THE ARAB SPRING
Revolutions for Deliverance from Authoritarianism

Case Studies

ARAB NETWORK
FOR THE STUDY OF DEMOCRACY

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Edited by Hassan Krayem

Translated by Jeffrey D. Reger

L'ORIENT DES LIVRES

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to Emad Siyam, our beloved colleague from Egypt who passed away in 2013. His contribution as a founding member of the Arab Network for the Study of Democracy goes beyond commitment and dedication. He will always be remembered for his humane character, sense of humor and innovative ideas. ANSD and Egypt have lost a brilliant researcher in the struggle for democracy, who had always combined practice in the field with research-based knowledge in an exemplary manner.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THE ARAB NETWORK
FOR THE STUDY OF DEMOCRACY

The Arab Network for the Study of Democracy, an independent non-governmental association founded in 2007, is a group composed of both male and female researchers and activists from civil society from several Arab countries.

The Network is concerned with monitoring the democratic transition process in the region and its analysis, and seeks to create broader academic and media collaboration through its research efforts.

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FOREWORD

This book, which is a collection of working papers and testimonies, is an edited summary and translation into English of studies of the Arab revolutions and some of the accompanying transformations between the years 2010 and 2013 in the context of what has been termed "the Arab Spring." The original Arabic edition was published in 2013 and contains the full articles and references[1]. Hassan Krayem summarized the Arabic and served as editor of both editions. Jeffrey D. Reger translated the Arabic into English.

It is based on analyses written by both male and female researchers from the countries that have witnessed revolutions or popular movements seeking political reform. And it is a preliminary documentation of these major events, presented by members and friends of the Arab Network for the Study of Democracy, in an effort involving many researchers and activists in public life.

1. al-Shabakah al-'Arabīyah li-Dirāsat al-Dīmuqrātīyah, *al-Rabī' al-'Arabī: thawrāt al-khalas min al-istibdād: dirāsat hālāt* (Beirut:Sharq al-Kitāb, 2013)

While this book does not claim to encompass all of the relevant aspects of these momentous changes and their daunting challenges, it does — through the multiplicity of participants' voices and the diversity of their cultural and political backgrounds — allow us to present a balanced and rich reading of still on-going events whose direct and indirect effects will remain present and influential for many years to come.

<div align="center">1</div>

THE ARAB SPRING AND THE PROCESS OF DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION

<div align="center">Hassan Krayem</div>

Abstract

The Arab world, since the end of 2010, has been living amongst a wave of uprisings aimed at toppling authoritarianism and transitioning toward democratic regimes, an ongoing movement that has, thus far, achieved only partial success. This introductory chapter sets the conceptual and historical context to show how the shift in paradigm from authoritarianism to democracy has just started. The entire region is entering into a long and complicated transitional stage full of conflict. These conflicts will touch all of the countries involved at different times and to different degrees for relatively a long time. The Arab world is gradually feeling its way toward democracy, despite the cloudiness of the future and the inconclusiveness of present conditions and the myriad complications that reflect the specific conditions in each country.

Introduction

The Arab world, since the end of 2010, has lived amongst a wave of uprisings, revolutions, and strong movements aimed at toppling authoritarianism in all its various forms and entering into a process of transitioning toward democratic regimes. Moving beyond authoritarianism, of course, has so far experienced only relative success. Disappointments and failures can only be expected, according to the divergent conditions in these various countries and the capacities of the public, particularly those of the social and political blocs that aspire to democracy.

It has long been considered a given that the Arab world formed an exception to the waves of global democratization, the most recent and third of which occurred in the late 1980s.[1] Then, there were these unforeseen and shocking events in the Arab world, like the symbolism of the Mohammed Bouazizi's self-immolation in Tunis at the end of 2010, which protested both daily living conditions and the domineering state apparatus.

If we carefully examine the map of social and political movements in the past three years, we will see that we are before a fourth wave of democratization that can be inferred from the fall of authoritarian regimes through popular mass revolutions, in all of Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen. The changes have come at different levels, from at least a change in the head of state, to deeper changes such as constitutional reform and the establishment of more representative institutions. From another perspective, however, the longest-running and most violent conflict to topple the Syrian regime continues. Likewise, a popular movement attempted to shake the regime in the Kingdom of Bahrain, only for it and its reformist demands to be severely suppressed with Saudi assistance, leaving the future open to further conflict. Yet Morocco, Jordan, the

Sultanate of Oman, Mauritania, and Kuwait introduced some limited reforms and ministerial reshuffles under the pressure of the popular movements that erupted in all of these nations. As for Algeria, Iraq, and Sudan: all three repressed their respective popular movements demanding reform or change. Lastly, the ripples of the wave have reached the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, albeit timidly, where the government has supplied generous "bids," reaching 40 billion dollars in the form of various social benefits, in the hope of calming things down.[2]

In very brief summary, the entire region is moving toward an escape from the authoritarian paradigm, which has governed the region for many decades, and entering into a long and complicated transitional stage full of conflict that will touch all of the regimes at different times and to different degrees. The Arab world is gradually feeling its way toward democracy, despite the cloudiness of the future and the inconclusiveness of present conditions resulting from myriad complications and reflecting the specifics of each country, which will be reviewed below and throughout the book.

Why now?

There is no doubt that the wave of liberation from authoritarianism in the Arab region has been delayed, and there are complex causes for this delay.[3] In researching this question, why it began at the end of 2010 and still continues, we have landed on explanations encompassing some or all of the following elements: the shift in the role of the state, leading to a decline in its "welfare" function in social fields; the rising prices of food; and the global financial crisis; in addition, the impact of the information revolution and the change in the political culture of large swaths of young people especially, as well as the influence

of change in Iraq and the Green Revolution in Iran[4]. But the more convincing structural factor is the phenomenon of increasing numbers of young people, whose ages range between 15 and 35 years, and who played the pioneering role in these movements. Statistics show that the number in this category has jumped from around 40 million in 1980 to more than 90 million in 2010.[5] Most importantly, the average age in the Arab world is 22 years old, compared to a global average of 28.[6] It is estimated that around 50 percent of the population in the Arab region is below 25 years old.

The demographic factor is intertwined with socioeconomic factors, which together led to the eruption of the youth revolution. That is, the pace of increase among the youth population was always faster than the pace of resource development and guaranteed employment opportunities. This fact aggravated unemployment rates among large segments of the educated and college graduates, especially following quantitative expansion of education, which in turn provided a lower quality of education for all. According to UN reports, the rate of unemployment among young people in the Arab region has reached 24 percent in the period between 2005 and 2008, which is more than twice the global average, which stood at 11.9 percent in the same period. Likewise, youth comprise about 50 percent of the total numbers of the unemployed in the Arab region.[7] A study by the United Nations Development Program in Egypt, based on official statistics and data for the year 2010, showed that the unemployment rate increases in direct proportion with the rate of education, reaching 14.7 percent of secondary school graduates and rising to 25.6 percent for university graduates.[8] The unemployment rate among young women is even higher at about 35 percent. This fact reflects inherited social prejudice in the dominant culture against women.[9]

It is estimated that Arab economies need to create 50 million jobs by 2020 in order to absorb the youth coming on the job market. This has happened during the last three decades, when the birthrate declined to 3.1 children per woman, ranging from about two children in Tunisia and Lebanon, while remaining at roughly three and a half children in countries like Egypt, Syria, and Jordan. The highest rate is 5.9 children in Yemen.[10] Thus, the Arab region does not differ from other regions, with respect to its mixture of excessive urbanization, even if accompanied by the construction of slums and the "countrification" of cities as has happened in many developing countries, and the transition to a service economy without developing a productive economy, in addition to the quantitative expansion in education, a delayed marriage age, and a rising cost of living, which together result in having fewer children. All this was accompanied by the weakened capacities of the Arab states after the end of the oil boom, which meant the end of guaranteed social support for food, housing, healthcare, and free education among other things. This also coincided with Arab states adopting neo-liberal policies of gradual withdrawal from providing these functions, which also made way for civil society to take a wider and more influential role, particularly organized networks built by political Islam in its various forms, especially in rural areas and the belts of poverty and the slums of the cities.[11]

It is possible to add other factors that vary in degree from one state to another in the Arab region, including the collision of frustrated young people with the reality of rampant and pervasive corruption, the underdevelopment of the political regime and its authoritarianism, and the prevalence of narrow social groups utilizing the state's positions of responsibility for personal profit. This has led more and more social forces to become stakeholders for change, expanding the social base for these revolutions. Another

new factor that emerged was the impact of the Information Revolution and the openness of social media on providing broader knowledge of the world and human values, which led to a change in the political culture among many segments of educated young people. The adoption of demands concerned with freedom, bread, dignity, and social justice was reflected in most of the slogans shouted from the beginning of the movements in Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen, Libya, and elsewhere.[12] Therefore it is necessary to focus on both the shared and the different phenomena of each country before entering into and exploring the prospects of the transitional phase and its characteristics.

Shared phenomena

Perhaps the most prominent commonality in the Arab social movement, which caused a domino effect, is the participation of nearly everyone in aspiring toward freedom through the overthrow of authoritarian regimes, all the way down to the demand of replacing it with democracy, as way of guaranteeing broad freedoms and pursuing social justice. It was clear that young people played a prominent role in launching and organizing the popular movements, which moved beyond spontaneity by gaining the ability to control and organize themselves sometime after their inceptions. But this lag also allowed organized political forces, which were monitoring the movements from the start, to ride the wave of revolution. Nevertheless, forces like "political Islam," with their vast social networks and organizational capabilities, which were influential and even dominant in some cases, entered only at a later stage, in subsequent phases.

The burden of starting and launching the movements fell on the shoulders of the young and newly initiated into organized political work, bringing a new discourse and new slogans reflecting common aspirations for a more democratic,

more just, and more modern political system. However, in the sequence of events in most of these countries, this was followed by the entrance and subsequent dominance of organized political groups, most prominently Islamist movements like the Muslim Brotherhood movement through its diverse variety of branches in Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen, Syria, and to a certain extent Libya. Although the initial role played by these "Islamic" forces was limited, their strong organizational capacity, vast and dispersed networks, and the sympathy resulting from its permanent stance in the ranks of the political opposition to the authoritarian regimes that had exposed its members to repression, violence and imprisonment — all this contributed to their expanding role in the course of the conflict, as well as their presence in various forms and to varying degrees in the elections that followed, particularly where the people granted the Islamic parties a chance to rule. This is what enabled the "Justice and Freedom" party, the political name for the Muslim Brotherhood movement in Egypt, to obtain more than 45 percent of the seats in the Egyptian parliament after the revolution, and get their candidate for the presidency of the republic elected.[13] Likewise, the Tunisia *al-Nahdah* movement succeeded in obtaining a similar percentage, and entered into a coalition with other liberal and secular forces that had succeeded thanks to the adoption of a proportional electoral system, and thus was able to form and head a coalition government.[14]

In all cases, the general picture gives an ambiguous impression. From one perspective, the military's tactic of raising the specter of a violent, extremist political Islam to support its authoritarian rule in the region, namely in the case of Algeria and repeated in Egypt in the 1990s, has reached its limits. From another perspective, a new political Islam, moderate in its discourse, has emerged and verbally accepted the rules of the democratic game. However, there

is an open and on-going conflict with political Islam about the foundations of the state, about the basis and tenets of the constitution, about a possible modern civilizational project, about the meaning of public order, about laws, about culture, about education, and about the role of women. These debates and this broader conflict will remain open in these communities and societies for decades to come.

Before concluding this section, another phenomenon must be noted: the wide participation of women in the social movement witnessed in some Arab countries, though in different ways, through different means, such as demonstrations or protests, and in different places. While the presence of women was varied and uneven in subsequent stages, to the point of absence on occasion, the point is that women's participation created another future area of conflict and a critical opening for the debate over the role of women and their rights in post-revolution democratic societies throughout the region. Conditions are similarly unjust in all the countries of the region, particularly, with respect to political rights and rights of representation, not to mention women's share of the workforce and prejudicial laws, especially personal status laws.

Different phenomena

In analyzing the different experiences and paths, three key factors emerge that distinguish the difference between success and failure, or that specifically led to complications and deviations. The first of the three factors is the existence and extent of vertical divisions in society (whether ethnic, tribal, or sectarian) and their effects and the ability of the authoritarian regime to either exploit these divisions in its favor or to use their negative impact to invite regional or foreign intervention at the expense of internal change. The impact of this first factor, already complicated in many countries,

can be magnified by the second primary factor, related to the role of the army or security forces, whether in defense of the regime or in staying neutral in this conflict. As for the third factor, it is historical and connected with the available extent of traditional or historic sources of the regime's legitimacy, or the degree of social cohesion or social pacts concluded on a tribal or class basis, like those with merchant families in some Gulf states.

It should be pointed out that the quickest and most advanced transition in its tasks of constructing an alternative system was the one in Tunisia, where the time between the outbreak of the uprising and the flight of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali was only four weeks. The first factor can be seen in the relative homogeneity of Tunisian society, and thus the absence of vertical divisions as an influential factor. In addition, the neutrality of the army as an institution undoubtedly played a role in pressuring Ben Ali to step down, and also reduced the amount of damage and guaranteed the speed of the transition to the stage following the fall of the head of the regime.

Similar to Tunisia, the military establishment in Egypt attempted to dispense with the head of the regime to preserve the rest of the regime to the extent possible and rebuild the rest. This prolonged the initial conflict, but in the end contributed to a certain extent in dividing the military from the head of the regime and its security apparatus, and in launching a less violent transition dynamic while preserving the institution of the military.

As for Yemen, tribal divisions and splits in the military and security institutions contributed to the complexity of the situation, prolonging the conflict and increasing the number of victims. These internal conflicts led to an assassination attempt on President Ali Abdullah Saleh, who then, through Saudi intervention, was persuaded to leave power in order to preserve what remained of the regime he had

founded. The conflict is still ongoing in all its complexity in the transitional stage, further complicated by the regional divisions between north and south Yemen.

In Libya, both tribal and regional conflicts have emerged, especially between eastern Libya and western Libya, and their respective cities of Benghazi and Tripoli, prolonging the armed and bloody conflict there. These conflicts have continued despite the defeat and murder of Muammar Gaddafi, and are represented by the spread of armed militias and the rise of regionalisms, which will likely continue to play an influential role in the transition. In the case of Libya, the armed forces were less an organized military institution than militias and battalions supporting Gaddafi and his family.

In the case of Syria, the authoritarian regime fed divisions that were in essence of its own making. Sectarian divisions, for example, contributed in complicating the situation of the political opposition, but it did not form an obstacle to the opposition's growth and expanding control on the ground, as the opposition attracted the sympathy of the vast majority of Syrians in the face of the oppression and brutality of an increasingly violent and repressive regime. And the violence of the regime increased quantitatively and qualitatively, which was the primary cause of the transformation of the revolution from peaceful to armed, six months after it began, in order to protect civilians and the revolution from this unprecedented violence. Thereafter, those remaining in the official military effectively became militias narrowly devoted to the regime and its head. This organic link between the authoritarian regime and a narrow circle prevented the military and security services connected with the regime from remaining neutral in the conflict, leading to the use and intensification of violence throughout Syria.

Tragically, the regime in Bahrain used sectarianism as a tool to stop the protest movement, and to associate it

with the regional conflict between Iran and Saudi Arabia, in addition to relying on the sectarian nature of the composition of the army and other Bahraini military and security institutions. All these factors have led the protest movement in Bahrain to be aborted temporarily, following heavy suppression and the arrest of its leaders. However, protests have continued in subsequent stages (if periodically), which suggests that the only way out of the impasse will be if the rulers return to a dynamic of serious, real dialogue, make or accept proposals or suggestions to expand and respect freedoms, and ultimately allow a transition to a democratic regime.

In addition to the factors previously mentioned, the monarchical regimes could draw upon dynastic legitimacy bestowed by history and inheritance, while the militaristic legitimacy of the presidential regimes collapsed. Likewise some of the monarchies adopted implicit vertical divisions, like the Jordanian-Palestinian divide and the employment of tribalism and clan-based rivalries in Jordan. This, along with a willingness to make some superficial concessions like changing ministers and cabinets helped avoid raising the more important questions about the constitution, the power of the king, and transition to democracy. This is what happened, for example, in Morocco, where more important concessions were made, only it led to a split in the positions of the Moroccan opposition parties themselves, likely prolonging the life of the regime with just a dose of reform.[15]

As for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and most of the wealthy Gulf states, the prevailing logic is still to swap rights and democracy for a redistribution of some of their resource-based wealth in the form of royal gifts and benefits personally granted by the kings and emirs to their subjects, as well as to adopt a common stance of regional conflict with Iran as a cover for preventing or delaying, for an indeterminate amount of time, the introduction of democratic

reforms. So these wealthy states do not differ much from the other Arab states, in terms of the presence of educated young people aspiring to a life of freedom and dignity, except in their economic and social conditions, which differ relatively from the others by virtue of the regimes' capacity to contain some social demands through a limited redistribution of petroleum wealth.

Characteristics of the transitional period

Based on the experiences of many countries in Southern and Eastern Europe, Latin America, Asia, and Africa, there are three stages that must be pointed out in the process of transition to democracy. The first stage: fall of the authoritarian regime, as noted above, by adopting various and diverse methods, depending on the circumstances of the country.[16] The second phase is the intermediary transition, which aims to lay the foundations for the transition to democracy, to effect changes to the laws and the constitution, to prepare political parties and the forces of civil society, and to hold elections to establish an alternative authority. This stage is conflictual *par excellence*, as seen currently in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya. The third stage is the consolidation of democracy through the establishment of firm institutions and the spread of such a culture. This is the final phase in the entrenchment of democratic governance.[17] Due to the variation in processes of democratic transformation in the Arab region and their different paths, from processes of gradual internal reform to processes of total regime collapse, and owing to factors like regional, foreign, and international intervention as well, the nature of the transitional period will be long, complicated, and ambiguous, and is already experiencing the seesaw of ups and downs, advances and retreats, with the path of one state affecting not only itself but also its neighbors.

It is important in this conclusion to point to four of the most significant issues around which conflict will revolve in these countries that are in the throes of getting rid of their authoritarian regimes and laying the foundations for the transition to democracy. These issues are shared in the common Arab cultural space, though the order may vary from country to country in terms of priority.

First: the struggle over the identity of the state, whether civil or religious. This conflict centers on the constitution and the laws governing it; it is a broad social conflict; however, it also reflects the deep intellectual difference between the two currents of political Islam and liberals in their respective variations.

Second: the struggle to redefine the roles of the army, military institutions, and security services, limited by democratic principles. Egypt has witnessed a chapter of this conflict, in the polarization between the armed forces and the Muslim Brotherhood that is expected to continue in the future. The Muslim Brotherhood constitution allowed the armed forces to maintain or even expand in some respects its former space of autonomy, privileges, and powers of the former era, while also giving the Muslim Brotherhood and its allies an opportunity to strengthen their rule of Egypt, and steer the country through further stages in the process of democratic transition. In a surprise move in August 2012, for example, Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi ousted Field Marshall Mohamed Hussein Tantawi, the de facto ruler of the country and the head of the military council that led the transitional phase.[18]

Yet subsequently, Commander-in-Chief and Defense Minister Abdel Fattah al-Sisi "isolated" President Morsi on 3 July 2013 after the unprecedented, millions-strong mass demonstrations against Mursi and the Brotherhood.

Third: the struggle over women's rights, especially in terms of legal equality, through the abolition of unjust and

discriminatory laws against women. Discrimination inherent to inherited customs and the "traditional" treatment of women also needs to be addressed, according to the indications coming from Tunisia and Egypt, the two countries that began the wave of change. The pivotal conflict will be not only between the liberal and Islamic political currents, but also between traditional and conservative Islamic social forces on one hand and civil society organizations, foremost women's movements, on the other.

Fourth and finally: There is a conflict still in its infancy centered around the role of the state in the distribution of wealth, or the redefinition of the role of state in connection with its socioeconomic policies and other issues that will crystallize through development programs. Altogether, therefore, the tasks in the coming stage appear difficult, arduous, and complex, even though things seem to be going in the right direction.

Endnotes

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11. UNDP, *Arab Development Challenges Report* (2011), 11.
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13. Among these slogans: "Change, freedom Social justice (which rhymes in Arabic);" "The people want the fall of the regime;" "Get out (directing the ruler to leave power);" "Death rather than humiliation;" "Peacefully, peacefully (a chant for nonviolence);" "Freedom forever."
14. And it was a difficult victory for the "Muslim Brotherhood" candidate Mohammed Morsi, who won 51.73 percent of the votes in the competition with General Ahmed Shafiq, the last prime minister of the Mubarak era, who won 48.25 percent.
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2

TUNISIA: THE FREEDOM AND DIGNITY REVOLUTION

Ahmad Karoud

Abstract

The spark of the uprisings that have taken place in some Arab countries was lit in Tunisia at the end of 2010. An analysis of the situation in Tunisia reveals that the monopoly on political decision-making by the small coterie surrounding the president, the inability of citizens to participate in public life, the suppression of dissent, the proliferation of corruption, and the deterioration in the quality of education led to profound changes in the political structure of the system. While Tunisia has achieved some social progress and some important economic successes, it was also still ruled by an authoritarian political regime. As a result, broad categories of people have not benefited from these successes and opted to rtebel against authoritarianism.

Introduction

The spark of the intifadas or uprisings that have taken place in some Arab countries was lit in Tunisia at the end of 2010. On 17 December 2010, in the city of Sidi Bouzid located in the central west of Tunisia, a young man named Mohamed Bouazizi, a street vendor who sold fruit, lit himself on fire in front of the provincial headquarters in protest of humiliations at the hands of government employees. Bouazizi's self-sacrifice by immolation was not the first such incident in Tunisia, but it formed "the spark that lit the whole field ablaze" and which has not yet been extinguished, despite the "escape" of the president of the republic in January 2011 after ruling for 23 years.

14 January 2011 was distinguished by the anger of protesters reaching its peak.

Clashes with police officers and the security services had swept the working-class neighborhoods of the capital, and the neighborhoods near the presidential palace in Carthage. The leading assembly point was on the most famous street in Tunisia, Habib Bourgiba Avenue, in front of the Interior Ministry, which symbolized the torture and humiliation that the regime had practiced against its people for decades. The rhyming slogan in Arabic chanted by the protesters proclaimed "the Ministry of Interior, a ministry of terrorism," distilling Tunisians' aversion for the state security services in particular and for the regime in general. On the eve of the very same day, Ben Ali left the country accompanied by his wife. And so did some of his in-laws, including the dozens of members of his and his wife's families that had been arrested. The "flight" of Ben Ali, 29 days after the peaceful, popular uprising had begun, truly represented a defining moment in the life of Tunisian men and women.

This paper will attempt to provide an analytical perspective on the events that occurred in Tunisia and the direct causes of this "revolution," as well as the structural causes,

then review the most important characteristics of the transitional phase prevailing in Tunisia.

I. Direct causes

First: the worsening unemployment crisis, particularly among young people, and specifically those with university degrees (200,000 college graduates were unemployed in 2010). This aggravated the social crisis for young people, whose prospects for social advancement were blocked in a country where social advancement depends on success in education. Graduation from the university has become a nightmare, because it opened the door to a long period of unemployment and desperate attempts to immigrate illegally to Europe.

Second: the phenomenon of corruption, proliferating on a wide scale within government agencies and economic institutions, all in the service of the ruling family. The families of the president and his wife Leila Trabelsi Ben Ali became, in their behavior, symbols of the abuse of both public and private property, making a mockery of the judiciary and harnessing the security services to facilitate the wide-scale looting of the wealth of the country by these two families, particularly the Trabelsi family.

Third, the Wikileaks documents revealed the criticism of American diplomats toward the repression and spread of corruption in Tunisia, noting that successive American administrations, like some European governments, considered the regime to be a strong pillar as an ally in the "fight against terrorism and clandestine immigration."

Fourth, there was the emergence of a different quality of young people in the ranks of the protesters, with high spirit and tenacity in the face of the various security services. These brave young people continued to organize rallies for weeks, despite the murderous campaigns carried out

by trained snipers (this is evidenced by the medical reports that recorded precise wounds that led to the deaths of dozens of victims).

Fifth, there was also the excessive use of force to repress the protests, with the use of live ammunition to kill protesters from close range. The day of 24 December 2010 saw the first of the martyrs fall in Sidi Bouzid. The greatest loss of life occurred in the period between 8-10 January 2011 in the interior of the country, and in the period between 12-13 January in and around the capital of Tunis, including its suburbs, and in the coastal cities.

Sixth, there was the role played by male and female bloggers who breached the media blockade that had been imposed by the regime for decades. They went out into the field to take pictures and gather testimony, and then transmitted news of the clashes with the security services and distributed pictures of the killed and wounded across social networks, particularly Facebook, which became an essential source of information for the pan-Arab satellite television channels and the global media generally. Tunisia has seen, despite strict control and monitoring of the internet, considerable growth in the numbers of Facebook users in a short period of time (from 860,000 in 2009 to 2,400,000 in January 2011).

Seventh, the embrace of the protests by the General Union of Tunisian Workers, which combines in its ranks the trade unions and white-collar employees scattered all over the country. Perhaps most significant were the protests and mass public gatherings in Muhammad Ali square, in front of the headquarters of the Central Union of Tunisia, and in front of the headquarters of the Regional Labor Union in Sfax, Tunisia's second largest city and important economic and industrial center.

Eighth, there was also the refusal of the military leadership to use force to disperse the protesters, and limiting

the role of army units to protect public facilities and institutions. This caused serious tension in the relationships among the security agencies as a result of the ever-widening protests and the entrance of various classes and categories of people (including professionals like lawyers and white-collar employees) into the protests, causing growing confusion at the higher risks of government who became unable to quell the revolution, which coalesced around the dominant bilingual slogan of *irhal* in Arabic or *dégage* in French (meaning "go," "leave," or "get out" in English), directed at Ben Ali from the crowds in front of the Ministry of the Interior.

II. Structural factors

In recent years, the vast majority of political observers have come to a consensus on the existence of a peculiarly Tunisian paradox. Tunisia is characterized by some social progress and some important economic successes, but also by an authoritarian political regime. As a result, broad categories of people have not benefited from the results of these economic and social successes.

To attempt to explain this paradox, we will adopt the method of social historical analysis; this is in order to determine the structural causes of the Tunisian revolution.

After 75 years under French "protection," Tunisia became independent in 1956, and the party that led the liberation movement from French colonialism began constructing a "nation-state" on the basis of a constitution drafted by a national constituent council, elected directly by the people (males only), consecrating a republican system that gave extensive powers to the president of the republic at the expense of the legislature and the judiciary.

Under this constitutional system — dominated by the ruling party, the same party as the president — all decisions

and policies derived from the will of the president and his small surrounding clique of political and security officials, and even members of his family, his wife at the forefront (Wassila Ben Ammar, Bourguiba's wife, was in some ways the Leila Trablasi of the Bourguiba era).

In spite of the president and his coterie's monopoly over decision-making authority, the regime pursued five decades of policies that deeply changed the economic and social structure in Tunisia. Education was expanded, graduating thousands of cadres qualified in various fields of knowledge, and concentrating government health facilities and cultural institutions in nearly every city. Highly competitive economic enterprises were established in the country, the demographic growth of the population was put under control, the annual per capita income rose from $91 in 1956 to nearly $5,000 in 2009, while life expectancy rose from 51.1 in 1966 to 72 in 2009, and the country experienced an average economic growth rate of 5.6 percent in the first three decades and 4.7 percent in the subsequent two decades.

Despite these successes and the deep change in the economic and social structure of Tunisian society, the country has seen three violent social shocks: the general strike led by the General Union of Tunisian Workers in 1978, the bread riots of 1984, and finally the "revolution of freedom and dignity" of 2011. On these occasions, the regime resorted to the army to suppress the popular uprisings because the security services were incapable of doing so. The regime succeeded in emerging from the crises of 1978 and the "bread uprising" of 1984; however, the third crisis of 2011 led to the collapse of the political system of the ruling party and the flight of its head.

What distinguished all of these uprisings in Tunisia over the past half century was the popular and peaceful nature of the movements, responding to the failures of government

policies to distribute wealth justly or reduce the significant disparities between social classes and between regions, most notably the regional disparity between areas on the Mediterranean coast (the east of the country) and the interior (the central and western areas).

To understand the reasons for the failure of Tunisia to build a political regime in line with its social and economic achievements, it is necessary to analyze the characteristics of the prevailing political system, the pattern of development, and the educational policies adopted over the last two decades.

First: an authoritarian political system

For three decades, the regime was based on the constitution of 1959, which was formulated by the chairman of the Constitutional Liberal Party (better known as Destour, after the Arabic word for constitution), who was also the president of the republic. The president thereby monopolized most of the powers (executive and judicial) under one-party rule and appointed the members of the legislature through sham "elections," with no room for competitors. In 1987, an elderly Bourguiba was dismissed, and his successor Ben Ali maintained the core of the system with some cosmetic reforms, such as holding regular presidential and electoral "elections" and permitting a very small number of parties defined by the law as "friendly" to the party of the president to coexist in the legislature, as well as enabling some "friends" to establish private media outlets.

This "pluralistic decor" did not succeed in covering the police-state character of the regime, uncovered through the reports issued by national, Arab, and international human rights organizations. All of these bodies and organization agree unanimously that the Tunisian regime has followed a systematic policy of repression toward any opposition and all dissidents, using torture and detention as instruments

of brutal oppression, and to strike fear in the society. The regime has relied on a number of police and intelligence services to practice this repressive policy, making a mockery of the judiciary through kangaroo courts, just as it used the media to spread political propaganda. The ruling Destour party, which became known as the Democratic Constitutional Rally (known as RCD based on its French acronym), was used as a tool to monitor the citizens.

When the masses erupted in the interior cities and lower-class neighborhoods, seeking to get rid of the "gang of thieves," the regime could not find anyone to protect it. Even the myriad omnipresent security services could not save it. The confrontations with the various security services demonstrated the regime's loss of legitimacy: no historical legitimacy (in contrast to Bourguiba in the first half of his rule owing to his anti-colonial credentials), no democratic legitimacy (without free and fair elections), and no popular legitimacy, with shrinking resources allocated to grants and social welfare to "needy families."

What distinguishes the authoritarian regime in Tunisia is its essential dependence on the security agencies and the Interior Ministry, as well as the governmental "mass media" and the ruling party, to serve as marketing for the regime and to disguise the miserable underlying political, economic, and social realities. As for the military, its political role had remained marginal. The army remained distant from the direct management of the public, daily life in the country. Furthermore, the number of men and amount of materiel was minimal compared to the armies of neighboring countries like Algeria, Libya, and Morocco.

Finally, the regime only resorted to the use of the military in the case that the security services were unable to suppress the uprisings, or the occasional selection of some senior officers to carry out governmental functions, particularly in the Ben Ali era.

Second: an economic system that deepened the social disparities between classes and regions

Tunisia has known three major stages of economic policy under the rule of Presidents Bourguiba and Ben Ali.

1956-1969: Regaining sovereignty and the "Tunisification" of the economy.

1969-1986: Economic liberalization and the establishment of heavy chemical industry.

1986-2011: Accelerated privatization and developing a partnership with Europe.

What distinguished the first three decades following independence from France (1956-1986) was the central role of the state as the fundamental economic actor, by deciding and implementing economic policies. Throughout this lengthy the era, the state was the primary financier, producer, and employer in all economic, agricultural, commercial, and service sectors. Despite the success in this first period in modernizing and administering the basic economic infrastructure and expanding the productive economic base, the bureaucratic tendency in the management of these institutions eventually deepened the economic crisis in the middle of the 1980s, creating favorable conditions for Ben Ali's "coup" and assumption of power on 7 November 1987, which marked Tunisia's entrance into a new economic experiment that last two decades. The economy under Ben Ali depended on the private sector, openness to the European Common Market, and the gradual reduction in the role of the state in the economy and the provision of services, especially in the areas of health, education, and employment. Despite a strengthened infrastructure (with the construction and expansion of airports, bridges, roads, and the power grid) and an average economic growth rate reaching 5.6 percent throughout the 1990s and 4.5 percent in the first decade of the new millennium, this era ended in severe crisis, centered on the inability of the economy to provide employment opportunities, particularly for well-educated young people.

The pattern of development that was followed in Tunisia since the mid 1970s had depended, in essence, first on financing the industrial sector, whose products were intended for export, and employed an inexpensive labor force of limited education so these exporting companies could compete with European institutions; and second, on developing the tourism sector, whose customers were primarily European employees and workers.

This strategy reached an impasse owing to competition from Chinese industry and the countries of Southeast Asia, and likewise could not withstand the consequences of the European-Tunisian free-trade convention. The economic policies of the Ben Ali regime thus led to the erosion of the middle class, deepened the unemployment crisis, and increased the poverty rate, such that the income of 20 percent of the population amounted to only two dollars per day in 2010. The outbreak of the global economic crisis in 2008 only made the economic crisis more severe, in particular the employment crisis in Tunisia.

