

The Arab Spring from a Different Dimension: Predispositions and Preconditions in Tunisia and Egypt

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Abstract: This article analyses how the Arab Spring broke out in Egypt and Tunisia from a democratization theory perspective. It will look closely at the link between social movements and democratization through exploring the three-step democratization theory of Samuel Huntington. Besides, this piece examines the predispositions and preconditions which pave the way for the overthrow of authoritarian regimes through social uprisings. Predispositions are characteristics of authoritarian regimes including average democracy level and the level of civil liberties and political rights. Preconditions are typology of authoritarian regimes and labour movements in Tunisia and Egypt. Although democratization is a very long process, different factors and elements prepared a ground for the beginning of the change in the Arab region. According to this, in support of my argument, the initial phase of social uprisings which made people unite against authoritarian regimes despite repression will be explored.

Keywords: Arab Spring, Democratization, Social Movements, Egypt, Tunisia

Farklı Bir Bakış Açısından Arap Baharı: Mısır ve Tunus'ta Eğilimler ve Önkoşullar

Öz: Bu makale, Mısır ve Tunus'ta Arap Baharı'nın nasıl ortaya çıktığını, demokratikleşme teorisi ile analiz etmektedir. Samuel Huntington'ın öne sürdüğü üç adımlı demokratikleşme teorisiyle birlikte, toplumsal ayaklanmalar ve demokratikleşme arasındaki ilişki analiz edilecektir. Buna ek olarak, bu makale otoriter rejimlerin toplumsal ayaklanmalarla devrilmesinde rol oynayan yatkinlıkları ve önkoşulları incelemektedir. Yatkinlıklar; otoriter rejimin temel nitelikleri, ona dahil olan ortalama demokrasi seviyesi, medeni özgürlükler ve siyasi haklardır. Önkoşullar ise; otoriter rejimlerin sınıflandırılması ve Mısır ve Tunus'taki işçi hareketleridir. Demokratikleşme çok uzun bir süreç olmasına rağmen, farklı faktörler ve öğeler, Arap bölgesinde değişimin başlaması için bir zemin hazırlamıştır. Buna bağlı olarak, bu makalenin temel argümanı çerçevesinde, baskıya rağmen, otoriter rejime karşı olan toplumsal ayaklanmaların başlangıç fazı ele alınacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Arap Baharı, Demokratikleşme, Toplumsal Ayaklanmalar, Mısır, Tunus

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Introduction

Under repressive and non-democratic regime conditions, the core of human rights and demands - which are civil liberties and political rights - are limited. For this reason, what this article will closely look at is: compared to democratic regimes, how demands in authoritarian and repressive regimes are formed to achieve and gain civil liberties and rights. The main goal is to bring democratization. It is worth bearing in mind that democratization is quite a long process involving various steps, starting from toppling the non-democratic regimes and eventually consolidating democracy. Yet the crucial, initial step is to down the non-democratic and authoritarian regime which essentially obstructs the people's freedom.

To be involved in politics as a member of a polity, civic engagement plays a key role. The only public spaces for citizens to bring civic engagement and to advocate their rights can be the arenas which are suitable for social movements. We can observe such examples of social movements which took place in various regions such as the Zapatista Movement in Mexico and the Labour movements in Poland which challenged the repressive and non-democratic regimes. It should be taken into account that social movements are the most important tool to participate through both deliberate and non-deliberate acts. These two types of acts constitute formal and informal participation. What we realized is that the unique example of the compound of formal and informal participation through social movements was evident in the Arab Spring. What we see in the Arab Spring is the perfect harmonization of formal and informal participation of people. Informal participation started by social movements' nondeliberate acts and continued through formal participation - which means their involvement into politics to bring down Hosni Mubarak of Egypt and Zine El Abidine Ben Ali of Tunisia. Of course, in the meantime there were predispositions of the Egyptian and Tunisian authoritarian regimes which made them vulnerable and liable to be overthrown.

Other than this, preconditions such as labour movements and strikes were highly influential in terms of paving the way for greater collective upsurges across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). I have chosen Tunisia and Egypt throughout the Arab Spring as cases to support my argument which is that: social movements had an initial impact as a catalyst in democratization to topple authoritarian regimes. The reason why I discuss these two countries is that they are successful examples of authoritarian leaders being overthrown by social movements.

The first section of the article will address the fundamental elements of democratization process which are civil liberties and effective political participation. The second section will focus on the steps of democratization process. The next part will address preconditions and characteristics of authoritarian regimes which lead to a successful overthrow in the context of debates related to levels of average democracy, civil liberties and political rights. Furthermore, to discuss the characteristics, I will consider the typology of regimes in general and then particularly in Egypt and Tunisia. In the following section, preconditions which pave the way for the overthrow of authoritarian presidents through social movements will be analyzed. I will draw attention to the prominence of labour movements in the Arab Spring, in Tunisia and Egypt, as essential factors in the fall of Mubarak and Ben Ali.

