

THE ARAB SPRING AND THE POSSIBILITY OF THE SUCCESS OF LIKELY REVOLUTIONS

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Abstract

This study analyzes whether uprisings after the Arab Spring such as those in Algeria, Sudan, Lebanon and Iraq are not new but a continuation of the revolutionary process. When countries incurred to revolutions are examined, it can be seen that all conditions that sparked the first phase still exist, and there are even more oppression and worse living conditions. The Arab Spring looks like the 1848 revolutions of Europe in some aspects and it might have the same result. Yet, seeing the end of the process may take decades since there are not only two opposing actors (people and dictators) but also armies and foreign powers, which have a decisive effect on revolutions. However, these actors against populations are variables, thereby they may ease revolutions by changing sides. In addition, a change in opposition groups' uncompromising attitudes against armies and foreign powers and their hostile posture against them might be a great factor in future uprisings. Through wielding literature review, this study aims to contribute literature with its argument that the collaboration of civilians and army during transition is key factor for the success of revolutions.

Keywords; Arab Spring, Middle East, Popular Revolution, Democracy, Uprising

Özet

Bu çalışma Cezayir, Sudan, Lübnan ve Irak gibi ülkelerdeki son isyanları analiz ederek Arap Baharının devap edip etmediğini sorgulamaktadır. Devrimlere maruz kalan ülkelere bakıldığı zaman, Baharın ilk aşamasına sebep olan şartların halen var olduğu ve hatta

daha kötü olduğu gözlemlenebilir. Arap Baharı Avrupa'nın 1848'deki devrimlerine benzemekte ve sonucu da aynı olabilir. Ancak sonucu görmek onyıllar alabilir. Çünkü aktör olarak sadece halk ve diktatörler değil, ordular ve dış güçler gibi devrim üzerinde etkisi çok olan aktörler de var. Ancak bu çalışma mezkûr iki faktörün değişken etkenler olduğunu vurgulayıp onların taraf değiştirerek devrimi kolaylaştırma özelliğine de sahip olabileceğini belirtmektedir. Ayrıca, halkın orduya ve dış güçlere karşı inatçı ve düşmanca tutumlarının değişmesi bundan sonraki devrimlerin seyrini halk lehine değiştirebilir. Bu çalışma literatür taraması yapılarak hazırlanmıştır. Çalışmanın amacı, 'geçiş döneminde sivilllerle askeri elit arasındaki işbirliği devrimi başarılı kılar' tezini literature sokmaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler. Arap Baharı, Ortadoğu, Devrim, Halk Devrimi, Demokrasi, İsyenlar

Introduction

When Mohammed Bouazizi, a street hawker in Tunisia, immolated himself on December 17, 2010, because his goods were taken away as well as humiliated by a municipal officer, none guessed that a popular protest ending the era of Ben Ali would erupt. The spread of protests to other Arab countries was even less predictable. However, self-immolation initiated the Arab Spring and caused either protests or revolutions in one-third of regional countries. People aimed to overthrow authoritarian regimes that were ruling their countries for decades. While the wave of uprisings toppled some leaders like Ben Ali, Qadhafi, Saleh and Mubarak, the result was not as Arab people wished. Except for Tunisia, the democratization process failed as old regimes were replaced by new autocratic regimes and some leaders could stay in power. Therefore, the Arab Spring turned into the Arab Winter (or autumn) and people lost their hope for a fundamental change. Eight years after the first protests that erupted in Tunisia, the political system is almost the same as pre-Arab Spring era.

It is now more clear that structural political transitions in the Middle East are not as easy as those happening in the other regions of the

world. In addition, when compared to other popular unrests that happened in other parts of the globe, the external support to Arab popular uprisings was quite weak. On the contrary, there was more support to authoritarian regimes and thanks to this foreign direct and indirect intervention, popular revolts were mostly suppressed. Yet, debates over whether the Spring ended or still continues are still on the top agenda of the world.

