1970 and introduced some new protest tactics in these

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[12]Steedly, Homer R. & Foley, John W. (1979). The success of protest groups: multivariate analyses. *Sociology Science Research*. 1(8):1-15. pp.1.

[13]Mirowsky, John & Ross, Catherine. (1981). Protest Group Success: The Impact of Group Characteristics, Social Control, and Context. *Sociological Focus*. 3(14):177-192.

[14] Frey, R. Scott., Dietz, Thomas & Kalof, Linda . (1992). Characteristics of Successful American Protest Groups: Another Look at Gamson's Strategy of Social Protest. *American Journal of Sociology*. 2(98): 368-387.

movements. Urban rioting is one of the new tactics mentioned by him[15]. Sidney Tarrow (1994) examined three main forms of contentious politics: violence, disruption and contained forms of actions. He argued that without violence, protest organizers would not have new ways to challenge authorities and to embolden supporters. They soon run out of energy and eventually fail[16]. Gamson's book, as indicated above, provided empirical evidence of the impact of violence. He later found that "although passive recipients of violence are more likely to fail, groups which use violence neither damage nor improve their chances of success.[17]" Steedly and Foley (1979) also found that because it is hard to predict established groups' reaction to violence, the use of violence cannot be helpful in predicting the outcome of movements[18].

More studies on the relationship between violence and the outcomes can be found in research on strikes. After studying violent labor conflicts, no solid evidence was found on the relationship between violence and success[19]. Scholars also studied the aftermath of urban riots of the 1960s in the US. Most of them found no connection between violence and riots gains[20] . But there are also studies that support a positive relationship between riots and better outcomes [21].

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[15] McAdam, Doug. (1983). Tactical innovation and the pace of insurgency. *American Sociological Review.* 6(48):735-754.

[16] Tarrow, Sidney. (1994). Power in Movement. *Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.*

[17] Mirowsky, John & Ross, Catherine E. (1981). Protest Group Success: The Impact of Group Characteristics, Social Control, and Context. *Sociological Focus.* 3(14):177-192.

[18] Steedly, Homer R. & Foley, John W. (1979). The Success of Protest Groups: Multivariate Analyses. *Social Science Research.* 1(8):1-15.

[19] Taft, Philip & Ross, Philip. (1969). American labor violence: its causes, character, and outcome. In Violence in America, ed. HD Graham, TR Gurr. *New York: Praeger.* Snyder, David & Kelly., William R. (1976). Industrial Violence in Italy, 1878-1903. *American Journal of Sociology.* 1(82):131-162.

[20] Hahn, Harlan. (1970). Civic Responses to Riots: A Reappraisal of Kerner Commission Data. *The Public Opinion Quarterly.* 1(34):101-107. Kelly, William R. & Snyder, David. (1980). Racial Violence and Socioeconomic Changes among Blacks in the United States. *Social Forces.* 3(58):739-760. Berkowitz, William R. (1974). Socioeconomic Indicator Changes in Ghetto Riot Tracts. *Urban Affairs Quarterly.* 1(10): 69-94.

[21] Jennings, Edward T. (1979). Civil Turmoil and the Growth of Welfare Rolls: A Comparative State Policy Analysis. *Policy Studies Journal.* 7(4):739-745. Button, James. (1978). Black Violence: Political Impact of the

Since the start of the 21st century, a prevailing view is that violence is seen as the last resort, a necessary mean in desperate circumstances, and to some extent can be a determinant of movement success. But, according to scholars, increasingly successful resistance is actually nonviolent, like the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt during the Arab Spring. In Erica Chenoweth and Maria Stephen's book *Why Civil Resistance Works*, the authors examined campaigns from 1990 to 2006 and found that nonviolent resistance was more than twice as effective as violent ones in achieving their goals. They regarded mass participation as an important source of success in non-violent resistance and pointed out that "high levels of participation in resistance campaigns can activate numerous mechanisms that improve the odds of success.[22]" For example, if potential protesters see that many people are joining the movements, they may also join. And their identities may vary. According to Chenoweth and Stephen, large campaigns are more likely to succeed and diversity of the campaign, as well as thick social networks are also important factors.

The Other Wave

If these studies focused on factors controlled by protest groups, a different wave of studies pays more attention on the broader context. Factors included in this broader context include public opinion and corresponding social and political context. Public opinion is an important consideration for social movement activists. Movements always try to gain public support and to attract more people to join them. Therefore, public opinion is regarded as an important external factor in studying the outcomes of social movements. Paul Burstein and

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1960s Riots. *Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.*
[22] Chenoweth, Erica & Stephan, Maria J. . (2011). Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict. *New York, NY: Columbia University Press*. Pp.27.

William Freudenburg (1978) studied the connection between public opinion and legislative change during the Vietnam War and concluded that cumulative war costs, public opinion and antiwar demonstrations all contributed to policy changes, making the examination of their individual impacts harder[23].

Paul Burstein is one of the scholars who has paid a lot of attention to the role of public opinion. In a 1979 article, he examined the relationship between public opinion, civil rights demonstrations and the passage of the anti-discrimination legislation after WWII and found that without fundamental changes in public opinion, demonstrations would not lead to legislation, and without demonstrations, it might be harder for public opinion to be translated into government actions[24]. In 2003, he reviewed the impact of public opinion and concluded that its impact is substantial and can remain strong even after taking the activities of political organizations and elites into consideration. Burnstein is not alone in ascribing importance to public opinion[25]. Many other scholars also think that public opinion has a strong impact[26]. But in 2010, Burstein admitted that past analyses on public opinion might have overestimated its impact due to sampling bias[27].

A more important segment of the literature has focused on the political context, as a key determinant of protest outcomes. In Goldstone's 1980 examination of Gamson's work, he suggested that the timing of success was independent of organizational characteristics and

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[23] Burstein, Paul & Freudenburg, William. (1978). Changing Public Policy: The Impact of Public Opinion, Antiwar Demonstrations, and War. *American Journal of Sociology.* 1(84): 99-122.
[24] Burstein, Paul . (1979). Public Opinion, Demonstrations, and the Passage of Antidiscrimination Legislation. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*. 2(43). pp. 157-172.
[25] Burstein, Paul. (2003). The Impact of Public Opinion on Public Policy: A Review and an Agenda. *Political Research Quarterly*. 1(56): 29-40.
[26] Page, Benjamin I. & Shapiro, Robert Y. . (1983). Effects of Public Opinion on Policy. *The American Political Science Review.* 1(77): 175-190. Shapiro, Robert Y. (2011). Public Opinion and American Democracy. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*. 5(75): 982-1017.
[27] Burstein, Paul. (2010). Public Opinion, Public Policy, and Democracy. In Handbook of Sociology and Social Research edited by Kevin T. Leicht & J. Craig Jenkins . Pp.65.

tactics and the broad context should be taken into consideration. As a reaction to the deficiencies of resource mobilization theory, the political process theory emerged[28]. Scholars stressed the importance of larger environment in the outcomes of social movements[29]. The concept of political opportunity is the most important factor in the political process theory. It can be defined broadly as "consistent but not necessarily formal, permanent, or national signals to social or political actors which either encourage or discourage them to use their internal resources to form social movements.[30]" Peter Eisinger (1973) studied the frequency of riots in American cities and started to consider political opportunity structure as a decisive factor of movement strategy variance. Political opportunity theorists tend to believe that social movements are more likely to occur when there are favorable external opportunities[31]. "These opportunities emerge when divisions develop among political elites, when new external allies emerge, when states weaken, and when new space in the political system opens.[32]" In other words, they believe that protest groups will not generate collective actions until political opportunities are available. For example, later in the 1950s, upper-middle class protestants and urban black people in America gradually changed from supporters for Republicans to swing groups between the two parties. And many of their opinions were becoming similar to those of the Democrats. Therefore, Democrats won the general election in 1964, which gave political opportunities to these groups of people. This promoted the

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[28] Goldstone, Jack. (1980). The weakness of organization: a new look at Gamson's The Strategy of Social Protest. *American Journal of Sociology*. 5(85): 1017-1042.

[29] McAdam, Doug. (1982). Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970. *Chicago: University of Chicago Press*. Tarrow, Sidney. (1994). Power in Movement. *Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.*

[30] Giugni, Marco. (2009). Political Opportunities: From Tilly to Tilly. *Swiss Political Science Review.* 15(2): 361-368. pp.361.

[31] Eisinger, Peter K. (1973). The Conditions of Protest Behavior in American Cities. *The American Political Science Review*. 1(67): 11-28.

[32] Morris, Aldon. (2000). Reflections on Social Movement Theory: Criticisms and Proposals. *Contemporary Sociology*. 3(29): 445-454. pp. 446.

development of many leftist movements centered on civil rights. The old balance was destroyed and new opportunities occurred.

There are some key points of criticism regarding the political opportunity theory [33]. The most important is the lack of clarity for the concept of political opportunity. According to Gamson and Meyer (1996) , "The concept of political opportunity structure is in trouble, in danger of becoming a sponge that soaks up virtually every aspect of the social movement environment - political institutions and culture, crises of various sorts, political alliances, and policy shifts.[34]" If it is used to explain everything, then it may risk explaining nothing at all. In addition, the model failed to explain why some movements succeed in political circumstances where political opportunities seem to be rare and some movements fail in circumstances that are more favorable.