The Fundamental Elements of the Democratization Process

In the contemporary agenda of the 21st century, people's demands play a crucial role in influencing democratic transformation of an authoritarian country. The demands of populations such as civil liberties, free elections, and pluralism are core elements of the democratization process. In the process of democratic transition, these demands are firstly provided then ensured in the installation of democracy. The democratic transition of an authoritarian country should be reinforced by bringing a secure and democratic environment which does not repress civil liberties and effective political participation so as to ensure civic engagement.

Civil Liberties

From the 18th and 19th centuries to the 21st century, civil liberties have referred to the first generation of human rights (Møller & Skaaning, 2013, p. 84). For centuries, human rights were centred upon freedom which promotes civil liberties. Human rights include the guarantee of civil liberties, effective political participation in free elections, and pluralism. Following this point, the guarantee of civil liberties as a component of human rights makes it a fundamental element of democratization. For centuries, authoritarian states repressed civil liberties to increase their power in comparison with democratic states. Therefore, since democratization bolsters civil liberties, it becomes a "facilitator of liberty" (Møller & Skaaning, 2013, p. 99).

I shall begin by assessing core elements of civil liberties. Civil liberties are divided into two categories: political and private. Whilst political liberties consist of freedom of opinion/expression and freedom of assembly and

association, private liberties include freedom from discrimination and intimidation and freedom of movement which are under the titles of personal integration and exertion rights (Møller & Skaaning, 2013, p.85). The relationship between democratization and civil liberties could be summarized as a coexistence of them in a secure environment which prevents repression. Since citizens are the core elements of democratic systems: their liberties are the key element which have to be guaranteed. Accordingly, democratization could be bolstered through enlarging citizens' choices and freedoms and by their inclusion into all issues, particularly political procedures. In other words, if we look at the real meaning of democracy which is a compound of *demos* (society/people) and *kratos* (rule), the true meaning of democracy is that 'people rule'. Since "people are the wealth of a nation" (UNDP, no date), they should be the major voice with respect to decision-making and all other issues through ensuring their liberties to freely express their beliefs and ideas which are the predominant aspects of the assessment of personal integrity and exertion rights. Yet, with respect to authoritarian systems, in order to stimulate democratization, civil liberties should be reinforced. Since authoritarian leaders usually lack legitimacy, they are inclined to repress the citizens, a situation which dramatically violates civil liberties (Møller & Skaaning, 2013, p. 87).

A vital question that we should ask is why civil liberties are elements of democratization. To give a response, Dahl (1971, p. 1) highlights that not only political institutions but also citizenry must be responsive to democratic principles, so as to facilitate democratization. The link between citizenry and civil liberties must be ensured through various institutions throughout political procedures which is an initial step of the democratization process. Civil liberties indeed play a prominent role in the representation of the public interest. In other words, democratization is another way to improve the "public politics" (Tilly, 2000, p.1). Public politics is an area that superimposes the representation of public interest, political actors, external political agents and citizens. This arena paves the way for negotiation and bargaining amongst various actors which also bolsters the guarantee of civil liberties. Regarding democratization, it is particularly important that people should freely express their interests, ideas, and values without any repression from the authoritarian leaders. Hence, the linkage between public interests and civil liberties becomes an essential component of the democratization process. In order to explain further, considering the fundamental features of a democratic regime and its relation with its citizenry might be fruitful. Tilly (2000, p. 4) defines that:

a democratic regime is democratic insofar as it maintains broad citizenship, equal citizenship, binding consultation of citizens at large with respect to governmental activities and personnel, as well as protection of citizens from arbitrary action by governmental agents.

This illustrates an explanation for the popular demands seeking broader involvement in political procedures. Since in democratization civil liberties consist of equality and breadth of citizenship and protection of rights and citizenship (Tilly, 2000, p.6), the process should aim for civic engagement not only at the societal but also the political level, through including them in political procedures to represent the public interest.

To sum up, for centuries the truth is that people have fought for their dignity and freedom to be released from repression. Other than examples in the past, nowadays the most significant case witnessed in the MENA was the dereliction of civil liberties which obstructed people expressing freely their ideas and beliefs. People and their liberties were repressed by authoritarian leaders such as Ben Ali and Mubarak. As a result of repression, as in the case of the Arab Spring, social movements were triggered as a response to gain their civil liberties, which also highlights the freedom of movement. With regard to the alleviation of the traditional authoritarian way of ruling, in the democratization process the initial thing to be achieved is to replace repression with toleration and deliberation of civil liberties. Therefore, social movements striving for civil liberties should be tolerated; moreover, they should be taken into account to hear the voice of citizens.

Effective Political Participation

In democratic regimes, political officials are chosen by elections in which the large part of the population is to be able to participate (Huntington, 1993, p. 109). This demonstrates that one of the core elements of the democratization process is to ensure effective political participation which paves the way for the representation of public interests thereby guaranteeing civil liberties. Therefore, I define democratization as a process which leads to effective political participation as a core principle in its agenda, as well as civil liberties. To begin with, there is a crucial linkage between democratization and effective political participation. In order to accomplish civic engagement with the political procedures through ensuring civil liberties, it is necessary to provide political participation.