Third: an educational policy producing unemployment

The expansion and generalization of education is considered one of Tunisia's crowning achievements in the past five decades. The number of primary and secondary students had doubled, while the number of university students had multiplied 9.4 times within half a century, such that the number of students in a country of 10 million had reached 2,440,000 by 2008. In the 2007-2008 school year, the number of elementary and secondary pupils between the ages of 12-18 had reached 1,069,600, while the percentage of university students amounted to 37.7 percent of all 20-24 year olds.

These statistics, while proof of the educational policy's success from a quantitative perspective, do not hide the deeper

problems related to the quality of education (the high student-teacher ratio means that the quality of mentoring and supervision is quite weak). The schools have become a means of jettisoning nearly 140,000 pupils, most of whom had not finished their educations, into the ranks of the unemployed every year. A report of the National Advisory Committee for Labor in 2008 explained that "two-thirds of young Tunisians are closer to illiteracy than they are to acquiring the necessary skills required to work in a globalized economy."

Perhaps most notable is the escalating unemployment rate for each higher level of education. According to the 2009 figures of the National Institute of Statistics in Tunisia, the unemployment rate among the illiterate was 6.1 percent; 14.1 percent among those who had received a secondary education; and 21.9 percent among post-secondary graduates receiving higher education. The numbers of unemployed university graduates doubled over the course of 15 years, such that the number of unemployed in this category was 200,000 in the second half of 2010. The percentage of college-educated unemployed in the inland areas of the country rose higher than the coastal areas. In addition to this phenomenon of unemployment, holders of advanced degrees suffer from underemployment and the phenomenon of working in areas completely unrelated to their educations and for low wages, increasing the frustration of this category of young people.

III. The transitional period

Following the "escape" or "flight" of Ben Ali to seek asylum in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on 14 January 2011, Tunisia entered a transitional political stage, whose first phase spanned until 23 October 2011, the day of elections for the National Constituent Assembly. A government was formed of the three parties that had won the most seats on the

council, which could be considered the start of the second phase of the transitional period, which is expected to end with new legislative and executive elections on the basis of a new constitution.

First: the first phase

On 14 January 2011, the first minister (head of the government) assumed the functions of the president of the republic pursuant to chapter 45 of the existing constitution, which empowers him to perform the tasks of the president of the republic in case of the president's absence. However, the events that took place on the evening of the 14th, represented by the arrest of some ministers and leading security officials and the deteriorating security situation necessitated a transfer of presidential functions to the head of the House of Representatives, according to chapter 57 of the constitution. Accordingly, a feeling of reassurance dawned in Tunisia, with the fall of President Ben Ali resolved constitutionally, and the successful transfer of power among three different presidents (Ben Ali, Mohamed Ghannouchi, and Fouad Mebazaa) all within 48 hours. The first weeks following this day are notable and distinguished by the feelings of solidarity and mutual respect among citizens, their tongues liberated from fear and trust replacing suspicion.

After the head of the House of Representatives, Mebazaa, had assumed the duties of the presidency and appointed Ghannouchi first minister, the same position he had held under Ben Ali, the issue of the legitimacy of institutions of governance emerged among the political class. The bicameral parliament, composed of a house of representatives and a house of councilors, was dissolved. The head of state was entrusted with the authority to issue legislative decrees. And a judicial ruling was issued to dissolve the structure of the former ruling party, the Democratic Constitutional Rally (better known by its French acronym, RCD).

But these measures did not stop the growing political tension and controversy over how to organize political life in the country's transitional context, in the absence of a legislative authority and with an interim president permitted by the existing constitution to perform his duties for no more than 60 days.

The political class proposed four options to resolve the issue of legitimacy:

1. Organize presidential elections under the existing constitution
2. Prepare a draft of a new constitution to be put to a referendum
3. Organize presidential elections and appoint a constituent assembly to draft a new constitution
4. Elect a constituent assembly for the second republic

As a result of pressure from the street — particularly the sit-in of young people coming from several interior cities and lower-class neighborhoods of the capital, known as the Casbah Sit-in — Ghannouchi's second government resigned, and Beji Caid el Sebsi was tasked with forming a new government, free of ministers who had worked with Ben Ali. This government proposed a new road map as a way out of the crisis of legitimacy. The president announced the holding of elections, which the current members of government would not contest, for a national constituent assembly to draft a new constitution. The choice to elect a constituent assembly proved the continuation of the revolution and the insistence of the "revolutionaries" on a break with the authoritarian regime and the constitution of the first republic from 1959, which initiated the monopolization of power by an unaccountable individual, first Bourguiba and then Ben Ali, who could rule unilaterally and with impunity.

Three committees were set up to look into "political reforms," to "inquire into excesses" occurring during the demonstrations and protests, and to investigate "the

phenomenon of corruption and bribery." In the beginning, these committees faced a wave of criticism and skepticism about their work, however, they accomplished some important tasks, making their mark on the transitional period and opening up debate and new ways of thinking through crucial issues.

The Supreme Authority to Achieve the Goals of the Revolution (*L'Instance supérieure ou Haute instance pour la réalisation des objectifs de la révolution*) prepared a number of draft decrees that were signed by the president of the republic, becoming a law-making power. Among the most important of these legal acts was the election law for the national constituent assembly that adopted a system of party-list proportional representation with parity between male and female candidates, meaning an equal number of men and women on the lists, as well as the creation of an independent higher body to supervise the elections. The commission also approved draft decrees concerning the establishment of political parties and associations, and two decrees regulating the public media and the practice of press freedom.

The fact-finding commission regarding excesses and abuses announced information about human rights violations during the period from 17 December 2010 to 14 January 2011 and the days that followed. The commission found that there were 338 deaths, including 86 prisoners, 14 members of the security forces, and five from the national army. 82 percent were under 40 years old. The commission noted that the security forces were responsible for 98.89 percent of deaths before 14 January, and counted 2,147 wounded.

For its part, the national committee on bribery and corruption had presented a final report after studying 5,000 files and referring 300 to the judiciary on suspicion of corruption. Additionally, after the revolution, the government

confiscated the property of the ousted president, his family, and his wife's family, and tasked a body with scrutinizing the sources of wealth for the two families as well as a number of politicians and business men who had benefited from their relationships with the president. The confiscated property was placed under the supervision of the judiciary pending the final determination of its legal status.

The interim president issued a decree calling for "citizens to elect a national constituent council that would draft a constitution for the country within one year of its election," and political powers accepted the results of these elections, which were supervised by the independent high commission for elections, held on 23 October 2011.

Hundreds of observers and journalists, both local and foreign, followed these elections. They, as well as the candidates, agreed on the whole that the elections were free and fair, despite the fact that they were the first of their kind to be held in Tunisia, and that the excesses or abuses that took place did not approach a level of invalidating the final overall results.

The final report of the electoral committee declared a turnout of 54 percent of the total population. Three political parties (the *Nahda* or Renaissance Movement, the Congress for the Republic, and the Democratic Forum for Labor and Liberties) out of more than 80 total that had nominated candidates had won more than 51 percent of the vote and 63 percent of the seats in the constituent assembly. A "coalition" government, headed by the Secretary-General of the Renaissance Movement Hamade Jebali, was formed. The secretary-general of the Democratic Forum was also elected to the council, and Moncef Marzouki, head of the Congress party, was chosen as president of the republic.

The first acts of the assembly were to draft its internal bylaws and issue the "provisional organization of authority" law, which gave broad powers to the prime minister at the

expense of the president of the republic, and gave constitutional powers (including the establishment of the Supreme Judicial Council) to the assembly, but neither specified how long the drafting of the constitution would take nor the dates of elections for the new legislature and executive on the basis of the new constitution. Thus, the National Constituent Assembly had monopolized broad powers controlled by the troika of ruling parties that constituted the majority.

Second: the contentious issues during the transitional stage

Tunisians had now become able to raise all kinds of contentious issues and engage in their discussion thanks to an atmosphere now conducive to the freedom of expression and the formation of more than 100 parties and hundreds of organizations and association. But the considerable decline in what some called the "prestige" or the authority of the state also meant a decline in its role as a guarantor of equal application of the law to all, without discrimination, and as a deterrent to those who infringed on the freedom of others.

In light of these conditions, the political, media, and intellectual elite waged a war of ideas over seemingly every issue related to the country's past, present, and future. The difficulty of coming to consensus emerged in the case of the most sensitive issues, such as the "accountability" of the former regime (related to notions of transitional justice); anything related to the "identity" of the Tunisian people, such as the place of Islam in politics and society; the potential type of the coming political system, whether parliamentary or presidential primarily; the pattern of development and social justice; and reform of the judiciary, the security apparatus, and the media.

This political and ideological back and forth led to a serious divide in both the elite and wider society. One

development deserving attention here was the surprising emergence of a "Salafist trend," as a party to public life. Its members could be counted in the thousands after numbering only in the hundreds under the rule of Ben Ali, who persecuted and oppressed them, targeting in particular the "jihadi wing" that used violence to confront his regime.

The adoption of violence as a method of dealing with its adversaries by some wings of this current has had a deleterious effect on political life and the ongoing debate over critical issues, and has fueled further controversies and contentious disputes.

More than two years after the spark of the revolution was ignited, Tunisians continue to live under an interim authority. 15 months after its election, the National Constituent Assembly through specialized committees has drafted a constitution and disseminated it to the public in December 2012. Although this formulation has taken into consideration the observations, suggestions, and criticisms generated by a draft proposal published in August 2012, Tunisian civil society organizations, international human rights organization, experts in constitutional law, and some opposition parties still adhere to fundamental criticisms of the proposed wording, specifically with regard to the absence of references to the universality of human rights and the principle of equality between men and women. These groups also expressed great concern over lending a "religious character" to the state, at the expense of its "secular character," a principle that enjoys considerable consensus among the main political powers in Tunisia.

With regard to the social and economic situation, the key attribute is the worsening dilemma of youth unemployment and the deteriorating purchasing power of large segments of Tunisians. In spite of the government's declaration to

create tens of thousands of new jobs, the state of frustration among young people is on the rise.

In the last few week of March 2013, there have been more frequent suicides of young people, foremost a young man who committed suicide through self-immolation on Habib Bourguiba Avenue, the main street of Tunis and symbol of the revolution.

From another perspective, recent months have been marked the numerical and qualitative rise of "Salafi" organizations in both political and social arenas, through many charitable and missionary groups and control over many mosques, as well as actions targeting "secular and modernist" groups.

Acts of violence against both opponents and trade unionists have likewise increased recently. These acts reached their culmination in two events: the first in the south of the country, where the opposition and local leader for the "Call of Tunisia" leader Lotfi Naqdh was killed; the second with the assassination by gunfire of Chokri Belaid, one of the leaders of the "Popular Front," an alliance of leftist and nationalist opposition parties.

In early March 2013, the fifth interim government was formed, which had won the endorsement of the National Constituent Assembly, and based on the same ruling tripartite alliance since the election of October 2011. The head of government, Ali Laarayedh, who succeeded his colleague Jebali of the same party (the Renaissance Movement), had announced that the priorities of his government would be to provide security and to reduce unemployment and rising prices. His office also announced a roadmap for the National Constituent Council including set dates for completing the drafting of the constitution and the electoral law, then holding presidential and legislative elections before the end of 2013.

Summary Conclusion

The Freedom and Dignity Revolution initiated a new era not only for Tunisia, but also for the Arab world. What happened in the first decade of the 21st century — particularly the years between 1998 and 2010 of union-led uprisings and popular protests, which reached their peak in the revolution launched at the end of 2010, when the cities and villages of the interior, marginalized for decades, reached the heart of the capital, and ended in January 2011 with the "escape" of the president of the republic — calls for reconsidering the analysis of the phenomenon of "authoritarian regimes" and their continuation in power. Likewise, the analysis of the phenomenon of "popular uprisings" in the Arab countries and their role in changing the political situation should be reconsidered.

This study has attempted, through social and historical analysis, to understand both the direct and the deeper causes of the revolution of the Tunisian people, and to analyze the lack of success of Tunisian society in the transition to democracy, despite the significant social and economic achievements (like the advanced standing of women, highly competitive industrial and tourism enterprises, and an average annual per capita income exceeding $5,000 USD).

The analysis of the situation in Tunisia has illustrated that the monopolization of political decision-making by the small coterie surrounding the person of the president, the deprivation of citizens from participating in public life, the suppression of dissent, the proliferation of corruption, and the deterioration in the quality of education led to the creation of sufficient conditions throughout and at the heart of the situation to bring about deep and profound change in the political structure of the system, marking a new era in the history of Tunisia. The transitional period is delicate and may carry many surprises in dealing with contentious

questions and thorny issues, foremost the administration of the country by a political party taking the Islamic religion as its reference, and finding appropriate and effective solutions to the issues of democratic transition by building constitutional institutions and a strong economy in order to solve the dilemma of unemployment and to advance education.

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3

THE PEACEFUL REVOLUTION OF 25 JANUARY AND THE CHALLENGES AHEAD

Emad Siyam

Abstract

The educated young people of the urban middle class in Egypt, comprised the chief bloc that led the revolution of 25 January (2011). The peacefulness of the young people's revolution was its basis of support and its source of power. The conflict ongoing now in Egypt began at the eve of Mubarak's departure, which was a move by the opponents of the revolution to isolate the youth, efface the peaceful and democratic nature of the revolution, and marginalize the youth political forces. The question of whether the old order will be reproduced in slightly burnished form, or the revolution can be completed remains to be answered as divisions are increasing and the politics is highly polarized again between the forces of revolution and the forces of the counter-revolution.

Introduction

The educated young people, the sons and daughters of the urban middle class in Egypt, comprised the chief bloc that led the revolution of 25 January. This made it a revolution of the youth, against a political system suffering not only from authoritarianism and corruption, but also from senility — so much so that generational conflict is one of the levels of the ongoing conflict in Egypt, which is considered to be, demographically, a young society.[1] Likewise, in terms of the education levels of Egypt's population, the proportion of holders of post-secondary qualifications has risen to 80 percent, compared to 68.7 percent in 1996.

This group formed the backbone of the middle class, as professionals and white-collar employees of the state, or workers in modern economic sectors. The growth in the numbers of educated young people, the sons and daughters of the educated urban middle class, coincided with the worsening social situation in Egypt, which was reflected in the high rates of youth unemployment. Statistics from 2006 as well as a number of studies indicate that 88 percent of the unemployed are between 15 and 40 years old.[2] These studies also indicate that unemployment rates increased more in urban (13.1 percent) than in rural areas (8.8 percent).[3] Likewise, the rate of unemployment among those with some university education reached 26.8 percent in 2006, while the rate for those from the cities in particular reached 33 percent. The proportion of unemployed young people between the ages of 20 and 30 is generally estimated to comprise approximately 74.3 percent of the total unemployed; this is the age group that formed the core bloc of the young people in Tahrir Square and the other squares of protest in all of the regional capitals of Egypt's governorates.[4]

A new youth movement

These are the core features of the nucleus of the protestor bloc: young people from the cities, the sons and daughters of the urban middle class in its various forms, who obtained a good post-secondary education but then largely suffered from unemployment and a growing crisis of confidence toward political and social institutions as well as official culture. This was expressed in the low level of citizen, and particularly youth, turnout in general elections, as well as low levels of party membership, among other examples of limited political participation, which was firmly under the control of the Mubarak regime and its security apparatus.

Young people began looking for alternative paths of community involvement, embodied in the emergence of new forms of civil society organizations like the Resala Charity Organization, which attracted hundreds of thousands of young people, or involvement in social protest movements like Kefaya or the April 6 Youth Movement and the Ultras clubs.[5]

These youth blocs were able to find alternative spaces for participation, particularly through social networking, launched on the grounds of consensus and largely above ideology. Despite dissimilar orientations and diverse interests, a democratic and protest-oriented outlook predominated among them, in general.

The success of the educated middle-class youth in overthrowing the head of the previous regime was, in fact, due to increasing ability of these young people to gain the sympathy, trust, and participation of other sectors of the urban population, especially the urban poor — the laborers and craftsmen who had obtained some education in governmental institutions and also suffered from unemployment and deteriorating economic and social conditions — in addition to the junior staff of the state apparatus, who suffered from shamefully poor wages.[6]

There are several factors that brought about a remarkable development in the consciousness and capacities of young people. Among the more prominent indicators of this qualitative development:

First: The success of the youth movement in transforming their political participation from the virtual domain of Facebook, blogs, Twitter, internet radio, chat rooms, listservs, electronic publications, and so forth, to the real world. Since 2005, when young people began transforming the virtual sphere into a parallel youth community interested in public affairs and discussing public issues, millions of young people have participated in these dialogues, as the following chart illustrates.[7]

Category	Number of participants
Number of internet users	14.5 million
Number of blogs (2008)	160,000 blogs
Percentage of political blogs (2008)	18.9 percent of total blogs
Percentage of young people (ages 20-30) among bloggers	53.1 percent
Number of Facebook users	2.4 million
Percentage of young people (ages 19-30) among Facebook users	64.8 percent

Joining the Kefeya movement was accomplished by signing its founding statement electronically. The Kefaya demonstrations, then, were the first attempt to convert virtual political participation into real-world participation.[8]

Second: the growing ability of young people to overcome ideological barriers, which contributed to formulating the simple and clear slogans of the 25 January revolution in a spirit of national, public consensus. At the fore of these slogans, many of which rhyme in the original Arabic, were

"peacefully, peacefully;" "freedom, freedom, freedom;" "dignity, freedom, social justice;" "bread, freedom, human dignity;" and most famous of all, "the people want the fall of the regime," which created a state of consensus around the non-ideological nature of the revolution. This was also helped by the fact that most of the activists who participated actively had no prior connection to organized political activity.

The combination of all of these factors, especially with the outbreak of the revolution and during the days of the Tahrir Square sit-in, contributed to reducing the role of organized political forces with experienced leadership. This created a situation wherein the revolution was without a unified, identifiable, well-known leadership, which at the same time reduced the possibility of liquidating or containing its leaders. It also contributed to a great extent to breaking down mutual stereotypes, whether between the left and the right, Muslims and Christians, or secularists and political Islamists.

It contributed as well to highlighting the peacefulness of the revolution, and helped to transform Tahrir Square throughout the days of the sit-in into a safe area, and transform the sit-in into a festive carnival, in which whole families (including their children) could participate, where there was music, singing, theater, open debate, and displays of caricatures, balloons, and signs — even marriage ceremonies on occasion. This definitively removed the inherited legacy of dread and fear of the practice of politics and public affairs among large segments of Egyptians, which translated into greater support for the revolution, leading to the participation of millions in the days of the sit-in.

Issues of the current conflict

The peacefulness of the young people's revolution was its basis of support and its source of power, the key factor that the masses could rally around, despite the hundreds of

martyrs and missing persons, and the thousands injured or wounded.

The powers of the *ancien régime*, headed by the military council, realized this, and endeavored to stop the revolution by limiting change to the head of the regime. To this same end, they exploited the lust of the currents of political Islam for power, without having to worry about the political Islamists' economic and social orientation, which overlapped substantially with the priorities of the former regime. Based on this convergence of interests, a hostile opposition front to the youth revolution was thereby formed, the new rulers drawn from and backed by both the Islamists and the military, seeking to reproduce the old order with a better image. Both groups tend toward a concept of limited reform rather than the concept of revolution, whereas the young people considered the coming out of Egyptians on 25 January to be a full, popular revolution that should be followed by radical change in the structure of political power and the socio-economic system of society, to move Egypt toward a democratic, modern state.

This is a conflict between two approaches, either to reproduce the old order in improved form, or to complete the revolution. This is the essence of the conflict ongoing now in Egypt, which began the eve of Mubarak's departure, which was a move by the opponents of the revolution to isolate the youth, efface the peaceful and democratic nature of the revolution, and marginalize the youth forces. This process has continued through eight ways:

First: the escalation of violence and incitement of chaos by the secret police and armed militias linked to the Muslim Brotherhood and other currents of political Islam, against the youth of the revolution

The military council not only was clearly complicit in and silent about the violence and killings targeting the young people, but actively involved, both during its management of the country's affairs and after, under the authority of President Morsi. Such violent incidents and murders became synonymous with daily political practice since Mubarak stepped down. The following table shows the bloodiest confrontations among the police, military, criminal elements, militias of the Brotherhood, and elements belonging to the group of Hazem Abu Isamail:[9]

Attack	Date	Responsibility	Victims
Al-Balloon	28 June 2011	Criminal elements plus the military police	1,140 wounded
Al-Abassiyah	23 July 2011	Criminal elements protected by the military	One killed and 231 wounded
Israeli Embassy	1 September 2011	Military plus police	5 killed and 1,049 wounded
Maspero	9 October 2011	Military forces plus the military police	28 killed and 321 wounded
Mohamed Mahmoud	19 November 2011	Military plus police	41 killed and thousands wounded
Council of Ministers	16 December 2011	Military plus police	17 killed and 900 wounded
Portsaid Stadium	1 February 2012	Criminal elements protected by the police	84 killed and hundreds wounded
Ministry of the Interior	3 February 2012	Police plus military	12 killed and hundreds wounded
Ministry of Defense and al-Abassiyah	2 May 2012	Military plus criminal elements	11 killed and 200 wounded

Attack	Date	Responsibility	Victims
Federation or Heliopolis Palace	5 December 2012	Brotherhood militias	8 killed, 644 wounded, and 134 arrested
Second anniversary of the January Revolution	25 January 2013 – 9 February 2013	Police plus unknown elements said to belong either to the secret police or to Brotherhood militias	57 killed in Port Said, Suez, Ismailia, and Cairo and 364 wounded in Port Said

This silence was taken up in turn by the forces of political Islam, which were preoccupied with maintaining their control over parliament through electoral gains. Neither when parliament was in session, nor even after its dissolution by a Constitutional Court ruling, did the political Islamists decisive action in the face of these practices. Confidence should have been withdrawn from the minister of the interior after the Port Said massacre, which claimed the lives of dozens of young people and caused the violence to escalate to a new level entirely, similar to mass killings. A specific group of young people known as the youth "Ultras," who had played a prominent role in the success of the revolution and its protection, was targeted in order to take revenge and break their will. This horrifying pressure sought to bring the level of political conflict down to the level of personal and collective revenge.

Second: the growing frustration among young people and large swaths of the population

Two years after the revolution, the Mubarak regime remains, in the forms of many of his men and all of his governing policies. The most prominent results, however, have been the takeover of first the parliament and the Shura Council and then the institutions of the presidency and the prime ministry by political Islamist groups, specifically, the Muslim Brotherhood. These groups have not only taken the initiative to reconcile with the symbols of old order, the individuals accused of looting and corruption, but also acquitted all of the security personnel accused of killing protesters, while simultaneously marginalizing and excluding the young revolutionaries in their various political currents from all institutions of executive and legislative power. The dominant majority in these institutions, close to the currents of political Islam, largely did not participate in the revolution (most prominently, the Brotherhood), until long after it had erupted and its resilience and success had been assured. Likewise, the Salafi currents worked directly against the revolution, considering it to be a work of *kufr* (infidelity or apostasy), subversive destruction, and chaos that sought the removal the country's legitimate ruler.

Through all this time, the young people of the revolution remained in their place, in Tahrir Squares throughout Egypt, protesting and demanding "dignity, freedom, and social justice." In the meantime, the country made no progress in this direction, to say nothing of the campaign launched against the young people through the machinery of the state media and private religious satellite channels, which was led by the military council and involved all of the powers of political Islam to varying degrees, accusing the young people of treason, disloyalty, sedition, standing in the way of progress and economic productivity, and being counterrevolutionary.[10]

Third: the gesturing of political Islamist groups, which controlled parliament, toward the use of violence against the young people demanding the realization of the goals of the revolution

This can be seen in the threats of the forces of political Islam to use force against the young people of the revolution through the following means:

- The public statements of some of the leaders of the current of political Islam, specifically those belonging historically to the jihadist current that believes in violence.
- The acquisition of organized, trained groups of some significance by some of the forces of political Islam, which could be used to suppress the revolutionaries if necessary.
- The issuance of religious opinions advising the spilling of the blood of the opposition specifically that of the leaders of the National Salvation Front.[11]

These statements, practices, and advisory opinions pushed the young people first to prepare to defend and protect themselves, and then later to reciprocate and retaliate, especially since it is common knowledge that the groups of political Islam in Egypt are the only groups where both the young and old have experience in acts of violence and the use of weapons.[12] The risk of this occurring was heightened by the boycott of the groups of political Islam of most of the protest activities practiced by the young people of the revolution belonging to the civil forces. This separation and discord rebuilt the prior mental imagery that was prevalent before the revolution, marked by fear, apprehension, and rejection of the other in light of the growing religious/civil polarization.

Fourth: the absence of unified leadership for the young revolutionaries

The absence of a unified leadership — capable, prominent and well known both in the field and in politics, around whose guidance and positions people could have rallied — created a situation that, firstly, gave increasing influence to some anarchist groups that were limited in both number and influence. From another angle, the absence of a unified leadership in the field let some groups and individuals suspected of associations with

state security drag thousands of protesters, without any organizational or political link among them, into acts of violence, when then let security personnel use the most severe degrees of violence against them and let the current of political Islam accuse the young people of violence and dragging the country into chaos. All of this inflicted unnecessary losses on them.

Fifth: the absence of self-criticism or review of the means of peaceful struggle among the groups of young revolutionaries

Compounding its impact was the absence of a culture of dialogue, and the predominance of a spirit of competition among the youth groups to outbid one another, even among members of the same group. Such a climate is not conducive to reviewing errors to stop from repeating them. Instead, they were sucked into ever more radical treatises, regardless of their validity or suitability to the present conditions, repeating the same mistakes and fearing that any retractions or public retreats would provoke accusations of weakness or treason.

Sixth: the religionization of political conflict and the increasing severity of societal polarization on a religious basis

This process had started with the referendum on constitutional amendments, and emerged blatantly during the parliamentary and presidential elections, and continued through the process of drafting the constitution and its respective referendum. This polarization began to impose a state of acrimony on political discourse and practices, to the point that some associated with the currents of political Islam took to issuing clear threats of violence if their demands were not met or if their plans to establish a caliphate or apply Sharia law did not succeed.

The currents of political Islam have pursued two clear methods in this area:

- Organize Islamist million-man marches by mobilizing crowds from the provinces, as one of the means of pressure and intimidation; these million-man rallies were organized by the powers of political Islam on their own, in the face of the civil powers in most cases, such as in the following examples:

Name of million-man march	Date	Goal
Handover of power	18 November 2011	Demanding the speedy handover of power to the Military Council
No to the El Selmi document	18 November 2011	Protest against the document of Ali El Selmi, deputy prime minister, containing some extra-constitutional principles guaranteeing a civil state as a point of obligation when drafting the new constitution
Implementation of Sharia	9 November 2012	Organized by Gemaah Islamiyah, jihadist groups, and the Hazim Abu Ismail group with the goal of implementing Islamic sharia
Protecting sharia and legitimacy	1 December 2012	To support the constitutional declaration issued by President Morsi to protect and give immunity to the Constituent Assembly and the Shura council, two Islamist-controlled institutions, from dissolution by ruling of the Supreme Constitutional Court

- The Islamists from the Brotherhood and the Abu Ismail group of official besieged and effectively paralyzed institutions like the constitutional (supreme) court to prevent their convening, for fear that they would issue rulings to dissolve Islamist-controlled entities like the Constituent Assembly, which was formulating a constitution biased in favor of the political project of the Islamic current, or the Shura Council. The groups inspired by Abu Ismail also blockaded Media Production City to terrorize the satellite channels biased toward the civil current, assaulting their guests and preventing the staff from broadcasting.

Seventh: the cultural gap and ideological conflict between the generations:

The Egyptian revolution revealed a substantial difference in the political culture between two irreconcilable generations, differing in all facets of their political and economic attitudes: the first, the generation of the younger generation, absorbed modern management methods for mass action, and was able to benefit greatly from the development of means of communication and information technology, employing these advantages to rally and mobilize and to organize popular movements and initiatives. The other culture is the slow, traditional, centralized administration with a bureaucratic, peremptory, and hierarchical character.

Whereas the younger generation made political decisions democratically, with the participation of a broad horizontal base via the internet, SMS, and quick referenda in the square and beyond, the older generation made decisions among a limited number of trusted individuals lacking political imagination. While the decisions of the young people of the revolution were quick, their up-to-date demands taking the initiative, the decisions of the elders were slow and always late.

Remarkably, the influence of this new political culture had an impact on the cohesion of the traditional religious political blocs like the Muslim Brotherhood, Salafist groups, and Coptic groups associated with the church, as well as the traditional political parties. The young people of these blocs often clashed with their leaders, insisting on vigorous participation in the activities of the revolution, which were the disputes that led to some of them to withdraw from the old party, organizational, or intellectual frameworks. They formed an integral component alongside the revolutionary youth: politically centrist, energetic, and open to dialogue about the politics and system of values that Egypt should adopt after the revolution.

All of these developments were considered part of the democratic climate that emerged with the January 25 revolution, pointing to the possibility of changing the structure of the authoritarian regime in the direction of political pluralism. However, this occurred amid the Brotherhood's quest to reproduce the totalitarian regime and attempts to "Brotherhoodize" state institutions, and to marginalize and exclude large segments of young people from these institutions, in addition to suppressing the freedom of expression and the creative, innovative, and artistic energies that had exploded among the young in the wake of the revolution.

Eight: Initiating the preparation of a package of laws restricting democratic freedoms:

One of the areas of conflict ignited by the 25 January revolution was over efforts to liberate the public sphere from the grip of the state. This was achieved through peaceful struggles based on civil rights reclaimed by Egyptians, foremost among them the rights to protest, demonstrate, and strike, and through the exercise of freedom of publication and expression, and the right to organize. However, the course of events — after the Brotherhood succeeded in

taking control over the legislative institutions, monopolizing the Constituent Assembly, and drafting a new constitution with the help of other Islamic currents — went in the opposite direction, limiting public freedoms, by issuing a series of restrictive laws and legislation, most notably the following:

— The president of the republic issuing a constitutional declaration giving immunity to his decisions;[13]

— The president of the republic declaring a state of emergency and curfew in the governorates of Port Said, Suez, and Ismailia;[14]

— The minister of justice calling for amending the emergency law;[15]

— The Brotherhood government preparing a draft law restricting the right to demonstrate pushed through the Shura Council for approval;[16]

— Preparing a draft law concerning civil society organizations that would impose security control over and administrative oversight of their activity, likewise pushed through the Shura Council for approval.[17]

Conclusion

The peacefulness of the 25 January revolution was one of the most important factors of its success. But two years after its eruption, many challenges have forced the revolution to move away from this peaceful tendency. Yet peacefulness remains the precondition for the revolution's ultimate success in establishing a society of justice and freedom, and will require the following:

- Rejection of violence as a methodology
- Change in the political culture. The path of a peaceful revolution is long, accomplished via the accumulation of experience. To use a boxing metaphor, the revolution will need to win on points, not as a technical knockout.

- Build a unified political leadership of the revolution; search for more flexible and effective organizational forms; and attract the main mass of young revolutionaries who believe in the cause of democratic transformation.
- Practice self-criticism and processes of review, though not in the form of accusations of treason, which risks becoming a means of silencing internal dissent.
- Communicate with the older generations that have greater experience and that have struggled for decades against tyranny and corruption.
- Transfer the spirit and culture of Cairo's Tahrir Square (and other Tahrir Squares throughout Egypt) — which embodied the peaceful revolution in its democratic, civil orientation in favor of social justice — to the villages and poor neighborhoods of Egypt.
- Insistence on the civil nature of political conflict in the continuing confrontation posed by its religionization.
- Work with the social categories that fostered the revolution to recover their support and continue the protests of an economic nature.