African Studies

With regards to studying Africa's political mobilisation experience in the past decade, most scholars have opted for case studies, some of which study additional factors explaining the outcomes of protest. Some argue that the success of protests is related to the authoritarian regimes. Ruth Kricheli et al (2011) argued that the more oppressive autocracies are, the more likely they will fall. Their study also suggested that if the autocrats rely on oppressive means like repression and intimidation to sustain themselves, they can only stay in power if they can

[33] Khattra, Jaswinder., Jasper, James M. & Goodwin, Jeff . (1999). Trouble in Paradigms. *Sociological Forum.* 1(14): 107-125.
Meyer, David S. (2004). Protest and Political Opportunities. *Annual Review of Sociology.* 1(30): 125-145.
[34] Gamson, William & Meyer, David . (1996). Framing Political Opportunity.in Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements. Edited by Doug McAdam, John D.McCarthy & Mayer N.Zald. *New York: Cambridge University Press.* Pp.24.

successfully control civil resistance, or they are more likely to be ousted by their people[35].

When talking about Egypt's Kefaya movement, Killian Clarke (2011) also argued that "authoritarian regimes can actually facilitate social movement mobilization by making it easier for movement leaders to form opposition coalitions.[36]" Vincent Durac (2013) pointed out that the closure of political systems, as well as the socioeconomic crisis have contributed to a new form of political movement that focus on regime change and political reform[37]. But these arguments cannot explain why some protests failed while some succeeded, including under the same authoritarian government.

Other studies about the success of social movements in Africa focus on the participation of new actors and the new technologies they are using in the protests. Vincent Durac (2013) , for example, argued that before the Arab Spring, most opposition political parties and Islamist movements in the Middle East and North African (MENA) region were actually marginalized. And the Tunisia revolution as well as the following protests were dominated by young people who relied on non-traditional communications[38]. Alcinda Honwana (2015) also mentioned the role young Africans played in the past protest movements and points out that "young Africans have emerged as active social agents in uprisings that toppled longstanding regimes in Tunisia, Egypt, Senegal and Burkina Faso, counteracting the notion that African youth are apathetic.[39]" And these young people brought social media as a powerful instrument in the

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[35]Kricheli, Ruth , Livne, Yair & Magaloni, Beatriz . (2011). Taking to the Streets, Theory and Evidence on Protests under Authoritarianism. Unpublished manuscript. Stanford University. Pp.1-45.
[36] Clarke, Killian. (2011). Saying "Enough": Authoritarianism and Egypt's Kefaya Movement. *Mobilization: An International Journal*. 16(4): 397-416. pp. 397.
[37] Durac, Vincent. (2013). Protest movements and political change: an analysis of the 'Arab uprisings' of 2011. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*. 2(31):175-193.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Honwana, Alcinda. (2014). "Enough is enough!": Youth Protests and Political Change in Africa. Collective Mobilisations in Africa / Mobilisations collectives en Afrique. Edited by Kadya Tall, Marie-Emmanuelle

success of many protests. Anita Breuer et al (2015) considered social media as an important resource for the successful popular mobilization in the Tunisia revolution and conclude that social media serves four functions: allowing the digital elite to break the national media blackout; providing a basis for intergroup cooperation on a larger scale; reporting events' magnitude to raise the perception of success for potential protesters; providing a kind of emotional mobilization[40]. Muzammil M. Hussain (2013) also argued that information infrastructure, the use of mobile phones in particular, is a key factor in social movement success and concludes that "by causal logic it is actually the absence of Internet use that explains low levels of success by Arab Spring movements.[41]" Many other studies have reached similar conclusions[42].

The role of military elites is another focus. They are considered as important actors in the success of social movements. Zoltan Barany (2011) examined the influence of military in social movements and pointed out that military support is necessary for revolutionary success because "no institution matters more to a state's survival than its military, and no revolution within a state can succeed without the support or at least the acquiescence of its armed forces.[43]" Risa Brooks (2013) also mentioned the decisive role of military in the Tunisia revolution, saying that "the refusal of the Tunisian military to participate in repressing the

Pommerolle and Michel Cahen. Boston: Brill. Pp. 45.

[40] Breuer, Anita., Landman, Todd & Farquhar, Dorothea. (2015). Social media and protest mobilization: evidence from the Tunisian revolution. *Democratization*. 4(22): 764-792.

[41] Hussain, Muzammil M. & Howard, Philip N. (2013). What Best Explains Successful Protest Cascades? ICTs and the Fuzzy Causes of the Arab Spring. *International Studies Review*. 1(15):58-66. pp.64.

[42] Rane, Halim & Salem, Sumra. (2012). Social media, social movements and the diffusion of ideas in the Arab uprisings. *The Journal of International Communication*. 1(18): 97-111. Oxlund, Bjarke. (2016). #EverythingMustFall: The Use of Social Media and Violent Protests in the Current Wave of Student Riots in South Africa. *Anthropology Now*. 2(8): 1-13. Bosch, Tanja. (2017). Twitter activism and youth in South Africa: the case of #RhodesMustFall. *Information, Communication & Society*. 2(20):221-232. Ruijgrok, Kris. (2017). From the web to the streets: internet and protests under authoritarian regimes. *Democratization*. 3(24): 498-520. Tufekci, Zeynep & Wilson, Christopher. (2012). Social Media and the Decision to Participate in Political Protest: Observations From Tahrir Square. *Journal of Communication*. 2(62):363-379.

[43] Barany., Zoltan. (2011). The role of the military. *Journal of Democracy*. 4(22): 24-35. pp. 24.

protests initiated the end of the regime.[44]" Mai Hassan & Ahmed Kodouda (2019) analyzed the fall of Sudan's Bashir in 2019 and emphasized the role of military elites during the country's 2018-2019 protest. They concluded that increasing disagreement between Bashir and the elites, including military elites, accelerated the fall of the former president because the pressure of economic crisis and social chaos made the elites decide to protect their own interests and to act against Bashir[45].

Therefore, studies on African social movements pointed out some determinants of social movement success that are different from those discussed in the above general literature. As is shown in this section, the outcomes of social movements in Africa can be related to the authoritarian nature of the regimes, the participation of new actors and the new technologies used by them, as well as the role of military elites. They therefore stress a combination of factors stemming from protest movements and their context, though the context itself and especially authoritarianism looms large.

Sudan's social movements

As is analyzed above, there is now a fair amount of studies on the determinants of successful social movements both in Africa and across the world. These determinants are related to factors controlled by protest groups and the broad context. Differences in the characteristics of protest groups and changes in the broad context during different time periods may bring very different outcomes. Sudan's case from 2011-2013 and from

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[44] Brooks, Risa. (2013). Abandoned at the Palace: Why the Tunisian Military Defected from the Ben Ali Regime in January 2011. *Journal of Strategic Studies*. 2(36): 205-220. pp. 207.
[45] Hassan, Mai & Kodouda, Ahmed. (2019). Sudan's Uprising: The Fall of a Dictator. *Journal of Democracy*. 4(30): 89-103.

2018-2019 may be a good example, as scholars begin to explore what led to the success of the most recent episode.

Sudan's protesters were seeking to oust the regime both during the Arab Spring and again in 2018. But they failed during the former period, while succeeding in 2019. On 11 April, 2019, Sudan's president Omar Hassan al-Bashir was forced to step down by his own internal-security apparatus after a series of demonstrations that began in 2018.

Al-Bashir had ruled the country since 1989 after he led a successful and bloodless coup against Sadiq al-Mahdi, then president of Sudan, on 30 June 1989 with the help of the military and the National Islamic Front (NSF). He then became head of state, Prime Minister, Defense Minister and Commander in Chief of Sudan's armed forces. In 1993, he declared himself president of the country, starting to personalize the regime by tying the fates of the powerful actors who had organized the coup to his own and dismantling their independent sources of power[46]. He won several presidential elections in which he ran as the only candidate. In 2009, he was indicted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) as "being criminally responsible, as an indirect (co-)perpetrator, for intentionally directing attacks against an important part of the civilian population of Darfur, Sudan, murdering, exterminating, raping, torturing and forcibly transferring large numbers of civilians, and pillaging their property.[47]" Bashir refused all these charges. During his long tenure, protests and political challenges were not new to him, but his regime remained intact, even after the Arab Spring.

Starting in the early 2010s, the Arab Spring rapidly spread across North Africa and the

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[46] Hassan, Mai & Kodouda, Ahmed . Sudan's Uprising: The Fall of a Dictator. *Journal of Democracy*. 4(30): 89-103. pp.91.
[47] International Criminal Court. (2009. ICC issues a warrant of arrest for Omar Al Bashir, President of Sudan. https://www.icc-cpi.int/pages/item.aspx?name=icc+issues+a+warrant+of+arrest+for+omar+al+bashir_+president +of+sudan

Middle East. People were protesting against their governments during that period. Some regimes were finally toppled by the protesters. In Sudan, there were also protests demanding the fall of al-Bashir, but the former president survived this wave of protests and many protesters were arrested. A new wave of protest occurred after al-Bashir declared a new austerity policy in 2012. College students took to the streets. The police and the army used tear gas to crack down on these demonstrators. Some protesters died in the clash and many people were arrested. Another wave of protests was in 2013, after the government started to cut fuel and gas subsidies. But the protests still didn't succeed. Al-Bashir remained in power.