Political participation is interpreted by two different methods. The first is formal political participation which was defined by Holger Albrecht (in Khatib, 2013, p. 317). This purports that formal political participation takes place so as to change the policy structures (Albrecht, in Khatib, 2013, p. 317). The second one is articulated by Laila Alhamad (in Khatib, 2013, p. 317) which is called informal political participation and involves non-deliberate acts such as social uprisings to be involved in the political structures. Here, my focus will be the blurred lines between formal and informal participation, as evidenced by the Arab Spring which resulted in the toppling of authoritarian leaders.

In Egypt and Tunisia, popular uprisings marked a major change which led to the blurring of lines between formal and informal participation. As non-deliberate acts of assembling of people from different segments to revolt turned into deliberate acts which brought about the fall of the Mubarak and Ben Ali regimes, this represented a big political change. Hence, effective political participation was exemplified through the blurring of lines between participation methods. Since informal participation turned into formal participation, in democratization we can see the prominence of effective political participation through social movements which will develop civic engagement further.

Consequently, an active citizen participates in the community's life through civic engagement in order to determine and shape their future lives. Because people no longer solely express their dissatisfaction but deliberately demand the fall of authoritarian leaders to start democratization (Khatib, 2013, p.318). As reinforced by a democratic political environment, civil liberties, and political rights should be accomplished step-by-step in order to support democratic transition and effective political participation in authoritarian countries. In order to give a broad definition of democratization process, Samarasinghe (1994, p. 14) contends that:

a process of political change that moves the political system of any given society towards a system of government that ensures peaceful competitive political participation in an environment that guarantees political and civil liberties.

This brings us firstly to perceive democratization as a long process, and secondly to consider civil liberties and political rights as main elements of democratization which must be guaranteed.

In a nutshell, the point which can be extracted from this section is that the core elements of democratization process - civil liberties and effective political

participation – play crucial roles in building a democratic regime. With regard to civil liberties and political participation, undeniably there is considerable impact of social movements in the democratization process.

The Steps of Democratization Process

The uprisings in the Arab Spring brought about a new paradigm with respect to democratization. The evolution from an authoritarian regime towards a democratic one requires a process of democratization which applies different phases step-by-step. The members of Arab uprisings have demonstrated a new definition which compounds of procedural and participatory of democratic transitional procedures through assessing blurred participation of citizens. Therefore, we can state that both political rights and civil liberties became grounds for democracy. Hence, the initial phase to transform an authoritarian regime to a democratic one requires guaranteed civil liberties and the political participation of the population. In particular, authoritarian regimes are the political environments which most suppress the peoples' voice and liberties. Therefore, automatically effective political participation and civil liberties are repressed. In order to overcome this, the authoritarian regimes must be ended in order to start the democratic transition.

To give a simplified background of democratization, democratization consists of three major steps (Huntington, 1993, p.35):

- 1- The end of the authoritarian regime
- 2- The installation of the democratic regime
- 3- The consolidation of the democratic regime.

According to Huntington (1993, p. 35), the first step of the democratization process is the emergence of reformers. Reformers consist of members of social movements who want to topple the regimes to stimulate the democratization process. Since people were essentially the only responsible for generating change despite different circumstances, reformers have a leading role to stimulate democratization (Huntington, 1993, p. 109). In particular, under authoritarian regimes the role of people increased as we look at previous examples of third wave of democratization. This third wave transition occurred in the 1970s and 1980s to end authoritarian regimes in various parts of the world; Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America (Huntington, 1993, p. 106). This complex transition involved different groups of people pursuing diverse interests and ideas. Yet the dominant idea was to end authoritarian systems to

bring about democratization. As democratization is a process that can only be achieved in the long-run, it was hard to install and consolidate democracy in those countries which were influenced through the third wave of democratization. Still, to end the authoritarian regime remains the initial and most crucial step of democratization.

As witnessed in the last a few years, participation of individuals in the Arab Spring through emerging rebellious groups against the authoritarian regimes, starting from Tunisia and Egypt and expansion to other Arab countries in 2010 and 2011 were the first steps in the democratization process (Sarihan, 2012, p. 70). Even though there are great differences between the Arab Spring and the third wave of democratization regarding characteristics of movements and repertoires, the first step of democratization was the shared goal of the agendas of 1970s-1980s and 2010s which is to challenge authoritarian and non-democratic systems. Within this initial process, particular groups of individuals solely demanded to topple the autocratic and tyrannical political order in the Middle East, which was a great obstacle for democratic rights. In other words, the most crucial obstacle which obstructs the civic engagement and civil liberties in effective political participation should be eliminated.