Endnotes

1. According to the results of the last census in the year 2006, taken from the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics www.capmas.gov.eg, the young age group comprises nearly 50 percent of Egypt's population.
2. Imad Awad, "The negative consequences of the phenomenon of unemployment," in the Arabic-language book *Unemployment, reality and solutions*, containing the work of a conference organized by the National Council for Human Rights in February 2008.
3. Labor force sample survey, 2000/2006, Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, citing Amal Fouad Mohammed, "The size and distribution of unemployment in Egypt," in *Unemployment, reality and solutions*, op. cit.
4. Ibid.
5. Youth of the Ultras: an association of fans of football clubs, who declared that they were siding with the revolution and participated

in it during the call to revolution through social networking like Facebook. They played a prominent role on the day of 25 January through the Friday of Anger, 28 January, because of their expertise in dealing with the security services, acquired from acts of hooliganism (football-related violence), in addition to possessing organizational expertise that enabled them to both mobilize and to direct crowds in an orderly manner, unlike the other more politicized youth groups.
6. The latest report issued by the Information and Decision Support Center (a governmental think tank of the Egyptian Cabinet) indicated that the labor force in Egypt was comprised of about 25.3 million people (*Al Masry Al Youm*, 24 June 2001), and the official website of the Central Agency for Organization and Administration indicated that the number of workers in the public sector reached 5,691,999 in the 2007/2007 budget, i.e. making up approximately 22.8 percent of the total labor force.
7. For further information, see "Digital media in Egypt… Reality and Challenges [in Arabic]," informational reports issued by the Information and Decision Support Center, February 2010.
8. This researcher has a database of up to 18,000 electronic signatures, most of them young people, to the statement of the Kefaya movement, who thereby considered themselves to be activists in the Kefaya movement.
9. The numbers of killed and injured came from the official statements of the Ministry of Health and reports of the fact-finding committees of the Lawyers Union into the events of Port Said, and numerous reports of human rights organizations.
10. For example, see the statements of Mr. Assem Abdel-Majid, media spokesman of the Gemaa Islamiyah: "There is an alliance between some of the businessmen and remnants of the former regime and some revolutionary groups like 6 April, Kefaya, and the Revolutionary Socialists; its aim is to sow chaos and the destruction of the state (*Al Masry Al Youm* 5 February 2012).
11. Among these is the fatwa of Sheikh Mahmoud Shaban, a Salafist sheikh and professor at Al-Azhar University, on the religious television channel Al-Hafiz, supporting the spilling of the blood of Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei and the Popular Current head Hamdeen Sabahi, the leaders of the National Salvation Front, as well as the fatwa of Sheikh Osama Qasim, mufti of the Jihad Organization (*Al Masry Al Youm* 8 February 2013).
12. With respect to the Brotherhood, the leading individuals (including the current head guide) in the executive Office of Guidance, which controls the most important positions of the group, were members in an armed secret organization led by Sayyid Qutb in the mid 1960s, have spent long years in prison, and all belong to what is known as Qutbism, the most hardline current.

13. Issued on 22 November 2012 and triggering a wave of massive protests.
14. Issued on 27 January 2013 to accompany the protests that were organized for the second anniversary of the January revolution, and in protest of the sentences referring the cases of 21 individuals from Port Said, defendants in the case of the killing of Al-Ahly fans, to the Grand Mufti, to seek an opinion on their possible execution
15. Statements of the minister of justice in the government formed by Morsi, headed by Hisham Qandil (*Al Masry Al Youm* 9 September 2012).
16. See the remarks of the prime minister published in the newspaper *Al Masry Al Youm* 30 December 2012, and the text of the draft law published in the electronic newspaper of the Brotherhood on the same date.
17. See the statement issued by the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, "The liquidation of civil society by law (It is incumbent upon the government of Dr. Morsi to withdraw its project to nationalize civic activity) [in Arabic]," 6 February 2013.

4

EGYPT'S REVOLUTION: ACTIONS AND REACTIONS DURING THE PROLONGED TRANSITIONAL PERIOD, AND SCENARIOS FOR THE NEAR FUTURE

Fouad el-Said

Abstract

Egypt has emerged as an emblematic case of the middle ground between success and failure, owing first to the presence of politically powerful groups all harboring ambitions to become the sole and exclusive power, like the military and the Muslim Brotherhood at different stages, and second to the kind of ideological hostility impeding consensus between Islamists and supporters of civil, secular thought. This explains the dramatic conflict during the transitional period and the complexity of future scenarios for the country.

Introduction

More than three years ago, the world rejoiced at the end of the Arab exception and the beginning of the Arab spring, but subsequent developments have gradually revealed the

roles of the military, sectarianism, and tribalism as obstacles to the flourishing of democracy, particularly in Yemen, Libya, and then Syria. During the transitional periods after the revolutionary uprisings in the countries of the region, Islamic movements appeared as an additional impediment in the view of some, and as a cultural indicator of the Arab Spring's path in the view of others. All of this motivates analysts to be cautious before issuing hasty final verdicts on the end of the "Arab exception" to the global waves of democratization.

Egypt has emerged as an emblematic case of the middle ground between success and failure, owing first to the presence of politically powerful groups all harboring ambitions to become the sole and exclusive power, like the military and the Muslim Brotherhood at different stages, and second to the kind of ideological hostility impeding consensus between Islamists and supporters of civil, secular thought. This explains the dramatic conflict during the transitional period and the complexity of future scenarios for the country.

The Egyptian military has seemed to likewise be an intermediate example, not without its own ambiguity — neither like Bashar al-Assad's murderous forces, which continue to slaughter his own people; nor like Tunisia's army, which remained neutral rather than side with the Ben Ali regime against civilian protesters. In the end, while the Egyptian military was forced to cede its desire to continue in power under the steadfast pressure of the young revolutionaries in the field, the military's position and historical roles make it a cornerstone of the political system. Likewise, Egypt's location and the dangers on its borders give the military considerable weight in the formulation of both regional and international policy. Similarly, the Brotherhood has not in practice proven their belief in democracy, at least so far. This was illustrated by their brazen abuse of the

constitution, the judiciary, an adherence to the principle of unilateral majoritarianism rather than collaboration, and the policy of "Brotherhoodizing" the state from their first day in power. As for the revolutionary youth bloc, it has lacked the support of a robust civil society or a strong political opposition to support a path of transitional justice. This allowed the military council and the Brotherhood to choose a winding path for the country for over two years, involving complacency toward the remnants of the former regime to attract their support for the collapsing Egyptian economy, as well as reluctance in truly restructuring the security regime, in order to suppress the mass youth protest movement that had struck most Egyptian provinces in recent months.

Harbingers of the revolution: a new generation is formed

In the years preceding the revolution of 25 January 2011, all signs indicated that the socioeconomic conditions in Egypt had deteriorated to alarming levels. The policies adopted had become a total political failure as a result of the concentration of the wealth in the hands of narrow elite, while the revenues and returns of development failed to reach the lower and middle classes. But nonetheless, the revolution did not occur due to the weakness of the older, established political opposition, but because of the success of the young revolutionaries on 25 January 2011. The middle class had achieved something like a miracle during these difficult years by not abandoning to allocate the bulk of their income to the education of their children. A part of this class benefited from the relative improvement in private educational institutions. Likewise the children of this class benefited from the modern communication infrastructure, which put this generation of young people on the path to

modern democratic culture and helped form their revolutionary values system, embodied and perhaps exemplified politically in the choice of peaceful revolution.

Many of the indicators revealed the existence of a crisis of confidence and a large gap between the youth forces of Egyptian society and the political, social, and official cultural institutions of Egypt. Egyptian society has undergone a long period of weak political participation, from party membership to voter turnout.

In contrast, contraindications emerged in the years immediately prior to the revolution, which confirmed the occurrence of a fundamental shift in first the social and then political participation among segments of young people. These were represented by the emergency of new types of civil society organizations attracting hundreds of thousands of young people, whether in the field of philanthropy like charitable social work or in the cultural sphere, as well as football associations like the "ultras." In this new societal context, a new national spirit was born, confirming the emergence of an active, important, and innovative class of urban youth drawing from all economic classes, particularly the educated middle class, which expressed a new sensibility reflecting an innovative system of political values, mixing together civic, national, and humanitarian values.

This is the primary quality of the young men and women who represented the backbone of the revolution, before the people, in all its classes, joined them. These new groups of young people did not launch or originate any complete or unified ideology through the internet, but they brought together diverse orientations, dominated by a democratic tendency in general, and some with left-wing social democratic tendencies. All nevertheless stood together on the common ground of peaceful democratic transformation, as an alternative to the traditional strategies of violent revolution.

All of these developments are part of the democratic climate that has arisen with the January 25 revolution. These developments indicate that the political structure in Egypt will change in the direction of political pluralism, the rejection of authoritarianism, whether in the form of militarism or in the now-broken monopoly of political elites over religion and the ability to accuse others of blasphemy.

From "revolution" to cultural confrontation: the countryside rises up against the cities

Within a few weeks of the revolution, developments revealed a cultural clash between the traditional culture of the countryside and the politically evolved culture of the cities. In contrast to the "revolutionary Fridays" that brought together the "culture of the city" — both the elite and the people — in attendance at weekly protests, the "Fridays" of the Islamists clearly revealed an antithetical social structure, supported by the traditional "culture of the countryside." After the fall of Mubarak, the rural audience traveled to weekly Friday protests in the same place, Tahrir (Freedom) Square, where the city audience had protested. Bussed in from distant villages throughout Egypt, some even brought their nuclear or extended families along with them, all to support the "Brotherhood" or "Salafism."

Usually, rural dwellers are unable to integrate into civil society, owing to its system of modern values, its rapid pace, but above all, the arrogance of the original city dwellers. This drives them to seek shelter with fellow rural groups, in a familiar psychological and social climate, and a system of cultural values that helps them to stick together and regain their confidence, and to condemn the culture of the unjust and oppressive "people of Cairo" as

much as to praise the "authentic" culture of the country, coated in a superficial and hardline religiosity by necessity. These groups are reassured by the Salafi ideology — in its Salafist and Brotherhood variants — which is the same that already produced the "Salafist jihadist" that took up arms against artists and intellectuals and against the state since the 1970s.

In turn, "the people of Cairo" see their "utopian, virtuous" city as one of urbanity, liberality, and acceptance of cultural, social, and religious pluralism. They see these rural people as invaders, destroying everything and everybody, pushing the original urban people to leave their cities, which have become countrified, for new towns, high above the dry hills of Old Cairo. Whereas Morsi descended to the square, after qualifying for the presidential run-off elections, to receive his audience of rural people who provided his base of support, Shafiq chose to hold his press conference at the highest point of the New Cairo plateau, in the finest of New Cairo's hotels, surrounded by the palaces of the upper class.

It is worth noting that the results of the referenda as well as the parliamentary and presidential elections following the revolution all came to confirm the importance of this socio-cultural approach to understanding the political transformations in Egyptian society. While the urban areas, with the highest education and income, clearly and with remarkable frequency voted for the civil current; conversely, the rural areas and the sprawling slums voted for the Salafist movement; whereas the middle class, those with moderate income and education, tended — generally — toward the Muslim Brotherhood immediately after the revolution; that is, before a continuing shift in the direction of the civil current, voting punitively against the Brotherhood, as evidenced also by the results of Egyptian university student elections.

Controversy over the shaping of the revolution: true revolution or reproduction of the regime?

Some of the political forces view what has occurred in Egypt as a full popular revolution that should be followed by a radical change in the structure of power and the socioeconomic system of the society, moving Egypt from a primitive form of state management to a modern democratic state. In contrast, there is another point of view reflected in the performance of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, as well as the political positions of the religious current — each with a different ideological cover — closer to reproducing the *ancien* regime, if in improved form by weeding out corruption, and thus mimicking the concept of reform. And in the framework of a dialogue between these two parties, the revolutionary position seems like the odd man out, weakened while the position of reform has strengthened as the one supported by those in power, in addition to the strong support of society, whether business men or Islamic elites or some individuals in the urban elite as well.

In the Egyptian case there was a direct leap from the stage of revolution with masses in the street, which ended with the fall of the head of the regime and some of its more prominent symbols, to the transitional phase. The faces changed, replaced with men of the same traditions, specifically from the administrative and political tier who often had the same mentality and political approach. This ambiguity makes some of the demands of the street seem unrealistically exaggerated in their revolutionary ambitions, while the measures of the military council and the government seem frustrating.

The revolutionaries neither succeeded in taking power, nor in stripping the forces of the regime of their political influence, just as the economic situation have not changed.

Military leaders consider what has happened since 25 January 2011 to be a public outcry or an expression of popular anger over the possibility of Mubarak's son inheriting power from his father, and to instead return power to its natural place, that is, in the hands of the military. Islamist forces begin with a similar premise in their analysis, viewing the revolution that was led by pro-democratic youth as a fortuitous event enabling the Islamists to take control of the grassroots.

The first phase of the transition: the military council runs the country

The uprising diminished the tendency of Mubarak's group to monopolize power, which had meant a reduction in the political role of the military and the exclusion of Islamists from the political system, despite their enormous popularity in the country. It was natural that Mubarak caved to handing over the administration of the country to the power most ready and already at the heart of the regime itself, that is, the military. It was only natural that the United States and the Egyptian military itself sought a civil partner enjoying popular support in order to help the military in restoring stability to the country, and it seemed at the time that the Muslim Brotherhood was the most suitable for the task, as a centralized organization that could control its members, supporters, and masses, in stark contrast to the fragmented revolutionary bloc lacking institutionalization or regulation. Thus, a kind of consensus of views and interests between the military council and the Muslim Brotherhood emerged on one specific priority: containing the revolution or adapting it, in the sense of trying to control its future trends. The new alliance worked to restore calm and rebuild the political institutions of the state, and the specter of the Pakistani model emerged, as a model in which the military and the Islamists coexist and fight one another over rule,

both finding consensus in excluding, weakening, or at least marginalizing democratic forces. In this context, the military played a key role in securing the elections that brought the Brotherhood to legislative power as the majority in the first parliament after the revolution — at least before they toppled the parliament, owing to the unconstitutionality of the election law.

The subsequent events of the revolution reveal how the contrast between the Mubarak regime and the Islamists was closer to a clash between political competitors, reflected in their overlapping bases of social support, convergent economic visions and policies, despite the apparent contrast in their respective ideological coverings. The cadres of the Egyptian military adopt an average Egyptian approach that does believe in a real contradiction between religion and the idea of modernizing the nation. Their political culture is not far removed from that of the Muslim Brotherhood. Their families look quite similar culturally: a conservative, usually veiled wife; disciplined children adhering to prevailing social values; and a culture of religious and military discipline. Therefore, coordination between the two parties was not surprising at many moments during the transitional period. The remnants of the Mubarak regime disappeared during the administration of the military junta, but they were in fact not far removed from the composition of the new form of governance taking shape, and began gradually emerged in the course of the second phase, in which the Brotherhood came to power.

The second transitional period: the Brotherhood in power

Signs of disagreement emerged between the military and the Brotherhood as a result of the Brotherhood doubting the military's intention to keep its promise of

non-interference in the civilian politics of the country, specifically when it came to who would become the next president. Nevertheless, the military, which leaned toward the former marshal, Ahmed Shafiq, in the presidential run-off, was forced to accept the first Brotherhood-supported candidate as president of Egypt when Morsi won. The Brotherhood responded beautifully in the aftermath by insisting on maintaining the traditional privileges for the military in the new constitution that the Islamists put in place unilaterally, ignoring the demands of the revolutionary street that had sought to diminish the predominant role of the military, and similarly putting an end to demands to try some of the leaders of the military junta, the remnants of the Mubarak regime, and the leaders of its security services.

In spite of this "quid pro quo," the transitional period witnessed the overthrow of the Brotherhood by a large number of military leaders, and points of both consensus and tension between the two parties from one time to another, from unconfirmed incidents about ambitions to "Brotherhoodize" the military within a broader campaign of "Brotherhoodizing" the state in general, and reactions by the military through anti-Brotherhood media campaigns, opening the door to a direct role for the military. Although the Muslim Brotherhood failed both politically and in terms of maintaining security, seriously endangering their popularity, the most grave and long-term threat to their political future resulting from their first experience in power will remain the collapse of their simplistic motto, "Islam is the solution." Egyptians have begun to realize for the first time the danger of mixing religion and politics in practice, and the meaning and practical value of political secularism.

Islamists and the betrayal of democracy

There is a somewhat secure segment of the public supporting the Brotherhood ideologically, tending to accept their arguments and their excuse for failing in the administration of the country. However, the transitional period has seen increasing fears of exclusion by numerous categories like women and Christians, in large part because the Brotherhood has been unclear in its political, economic, social, and cultural policies, and even occasionally prevaricated or spoke duplicitously in its political rhetoric.

Meanwhile, the Islamists received much criticism and suspicion toward their commitment to the rules of democracy and the foundations of the modern nation state, as result of their ambiguous Islamic concept of a civil state with "a religious reference." Skepticism increased with a transformation toward unilateral dominance of politics by all means at the expense of participatory approaches. The president sought to undermine the Constitutional Court's ruling regarding the unconstitutionality of the election according to which parliamentary elections had been held, before ignoring the Islamists' siege of the court that prevented it from convening, and finally issuing a "constitutional declaration" that fortified his previous and subsequent decisions. These fears gradually spread from a narrow group represented by the liberal and leftist civil elite to segments of the broader public, particularly with the revelation of the insistence of the Muslim Brotherhood on acquiring the most important centers of political decision-making: parliamentary assemblies, the presidency of the republic, and the head of government (prime minister), in addition to their traditional influence in the judiciary plus the unilateral writing of the country's new constitution, which is by nature a document of consensus that should reflect the entire spectrum of society, especially in the early transitional stages.

The scope of fear of the Brotherhood gradually widened as a result of its continually seeking to "Broterhoodize the state," just as their popularity constantly decreased as a result of their loss of political legitimacy, their repeatedly retreating from all of their promises, and their failure to manage the crucial portfolios of the state: economy and security, especially issues of national security in the Sinai and along the eastern borders. Furthermore, their social policies were revealed to not, in fact, favor poor workers, peasants, and junior employees, to say nothing of their failure to solve the problem of unemployment. Finally, their stance in opposition to freedoms of expression and association was illustrated by the relevant articles of the constitution and laws governing demonstrations, the press, non-governmental associations, and trade unions.

Correspondingly, democrats have accused the Islamists of double speak, manipulation of terms, and evading an explicit declaration of acceptance of the concept of a modern civil state and the conditions this places on practices on the ground. This is reflected in the pressures of Islamists, especially the Salafi movement, to give the constitution a religious tint.

The project of "Brotherhoodizing" the state

There are indications of an orientation of Islamization and Broterhoodization of education through the planning of fundamental changes to the curriculum, to the degree that in some (non-governmental) Islamic schools the national anthem was replaced with Islamic chants. From another perspective, the Freedom and Justice Party openly began a phase of "Brotherhoodizing the judiciary," through outright and blatant interference in the work of the judiciary by changing its composition, and employing a large number of aids to the public prosecutor, alongside amending the law

on judicial authority to reduce the retirement age of judges to 65 years.

The Egyptian opposition has discussed the plans of the Brotherhood to "Broterhoodize the Interior Ministry" and announcement of the Salafi parties (formerly jihadist) to establish Islamic popular committees to maintain security as an alternative to the striking police and to block the idea of sending in the army, which was rejected by the Islamists. The role of these Salafist (and jihadist) militias was reflected in the attack of the Brotherhood militias on peaceful protesters in front of the presidential palace, and the Brotherhood and Islamist militias assistance of the Interior Ministry against political demonstrations and popular protests in recent months.

The shrinking of the urban civilian elite: disturbing suicidal tendencies

The Islamic and civil currents have shared in describing one another's behavior as "political suicide." The Islamists contend that the leadership of the civil current is attempting some sort of political suicide by persistently rejecting all presidential decisions, calling for dialogue, and calling to boycott the referendum on the Brotherhood's constitution — resulting in their alienation from the street and their isolation from the masses, arrogantly considering themselves superior to, while also fearing, any invocation of the voices of the people or possible submission to the votes of the people. In return, the leaders of the National Salvation Front direct the same accusations of political suicide to the presidency and the Brotherhood, as a result of their insistence on an authoritarian constitutional declaration, ignoring the massive crowds in opposition, and proceeding with the referendum on the constitution without national consensus.

Most of the political decisions that have been made by all parties point to the possibility of transforming the country into a state of violent conflict, with the use of violence by the Brotherhood and Islamist militias recently as a counter to the violence of the emergent, masked "Black bloc" groups, which announced their role as one of protecting peaceful protesters, while also claiming responsibility for attacking some of the headquarters of the Brotherhood.

Summary and future prospects

First: the impossibility of skipping the cultural stages

After many, long years of imprisonment, arduous social work, and the successful "Islamization of society," beginning with the *hijab* and the *niqab* and ending with Islamic weddings and speculation in Islamic banks, the Brotherhood had become the main opposition to the regime. After all that, the Islamists were surprised by the angry masses emerging from behind a handful, no more than a few dozen, of liberal and socialist young people, who quickly exceeded the accomplishments of the old opposition and bravely dared to demand the departure of Mubarak and his regime. From that moment, the Islamists began a series of efforts to recover "their masses" by returning to a political discourse employing religious feelings.

On the other side of the same revolutionary moment, the revolutionary young people believed that they had overcome the prevailing "Islamic cultural situation," and that arriving at a just democratic society and a modern civil state encompassing all Egyptians and achieving their demands was immediately possible.

The socio-cultural Islamic project began forming with the defeat of June 1967, but spring dawned only recently. Businesses — particularly their newly educated employees — linked to

economic globalization were affected by the culture of globalization as well, a democratic culture by its nature, which conflicted with the military and bureaucratic totalitarianism that has governed the region, and contradicts also the religious totalitarianism that is now in control. In this climate, it was only natural that Islamic thought in the region would experience some kind of reform or religious renewal like that experienced by Europe and the West, and open the door to the concept of a modern democratic civil nation-state.

It is incumbent upon supporters of the civil state to seek to complete the enlightenment project that had been started in the late 18th century but was stopped, through daily struggle in the fields of education, culture, media, social work, and finally, political action. If it was possible to skip the "political stages" in some of the world's revolutionary experiences, burning through the "cultural stages" deeply rooted in a society is almost impossible. Egypt and the other societies of the Arab Spring must undergo a renewal of Islamic thought itself, before dreaming of a modern civil state. The anticipated Islamic renewal is that which confirms religion as a central component of a nation's identity, and emphasizes religion's positive role in formulating the values of society, with awareness of the seriousness of mixing religion with politics in service of one group's monopoly over a specific political interpretation of religion, as numerous such experiments ended in ruin for the nation after religious civil wars. The coming conflict will be between this vision and the vision of the religious state, a conflict that will continue for some time before Egypt enters a new cultural era.

Second: the erosion and the deterioration of the Brotherhood's popularity

The Islamists did not profit from investing in their first experience of rule, instead losing much of their political and cultural capital, which represented their most valuable

asset. For some of those who voted for them felt worried for the first time about the immediate, forcible insertion of religion into politics and a militant version of Islam, incompatible with the tolerant, moderate Islam long known by Egypt of al-Azhar, known for centuries as one of the chief centers of higher learning in the world. They feared the use of Islam as a slogan to cover up the repression of any political opposition, or social discrimination against the poor and against women, or lifestyle changes, or restriction of public freedoms.

The growth of these concerns in society can be considered a strong indication of a likely change in the voting behavior of Egyptians in the upcoming parliamentary elections, in the direction of establishing a kind of balance between the main political forces, Islamic and civil, as well as empowering some moderate, centrist Islamic parties. This could be the change that begins to end the crisis of political obstruction employed by both the Islamic rulers and the civil opposition that has gone to the extent of boycotting elections.

Third: the limits of the military's expected role

In late January 2013, in the wake of escalating protests in an unprecedented number of provinces, an urgent meeting of the National Defense Council, which includes military and security leaders alongside political and popularly elected leadership, was announced for the first time. Merely holding a meeting of this kind was a clear signal that the president could not manage the country's political process, particularly at this troubled stage, meaning the end of exclusively civilian rule, whether Islamist or not, over the political process, while the military had devoted itself entirely to its original task of securing the borders. The meeting was a signal that the military was resuming its role in the political policing of the country, particularly when a statement gestured for the first time since the presidential election

to the possibility of imposing a "curfew" in areas of unrest and violence, which is in fact what happened in the Suez Canal zone, and immediately and clearly in Port Said after the withdrawal of state security, which had been involved in killing around 40 citizens over two days. The statement also contained at the time what appeared to the opposition to be an apology to the judiciary and to the media after a smear campaign and attempts to destroy their independence by the Muslim Brotherhood; however, it was likely due to military pressure on the president and the Brotherhood to cease attempts at dominating and "Brotherhoodizing" the state."

Thus, the military drew up its role in Egypt, as the last deterrent to the attempt of any political faction to monopolize decision-making or to go beyond its public mandate, backed by the possibility of repressive intervention.

Fourth: scenarios of the political process in Egypt

It is possible to summarize the current political situation as the following: the Brotherhood proved to be failures, but the substitutes are not yet either ready or able to win either the trust of the people or the confidence of the international community, particularly the United States. The civil opposition, still weak and fragmented, is riding the wave of popular anger, but it lacks the trust of a popular bloc that could enable it to obtain a comfortable majority through elections. There are promising precursors to the spread of civil parties, particularly among the youth, emerging in the results of university student election, which could open the door to a potentially broad civic alliance that could gain the largest percent of votes in the next election, as a punitive popular vote against the Brotherhood and the Islamists. In this case, Egyptians may suffer through yet another stage of confusion, as the only civil bloc qualified for such a dramatic shift is a liberal alliance capable of mobilizing rural and urban notables as well as former members of the

National Party, untainted by corruption or uncompromised politically, which explains the continued presence of Amr Moussa and the Congress Party in the Salvation Front, despite the objections of the affiliated revolutionary youth.

The military, the civic opposition, and the Salafi alternative have all practiced a policy of persistent pressure on Brotherhood rule, with the aim of forcing the Brotherhood to retreat from a policy of unilateralism and comply with participatory approaches and to comply with demands for a fair election law, particularly with regard to the division of voting districts (gerrymandering) and judicial supervision under a neutral government, in order to reach a composite political alternative, which would enjoy a much greater chance of getting Egypt to safety.

The military wants the Brotherhood to be just one power among multiple, balanced political powers, not the dominant or hegemonic force in the Egyptian political system, which is still taking shape at this stage. Despite what the United States expressed in the wake of the revolution about a conviction in the Brotherhood's ability to achieve political stability and manage the transitional period, their failure on all axes forced the United States to adopt a strategy of democratic political balance in Egypt. Likewise a report in the American magazine *Foreign Policy* pointed to Obama's strategic vision, which is based on the expectation and preference for a Brotherhood decline in free and fair elections, neither through revolutionary street violence nor military intervention, because the American administration considered the best development in the long term for Arab political culture to lie in the entry of Islamists into the democratic process, who would then be superseded electorally.

On the other hand, a second scenario (and cause for pessimism) has actually taken shape on the ground in the form of a tumultuous political confrontation, which could approach a state of civil war, between supporters of the

Islamic movement led by the Muslim Brotherhood, and the military supported by the civil current and the angry ordinary people in the streets, particularly with the continued intransigence of the Brotherhood and their determination to monopolize the political process by themselves, which forced the opposition Salvation Front to take decisions to boycott all dialogue with the president as well as the first parliamentary elections under President Morsi. Unfortunately, there are a number of indications supporting this scenario, where the Brotherhood clings to a political and intellectual approach reflecting a state of total lack of awareness of the concepts of a civil and modern state — the implications, the conditions, and the benefits of democracy and human rights — instead providing a traditional religious cover for their supporters to use communal violence against their political opponents. This all portends strong and realistic prospects of a civil war, and the intervention of the army to rule directly for yet another interim period.

LIBYA'S TROUBLED TRANSITION

Paul Salem and Amanda Kadlic

Abstract

More than a year after the 2011 uprising against Muammar Qaddafi's rule, Libya is in the midst of a challenging transition. Significant problems remain: among them, lack of state institutions to manage the transition, repeated outbreaks of fighting between a tribal and militia groups, and deep fragmentation along regional lines. While there are many ways that the transition can go wrong, success is not impossible. The process is bolstered by widespread pride in Qaddafi's overthrow, a significant sense of Libyan identity, and general agreement about the next key steps: hold elections, draft a new constitution, and establish a structure of democratic governance.

Introduction

More than a year after the outbreak of the uprising against Muammar Qaddafi's rule, Libya is in the midst of a

challenging transition. Qaddafi is dead, his forty-two-year-old regime overthrown, and the country liberated. And now Libyans are laying the groundwork for elections that will start their country on the path to a new constitution.

But absent are state institutions to manage the transition, security services to keep the peace, and sufficient national unity to ensure a safe transition. The National Transitional Council laid out a timetable for transition, but its legitimacy among the public is weak. What is more, it lacks the institutional infrastructure to ensure the timely and successful implementation of its own road map.

Adding to the tension are tens of thousands of armed revolutionaries refusing to give up their weapons until their various needs are attended to and repeated outbreaks of fighting between a range of tribal and militia groups settling scores from the recent past or battling over turf. And the country remains deeply fragmented along regional lines. The numerical strength of the westerners of Tripolitania is tensely balanced against the revolutionary force of the eastern region of Cyrenaica—which includes the rebel stronghold of Benghazi—and the divided southern tribes of Fezzan.

Still, the chances of a successful transition are not bleak. The process is bolstered by widespread pride in Qaddafi's overthrow, a significant sense of Libyan identity, and general agreement about the next key steps: hold elections, draft a new constitution, and establish a structure of democratic governance. Libya's geopolitical environment is fairly positive, particularly when compared to countries in the Levant that are arenas of intense international struggle. And then there is Libya's copious oil revenue, which if properly managed can help to rapidly rebuild state and national institutions in a way that is not available to some other post-revolutionary states in the region.

There are many ways that the Libyan transition can go wrong. But if Libyan leaders and their friends in the region and abroad stay the course, Libya has a good chance of transitioning from dictatorship to accountable government—and taking the first steps toward rebuilding state, society, and economy in that ravaged land.

From Liberation to Constitution

In its Constitutional Declaration of August 3, 2011, the National Transitional

Council (NTC) announced an ambitious eighteen-month timetable for transition that would begin immediately after the overthrow of the regime. When Tripoli was liberated on October 23, 2011, the countdown began and the transition was slated to be complete by May 2013. The first phase included the appointment of an interim government, the promulgation of an election law, the establishment of a Higher National Election Commission (HNEC), and preparations for national Constituent Assembly elections, which were scheduled for June 19, 2012. The NTC is supposed to be dissolved upon the assembly's first meeting, and the newly elected body is to appoint a new government and a committee to draft a new constitution by August. The constitution will then be presented to the Libyan people for approval, and it will pave the way for a fresh round of elections and a new political order by May 2013.

While there is little disagreement in Libya over the broad outlines of this road map, there is considerable uncertainty both within Libya and abroad as to whether it can be implemented successfully, particularly within a reasonable time frame. The June elections have already been postponed to July 7 due to technical delays and challenges by disqualified candidates. Among the other immediate challenges are the limited credibility and capacity of the NTC and its interim government, the fragile state of internal security, the reluctance of armed brigades to cede control, and

serious questions about whether elections can be success-fully held in the absence of effective electoral security and management.

The NTC's Mixed Record

The NTC was founded in the early weeks of the revolution after ad hoc local councils that emerged in rebel towns and cities — Benghazi, Bayda, Derna, Tobruk, and oth-ers — sought to organize their representation in a broader group that would represent the anti-Qaddafi rebellion and reach out to towns and regions still under regime control. Originally based in Benghazi, the NTC also served to initi-ate communication and seek support from the international community. The organization named an Executive Board to assume government functions in areas under rebel control.

In territories still under regime control, the NTC worked with covert groups who nominated representatives to the body; these members' names remained necessarily secret until their regions were liberated. This partially covert nature in the early stages, as well as poor public communi-cation and behind-closed-door decision-making, created a deficit of transparency in the council that has come back to haunt the NTC. As long as Qaddafi had yet to fall, popular revulsion toward him united opposition groups and side-lined the process of sorting out the finer points of NTC makeup and decision-making. And during the revolution and its immediate aftermath, the NTC enjoyed a temporary "revolutionary legitimacy" in public opinion for leading a successful overthrow of the regime.

But as the country moved from revolution to transition, issues of the NTC's transparency, legitimacy, and perfor-mance came to the fore. Since the NTC is essentially a self-appointed body, it has been open to questions about how its members are selected and what authority they have

to govern. This has caused problems with various local groups and armed brigades who are dissatisfied with their representation or lack thereof in the NTC, or dispute the NTC's authority over them. In response, citizens in locali-ties throughout the country, many of which had no role in electing or nominating those who currently represent them in the NTC, have organized and held their own local elec-tions in order to replace their representatives. Civil society groups have consistently pressed interim leaders on a range of progressive issues from increased transparency to minor-ity rights to women's representation in parliament. At other times, the NTC has come under threat from militia groups demanding various concessions and privileges. The NTC has tried to manage these tensions through negotiation, increased transparency in its operations, and its expansion to represent a wider array of groups and places. It has grown steadily in size since the early days of the revolution and, as of this writing, has 81 members.

The NTC moved its operations from Benghazi to Tripoli and named an interim government after Qaddafi's fall. Over time, the balance of power in the NTC, too, has shifted from its eastern to western membership. This shift has created rancor among eastern groups and partially fueled calls for a federalist state and autonomy for the east.