The protests that started in 2018 seemed to be different. The protesters were against the government's new austerity measures that canceled subsidies for basic goods, like flour, and devalued the country's currency. Opposition parties, young people and women movements joined the protest to express their discontent with the president. In December 2018, faced with a deeper economic crisis, another wave of protest broke out in several Sudanese cities and " the mobilization in Atbara signaled a shift in the nature of citizen's demands from purely economic to political.[48]" In the city of Atbara, students and other residents were chanting anti-austerity slogans and demanding an end to al-Bashir's regime. The protests rapidly spread to other cities. The police used tear gas to crack down on protests, causing injuries and deaths. Following these events, allies of the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) announced that they would withdraw from the government. On 22 February, Bashir announced a state of emergency and security forces were reported to enter universities in Khartoum and Ombdurman several days later. The protest continued in March and April. On 11 April,

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[48] Hassan, Mai & Kodouda, Ahmed. Sudan's Uprising: The Fall of a Dictator. *Journal of Democracy*. 4(30): 89-103. pp.98.

al-Bashir finally stepped down.

    As we can see from Sudan's case, the protests during the Arab Spring did not bring regime change, while those in 2018 did. What contributed to the different outcomes between these two waves of protests? By comparing these two episodes, this research paper seeks to explore what Sudan's case can teach us about success and lack of success in protest movements.

Chapter 2. The Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

Considering they are central to this research paper, it is important to define the notions of 'social movement' and 'success'. According to Mario Diani (1992) , scholars of social movements have different views on its concept. For example, Turner and Killian see social movements as a kind of collective behavior, while Tilly relates them to a political process, emphasizing the overall dynamics which determine social unrest and its characteristics[49]. After discussing these different views, Diani gave a synthetic definition of social movements: "A social movement is a network of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organizations, engaged in a political or cultural conflict, on the basis of a shared collective identity"[50].

Considering the concept of "success", William Gamson once tried to outline two types of success: acceptance and new advantages[51]. The former one involves the changing relationship from hostility to a more positive attitude between the challenging groups and their antagonists. The latter entails the fulfillment of the protesters' demands. In other words, "success" was defined by Gamson in two ways: whether these groups have been legally recognized as a special representative for particular interest and been involved in the policy-making process, and whether the protest groups have realized their goals. Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan have similar views. They pointed out that for a campaign to be considered "successful", there are two conditions: "the full achievement of its stated goals within a year of the peak activities, as well as a discernible effect on the outcome, such that

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[49] Diani, Mario. (1992). The concept of social movement. *The Sociological Review*. 1(40): pp.5.
[50] Ibid. pp. 13.
[51] Finch, Gerald . (1975). Reviewed Work(s): The Strategy of Social Protest. by William A. Gamson. *Political Science Quarterly*. 3(90): 544-546. pp.545.

the outcome was a direct result of the campaign's activities[52]."

In this research paper, "success" will be defined mainly regarding the aspect of goal achievement. This is because the most urgent demand of protesters were an end to al-Bashir's regime and they have achieved this goal. Al-Bashir's fall is meaningful for the country considering he had held power since 1989 and no social movements before succeeded in ousting him over the past three decades. Some may question the depth of changes in Sudan, since protest is ongoing and it remains to be seen what role the pro-democracy movement will play in the future negotiation with the military and substantively change the political system. Ousting of Omar Hassan al-Bashir under protesters' demand was nonetheless the most immediate and concrete goal of the movement.

As discussed in Chapter 1, social movement success can be the result of different determinants: factors that can be controlled by the protest groups, the broader context, the authoritarian regime, new actors, new technologies and military elites. But compared with the protests from 2011 to 2013, factors like "new actors" , "new technologies" and "authoritarian regime" may not be considered as determinants of al-Bashir's successful ousting or at least the only determinants. This is because the authoritarian characteristics of the regime did not change. And actors of protesters were also mostly young people. In both periods, people were trying to use social media to spread their ideas and to attract people.

Building on these insights, this paper will put forward two hypotheses to explore what has contributed to the successful ousting of al-Bashir:

Firstly, success is about the unity between the president and the elite groups. "Worldwide,

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[52] Chenoweth, Erica & Stephan, Maria J. (2011). Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict. New York, *NY: Columbia University Press*. Pp.12.

the greatest threat to autocrats' rule has come from elites, who have the clout and resources to influence political actors.[53]" If government leaders and the elite groups can maintain a good relationship, without external intervention, the government can maintain its position in a relatively easy way. Both political and military elites should be taken into consideration in this relationship. Political elites and their parties can be partners of the ruling party, which is important for a multi-party state. In Africa countries, military elites often play a special role with regards to bolstering governments or when they disagree sometimes challenging governments. Sometimes, the military will take over the government to save a country from chaos. But under some conditions, military elites may stage a coup for different reasons, such as seeking power and glory or to address abuses of the constitution and institutions by political elites. Sudan's Bashir himself is also a leader of a military coup in the 1980s and his stepping down was supported by his own internal security apparatus. During the Arab Spring, although there were also protests in Sudan, they were finally quelled by the government and its security forces. At that time, the elites in al-Bashir's government, including military elites, did not take actions to support demands of protesters. Therefore, it is reasonable to think that something might have happened between the president and the elites. And this division between the two may have contributed to the different outcomes in the two periods.

Hypothesis 1: the division between al-Bashir and the elites, especially military elites, contributes to the success of a protest movement and in Sudan's case the successful ousting of al-Bashir.

Another lead pertains to protest groups themselves. The protests during Arab Spring in

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[53] Hassan, Mai & Kodouda, Ahmed . Sudan's Uprising: The Fall of a Dictator. *Journal of Democracy*. 4(30): 89-103.pp.91.

Sudan started from Khartoum and Al-Ubayyid against austerity policies put forward by the government. Although protesters used Facebook to call for more people to fight against the regime, the majority of protesters were students and no organized groups or opposition parties emerged as leading power to provide support for the protesters. But during the protests from 2018-2019, an organized group called the Sudanese Professionals Association (SPA) emerged as a leading group in the movement. The Forces of Freedom and Change (FCC) also supported the ousting of al-Bashir and worked together with SPA and the protesters. Apart from these organized groups, opposition parties like the Umma Party also participated in the protest, although these parties did not play a leading role. The close cooperation among these groups may have made the movement more organized and more sustainable. Considering this, it is reasonable to think that the unity of organized groups and opposition parties may have affected the outcomes of the protests. Therefore, the second hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 2: The unity of organized leading group and opposition parties contributes to the success of a protest movement, and in Sudan's case the successful ousting of al-Bashir.

Chapter 3. Methodology

This research paper selected Sudan's protests in two different episodes to examine what contributes to the successful ousting of al-Bashir, Sudan's former president. There are some reasons for the selection.

As is shown above, there are many studies about the determinants of social movement success. However, most of them focused on single cases and a single episode in each case, or on a large universe of cases. For single case studies, they tended to study different successful social movements in different countries to find out what determined the outcomes of those movements. This is especially true for African studies in the past decade. Scholars mainly focused on famous successful protests in countries like Tunisia and Egypt during the Arab Spring and made conclusions about what had contributed to these successes. But there are still many unsuccessful protests in the history of different countries. Sometimes, protests with similar goals in a certain country may fail during one period, while succeed years later. Comparins them can yield important insights since variables are well controlled. This is because when we study cases in different countries, there are many factors that need to be taken into consideration since different countries have different national conditions. A single case with comparable episodes of non success and success avoids to some extent this issue.

There are additional reasons why we chose Sudan as the country of focus. Firstly, it is a country that has a long history of protest. Since its independence, leaders of the country witnessed numerous protests, big or small. Some of them have made great changes but most of them failed. During the Arab Spring, many people expected a regime change in the country just like those in Tunisia and Egypt, but the protests were quickly quelled by the government.

However, the thirty-year-long rule of al-Bashir suddenly ended in April 2019, which surprised many. People are interested in what has brought the result. Still, al-Bashir's fall is following the resignation of Abdelaziz Bouteflika, Algeria's former president who has held power for the past 20 years. Many people see the changes in these two African countries as a sign of an Arab Spring 2.0 in the region. It remains to be seen whether the statement is true and the study of Sudan's case may contribute to this.

The method used in this research paper is mainly document analysis. This is because this method can offer thorough background information about history and the current situation, offering a relatively comprehensive understanding. Pertinent academic articles and news reports were collected and analyzed. But most of the material related to the topic of this paper was news reports. This is because most scholars mainly focus on revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt, academic articles about Sudan's social movements during the Arab Spring are rare in part because it did not lead to changes. Also, this is because al-Bashir's stepping down is a relatively recent event, few many academic articles about Sudan's 2018-2019 protests could be found.