As long as this initial step is achieved, the second step of democratization - which is to install the democratic regime - could begin. In the wake of popular uprisings, people are supposed to acquire the strength to be in power in the regime (Huntington, 1993, p. 127). The completion of the installation phase of the democratic transition depends on the replacement of authoritarian officials with reformers. This could be achieved through democratic, free elections which aim to favour non-elite parts of the community - which includes various groups besides elites of tyrannical and authoritarian order. The third step is the consolidation of the democratic regime. In pursuit of the stabilization of the political grounds to achieve transition, this stabilization must be secured through the provision of constituency amongst opponents and supporters of the new regime (Huntington, 1993, p. 141). In other words, in the wake of the opposition gaining strength, the government starts to lose its power and effect over citizens until it eventually falls (Huntington, 1993, p.143). As a consequence, starting from the first phase of democratization process, the desire to ensure civil liberties and political rights becomes a major element which also gives power to the people to end authoritarian regimes so as to stimulate democratization. To sum up, the democratisation takes place in a

three-step process: “the struggle to produce the fall, the fall and the struggle after the fall” (Huntington, 1993, p.142).

Predispositions and Characteristics of Authoritarian Regimes

In this section, I address those predispositions of authoritarian regimes which make them more susceptible to be successfully overthrown by social movements. In order to do so, I look at the overview of particular characteristics of the Middle Eastern authoritarian regimes prior to the Arab Spring in the context of Tunisian and Egyptian regimes. How these authoritarian regimes became inclined to be deposed in order to stimulate the democratization process will be the main focus of this chapter.

The most notable predisposition which makes authoritarian regimes liable to be deposed is that their leaders are obsessed with staying in power in the long-run, even though they are supposed to monitor society in terms of many aspects (Møller & Skaaning, 2013, p. 87). For this reason, without considering citizens’ rights such as civil liberties and participation rights, they continue to repress society which is the least-difficult method of ruling. Rather than promoting civil rights and reinforcing civic engagement which they consider a threat weighing against their interests, they prefer to strengthen their dominance and power to stay in office over the long term. In order to further explore the predispositions of authoritarian regimes, it is fruitful to look at the characteristics and different types of authoritarian regimes. This chapter is divided into two sections: in light of predispositions and characteristics the first deals with characteristics and typology of authoritarian regimes, and typology of the Egyptian and Tunisian regimes before the Arab Spring. The second section will address and analyse the preconditions of the Arab Spring in Tunisia and Egypt to down Ben Ali and Mubarak regimes.

Characteristics of Authoritarian Regimes

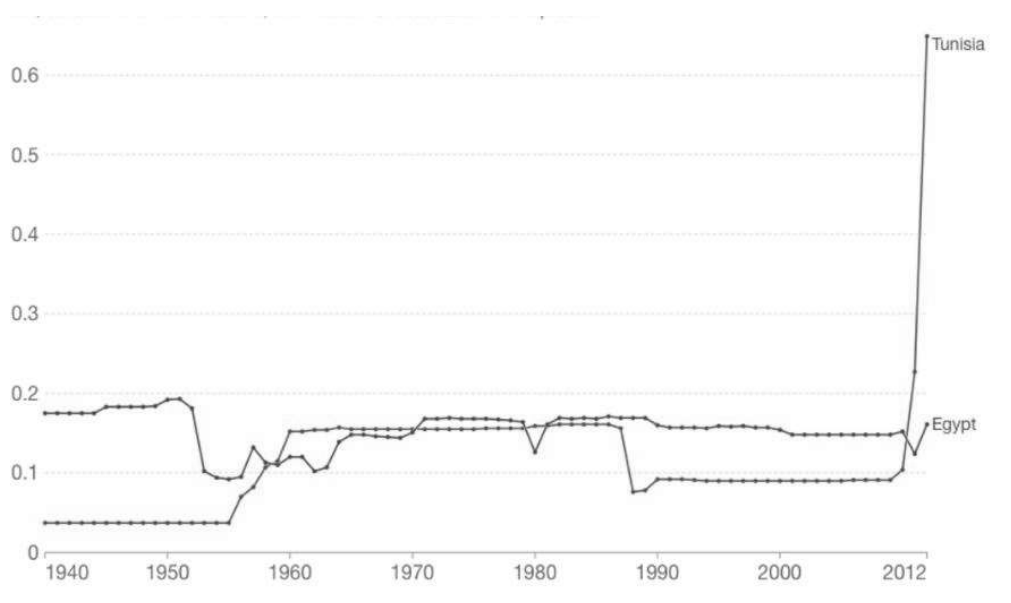
In order to delve into the predispositions of authoritarian regimes, it would be useful to explore the particular characteristics, the average democracy level and the level of civil liberties and political rights in the context of Egypt and Tunisia.

Average Democracy Level

I will begin with giving a simplified background of the average democracy levels in Tunisia and Egypt in Figure 1. This figure demonstrates the how democracy level fluctuated from 1940s to the Arab Spring.

Figure 1: Democracy Levels in Egypt and Tunisia

Source: V-Dem Dataset 2021



According to Figure 1, the average democracy level fluctuated over sixty years in Egypt and Tunisia. Yet the largest decrease in average democracy happened in the 1980s. It gradually decreased until the mid-1980s when Mubarak came to power in 1981 and Ben Ali came to power in 1987. The level of democracy however started to increase from the late 1980s to 2000s. It reached its peak around the 2000s. During 2010, the Arab World witnessed its highest level of democracy, similar to the 1950s and even higher than that level. This could be explained by the influx of transnational social movements across the region.