The council also greatly underrepresents women despite their significant role in the revolution; only two women are in the NTC and there were only two female ministers in the twenty-four-member interim government. Indeed, there is a growing fear among some that the NTC might be reproduc-ing Tripoli-centric and patriarchal patterns that had been part of the Qaddafi past.

The Executive Board and interim government that the NTC appointed have, on the one hand, done an impressive job of garnering international support for the revolution and managing the transition so far. They have averted a major

breakdown despite the extremely difficult circumstances of transitioning from revolution and civil war to the beginning of a post-Qaddafi era. On the other hand, both bodies have faced intense public criticism, with some arguing that they are not adequately representative and accountable and others that they are moving too slowly in rebuilding security, mismanaging public funds, and harboring their own political agendas.

Yet, unlike interim authorities in Tunisia or Egypt, the NTC as well as its Executive Board and interim government did not have strong state institutions to command. During his rule, although the bulk of the labor force was on the public payroll, Qaddafi had actively weakened most state institutions and governed through a network of personal relations and security units; the revolution and the fall of the regime further weakened these feeble institutions. And not only were basic state institutions in shambles, the new governing authorities faced financial, security, and political difficulties as well. After the fall of Tripoli, the interim government faced several immediate challenges: work to recover $170 billion in Libyan assets frozen abroad; revive oil production;[1] reestablish security by disarming and integrating armed revolutionaries and rebuilding the national army and police; deal with transitional justice issues; and prepare to hold elections in mid-2012—a tall order by any stretch of the imagination.

Finances and Politics

The return of cash streams from unfrozen government assets, with sanctions lifted and the return of oil production nearing pre-war levels has revived concerns about corruption—a hallmark of the past regime threatened to resurface in the post-Qaddafi order. Without an adequate system of financial oversight and transparency, the NTC and

interim government have been unable to effectively refute accusations of financial mismanagement.

The key concern in Libya is not the lack of resources, but the capacity to effectively manage them. National elections will produce the Constituent Assembly that will then elect a government to replace the NTC and its interim government. Until elections are successfully held and Libya's first assembly convenes, the NTC and its interim government will continue to face the large public legitimacy and confidence deficit that has marked its leadership in the transition.

The Security Challenge

Whether the tenuous calm that has largely prevailed since the fall of Qaddafi can be sustained and whether elections can be held under current conditions remain very open questions. Security during the transition will remain in the hands of the tens of thousands of armed rebels split into dozens of brigades throughout the country and cannot be ensured. The country will have to proceed through summer elections and the constitution-drafting process under the careful management of tenuous transitional institutions, who in turn will have to rely on the goodwill of the largely armed population.

Brigades and the Central Authorities

The most direct challenge to Libya's transition is the tenuous state of security in the country. Tens of thousands of armed revolutionaries, organized loosely into dozens of self-led militias—or as they call themselves, brigades (*Kata'ib*)—form a patchwork pattern of control over various parts of the country. Exerting authority over these well-armed brigades has been challenging.

The NTC and the interim government have chosen patience over confrontation: In this way, the interim government wants to defuse the problem gradually, while hoping that national elections will provide a political avenue for the representation of disgruntled groups and will encourage them to pursue their interests within the political process.

Resurrecting the Government's Forces

Rebuilding the national army has been an uphill struggle. A formal Defense Ministry existed during Qaddafi's rule, but internal security was managed informally through various praetorian units. The national army was kept weak in favor of these praetorian units to avoid the risk of a *coup d'état* and was further decimated during the revolution by desertions and NATO attacks. The special praetorian units melted away with the regime's demise, and after the revolution, the army was in no position to impose authority over armed rebel groups or to adequately provide security in the transitional phase.

The regular police forces fared slightly better than the army during the Qaddafi era because their tasks were focused largely on traffic and civilian policing, so the regime had little reason to fear or weaken them. In addition, wartime desertion and the effects of NATO intervention on their functions were less than those of the army. Moreover, their public image was fairly positive because they had not been involved in the political and intelligence network; that was left to other agencies.

Yet, this force too has had its struggles. Police officers were back on the streets right after the revolution, but with little authority over the armed brigades.

The armed forces will not be rebuilt rapidly enough to ensure a safe transition, but they need to be ready soon

thereafter to help establish and maintain national security following this period of insecurity and instability.

Cross-Border Concerns

In the coming months, Libya also faces the urgent tasks of securing its borders, particularly to the south, and regaining control over the loose weapons from Qaddafi's arsenal that are crossing those borders and increasing instability in neighboring countries.

Transitional Justice and Reconciliation

The NTC drafted a transitional justice law with considerable UN Support Mission in Libya support and consultation. The law is intended to address the period between the Qaddafi era beginning in 1969 through the revolution of 2011 and the transition to a new government after Constituent Assembly elections in 2012. A combination of commissions, public apologies, reparations, trials, and purges of civil and security staff have been proposed, and a Fact Finding and Reconciliation Commission is tasked with investigating incidents of human rights violations and cases of disappeared persons.

Yet, despite the rapid progress on paper, shifting the public consciousness to respect transitional justice and due process will take years. While putting the transitional justice law on the books is one of many steps the NTC has taken toward advancing rule of law since Libya's liberation, it is of little value if no concrete steps are taken to implement or enforce it. In addition to lacking police and court systems capable of administering their detailed measures, the government has also yet to grapple with the massive problem of claims and counterclaims related to property confiscated and redistributed during Qaddafi's rule.[2]

Election Challenges

Elections were automatically slated for June 2012 following the liberation of Tripoli in October 2011, which is a very short preparation period for a country emerging from revolution and civil war, and with no real previous experience with elections. Nevertheless, the NTC and interim government have moved quickly.

Although training has been proceeding apace with help from the international community, there are certain to be many administrative problems and irregularities on Election Day. On a more basic level, determining who will be allowed to run and vote in elections for the Constituent Assembly has been a complicated process.

Local Elections Could Aid Success of National Poll

While preparations for national elections have been moving forward, several towns and cities, led by Misrata and others, have recently held their own local elections without coordination with the HNEC or the central authorities. This is both a challenge to the NTC's authority and a potential benefit in that these localities have prepared voter lists and gained voting management experience.

Overall, the organization of these local elections is an impressive show of democracy-in-action driven independently by ordinary citizens. However, as electoral preparations proceed apace, the success or failure of the national elections will ultimately depend—as in most matters in today's Libya—on the precarious security situation.

The Political Party Landscape

After the NTC abolished Qaddafi-era restrictions on political party formation in the wake of the revolution, dozens of

potential parties of varying ideologies surfaced. Moderate Islamist, Salafist, nationalist, liberal and leftist strains formed groups, while other parties reflected local, tribal, or regional power bases. These political parties will play an important role in assembly election as part of the proportional-representation system.

Although liberal-leaning groups have limited social roots, they are likely to gain at least a small presence through the proportional-representation vote, and their presence in a future assembly will help ensure that at least some counterbalance to the Islamists, and some attention to women and civil rights issues, is maintained. While the new assembly is likely to have a strong Islamist contingent, it is also likely to be characterized by local and tribal representation, thus creating a rather disjointed and localist Constituent Assembly.

Drafting a Constitution

If the elections come off successfully, the new assembly will have two tasks: appointing a new interim government and, more crucially, appointing a constitutional drafting committee, the size and makeup of which still has not been decided. But simply forming the constitutional drafting committee might be a challenge. The West has a larger population, and will likely want a majority, while the other regions will seek equal representation for all three regions.

Once formed, the committee still has the daunting task of drafting a constitution in two short months. Although there is considerable consensus about the broad outlines of the constitution—that Libya will be a constitutional democracy respecting human rights and political pluralism—there are a number of issues that will require considerable debate, and others that will simply require time to negotiate and work into final texts. Among the issues that might attract

particular debate are the issues of federalism and decentralization, the details of executive authority, and the place of religion.

Federalism and Decentralization

While leaders from the east and south have generally been pushing for decentralization, or in some cases outright federalism, leaders from Tripoli and the west generally favor building a more centralized state. Indeed, there are several factors that pull Libya in both centralizing and decentralizing directions.

Pushing toward decentralization are the country's vast geography, the distinct dynamics and histories of western, eastern, and southern areas; eastern primacy in the revolution; the distribution of oil and gas resources; and the decentralization of military power throughout the country to local militias.

Pushing toward centralization are the need to quickly rebuild an effective state; impose national security and authority; create effective financial oversight and governance institutions; establish strong international relations; and boost energy exports.

Regional identities are strong in Libya. Throughout Qaddafi's rule, the dominance of the west created tensions with Benghazi and the east, leading to unrest and repeated rebellions. Luckily, regional identities are not reinforced by ethnic or sectarian identities, as in some other Arab countries, but regional tensions are certainly a significant part of Libya's current transitional challenges.

Resources also play a considerable role in how power at the national level is distributed, and each region possesses its own tools with which to bargain for power. The south holds the bulk of underground water reserves—an indispensable resource in one of the world's driest countries.

The bulk of the country's oil industry is located in the central Sirte Basin and the eastern Benghazi region; the west contains most of Libya's limited gas reserves. While the east holds about 70 percent of the country's oil wealth, in the west, Tripoli's population is equal to that of the entire eastern region.

Leaders from Tripoli and the west generally favor building a more centralized state, while parties from the east and south have generally been pushing for decentralization, or in some cases outright federalism. Although federalism is not likely to be adopted in the constitution, the debate about decentralization will be serious. But the constitutional debate over the extent and details of decentralization will likely be a complicated and drawn out one.

Form and Details of Executive Authority

Other Arab countries in transition like Tunisia, Egypt, and Yemen have contended with the debate between presidential and parliamentary systems of government. Although the main political parties have not staked out official positions, in workshops organized with political parties and civil society groups, opinion has been divided among three models: a parliamentary model, a full presidential system, and a semi-presidential system.[3]

The Place of Religion

Over 95 percent of the Libyan population is Sunni Muslim and of the Maliki religious school, hence religion is a generally unifying factor. While Salafism is a gathering trend, it is counterbalanced by a wide presence of the more moderate Muslim Brotherhood and a lingering Sufist current. And while there are gradations of conservative and more liberal interpretations of Sunni Islam in Libya, there are no

significant religious or sectarian divisions as in the Levant or even in Egypt. However, there are secular and liberal groups and constituencies, albeit small, that are worried about the strong Islamist trend and would seek to limit references to Islam in the constitution.

Civil society and other social groups are particularly concerned, as in other transitioning Arab countries, about the rights and place of women and the freedom of liberal and secular citizens to choose their own lifestyles. If and when the committee succeeds in creating a draft, the HNEC will then proceed in organizing a national referendum on it. If the constitution is accepted, it becomes law; if it is rejected, the drafting committee will have thirty days to amend the draft and resubmit it to referendum. After the constitution is approved, elections for a new legislative assembly and the new executive authorities will be held within 210 days. If so, Libya will have completed the first phase of its precarious transition.

Beyond Transition

If Libya completes its transition road map and makes it beyond this initial phase—holding elections, drafting a constitution, and forming a new government— it will then face several longer-term challenges. Efficient and transparent state institutions capable of delivering quality services and regulation must be built. The process of integrating rebels and reclaiming the state's monopoly of force must be completed. Libya's leaders must determine how to restructure an oil-dependent economy into one that is diversified and can create meaningful employment and income for rising generations. And civil society, which blossomed during the revolution and is key to creating a more sustainably democratic Libyan society, must be nurtured. These issues are of great importance, but they are still beyond the horizon for

most Libyans who are concerned with their immediate security needs and livelihood as they seek to move beyond the ambiguity of the transitional period to a more democratic and effective state.

The challenges Libya faces are deep-seated and complex. The success or failure of the Libyan transition will depend on decisions made by Libyans themselves—as it should be. The prospect for the development of a sustainable democracy in Libya certainly exists. While the absence of established state institutions has complicated aspects of the transition, it could also be an opportunity to rebuild the state, nation, and economy from a clean slate rather than have to grapple with entrenched institutional powers from the *ancien régime*, as Egypt did.

Still, Libya's transition rests on a knife-edge: The country has a good chance of emerging from one of the world's worst dictatorships and starting down the road of building a democratic and prosperous state. It is up to the Libyan transitional leadership and the Libyan people to navigate their way through the immediate challenges of holding free and fair elections and drafting a new constitution. They can then turn to the longer-term challenges of building a stable, secure, prosperous, and sustainably democratic Libya.

Endnotes

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THE HISTORIC BLOC FOR THE REVOLUTION OF FREEDOM AND CHANGE IN YEMEN: FROM FORMATION TO DISINTEGRATION

Adel Mujahid al-Shargabi

Abstract

The Yemeni Revolution of Freedom and Justice began through the activism of a number of new and youthful social movements, which formed the critical mass for the revolution whose activists were committed to regime change through a peaceful, popular revolution. In its aftermath, a number of challenges remain, particularly the discord among the social forces which had united around the idea of overthrowing the regime, but which could not subsequently unite around a comprehensive vision of what the new state should look like and how the process of state-building should proceed.

Introduction

In the summer of 1994, President Ali Abdullah Saleh began thinking of transforming the political system into a

familial regime, in order to perpetuate his position as president of the republic, which would then be inherited by his eldest son, Ahmed Ali Abdullah Saleh, after his death. He had excluded any sources of political opposition from the public sphere; weakened and fragmented society through the inflammation of conflicts along tribal, religious, and ethnic lines; and made unilateral decisions regarding the distribution of wealth and power. He feuded with all of the active political parties in Yemeni society, as well as most of the tribal elders (sheikhs) and religious leaders. At the end of 2010, the ruling party sought to amend the constitution, in particular article 112, in order to abolish presidential term limits. The House of Representatives passed the draft amendment in principle, agreeing to amend the election law in accordance with the vision presented by the ruling party, without the consensus of the opposition parties.

In response to the unilateral actions taken by the ruling party, an opposition bloc known as the Joint Meeting Parties, or JMP, issued a statement on 13 December 2010, supporting the "gift of continuous and comprehensive popular anger that would only subside with the restoration of legitimate, democratic choices, the right to change, and to realize a national partnership in power, wealth, social justice, equal citizenship, and free and dignified life."[1] At the end of the first week of January 2011, the JMP called upon the masses to "escalate the popular protests in the various provinces, to confront the policies and directions adopted by the government."[2] The JMP bloc selected 3 February to organize sit-in protests in the provinces of the republic. The goal of these protests was not to topple the regime, but to pressure the government to accept the postponement of the election, until consensus on changing the electoral system could be achieved, and until a dialogue on the nature of the political system between the government and the opposition could be completed.

First: a conceptual framework

A revolution can only be described as successful if it brings about comprehensive change, such as the formation of a different form of government or the formation of a new political entity.[3] The goal of revolution was and still is freedom.[4] Revolutionaries cannot succeed in overthrowing the regime and building a civil state unless they first build a historic bloc to achieve the revolution's goals, and second, maintain the unity and cohesion of such a crucial alliance. If they cannot build a historic bloc, or are unable to maintain its unity, then the regime can preserve its unity and will therefore succeed in eliminating the revolution. But if both the blocs of the revolution and the regime collapse and disintegrate, then the most likely possibility serves the interest of a third party, by overthrowing only the prominent personalities of the former regime while working to reproduce the system.

Second: the critical mass for the Revolution of Freedom and Change

Since 2007, young people and students in Yemen had lost confidence in the political elites and parties, and the youth in the south decided to mobilize through independent social movements rather than through the organized methods of political parties, and subsequently formed the Southern Movement.

In the Northern provinces, young people were not able to form a historic bloc for the revolution, due to the nature of the structure and tribal relations prevalent in most of the provinces of the north. They instead counted on the provinces of Ta'iz, which in turn disappointed their hopes, after they lost all hope in the parties. The activist Bushra al-Maqtari[5] expressed this disappointment in an article published at the end of the first week of January 2011 entitled

"Delusions of the Good Times."[6] Perhaps this was the event that gave rise to her strongly held conviction, shared by her colleagues, that there was need to organize in a new way. So she and her colleagues established the Youth Movement for Change (*Irhal* or leave) in the city of Ta'iz. In Sanaa, Tawakkol Karman said that the parties generally, and the Yemeni Congregation for Reform (better known by the Arabic word for reform, *Islah*) in particular, needed to "take to the street and coalesce with the masses to demand the fall of the regime and hold it accountable for criminal misuse of public money and public property, and why we became a failed state after three decades of its rule, not in dialogue or competition with it."[7]

In light of the above, it can be said that the beginning of the Yemeni Revolution of Freedom and Justice began through the activism of a number of new social movements, which formed the critical mass for the revolution. At the forefront were the "15 January Student Movement" at the University of Sanaa, the Youth Movement for Change (Irhal) in the city of Ta'iz, and the 3 February Movement of the "Youth and Student Revolution in Sanaa. These were the main movements that promoted the slogan, rhyming in Arabic, "Our revolution is a revolution of the young people, neither partisan nor of parties." Their activists had realized that the people could only change the regime through a peaceful, popular revolution, not through arms. In contrast, the opposition parties did not trust in the ability of young people to effect change, and so did not announce that they were joining the revolution.

1- January 15th Student Movement

Just a few short hours following the announcement that Zine El Abidine Ben Ali had fled Tunisia, the student organization of the Yemeni Socialist Party at the University of Sanaa issued a statement on the evening of 15 January 2011

calling on "Yemeni youth to draw revolutionary inspiration from the experience of the Tunisian people's triumph toward the right to freedom and dignity of life."[8] The next morning, the student section of the Yemeni Socialist Party organized a march to the Tunisian Embassy in Sanaa. In spite of the limited popular participation in the rally, Ms. Tawakkol Abdel-Salam Karman, president of the organization Women Journalists without Borders, participated, as did some leaders of the Yemeni Socialist Party, some intellectuals, and some members of the media.

2- February 3rd Movement, the "Student Youth Revolution"

The 15 January declaration of revolution against the regime that had been announced by the student organization of the Yemeni Socialist party at Sanaa University started the snowball of the Yemeni revolution rolling. Despite continuing acts of student protests on an almost daily basis, they did not succeed in mobilizing the masses, remaining confined to Sanaa University students, some intellectuals, and political and civil activists. With the launch of the Egyptian revolution on 25 January, the Sanaa University students founded a movement they called the "February 3rd Movement: Student Youth Revolution."

On 30 January 2011, the 3 February movement issued a statement with the following demands: "1. The dismissal of the commander of the Republican Guard and Special Forces Ahmed Ali Saleh. 2. The president's resignation from the General People's Congress and his pledge not to run again. 3. The president's vow to hand over plundered public money. 4. The dismissal of the government, dissolution of the Parliament, and appointment of a national salvation government. 5. The dismissal of senior powerbrokers and the referral of those involved in corruption to the judiciary."[9]

From that day, the 3 February youth attempted a sit-in of Obelisk Square, now known as Change Square. They began a sit-in on the afternoon of Thursday, 3 February 2011, continuing until its suppression by the security apparatus in the late afternoon of Friday, 4 February, when eight were arrested. On February 19th, the students of Sanaa University were able to convert their demonstrations into a permanent sit-in of Change Square, and they founded the "Youth Coalition of the Peaceful Yemeni Revolution."

3- Youth Movement for Change (Leave)

A group of students, young people, and leftist and liberal intellectuals founded the revolutionary movement on behalf of the youth for change (Leave) in the city of Ta'iz on 25 January 2011. The activists of the movement took up the slogan "the people want the fall of the regime," and in parallel with their revolution against the regime, they declared a rebellion against the political parties by taking up the slogan "neither partisan nor of parties, our revolution is a revolution of the young people," and arranged to effectively turn the Joint Meeting scheduled for 3 February 2011 into a march of anger. Although the Joint Meeting objected to the rally and to its slogans, the young people organized a number of processions on that day, starting in various locations throughout the city of Ta'iz and going in different directions. This was an indication that the revolution had begun to mature.[10]

The participants repeatedly chanted, "The people want the fall of the regime." The movement managed to attract many young people, intellectuals, and members of the middle class to join them, motivating others members of these social groups to establish independent, revolutionary movements and groups, such as Academics for Change or Tribes for Change, whether in the city of Ta'iz or in the Freedom and Change Squares in other provinces.

The Leave movement issued a statement on the eighth of February, identifying 11 urgent demands, including the president's resignation from the post of Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, and from the chairmanship of the ruling party (the General People's Congress); the removal of his son and relatives from all military, state, and economic positions; the dismissal and trial of the ministers of the interior and of information; the abolition of the law on demonstrations restricting freedom of expression; resolving the issue of the south as full partners in unity at home and abroad, rather than excluding or suspecting the southerners of disloyalty; returning the looted land and property of the south and opening an investigation into illegal shootings and arrests of the people of the south; opening an immediate investigation into the heinous and bloody massacres in Saada; making university education free and guaranteeing the independence of universities, rather than as platforms for the defense of authority; the elimination of unemployment according to a well-considered and effective timetable, and with the participation of a committee of young people to achieve the principle of transparency; and engaging the young people in the future of Yemen.

The parties viewed the movement's call to revolution and the overthrow of the regime as a kind of excess or extremism, going too far without considering the consequences. The media did not dare to transmit the slogans taken up the movement at the marches on the third of February, which they instead attempted to present as rallies in support of the Egyptian revolution.[11] And the announcement that the former Egyptian president, Hosni Mubarak, would be stepping down from power on the evening of Friday, 10 February 2011, formed a strong impetus for the youth of Ta'iz to respond to the Leave movement's demand for revolution against the regime. So with the announcement of

Mubarak's resignation, the masses of Ta'iz went out into the streets, joining the youth of the revolution in Ta'izz's Tahrir Square. And when they were assaulted by the security forces and the thugs of the regime, it became known as Whistling Square for all the chanting and whistling, and then was officially renamed Freedom Square. Freedom Square in Ta'izz was the first permanent sit-in for the revolutionaries of Yemen. And on 17 February 2011 they established a page on Facebook in the name of the "Media Center for the Revolution, Freedom Square, Ta'iz."[12]

The young people of the movement and the revolution generally replaced the space of the party, the space that had been closed to them and monopolized by the traditional elite, with the virtual space offered by the internet, especially through pages on social networks like Facebook,[13] through which they could rally and mobilize the masses.

The Youth Movement for Change called for holding Friday prayers on February 18th in Ta'iz's Freedom Square, under the name "Friday of the beginning." On 16 February, a Freedom Square was founded in al-Mansoura in Aden governorate, and a Freedom Square in the city of Ibb. The following Friday on 25 February was named "Friday of Loyalty to the Martyrs."

Third: the participation of women in the revolution

The leftist and nationalist students that declared the revolution on 15 January were looking for a charismatic personality that would ensure that their revolutionary uprising extended to broader popular sectors. The choice of the Ta'iz youth fell on the leftist activist Bushra al-Muqtari, who had a prominent role in establishing and as spokeswoman for the Youth Movement for Change (Leave) in Ta'iz. The youth of the revolution in Sanaa chose the activist Tawakkol Karman, who in turn was looking for a social base outside the socially conservative and traditional base of her party (Islah). She joined their first march to the Tunisian Embassy on 16 January, and then participated in all of the students' subsequent marches and demonstrations. Karman remained closer to the young people than to her party organization, and it was the young people belonging to nationalist, left-wing, and liberal parties who were the most responsive to Karman. She was the person most capable of mobilizing young people. She organized a number of youth rallies, most notably the march that went to the Council of Ministers, while the party elites complained about the outpouring of the youth and of Karman. Karman possesses great capabilities in mobilization, especially for the ordinary man on the street; however, she did not have a conception of state building, or a vision for constructing a new, alternative regime. As for Bushra al-Muqtari, she embraced a more defined project for change, as the first to raise the idea of a civil state in an interview with the newspaper *al-Madina*. She also described the striking presence of women in the leadership of the movement, that it "reflects its civil orientation, and its project to build a modern civil state."[14]

Then, the square of the sit-in divided into two squares: one for men and one for women. Women had been a remarkable presence in both Change Square in the capital of Sanaa and in Freedom Square in the city of Ta'iz, a memorable level of participation in the sit-in movement. Some women participated very effectively through sectorial coalitions and professional gatherings in the squares and in the camps, from academics to members of the media and doctors. Among the women who participated effectively in the revolution in the capital alongside Karman were Doctor Ibtissam Mutawakkil, a professor of Arabic language and literature at the University of Sanaa, a liberal proponent of

secular modernizing thought, who undertook the work of internal education and communication in Sanaa's Change Square while al-Muqtari came to prominence in Ta'iz. Despite the fact that women's active participation in the revolution was concentrated in the capital of Sanaa, and the cities of Aden, Ta'iz, and Al Hudaydah, the predominantly tribal provinces did witness some female protests, especially the governorates of Ma'rib and 'Amran. Both urban and rural housewives participated in the preparation of food and cakes for the protesters, while female academics and professionals participated in volunteer efforts, especially in the fields of medicine and first aid for the wounded, as many nurses were also involved.

The violence of the regime toward women activists in Freedom and Changes Squares was not limited to verbal abuse, but extended to physical violence as well. Many of the female activists in Ta'iz were subjected to beatings, and a number of female martyrs were killed during the revolution. Nearly all of those martyred were targeted by the regime's snipers, or through the direct targeting of places allocated to them in Ta'iz's Freedom Square.

Despite substantial mobilization among women to participate in the revolution that was undertaken by Islah, the party worked nevertheless to separate female from male, not permitting demonstrations or marches together. The women who broke this rule of gendered separation by participating in joint marches were harassed and sometimes even beaten. On 16 April, a number of leftist and liberal female activists were assaulted by soldiers of the First Armored Division and hardliners in front of the University of Science and Technology.

On the third of February 211, the "Movement of Free Women" was founded in the city of Ta'iz.[15] On 19 April 2011, female revolutionaries in Change Square in the capital of Sanaa established a Facebook page in the name of "A Yemeni Women's Coalition,"[16] and on the fifth of July 2011, three women's movements in Change Square in the city of Ta'iz (Free Women of Education, Revolutionary Mothers, and Free Students) announced a merger, forming a broad bloc called "Female Fighters for the Revolution of Yemen."

Some women were able to move beyond the separation of men and women in revolutionary activities, participating in some marches or organizing joint activities in the squares. In addition, there were 88 female participants in a march on foot from Ta'iz to Sanaa.[17] Some were independents and others belonged to political parties of various ideological orientations. If the participation of women generally in the different marches represented a challenge to traditional standards of behavior, then the participation of women belonging to parties of political Islam represented an even bolder step in this regard.

Fourth: the formation of the historic bloc

On Monday 14 February, the leader of Ansar Allah, Abdul-Malik al-Houthi issued a statement calling for the Yemeni people to exploit the opportunity to change the situation and the criminals in power. On 15 February, he declared that he was taking to the street and demanding that the government leave the country quickly. Al-Houthi sought to incite all the people of Yemen to come out against the state and take advantage of the revolutions of Egypt and Tunisia.

On 20 February, the JMP broke the silence that had fallen over the parties during the previous period, calling along with the Commission for National Dialogue for its members to join the young people in demanding the departure of the regime. The first tent in Change Square was put up the same day, which suggests that the JMP offered political protection to the young people, once

the youth of the parties joined those in the square. On 4 March, the JMP affirmed its continued support for the Yemeni youth uprising and its demands for change. On 7 March, the Organizational Committee for Change Square was formed on the basis of quotas for the JMP and some of the forces that had declared their accession to the revolution. But the JMP in general, and Islah in particular, were clearly the dominant powers.

In the south, the city of Aden responded to the sit-ins of Ta'iz, and demonstrations began on the following day. On 16 January, the first martyr fell in Aden's Mansoura Square. The demonstrations turned into a permanent sit-in on 20 February, and the square was renamed Martyr's Square. The organized youth movement known as the February 16 Youth Movement took shape in the square,[18] taking up the same slogans as the February 11 Movement in Ta'iz, foremost "the people want the fall of the regime." Toward the end of February, the Southern Movement began to adopt the same slogan as well.

During the first half of March 2011, the former president Saleh tried to attack the revolution with force, reaching its peak in the massacre on the Friday of Dignity, 18 March 2011, which claimed the lives of 50 martyrs and injured hundreds of the revolutionaries in Sanaa's Change Square. However, the revolutionaries proved their tenacity and did not retreat, arresting a number of the perpetrators of the massacre. This legendary steadfastness convinced the former president, his traditional allies among the elite, and regional and international actors of the impossibility of eliminating the revolution. General Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar, commander of the northwestern region and the First Armored Division) announced his defection from the regime, and his support and protection of the revolutionaries, on 21 March. On the same day, a number of tribal sheikhs declared their support for the revolution.

Fifth: the disintegration of the historic bloc

After the Friday of Dignity, and failure of Saleh to eliminate the popular Yemeni revolution by armed military force, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia became convinced that Saleh could not stay in power in Yemen, but would not accept the fall of the regime. The Kingdom wanted a transfer of power, not regime change. So Saudi Arabia formulated the Gulf Initiative on the basis that what was happening in Yemen was a power struggle among the political and social elite — not a conflict between the regime and the Yemeni people.

Saudi Arabia pressured the political, military, and tribal elites opposed to Saleh to accept the Gulf initiative and make concessions to Saleh. It seems that Saudi was behind the strategy of stalling and evasion followed by Saleh in dealing with the signing of the Gulf initiative, in order to arrange the conditions and search for Saleh's alternative in Yemen.

The joining of traditional forces to the revolution formed the seed of disintegration for the historic bloc for revolution, as a divide appeared in Sanaa between the Houthis and the reformists, between modernist and traditional forces, and between civil and religious forces. While the defection of these elites weakened the regime, it did not strengthen the revolution, instead weakening and breaking up the historic bloc for the revolution. Although General al-Ahmar had pledged to protect the squares of the revolution from the repression of the regime, it was also an implicit pledge to protect the regime, guarding the revolutionaries in Freedom and Change Squares as well as guarding the regime from the popular rising. The young people were not allowed to leave the square in the direction of the presidential palace, and in coordination with the parties and the Organizing Committee of Change Square, controlled all the activities of the square.

In the cases when some of the young people and revolutionary movements rebelled against the decisions and directive of the organizing committee, the military partisans of the revolution left them to face their fate alone, without protection. A number of martyrs and hundreds of injured and wounded fell during the march on Tuesday 19 April on 60 Meter Road in front of the Foreign Ministry, without the intervention of the partisans of the revolution to protect them; the Stadium march on 27 April claimed the lives of 13 revolutionaries and injured dozens; in the Foreign Ministry massacre on 15 October, there were 12 martyrs and dozens injured; and in the Council of Ministers march on Wednesday 11 May, there were 12 martyrs and many wounded.[19]

In opposition to the dominance of the Organizational Committee over Change Square in Sanaa, and to the dominance of the JMP over Freedom and Change Squares generally throughout Yemen, at the same time the first draft of the Gulf initiative was introduced, independent youth blocs and alliances with a liberal and leftist spirited formed in the squares, against the dominance of traditional powers over the revolution. These included the Civic Alliance of the Youth Revolution, founded on 23 March 2011, headed by the independent member of parliament Ahmed Saif Hashed, and residing in the capital's Change Square, Ta'iz's Freedom Square, and in Aden; the Coordinating Council for the Youth of the Revolution of Change (forming the Arabic acronym *Tanawwu'*, or diversity), founded on 11 March 2011; Democratic Civil Council (*Madad*), founded in May 2011 as a framework for independent coalitions with a liberal character; and the General Forum for Revolutionary Organizations, founded in September 2011, gathering a number of leftist and liberal revolutionary groups.[20]

When the Gulf initiative was signed on 23 November 2011, the media office of Mr. Abdul-Malik al-Houthi issued a statement expressing his opposition to the initiative, as unacceptable and careless, considering the sacrifices of the revolutionaries. He also stood against the demonstrations of the youth of the squares. On the same day, the Civil Alliance issued a statement rejecting the initiative, calling for the fall of the regime and its trial, and to put in place the building blocks of a modern, democratic, civil state.[21]

After the signing of the initiative, the youth circles of the revolution (and the 3 February Youth Movement in particular) diverged in two general directions: the current of young party members committed to the policies of the parties on one side, and the current of young independents rebelling against the parties, those who had previously comprised the 15 January Movement, on the other side. The latter announced a return to the practice of their revolutionary activities under the name of the 15 January Movement, with the goal of restoring the youth spirit of the revolution.

Future of the Revolution

One of the most important challenges standing in the way of achieving the goals of the Yemeni popular revolution is the discord among the social forces which had united around the idea of overthrowing the regime, but which could not subsequently unite around a comprehensive vision of what the new state should look like and how the process of state building should proceed. Compounding these disputes, some of the forces behind the revolution have a low level of trust in their erstwhile allies. Another challenge is the overzealousness of the young people, in particular their unrealistic expectations for the pace of change, which will clash with the significant amount of time demanded by the state building process. There are also the multiplying divisions among, and the dispersal of, the young people.