This study argues that the Arab Spring continues since reasons that caused it are still there and the desire for change in incurred countries continue. For an event to take place again, it should end first. There were some changes in leaderships such as the replacement of Mubarak by Morsi and his overthrow by Al-Sisi but authoritarianism and people's dissatisfaction continue. On the other hand, while in some countries no changes were witnessed, e.g. Bahrain, some others are still tackling with civil wars, e.g. Libya and Syria. More specifically, except for Tunisia, all other incurred countries are in the process of transition, which is impeded by force at the moment. Even those countries that were not affected by the Arab Spring like Saudi Arabia and the UAE might not be safe against new waves as they got involved in popular revolutions taking place in other countries. For example, Saudi Arabia and the UAE both supported proxies and directly intervened in the war by their armies in the Yemeni civil war.

However, they could not change the course of the conflict in their favor, thereby did not win the war nor lose it. While the UAE might only damage its image in international politics, an internal contention in the house of Saud stemming from the wrong foreign policy is not out of question. In addition, since the Saudi-UAE-Bahrain axis against Qatar is a result of different approaches to the Arab Spring, we can argue they are already affected by it and hurting each other. Finally, unless there is no gradual transition after uprisings, the Arab Spring will likely continue. Since it is not easy to change the genes of authoritarian regimes that are protected by army generals or strong families via protests, the rational way is to

share power at first and gradually giving power to people in the end. Yet, such revolutions may still take decades.

Methodologically, literature review was used for supporting this article's arguments. The study sheds light mainly on a single missing argument in theory, regarding specifically the Arab Spring and generally popular uprisings. It is that; rioting people's uncompromising behaviors with military elites and foreign powers lessen the success of the revolution. Whereas, if they cooperate, revolution might be achieved. On the other hand, the study also analyzes the Arab Spring and tries to unveil why the process continues.

The Arab Spring

When colonial powers left the Middle East, newly independent states were entrusted to army generals or certain families. The political system was either republic that was ruled by a junta regime or monarchy that was hereditary within one family such as houses of Saud, Al-Thani or Al-Sabah. Democracy or will of people was out of the question, thus a struggle for power between ruling elites and people was always witnessed. However, the losing side was always ordinary citizens, who were responded with torture, oppression, deprivation of basic rights, ban on making politics, etc. Therefore, people were left poor, uneducated and prohibited to participate ruling system. In other words, citizens were seen as potential enemies of the regime in the Arab World. While Arab people were under pressure, the world was globalizing, a process that made the globe smaller and communication easier. In addition, despite that life was becoming more comfortable for some people across the world, the others, e.g. the majority of Arabs, were following from behind. However, developments in the communication system, such as satellite broadcast and later the internet, made disadvantaged masses to compare themselves with others. As for the Middle East, the establishment of the Al Jazeera TV network was a milestone since the Qatar-based media company freed the flow of information, which

was under the control of authoritarian regimes. Then came the internet, which was revolutionary and helped revolutions to take place. Thus, comparison, a keyword for human development, became possible and destitute communities began to lose their faith and patience against their governments.

When the year 2010 came, people were still being excluded from political participation except for a small minority, and poor Arab countries living by imported goods were in trouble due to rising prices caused by global financial crisis (Idris, 2016, p. 2). According to the United Nations records, on July 2010, price of wheat increased 84%, maize went up 77%, sugar by 77% and oil and fats by 57% (Joffe, 2011, p. 509). Particularly, Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, and Yemen suffered from high food prices that led to mass protests (Mushtaq and Afzal, 2017, p. 2). In addition, North African countries were at the top in terms of wealth inequality. For example, while 10% of Tunisian population controlled 31.5% of the wealth, in Egypt, this number was 27% (Joffe, 2011, p. 510). On the other hand, almost 20% of the population was below the poverty line. Such unbalanced distribution of wealth also meant corruption, of course. Privileged people concentrated most of their wealth through nepotism, cronyism, and corruption (Abdelsalam, 2015, p. 123). According to a document revealed by Wikileaks, US ambassador to Tunisia reported in 2006 that almost half of Tunisia's commercial elites had ties with Ben Ali through his children and his second wife's brothers and sisters (Anderson, 2011, p. 3). It is claimed that members of the family of Ben Ali's wife, Leila Trabelsi, were the biggest shareholders in many economic sectors like banking, transport, insurance, tourism and industry. (Saidin, 2018, p. 72). In Egypt, the situation was no different. Mubarak and army officers had billions of dollars-worth assets. Therefore, while people were unemployed and living in poor conditions, a small elite group were increasing their assets by stealing state properties. In such unequal conditions, even an ordinary incident would be enough to trigger an uprising against the regime, and it was the Tunisian street vegetable seller Mohammed

Bouazizi's self-immolation that sparked the fire of protests, which is called the Arab Spring.