This also highlights an oxymoronic picture created by the Arab Spring which also marked a vital predisposition of these regimes. The more the authoritarian presidents repressed citizens, the more they paved the way for a mass transnational action which posed a great threat to the regime's power. This is a significant predisposition regarding characteristics of authoritarian countries to start democratic transition. However, I have to point out that this oxymoron is not valid for all authoritarian regimes. It should be taken into account that the conjunctures of regimes differ from each other regarding their characteristics, therefore this oxymoron is a mere feature of the linkage

between regimes and transnational social uprisings within the Arab Spring which makes it unique. In brief, the low average of democracy levels as a predisposition prepares suitable ground for transnational social movements to start democratization, as in these specific cases of Egypt and Tunisia. Shortly, many peculiarities of authoritarian regimes pave the way for democratization process.

The Level of Civil Liberties and Political Rights

It is also fruitful to look at how free Egypt and Tunisia were before and after the Arab Spring. I depict a categorization regarding political rights and civil liberties in order to address the level of freedom. Naturally, since authoritarian countries repress citizens, it is not expected that they will be a free country which guarantees civil and political rights. Yet, still it requires defining nuances between these countries.

The categorization applies three designations as Free, Partly Free and Not Free (Puddington, 2013) to understand the levels of rights and liberties. I argue that this will help us to conceive and depict specific predispositions for social movements to stimulate democratization. The first, a 'Free' country, is an independent country in terms of effective political rights, civic life and civic engagement. A 'Partly Free' country is one which limits respect for civil liberties and political rights. The last one, a 'Not Free' country is clearly one which has even no basic civil liberties and rights, or shortly the one that denies civil rights and citizens' voices (Puddington, 2013). According to this categorization, Egypt was consistent with the 'Not Free' category during the Mubarak period. Since freedom of expression and movement were repressed under Mubarak, it was not even possible to talk about civil liberties. With respect to effective political participation, again citizens were repressed to make them passive during political processes. Yet, as a consequence of mass and collective uprisings in Tahrir Square in 2011, Egypt became a Partly Free country. Freedom House Annual Survey of Political Rights and Civil Liberties assessed by Puddington in 2013 analysed freedom levels in diverse countries around the world. According to variables examined by this survey, being a Not Free country, Egypt's score in terms of political rights and civil liberties was lower than it was in 2011. Transnational revolts which were highly influential in Egypt managed to initiate civic engagement process through preparing grounds for expression of liberties to gain political rights in spaces of movements. This was impossible during the Mubarak period however the

remarkable success of the social impulse to topple and change the order was a watershed in history of Egypt.

In the same vein, as a consequence of mass uprisings in 2011, Tunisia moved from a Not Free to Partly Free country in terms of facilitating civil liberties, political rights and civic engagement. Tunisian society, as a bellwether of the Arab Spring, showed great resistance against the Ben Ali regime to start democratization. The insurrection of Tunisians fuelled by rage and anger could be perceived as a fight of people to gain their civil liberties and political rights which were repressed for many years. So, it could be understood that the main obstacles to freedom in Tunisia and Egypt were the Ben Ali and Mubarak regimes. Consequently, the Arab Spring had a great impact on the improvement of political rights and civil liberties since it brought about competitive presidential elections which require citizen participation (Puddington, 2013).

To elaborate on my argument, it is worth briefly discussing what happened after the Arab Spring due to the liability of Egyptian and Tunisian regimes. Following the fall of Mubarak, the parliamentary elections were held from the 28th November of 2011 to 11th of January, 2012. The first round of presidential elections were held on the 23rd and 24th of May 2012, followed by the runoff between Mohamed Morsi and Ahmed Shafiq who was the last prime minister during Mubarak period (NPR, 2013). After Mubarak was ousted, in the face of rising public demands to adopt civilian rule and non-violation of their rights and liberties, the candidate of Freedom and Justice Party Mohamed Morsi won the presidency with 51.7percent (World Bank, 2013). Even though this presidential election was imperfect since Egypt is still not a proper electoral democracy, it was pretty close to genuine democracy standards because this was the second election in history of Egypt with five main candidates, not like 2005 presidential elections with one candidate in which Mubarak won.

Similarly, 2011 marked a watershed for Tunisia. Since Tunisia improved from Not Free to Partly Free, this was the first step to initialize electoral democracy which was exemplified by balloting in 2011 in the wake of Ben Ali's overthrow. Constituent Assembly of Tunisia was elected on the 23rd October, 2011 which held presidential elections on the 13th December, 2011 after the fall of Ben Ali. Moncef Marzouki was elected as a new president of new Tunisia which was saved from authoritarian order. This also stimulated a huge improvement of civil liberties and political rights since this first election was consistent with democratic election standards. The 2011 elections were highly significant in

Tunisia's history which marked the first example of free and fair elections through participation of all citizens (BBC, 2011). This was likely to bolster further engagement of citizens in a democratic environment which their liberties and rights would not be limited.