The Organizational Committee did not represent an acceptable framework for all of the youth blocs and coalitions. Finally, the armed conflicts along sectarian lines that erupted between the Houthi group and armed Salafi groups, and others supported by Islah, all adversely affected the national struggle between the people and the regime. Together, these challenges will force the revolution to tread water for some time to come.

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BAHRAIN: BETWEEN A NIGHTMARE AND THE DREAM OF DEMOCRACY

Ghaniya Alawi

Abstract

This chapter presents a detailed narrative history of the democratic movement in Bahrain, which has been systematically co-opted and repressed by the ruling monarchy. In January 2011, a number of Bahraini young people initiated a peaceful movement to demand a democratic system along the lines of well-established constitutional kingdoms. The monarchy was able to brutally repress the Bahrain uprising, and has since also used economic incentives like cash grants, politically-motivated firings, and a variety of political initiatives such as national dialogues and fact-finding committees to ward off revolutionary activity.

Introduction

The Al Khalifa family signed the treaty of British protection in 1861, and Bahrain remained a British protectorate until

1971. The population of Bahrain was estimated at the time of the agreement's signing to be about 70,000 people, most of whom were Shia Arabs, called "*al-Baharnah* or the Bahraini people," and other Sunna Arabs from the Arab peninsula, called "*al-Arab* or Arabs." There are those who came from Persia, the Shia among them called "*al-ajam*, meaning either non-Arab in general or Persian in particular," and the Sunna among them known as "*al-huwala*," and also individuals belonging to the Christian and Jewish religions.[1]

The discovery and production of oil in 1932 led to the emergence of a great developmental and educational movement, a new class of educated workers who contributed to the development of Bahraini society over the next fifty years. The political regime chose to deport the most prominent leaders of these national movements. In the 1950s, the rulers sought to create strife (*fitna*) between the Sunna and Shia, but the people of Bahrain moved to create an organization shared equally between the Sunna and Shia, called the National Union Committee.[2]

Founded in 1954, the National Union Committee (NUC) was the first nationalist organization, by virtue of including nationalist actors of all backgrounds, and seeking an end to sectarianism. As its strength grew, the NUC made a series of demands, notably the election of a national parliament, the development of a uniform civil and criminal law code, the establishment of an appeals court composed of judges well versed in the law, and the establishment of labor, trade, and professional unions. The NUC continued to lead the popular movement until 1956, when its key leaders were arrested, put on trial, and exiled. The government thus delivered the deathblow to the first socio-political Bahraini Gulf movement.[3]

In March 1965, the spark of the *intifada* or uprising began with a labor strike of the Bahrain Petroleum Company (Bapco) workers, to protest the firing of 1,500 workers, which inspired high school students in Manama to demonstrate in solidarity with the workers. The demands of the intifada evolved to include the reversal of all the layoffs, recognition of the right to form unions, allowing the holding of political meetings, abolition of the state of emergency that had been imposed on the country since 1956, and the release of all political prisoners.

The March intifada put the issue of political independence, and then political reforms, on the agenda in the 1970s. Iran had asserted its right to rule over Bahrain, and the Iranian government reiterated its claim to Bahrain when it saw the intention of Britain to leave the Gulf. Subsequently, a survey of citizens in Bahrain was conducted under the auspices of the United Nations in 1970, and the majority of Bahrainis were inclined toward establishing an independent state, unaffiliated with any party in the region. After independence, the leadership of the national struggle was held by communist and nationalist leftist organizations until the late 1970s, when the religious current emerged, in the wake of the Iranian revolution.[4]

In its first years after independence, Bahrain began to take steps toward laying the foundation of democratic rule. A constituent assembly was established to prepare a constitution for the state. The country's first constitution was issued in 1973, limiting the powers of the emir and organizing the relationship among the three branches of power.[5]

Bahrainis also elected members to the National Assembly in the same year. The majority of its members, approximately 74 percent, were popularly elected deputies, the remainder appointed ex officio as cabinet ministers. The Bahraini parliamentary experiment suffered its first setback in 1975, when the government resorted to the dissolution of the National Assembly.[6]

Since the 1970s, the democratic movement has grown and strengthened in secret, both locally and abroad, forming

strong organizations overseas. Among these groups were the National Liberation Front, the Popular Front (most of whose leadership came out of the Arab Nationalist Movement), the Baath Party, the Da'wa Party, the Islamic Action Front, and some Nasserist forces. Together, they formed the opposition forces. In addition, there were religious currents loyal to the sovereign like the Muslim Brotherhood, which represented the Sunni religious mainstream, and distanced itself from the nationalist struggle. The Wahabi-Salafi current assisted the regime in its unremitting efforts to spread Salafist ideology.[7]

In the 1980s, the Bahraini intelligence services began to monitor some aspects of the fledgling activity of some Shia religious scholars. The government proceeded to arrest and expel Sayyid Hadi al-Modarresi in late 1979. After demonstrations swept Bahrain following the Iraqi regime's killing of Shi'i cleric Sayyid Mohammad Baqir al-Sadr, the Bahraini security service ventured to close the Husseini Social Fund Center permanently and arrest dozens of its members on charges of being linked to the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain. They were accused of plotting a military coup d'état, and some were sentenced to 25 years in prison.[8]

In the 1990s, a protest movement emerged that spanned from 1994 to 2000, including leftist, liberal, and Islamist forces. Its demands can be summarized as the return of democracy through the reelection of the National Assembly; release of all political prisoners; return of exiles; granting women civil and political rights; guaranteeing justice for all citizens; and economic reforms.

The 1990s movement ended, leaving behind 40 martyrs, after Sheikh Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa promised reforms and the abolition of the notorious State Security Law. Hamad had succeeded his father, becoming emir of the state in 1999, and his son Sheikh Salman had become crown prince.

Emir Hamad began his "reform" program in February 2001 with a referendum on the National Action Charter that outlined the bases for political reform. Bahrainis approved the charter by an overwhelming majority of 98.4 percent, under which Bahrain became a constitutional monarchy.[9] But the "reform" project resulted in the ineffectual parliament of 2002, incapable of fulfilling its legislative role, while the new constitution gave sweeping powers to the king, including legislative powers; thus, the king came to dominate the three executive, legislative, and judicial branches of power. Additionally, the king brought a package of right-impinging laws, relating to associations, gatherings, the press, and the distribution of electoral districts. This finished off what had been achieved in terms of relative freedom, frustrating the hopes of the people for political reform. And so the opposition and government continued a real political fray through hit-and-run tactics.

A number of national figures and the associations of the Quadruple Alliance (the National Democratic Action Society, Al Wefaq National Islamic Society, the National Democratic Assembly, and the Islamic Action Society) agreed to hold a constitutional conference, aimed at the study of the constitutional question, whose recommendations would be binding. The Bahraini authorities tried hard to obstruct the progress of its work, preventing the participation of Arab and European invitees; however, the constitutional convention was held successfully 14-15 February 2004, under the motto, "Toward a contractual constitution for constitutional kingdom."

But the opposition agreed to take part in the elections of 2006, realizing only afterwards that the regime was not serious about reform. As well, the opposition did not possess the ability to put pressure on the government to proceed with the reform process. As a result, the intensity of opposition's demands escalated, which were met by continued

governmental repression. This situation continued until the end of 2010.

Young Bahrainis found inspiration and hope in the Arab Spring, which started in Tunisia. In January 2011, a number of Bahraini young people initiated a peaceful movement to demand a democratic system along the lines of well-established constitutional kingdoms. They published a statement through social networking and emerged in peaceful rallies in a number of Bahrain's villages. The anti-riot forces met these peaceful marches with force, and the first martyr, Ali Abdulhadi Mushaima, was killed. During the funeral, the mourners were again met with repression by the riot police and snipers, and the second martyr, Fadhel al-Matrook, was killed. As a result, popular discontent increased and marches swept most of the villages of Bahrain.

The young people of the movement proposed a number of sites as a gathering place via social networking sites like Facebook, and the overwhelming choice was the Gulf Cooperation Council Circle, known as the Pearl Roundabout, which is in the center of the city of Manama and whose streets connect easily to Muharraq and various cities and villages of Bahrain. Despite King Hamad's decree on Friday, 11 February 2011, to give 1,000 Bahraini dinars (equivalent to $2,652 USD) to each Bahraini family to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the National Action Charter, in addition to other grants and an announcement of service projects in other areas, in an attempt by the rulers to head off possible unrest, the gathering for the march nevertheless began on the morning of 14 February 2011 in Pearl Roundabout, the place agreed upon by means of social media. The demands began to crystallize as the establishment of a constitutional monarchy through the formulation of a new constitution for the kingdom, under which the government would be elected by the people.

The participants in the demonstrations therefore demanded a contractual constitution in place of the constitution of 2002, which had been issued by the Bahraini king after the vote on the National Action Charter, as well as the release of political prisoners, and religious leaders who had been detained since August 2010, in addition to dissolving the standing Council of Representatives and abrogating the legislative powers of the appointed Consultative Council; the need for the alternation of executive power by means of free elections; the freedom to form political parties and expanded freedoms of opinion and expression; a stop to political naturalization (instrumentalized to alter sectarian demographics); and curtailing the role of the ruling family, which controls the council of ministers or governmental cabinet, which has been headed by the king's uncle as prime minister for more than 40 years.

The king appeared on television, offering condolences to the martyrs' families, describing them as the slain, which encouraged the people to march and gather in Pearl Roundabout. The king issued a royal decree forming a special commission of inquiry into the unfortunate events that had occurred in the country on 14-15 February 2011. But the Wefaq parliamentary bloc refused to participate in the commission, after previously announcing the suspension of its parliamentary activity in protest of the excessive use of force against the demonstrators, which led to the deaths of two of them and wounded more than 37 others. Slogans calling for the reform of the regime began to resound, and the political associations and civil society organizations found themselves forced to follow the lead of the young revolutionaries. The opposition political associations (Wefaq National Islamic Society, National Democratic Action Society or Wa'ad, Progressive Democratic Tribune or al-Minbar, National Democratic Assembly, National Democratic Alliance, Al-Ekha'a (Brotherhood) National

Society, and Islamic Action Society) held an emergency meeting the evening of 16 February 2011 at the headquarters of the National Democratic Action Society to discuss the political developments and recent events experienced by Bahrain.[10]

In their meeting, the associations affirmed support for the demands of the movement for real democracy, an elected legislature with full powers, and peaceful transfer of power, and condemned the excessive violence used by security forces to disperse peaceful gatherings. In the meantime, the demands of a group of youth movements crystallized into what was known as the February 14 Youth Coalition. Meanwhile, on the afternoon of 16 February 2011, Bahrain TV broadcast rallies in support of the regime and the political leadership live for hours. The secretary general of Al Wefaq, the largest Shi'i association, emphasized at a press conference that there is no place for *vilayat-e faqih* (guardianship of the jurist, which in the revolutionary Iran was interpreted to mean a supreme theocratic leader) in Bahrain. The people, he stressed, were not calling for a religious state, but for a democratic civic state as it is known around the world, and the protests taking place in Bahrain were an internal matter out of the internal need for reform. The crowds of people continued to march toward Pearl Roundabout, and began a sit-in there. The surprise came with the arrest of Mohamed Albuflasa — a Sunni military officer — after he made a speech addressing the subject of governmental corruption at the Pearl Roundabout.[11]

On Wednesday, 17 February 2011, the military and police attacked Pearl Roundabout, and this treacherous attack resulted in the killing of four martyrs and more than 250 wounded. The accounts of a number of paramedics confirmed that the security forces and military prevented them from reaching the wounded in Pearl Roundabout after its

storming, and recalled that there were orders from senior authorities in the ministry to prevent ambulances from leaving. Local reactions to the events soon followed. The Al Wefaq parliamentary bloc announced that its 18 deputies, out of 40 total, withdrew irrevocably from the Bahraini Council of Representatives beginning on Thursday, 17 February 2011.[12]

The General Command of the Bahrain Defense Force issued a statement it called Statement No. 1 on Thursday 17 February 2011, announcing the deployment of armed forces in the capital area, under the pretext of taking the necessary measures to maintain the security and safety of citizens and residents, and to secure their liberty and their property from acts of violence. On 19 February, the General Federation of Workers Trade Unions announced a strike, unless the armed forces and security services withdrew from the streets and the government would guarantee the freedom to demonstrate.

On 19 February 2011, crowds of mourners bearing only Bahraini flags headed toward Pearl Roundabout, fortified by the military. They were met by the sound of live ammunition. The accident and emergency department at the Salmaniya Medical Complex received 96 injured, some caused by live ammunition.

In a tangible development on 20 February, the crown prince and deputy supreme commander appeared and announced his initiative for a comprehensive dialogue, with no party excluded. The king crowned the initiative of his son by issuing a royal decree that gave the crown prince the helm to oversee the dialogue with the opposition. On the same day, the military and security forces withdrew from Pearl Roundabout on the orders of the crown prince, and people poured into the Pearl Roundabout. In just three days, the roundabout filled with people from all sects and age groups, many of them young people. On the 17th, a

group of national figures held a meeting forming a group called the National Meeting, which included the leading personalities of the political associations.[13]

On 22 February 2011, the king ordered the release of a number of political prisoners accused of attempting to overthrow the government, and the cessation of all cases awaiting trial. On the following day, the Bahraini government announced in an official statement the release of 308 people following their amnesty by the king, and the government announced that it would begin to investigate allegations that they were tortured. On Friday, 25 February, the king dismissed four ministers described as "ministers of aggravation," for worsening the crisis, against the backdrop of the recent protests.

On Saturday, 26 February, the king ordered a 25 percent reduction in housing loans for citizens. Despite all of these bribes to the people to back down from their original demands for freedom, democracy, justice, and equality, the people were encouraged and doubled their numbers day after day at the Pearl Roundabout, transforming the circle into multiple zones, each zone composed of a number of tests, and each tent serving a specialized function for the people of the roundabout — media, medical, educational, and hygienic —becoming a space where class, ethnic, cultural, and social differences nearly disappeared.

The sit-ins continued, and the momentum of the events increased. The eyes of the regime were deployed in the roundabout to monitor and document everything, and to photograph every face. One of these peaceful rallies and sit-ins was a march of intellectuals, composed of writers, artists, activists, and civil society organizers on Saturday, 26 February. The photographs became the regime's proof of participation in the protests, and subsequently the basis for firing thousands of workers and employees from various jobs and professions.

On 27 February, a few leaders of the opposition were allowed to return from exile, and on 28 February, activists formed a human fence around the parliament and the state television headquarters in protest of their disgraceful stances toward the reform movement. On 5 March 2011, thousands participated in a human chain against sectarianism, which extended from the al-Fateh area to Pearl Roundabout. On 6 March, thousands staged a sit-in before the seat of government, demanding its fall, and on 7 March, there was a sit-in in front of the American Embassy, criticizing its silence toward the just demands of the people of Bahrain, especially in comparison to the American stance toward the protests in Tunisia and Egypt.

On 8 March 2011, an opposition faction close to Iran, the Coalition for the Republic, announced its demands for the establishment of a republic and the fall of the monarchy, marking a potentially dangerous juncture by far exceeding the demands raised for reform — and diverting attention from the reformist demands of the opposition. The vast majority of the opposition were calling for reforms, which were beginning to be made.

Nevertheless, the regime then took the slogan of "establishing a republic" as a pretext for its tyranny, and for a revision of the past, claiming that the source of the marches and sit-ins was outside interference, and the consequences of this new-found pretext for brutality became abundantly clear in subsequent events. On 11 March 2011 was the march of the Royal Court, and the security services and thugs fired shotguns and tear gas at the people, in order to provoke a street battle.

To make matters worse, the official media poured fuel on and fanned the fires of sectarianism. On 12 March, thousands marched toward the Safriya Royal Palace shouting for the fall of the regime, and on the next day, the security forces attacked the protesters camped out in the Financial

Harbor region, and at the same time, there was an attack by thugs and security forces on university students to provoke clashes, in order to accuse the protesting students of violent subversion. This was accompanied by an attack on students in public schools and the fabrication of factional clashes between students on a sectarian basis. Acts of violence by masked men carrying weapons became commonplace, a number of Shi'a majority villages were assaulted, some Shi'a-owned shops were robbed, and the headquarters of both the secular-oriented National Democratic Action Society (also known by its Arabic acronym Wa'ad) and the newspaper *al-Wasat* (*The Middle*, the only newspaper not affiliated with the regime) were assaulted.

In the beginning of March, the Gulf Cooperation Council donated 20 billion US dollars to Bahrain and Oman to ameliorate their conditions, and this was accompanied by the issuance of a number of decisions, including a plan to employ 20,000 people to cover the needs of various organs of the ministry of interior — an attempt to absorb the anger of the Shi'a protesters who accused the government of discriminating against Shi'a in hiring for the military and security services. On 6 March, the Bahraini minister of housing announced plans to build 50,000 housing units in the country at a cost of no less than two billion dinars ($5.32 billion).

At a press conference held on Monday, 14 March 2011, at the headquarters of Al Wefaq, the political associations in opposition affirmed their commitment to the crown prince's initiative. They were joined by the National Coalition, which included a number of national figures, from different orientations, supporting the dialogue. They confirmed their support for the initiative with seven points: a parliament with full powers; a government representing the will of the people; fair electoral districts; addressing naturalization; fighting administrative and financial corruption; remedy the

situation of state property; and mitigate sectarian tensions.

The Islamic Association called for a fast start of the comprehensive national dialogue, seeking calm and to stop the bloodshed, and to avoid changing the subject from an issue of political demands to a security or sectarian issue.

On 14 March 2011, Peninsula Shield forces, composed of units from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, entered Bahrain via the bridge linking Bahrain and Saudi. The Peninsula Shield forces dressed as locals and clashed with protesters in the villages, especially in Sitra, killing and injuring a number of peaceful, innocent people.

On the morning of Wednesday 16 March 2011, Bahrainis awoke to the news of security forces and the National Guard storming Pearl Roundabout and blockading Salmaniya Hospital, with the support of the army, four military aircraft, and two planes belonging to the Ministry of the Interior. The attack resulted in six killed, and hundreds wounded.

On the same night, the new minister of health, 12 judges, and seven members of the Consultative Council (upper house of the National Assembly), and officials of the Shi'a community presented their resignations in protest of the repression of peaceful civilians in the roundabout, which were followed by further resignations by Shi'a at various official levels. Official circles became and remain almost exclusively dominated by one sect alone. At dawn the next day, Thursday 17 March 2011, the homes of several opposition leaders were raided. In the early morning of Friday, 18 March, bulldozers demolished the monument at the center of Pearl Roundabout, in an attempt to erase the symbol of the protests. The foreign minister justified this action as "getting rid of a bad memory."

While the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay stated that the security and military forces' treatment of hospitals and medical centers

constituted a violation of international law, King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa expressed his appreciation to the leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council, thanking them for "their good efforts" toward promoting security and stability, and confirming the presence of Peninsula Shield forces in Bahrain (within a framework of mutual defensive cooperation and coordination among GCC states).

King Hamad issued royal decree number 18 for 2011, announcing a state of "national safety" throughout the kingdom of Bahrain for three months, starting from 15 March 2011. The king authorized the commander in chief of the Bahrain Defense Forces to take the measures and procedures necessary to maintain the safety of the nation and its citizens, and so the security services continued to arrest numerous members of the opposition, activists, and doctors. Security forces raided the homes of several political and human rights activists, and many villages reported clashes between demonstrators and riot police back by the armed forces.

Finally, and perhaps worst of all, a kind of Bahraini "McCarthyism" began to take over. Security authorities kept track of all who participated either from near or from far in the events that occurred at Pearl Roundabout and subjected them to harassment, imprisonment, torture, and investigation. Additionally, more than 4,600 people were fired from their work, after first being investigated and humiliated in full view of their colleagues at workplaces across the country, in various ministries, companies, factories, and offices.

The king appeared on television Monday, 9 May 2011, announcing that the state of emergency would be lifted by the first of June. He appeared a second time on Monday, 31 May, directing the executive and legislature to advocate for a national dialogue on the optimal situation for the Kingdom of Bahrain, and to take all necessary preparations for a serious and comprehensive dialogue, without preconditions.

Building on this, all civil society organizations, political associations, and national figures were invited to a dialogue that lasted for one month. After initially agreeing to participate, Al Wefaq pulled out of the dialogue after it found that the dialogue was designed to water down the popular demands for democracy, justice, and equality. The opposition was then marginalized in the dialogue, reduced to five participants out of a total of 300. Its demand unmet, the street movement thus continued unabated.

On Wednesday, 30 June 2011, King Hamad ordered the formation of an independent fact-finding commission into the events of February and March, to be composed of individuals with global reputations, extensive knowledge of international human rights law, and far removed from the domestic political sphere. There was extensive controversy about the credibility of the Bahrain Independent Commission headed by Professor of International Law and Human Rights Mr. M. Cherif Bassiouni, which came as a substitute for the special committee set up by the Human Rights Council.[14]

The fact-finding commission announced the results of its investigations on 23 November 2011, which confirmed significant and systematic abuses including torture and the use of excessive force. Although the report found responsibility only extended to junior officers, some of whom were tried, the report nevertheless contradicted the regime's earlier claims about foreign conspiracies and American-Iranian espionage. The commission called a spade a spade, confirming cases of torture, starvation, and murder. The commission also recommended the rehiring of all employees dismissed from their work.[15]

Despite the fact what came of the Bassiouni report was considered entirely fair and reasonable in the eyes of many, most of the recommendations were not implemented or remain largely defunct. The street movement continues,

often facing repression, while the official media machine does its best to worsen sectarianism. What is happening in Bahrain is closer to a state of martial law. There is essentially an undeclared state of emergency. The regime has continued to escalate its tyranny and repression of freedom of opinion and expression, through arrests, raids, and the continued persecution of citizens for expressing their opinions.

Therefore, five opposition political associations (Al Wefaq, Wa'ad, Assembly, Alliance, and El-Ekha) launched the Manama Document, which was entitled "Bahrain's road to freedom and democracy." In it, the opposition renewed their previous demands for an elected representative government; a just electoral system with fair electoral districting to ensure the equality of all citizens in accordance with the principle of one vote for every citizen; an elected unicameral legislature with full supervisory and legislative powers; and an independent judiciary. These associations stressed the necessity of security for all through the involvement of all components of Bahraini society in the composition of all the various security and military services.

The only way out of Bahrain's ordeal is through a political solution that responds to the demands of the people for an equitable democracy, the right to live in freedom with dignity and pride, a nationwide effort to achieve national reconciliation, and the release of political detainees and prisoners of conscience.

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ON THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ROOTS
OF SYRIAN FASCISM

Yassin al-Haj Saleh

Syria constitutes an exceptional case among the Arab revolutions. The revolution that began peacefully in March 2011 — adopting demonstrations and sit-ins as the primary methods to break the state of emergency prevailing in the country since 1963 and to call for an end to the rule of the quasi-royal al-Assad family, in power since 1970 — transformed at the beginning of September 2011 into an armed struggle, initially to protect itself, then as an attempt to overthrow one of the most authoritarian and brutally repressive Arab regimes.

The situation on the ground has developed correspondingly, as a result of both internal and external factors, becoming an open military conflict in which sectarian factors overlap with regional considerations. Several states have intervened on behalf of their own concerns, interests, or policies.

However, the responsibility for the current situation falls on the shoulders of the regime, which did not hesitate to use aircraft, ballistic missiles, and poison gas in its war against the

revolution, in addition to massacring thousands of Syrians, male and female of all ages, in a manner rarely if ever seen in the Middle East before. It is only possible to understand the regime's brutality and barbarousness toward Syrian society by analyzing the roots of the political violence that it has adopted as its governing philosophy from day one.

In the following study, the Syrian writer Yassin al-Haj Salih offers a deep reading of what he calls "the roots of Syrian fascism," namely what many Syrians and a large number of those observing Syrian affairs have discovered tangibly when the first cases of mass murder and torture, committed by intelligence personnel and the militias of the *shabiha* associated with them, appeared in the earliest days of the revolution. With time, these practices have escalated to become campaigns of slaughter, executing the inhabitants of villages or neighborhoods in their entirety.

The author has graciously allowed us to republish this text of his, which was previously published in Arabic by the Beirut-based cultural quarterly *Kalamon* in 2012. This summary of the article preserves the essence of his ideas. We have not altered its substance except to update the casualty figures, which have changed significantly since its original publication.

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To the memory of Hamza al-Khatib

Abstract

Syria constitutes an exceptional case among the Arab revolutions. The revolution that began peacefully in March 2011 became an armed struggle, initially to protect itself, then as an attempt to overthrow one of the most authoritarian and brutally repressive Arab regimes. This study examines three social and cultural elements that may explain the regime's

monstrous violence against its own citizens: the Baathist formulation of Arab nationalism; sectarianism and its associated social, political, and ideological formations; and the new bourgeoisie, a class formed occupying a dominant position, politically and ideologically, in the era of Assad the younger.

Introduction

One day, a broad and detailed inquiry will need to be undertaken into the socio-cultural roots of the fascist violence perpetrated by the regime of Bashar al-Assad in the cities, towns, and villages of Syria. The regime has killed nearly 130,000 of the Syrian general public, including both the civilian poor and the opposition's bravest fighters, and inflicted massive destruction on dozens of cities and towns, causing the internal displacement of more than five million persons and more than three million to seek refuge in neighboring countries. This shocking brutality was coupled with open hatred and disgust for the revolutionaries and their environments.

This text looks at three social and cultural elements that may be fueling, justifying, or making this monstrous violence desirable: first, absolutist Arabism or the Baathist formula of Arab nationalism; second, sectarianism and its associated social, political, and ideological formations; and third, the new bourgeoisie, a class formed within the confines of the Assad regime and occupying a dominant position, politically and ideologically, in the era of Assad the younger.

Before addressing the roots mentioned in brief above, we should clarify that what is intended by the term "fascism" here is violent aggression toward the public, cheapening their lives, freedom, and dignity and utilizing punitive, disciplinary campaigns to deal with their protests, such as

through mass shelling or bombing of towns, neighborhoods, and villages. This occurs at the hands of a wealthy clique, ruling with impunity, and employing pretexts that refer to the nations, the state, and homeland security. One will not find here a systematic fascist ideology or fascist social organizations, only a combination of unrestrained, runaway violence and "thinking" that is silent about violence at its best, and justifies or calls for violence at its worst.

Absolutist nationalism and its intellectual world

The first of the roots of Syrian fascism is represented in the Baathist formulation of Arab nationalism, or the dogma of absolutist Arabism.

This doctrine stipulates that Syria is "an Arab country," like other Arab countries, which together form "the Arab nation (*watan*)," and that the Arab identity (or Arabism) of these countries is essential, fixed, and all-consuming for all — the inhabitants, the land, and the state alike. The preamble to the Constitution of the Baath Party, issued in the April 1947, states: "the Arab nation (*ummah*) is a cultural unit, and all of the differences existing among her sons are incidental, superficial, and will all disappear with the awakening of Arab consciousness."[1]

This Arabism or Arab identity is not historical or contractual. Syria is not an Arab country for clear historical reasons, the outcome of centuries being that the majority of the inhabitants are Arab and speak Arabic. But no, the Syrian Arab essence requires that the population is entirely "Syrian Arabs," as indeed everything Syrian is described (Syrian Arab Army, Syrian Arab Television, Syrian Arab National Anthem, Syrian Arab citizen…). Whoever is not must be arabized or driven out of the country, as required by Article XI of the Baath Party Constitution: "Expel from

the Arab homeland (*watan*) whoever calls or joins a racist bloc, and whoever migrates to the Arab homeland for the purpose of colonization."

This vision is the basis for the policy of national dissolution, which did not succeed in dissolving anyone, but it did alienate the Kurds in Syria, if limited in its entirety to their complete expulsion from the Syrian public sphere, and not from the country itself. Today, there may be more than a quarter of a million Kurds deprived for nearly half a century of Syrian nationality, a fact that helped to legitimize Arabism and weaken the sensitivity of the Syrians public toward it.

However, the most prominent function of Baathist or absolute Arabism in our context is exemplified in the imposition of total political and ideological homogenization within Syria, aspiring to an exact match between all Syrians and the Baath Party as the bearers of truth and the timeless message, as Arabs. The naturalized, cultural separation of Arabs from the world is based on a distrustful view of the outside world, the West in particular, but also non-Arab neighboring countries as well as most Arab countries, considering their conspiring or treacherous governments. Conspiracy theories are common everywhere, but in Syria; conspiracy thinking is a fundamental cornerstone of the regime's political doctrine and worldview. The installation of this belief is geared toward the prohibition and criminalization of internal dissent on the one hand, and toward the isolation of Syrians "at home" from the hostile and plotting forces "abroad."

The practical translation of this criminalization of internal political and intellectual dissent can be found in the institution of political imprisonment, active from the beginning of Baathist rule, undertaken in the decades of Assad rule by a security complex composed of various security agencies, undifferentiated in their powers and

indistinguishable in their brutality. The Palestine Branch in Damascus may be a symbol for this, being through its very name a bridge linking the Arab nationalist (*qawmiyah*) doctrine in its absolutist formulation and the brutal treatment of internal dissent. What thousands of political prisoners, including many Palestinians, suffered in this place justifies considering the Palestine Branch as one of the symbols of fascism in Syria.

The absolutist Arab nationalist doctrine received support in the 1960s and 1970s from communist ideology and its confrontational approach to imperialism, much of which drew on commonplace hostility to the West. Then, this doctrine received additional support from the rise of Islamic movements, through its political and cultural hostility to the West as well, or through the belief in the specificity or distinctive character that confers a degree of legitimacy on our present situation, reducing in turn the need to learn from the West. The Islamist tendency toward self-sufficiency (or self-satisfaction) lays the groundwork for the political and cultural isolation of the ruled, which is what sets the stage for the shift to the explicit fascism of Salafist jihadist currents.

Absolute nationalism found real support for its aspirations for internal homogenization and isolation from the outside in the establishment of an antagonistic Israeli state in the Arab *Mashriq* or Levant, and the aberrant and completely unjust Western favoritism to this entity. The strong, arrogant, superiorly armed, and religiously defined Israel — granted impunity by the great powers of the world — has facilitated the militarization of thought and public life in our countries, and complicated to the greatest extent the issue of political and cultural change in our societies. While it is undoubtedly true that the Baathist Assad regime has instrumentalized the issue of Palestine, the reality of Palestine has provided actual support for its claims.

The Baathist creed has come to be concentrated entirely on the person of the ruler, Hafez al-Assad in Syria and Saddam Hussein in Iraq. This is due in part to the extreme abstraction of the ideology itself, divorced from reality, as well as its rigidity and vapidity. Only its paranoid, emotional content has survived from what was originally a poor, rhetorical creation. The glories attributed to the singular Arab nation (*ummah*) were found in condensed form in the Baath party, and this is certain to the fullest extent in the image of the two men, both secretary general of the party in their respective countries: guardians of national purity, preventing Western and foreign infection. As there was only one party by definition, just as the Arab nation was one, only one secretary general was required. Thus, each of the secretaries general was a traitor in the eyes of the other regime.

The Baathist revolution or "coup" became sultanic, dynastic rule for which the Syrians are paying an enormous price today, the same huge costs already paid by Iraq to dispose of its tyrant, another who had intended for hereditary rule in his family.

Although absolute Arabism is not the doctrine of the Bashar al-Assad era, the same mental template remains in effect (internal homogenization, foreign conspiracy, mistrust, intimidation, and accusations of treason…). Some sectors of what we call the new bourgeoisie are descended from certain circles of religious and sectarian minorities in particular, who are partial to absolute or absolutist Syrianism, which is absolute Arabism in miniature, based on the Syrian rather than the Arab homeland (*watan*).

Clarification is needed, at the end of this section, that absolute Arabism is a special form of a tendency latent in Arab nationalism, as the basis of Syrian fascism, which does not extend to all Arabs as a human group, nor to Arabism as a cultural and humanitarian grouping, and not even to Arab nationalism as a political call. This is a fascist

formation that is possible with any nationalist framework. It is just as possible within a framework of absolute Syrianism as it is in the framework of absolute Arabism.

Sectarianism and building hate

What is important in this regard is not the inherited social frameworks from centuries past, for the matter of sectarianism in Syria is not much different from other countries of the world, a difference perhaps only in degree, but not in kind. Rather, the important thing is the specificity of the political and legal organizations extant in the country, and the extent to which they either neutralize or strengthen these inherited distinctions, or perhaps force confrontations. Elements of the past may be mobilized to build and solidify popular identities, but such confrontations derive energy from the politics of the present, from contemporary polarization, and from current conflicts, which have nothing to do with the inheritance and stories of the past.

From the start of the Assad reign, Hafez depended on certain loyal, reliable families and individuals to secure his regime. It seems that, from very early on, the man trusted in seizing power through military coup, but what was of paramount, utmost importance was staying in power, in a country known for political volatility and its frequent military coups. Perhaps it was clear to him that the greatest challenge in Syria was not coming to power, but retaining it.