This paper used databases to deploy searching strategies with keywords to find reliable materials. For news reports, the material was sorted by the dates of their publications and the sources are convincing news agencies like *BBC News*, the *New York Times*, T*he Guardian*, etc. To assess the hypotheses, document analysis then mainly focused on several aspects: the roles and attitudes of the elites in the two episodes, al-Bashir's relationship with the elites in the past decade, the difference of protest groups in the two episodes, especially in terms of their organization, and the role of opposition parties.

There are also limitations for this kind of method. Reports with protest details are hard to find in Sudan's official media. And sometimes, material like news reports may not be objective. Personal views and values might be included in the reports. In order to be relatively neutral, this paper was built on reports from multiple sources in order to take a relatively neutral position in the analysis.

Chapter 4. The division between al-Bashir and the elites

"Worldwide, the greatest threat to autocrats' rule has come from elites, who have the clout and resources to influence political actors.[54]" Al-Bashir would have known this because he himself was one of the participants of the 1989 military coup that was carried out by the military and the National Islamist Front (NIF), a political party of the Islamist Movement that was later absorbed by al-Bashir's National Congress Party (NCP) in 1998. After al-Bashir took power, he took many measures to protect his regime from elite threats.

For political elites, he tried to ensure that important positions in the government would be held by "individuals willing to use state resources to support him in the event of a challenge.[55]" But this policy was initially challenged by Islamist politician Hassan al-Turabi, then leader of NIF. In 1999, al-Bashir started to purge al-Turabi and his loyalists in the party and the government in order to consolidate power. This marked "the beginning of the NCP's transformation from an ideologically driven, institutionalized party into a patronage-based party that placed few checks on Bashir.[56]" Many other party stalwarts were gradually removed by Bashir after this. At lower levels of the government, al-Bashir also tried to establish a patron-client ties. He carried out the policy of *Tamkeen* (empowerment) to help support an Islamic order and to purge institutions that did not support such an order, which generated widespread public anger. The president also took actions such as arrests and imprisonment to oppress political opponents. Years of oppression has weakened Sudanese political opposition.

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[54] Hassan, Mai & Kodouda, Ahmed. Sudan's Uprising: The Fall of a Dictator. *Journal of Democracy*. 4(30): 89-103.pp.91.
[55] Ibid. Pp.91.
[56] Ibid. Pp.92.

For military elites, al-Bashir tried to weaken the independence of the security apparatus. He tried to connect the interests of the security apparatus to the survival of his regime in order to avoid potential betrayal of the security forces. One of his policies was to make sure that all the branches of the security apparatus were well-funded. For example, it was reported that during a speech before Sudan's Air Force headquarters in December 2015, al-Bashir claimed that even if all the state's budget was spent on the military, it was still not enough [57]. In 2016, Sudan's military expenditure accounted for 2.65% of its GDP[58]. Its total expenditure for security and defense was roughly 17 billion Sudanese pounds (US$2.8 billion), accounting for 25% of the total budget of 67.5 billion Sudanese pounds, 8% more than United States' defense spending in 2016[59]. Al-Bashir spent large amount of money to support the security forces in order to buy off their loyalty, to quell potential challenges.

The other measure taken by al-Bashir was to make the security apparatus fragmented in order to reduce their coordination and cooperation, making it hard for them to organize a coup. This policy was to use "different security organs as counterweights to one another, giving them overlapping responsibilities, and reducing their lines of communication and coordination.[60]" The rivalries between different organs have made the cost of staging a coup much higher. He also created his secret police, the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) and supported militias in Darfur to achieve a balance of power.

Over the past three decades, although these policies have caused low efficiency in the

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[57] *Nuba Reports. (*16 February 2016). Sudan's economy: annual budget designed for war. https://nubareports.org/sudans-economy-annual-budget-designed-for-war/
[58] *The World Bank.* Military expenditure (% of GDP) of Sudan. https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.GD.ZS?end=2019&locations=SD&most_recent_value_desc=true&start=1998
[59]*Nuba Reports. (*16 February 2016). Sudan's economy: annual budget designed for war. https://nubareports.org/sudans-economy-annual-budget-designed-for-war/
[60] Hassan, Mai & Kodouda, Ahmed . Sudan's Uprising: The Fall of a Dictator. *Journal of Democracy*. 4(30): 89-103.pp.93.

running of the state, "Bashir's use of government resources and positions to buy off elites gave him powerful levers of control.[61]" These measures also made it possible for al-Bashir to survive past waves of protests, according to analysts.

In January 2011, many Sudanese students took to the streets in Khartoum and other northern cities to protest against price hikes and to demand an end to the ruling party's leadership. The protest was actually inspired by popular uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt months earlier. Apart from political opposition parties, the elites in the regime did not express their support for the protest. In contrast, they were concerned that the outcome of the protest in Sudan would be similar to that in Tunisia and Egypt. Therefore, they were calling for "more immediate action to prevent the kind of popular uprising that toppled long-serving leaders in Tunisia and Egypt and has spread to other nations including Libya.[62]" Armed riot police and national security forces were also following the president's order to crack down on protesters.

But things started to gradually change following the independence of oil-rich South Sudan in July 2011, leading Sudan's economy to experience a serious crisis. South Sudan accounted for three quarters of Sudan's oil reserves and, after its secession, Sudan lost 36.5% of its revenue[63]. The worsening economic situation started to force the regime to scale back the web of patronage established by the president because the government did not have enough money and resources to do so. Political elites were witnessing a decrease in the

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[61] Hassan, Mai & Kodouda, Ahmed. Sudan's Uprising: The Fall of a Dictator. *Journal of Democracy*. 4(30): 89-103.pp.94.

[62] *Sudan Tribune*. (28 February 2011). Sudanese youth group call for fresh protests on March 21. https://web.archive.org/web/20120229083702/http:/www.sudantribune.com/Sudanese-youth-group-call-for,38140

[63] *UNDP Sudan*. (July 2013). Update on Macroeconomic Developments in Sudan 2011-2013. pp. Viii. https://www.undp.org/search?q=Update+on+Macroeconomic+Developments+in+Sudan

patronage they could receive. This has weakened NCP, the ruling party.

Prior to 2018, the country could still get some external financial support from other countries and international organizations before 2018. From 2012 to 2017, Qatar donated large amounts of aid to Sudan and was the largest Gulf Arab donor to the country during that time[64]. And according to its 2012 Amended Budget, it was assumed that 25% of the country's deficit would be financed by external borrowing[65]. However, even if Sudan could still borrow money from the international community, the worse economic situation has made it increasingly hard for al-Bashir to buy off loyalty from the elites as he did before.

From 2012 to 2013, many small protests broke out but security forces were reported to have arrested many protesters. In September 2013, people took to the streets after the government announced cuts to fuel subsidies. This was the worst social unrest since al-Bashir took power. But the protests were confronted with violent crackdown. According to Amnesty International, security forces arrested at least 800 activists, members of the opposition parties and others. The number of deaths were estimated to be 210 in the capital alone[66]. The military elites were supporting the president's policy towards protesters and al-Bashir regarded the protests as conspiracies by saying "they brought agents, thieves and hijackers, and they said Khartoum will be overthrown...but Khartoum could not be overthrown because it was guarded by God.[67]"

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[64]Aldardari, Sima. (22 September 2020). The politics of Gulf aid to Sudan. *The Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington.*
https://agsiw.org/the-politics-of-gulf-aid-to-sudan/
[65] *UNDP Sudan.* (July 2013). Update on Macroeconomic Developments in Sudan 2011-2013. pp.8.
https://www.undp.org/search?q=Update+on+Macroeconomic+Developments+in+Sudan
[66] *Amnesty International.* (2 October 2013). Sudan escalates mass arrests of activists amid protest crackdown.
https://web.archive.org/web/20131006034857/http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/sudan-escalates-mass-arrests-activists-amid-protest-crackdown-2013-10-02
[67] *Al Jazeera*. (9 October 2013). Sudan's Bashir: Protests sought regime fall.
https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2013/10/09/sudans-bashir-protests-sought-regime-fall/

After the violent crackdown in 2013, Sudan's civil society largely remained silent and the relations between al-Bashir and the elites were gradually changing. The ruling party faced divisions. It was reported that the violent crackdown in 2013 has caused disputes within the ruling party. According to *BBC News*, faced with the crackdown, a group of 31 prominent figures led by Ghazi Salaheddin Atabani, the former presidential adviser, issued a memorandum to denounce the way used by the government in quelling the protest. Atabani's defection "does reveal the tensions in Mr Bashir's loose ruling coalition ... the prevailing economic crisis will make things even harder for them. [68]"

As is discussed before, Sudan's economy worsened after the independence of South Sudan in July 2011. The loss of the oil-rich South started to make it hard for al-Bashir to use state resources to buy off loyalties of the elites. But this was a gradual process because it is ordinary Sudanese people who were hurt first and most by the declining economy. Although the government took some measures to try to solve the problem, they did not combine them with the right mix of policies in sectors such as agriculture. Therefore, in the short term, the austerity measures brought higher inflation. In the long run, the government's policy to cut federal transfers and health and education budget affected further development of the country[69]. It was increasingly difficult for the country to attract foreign investment. Although ordinary Sudanese suffered the most, the lasting economic crisis and the incompetence of the government to tackle it also ended up affecting the elites.