When Bouazizi's deathful protest spread across Tunisia, people took streets and challenged Ben Ali. The Tunisian dictator could not stand against protests and stepped down quickly, a rare moment that an Arab leader was ousted by people. Aftermath, different ideological groups including Islamists, liberals, socialists, and seculars accepted the democratic ruling system and since then the country is ruled by elected governments. As for Egypt, being inspired by the Tunisian revolution, Egyptians began to protest Hosni Mubarak, who was ruling the country since 1981. Reasons for demanding his ouster were almost similar; corruption, unfair elections, unemployment, torture, and so on. While Mubarak had no intention to leave power, continuous protests and the army's reluctance to defend his throne forced him to step down in the end. Aftermath, Egyptians held democratic elections and chose Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) as their first elected president (Steinberg, 2014, p. 17). Yet, one year after he came to power, protests began again and he was toppled down by Defense Minister Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi through a military coup. Al-Sisi launched a fierce campaign against pro-Morsi groups, some of whom were killed, tortured, jailed or sentenced to death while many fled the country. While Al-Sisi got the full control of power through military junta and made Egyptians live the worst era of persecution in their history, Morsi died during a court hearing on June, 17, 2019, allegedly due to a heart attack stemming from the poor living conditions in prison. What is more, Al-Sisi did not only get himself elected twice by elections without opposition rivals, but also changed the constitution to stay in power until 2034. Unfortunately, both authoritarian Arab regimes and democratic Western countries supported Al-Sisi's coup and continued to work with him.

Meanwhile, Tunisian and Egyptian uprisings being inspiratory to other Arab communities, protests metastasized to other countries. In Yemen, Ali Abdullah Saleh resisted popular protests at first but

eventually accepted to leave power with immunity from prosecution. Nonetheless, Yemen entered an uncertain period, in which it became an arena of a proxy war between Iran and Saudi Arabia (Lamzouwaq, 2019). Besides ongoing civil war, Saleh was killed by Houthi rebels on December 4, 2017. Protests in Libya ended with the murder of its leader, Muammar Qadhafi, as well. Libya was different from other countries as the system was *jamahiri*, which was called direct popular democracy and where people were expected to participate in decision-making (Joffe, 2011, p. 525). However, the system only killed existing institutions and did not allow to create new ones (Altunışık, 2014, p. 85). In addition, quite a considerable number of tribes sided with Qadhafi against protestors. Libyan army also supported Qadhafi and did not hesitate to shot people. In terms of foreign support, China and Russia had oil investments in the country, thereby they were with Qadhafi. Hence, he was strong enough to suppress the revolt. However, the U.S., NATO and Arab League stood opposite to Libyan leader and launched airstrikes to regime forces to help armed rebel groups, without which it would not be possible to defeat Qadhafi (Beck and Hüser, 2012, p. 14). Qadhafi was caught and killed by rebels and a new era, which was worse than the previous one, began. As of 2020, Libya is divided between internationally recognized government, supported by the UN and countries like Turkey, and General Haftar forces, who are supported by Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Bahrain, the UAE, Russia, partly the U.S. and some European countries. Civil war continues and nobody knows when it will finish.