The first source of concern in this regard is the politicization of the military, and he therefore established independent military units, mostly headed by his relatives or people he trusted, which were clearly concerned with defending the regime. With time, the military was fully wired to explode with sectarian and security concerns, so that if the commander of a military unit was of one sect, his deputy would be of a different sect, and the security officer would be of

a third. The various formulas of this three-part arrangement were always taken into account, the purpose being to ensure a lack of trust within the unit concerned, so that it would not be able to act uniformly or in a unified manner.

First and foremost among the trusted people is the Assad family itself. Rifaat al-Assad was the leader of the Defense Brigades, an elite paramilitary force that was the best-armed in the Syrian military, composed predominantly of Alawites. Adnan Makhlouf, a cousin of Assad's wife, was the commander of the Republican Guard.

This early configuration, unprecedented in the history of the modern Syrian entity, is the first source of sectarian tensions in a society that, before Assad and Baathist rule, was heading toward diminishing social and cultural differences, not their expansion.

Hafez al-Assad's other main concern was the parties and organizations in political opposition. He had long fought with them in the 1950s and 1960s, and so broadened his interest in the security services, likewise placing at their heads his "protégés", favorites, and those he trusted. He booby trapped the parties as well, and society as a whole, with informants and informers, by swelling the security function of the Baath party, which became a tumorous mass penetrating all of Syrian society. He likewise distributed security headquarters in neighborhoods and districts, in addition to a security cell in each and every university and government department.

It can only be expected that rule of law, independent political and cultural activity, and academic freedoms would all decline and retreat in such circumstances. The highest priority of the regime, its survival, ruled out all other considerations, at all times. National integration, recovering occupied territories, social progress, and development of fair educational and judicial systems would occupy the lowest positions and be sacrificed, if they conflicted with the

top priority. This is what actually and always happened. The one constant was forced political stagnation, disabling the political and social movements of the elites and restricting supreme power and authority to the hands of the president and his men instead. This took decades, finally leading to a national crisis of confidence on multiple levels, so that Syrians reciprocate feelings of mutual distrust or fear of one another, only trusting in their families. At its widest scope, trust could perhaps extend to the larger ethnic group or sect, and to the immediate family at its narrowest. This is equivalent to saying that the Syrian people do not exist. Each group developed narratives of superiority and narratives of persecution, drawing support from the modern or the ancient. There were no efforts to counter these dangerous stereotypes, or to encourage respects for difference.

These are the psychological and rhetorical mechanisms leading to collective violence and massacres. From these mechanisms as well spreads the belief of "kill or be killed," that they will kill us if we don't kill them. This dread seems bizarre, without realistic basis in Syria's modern history, but it seems to be the basis for the crucial distinction between "us" and "them." Or it is the firmest basis for a type of absolute sectarianism that mimics absolute Baathist Arab nationalism: aspiring to complete internal homogeneity and complete disassociation from the other, and regarding any dissent as disloyalty.

To the same extent that the Palestine Branch embodies the fascism of absolute Arab nationalism, the Tadmor prison embodies the confluence of sectarianism with the organized fascist violence during the last two decades of the rule of Hafez al-Assad. And it seems to have returned to use with the revolution, following the closure of the political section in 2001.[2] The regime has been keen on most of the jailers being of Alawite descent, and the warden of the prison always Alawite, while most of the prisoners were Islamists. What distinguishes Tadmor prison is the persistence in the practice of torture for over two decades, particularly of Islamists, making the prison the true laboratory of Assad rule. It is a concise encapsulation of the regime and its hellish face.[3]

It is well known that sectarianism is associated with one of the most notable, and most fascist, phenomena during the Syrian revolution: the *shabiha*, or government associated militias.[4] It is composed of civilians armed during the revolution, and who are likely responsible for the worst and most monstrous crimes, in particular those of a sectarian nature, like the massacre of Karm al-Zaytoun in Homs on 11 March 2012, then the Houla massacre on 25 May 2012. The linkage between sectarianism or ethnicized hatred and massacres is not a distinctly Syrian feature, the world having already seen the likes of which in Rwanda, Yugoslavia, and Nazi Germany. Nearer to us are Iraq and the Lebanese civil war. But Syria is the country that seems today to be the most likely candidate for these scenes to repeat the pattern again.

The new bourgeoisie and its culture

All this is connected to the formation of a new bourgeoisie in Syria, whose nucleus is the "sons of officials" and their followers, their wealth created within the confines of the regime, taking advantage of preferential treatment in contracts, deals, and projects, and thanks to their access to the public resources inside Syria, and previously in Lebanon as well.[5] Rami Makhlouf, a cousin of Bashar al-Assad and owner of "Syriatel" (one of two licensed mobile telephone companies in the country), is a symbol of this class by embodying the confluence of wealth and power.[6] But he is no more than one of the dozens of similar, prominent business titans comprising a closed club, whose most prominent institution is the Sham Holding capital investment company, run by Makhlouf

himself as vice chairman of the board of directors, and who is also beyond its younger sister, Souria Holding.

The ideology of this class is called "development and modernization," a title favored under Bashar al-Assad, and possibly even chosen himself. It had entered into circulation during the days of the "Damascus spring," in an explicit and exclusive relationship with the concept of political reform, which was the ceiling of the demands that could be made by the Syrian opposition at the time. According to this title/ slogan, the bulk of what is needed is the development of the existing apparatus and the modernization of its appearance, thereby giving the regime a more contemporary face.

In the same temporal and ideological neighborhood of this slogan was another, "stability and continuity," which had been commonly used in the early days of Bashar's rule. "Development and modernization" are required for stability, and stability takes the form of continuity, that is, in the person of Bashar as successor to his father. This ideology is matched with Bashar himself and his wife Asma al-Akhras, two "thoroughly modern" individuals, well dressed, who speak at least one foreign language, are well acquainted with computers, and memorize foreign songs.

We speak about the new bourgeoisie because the positions of dominance within it are connected to the regime, to its core, but in reality it is a not inconsiderable recycling of the old bourgeoisie and its integration in a position of political subordination to the new class.[7] All of this combines the family character of the class's projects on the one hand, with intimate connections to political power on the other.[8] For this reason, the new bourgeoisie, and in particular the wing generated by the heart of the system, displays intensely ferocious loyalty to the regime and strong hostility to any opposition. The newspaper *al-Watan* and the *Addounia* television channel are two of the most fascist platforms in Syria, far exceeding even the official state media in this regard.[9]

After the forced Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon in spring 2005, losing the access to Lebanon that this class needed, a shift toward what was called "a social market economy" at the Baath party conference that same summer was initiated. This title represented a policy of economic liberalization for the benefit of the new bourgeoisie, without political or legal reforms. This transformation was a formula of neoliberal development corresponding to the interests of this greedy and selfish class.[10]

Whereas neoliberal development does not conflict in any way with political authoritarianism, its inheritance of a dictatorial regime with totalitarian features facilitates its turn toward outright fascism in the face of general uprisings. The Bashar al-Assad regime is not only the general staff of this class. In connection with these class transformations, the regime in the early Bashar years presented a liberal countenance, easing travel abroad and encouraging foreigners to visit. The regime decisively lost control over virtual public space, and the weight of the new class increased at the expense of the Baath party and its subsidiary popular organizations.

Instead of the bland Baathist cadre working in the party, popular organizations, unions, and universities in the days of the father, we have today a new generation of wealthy professionals of the new modern and sophisticated middle class, resembling Bashar al-Assad in form and content (his age or younger, studied in Western universities, stylish and elegant…), teaching at private universities, working in new banks, running independent newspapers and magazines, or owning shiny new cafes and restaurants. Whereas they are open minded to the world and the West in particular, they are severely close-minded, ranging from ignorance to hostility, toward a certain sector of Syrian society, precisely the one undertaking the revolution. In proportion with the advent of the new bourgeoisie and its position in power, the

partial privatization of violence against the revolution is ongoing today, not just in terms of those undertaking the violence (the *shabiha*), but also those funding it.[11]

Perhaps the modernist element in the rule of Bashar al-Assad, and the rise of the associated new bourgeoisie, is what facilitated the spread of modernist ideology in Syria over the past decade, after it had spread globally and regionally following the fall of the Soviet camp. This modernism has three fundamental traits. The first is its total neglect of issues of values, justice, freedom, equality, and human dignity for the sake of precepts without defined moral content, like "secularism," "rationality," "enlightenment," and "modernity" itself.

The second characteristic is the radical neglect of social problems, with respect to poverty, unemployment, marginalization, and illiteracy. The third feature is the politically conservative tendency of the proponents of this trend, close to the ruling power, and their open hostility to democracy, which is described at times as "numerical democracy" (a position shared with fascism), and at other times as a mask for the tyranny of the majority, and at still others as hostile to the state (a description suiting fascism in turn). This belief includes a barely hidden political theory that attributes all of our political and social problems to a defective "mentality," or backwardness defined culturally. Therefore, it is not surprising that this belief suited the regime and its security apparatus specifically. The problem is the minds of the people, in the backwardness or fanaticism or irrationality or deep-rooted violence of society, and not in the tyranny and corruption of the government, not in the brutality of the intelligence services, and not in the influential class monopolizing national resources. This is, of course, in line with the devaluation of the human life and liberty of those backward fanatics.

This modernism is an ideology that places the new bourgeoisie in an aggressive position in its struggle for the monopolization of power and influence over the public.

The public is backwards, illiterate, ignorant, and fanatical, their conditions the product of these characteristics, rooted in their beliefs and mentalities, and not at all the social and political conditions in which they live.

Modernism has replaced Arab nationalism, which is what explains the lack of Baathist ideologues defending the regime today, the majority of whom instead are the non-Baathist professional cadre, the absolute Syrianists of Bashar's generation, liberated from the ideological and ethical constraints of Baathist doctrine.

This modernism appears superficial, anti-democratic, and hostile to public, but especially willing to accommodate the Syrian ideology of "development and modernization." It holds society responsible for the authoritarianism imposed on it, and for its social conditions, which seems quite suitable to the neo-bourgeois and the intelligence services. The reactionary character of this modernist doctrine was no secret before the Arab revolutions, but its fascist face was forcefully exposed by the revolutions, the Syrian revolution in particular.

In the background of the alliance between the new bourgeoisie, intelligence services, and modernist ideologues is a fear of change and constant bias toward the status quo. The new bourgeoisie upholds the values of stability and security, the intelligence services take responsibility for guarding stability and security, and the ideologues warn of democracy and the dangers of the "tyranny of the majority" emerging from the ballot box. In order to avoid this impending tyranny, one of the senior modernist dogmatists suggested preventing illiterates from voting in any free election, because the problem of our societies is defective ballot boxes reflecting the defective minds of the people, not in the absence of ballot boxes.[12] In the current Syrian context, "modernity" offers a ready pretext against the revolution, which is that most of its demonstrations emerged from the mosques. The

very expressions like backward, Salafist, and *'ara'ir*[13] stereotype the revolutionaries through negative associations, which makes dealing with them strictly undesirable.

These perceptions intermingle classism with sectarianism, facilitating confusion between the two and modernist doctrine itself. The concept of "backwardness" itself includes a cultural component, elaborated by modernism, and a social component that incorporates the deterioration associated with "slums" or informal settlements and a modest level of education. And when the demonstrators are described as "scum" or "rabble,"[14] it refers to the same classist-sectarian mix.

Conclusions

To summarize this discussion in brief: absolute Arab nationalism is the basic mental framework and the innermost layer of Syrian fascist justifications, while sectarianism freights Syrian fascism with emotion and lays the basis for dividing the population, whereas the class privileges of the new bourgeoisie are the interest being defended.

What can be built politically on this analysis is that to remove the pillars of fascism, there must be a shift toward a constitutional understanding of nationalism, one that acknowledges the internal pluralism of our society and its real and necessary connection to the world, as well as recognizing the freedom and independence of the individual.

It will be necessary to defuse the sectarian landmine and to keep this issue as a subject of public debate, but also build institutional, legal, and intellectual barriers that prevent sectarianism from leaking into the state. In particular, a culture of anti-sectarianism needs to be developed, which requires, before all else, putting the subject on the table.

The Syrian regime does not rule through force alone, but through ideological hegemony as well, which prohibits

addressing or even thinking publically about sectarian problems. Our hasty resistance to the regime will be fruitless unless this hegemony is broken and its employment to guard fascism is revealed.

Fascism in Syria is not tied solely to Assad rule or to the privileged position of Alawites in the regime today. It is possible on any religious or sectarian grounds, and it could be revived on Sunni, especially Salafi, grounds.

Furthermore, the interdependence between wealth and power must be broken through an orientation toward a competitive and productive economy, enabling the working community to protest, as well as the development of a democratic public sphere that allows society to organize its forces and defend itself in the face of capitalism.

Finally, it is always important to restore culture and critical thinking, which play moral roles in the life of intellectuals and their personal behavior, and crucial political roles in the resistance to tyranny and in the tendency toward affinity with the less fortunate.

Endnotes

1. Constitution of the Arab Socialist Baath Party
2. According to a Human Rights Watch report "By all means necessary: individual and command responsibility for crimes against humanity in Syria," which discusses 2,500 detainees in prison. Available in English at http://www.hrw.org/reports/2011/12/15/all-means-necessary-0
3. See the works of Bara Sarraj: From Tadmor to Harvard: journey of a prisoner of conscience. Sarraj spent 12 years in Tadmor prison, and then traveled to America after his release to specialize in immunology.
4. See my article "On the shabiha and al-tashbih and their state," Kalamon 5 (Witner 2012), Beirut.
5. See the book *Walking on one foot* (Beirut: Dar al-Adab, 2012), in particular part four on political economy, 147-200.
6. The late Anthony Shadid interviewed Rami Makhlouf for the *New York Times* on 11 May 2011, just weeks into the revolution. Makhlouf said: "The decision of the government is that they have decided to

fight;" and "We will stay here, we will not flee the boat, we will bet our lives on it." "We will stay here. We consider it a fight to the death," and the alternative to the regime in the eyes of Makhlouf as well as the regime, since the beginning, is "Salafists." "But we will not accept this. The people will fight them. Do you know what this means? It means disaster. We have many fighters."

7. The process does not always seem to be guaranteed for the regime. There was an indication that the markets depend on the old bourgeoisie, such as the al-Hariqah, al-Hamiddiyyah, Medhat Pasha, and Albzoria, which went on strike on 28 May 2012 for a number of days, in protest of the Hula massacre. This was reluctantly followed by others, closer to the new bourgeois, including al-Shaalan, al-Salehiyah, and al-Jisr al-Abiad.

8. Talas, Shailesh, al-Akhras, Makhlouf, Sulaiman are the names of the men in power whose sons hold central positions in the new bourgeoisie. About the general staff of the new bourgeoisie, see an article entitled "The House of Assad, a predatory clan," published in *Le Monde*. Available at http://www.free-syria.com

9. Rami Makhlouf effectively owns the newspaper al-Watan, while the funding for Addounia is shared among Muhammad Hamsho (a favorite of Maher al-Assad), Sulaiman Marouf, and Omar Karkour. The new bourgeoisie includes anyone who made their fortune under and in connection with Assad, as well as the old bourgeoisie that was integrated into the Assad's social, security, and political networks.

10. In the same interview with the New York Times previously mentioned, Rami Makhlouf said: "The priority for Syrians is that economic reform must come before political reform."

11. Saleh, "On the shabiha and al-tashbih and their state."

12. George Tarabishi, *The culture of democracy* (Beirut: Dar al-Taliaa, 1998), 21. The author did not change his position when he republished the same text as *Heresies* (Beirut: Dar al-Saqi, 2006).

13. Derived from the name of Adnan al-'Ar'aour, a populist Sunni cleric who appears on a Saudi religious channel, who transformed from an attacker of Shiites (in the context of the Saudi-Iranian and Sunni-Shiite conflict) to an attacker of the regime, inciting violence toward it. He gained widespread fame thanks to his television program, and thank to his hostile propaganda against the side of the regime.

14. As Bassam Abu Abdullah persists in saying on the air of the channel *Addounia* on 12 May 2012, he called on the Syrian government to remove all non-Syrians from public functions, which would only apply to Palestinian refugees. Condescension toward the lower classes and "strangers" is a distinctive feature of right-wing extremist currents, fascists in particular. The day before, on the same channel, he called for the tongues of opposition leaders Burhan Ghalioun and Hassan Abdel Azeem to be cut out, in order to prevent them from speaking in the name of the Syrian people.

9

MOROCCO: CHANGE IN THE FRAMEWORK OF CONTINUITY

Abdelaziz Karraky

Abstract

Morocco has reached a stage of maturity in its political choices, through the sustained acceptance of political reform, which occurred gradually rather than all at once. One key area has been constitutional reform. Once considered to be purely a royal prerogative, Morocco drafted a new constitution with some public discussion. The motivation to bring about change came out of a desire to divert the reformist pressure on the country by shunting it toward constitutional outlets. Some opposition forces criticized the constitution as leaving the authoritarian nature of the political regime intact while other opponents are now participating in institutions like the parliament, beginning to feel their way through this unfamiliar kind of political work.

Introduction

"One generation follows another, one ruler succeeds another. The personalities change; but the system, firmly and consistently, stays the same, just like the public mentality."[1] Indeed, yet this continuity in Morocco could not last without certain flexibility in terms of attitudes and positions, through the sustained acceptance of political reform, which was accomplished gradually rather than all at once. In the end, this process has allowed the gradual crystallization of the mechanisms of peaceful political action, helped Morocco to reach a stage of maturity in its political choices, and offered the possibility of development within a framework of continuity — as is the case for many monarchies in the world. True understanding of the political movement in Morocco necessitates a careful examination of first, the path of human rights; second, the turning point of the transfer of power; and third, the outcomes of the Arab Spring.

The path of human rights

The question of human rights has formed a real challenge to political authority.[2]

The families of victims of grave violations of justice began to make contact with international human rights organizations, which then formed a means to pressure the political authorities. This likewise led to increasing concern for human rights as a fundamental pillar of democracy.[3] Thanks to contact with the international media, news about some secret detention centers began to leak, to the point that one of the members of parliament dared to pose a verbal question to the minister of justice about the infamous Tazmamart prison. However, the answer was no, a denial of its existence, that there were no secret detention centers or prisons in Morocco.[4] But this did not put an end to the debate, which then broadened to encompass human rights as a whole and led to the establishment of the Moroccan Organization for Human Rights in 1988. Many issues began to be discussed publicly, including the secret prisons, and the cases of people who had disappeared in mysterious circumstances began to float to the surface, becoming identified as victims of enforced disappearance.

The founding of the Moroccan Organization for Human Rights had a number of implications,[5] such as greater attention paid to human rights: firstly as a priority in public policy, and secondly as an issue leading to the creation of a specialized institution, the Advisory Council for Human Rights.

The Advisory Council for Human Rights

The Advisory Council for Human Rights was founded on 20 April 1990, as the first national institution of an advisory nature, to help the king in all issues related to human rights. However, the political authorities excluded from its purview anything having to do with religion, national soil, or crimes of a political nature.[6] The council issued a recommendation to amnesty all political detainees; set up a committee to research and investigate the events occurring in the city of Fez in December 1990; study prison conditions; introduce a working group on economic, social and cultural rights; assess the compatibility of criminal and penal legislation with human rights standards; and form an arbitration body to determine compensation for enforced disappearances. 10 years later, the council was reorganized so as to allow an expansion of its powers.

The council, which included numerous former political prisoners, in its various forms contributed to the development of a new approach to human rights.[7] An examination of the annual reports of the council largely confirms this trend.

However, this did not convince all human rights activists in Morocco to trust the council,[8] as some parties remained skeptical of its independence from the state and the extent of its ability to solve the human rights dilemma in Morocco.[9] Despite the criticism, one of the difficult tasks it undertook concerned the Equity and Reconciliation Commission.

The Equity and Reconciliation Commission

Opening the human rights file within an institutional framework allowed a comprehensive view of the horrible extent of grave violations, and proved that such an approach should not only include material compensation, but also bring about a kind of reconciliation, in order to prevent their recurrence. To accomplish this, the Advisory Council for Human Rights issued a recommendation to introduce the Equity and Reconciliation Commission,[10] with the intention of finally turning the page on human rights violations. This body was entrusted with carefully defined tasks.[11]

The commission has completed valuable work on the level of inquiries, research and investigation, and uncovered extensive information and facts pertaining to gross violations of human rights occurring from Morocco's independence until 1999.

The report of the Equity and Reconciliation Commission helped to open numerous workshops aimed at promoting human rights and preventing the recurrence of the painful events of the past, and also accelerated the pace of ratification of several international conventions on human rights and the removal of some reservations that Morocco had previously recorded against their full implementation.[12] However, putting a definitive end to grave violations remains far away, as the Advisory Council for Human Rights stressed in its report for the year 2009, despite a decline in the number of cases.[13]

The turning point of the transfer of power

The political authorities in Morocco realized in the 1990s that change had become not just necessary but vital, to make it possible to address problems using different approaches, especially since in a state of law there must be a transfer and rotation of power.

This possibility in Morocco was opened by an agreement between the late King Hassan II and Abdel Rahman Youssoufi, leader of the Socialist Union, which defined rotation as based on consensus while awaiting the organization of genuine elections that could lead to a real democratic transition.[14] The opposition had not gotten a majority in the 1997 elections preceding the agreement, and as result, two parties accustomed to being in power, the Popular Movement and National Rally of Independence parties, joined together to ensure a numerical majority, and the government of "rotation" remained subject to the requirements of the constitution that had given the king sweeping powers.[15] Despite the fact that many researchers did not consider this to be a "rotation," but rather royal dominance of power by other means and methods, it can be argued that it was at least a starting point that would assure democratic choice. This has prompted some researchers to consider rotation as a reformation of the Moroccan political field,[16] while others consider it to be the beginning of a move away from authoritarianism.[17]

If consensual rotation had been unable to bring about a democratic transition, worse was the fact that the 2002 elections did not result in the majority-winning party leading the government. To the bewilderment of all, the constitution was read in such a way that there were no requirements found that obligated the appointment of the first minister from the party that won a majority, while democracy requires exactly that, since the majority emerging from the

ballot box must lead the government, while respecting the rights of the minority that plays the role of the opposition.[18]

In the period that followed the issuance of the Equality and Reconciliation Commission's report, a serious discussion about the constitutional issue emerged, marking the transition to another political stage. However, the painful terrorist attacks on 16 May 2003 turned attention elsewhere, bringing the social issue to the fore. It became clear that poverty and vulnerability in Morocco had become real threats, creating a favorable environment for the extremist ideology represented by a tendentious, selective interpretation of Islam that uses deprivation and social inequalities.[19] This new social public policy took shape as the National Initiative for Human Development, which generated real dynamism at the social level, particularly by making civil society the primary mechanism for the implementation of development programs.

The demand for change subsided in favor of solving the social dilemma, and political life entered a kind of humdrum routine, ensuring that the absence of democracy could constitute "fertile ground for more damaging forms of organized violence."[20]

Amidst all this, the 2007 elections were organized, and the hopes of those dreaming that it would be the gateway to democracy evaporated along with the low turnout, of no more than 37 percent. The results confirmed that it would be difficult to dispose of the negative legacy of the past in the field of elections, which may have caused the majority of registered voters to boycott. It became clear that neither the parties nor the authorities gave any importance to a culture of participation. But, what distinguished the 2007 elections is that the winning party was allowed this time to lead the government,[21] and the Islamic forces in their various offshoots developed their working methods and became more attractive to young people and women.

Islamic political forces

Morocco has long known the fusion of religion and politics, as political authorities have been considered undisputed religious authorities as well. In both the constitutions of 1962 and 1996,[22] chapter 19 of the Moroccan Constitution contended that the king is "*amir al-mu'minin* or commander of the faithful,"[23] and which has received so much scholarly attention that it could be said to be the chapter that has received the greatest share of research and studies.[24] Some scholars even consider it to be an umbrella for Moroccan constitutional and political life as a whole.[25] So what led to the emergence of Islamic movements in Morocco, which have contested the claims of the political authorities over a field in which they held a monopoly for such a long time?

All of the Moroccan Islamic political parties are associated with the transformations witnessed by the broader Arab world.[26] The Islamic Youth emerged as a result of what the Islamic Movement experienced in Egypt under Nasserism,[27] and the appearance of the Justice and Charity Organization was linked to Khomeini's coming to power,[28] and whose presence as a leader created an ideology through which to frame the organization and construct its positions.[29] This was in marked contrast to the experience of the Islamic Youth, whose character was defined through collective struggle and which had been burdened from the outset by the blood of Omar Benjalloun,[30] and whose leadership did not succeed in the way that Abdel Salam Yassine did — that is, in building a political group with a strong presence — instead, declaring explicitly that they were awaiting the achievement of "Islamic rule."[31] However, it was those who aspired to take political action and splintered off from the Islamic Youth movement to join the Constitutional Popular Movement party (later called the Justice and Development Party) who would lead a new political era in the history of Morocco, beginning with the legislative elections on 25 November 2011.

At a time when the Justice and Charity Organization became heavily involved in the February 20 Movement, reinforcing its marches and organizational meetings in all Moroccan cities, the Justice and Development Party refused to participate. Meanwhile, the Boutchichia movement/zawiyah (a type of Sufi order) took to the streets to advocate for revision of the constitution.[32] As for the political authorities, they were heavily criticized by many for refusing to concede any of their religious authority, for monopolizing the religious prerogative, and for unilaterally "commanding the faithful" — as the demand for such concessions became greater than ever before, on the part of numerous political powers.[33]

Outcomes of the Arab Spring

Political life after the 2007 elections went through a period of real stagnation. The political parties drew criticism because their political role had remained limited, and the political authorities alone still determined the fate of the country. But Morocco would not remain immune to the transformations brought about by the revolution in Tunisia. The February 20 Movement embodied the Moroccan version. And no sooner had the movement came about, with thousands participating in its rallies, than some of the forces searching for a new role for the Moroccan left had joined,[34] in addition to the Justice and Charity Organization, which formed a real force within the movement by giving it the momentum of the masses and lending its experience in the areas of demonstration and discipline. However, the Arab Spring in Morocco did not follow the slogan "the people want the fall of the regime" so much as it produced its own slogan: "the people want reform and the elimination of corruption."

Then, the political authorities launched a political initiative to reform the constitution.[35] The proposal revolved around the following basic pillars:

- The constitutional consecration of the pluralistic nature of Moroccan identity;
- The consolidation of the rule of law and institutions, and the expansion of individual and collective rights, and the strengthening of the human rights regime;
- The upgrading of the judiciary to an independent branch of power;
- The reinforcement of the separation and balance of powers.[36]

The issue of constitutional reform was previously considered to be purely a royal practice, usually done furtively quietly, but this time Morocco as a whole would draft a new constitution.[37] The motivation to bring about change at this level came out of a desire to absorb, convert, and divert the pressure on the country, shunting it toward constitutional outlets.[38]

- The preparatory period allowed all of the political currents to express their positions on the constitution. The question of parliamentary monarchy emerged as the alternative option, based on the following foundation:
- Explicit recognition of the people as holders of sovereignty and legitimacy, and as the source of all powers and authority.
- Subjecting all institutions and authorities to the provisions of the constitution.
- Defining Morocco as a democratic civil state with a separation of the holy from the political.
- Commitment to provide a comprehensive guarantee of human freedoms, rights, and dignity.
- Disconnecting the king and the royal family from any operations related to money or finances.
- Constitutionalization of all the demands of the Equity and Reconciliation Commission.[39]

Each of the Moroccan political parties presented memoranda that reflected their visions for the constitutional issue. The Istiqlal (Independence Party), which led the

government, praised the king's 9 March speech as "historic," while pointing out the problem of electoral fraud.[40] The Socialist Union Party insisted that "constitutional reform will only be effective if it is linked simultaneously to deep political reforms, affecting the electoral code, election laws, the law governing political parties, and the fight against electoral corruption.[41] As for the Justice and Development Party, it insisted on two directions:

1. A constitution privileging an "Islamic reference" (typically interpreted as the incorporation of principles of sharia law)
2. A democratic monarchy based on the principality or emirate of the faithful.[42]

Some of the components of the left came together and issued a declaration for a parliamentary monarchy in line with the demand of the February 20 Movement, which included the following demands: that the people are the holders of sovereignty and the source of legitimacy and authority, and there are no authorities or powers except as stipulated in the constitution; that there be legislation for a freely and fairly elected parliament; that the executive branch of the government be answerable and accountable; the judiciary an independent branch of power; Morocco a decentralized, democratic, civil state, its system of governance a parliamentary monarchy where the king reigns but does not rule, as an inviolable symbol of the state as stipulated in the constitution; and separating the holy from politics, and money from power.

It became clear that many of the observations and opinions presented were included in the body of the constitution. The sanctity of the king, who has been regarded since the 1970 constitution as sacrosanct and inviolable, was lifted, becoming chapter 46 of the new constitution, which instead guarantees toward the king "a duty of reverence and respect." Is it possible to say that

the 2011 constitution is the beginning of the democratic transition in Morocco?

Logically, perhaps, this question requires an examination of the constitution's contents as well as its most important implications and accompanying major developments.

The constitution as the beginning

It is only natural that the constitution has new contents, reflecting the Moroccan social and political patterns that have experienced a process of transformation, even if it was slow on occasion.

On 17 June 2011, the draft constitution was introduced, and the first of July was selected as the date for its submission to a referendum. Some of the opposition powers adopted a position of boycott,[43] at a time when many agents of the authorities were recruited to mobilize citizens to go en masse to the polls. While those opposed to the constitution had been allowed to demonstrate and express their attitudes, this did not happen without skirmishes with supporters of the constitution. In the end, it was submitted to referendum approved by a vast majority, which provoked many observers, who contended that fraud had tarnished this accomplishment and questioned the process of democratic transition,[44] whereas others explained the outcome based on the fact that the draft constitution was presented by the king, who stated publicly that he would vote in its favor.

Perhaps an objective look at the contents of the new constitution can underline the shift that occurred on a number of levels, most notably:

- The supremacy of international conventions superseding national laws;
- The inclusion of democratic choice and freedoms within the parameters that cannot be impugned upon in any constitutional review;

- The acknowledgement of cultural pluralism on the level of identity and the Amazigh language as an official language;
- The elaboration of fundamental rights and freedoms;
- The enhancement of the separation of powers and strengthening the position of the executive branch emanating from parliament;
- The expansion of the field of law and strengthening the independence of the judiciary;
- The adoption of regionalism or decentralization;

In addition, the constitution maintained a number of special competencies and privileges for the king, most importantly, as commander of the faithful (though confined and limited to the religious sphere), head of state, leader of the military, head of cabinet, and presidency of the supreme scientific council, high security council, and supreme council of the judiciary. But in contrast, it became imperative to appoint the head of government from the political party leading the elections, who could then become, with the authorization of the king, head the council of ministers and the Security Council on the basis of a specific, defined agenda. As for executive authority, it has become purely a governmental prerogative, while the council of government was converted into a constitutional institution with expanded and adjusted jurisdiction.

However, this did not prevent some of the forces of the opposition from criticizing the constitution, as far from the true values of democracy and "did not change the authoritarian nature of the political regime."[45]

It was necessary after the ratification of the constitution that its requirements and provisions take effect, especially the organization of free and fair legislative elections, as prejudicing the transparency and fairness of the elections was now considered truly against the law.[46] Elections were indeed held on 25 November 2011 in an atmosphere of

positive neutrality by the authorities while the February 20 Movement continued its marches and rallies demanding a boycott. The reports of those monitoring the elections confirmed their integrity, and the results were announced more quickly than what happened in the past. Positive discrimination had been adopted in favor of women and young people in this election. The Justice and Development Party, with an Islamic reference, took center stage, obtaining 107 of the seats, a number that not even the most optimistic expected, while the Socialist Union of Popular Forces party, which led the "rotation" stage, fell to fifth place with 39 seats. As for the Authenticity and Modernity Party that led a coalition of eight parties, it took fourth place with 47 seats.

After the formation of the government, composed of a coalition of four parties (Istiqlal (Independence) Party, Popular Movement, and Progress and Socialism in addition to the Justice and Development Party), all eyes turned toward the February 20 Movement, as it became clear that it lacked the necessary element of ideological cohesion for the continuance of the political movements. Soon the Justice and Charity Organization, which had supplied mass momentum and large public support, withdrew from the movement, and the number of businessmen appearing in the marches declined.[47] But what cast its shadow over the lack of cohesion among the ranks was one of the activists joining the Authenticity and Modernity Party,[48] who the movement had previously accused of political corruption at the peak of its power.