Because of the bad economy, the patronage al-Bashir gave to both the elites and the

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[68] Copnall, James. (14 November 2013). Sudan feels the heat from fuel protests. *BBC News*.
https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-24938224
[69] *UNDP Sudan*. (March 2014). Update on Macroeconomic Developments in Sudan. pp.v.
https://www.undp.org/search?q=Update+on+Macroeconomic+Developments+in+Sudan

low-ranking soldiers was declining. In September 2018, al-Bashir had to cut the number of the government's ministerial positions from 49 to 21. And because of the high inflation, the value of the payments to lower-level operatives was reduced. "Bashir no longer had the resources to buy the loyalty either of important elites or of the foot soldiers who served as the regime's link to the grassroots."[70] Although the security apparatus was relatively better funded than others, they also faced a decline in budget. The military expenditure of Sudan in 2018 was only 1.648% of GDP, compared with 5.985% of GDP in 2009[71]. Therefore, these military elites started to find their own revenue streams rather than simply waiting for money and resources from the government. For example, the security apparatus offered arms to neighbouring countries like South Sudan and Somalia, contributing to "Sudan's becoming Africa's third-largest producer of arms as of 2015.[72]" This has made it possible for the elites to disconnect their revenues from al-Bashir's continued presidency. Although al-Bashir still focused on the elites, especially military elites, a lack of resources has made it harder for him to keep the military under control as he did before.

Al-Bashir was trying hard to consolidate support within the military, but his over-emphasis on the military has made him neglect his ruling National Congress Party and hardline Islamists in it, the other two pillars of al-Bashir's rule apart from the military[73]. This caused discontent, unhappiness and factional war in the ruling party and among its political Islamist members. Political Islamists were worried about the military's encroachment into

[70] Hassan, Mai & Kodouda, Ahmed. Sudan's Uprising: The Fall of a Dictator. *Journal of Democracy*. 4(30): 89-103. pp.96.
[71] *The World Bank.* Military expenditure (% of GDP).
https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.GD.ZS?end=2019&locations=SD&start=2005&view=chart
[72] Hassan, Mai & Kodouda, Ahmed. Sudan's Uprising: The Fall of a Dictator. *Journal of Democracy*. 4(30): 89-103.pp.97.
[73] Kuol, Luka. (17 March 2019). Sudan's al-Bashir rebuilds his military power base as other pillars crumble. *The Conversation.*
https://theconversation.com/sudans-al-bashir-rebuilds-his-military-power-base-as-other-pillars-crumble-113408

government affairs and were concerned that they would be sidelined by al-Bashir[74]. Al-Bashir's base among his supporters started to become fragile and his coalitions were becoming increasingly loose.

The protest wave from 2018-2019 clearly showed that al-Bashir did not have as firm control of the elites as before. Different organs of the security forces clashed with each other because some were still loyal to al-Bashir while others wanted to support the protesters. Security forces loyal to al-Bashir opened fire on the protesters during the sit-in in front of the military headquarters while soldiers who are part of the regular army opened the gates of the headquarters to welcome the protesters and to protect them[75]. The division within the military became increasingly visible as many low-ranking soldiers joined the protests and high-ranking officers declared that they would not take actions to disperse the protesters[76].

The president's government was also divided. On January 1st 2019, 22 political parties, including Islamist political parties, were calling for the president to step down and to form a sovereign council and a transitional government. They also withdrew from a national dialogue which was put forward by al-Bashir. Even the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS), the secret police, was also starting to denounce the incompetence of al-Bashir's government in solving the economic crisis. Many protesters saw this as the shifting attitude of the military from supporting the president to a relatively neutral position or even under some conditions standing with the protesters. Even the Rapid Support Force (RSF), the special

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[74] Ibid.

[75] Pachodo.org. (9 April 2019). Rival Security Forces Clash in Sudan Amid Anti-Government Protests. https://pachodo.org/latest-news-articles/news-from-various-sources/18878-rival-security-forces-clash-in-sudan-amid-anti-government-protests

[76] Osman, Muhammed & Bearak, Max. (11 April 2019). Sudan's Omar Hassan al-Bashir is ousted by military after 30 years in power. *The Washington Post.* https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/sudans-military-expected-to-announce-overthrow-of-president-following-months-of-popular-protests/2019/04/11/bedcc28e-5c2b-11e9-842d-7d3ed7eb3957_story.html

military force meant to protect the president, stayed low-key in the uprising[77]. A few days before al-Bashir stepped down, coalition partners of his ruling NCP also declined to support him. He was totally isolated days before his ouster.

As is discussed above, the division between the president and the elites in the government might have opened political opportunities for the movement. But causes of this division might be more complicated. This means we may need to consider another type of political opportunities and in this case, it is foreign relations between Sudan and other countries.

Though it may not have been part of the hypothesis proposed around regime relations, and especially between elites, a key relational element that emerged from the survey of documents is the importance of foreign relations. According to different reports, foreign relations might have been an essential factor in Sudan's military coup, and ahead of it the fraying of relations among elites. It was reported that one top elite played a very important role in ousting al-Bashir. Salah Gosh, the head of the secret police NISS, helped make the military coup possible.

According to Reuters, Salah Gosh held talks with several opposition groups and their leaders before the coup and "made at least one phone call to intelligence officials in the UAE to give them advance warning of what was about to happen.[78]" Through the meetings, it was a signal that the security apparatus had the willingness to topple al-Bashir and wanted to get

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[77] Kuol, Luka. (31 January 2019). Sudan impasse can end if Bashir sets aside his pride and agrees to mediation. *The Conversation.*
https://theconversation.com/sudan-impasse-can-end-if-bashir-sets-aside-his-pride-and-agrees-to-mediation-110733

[78] Abdelaziz, Khalid., Georgy, Michael & Dahan, Mahael . (3 July 2019). Abandoned by the UAE, Sudan's Bashir was destined to fall. *Reuters.*
https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/sudan-bashir-fall/

support from the opposition parties. But according to different sources, Salah Gosh was not alone in plotting the coup. There might have external support from Gulf Arab countries like the UAE and Saudi Arabia.

One opposition leader recounted how Gosh held meetings with eight opposition figures in the jail early January 2019. It was said that Gosh told these opposition leaders that he came from Abu Dhabi and the UAE had promised fuel and economic assistance for a new regime. And Gosh hoped that these leaders could support his plan to build a new political system in Sudan. Ten days later, he visited 26 cells that held political prisoners and according to one opposition leader, their conditions in the jail improved after Gosh's visit[79]. Gosh also contacted other top officials like the defense minister, the army chief of staff, the police chief and it was said that "each of the men realized 'Bashir was finished'." According to the Transitional Military Council (TMC) that now temporarily rules Sudan after Bashir's fall, Gosh indeed took a leading role in the plot[80]. But considering evidence from the opposition leaders, Gulf Arab countries might be involved in the plot, although there is no official response from these countries on this.

The relations between al-Bashir and Gulf Arab countries changed after the Qatar diplomatic crisis when important MENA countries announced to cut diplomatic ties with Qatar. In 2017, the relation between al-Bashir and the UAE was still warm when Bashir visited Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed in Abu Dhabi. Also, the UAE and Saudi Arabia have been Sudan's major donors since 2015. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Sudan has received over $18.04 billion from various Gulf countries

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[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid.

since 2015[81]. In 2015, Saudi Arabia donated $1 billion to Sudan's central bank. Apart from deposits to the central bank, development aid from Saudi Arabia and the UAE also reached a high level since 2015. " […] between 2005 and 2014 Saudi Arabia provided $333.1 million in financial aid assistance to Sudan while the UAE gave $124 million. Since 2015, Saudi Arabia has provided Sudan $1.5 billion in development assistance while the UAE has given $1.6 billion.[82]"

They provided large amount of aid in order to strengthen their links with Sudan. Saudi Arabia's donation to Sudan's central bank coincided with the Saudi-led intervention in Yemen. Saudi Arabia wanted to cultivate more allies in this region to better recruit soldiers to fight in Yemen because its own troops were limited. This assistance successfully convinced al-Bashir to join the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen. "Within a few months of the start of the 2015 Saudi-led offensive on Yemen, Sudan committed an estimated 10,000 troops to support the coalition.[83]" In addition to the war in Yemen, Saudi Arabia and the UAE also expected that Sudan could come to their side to against Qatar and Iran.