Contrary to Libya, Bahrain's Al-Khalifa and Syria's Assad secured themselves and their regimes survived thanks to foreign intervention. Yet, civil war still continues in Syria. In Bahrain, when Shiite majority initiated protests against the regime, Saudi Arabia and the UAE sent troops to help King Khalifa since Saudis were accusing Iran of supporting Shiites of Bahrain (Eran, 2011, p. 17). However, the Bahraini regime was indeed discriminatory against its Shiite citizens. In addition, the Bahraini government imported Sunni

Chechens and Pakistanis and gave them citizenship to make Sunni population the majority. While the regime granted more social and political rights to their citizens after the end of events, Sunni-Shiite contention still continues. Regarding Syria, almost all Sunni states and Western countries supported opposition groups that fought the Assad regime. When Assad declared that he could withstand against opposition groups only two more weeks, Hezbollah and Iran run for help to save his regime. Moreover, unlike Americans and Sunni states that used proxies against Assad, Russia directly intervened into civil war and consolidated the Assad regime. On the other hand, divergences between Qatar, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE impeded a united opposition. What is more, this contention resulted in the growth of ISIS. When the U.S. also went on its way by forming Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), Syria was divided by (Russia and Iran backed) Assad regime, (the US-backed) Kurdish forces and (Turkey-backed) Free Syrian Army. Meanwhile, Gulf States withdrew their support to the opposition in the course of time. The UAE even re-opened its embassy in Damascus. As of 2020, Assad still rules most of the Syrian territory with the help of Iran and Russia (Achcar, 2019).

Although the Arab Spring was felt utmost in above six countries, in four of which regime changed, there were also protests in Algeria, Morocco, Oman, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Jordan, Iraq, Palestine, Sudan, Djibouti, and Mauritania. However, the population of these countries did not aim to make a popular revolution and overthrow their governments but asked to make reforms and ameliorate their conditions. Almost all mentioned countries gave subsidies and concessions to their citizens to terminate uprisings. For instance, Saudi King Abdullah promised \$130 billion as subsidies to his citizens to tackle with unemployment and housing problem in 2011 (Steinberg, 2014, p. 7; McQuaid, et al, 2017, p. 18). In addition, the Saudi regime provided \$20 billion to Oman and Bahrain to struggle with public unrests. On the other hand, the UAE fiercely crushed all groups that asked reforms. Furthermore, it supported

friendly regimes against Islamic and non-Islamic groups both fiscally and militarily. Its military intervened in conflicts happening in Bahrain, Yemen, and Libya. By the way, some facts about states where protests erupted are also worth mentioning. For example, the Arab Spring affected republics rather than monarchies (Rozsa, et al, 2012, p. 18). With Bahrain being the only exception, Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Syria, and Libya were all had a republican system (Douglas, et al, 2014, p. 6). In fact, Bahraini monarchy would also probably contain protests, had there not been sectarian strife between the regime and population. In the same vein, where there is a sectarian struggle like in Syria and Bahrain, regimes could survive with external help. In other words, the Bahraini regime was rescued by Sunni Saudi Arabia and Syria's Assad regime by Shiite Hezbollah and Iran. Besides, it can be concluded that monarchies resisted revolutions more successfully than republics. From a rentier state perspective, actually, all rentier regimes survived except for Qadhafi's Libya, which also could have survived, had there not been foreign intervention. Laz (2014, p. 26) explains 'rentier state' as no governmental accountability due to its dependence on oil revenues rather than people.

Indeed, foreign intervention was crucial for the failure or success of revolutions. In terms of media, Al Jazeera disseminated footages from unrests and made the world know what was happening. It even established a private channel called 'Al Jazeera Mubasher Mizr' to make live broadcast from Tahrir Square. Besides, it sent more than one hundred journalists to Egypt, some of whom were arrested later by the Al-Sisi regime. Al Jazeera was the most influential TV network in every revolution. If people inspired from each other, it was because they watched Al Jazeera. That is why the Arab Spring is named as 'Al Jazeera Revolution' by some scholars. Meanwhile, revolutions were also called 'Twitter Revolution' and 'Facebook Revolution' since social media was used to inform, organize and mobilize people (Cavatorta, 2012, p. 79). The use of the internet, particularly social media, was on the rise when uprisings erupted.

