

Review of: "Political Transition in Sudan"

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The title should be more descriptive of the content of the paper. No analytical foundation, or research framework, is presented here so it is not clear what distinguishes this paper from merely being the author's own opinion. There is no clear review of existing literature or theories on state fragility, transitions from colonialism to democracy, conditions for coups, military rule etc. There are many claims made which need academic references.

This paper covers too many separate research areas, and consequently does not explore any of them in enough critical depth. Much of the paper consists of descriptive writings about various events and histories, rather than scholarly analysis. I would suggest focussing either on internal factors, or external influences for state fragility, but perhaps not both. The abstract sounds like the conclusions have already been reached. And based on unfounded assertions, it needs a stronger evidence-base. The range of external (negative) influences presented here on the country is too broad and disparate. "Sudan shall develop an integrative and inclusive political approach to unsnarled and disentangled from the periodic popular revolution which begets military administration and secessions to the worst"- sentence doesn't make sense, needs rewriting.

Introduction: not a suitable introduction to this paper. "was the largest and most peculiar of all the former European colonies in Africa"- unsuitable and unclear language.

Section 2. the brief history of coups is useful. But "52 years have occurred in the nation (Fluehr-Lobban, 1987)" – this reference from 1987 cannot be used to make a claim about events that happened afterwards. "The inability to come to an agreement and strike a compromise may be the cause of instability"- but this begs the question, why the inability? Inability in itself is not a sufficient cause.

Instability in South Sudan is perhaps a separate topic, and could be addressed separately from Sudan itself. Historical instability (and drawing conclusions from it) should be distinguished from descriptive writing about the current situation. Arguably, the conflict in regions like Darfur, is different to the political tensions in Khartoum.

Section 4 starts to repeat information from 2 and 3. Could be more succinct and more analytical.

Section 5- no argument is given for why the causes of the instability are those that the author identifies. No argument is given for why Arabism has been implemented or considered as a political tool. In the part on Identity Mismanagement, some interesting arguments begin, presented more coherently and more critically examined. The final paragraph of this section might fit better in the conclusion instead.

6. "the US and other UN countries have encouraged Arabism in Sudan"- how is this true? "Every country bordering Sudan has taken part in the reciprocal sponsorship of rebel groups"- is this correct? Also, it is not clear from this section how political manoeuvring of various neighbouring countries has contributed so significantly to the political instability in Sudan.

The paper needs restructuring and condensing. The current system of sections needs reworking. The main problem is the lack of critical analysis, and tying theory to real-world events.

The paper does not have an overall conclusion that clearly addresses the main causes of political instability. Many of the causes of instability presented here, are themselves effects of instability. The paper finishes with paragraphs of claims by the author which are weakly evidence-based, and appear to be his/her perception of events. The final recommendations seem to be ambitious and unachievable, in light of the reality of Sudan's post-colonial experiences.

The bibliography needs small errors correcting. The paper needs careful proof-reading and checking for suitable language.

There is a lot of interesting material here, and the author clearly knows the post-colonial history well. I consider this would be a publishable paper, with a major rewrite and revisions throughout.