The regime of al-Bashir, maintained a close relationship with Iran from its early years. At the same time, his regime also maintained good relationship with Qatar and Turkey because they are two regional backers of the Muslim Brotherhood[84]. But in 2016, al-Bashir cut ties with Iran eventually after receiving assistance from Saudi Arabia and the UAE. In early 2017, al-Bashir visited the UAE and met with the prince. The prince was hoping that Bashir could

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[81] Aldardari, Sima. (22 September 2020). The politics of Gulf aid to Sudan. *The Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington.* https://agsiw.org/the-politics-of-gulf-aid-to-sudan/
[82] Ibid.
[83] Gallopin, Jean-Baptiste. The great game of the UAE and Saudi Arabia in Sudan. *Middle East Political Science.*
https://pomeps.org/the-great-game-of-the-uae-and-saudi-arabia-in-sudan
[84] Ibid.

keep Sudan's Islamists in check. This is because the UAE was leading regional countries to counter political Islam, which was regarded by the country and Saudi Arabia as a big threat to their monarchic rule and the region. Among different Islamist groups, the Muslim Brotherhood was viewed as a terrorist group and a big threat.

But the influence of Islamists was large and deep in Sudan. Al-Bashir himself took power in 1989 as the head of an Islamist junta. After purging al-Turabi, he carried out a policy called "tamkeen", mentioned above, to establish an Islamic order. The policy "involved purging institutions such as the judiciary, government departments, and universities of career bureaucrats who were not seen as supportive of the cause and replacing them with devout Islamists.[85]" In order to get a state job, many people chose to join the Islamist movement. After so many years, Islamists already controlled different parts of the government, such as key ministries. It was reported that al-Bashir and the prince reached an understanding to promise that he would remove Islamists in his government. In turn, the UAE would provide financial support to Sudan. "In the year to March 2018, the UAE channeled a total $7.6 billion in the form of support to Sudan's central bank, in private investments and investments through the Abu Dhabi Fund For Development.[86]"

In the summer of 2017, a diplomatic crisis broke out around Qatar. The UAE and Saudi Arabia cut their diplomatic relations with Qatar because they were enraged by Qatar's continuing support for the Muslim Brotherhood. Islamists in al-Bashir's government pressed him to maintain relations with Qatar. As a result, al-Bashir did not cut ties with Qatar. In

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[85]Hassan, Mai & Kodouda, Ahmed. Sudan's Uprising: The Fall of a Dictator. *Journal of Democracy*. 4(30): 89-103.pp.92.
[86] Abdelaziz, Khalid., Georgy, Michael & Dahan, Mahael . (3 July 2019). Abandoned by the UAE, Sudan's Bashir was destined to fall. *Reuters.*
https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/sudan-bashir-fall/

March 2018, Sudan and Qatar announced a new agreement to develop the Red Sea port of Suakin together. But al-Bashir's decision not to cut ties with Qatar angered the UAE and Saudi Arabia. In December 2018, it was reported that the UAE stopped their fuel supplies to Sudan. Sudan's economy at that time was in deep crisis. Problems like shortage of foreign exchange, deficit and debt are serious.

Sudan was desperate for money, but Bashir could not get the money needed. Cutting down of bread subsidies triggered popular demonstrations at the end of 2018. His relations with the Gulf Arab countries soured. It was reported that he went to Qatar for money, but somehow returned home empty handed[87].

As the large waves of protests broke out in December 2018, none of his foreign sponsors came to help him. On 24 December 2018, Gen. Mohammed Hamdan Daglo, the head of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), a guard of al-Bashir, expressed his support for demonstrators. On 7 April 2019, Gen. Jalal al-Dine el-Sheikh, the deputy head of the security service, leaded a delegation to Egypt to seek support from Egypt, the UAE and Saudi Arabia for a coup to topple al-Bashir[88]. On 11 April 2019, al-Bashir was overthrown by his own security apparatus.

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[87] Ibid.

[88] Gallopin, Jean-Baptiste. The great game of the UAE and Saudi Arabia in Sudan. *Middle East Political Science.*
https://pomeps.org/the-great-game-of-the-uae-and-saudi-arabia-in-sudan

Chapter 5. The unity of organized leading group and opposition parties

The power of ordinary protesters and opposition parties might also have contributed to the successful ousting of al-Bashir during the 2018-2019 wave of protests, which was regarded as the largest and the most sustained protest in Sudan since 1985.

Sudan has a long history of popular uprisings. Sudanese people used to be active in expressing their opinions through protests and some of the protests attained great achievements. In 1964 and 1985, peaceful civil disobedience successfully brought down military regimes. Angry teachers and other different professionals in Khartoum launched strikes that paralyzed the country and toppled the government. But following al-Bashir's coup, things changed. For many Sudanese people, al-Bashir taking power in 1989 negated the gains of the 1985 civil protests and was always seen as an error that needs to be corrected[89]. Throughout al-Bashir's tenure, many Sudanese people tried to express their discontent through protests. The former president witnessed numerous protests during his years in power, but none of them toppled his regime like the protests before the 2018-2019 protest.

Al-Bashir would have known the power of the people very well, having come to power through a coup. After taking power, he deliberately took some measures to weaken the country's civil society, especially in urban areas. At first, he banned unions, professional associations and political parties. Although the government later approved the existence of opposition parties and public sector unions, most opposition parties were co-opted and public sector unions were headed by loyalists to the regime. He also dismissed informal neighborhood popular committees, which were important groups used to mobilize people

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[89] Dwamena, Anakwa. (8 February 2019) . The historical precedents of the current uprising in Sudan. *The New Yorker*. https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/the-historical-precedents-of-the-current-uprising-in-sudan

around issues that would affect ordinary Sudanese[90]. Still, he "replaced members of the professional class and civil society with party loyalists, and his security forces began torturing activists in secret locations […] It also created a new federalist system, embedding supporters in the local levels of government throughout the country. [91]"

These measures weakened the country's civil society. Even if there were still protests inside the country before 2018, they were not very well organized and were quickly quelled by the government. The 2011-2013 protest's failure may partly have been because of the lack of leading groups and their cooperation with opposition parties. Protesters could not find groups or organizations that could lead them and help them to express their pursuits in a more formal and organized way.

In the 2011-2013 wave of protests, the NCP still firmly controlled different labor unions inside the country. The protests attracted certain amount of people, but they failed to attract more because many people were still afraid to take to the streets. Although ordinary Sudanese expressed their support for the student movements, they didn't think that these movements can address their concerns. Many activists were later detained by the government. The majority of the protesters were students. Although some of them built groups calling for a regime change, they did not have enough ability to organize protests and to make an agenda.

In protests in 2011 and 2012, Sudanese groups like "Youth for change", "Girifna (We are fed up)" and "Change Now" were emerging on the social media. These groups were organized by students and their organizers often used social media to call for creative protests and

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[90] Hassan, Mai & Kodouda, Ahmed. Sudan's Uprising: The Fall of a Dictator. *Journal of Democracy*. 4(30): 89-103.pp.95.
[91] Dwamena,Anakwa. (8 February 2019). The historical precedents of the current uprising in Sudan. *The New Yorker*. https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/the-historical-precedents-of-the-current-uprising-in-sudan

different strikes. Although they expressed their pursuit to bring down al-Bashir's regime, they did not have a formal plan on how to achieve their goal. When the first wave of the protests failed, these student organizers tried to stage weekly protests with different themes like "Licking Elbows". But these protests were often small and spread in different regions, which made it easy for the government to quell them one by one. And considering the heavy hand of security services, many people were afraid of taking to the streets.

Opposition parties were also not playing a powerful role. According to Zach Vertin, a Sudan analyst for the International Crisis Group, "years of subjugation at the hands of the N.C.P. have yielded both political apathy and a weak opposition.[92]" As a result, "the movement failed to garner mass appeal and dozens of activists remain detained without charge.[93]"

The 2013 uprisings might be considered as a departure from past protests because they started not from the capital but impoverished areas of the Sahara desert. But the protest turned violent as angry students started to torch gas stations and government buildings. More than 87 people were killed[94]. And it seemed that no groups were actually leading the movement and the students' appeals were not so attractive to ordinary Sudanese. The non-student protesters were not led by student organizers and their demands. According to Zachariah Mampilly, an expert on the politics of violent and nonviolent resistance, the protest did not stop after the government arrested student leaders. "The poor, driven by rage, did not take direction from

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[92] Gettleman, Jeffrey. (2 February 2011). Young Sudanese start protest movement. *The New York Times.* https://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/03/world/africa/03sudan.html
[93] *Sudan Tribune.* (1 March 2011). Sudanese youth group call for fresh protests on March 21. https://web.archive.org/web/20120229083702/http:/www.sudantribune.com/Sudanese-youth-group-call-for,38140
[94] Copnall, James. (14 November 2013). Sudan feels the heat from fuel protests. *BBC News.* https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-24938224

anyone, and they did not understand their actions as related to those of the student organizers. The desire for total political upheaval that animated their protests could not be squared with the comparatively meek reformist visions offered by student activists.[95]"

The opposition parties also did not form a leadership because they were weak and divided after years of oppression by al-Bashir's government. But the most important reason for this lack of direction on the part of opposition parties was that they were widely discredited among ordinary Sudanese people.