There were seven million Facebook users and hundreds of thousands of Twitter subscribers only in Egypt in 2011 (Travis, 2013, p. 83). However, while social media's role can not be denied, claiming it as the main reason for revolutions will be misleading. Gladwell (2010) argues that social changes occur through 'high-risk activism', meaning sit-ins, boycotts, protests, hierarchical organization, etc. Yet, likes and shares on Facebook or twitting is 'low-risk activism' since there are weak ties between people and no real sacrifice. Moreover, Wolfsfeld, Segev, and Sheafer (2013, p. 119) claim that where internet is controlled by the state, it is not easy to get use of social media. Yet, in the Arab Spring, it was too late for governments to censor the internet as social media had already enabled awareness. On the other hand, Aday, et. al. (2012, p. 8) says that only 13% of Tahrir Square protestors used the new media as a medium while a majority as high as 92% got news from old media. Perhaps, the best explanation was made by Hroub (2015, p. 149), who said the integration and marriage between old and new media at the beginning of uprisings mobilized people to take streets. However, the role of conventional media, particularly that of Al Jazeera, was quite more than social media. Therefore, while terms like 'Twitter Revolution' or 'Facebook Revolution' may not be correct, the term 'Al Jazeera Revolution' might be acceptable.

Besides media, regional and foreign powers also got involved in revolutions to change the course of events. When protests began, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and the UAE quickly sided with Tunisian, Yemeni and Egyptian regimes to hold dictators in power. While this 'authoritarian brotherhood' could not save Ben Ali, Saleh, and Mubarak, it was successful to topple Mohamed Morsi and bring Al-Sisi to power. Another success was in Bahrain where the King could suppress uprising with the Saudi-led coalition's help. On the other hand, they wanted Qadhafi and Assad to go but could remove only the former from power. In addition, Saudis helped governments of some Arab states to help them tackle with public protests. Meanwhile, we should note that Qatar went on its own way and

supported different groups during the Arab Spring. While Doha regime benefited from the MB network and gave full support to the group, Saudi, Bahraini and UAE regimes funded opposite groups. This divergence ended up Qatari blockade in 2017. Regarding foreign countries, the U.S. and other Western countries followed paths of Saudis by not backing democratic popular protests. Contrary to the West, Russians and the Chinese were with Qadhafi and Assad. Turkey was also influential during the Arab Spring. Ankara government followed a policy parallel to Qatar as opposed to Saudis and its allies. However, Turkey suffered from the Arab Spring more than any other country since; 1) terrorist groups killed its civilians through street explosions; 2) hosted 3.6 million Syrian refugees; 3) had to intervene Syria to remove threats coming from ISIS and PKK/YPG; 4) sent forces to Idlib to prevent influx of more refugees. The threat stemming from the Syrian civil war still continues due to the US support to SDF, which is a proxy mainly consisting of PKK's Syria branch YPG that Turkey sees as an existential threat. In addition, hosting so many Syrians for such a long time caused fury among Turkish people, thereby their support to Erdogan government diminished.

As for domestic factors, first, the attitude of armies was significant for the result of revolutions. Since armies are guards of the regime in authoritarian states, generally, which side they weigh on takes power. In Tunisia, the army was frustrated by Ben Ali's policy of marginalization. Ben Ali did not only reduce the number of soldiers but also purged a great number of generals during his reign. Thus, the army allied with protestors and besieged presidential palace during the revolution, which led to the abdication of Ben Ali (Salih, 2013, p. 190). Egyptian army also did not shot protestors and even let them surround the parliament and the President's building. In both countries, there was friction between the military and the President, thereby generals punished their leaders by siding with people. By contrast, in Syria, most of the army remained loyal to the regime while Qadhafi's army split between the regime and people