Attention then returned to the parliament, where some of the components of the opposition now inside parliament began to feel their way through an unfamiliar kind of political work, while the non-participant political left was cut off and left to hold conferences, conform to the requirements of the new law for parties, and reanalyze the experience of the February 20 Movement.

Finally, the Arab Spring has confirmed "the country in which the possibility of dialogue is non-existent or barely exists is that whose rulers are surprised by a movement that topples their regime. As for the country that offers the possibility of dialogue, whose rulers have the considerable capacity to be forward looking, that is where significant gains were achieved on the road to democratic transition."[49]

Endnotes

1. Abdallah Laroui, *From the Diwan (Court or Bureau) of Politics* [in Arabic] (Casablanca: al-Markaz al-Thaqafi al-'Arabi, 2009), 31.
2. As just one of many examples, see the reports of Amnesty International in the 1980s and 1990s.
3. Norberto BOBBIO: Le futur de la democratie, SEUIL, PARIS 2007 p 91.
4. The MP was Mr. Mohamed Bensaïd Aït Idder, also a public advocate and open supporter of the February 20 Movement.
5. Idris Barhoun, *The problematic state of right and law in Morocco* [in Arabic] (Casablanca, Dar al-Furqan for Modern Publishing, April 2002), 126.
6. Ibid.
7. For further elaboration, see the annual report on the state of human rights in Morocco, 2003.
8. The Advisory Council for Human Rights was converted into an institution bearing the name of the National Council of Human Rights at the beginning of March 2011, and this was done through a constitutional amendment passed at the start of July 2001.
9. The Moroccan Association for Human Rights, which rejected a membership on the advisory council as incompatible with its independence, remains its biggest critic.
10. This happened at the twentieth meeting of the council, held on 14 October 2003.
11. See the full text of the recommendation in the documentary book issued by the Advisory Council for Human Rights on the occasion of its twentieth anniversary.
12. See, for example, the withdrawal of Morocco's reservations toward the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women.
13. See the 2009 annual report of the Advisory Council for Human Right issued by the National Council for Human Rights (Rabat, 2012), 48.
14. Rkia EL MOSSADEQ: Acteurs politiques dans l'espace constitutionnel 1ere édition 2011 P 56.
15. Omar BENDOUROU: Les rapports entre le roi et le gouvernement op cité p 100 . 101
16. Abdelmoughit Benmessoud TREDANO: Alternance et recomposition du champ politique op cité p109.
17. Abdullah Hamoudi, *The cultural stake is the illusion of rupture* [in Arabic] (Dar Toubkal for Publishing), 170.
18. Jean Luis QUERMONNE: L'alternance au pouvoir APPROCHES éditions CASBAH ALGER 1998 p10.
19. Abdullah Hamoudi, *Radical Islam in Morocco, one of the aspects of totalitarian modernity* op. cit. 274.
20. Morauton H. Halperin et. al, *The benefits of Democracy* (Nahdat Misr for Printing, Publishing and Distribution, 2009), 103.
21. Mr. Abbas El Fassi, leader of the *Istiqlal* (Independence) Party, led the 29th government in Moroccan history.
22. Although it should be noted that this special competence did not disappear with the constitution of 2011. Rather, it was simply divided and changed into a different order, becoming chapter 41 of the constitution.
23. Much debate has arisen over this issue, to the point that many intellectuals considered it to be overstepping the bounds of authority conferred upon the king by the constitution. See Rkia ELMOSSADEQ : Acteurs politiques dans l'espace constitutionnel RABAT 2011 page 33.
24. Mohammed al-Sassi, "The relationship between the constitution and the democratic transition in Morocco: two stages, visions [in Arabic]," *Moroccan Journal of Political and Social Science*, No. 1, Part 1 (Fall/Winter 2010-2011), 21.
25. Dr. Mohammed Mutassim, *The Moroccan constitutional and political system* [in Arabic] (Casablanca: Isis Foundation for Publishing, March 1992), 124.
26. Mohammed Darif, *The Islamic Movement: creation and development* [in Arabic] (al-Zaman Publications, 2008), 11.
27. This movement, which was involved in the killing of the unionist Omar Benjelloun, is led by Abdelkrim Mouti, who lives in exile in Libya.
28. Dr. Mohammed Darif, *Justice and Charity Organization: a reading of its tracks* [in Arabic] (Publications of the Moroccan Journal for Political Sociology, 1995), 9.
29. Abdessalam Yassine, *An Interview with Virtuous Democrats* [in Arabic] (Casablanca: Horizon Publications, 1994), 58.
30. Omar Benjelloun was a prominent leftist fighter and leading member of the Socialist Union who was assassinated in 1975 by members of the Islamic Youth. Since that time, the movement went underground, following the flight of its leader from Morocco and the loss of much of its members, some of whom would eventually lead the Islamic Movement in Morocco, like Abdelilah Benkirane, Mohammed al-Mutassim, and Mohammed al-Marwani.

31. Darif, op. cit., 106.
32. This movement can be considered the most powerful of the Sufi movements in Morocco. Its headquarters are located near the town of Berkane.
33. Statement of Alternatives: In order for Moroco to take off, 2005, page 11.
34. Abderrahmane El Nodhah, "Discussion of a proposal to establish a new political framework for the left … Dying? [in Arabic]" *Amal* 34 (2009), 114.
35. Exemplified by the royal speech on 9 March 2011, in which the amendment of the constitution and other mechanisms to be employed were announced.
36. Ibid.
37. Ikram bin Omar, *Constituent power between constitutional drafting and constitutional reform* [in Arabic] (Tunis: Dar Mohammed for Publishing, 2011), 5.
38. Mohammed Hassan al-Wazani, *On constitutions and parliaments* (Fez: Mohammed Hassan al-Wazani Foundation, 1986), 7-8.
39. Ibrahim Yassin, "Constitutional change for a parliamentary monarchy: premises and principles [in Arabic]," *Amal* special issues 36-37: Which constitution for tomorrow's Morocco? (2011), 15.
40. Perceptions and suggestions of the Istiqlal Party regarding the revision of the constitution.
41. Ibid., 193.
42. Preliminary note of the Justice and Development Party, *Amal* op. cit., 210.
43. Examples include but are not limited to the Ummah Party, Justice and Charity Organization, Democratic Confederation of Labor, and the Left Alliance composed of the Unified Socialist Party, the Ittihadi National Congress, and the Democratic Socialist Vanguard — which had made up the majority of the February 20 Movement.
44. For some of the violations that affected referendum on the constitution, see the summary of the report issued by the National Council for Human Rights on its website at the following link: http://www.ccdh.org.ma/spip.php?rubrique765
45. This was what the Unified Socialist Party in a document issued on the occasion of convening the third conference entitled "parliamentary monarchy now."
46. Article 11 of the constitution.
47. Among them, Karim Tazi, one of the businessmen who openly joined the February 20 Movement from the beginning.
48. Oussama Elkhlifi, considered one of the most prominent activists of the movement.
49. Ahmed Herzenni, "Which summer after the Arab Spring," university season-opening lesson 2011-2013, Mohammed V University, College of Arts and Humanities, Rabat, page 9.

10

THE "ARAB SPRING" IN ITS MOROCCAN VERSION

Ahmed al-Khamssi

Introduction: the Moroccan context and the exceptional circumstances of the "Arab Spring"

Abstract

The February 20 Movement, composed of politically unaffiliated young people, called for transforming the regime into a constitutional, parliamentary monarchy, wherein the king would reign, but not rule. The state responded with reforms. In the end, this process ultimately strengthened the role of institutions at the expense of protests as a vehicle for change. After the "Arab Spring," Morocco remains governed by an executive monarchy dominating the political sphere and clinging to all powers. Because the major parties did not contribute to the renewal of the elites, the parties loyal to the state have regained their power. The post-Arab Spring political season has commenced with a retreat from the democratic revelation of the constitution.

Introduction

The strategic location of Morocco, at the point of direct contact between Europe and Africa, has caused sharp contradictions in the Moroccan case: on the one hand, there is the continued existence of the conservative elements like the form of government as a monarchy as well as rituals and traditions that no longer exist in the neighboring republics; on the other hand, there exist progressive features like the recognition of the rights of Amazigh identity and the rights of women. Furthermore, in terms of religious political forces, the Moroccan Islamic movement is quite distinct from the Muslim Brotherhood in its various forms. In addition, conflict continues between the Moroccan state and Algeria on its eastern border. And just when the role of the political parties declined and the state became hegemonic, the star of "the democratic Arab Spring" emerged in the dark, night sky.

I. The actors

The "democratic spring" movement in the Arab region highlighted the power of actors beyond the local political class, and manifested the ferment for societal change among young people, especially the core affected by unemployment. By contrast, the framing role of the political parties declined significantly while religious movements flourished among the lower and middle classes. Finally, the reforms formulated by the institution of the monarchy accumulated, which ultimately strengthened the role of institutions at the expense of protests.

1. The fermentation of conditions

Morocco falls within the lowest third of countries ranked globally by rates of human development, according to the

three indicators adopted by human development reports, namely health, education, and individual (per capita) income.

In terms of economic development, statistics indicate that Morocco has benefited from neither its local qualifications nor its proximity to world markets. Morocco's global ranking for per capita income is 118 out of 182, and 130 of 182 in terms of level of human development. Despite Moroccan support for Western policies in various areas, analysts contend that Morocco missed an opportunity for economic development in the 1990s. This is with the knowledge that economists around the world only noted the boost in economic growth throughout the period of political independence but once between 1958 and 1966.

In terms of political development, the state has not been able to invest the balance of trust that reached its peak at independence. And while the state has followed a strategy of popular participation via elections since 1975, the level of participation in terms of turnout has in fact declined from two-thirds in the mid-seventies, to half of registered voters at the beginning of the new millennium (51 percent in 2002), and down to nearly one-third in 2007.

2. Decline of the framing role of political parties

The state has continued to consider the *makhzen* (literally, warehouse, likely in reference to the tax-collecting and financial functions of the ruler and his court, which is often used metonymically to refer to the state), as the close circle surrounding the institution of the monarchy, to be more representative of the *ummah* (or nation) than any other political actor. As a result, the period dominated by the rule of the former interior minister, Driss Basri, is infamous for being a period of Balkanization for the parties, divided by every electoral event. No party or administration was able to escape from this strategy, such that the

electoral results for each party essentially depended on the distance between the party leadership and the interior minister.

Likewise, for each election, the Moroccan desert remained under the direct supervision of the authorities commanded by and following the ministry of the interior. The candidates in the countryside became dependent on the organic linkage of mutual interests shared between the party leaderships and the ministry.

As for the conferences organized by the "major parties," these remained under the careful eyes of the authorities, which controlled the leadership, meaning that most of the secretaries general remained at the head of their parties "forever," and thereby emptying the principle of internal democracy of all meaning.

These factors mentioned above all came together, leading to a predominantly conservative orientation for both the state and society. With the quantitative demographic transformation, young people became the dominant age group numerically, but remained absent from politics, digging a huge gap between the politicians and the voters. The percentage of those belonging to parties decreased from 50 percent at the beginning of independence in 1956, to 5 percent in 2000. Because the numbers of educated young people multiplied, the degree of their influence on electoral turnout rose, at a time when the unemployed educated young people were heading toward either political indifference or boycott.

The years of Mohammed VI's rule have witnessed the interaction of all of these factors, with the addition of the trends of globalization, the expanded roles of non-governmental organizations in society and technocrats in governance. Several researchers have noted the trend of the state strengthening its presence using these last two groups as intermediaries between the state and society.

3. Young people's accumulation of framing experience through coordinating the unemployed

Since the beginning of the 1980s, the state has worked to domesticate the student movements by introducing what are known as the "university guards" as a repressive force on the "university campus." After the bread uprisings of 1981 and 1984, the state began to clamp down on the role of youth, whose headquarters as national associations linked to political parties were a place to politicize young people. As official barriers cut off the tracks toward the modern politicization of young people, religious organizations emerged, and the mosques became the place for shaping the youth and framing their concerns.

With respect to the state's economic policy, the share devoted to wages out of total state expenditures fell from 13 to 9 percent as one of the major goals of its macro-economic reforms. As a result, the contradiction between the cohorts of graduates from universities, schools, and institutes of higher education and the closure of outlets for putting them to work became absolute and severe.

In terms of the political process itself, the throne passed to Mohammed VI in 1999 with the help of the Socialist Union, which was the largest opposition party but had entered the government in 1988. This caused the secession of a significant portion of its youth cadres who disassociated from the party's official policy, as well as the collapse of the party's role in connecting young people to political institutions.

University graduates found themselves alone, burdened by facing an unknown fate, after the doors to all of the traditional pathways were slammed shut in their faces: the paths of employment, due to the parties moving from opposition to power; the paths of liberalism and the left, owing to the public polarization against religious currents in the name of the war on terror.

Unemployed university graduates devised a method of organizing and coordinating for each cohort and specialty, while also demonstrating before the parliament and governmental institutions to present and defend their demands. The headquarters of some trade unions, human rights organizations, and small leftist parties became gathering places for young people. Likewise, a religious group in opposition outside these institutions (Justice and Charity Organization) had become mindful of and attentive to these new frameworks. A significant portion of young people at university were forced to transition into working as street vendors, as a result of both the need to find daily sustenance and the continued struggle to find work. Lastly, the internet became the fundamental network for communication.

4. Lighting the fuse of change from abroad

Two developments granted young people a liberated and easily accessible space for collective action, shortened the distance between young people and the moments of demonstration in public spaces, and offered opportunities to discover their capacities to effect change: first, familiarity with coordinating individual efforts with the help of mobile phones could become organizational energy, and second, e-mail introduced a virtual space for group discussion. Furthermore, a young leadership emerged from among the young people, marked by their experiences with the movement and initiative in virtual spaces.

This virtual sophistication meant that they received and absorbed the lessons from Tunisians and Egyptians on the importance of fieldwork and honing their energies. The Tunisian revolution on 14 January and Egyptian revolution on 25 January illustrated how sheer could be sufficient enough in the short term to convert virtual ties into the will to take the struggle to public spaces in Morocco on February 20 2011. Satellite channels picked up and

circulated the news, and support came from well-known names in Morocco through political articles, thanks to the existence of an independent press in Morocco.

The headquarters of human rights organizations and the opposition political parties formed the physical base for the independent young people, while the young people affiliated with the extra-institutional opposition committed to political action provided the newborn movement with its organizational and social fabric across 50 localities with the first outburst on 20 February.

5. The behavior of the monarchy toward the February 20 movement

The conduct of the state can be characterized in two ways: first, accommodating the protests, and the second, absorbing the public opinion resulting from the protests and keeping it limited to meeting rooms with the intention of keeping abreast of developments and retaining the political initiative. Faced with the surprise coming from Tunisia and Egypt, the king made an official speech on television, proposing a bold program of political reform, headlined by the following: immediate reform of the constitution to be followed by political reform, through broadening the mandates of the government, parliament and judiciary; expanded rights and freedoms; a greater role for not only civil society, but also the parliamentary opposition. This would expand representative democracy and deepen the gains of society under the manifestations of participatory democracy. Lastly, a project of regionalization or decentralization would lighten the burden of the state's centralized bureaucracy.

Already having appeared to respond immediately to the February 20 Movement, the king appeared on Moroccan television again the following day, February 21, and appointed prominent actors from the unions and from human rights,

cultural, developmental, women's and youth associations as members to the Economic and Social Council. The king also took into account the social incubator for the youth — material interests — when on 27 April 2011 he announced an increase in public sector and semi-public wages.

Thus, the response described above illustrates that the king and his advisors were ready to respond to the phase of the "Arab Spring." But the political will expressed by the state was also connected to the context of reform in Morocco, reforms that had accumulated over the last decade, whether in terms of the Amazigh movement, the women's movement, the regionalization movement, or the human rights movement demanding political reform and transitional justice. The audiovisual public media as well as private radio stations had set in motion dialogue, and opened an unprecedented space for freedom of expression and freedom of the press.

The reform process in Morocco that took place within the circumstances of the "Arab Spring" were far removed from the radical currents (leftist and Islamist) that dominated the February 20 Movement, which remained outside the institutions, as it boycotted the commission to amend the constitution, boycotted the referendum on the constitution, and boycotted the legislative elections.

The movement was therefore unable to compete with the traditional political class in their own game, on the institutional stage. And this gave the state an excuse to direct the reform process together with the traditional political leadership. And so the monarchy became the effective political leadership, while allowing some of the young symbols of the February 20 Movement (such as Najib Chaouki or Ghazlan Benomar) to emerge as new political actors from the heart of the protest movement.

However, the discovery of the bomber of the Cafe Argana not only cast light on the Atlantic Ocean coast city of Safi

(near Marrakech), but also on the presence of religious movements within the February 20 Movement, which enabled the state to point an accusatory finger at the religious current working outside official institutions. By doing so, the state also dealt a blow to the February 20 Movement, without appearing to be oppressive. Furthermore, the gendarmerie and the police returned to the entrances of Moroccan cities, sending a message to both the "ordinary citizen" and the activist youth that the priority, above all else, would be security and stability. Because the state took Safi as the model for other cities, seeing it as an example of how a dangerous shift could occur with the protest movements elsewhere, the police authorities intensified their violent treatment of the demonstrators there. This led to the February 20 Movement's first fatality since its inception, in addition to the blackout and the circumstances of the investigation that killed five, as victims of fire, in Al Hoceima in northern Morocco on the first evening of the February 20 Movement.

The religious movement, in terms of its participation in the protests of the February 20 Movement, emerged in two halves: the hesitant moderate religious current represented by the Justice and Development Party; and those present in force, substantially bulking up the size of the demonstrations, represented by the Justice and Charity Organization.

Finally, the researcher and leader in the Unified Socialist Party Mohammed Sassi summarized the behavior of the state toward the February 20 Movement as follows, across "four stages: First, confusion and distortion; second, keeping pace with and practically acknowledging through the official media; third, repression at moments of protest from time to time, in anticipation of the responses of both domestic and international public opinion; and fourth, using a type of thugs who called themselves "the royal youth" and some categories of small merchants who claimed that the movement was hampering their work near places of protest."

II. Developing events

The overlapping levels of change, between the protests in the field on the one hand and the institutional initiatives on the other, reflected the fact that the two most organized and capable forces in state and society were the monarchy and religious movement respectively — the former at the heart of the state, and the later at the heart of society. The youth revolution was a fiery outburst. Between the intense enthusiasm of young people (with both the good and the bad that adolescence rings) and the sagging support of the leftist leadership, the youth revolution proved the least capable of managing its contradictions, assembling its supporters, and dispersing the attacks of its adversaries.

The central issue encapsulated in the slogan "democratic transition," which had lost its attractiveness, was exchanged for "change here and now," a more concrete nomenclature focusing on eliminating corruption and despotism. Opinions varied widely, between those who saw the power of the extraordinary event within the revolutionary circumstances that had swept the region and would sweep away corruption and despotism — and those who saw the extraordinary position of Morocco, thanks to earlier partial reforms, as able to curb the torrential power of the current of revolution in the Arab world.

A binary had emerged in the course of events, between change through protests in the street "led" by the February 20 Movement, and change through reform via institutions, led by the monarchy, by adapting to the slogans raised by the protest movement, restructuring the state itself, and reviewing the jurisdictions of the king, the parliament, the government, and the judiciary.

The youth movement for change depended on the dissemination of the program for each demonstration via press conferences in Rabat and through YouTube. Although

domestic public opinion remained largely uninterested in the initiative, the results of the movements in Tunisia and Egypt sharpened the determination among the young of entrepreneurial young people, who called upon the state not to act in its traditional, violent, security-obsessed manner. This provided the initiative of the young people an exceptional space with freedom of coordination, organization, mobilization, and protest. Coordinating committees emerged in several cities of Casablanca, Rabat, Tangiers, and Marrakech, and to a lesser extent in smaller cities.

This was in part because the leaders of the political bodies supporting the February 20 movement residing in Rabat and Casablanca amplified the call more than those in the other cities of the north and the cities of the interior. Furthermore, the correspondents of foreign newspapers and the Arab satellite channels resided in Rabat, and as a result, the media coverage remained limited to what was happening in Rabat and Casablanca.

On the whole, what happened in Morocco wound up working in the interest of the calm, reformist, institutional work, and against the February 20 Movement.

Democratization and the current alignments

I. Democratic transformation and its limits

1. The slogan of democratic transformation
Measuring the degree of the transformation produced by the circumstances of the "Arab Spring" in Morocco requires a review of the basic slogans of the February 20 Movement:
— For parliamentary monarch
— End corruption and despotism
— Dissolve parliament and cabinet
— Change the constitution to cement the foundations of parliamentary democracy

The circumstances of the "Arab Spring" created a new politically legitimate movement with the youth at its core, and a new spirit of political life among Moroccans on the street and in the discussions among different institutional circles. The four slogans mentioned above circulated on the tongues of the general public, such that mentioning the phrase "the king should reign and not rule" was no longer something to be feared. The people began to circulate these slogans, which showed a tacit agreement with the demands of the February 20 movement on the necessity of a parliamentary monarchy, and therefore that they understood the pragmatism of demanding the dissolution of parliament and the cabinet, which would require changing the constitution, and that they understood that the newborn movement came as an instrument to pressure the state to move in the direction of enacting the demands encapsulated in these four slogans.

The people understood what the movement could realistically accomplish and feasibly change, and therefore did not call for radical changes to the royal political system like the fall of the monarchy in Morocco, especially in view of the king's reputation with the public. Out of all of this, the role of the monarchy as a political actor transformed from one that depended on sacrosanctity and severe security, to one acting through dialogue, even if this arose from adapting to the momentum of the "Arab Spring," and not as a qualitative shift fixed in the political life to come.

2. The cleverness of the king and the speed of response

Over the previous decade (1999-2010), the king had worked to create a favorable public opinion in solidarity with his political discourse, through initiatives that responded to the sociopolitical movements inherited from his father's era, like the Amazigh movement, the women's movement, the human rights movement, calls for transitional justice, and the religious movement emerging as a new political actor.

The state worked to coordinate its domestic policies with its international agenda, along three axes: the war on terror, macroeconomic reforms to fit the Moroccan economy with its global trading partners (foremost the European Union and the United States), and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, like the fight against poverty, marginalization, and exclusion.

The cleverness of the king emerged in the management of the state bureaucracy, while working to change the military and police leaderships, modernize the previously marginalized public force known as the mobile *Makhzen*, and to restructure and renew the personnel of the civil protection force. These four forces are the arm of the state, ready to strike in order to maintain the regime, stability, and security.

The Moroccan administration also inherited a practice of coordination with Western administrations regarding the methods and means of modernization, dating back to the reign of Hassan II. When the atmosphere of the "Arab Spring" moved from outside the borders to the heart of Moroccan political life, the king knew how to respond to the protest movement in a different manner than the authorities in Tunisia and Egypt.

The historian Benjamin Store has noted that at the core of the king's position, when he arranged his thoughts for the 9 March speech, was his attentiveness to the protest movement's demands, more so than his fear of its size or geographical spread. This enabled the king to respond to the demands of the movement and work toward formulating a new constitution that would expand the jurisdictions of the government, the parliament, and the judiciary.

II. Current alignments and alliances

The official map of political parties in Morocco had been divided into two: the parties of the democratic national movement, which had emerged from the heart of the

Istiqlal or Independence Party (headed by the Socialist Union of Popular Forces) and the Party of Progress and Socialism, heir to the Communist Party of Morocco, which was the bulwark of the opposition at most stages since the reign of Hassan II; and the parties formerly designated as "administrative" under the iron fist of the Hassan II regime, which the king used to fill elected institutions to lend to the regime a veneer of democracy, but which the opposition did not considered to be legitimate parties.

The "loyal" elections of 1997 led to the formation of a consensus government of transition, under which the head of the left-wing socialist union, who headed the government, acknowledged the administrative parties affiliated with the state. As soon as Mohammed VI became king, the moderate Islamic party became the Party of Justice and Development in the first legislative elections held under the current king in 2002, a third party in this equation, upsetting the balance and the alignments among the five major parties represented in parliament, and confusing the democratic bloc in particular. This opened the door for the king to turn the tables on the Socialist Union, who then appointed a technocrat (Driss Jettou) as first minister.

From his father, Mohammed VI inherited a policy of managing and engineering the partisan politics in Morocco. In addition, he was in his prime at wielding both the carrot and stick, compared with the aged party leaders, who had exhausted the ability to think, guide, and frame. Therefore, the secretary of state for the interior (a school chum of the king, Fouad Ali El Himma) resigned to participate in the 2007 electoral elections, winning three seats by himself in the electoral district where he was nominated, his hometown near the city of Marrakech. Less than a year after the elections, there was a sudden "migration" wherein 90 members of parliament joined together under the banner of the "Party of Authenticity and Modernity." Its political platform,

in light of the widespread public opinion that it was the party of the king, was based on confronting the rise of the Islamists. After this shift, national public opinion became polarized between the Party of Authenticity and Modernity on one hand, and the Party of Justice and Development and the Socialist Union on the other. Since its debut in 2008 until the launch of the February 20 Movement, the party of the king (the Party of Authenticity and Modernity) remained the pivotal political actor.

But the Party of Justice and Development remained a formidable actor, capable of preserving its electoral gains after winning the 2011 elections, in which it had captured substantially more votes than the liberal and leftist wings of the opposition. Nevertheless the overall picture is negative, in terms of the role played by the Party of Justice and Development in not completely implementing the new constitution, in its simultaneously voluntary and helpless submission to the will of king, and in not adequately defending recent gains and individual freedoms. Thus it seems that the moderate religious party, alone, is incapable of producing a qualitative shift in political life in Morocco.

Conclusion: Has Morocco entered a new constitutive phase?

The strategic separation of the circumstances of the "Arab Spring" from the particular Moroccan context

The Moroccan case has shown that the state, since the start of the Arab Spring, has accumulated achievements of partial reform in four sectors: first, the spread of the autonomy proposal for the Western Sahara throughout the administrative organization of the state, under the title "project of expanded regionalization"; second, the retreat

of the Amazigh movement after the constitutionalization of its initial demands in the preamble to the 2011 constitution; third, the decline of the women's movement since the issuance of the Family and Work Code, enshrining the division of responsibility between the two spouses in the law, and the principles of equality and parity in the constitution; fourth, the moderate Islamic party assuming responsibility as head of government, thereby defusing the fierce Islamic opposition to the regime.

The state has undertaken a policy of strategically separating the youth protest movement from the broader populace, so that the February 20 Movement could not transform into a true popular uprising like what occurred in Tunisia and Egypt, and thus could not generate the same kind of "revolutionary situation" expected by the movement. Instead, the February 20 Movement found itself a stubborn adversary in the young unemployed university graduates, over whether it should be a demand-based social movement, rather than a political movement.

The Moroccan change movement's strategic points of vulnerability

The February 20 Movement, composed of politically unaffiliated young people, raised radical political slogans from inside the monarchical system, calling for the overthrow of the binary of corruption and its patron, political despotism, embodied in an executive monarchy. The movement called for transforming the regime into a constitutional, parliamentary monarchy, and called for legalizing the status of the parliamentary monarchy wherein the king would reign, but not rule.

While leftist and religious currents proceeded to call for the overthrow of the regime, the grassroots refrained from joining in, and pushed the authorities through "*baltagiya* or thugs" and "*fulul* or remnants" (to borrow the Egyptian

political vocabulary) to condemn the call for regime change and shout slogans supporting the king. Then, the Justice and Charity Organization quickly withdrew from the movement shortly after the success of the moderate Islamic party in obtaining the top position in the 2011 elections and forming a government of the majority composed of three parties that had been in government before the Arab Spring.

After the "Arab Spring," Morocco remains governed by an executive monarchy dominating the political sphere and clinging to all powers. Because the major parties did not contribute to the renewal of the elites, the parties loyal to the state have regained their power. The post-Arab Spring political season has commenced after the adoption of the new constitution with the establishment of a coalition of eight loyal parties, joined by three small splinter parties from the Socialist Union and the United Left, and a fourth small breakaway party from the Party of Justice and Development. This has all cast the shadows of an absolute retreat away from the democratic revelation of the constitution.

THE POLITICAL MOVEMENT IN JORDAN

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Abstract

The Jordanian protest movement began in 2010, before the outbreak of the Tunisian and Egyptian revolution. Spurred by socioeconomic and political grievances demands centered on combating corruption and increasing the representativeness of the political system. There is an almost unanimous consensus that what is required is the reform of the system, and not regime change. The Jordanian state has accepted a process of reform, but the implementation has recently slowed. If the state fails to implement its promises, this could lead to the reawakening of the protest movement, though the ceiling of demands will likely be raised even higher. Jordan has the opportunity to lead a process of serious, gradual reform; or, the street can lead a process of reform, whose results will be entirely unpredictable.

I. Background of the political movement

From 1967 to 1990, Jordan lived under emergency law, which paralyzed political life in the country. In April 1989, in the wake of the decision to sever Jordanian ties to the West Bank and a severe economic crisis in the mid-1980s, the late king Hussein Bin Talal announced parliamentary elections, in which all parties that had previously been banned and operating in secret were eligible to participate. At the time, a significant number of observers considered these elections to be a turning point that would lead to the revival of parliamentary life.

This development came as the culmination of a phase spanning nearly two decades in which opposition parties operated in secret, demanding the return of constitutional democracy and trade unions, respect for political freedoms and public freedoms in general, and the lifting of martial law and the holding of general parliamentary elections.

In the early 1990s, after the first Gulf War, Jordan began participating in the Peace Process, which brought about the Israel-Jordan peace treaty in 1994. Domestically, a process of switching economic emphasis to the private sector began, accomplished through the application of austerity measures, which led the state to gradually abandon its role in economic life.

Despite the fact that the state has embarked upon the development of a legislative environment governing political life, such as laws for political parties, publications, and elections among others, these laws restricted political action, the work of parties, and the process of democratization as much as they encouraged political life. As a result, political life remained at a standstill in the 1990s and 2000s. Yet the privatization process has changed the equation of the relationship between citizens and the state. Democratic rule

has become a general requirement and a public demand. Despite the many initiatives and national documents, with the passage of time, reform has become a term without substance.

The results of the parliamentary elections held in 2007 and 2010 showed that the Jordanian state remained committed to the political and social status quo, uninterested any changes that would diminish its influence over the executive and legislative branches. To that end, the one-vote law (first past the post) was maintained, which in the opinion of some was designed to prevent certain political blocs, particularly those with reformist agendas, from reaching parliament.

As a result of these economic, social, and political circumstances, the protests against the government and its policies, particularly with regard to the elections and the government's performance, began to take on a mass character in late 2010, spreading before the outbreak of the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions. But when the protests in Tunisia and Egypt broke out subsequently, the protests in Jordan began to take on new dimensions, as people's participation in an unprecedented popular movement began to extend across all regions, sects, and social groups.

As happened in many Arab countries, the protests were not organized by political parties. Although the parties were later able to lead part of this movement, they were neither able to fit the social movement within a single framework nor direct its political agenda.

II. Patterns of expression and protest

The protest movements and political forces resorted to many ways of expressing their demands and stances toward various issues connected to political reforms, living conditions, and the working conditions for many sectors and

groups. Some of these came in familiar forms, such as issuing statements, submitting petitions, or sending open letters to the king and government officials, while others were new, reflecting the changing mix of the demonstrators, in particular the influx of young people.

The following summarizes the most important vehicles for expression used in the recent past by the political movement.

1. Statements and petitions

Sending memos to the king; issuing press releases or founding statements announcing the establishment of new political or youth associations; organizing seminars as forums for civil society organizations to announce their demands or positions; holding press conferences by the higher coordinating committee of the opposition parties or other parties; sending collective memoranda with demands from trade unions and civil society organizations to the royal commission tasked with reviewing the constitution, in order to present their demands regarding the need to amend some constitutional articles.

2. Spontaneous or unorganized demonstrations by existing institutions (political parties and trade unions)

In December 2010 and January 2011, Jordanian citizens took part in spontaneous demonstrations outside the framework of political parties and trade unions. These demonstrations, which included thousands of citizens in Amman and several other cities, were held in protest of rising unemployment, prices, and cost of living, and demanded "the fall of the government (directed at the cabinet, rather than the institution of the monarchy or the royal regime itself)," despite the measures taken by the government to reduce prices and create new jobs.

3. The organized movement

The opposition parties organized several demonstrations and sit-ins to protest against official policy, particularly in the economic sphere, or to express their demands for political reform and to fight corruption.

4. Demand-based protests

This was one of the most vital, vibrant, and widespread means of expression, especially since the demand-based movement preceded the political movement by several years, maintained a fast pace, and encompassed most of the business sectors and various regions. A report published by the Phoenix Center for Economic and Labor Studies noted that the number of labor protests during the year of 2012 was "an unprecedented, record number" of 901 protests. By comparison, the number of protests in 2010 did not exceed 140.