As aforementioned, the typical characteristics -low average democracy level, repression of civil liberties and political rights- of authoritarian regimes create predispositions to be deposed by social movements. The vital point is that these characteristics empower the control and dominancy of authoritarian leaders. Yet in the meantime, as Schedler (2009, p. 75) notes, the ultimate control of the authoritarian leader over legislation, political parties, judiciary system and so forth was one of the primary factors which create the liability to be overthrown. To illustrate, the ultimate control of Ben Ali over different branches of government including monitoring elections in favour of his interests were highly influential in shaping political procedures. Yet, in 2011 elections of Tunisia this changed:

all 217 members of the Constituent Assembly were directly elected through party-list voting in 33 multimember constituencies, and voters were able to choose from political parties representing a wide range of ideologies and political philosophies, including Islamist and secularist groups. Many of the parties that competed were excluded from political participation under Ben Ali (Freedom House, no date).

Therefore, I articulate that elections in 2011 and 2012, in the face of transnational social uprisings, led to major changes in the oldest authoritarian systems of the Arab World - Tunisia and Egypt - in terms of the liberties and rights of citizens.

Typology of Authoritarian Regimes

In this section I analyse the particular types of authoritarian regimes which trigger an overthrow in line with the democratization process. As Linz and Stepan (1996, p.20) point out, the type of non-democratic regime affects the potential for the breakout of movements to accompany democratization. Amongst non-democratic regimes, authoritarian regimes are the ones which mostly experience mass-mobilized movements rather than totalitarian and sultanistic regimes (Linz & Stepan, 1996, p.20). Yet there is still a need to explore the different types of authoritarian regimes. Since each type responds differently to social movements, Geddes (in Ulfelder, 2005, p. 310) depicts authoritarian regimes in a three-way categorization.

What is more, he defines these three diverse authoritarian regimes according to their relationship with social movements in contentious politics. This helps to identify which regimes are more prone to be deposed by social uprisings to start democratization. The first one is the personalistic regime in which contentious social actions have no significant effect on regime breakdown. The second one is the single-party regime which is more likely to fall as a consequence of anti-government uprisings. The last one is the military regime which is less likely to fall in the wake of mass movements in contrast with single-party (Ulfelder, 2005, p. 314). Let us examine each of these in greater detail.

1) Personalistic regimes: Geddes (in Ulfelder, 2005, p. 315) articulates that the leader of the single-party government or an officer in a coup who consolidates power in his own hands to control political issues leads to a personalistic regime. Sultanism and neo-patrimonial regimes could be consistent with this definition. In this type of regime, the linkages between the state and public are remarkably defined by repression and exploitation rather than cooperation and mobilization (Ulfelder, 2005, p. 316). There is no space for social movements to have an impact upon the regime in a very significant way. In other words, it is not likely that mass-mobilization movements could topple these personalistic regimes.

2) Single-party regimes: Single-party monitors have the most access to political power and other local agencies (Geddes in Ulfelder, 2005, p. 316). It should be taken into account that single-party regimes can be associated with the exclusion of all other parties and other local actors from the political arena (Geddes in Ulfelder, 2005, p. 316). This highly undermines civic participation and engagement. With respect to single-party regimes the core point is that its dominance undermines and represses the demands of the public and crucial social actions. There is the likelihood of regime breakdown within single-party regimes through social contentious movements (Ulfelder, 2005, p. 316). This derives from the vulnerability of single-party authority. Particularly, the likelihood of the overthrow of the regime increases in compliance with the efficiency of contentious actions. The efficiency and strength of contentious social uprisings depend on involving participants' variety and their repertoires (Ulfelder, 2005, p. 316). The key point is that the more vulnerable the single-party regime becomes, the more it will be prone to toppling.

3) Military regimes: These are generally governed by a military officer, either active or retired. They are supported through the main military establishment

in terms of implementation of mechanisms and policy-making (Geddes in Ulfelder, 2005, p.317). In some cases, the military can collaborate with the ruling and dominant party. However, there is no room for civil society or popular participation, as with personalistic regimes. Thus, citizen participation and their voices are repressed. Yet, the crucial point is that in the wake of effective collective social uprisings, military regimes are likely to fall (Ulfelder, 2005, p. 319).

Having looked at different responses of different types of authoritarian regimes, it is possible to see that authoritarian rulers strive to limit institutional bodies so as to make sure that so-called democratic organs would remain under their authority as well (Schedler, 2009, p. 70). As long as agencies, legislation, election process and decision-making depend upon particular factions amongst political parties or other organizations, it is not feasible to anticipate the inception of democratization in authoritarian regimes. Yet within half a decade contentious social movements have gained prominence to challenge the authoritarian systems and their initiatives in various parts.

Effectively, there is a notable link between the legitimacy of the regime and the power of social movements. This purports that the legitimacy of governments which can be challenged by social contention is designated by its efficiency and power in terms of dealing with social uprisings. The striking point is that the main differences between various authoritarian regimes define their transition characteristics. Therefore, the main peculiarities of authoritarian regimes could be analysed in order to observe the democratization process of authoritarian regimes. To support and summarize this point, Geddes (in Ulfelder, 2005, p. 320) contends that “[t]hese differences... cause authoritarian regimes to break down in systematically different ways”.