(Idris, 2016, p. 3). Qadhafi would probably have saved his throne but his army was not strong enough to resist against NATO's intervention. Therefore, it can be concluded that in the Middle East, still not people but armies decide who to rule. Second, the main actors of revolutions are neither Islamists nor seculars or any other groups. As almost the whole scholarship agrees, it was the youth that challenged dictatorial regimes and wanted them to step down (Hroub, 2015, p. 148). The youth aged between 15 and 29 made up one-third of the population and 75% of social media users (Rabindranath and Kapil, 2015, p. 128). Besides, another one-third was under the age of 14, meaning that there were 83 million inhabitants that were under 14 in the region (Howard, et al, 2011, p. 5). Furthermore, almost half of the youth was unemployed, particularly those with a university degree (Mulderig, 2013, p. 11). It was this furious and disappointed Arab youth that wanted to change the status quo. They were well educated and asking for democracy. According to Mushtaq and Afzal (2017, p. 3), by citing from other scholars, the youth do not fear uprisings, civil clashes, and political aggression. This is probably because they did not face regime brutality as adults did. Moreover, young people were so apolitical that none of them chanted political slogans when they were in the streets. According to Bradley (2012, p. 201), they were not complaining about elections but economic circumstances they lived in. In this sense, what they wanted was personal and economical rather than political. On the other hand, older generations were more hesitant about protesting the regime since they had no good memories of opposing the status quo. This was the case not only for seculars and liberals but also Islamists. For example, the Muslim Brotherhood, the largest civil society in Egypt, was reluctant to participate in the first days of protests. It was the pressure of younger members that persuaded the Brotherhood to participate (Cavatorta, 2012, p. 77). In fact, elders of the MB were right since they were blamed for initiating the revolution that they did not commence. In 2014, Saudi Arabia declared the MB as a terrorist

organization. Also, it was the most suffering society after Morsi was overthrown. However, in general, the role of older protestors, especially well-educated ones, should not be underestimated. While the youth was in action, older intellectuals helped revolution with their ideas. Overall, it can still be concluded the Arab Spring was a 'youth revolution' which aimed to change socio-economic conditions rather than the political system. Nonetheless, Tunisia being the exception, this bottom-to-top revolutions failed in all states despite that some dictators were overthrown. Finally, third, this research refuses that general unemployment rates were one of the big causes of revolutions. In 2010, while the unemployment rate was 13% in Tunisia, the rate in Egypt was 9.2%, 8.6% in Syria, and 1.3% in Bahrain (Cinar and Gocer, 2014, p. 41). While there are no correct numbers for Yemen and Libya, the aforementioned rates are still not enough to revolt against a government. In fact, what triggered uprisings was still unemployment but it was the youth unemployment. Hence, not general unemployment but youth unemployment should be regarded as a reason for public protests.

Does The Arab Spring Continue?

Ten years have passed since the Arab Spring erupted in December 2010. People tried to change authoritarian regimes in particularly six Arab states but they failed except for Tunisia. Therefore, the Arab Spring turned into the Arab autumn or winter, at least for a while. When unrests began in Sudan, Algeria, Iraq and Lebanon in 2019, many analysts in media, politics, and academia debated whether it was a new Arab Spring. Someone also called it 'the Second Arab Spring'. In contrast, this study argues that the Arab Spring did not end, thereby naming new protests as well as likely ones that may resume in already incurred states should be regarded as the perpetuation of the Arab Spring. Besides, the Arab Spring looks like the European revolutions of 1848, in which some monarchies were overthrown and replaced with more representative governments (Manfreda, 2019). Like 1848 revolutions, the Arab Spring may end

with the demise of dictatorships in the long term. As Archar (2019) contends, uprisings of 2011 were the first phase of a long-term revolutionary process that may continue for years or decades. In other words, it needs some more time to see whether the will of people will prevail and democracy will work (Debeuf, 2017, p. 48). Based on this argument, latest protests should rather be regarded as the continuation of the Arab Spring with new protests and protestors that learned lessons from the first phase. Indeed, people were acting wiser thanks to experiences that they got from the Arab Spring (Kirkpatrick, 2019). What is more, protests ended up with the overthrow of al-Bashir of Sudan by a military coup, resignation of Bouteflika of Algeria, Abdul-Mahdi of Iraq and Hariri of Lebanon. Thus, leaders lost power on request of the population. Yet, while people were happy with the change, there was not the same euphoria of the Arab Spring since they knew that the harder work lay ahead of them (Alterman, 2019).