But the 2018-2019 wave of protests seemed to be different. Years of economic crisis and the government's incompetence in dealing with the crisis not only caused division between the elites, but promoted the country's civil society. Many professionals and academics started to form shadow unions and civil groups to call for changes. For example, the Sudan Revolutionary Front, the National Consensus Forces and a coalition of other organizations used to come together under Sudan Call, an umbrella initiative[96]. Although this initiative did not succeed because of infighting, it showed that Bashir's grip over the country's civil groups was not as strong as before. This is because al-Bashir used to use money to control popular discontent by fixing the price of common commodities like bread and gas. The public then took advantage of the low prices. But the government gradually ran out of money because of the worsening economic situation. Therefore, it was increasingly hard for al-Bashir to control popular discontent. Many civil groups started to pop up.

The 2018-2019 protest was clearly under the leadership of an umbrella group called the

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[95] Mampilly,Zachariah. The people's protest---Sudan from the margins. n+1.
https://nplusonemag.com/online-only/online-only/the-peoples-protest/
[96] Hassan, Mai & Kodouda, Ahmed. Sudan's Uprising: The Fall of a Dictator. *Journal of Democracy*. 4(30): 89-103.pp.97.

Sudanese Professional Association (SPA). The group is an alliance of independent professionals like doctors, teachers and lawyers that brought together a group of trade unions and committees. The internal structure and identities of its members remained unknown, which has made it possible for its members to avoid arrests and repression from al-Bashir's government[97]. SPA emerged after the violent crackdown of the 2013 protest, but its emergence was not sudden. It was said that the group had links to two political bodies in the movements in 1964 and 1985, one was the Revolutionary Committees Front of October 1964 (*jabhat el hayaat el thawriya*), the other was the Trade Union Assembly (*altajamoo al-naqabi*)[98]. The former one was a group of trade associations emerged after the 1964 protest that finally ended General Ibrahim Abboud's military regime through social movements and important negotiations. And the later one was also a central driving force in the fall of Jaafar El Numeiry in 1985, which brought Bashir to power. SPA played a similar role in the 2018-2019 movement and successfully attracted a large number of audience. This wave of protest was regarded as the largest and the most sustainable protest since 1985. There are some reasons to the group's success in attracting and mobilizing people.

Firstly, it has made a formal statement about what goals they wanted to achieve. On January 1st 2019, the group made a formal statement, the Declaration of Freedom and Change. In the formal declaration, SPA clearly stated their three goals and the first and foremost goal was "the immediate and unconditional end of General Omar Al Bashir's presidency and the conclusion of his administration.[99]"

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[97] Majdoub, Sarra. The ghost battalion. Africa Is a Country.
https://africasacountry.com/2019/08/the-ghost-battalion
[98] Ibid.
[99] Sudanese Professionals Association, Declaration of Freedom and Change,
https://www.sudaneseprofessionals.org/en/declaration-of-freedom-and-change/

Secondly, it remained open to other opposition groups and even the armed forces. In the declaration, the group stated that this was only a draft declaration which "remains open to additions and amendments […] accommodating all concerns and aspirations of the Sudanese people, and benefiting from previous relevant declarations of opposition groups.[100]" It also called for Sudanese soldiers in the armed forces to "take the side of the Sudanese people and to refrain from supporting Al Bashir by participating in the brutalizing and killing of unarmed civilians.[101]" By the time it was announced, the declaration already had 22 signatories. Through the declaration, the group also made their next step clear, which was to take a lead in future nonviolent struggle until their demands were met.

Thirdly, the group's early activities earned support from ordinary Sudanese people. SPA did not engage in anti-government political actions immediately after its establishment. As a group of professionals, SPA first focused on ordinary Sudanese people's living conditions. They made investigations across Africa and argued that Sudan's monthly minimum wage (between $6 to $120) could not meet people's basic demands. SPA made propaganda on increasing people's minimum wage, which has earned trust and support from ordinary workers.

The protest on December 25th 2018 has been regarded by civil society leaders as a turning point. While the movement initially demanded an increase in the country's monthly minimum wage, opposition parties suggested linking these demands to criticism of the government's corruption and to demand an end to the regime[102]. The movement was finally

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[100] Ibid.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Hassan, Mai & Kodouda, Ahmed . Sudan's Uprising: The Fall of a Dictator. *Journal of Democracy*. 4(30), pp.98.

successful in attracting between five-and ten-thousand people, the largest in the capital since

the regime took power[103]. Still, its activities often focused on vulnerable people. "They have

initiated civil disobedience, rallies and marches focusing on women, the displaced and exiled,

social justice and life on the margins.[104]"

Among them, women played a very important role. They "made up a substantial portion,

and at times a majority, of participants.[105]" Although women were often taking a large

portion in Sudan's street protests, this time there was an iconic lady who were later regarded

as a symbol of this movement and greatly encouraged many protesters. During the protest, a

picture of a female student called Alaa Salah went viral on the social media. She stood on a

white car and was leading an anti-government chant. Many Sudanese people were encouraged

by her picture. The TIME magazine spoke highly of her, saying that "the iconic photo of her

helped fuel Sudan's revolution.[106]" SPA's activities helped to bring ordinary Sudanese people

together and became an unstoppable power.

Fourthly, SPA had clear protesting strategies. Social media was often used in Sudan's

social movements. For example, the group used social media to call for a demonstration on

April 6th, the anniversary of the end of Jaafar El Numeiry's military regime. It organized

people to protest in front of the military headquarter. But what differed from previous

instances of mass protest was that the group attracted a lot more people through social media

because their early activities on improving Sudanese people's minimum wage earned public

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[103] Ibid.

[104]Majdoub, Sarra. The ghost battalion. *Africa Is a Country.*
https://africasacountry.com/2019/08/the-ghost-battalion

[105]Hassan, Mai & Kodouda, Ahmed. Sudan's Uprising: The Fall of a Dictator. *Journal of Democracy.* 4(30),
pp.96.

[106] Reilly, Katie. (30 October 2019). The Iconic Photo of Her Helped Fuel Sudan's Revolution. Now, She and
Other Women Are Being Sidelined. *TIME.* https://time.com/5712952/alaa-salah-sudan-women-protest/

trust. In addition, SPA did not only focus on Khartoum and other major cities. It tried to mobilize people in remote places, like the resignation marches in outlying towns and provinces because these places were often hit hardest by economic crisis and the government's austerity policies and there were little protest-proof measures in these regions. SPA also tried to reach people in different sectors, like the mobilization of dock workers in Port Sudan[107]. SPA also used creative languages like "Tasgot bass!" ("Fall, that's all!") to attract people. These calls "have become watchwords of the revolution—whether in Arabic, local dialects, or randouk (the urban slang) they are now embedded lyrical motifs.[108]"

Fifthly, the properties of SPA itself have attracted many people. Different from traditional opposition political parties, SPA and its organizers "weren't a traditional political class gave them crucial political capital.[109]" Sudanese people did not trust political opponents and opposition parties because they thought these parties were often involved in political fighting and did not serve ordinary people's interests. In this aspect, SPA was very different from traditional political parties and this is also why the group quickly earned acceptability and trust from the public.

This is not to say opposition parties did not play a role. Opposition political parties also played a role in the protest but not a leading role. During the protest, opposition parties expressed their support for the protests. As is mentioned above, the protest on December 25th 2018 was seen as a turning point in this wave of protest. SPA originally wanted to stage an economic protest calling for an increase of monthly minimum wage. But after following the

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[107]Majdoub, Sarra. The ghost battalion. *Africa Is a Country.*
https://africasacountry.com/2019/08/the-ghost-battalion
[108] Ibid.
[109] Monica, Martin La. (12 April 2019). Why al-Bashir's fall is only the start of a new Sudan. *The Conversation.*
https://theconversation.com/why-al-bashirs-fall-is-only-the-start-of-a-new-sudan-115389

suggestion from opposition political parties, the group decided to connect the issue with the corruption problem in al-Bashir's government and to demand an end to the regime. Early in the protest, opposition parties thus expressed their support. According to the *Washington Post*, opposition leader Sadiq al-Mahdi in December 2018 called for further investigation of the deaths of protesters during the movement. And Sudan Call (which includes al-Mahdi's Umma Party and the Democratic Unionist Party) and the National Consensus Forces, two of the largest opposition groups in Sudan, said they would support the protesters[110]. In January 2019, different arms of opposition parties came together to form the Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC), an opposition umbrella group. But because the unpopularity of opposition parties among the public, SPA agreed to remain the face of the movement after negotiation[111]. During the protest, the FFC asked citizens to form neighborhood committees in order to coordinate protests across the country. These committees helped to organize small protests in different neighborhood every day and "took on an important role in organizing guerrilla-style urban protests.[112]"

The political opposition parties were actually caught off guard in this uprising because the leaders of the three main opposition parties in Sudan - the National Consensus Forces Alliance, Nidaa al-Sudan and Ummar party – did not join the protest immediately after it broke out. This is another reason why they did not play a leading role in the movement. They ultimately ended up joining the movement, however. This is because "despite their backseat

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[110] Elamin, Nisrin & Mampilly, Zachariah. (28 December 2018). Recent protests in Sudan are much more than bread riots. *The Washington Post.*
https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2018/12/28/recent-protests-in-sudan-are-much-more-than-bread-riots/
[111] Hassan, Mai & Kodouda, Ahmed. Sudan's Uprising: The Fall of a Dictator. *Journal of Democracy.* 4(30): 89-103.pp.99.
[112] Ibid

role in the protests, the traditional opposition parties are nevertheless expected to play the role of kingmaker in any transition process. For its part, the professional association is expected to provide significant input.[113]"

Therefore, the leading group and the opposition parties might be important in ousting al-Bashir. SPA's properties and its ability in organizing and mobilizing people around the country "placed unusual pressure on the regime's ability to suppress unrest that spread broadly across cities and towns.[114]" And although opposition political parties were weak, they offered their support in the movement. The cooperation between the two might have made it possible to achieve their political goal, which is the successful ousting of the former president.