Typology of Egyptian and Tunisian Authoritarian Regimes

In support of my argument, I analyse regime characteristics of Egypt and Tunisia in which authoritarian presidents were toppled by social uprisings within the Arab Spring. The reason why I focus on only Egypt and Tunisia is that they were the very examples of regime breakdowns in the wake of mass contentious movements within the Arab Spring. After having explained the primary predispositions of authoritarian regimes, I will look at particular characteristics of authoritarian Mubarak regime in Egypt and Ben Ali regime in Tunisia.

It should be taken into account that in Egypt we can witness the presence of a hybrid regime which compounds personalistic, single-party and military regime types. This is a salient point that we should consider in terms of analysing the impact of social uprisings. Since the regime was a hybrid, the impact of contentious movements is highly mixed. Three actors - the single party (National Democratic Party), Mubarak and the military – were reluctant to fulfil the demands of citizens. It can be seen that Mubarak personalized one party, thereby undermining other parties' involvement for 30 years. As the military was one of the foundations of the Egyptian government since the 1950s, it was very influential in the political procedures. Moreover, since Mubarak was the supreme commander of the military, the lines between politics and the military were blurred. Consequently, the rights and liberties of the people were repressed. People were the victims of this hybrid regime, suffering from inequalities and government abuses. For this reason, initially it was hard to estimate the impact of social movements in contentious politics. However, the rage galvanized people into action in 2011 in order to gain their freedom and rights.

In Tunisia, single party and personalistic regime types were evident, also resembling a hybrid regime. Although the single party which espoused socialist and democratic ideology was highly effective, Ben Ali centralized and personalized power in his own hands to become the leading actor. However, as in Egypt, people were repressed through initiatives of Ben Ali, with limited freedoms in relation to involvement in political procedures to express their demands and ideas. Under the Ben Ali regime from 1987 to 2011, there was a drastic suppression of the Tunisian people and human rights violations. Both domestic and international organizations argued that one of the most serious shortcomings of the Ben Ali regime was the human rights violations committed by the police (Lutterbeck, 2013, p.3). Accordingly, Tunisia was one of the top-ranked countries for human rights violations throughout the twenty-four years of Ben Ali (Amnesty International, 2008).

To explain further, hybrid regimes such as Egypt and Tunisia are defined as a compound of authoritarian and democratic institutions like elected parliaments and other political organs. However, usually the power belongs to informal and authoritarian bodies. In brief, with regard to hybrid regimes, although they may run democratic elections and establish democratic institutions, in the internal sphere they continue to rule the country through their traditional authoritarian approach. According to Hadenius and Teorell

(2006, p. 29), Tunisia and Egypt are consistent with dominant and single party authoritarian systems over the periods of 1994-2003 and 1976-2003 respectively. From 1957 until 2006 Tunisia is identified as a single party regime, whilst Egypt is considered as single party-personal-military regime from 1952 (when the country gained independence) onwards. Yet, the Tunisian regime was classified as a personalistic regime in the late 2000s. Ben Ali and his family started to monitor various parts of state and political organs and agencies. The striking point is that the hybridity of Tunisian and Egyptian regimes created tendencies to be overthrown. This is to say that when regimes are of a complex and hybrid nature, they are unbalanced with democratic and authoritarian agencies which become more inclined to fall. This purports that in the cases of Tunisia and Egypt the revolution of people to topple Ben Ali and Mubarak presidencies was accomplished through revolutionary social movements. So, we can state that toppling is achieved through various means however the most effective to oust incumbents from power is revolution through mass uprisings (Brownlee, 2009, p. 522).

Preconditions of the Arab Spring in Tunisia and Egypt: To Oust Authoritarian Presidents

This section discusses the preconditions which were in place prior to the Arab Spring to facilitate the ousting of the Ben Ali and Mubarak regimes. To shed light on these preconditions, I focus on labour movements and strikes since they were remarkable examples of the fight of the people to gain their liberties and rights to initiate democratization. In other words, undeniably they have a prominent role as a precondition to end the authoritarian regime.

Labour Movements in Tunisia

I will begin with the Tunisian labour movements and strikes which took place in 2008. The labour movements and strikes could be fruitful examples to give an idea about the spark of the Arab Spring and Ben Ali's eventual overthrow. The Gafsa and Redeyef uprisings in 2008 were arguably the most significant. They stemmed from the repressive initiatives towards workers which favoured supporters of Ben Ali. This could be perceived as the most precipitating element to bring about the mass uprisings of the Arab Spring in Tunisia. The reason behind these labour movements was the attempt of Ben Ali's regime to take control of the leadership of the Tunisian General Union of Labour (UGTT), the largest and influential union federation, and subsequently influence its initiatives (CRS, 2012). Here, the point to highlight is that the repressive

initiatives of Ben Ali which were undermining people's demands –better working conditions and higher wages- and civil liberties became resurgent in the wake of his initiatives to intervene in the UGTT's decision-making (CRS, 2012). Hence, jobs were given to the supporters of Ben Ali whilst people who did not support Ben Ali either lost their jobs or had to work under bad conditions (France24, 2011), at the end of the strike around 300 people were arrested as well. This incident could be perceived as the main precursor of the Arab Spring movement to galvanize people to topple Ben Ali's presidency so as to bring their freedom. It should be taken into account that the primary factor of labour movements within the UGTT against Ben Ali was their prominence and power to destabilize the authoritarian order and catalyst democratization process.