If the Arab Spring is continuing, what is next then? To understand the next phase, we should look at the past first, and figure out what was left from the first phase. The protests that started in 2011 were the result of public anger that existed for years. When people lost their patience and faith to regimes, they rioted to change their rulers. The reasons that provoked people to revolt are still available in the Arab states. Young Arabs view unemployment as the biggest problem, even more than terrorism in the region. When we look at youth unemployment rates, numbers are indeed worrisome. According to statistics of 2018, youth unemployment is 14% in Bahrain, 18.8% in Oman, 19.4% in Kuwait, 20% in Algeria, 21% in Lebanon and Morocco, 29% in Jordan, 30% in Yemen, 32% in Tunisia, 33.5% in Saudi Arabia, 35% in Iraq, 42% in Egypt, 43% in Palestine, and 49% in Libya (Al Shaykh, 2018). Young people will not blame anyone but the regime for being jobless and desperate about their future. Because it is the obligation of leaders, whether King, Emir or President, to create jobs for their citizens. When rulers fail, populations will not only question the capabilities and qualifications

of them but also the political system. Especially, in a century when contemporary political systems like democracy offer a rich and comfortable life to societies, poor Arab youth that can see the welfare in other countries through the internet will not remain calm. Thus, they will look for ways to change their conditions.

In fact, the world already testifies some solutions that the youth found for their future. For example, millions of people try to migrate to Europe for a better life. It is no coincidence that many of those migrants are from Libya, Egypt, and Syria. Their migration is a result of despair about their countries and hope for a new life in free and stable countries. Besides, the flow of foreign fighters to Syria for joining ISIS is also one of the results of the Arab Spring. Intelligence services revealed that the majority of militants came from North African countries such as Libya, Tunisia, and Egypt. Libyans even formed their brigades inside ISIS. As some ISIS members confess, what brought tens of thousands of young Arab people was their desire for vengeance from the status quo rather than religion. What Libyans, Egyptians or Saudis could not do in their countries was possible to do in Syria. Every bullet they shot to Assad was assumed to be fired to their dictators as well. Furthermore, the emergence of ISIS in Libya, Tunisia, and Egypt is a consequence of anti-establishment feelings of militants coming from these countries. On the other hand, regarding those frustrated youth staying at home, they are either under the surveillance of the regime or already fighting. In Egypt, Al-Sisi regime listens to the breath of every citizen. A young member of the MB was asked for this research whether a new revolution is possible. He said it is not possible due to the regime oppression. Yet, he still has the hope for a change. Regarding Libya, people are still fighting either on the side of General Haftar or central government. This is the case for Syria and Yemen, too. Such circumstances can be interpreted as that people expect and struggle for an opportunity to finalize the ongoing revolutionary process on their favors.

Meanwhile, the decisive role of armies for the survival of regimes should be underlined. As mentioned above, if the army (mainly generals) does not support a dictator, his reign will not last long. While the Egyptian army sided with people against Mubarak, it supported Sisi against Morsi. In addition, army generals hold top positions in the government, a way that Al-Sisi uses to appease them. Hence, it is an army that rules Egypt at the moment. The army never stayed away from power in every revolution and uprisings. For example, while it was people that wanted the overthrow of Bouteflika, it was Algerian army that forced him to resign. This was also the case in Sudan, where the army removed al-Bashir from power with a coup. Thus, what happened was akin to a military coup rather than a popular revolution (Alterman, 2019). This shows that even if people want a regime change, it will be made only by the army. Further, the army is always the strongest group in states. From an opposite perspective, it also indicates that armies steal people's revolutions. Therefore, the population may also have to challenge Generals as well. For instance, Sudanese people tried not to allow the confiscation of their revolution and resisted military leaders in spite of killings by troops. Eventually, they could save their revolution, despite sharing power with the army.

The stance of generals is important but their power might still be breakable. Perhaps, what is more worrying for future revolutions is foreign intervention. As the Arab Spring and its aftermath have shown, foreign intervention was qualitatively influential in revolutions. Gulf states and superpowers were all there to protect their interests. For example, had there not been financial support from Gulf states and political legitimacy from the US, probably Al-Sisi would not dare to attempt to overthrow Morsi. In addition, Khalifa Haftar would not fight against the legitimate Libyan government, and Yemeni civil war would not happen or it would have ended before. Hence, even if a dictator decides to accept a more representative political system, his sponsors might not accept and they may even punish him.