[113] Monica, Martin La. (12 April 2019). Why al-Bashir's fall is only the start of a new Sudan. *The Conversation.* https://theconversation.com/why-al-bashirs-fall-is-only-the-start-of-a-new-sudan-115389
[114] Ibid

Concluding Analysis

As is discussed in the literature review, studies of outcomes of social movements often stem from two different perspectives. Some studies mainly focused on the organizational characteristics of movements and their connection with movement outcomes. Others shifted attention to the broader context which includes factors like public opinion and the corresponding social and political context. The two hypotheses discussed above are also put forward from these aspects, from elite fragmentation to a movement's ability to organize, though what transpires from this is also the importance of factors not originally included in hypotheses, especially a broad sense of political opportunities, from those afforded by foreign relations to economic hardships the country faced following South Sudan's independence.

Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis is mainly focusing on the role of elites, which is related to the political context of a country. With the emergence of the political process theory, scholars started to pay more attention to the so called "political opportunity", which is broadly defined as "consistent but not necessarily formal, permanent, or national signals to social or political actors which either encourage or discourage them to use their internal resources to form social movements.[115]" Scholars of political process theory believe that collective actions taken by the protesters are only possible when there are political opportunities. They believe under some circumstances political opportunities will emerge. According to Aldon Morris (2000), political opportunities may occur "when divisions develop among political elites, when new

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[115] Giugni, Marco. (2009). Political Opportunities: From Tilly to Tilly. Swiss *Political Science Review.* 15(2): 361-368. pp.361.

external allies emerge, when states weaken, and when new space in the political system opens."

Considering this, the division between the elites might have offered a political opportunity for the protesters to successfully topple the former president. There are several reasons to this:

Firstly, according to scholars of the political process theory, political opportunities are vital for protesters to take collective actions. Although the actions of protesters in social movements are important, they are not enough to make a difference. This is also why many scholars started to consider the factor of the broader context in studies of contentious politics. And in Sudan's case, the former president has experienced numerous anti-government protests during his thirty-year rule, but these protests all failed until the 2018-2019 uprising. Even the protests following the successful revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt in 2010 did not yield any results. Therefore, it is reasonable for us to think that apart from the aspect of the protesters, there might be some other factors that have helped protesters to take advantages of the situation. And since al-Bashir was isolated by both political and military elites days before his ouster, there might have disputes between al-Bashir and the elites.

Of course, the broader context not only includes domestic political context. Changes in foreign relations can also be another form of opportunity. For example, regarding protest movements across the world, countries like the United States and European countries tend to engage with different forms such as supporting the government or the protesters. If the international response tends to denounce the government, it may put pressure on the government, which may help the protesters get compromise from the government. In Sudan's

case, however, the factor of foreign relations is less explicit because there was no official response or statement from related countries. But compared with previous years, the relations between Sudan and two regional powers, the UAE and Saudi Arabia changed and this change is possibly to have helped widen the division between al-Bashir and the elites.

Sudan's relations with the two countries were relatively stable before 2017. The two Arab countries have become Sudan's major donors since 2015 and Sudan also sent troops to Yemen to join the Saudi-led coalition. But in the Qatar diplomatic crisis in 2017, al-Bashir didn't stand with Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Instead, he continued cooperation with Qatar, which caused discontent from the two countries. The diplomatic crisis showed the division inside al-Bashir's government. His Islamist allies pressed him not to cut ties with Qatar while some other officials were unhappy that the president mishandled the important relation. As is discussed before, al-Bashir was totally isolated before his ousting. He was not only isolated by his political partners and the military, but also his Arab allies. But what is interesting is that al-Bashir could not get any financial support from former donors during the protest from 2018 to 2019 but after he stepped down, the UAE and Saudi Arabia announced that they would provide aid to the new regime.

Sudan's economy also worsened following South Sudan's independence. The loss of oil reserves caused the decline in Sudan's total expenditure as a percentage of GDP, its exports revenues and its foreign exchange reserves. This resulted in the depreciation of the Sudanese Pound against the US Dollar, further inflation, increase in debt stock as well as high unemployment rate[116]. The high debt made it hard for Sudan to get financial support from the

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[116] Ibid.

IMF. In the last days of al-Bashir's tenure, he failed to borrow money from any channels.

So when considering political opportunities around protest, it seems fair to conclude that the domestic political context in combination with foreign relations may have divided the close relation between al-Bashir and the elite, which created opportunities for the protesters.

Hypothesis 2

The factors related to the organizational characteristics of movements and their connection with movement outcomes is another aspect. Studies on this mainly focus on several factors, such as whether the movement leaders can build an effective organization, whether the leadership is professionalized, whether the protests were violent or not, what kind of beliefs and goals do the protesters have, whether the protest groups can remained unified, etc. The focus of the second hypothesis was therefore mainly on the leading organized group called the Sudanese Professionals Association (SPA) and the cooperation between the group and the opposition political parties during the latest episode. The organizing role played by SPA, and its federation of the movement may have contributed to the 2018-2019 protests' success.

Firstly, as is discussed above, protester groups and their characteristics are very important in the protest. As is discussed above, if protest groups want to make a difference, they should meet demands such as effective organization, professionalized leadership, unity among groups, etc. In Sudan's case, compared with protest groups in the social movements in early 2010s, groups in the 2018-2019 wave of protest clearly have different characteristics. The most obvious difference is the emergence of SPA, the umbrella group that helped to

organize the protest. The group also played a leading role in the protest. Therefore, this paper assumes that this leading group might be very important in the protest.

Secondly, although political parties are weak, divided and widely discredited in Sudan, as political oppositions, they are against al-Bashir's regime. So, even though opposition parties did not join the protest immediately after it broke out, they soon expressed their support for the protesters. The opposition parties offered useful advice to the SPA on protests and successfully helped the group relate economic crisis to the government's incompetence and corruption, which attracted many ordinary Sudanese people. In early 2019, different arms of opposition parties came together to form an opposition umbrella group called the Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC) to offer support to the protests. FFC asked people to form neighborhood popular committees to help organize a guerrilla-style urban protests. Their actions, together with actions taken by the SPA, helped to make the 2018-2019 protest the largest and the most sustainable protest in Sudan since 1985.

This paper analyzed the leadership of the group from several aspects: its goals and beliefs, its attitudes towards opposition parties and the army, the reasons why they could get public support, their protesting strategies and the properties of the group itself. But as it is mentioned in the literature review, about the leading group, the professionalization of leadership and the centralized and bureaucratized feature of the group are also key factors that might affect the outcomes of the protests in Sudan. According to Suzanne Staggenborg (1988), the professionalization of leadership would formalize the organizations, affecting the maintenance and direction of social movement organizations. Professional social movement means that "more sources of funding become available for activists who make careers out of

being movement leaders.[117]" But since the structure and members of the SPA are still largely known, it is difficult to know the funding conditions of the group. And the problem is the same for whether the group is more centralized and bureaucratized.

Considering the two hypotheses, some factors remain unknown and the information is also relatively limited. But what's clear is that the situation in 2018-2019 provided some political opportunities for Sudanese people to successfully topple al-Bashir. The interaction between these political opportunities, including in terms of foreign relations, and the movement's structures played an essential role in the former president's stepping down. Therefore, for this paper, it is in interaction between political opportunities and structures that we see the shift in the possibility for the successful ouster of al-Bashir. There is no fragmentation of elites or even more structured organization outside of the wider political context.

As is discussed in the literature review, many scholars of contentious politics have discussed the determinants of protest successes. But most studies were based on western experience or were looking at large comparative universes, neglecting more determinants of success in specific cases. Studies on Africa's contentious politics for the last decade were often focusing on countries like Tunisia and Egypt because protests in these countries had brought great changes. When we think about the determinants of protest successes in contentious politics, it is reasonable for us to look at successful cases. But it is also important to know why some protests didn't succeed. From comparative studies, people can have clearer understanding about success and lack of success in contentious politics. This paper, as a

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[117] Staggenborg, Suzanne. (1988). The consequences of professionalization and formalization in the pro-choice movement. *American Sociological Review*. 4(53): 585-605.

comparative study about two different waves of protests in a non-Northern country, is trying

to offer a slightly different perspective in considering the determinants of protest success in

studies of contentious politics.

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