To explain further, the popular pressure particularly coming from workers plays a crucial role in the democratic transition process of authoritarian countries (Collier & Mahoney, 1997, p. 292). In order to destabilize authoritarian regimes - the first and foremost step of democratization - labour unrest has a considerable impact (Collier & Mahoney, 1997, p. 294). In other words, to struggle for their demands, people supported the labour upsurges against authoritarian incumbents. The central point which was a driving force of the labour to revolt was the repressive regimes undermining civil liberties and political participation of people. People struggled to earn money due to the abuses of the governments. Even though they would like to raise their voice to influence the initiatives of the state, they were unable to bring about a significant impact due to continuous repressions of Ben Ali and his supporters. Consequently, the previous movements and strikes paved the way for the huge turmoil which resulted in overthrow of Ben Ali's regime on the 14th of January, 2011.

Labour movements in Egypt

In the same vein, Egypt also witnessed labour movements across the country, particularly in Cairo. One of the common points between the Tunisian and Egyptian uprisings was that both stemmed from uprisings of labour movements. Similar to the Gafsa and Redeyef uprisings, the spark of the fall of the Mubarak regime started with the Mahalla uprisings in 2008. The labour movements and strikes were influential and triggered bigger popular uprisings against the Mubarak regime. The key reason beyond these mass strikes was the concerns of workers regarding job security and wages (CRS, 2012). Since Mubarak privatized many government agencies in Cairo - one of Egypt's main

industrial cities – this created a fear amongst workers in terms of earning less money and even losing their jobs (CRS, 2012). Mohamad Murad, a railway worker, depicts a bigger picture of this labour unrest and its significance: “our slogans are not labour union demands, now we have more general demands for change” (cited by Phelps, 2011). In other words, what Murad stated was that the demands were bigger, not only higher wages or better, safer working conditions but they demanded political change which necessitated the fall of Mubarak. More importantly, the demonstrators in labour movements started to stomp on and destroy big posters of Mubarak in central squares of various cities (Phelps, 2011). Therefore, this can be perceived as a remarkable reflection of the central demand of Egyptian people voiced by the labour movement: “we want Mubarak to leave” (Phelps, 2011). Besides the limitation of civil liberties, Mubarak and Ben Ali excluded particular segments of people such as workers to limit their effective political participation which is an essential component of political pluralism in democratization (Philippe Droz-Vincent, 2004, p. 947). Additionally, the presence of labour unrest in Egypt and Tunisia on behalf of other segments of population which were repressed by authoritarian regimes was the inception of democratic transition. This was one of the leading factors of the emergence of the mass uprisings in the Arab Spring - in Tunisia and Egypt.

Consequently, with respect to democratization and its primary tenets, I argue that labour movements and strikes as notable preconditions which constructed the roots of major uprisings stimulated the Arab Spring in Tunisia and Egypt. In short, they were highly influential in determining the democratization process through increasing the importance of civil liberties and their demands.

Conclusion

This article has addressed the relationship between the social movements and democratization and their linkage as the significant stimulant on the path of democratization. This also has been supported by Huntington’s (1993, p. 35) three-step process of democratization. Additionally, the certain peculiarities of social movements and fundamental elements -civil liberties and effective political rights- of the democratization process were addressed.

As witnessed in the Arab Spring, perhaps the most crucial example, the fall of the Ben Ali and Mubarak regimes in Tunisia and Egypt was accomplished through mass popular uprisings in 2010-2011. They fought for their demands which were to gain civil liberties and political rights. As an initial step, the

people of the Arab World demonstrated how powerful their demands and ideas were by bringing down authoritarian regimes and paving the way for the instalment of an alternative order. The remarkable fact is that through the power of their ideas, beliefs and demands, they did not give up the fight due to high repression of authoritarian leaders.

Yet, it is worth bearing in mind that it was not only the people's power to topple authoritarian leaders to bring about democratization. As analysed in the article, there were also predispositions and preconditions of authoritarian regimes in Egypt and Tunisia which made them inclined to be overthrown. Besides, characteristics and various types of authoritarian regimes which were predispositions of to be deposed, the presence of labour movements in 2008 in Egypt and Tunisia had a remarkable effect as the spark and the preconditions of the Arab Spring to initialize democratization in these countries. Dwelling upon these issues, since Egypt (personalistic, single-party, military) and Tunisia (personalistic, single-party) were hybrid regimes under Mubarak and Ben Ali respectively, they were more vulnerable to overthrow attempts. Other than this, as depicted through the arguments of Collier and Mahoney (1992, p. 297), the precipitating impact of labour movements should not be forgotten in the Arab Spring.

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