However, as similar events of the democratization process in history have proven, the Arab Spring may still end in favor of people whether in upcoming years or decades. There are several reasons for this argument. First, foreign support is not absolute as sponsorship is costly to Gulf states. Pouring so much money into a state just for ensuring the power to a dictator is a burden to budgets of supporters. It may cause internal conflict, which may not be between the regime and population but between the regime and other aspirants of power. Second, it damages images of sponsors, as was the case for the UAE and Saudi Arabia. These two countries are enlisted as terror-supporting countries by the EU. Such a bad reputation also intimidates foreign investors and tourists. Third, some sponsors support people as well. For example, Turkey and Qatar back legitimate government in Libya and the MB in Egypt. In addition, Houthis get help from Iran that has an aggressive policy in the region. Perhaps, that is why the UAE decided to withdraw its troops from Yemen as it probably realized its limits and the threat that may come from the Iranian regime. Fourth, there will always be a youth community that did not experience regime oppression, who will ask for the change. Children and teenagers of the Arab Spring are now university students or graduates. When they taste unemployment, they will not stay silent and act without thinking of consequences. Fifth, army generals are not always with dictators. They may support the realization of the will of people as well. Tunisia and partly for the moment Sudan is a good example for that. Finally, authoritarian regimes are obsolete and old-fashioned in the 21st century. Time is on the side of people, and regimes will always feel its pressure.

Finally, for a revolution to be successful, rioters' attitudes are very crucial. From the Arab Spring experience, when opposition groups come to power, they behave their internal and external adversaries like an enemy. They were not open to dialog and did not meet on a common point with foreign powers. For example, when Morsi came to power, he expressed his hostile feelings against Gulf states, the U.S.

and Israel by refusing their invitation to visit them. Whereas, he could act more realistically and develop good relations with them. Thus, when foreign powers understood that they can not work with Morsi, they encouraged Al-Sisi to topple him. Regarding a perpetual transition, if military-civilian collaboration in Sudan culminates in a permanent switch to civil rule, it may be an inspiratory model for next revolutions. In Sudan, generals and leaders of protestors formed a joint ruling body that consisted of five soldiers and six civilians. Called Sudan Sovereign Council, the body will be headed by a general for 21 months followed by a civilian for the next 18 months. There will also be a 300-member legislative assembly and a cabinet of technocrats, which will rule the country until elections are held 39 months later (Al Jazeera, 2019). If it works, it might be a model transition since civilian groups and military cooperate instead of fighting. Hence, no side feels ousted from power. In addition, a certain time was determined for recovery of the country and formation of the new system. We can call it 'gradual transition' that enables interaction, cooperation, and dialog between the two sides. Such collaboration also prevents manipulation of external powers that want to control the government for their interests. Regardless of achievement or failure in Sudan, their model of transition was indeed a good invention that other Arab states did not do. Finally, may new uprisings happen? As long as there is oppression, there will always be resistance and attempts for change.

Conclusion

The Arab Spring is a long-term process in which people and authoritarian regimes struggle for power. 2011 events ignited the process but autocratic governments could stop it with the help of their foreign allies. Yet, all conditions that sparked revolutions still exist and if regimes can not offer better conditions, unrests will resume. Ten years after the first phase, regimes have not changed the conditions of their citizens. Whether people are equal citizens or subjects is not clear. Besides that, the oppression of regimes causes

more frustration and endanger the future of their reigns. In addition, people become more radicalized and furious due to bad circumstances. While some of them left the country to escape from persecution and have a better life abroad, others are hopeless and furious. Military backed governments control angry population for now but the current system may not last long. On the other hand, while people want a regime change, they are not capable of ruling the country due to the lack of administrative experience. Moreover, hostile attitudes of people prevail against rational dialogs, a situation that makes people lose their revolution for which they paid high costs. However, it is not out of question that the Arab Spring may sooner or later end up with a permanent solution that will be in favor of people. In case new revolutions take place, the transition should be gradual and based on power-sharing until civilians take full control of power.

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