5. The new social movements

The founding of some of these movements, like the "Social Left Movement" and the student campaign "*thab-7toona* (you're killing us)," dates back four years or more; however, many more appeared in the last two years, specifically since the beginning of 2011, after the start of the popular Arab uprisings.

6. Social networking sites

These sites became ideal information tools for expressing the positions of political and youth associations and powers, and to publish their calls for reform, mobilization, and rallies, and to make preparations for movements in the field.

It is clear at a glance that there are deep schisms among young people regarding traditional and governmental politics. There is also a marked contrast between generations regarding identity. These divisions are reflected in

the rapidly escalating growth of youth networks and virtual communities on social networks and the internet more generally.

While the involvement of young people in virtual communities is not new, it has gained exceptional importance recently as a result of the unprecedented involvement of young people in the political ferment in the region and in Jordan.

III. Issues and demands of the political movement

The most important characteristic of the popular movement in Jordan is that it began before the outbreak of the revolution in Tunisia and Egypt. In the beginning, it had started to protest the parliamentary elections that were held in early November 2010, and then intensified with the granting of an almost absolute and unprecedented parliamentary confidence to the Rifai government, which had never enjoyed popular acceptance even at the time of its formation.

The second characteristic of the movement was that it was not framed, and would not subsequently be framed by the political parties. It was instead extremely diverse in terms of the personal, regional, professional, and economic demands. The labor movement focused its demands on wage increases.

During the first three months of 2011, the pace of protests and demonstrations multiplied by more than eight times, such that March alone witnessed more than 800 demonstrations, protests, and sit-ins. But the pace of protests began to decline after the formation of the National Dialogue Committee and the Royal Commission to Amend the Constitution were announced in April 2011, when some of the opposition parties decided to stop protesting

and demonstrating, pending the results of the two committees' efforts.

Additionally, the street seemed to divide over some political demands, particularly those demands related to transforming the regime into a constitutional monarchy, which led to clashes among different groups in the streets, and ultimately to part of the protest movement's decline. Among the other factors explaining the decline were the increasing violence in Syria and the emergence of the Islamist and Salafist trends as major forces in the elections held in Tunisia and Egypt.

IV. Official reactions to the political movement

The official reactions to the protest movement were marked by flexibility, attempting to contain the social movement and striving to "respond to the majority of the requests" of citizen protesters by introducing economic measures to mitigate the economic crisis and the crisis of living conditions that ravaged the country. For example, wages were raised in the public sector, and the prices of fuel and some basic commodities were fixed. This was also accompanied by confirming the right of citizens to demonstrate and protest. These positive steps contributed to providing a broader range of freedom to organize different types of protests, among other means of public expression of opinion.

But the economic measures mentioned above did not succeed in calming the Jordanian street, as a series of rallies held on Fridays began on 14 January 2011 at the center of the capital Amman and in several other cities. These marches involved thousands of protesters shouting slogans like "the people want the reform of the regime" (a twist on the famous slogan "the people want the fall of the regime"), and shouting chants against the "neo-liberal" Prime Minister Samir Rifai.

On the first February 2011, the king dismissed this government as a response to popular political demand, replaced a week later by a new government headed by Marouf Bakhit, which included in its ranks several politicians known for their opposition stances. This government was tasked with taking "swift and effective action" toward effecting political reform, treating the living conditions of citizens, and fighting corruption. Here again were the clear fingerprints of the street in formulating the tasks assigned to the new government.

The Bakhit government amended the Public Meetings Law in accordance with popular demands and the demands of several parties and political, union, and social forces. About a week afterward, the government formed the "National Dialogue Committee" chaired by Taher Masri, head of the senate, and comprised of fifty members representing most of the political powers and currents in the country. The commission was mandated to look into the steps necessary to achieve political reform, specifically the preparation of a new elections law and a new political parties' law. Of course, the reform or change of these two laws, in addition to other laws, was one of the primary demands of the political and popular movement.

The king took another important step toward answering popular demands for political reform with the formation of the "Royal Commission to Review the Constitution" on 26 April 2011.

The Bakhit government also referred several cases of corruption to the Anti-Corruption Commission, and from there to the House of Representatives for investigation. Public opinion, political parties, and the press had demanded that these cases be disclosed, and those responsible be held accountable.

In the meantime, King Abdullah II intensified his meetings with representatives, senators, and journalists, visited

citizens in their respective regions, and met with tribal leaders and local officials, in order to listen to the views of various sectors and to explain the official views toward recent developments.

While the policy of allowing demonstrations and protests was largely followed, the government displayed a firm determination to break up camps wherein the organizations wanted to establish permanent sit-ins and escalate demands. On the whole, the vast majority of protests were entirely peaceful, and the number of exceptional cases wherein security officials confronted the protesters can be counted on one hand.

V. The outcome of the National Dialogue Committee: How was it dealt with and what were the reactions toward it?

After three months of meetings with political parties, popular forces, and civil society organization, the committee delivered its final report to the government in June 2011.

This document consisted of a preamble and recommendations for constitutional amendments (which had been submitted to the royal committee to review the constitution), then a draft election law based on a mixed electoral system, and a new draft law on political parties.

The preamble was keen to define the goal of desired reform as "developing the performance of constitutional institutions by increasing their effectiveness, enhancing the separation of powers, creating a legislative and political climate conducive to public freedoms, safeguarding human rights, and strengthening the role of political parties and civil societies in public life, in addition to emphasizing and promoting the principle of citizenship and respect for human dignity as the fundamental basis governing the relationship between the state and all citizens."

The mixed electoral system combined an open party-list system of proportional representation on the provincial level with an open party-list system of proportional representation on the national level, with the allocation of at least one seat for women in each province, in addition to recommending the establishment of an independent national body for elections and to empower the judiciary to review candidacy appeals.

Finally, the document included a new draft law for parties simplifying party registration procedures to reaffirming their strict legal and personal adherence to purely national points of reference, and removing administrative obstacles by providing financial support and simplifying oversight over financial activities.

Despite the positive points of the document of which the opposition parties and other labor and popular forces took note, most of these parties and forces took a critical stance toward the recommendations to of the National Dialogue Committee as "unambitious," with some declaring their open refusal of such a "limited step forward," and others seeing it as "decorative, superficial reform."

These negative stances of various parties and forces toward the outcome of the dialogue committee meant little to the executive branch, as the government of Awn al-Khasawneh just a few short weeks later adopted a draft electoral law that was a mixture of the 1989 one-vote (first-past-the-post) law and the mixed electoral system proposed by the National Dialogue Committee. The new bill was referred to as the House of Representatives; this bill faced a broad campaign calling for its rejection and its condemnation. Opponents stated that the draft had nothing at all to do with what had been agreed upon by the representatives on the dialogue committee.

In reaction to these developments, the political parties and forces of the popular movement initiated calls and

campaigns to affirm "popular pressure and mass action in the streets are the two ways to reach real reform." The country witnessed many sit-ins and demonstrations during which slogans resounded demanding the arrest and trial of corrupt officials.

VI. The outcome of the Royal Commission for Review of the National Constitution: How was it dealt with and what were the reactions to it?

On 27 April 2011, King Abdullah II formed the "Royal Commission for the Review of the Constitution." The initiative came as a response to demands of political and popular forces in the country. The king asked the commission to study the recommendations of the National Dialogue Committee concerning the necessary constitutional reforms, especially with respect to the laws governing elections and political parties.

The results of the commission's work were announced at an official ceremony in early August 2011. But the popular forces demanding reform preempted the commission's pending announcement through multiple popular rallies rejecting the expected reforms. Thousands of supporters of the Islamic movement, known as the "coordinating committee of popular and youth movements for reform," staged a sit-in in Amman and a number of southern provinces, expressing their rejection of any anticipated changes that would not involve substantial amendments to the constitution, including a guarantee that governments would be formed out of the elected representatives of the parliament (rather than appointed by the king).

In the weeks following the announcement of the proposed constitutional amendments, the feedback from both opposition and "loyal" parties was overwhelmingly

negative. While the opposition parties acknowledged some of the reforms as "positive," such as the establishment of the Constitutional Court, the independent party overseeing the parliamentary elections, and other articles related to the strengthening of the rights and freedoms of citizens, they criticized the other reforms that did not affect the powers of the executive and legislative branches, and those items related to the relationship between them. Lastly, the reforms not only did not challenge the rights of the king, but also added to them the right to appoint members of the constitutional court and its chief justice (instead of the judicial council).

It is also worth noting that the changes did not eliminate the State Security Court, a special military tribunal that received stiff opposition from international bodies concerned with human rights and other opposition parties and civil society organizations.

Many rejected the retention of the senate in particular. They suggested either its abolishment or transferring the sole right to legislate to the House of Representatives. If it was retained, then it should be elected, in keeping with the principle of the people as the source of authority.

In short, the reactions of the parties, the popular movements, and a wide spectrum of opinion leaders can be summarized as "positive, but not enough."

In any event, the constitutional reforms were known as "a happy ending," despite the negative feedback, when the king issued a decree on 30 September 2011 approving the amendment of the Jordanian constitution "in the form approved by both chambers of the Jordanian National Assembly (House of Representatives and Senate). Here, too, observers noted that the amendments were not put to a popular referendum, as demanded by many of the political forces, in order to lend it popular legitimacy, and not just legality.

VII. The "reforms" take effect

The year of 2012 and the beginning of 2013 can be considered, from the perspective of the regime, to be the period of "implementing the reforms," which were presented to the people as "a response" to their demands. The National Assembly passed an amended version of the law of municipalities in March, followed by a new political parties' law in June, then an amended elections law in July. In the meantime, Law No. 15 for 2002 formed the Constitutional Court, preceded by the law establishing the independent elections commission, applying the constitutional amendments that had been passed in September 2011.

In October 2012, the House of Representatives was dissolved, in preparation for new parliamentary elections. The king assured in his remarks that the election would be held before the end of 2012; however, for legal and technical reasons, it was delayed until 23 January 2013. Finally, in 2012, some officials implicated in cases of corruption were presented to the judiciary, and two bodies were formed, one to promote "system of national integrity" and a second to review and evaluate privatization.

VIII. A review of two years of conflict over reform

Awn al-Khasawneh presented his government's resignation at the end of March 2012, only six months after its formation, when it became clear that the government was no longer able make any significant progress in completing the laws governing political life, particularly the electoral law. The selection of Dr. Fayez Tarawneh to form the new government carried a number of implications, particularly as a man known belonging to the category of conservative bureaucratic politicians, severely loyal to the king.

In light of this, it is not an exaggeration to conclude that the advent of the Tarawneh government at the beginning of April 2012 can be considered a clear reversal from the process of reform put forward by the popular movement and the opposition forces.

But close attention to what is going on in Jordanian society, specifically in terms of the new political movements, reveals that the nucleus of the popular movement demanding real reform is not only the traditional opposition parties, but also new forces that emerged from among the ranks of Jordanian tribes and the young people. If their numbers are limited at the present time, it nevertheless reflects wide segments of the people, specifically the young people, who were suffering bitterly from unemployment, deprivation, and marginalization, but today no longer suffer from fear and from the threat of oppression. Instead, they have recognized the lack of change in the country day after day, and the lack of progress toward real reforms, which will close the prospects for the future entirely. The worsening of the economic and living condition crises has come to confirm that the path of struggle lies in the street as the only guarantee of achieving political and economic reform.

At the beginning of June 2012, the authors of this study were able to follow and monitor thirty tribal and youth movements organizing demonstrations demanding reform — especially on Fridays — in the capital and in several other cities, in cooperation with the opposition parties. These movements insist on remaining peaceful and are currently seeking to close ranks and unite within a single framework. The conflict, therefore, remains open to all possibilities.

IX. Political reform between the ideal and the possible

There is an almost unanimous consensus that what is required is the reform of the system, and not regime change. Reformist demands have ranged between changing the laws governing the political process (relating to elections, political parties, and public meetings) and the need to combat corruption. In turn, some voices have emerged demanding fundamental constitutional changes limiting the powers of the king and turning the country into a constitutional monarchy, where the king reigns but does not rule; however, the groups calling for this kind of reform are limited in size and influence on the Jordanian scene.

The street has calmed down comparatively after the various reforms were announced, however, the slowdown in the application of these reforms, in addition to the poor governmental performance in some of these areas, particularly combating corruption, has led to feelings that the state may not be serious about the political reform process. This impression has led to a resumption of the political movement, if limited to weekly rallies, especially in the provinces, focusing mostly on government policies, particularly those regarding corruption.

The Jordanian state is facing a serious challenge that it has made for itself by accepting a process of amending basic laws and the constitution. True, it has been able to calm the street through this, but the street remains in a state of waiting that will not last much longer, if the state retreats from or fails to implements these promises, which could lead to the reawakening of the popular movement once again. If this happens, the ceiling of demands will be raised even higher.

Jordan has the opportunity to lead a process of serious, gradual reform; or, the street can lead a process of reform, whose results will be entirely unpredictable.

It should be noted here that there are some obstacles to political reform in Jordan, the most important of which is the division of the Jordanian street between those focusing on the civil rights of Jordanians of Palestinian origins, and between those focusing on issues of identity and the future of Jordan as a political entity with its own distinct history. This divide weakens the ability of the political parties and movements to agree on a basic political program for the nation. The second constraint is related to the historical interests of some of the political forces, or what is occasionally referred to as the old guard.

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THE DEVELOPING POLITICAL SITUATION IN ALGERIA IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ONGOING CHANGES IN THE ARAB WORLD

Naji Safir

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Abstract

A process of political reform began in Algeria in 2011, in response to pressure from a civic movement aimed at winning political reforms conducive to greater democracy. Reforms included a review of important legal texts—especially relating to the electoral system, parties, associations, and the media—and perhaps also the revision of the constitution. The political changes taking place in Algeria represent a form of adaptation to the changes taking place in the Arab world. Since that time, the authorities in power have begun to develop a strategy aimed at maintaining the political status quo at the lowest possible social cost, while bearing the financial cost thanks to the rent revenues enjoyed by the country oil and gas resources.

Introduction

From the beginning of 2011, many Arab countries have experienced profound political developments, and Algeria appears to be in a state of relative stability. Despite massive and violent popular unrest in early January 2011, these disturbances neither had nor produced clear and specific political demands. Afterwards, several political movements sought to capitalize on these mass disturbances, and called for demonstrations, especially in Algiers. But these calls have been unable to muster enough participants to represent a serious challenge to the authorities.

Regardless, a civic movement was organized and continued to exert pressure aimed at winning political reforms conducive to greater democracy; this is what was ultimately pledged by the political authorities in a speech by President Abdelaziz Bouteflika on 15 April 2011. A process of political reform began, including a review of important legal texts — especially relating to the electoral system, parties, associations, and the media — and perhaps the revision of the constitution too.

The political changes taking place in Algeria since January 2011 represent a form of adaptation to the changes taking place in the Arab world. Since that time, the authorities in power have begun to develop a strategy aimed at maintaining the political status quo at the lowest possible social cost, while bearing the financial cost thanks to the resources and revenues enjoyed by the country.

I. Developments in the political situation at the dawn of the ongoing changes in the Arab world

A. Results of the urban unrest in January 2011 and the first of the changes in the Arab world

The constitution was amended in November 2008 to allow President Bouteflika to win another presidential term of five years after finishing his second term in 2009. In fact, article 74 of the 1996 constitution, "the president of the republic can be reelected only once," was changed in its new form to become: "the president of the republic can be reelected," without mentioning any limitation to the number of terms. Having been elected in 1999 for the first time, and reelected in 2004 for a second term, which was supposed to end in 2009, nothing in the president's powers enabled him to claim a third term.

The constitutional amendment would be voted on by chambers of parliament, which are controlled by the three parties that make up the so-called "Presidential Alliance" supporting the president of the republic: the National Liberation Front (known by its French acronym, FLN), the National Democratic Rally (RND), and the Islamic Movement of Society for Peace (MSP). This amendment, whose character is contrary to democracy, mainly reflected the totalitarian logic of the political authorities in power. Thus President Bouteflika was reelected on 9 April 2009 in the first round of elections, with 90.24 percent of the votes cast, for a third term that would extend, in principle, until 2014.

Disturbances broke out in Algeria on the 3 January 2011, and began to take on a national character, spontaneously and violently, spreading to most major cities in the country, including the capital Algiers. The unrest, carried out by young people who frequently suffer from high rates

of unemployment and underemployment, continued for a week, causing the deaths of five people and injuring hundreds.

The factors that contributed to the outbreak of these protests are linked as a whole, in one way or another, to the rising prices of various essential commodities. The disturbances in early January 2011 were unable to shake up national policy; however, the fundamental importance of the events lay as portents of the possibility of political change. In fact, the idea of the "domino effect" rapidly took root in the Arab world, and led a large part of the democratic opposition to desire to take a leading role. The main political actor in this process was the Rally for Culture and Democracy (RCD), led by Saïd Sadi. Among other political demands were slogans such as "Get out O Authorities" and "Go, Bouteflika."

From the outset, these demonstrations attracted very few people, faced massive police suppression, and occupied only a few public squares. It should be noted that the state of emergency declared in February 1992 was still in effect at that time (January 2011), and demonstrations in the capital were banned. In order to continue to pressure the political authorities and to mobilize greater numbers of social and political forces, the organizers of the demonstrations founded a new structure: "National Coordination for Change and Democracy" (Coordination nationale pour le changement et la démocratie or CNCD), comprised of opposition parties, independent trade unions, and various representatives of civil society.

This new organization, however, did not help much in rallying greater numbers. After several weeks of public presence in the same square without any noticeable increase in popular support, these demonstrations ended with a loss of their meaning and organizations. Their only success was in lifting the state of emergency, which occurred on

24 February 2011, though demonstrations have remained prohibited in Algiers.

There was also a largely class-based social dimension, focused on the introduction of substantial wage and salary increases. Thus, according to some estimates, the cost of the extraordinary measures taken by the governing authorities to meet these various demands has risen to nearly 50 billion dollars for the first half of 2011.

B. The strategy of response used by the political authorities

The state's strategy focused on preventing the transition of the events of the Arab Spring to Algeria, and so out of these fears gradually initiated a political process that would culminate with the speech of President Bouteflika on 15 April 2011, which would focus on the issue of necessary reforms that the country must commence.

In this speech, President Bouteflika referenced the developments in the countries of the region, and referred to the commitment of Algerian policy of strict respect for the national sovereignty of others, just as for Algeria. Using this principle as a pretext, political support would be given to the totalitarian authorities in various Arab countries.

Bouteflika announced three packages of reforms relating to the work of political parties and associations, the election and media laws, and the amendment of the constitution.

A month after this speech, on 15 May 2011, a "national advisory body on political reforms" composed of three individuals close to power was formed. On 21 May 2011, this committee embarked on its work, ending a month later. The Rally for Culture and Democracy (RCD) and the Socialist Forces Front (FFS) refused to participate in the ongoing consultations with the commission, as did many of the individuals who had been invited, along the lines of the

former heads of state and former heads of government who boycotted the process.

At the conclusion of its work, the commission delivered its report to the president of the republic, which has not been published.

The government has prepared several draft texts of the laws that had been presented to the outgoing National People's Assembly, as well as to the Council of the Nation, both of which had approved these bills. Therefore, preparations were made for legislative elections in May 2012 on the basis of these new legal provisions and their application, but without amending the constitution.

In the context of these upcoming and important elections, the president of the republic would issue on 14 January 2012 special presidential provisions, composed of five basic laws, dealing respectively with "the electoral system," "cases of incompatibility with parliamentary mandate," "expanded representation of women in the elected assemblies," "the media," and "the political parties."

II. Developments of the political situation related to parliamentary elections in May 2012

A. The results

The results of the parliamentary elections that were held on 10 May 2012 call for the five following observations:

1. The high rate of abstention from voting, as participation was 56.86 percent of registered voters. This was despite election campaigning for intensive participation at the polls. The situation is that the two parties that form the heart of the outgoing Presidential Alliance, the National Liberation Front (FLN) and the National Democratic Rally (RND), despite winning over 59.74 percent of the seats, in fact only got 8.35 percent of the votes of legitimately registered voters, 19.79

percent of the voters in the election, and 24.21 percent of the votes cast. These results clearly showed the lack of interest of the vast majority of the electoral body toward official elections, based on the rising number of blank or white ballots, amounting to nearly 1.7 million, that is, 18 percent of the votes cast.

2. The triumph of the two parties, the FLN and the RND, thanks to the provisions of the balloting in addition to other factors, meant they obtained 208 and 68 parties respectively, or nearly 60 percent of the seats with 276, which exceeds the necessary absolute majority of 232 seats, out of a total of 462 seats. The major parties represented in the new council are the following: Green Algeria Alliance (49), Socialist Forces Front (FFS) (27), Workers' Party (PT) (24), Algerian National Front (9), Justice and Development Front (8), Algerian Popular Movement (7). Finally, a list of 27 parties won at least one seat each, and independents won 18 seats.

3. A decline in the weight of Islamic forces within the community. The parties of the Islamic movement, the Green Algeria Alliance that included the Movement of Society for Peace (MSP), won only 475, 049 and 49 seats, approximately 11 percent, compared with 61 deputies of the MSP alone in the previous assembly, or roughly 16 percent of the total seats.

4. The emergence of women in the new assembly, who won 146 seats or 31.60 percent, benefiting from the provisions of the law passed in November 2011. In comparison, women held 30 seats out of 359 in the outgoing assembly, that is, 8.35 percent.

5. The elections were held in the presence of nearly 500 international observers, including the Observation Mission of the European Union, whose report, although containing severe criticisms, did not challenge the results of the election, noting the complete

indifference of society and the weak rate of participation in the electoral process.

B. The current political situation

The political situation in the country is marked by an interesting ambiguity on one hand, and the new shape of politics in the process of forming on the other.

The factors going in the direction of ambiguity are reflected in the following:

1. At the institutional level, everything was done as if the political results of the previous legislative elections on May 10 2012 were meaningless. The existing National People's Assembly had continued acting for nearly four months, making the change of government bereft of political meaning. Within the real constraints on the current system of government in the country, this made a decisive political event seem like a slight modification, affecting only an administrative technical apparatus, most often used merely as a malleable or pliable tool.

2. Most of the political parties are suffering from serious internal crises, especially the major parties represented in the new assembly. The FLN and RDN are being torn apart. The internal struggle in the Green Alliance and FFS focuses on the strategy toward the authorities.

3. Finally, political pluralism has expanded, as the number of parties is steadily increasing. 44 parties, of which 21 have recently been licensed, participating in the 10 May 2012 elections, and 27 of them became represented in the National People's Assembly. Even more parties participated in the local elections, held on 29 November 2012. This chaotic hyperinflation on the political landscape does not enhance the quality of democratic life in the country.

The factors that go toward the formation of a new political structure are reflected in the following:

1. First, the consecration of a dominant front composed of the FLN and the RDN. The fact is that it is a dual front only superficially, because both are affiliated with the Liberation Front, which has remained the official ruling party since 1962. This continuity is embodied a very fragile rentier regime, of which President Bouteflika presents himself as the guardian. The dominant front seems to be a guarantor of the rentier regime, built around social programs, but one without a program capable of bearing the economic, social, and cultural challenges facing Algerian society.

2. It is reflected, secondly, in the advances of the Islamic movement, which in the past twenty years has become an important element of political life. The Islamic movement has sought to adapt the changes taking place in the country and in the world, oscillating between a position of cooperating with the ruling powers (the FLN and RDN), calling for a repeat experience of the outgoing tripartite Presidential Alliance, and making itself a supportive Islamic force, and a position of confronting the FLN and RDN, by adopting Islamic rhetoric and an Islamic platform, and putting itself foreword as a political force capable of securing the administration, or at least the leadership, of the alliance. It seems that it prefers working at the community level, for long-term social change.

3. Finally, the continuous marginalization of parties clearly based on democratic or liberal political values. In reality, among the "larger" parties, those capable of mobilizing an important electoral bloc and winning a large number of seats in national elections, there are just two parties "working" inside the country as well as abroad which clearly profess these values: the

Socialist Forces Front (FFS) and the Rally for Culture and Democracy. The current situation is that the base of these two parties, though they still have a national presence, has historically been connected in large part to the Amazigh-speaking areas of the country: the Kabylie region. With the exception of these two "large" parties, there are other parties who prevent themselves in the political arena as bearing the values of democracy, but not one of them has gotten results, considering the most recent elections.

III. Some of the determinants behind this interpretation of the May 2012 legislative elections and the ongoing political developments

In this regard, there are four determining factors that are the basis of the political changes:

1. The systematic centralization of rents

For several decades now, most clearly since 2000, Algerian society has become dominated by a rent-based economy, which is becoming increasingly apparent and now almost systemic. In fact, natural resources connected with hydrocarbon fuels account for 35-40 percent of gross domestic product and 65-70 percent of state imports and 98 percent of exports. The pattern has thus become an issue of access to rents derived from natural resources managed by the central political authorities, who are solely in charge of the crucial process of redistributing these resources, according to all of the individual and collective interests found in society.

In this context, the social groups that will benefit the most from the redistribution of rentier resources, based on what has occurred in the past two years, are those that have always

formed the main social base of voters for the FLN and RND. These groups essentially compose the salaried middle and upper classes heavily involved in the activity of governmental institutions. In addition, some owners of private enterprise benefit from the public the markets, and some craftsman and/or small manufacturers benefit from governmental loans at discounted rates, particularly in the agricultural sector, just like the middle and upper class employed in the private sector. Indeed, this group formed the core bloc of voters who participated in the 2012 elections.

2. Growing apathy among young people regarding elections

In contrast to those first group composed of "arrivistes," society is dominated by the young, where average age is now 28. The large numbers of the excluded are mostly young people, who form the core of those abstaining from voting. Their interest in official political events has diminished, foremost because of their marginalization in the rent redistribution process. This is combined with the growing rates of unemployment and underemployment, which are the worst direct results of this serious crisis, especially among young people who suffer from an average rate of unemployment approaching 35-40 percent and higher in certain geographic areas. They are not seriously concerned with official political processes, like the recent legislative elections, and therefore constitute the main social base for the wide-scale boycott.

3. The new development of the Islamic movement

Four factors played a role in creating the conditions of cultural hegemony with an Islamic character in society: the educational system, the network of mosques, the national mass media, the Arab satellite television channels. The clear support given by the existing political authorities

— especially the FLN — to the movement of Islamization underway in society has contributed to its perception as an objective guarantor of Islamic credibility to the political landscape. This somewhat centrist Islamic tendency is attractive, particularly since it helps avoid the dangers of political extremism that the Islamic parties themselves have represented. For all actors, it seems like an acceptable social compromise guaranteeing the political stability necessary for the continuity of the redistribution of rents.

4. The Islamic movement's monopoly over the horizon of change

The problem of political change in the current circumstances is the closing off of even limited change: "the existing authorities or the Islamic movement." For many, this false dichotomy contributes to strengthening the former as the sole guarantor of stability in the face of the dangers and threats posed by change in favor the latter. In facing this problem, many citizens, foremost the majority of the various categories of "arrivistes" benefiting in one way or another from the current policy of the distribution of income, choose a conservative stance and prefer to support those in power. Finally, the experience of the 1990s is still searing painful in both individual and collective memory.

IV. The primary political stakes

The following are the three major political stakes characterizing Algerian society:

A. The legitimacy of the political authorities:

In general, the national political arena remains fundamentally subordinate to the discourse that derives its legitimacy from the continuity of the FLN's "historic" message, that is, the war of national liberation. Nowhere is this logic

reflected more than in the shameless exploitation of even the name of the Liberation Front, which has been made completely devoid of any meaning, at a time when, at least since the advent of political pluralism in 1989, such exploitation should not be allowed, since the Liberation Front belong to all, in the nation's collective memory. The accumulation of rents has become the means to legitimize those in power, who are keen on extending their time in power for as long as possible by using the "stockpile" of historical legitimacy.

B. The nature of the political authorities:

The nature of those in power is bureaucratic, as part of a centralized state composed of individuals and institutions, reflected in their decision-making processes, rhetoric, and practices. This bureaucracy has long been quite clearly subordinate to the dominant military wing of those in power. The former prime minister, Sid Ahmed Ghozali, gave an interview to the newspaper *Le Quotidien d'Oran* on 18 October 2010 testifying to as much, alluding to "a decision-making regime inside the regime," which in fact encompasses the intelligence services associated with the military establishment, which he referred to as the "political army" in the text of the interview. It is worth mentioning in relation to the ongoing discussions regarding political reforms that the chairman of the National Advisory Committee for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights, Farouk Kstuntini, suggested an amendment to article 70 of the constitution, which states that the president of the republic is the "guarantor of the constitution," while also mentioning in this article that the National People's Army is the "guardian of the constitution."

C. "Accountability" of the political authorities:

The country's current serious crisis directly poses the question of defining direct responsibility, in general, for

the current system of rule, and more specifically the political elites in charge of public affairs, which makes the lack of "accountability" of rulers and the elites quite remarkable. Indeed, the absence of mechanisms of accountability leads gradually to a kind of divorce between state and society; this divorce in turn leads to the coexistence of two parallel models: the model of the state which claims that it is applying officially declared programs, but in reality does not take on the real problems of society, as a result of either being unable and hesitant or as a result of trying to impose solutions by force that benefit the dominant bureaucratic classes.

The second model emerges out of society, for which public institutions distance themselves from taking responsibility.

V. Prospects

There is nothing to prevent believing that some unrest is still possible, in a national context characterized by three features: first, the failure to treat chronic unemployment and underemployment, especially among young people; second, the intense tensions of all kinds, becoming acute crises giving rise to violence beyond the local scale; third, the dependence on an outwardly democratic political machine, which is actually authoritarian. It seems that the only ones who still support are those securing its continuance.

A. The binary form of rents in a state of crisis

The dual model of rents is now entering into a spiral of crises connected objectively with the depletion of the two key funds used as an "engine": the first fund is political historical, connected with the kinship of the current political authorities to the historical legitimacy emanating from the struggle against French colonialism. For years

now, this fund is no longer related to activities that can be regenerated, to say nothing of the gradual disappearance of those bearing memories of the struggles of the past. As for the second fund, of a socio-economic nature, it works in the context of a typical rentier economy. This fund also suffers from a decline in its effectiveness owing to the expected depletion of hydrocarbon resources as a non-renewable resource, and to the ever-increasing social demands of the growing population, which is expected to reach 47 million by 2050.

B. The difficult transition

In summary, it can be said that Algerian society is standing today at a crossroads between two possibilities, and two different scenarios accordingly.

The first possibility is that the current situation can possibly be overcome, moving toward a system based on social legitimacy with a democratic character. From this perspective, the political stakes become centered around the issue of democracy and the establishment of the rule of law as the driver of positive economic and social progress.

The second possibility is that Algerian society is unable to provide the required ingredients for the transition, continuing its material dependence on petroleum rents and its political dependence on "historical" legitimacy. Both rents are in fact quickly becoming exhausted. This means continuing according to the scenario of "continuity" previously discussed, which will lead to the exacerbation of existing crises to the worst possible levels. This will likely also be accompanied by the "rise of the hardliners," and the spread of chaos and violence. From this point of view, because of the expected tension in all domains, the only possibility that can be expected is the emergence of new forms of authoritarianism.

Of course, the fundamental question raised by the issue of an alternative political system remains the nature of the

social forces that would be capable of leading the processes of democratic change, since transition processes remain uncertain in terms of their predominant directions, trends, and orientations.

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13

WOMEN IN THE ARAB REVOLUTIONS
Mayla Bakhache

Abstract

It is difficult to draw a complete picture of the role of Arab women at an unsettled time of such rapid change. The timing in each country differs, with regard to their demands for basic social and economic rights, participation in the process of national reconciliation, criminalization of sexual violence, and their fight against the dominant male culture. This paper describes the state of women's participation in each country's revolution. The battle for women's equality is in its infancy, but it is the only guarantee of arriving at an equitable democracy. The voices of the women of the Arab Spring undoubtedly must gain prominence.

"Women's spring"

It is difficult to draw a complete picture of the role of Arab women at an unsettled time of such rapid change. The timing in each country differs, while the effects overlap.

This paper will present the diversity of women's participation in each country's revolution: its specifications, milestones, strengths, as well as the tradeoffs and the most important challenges faced in the transitional period prevailing in all of Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen, while Bahrain and Syria are still in a time of revolution. Then it will highlight the most common issues shared among the women of the Arab Spring countries.

Commonalities and differences among women in the time of the Arab Spring

From the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean, Arab women have surprised observers with their strong presence in the field in 30 core revolutionary activities, demonstrating their great courage and efficiency in organizing, communicating, leading, and confronting.

"On 18 January 2011 in Cairo, a blogger named Asmaa Mahfouz published a recording on Facebook calling for a gathering in Tahrir Square on 25 January 2011, to protest the regime of Hosni Mubarak. On the following day, the Yemeni activist and journalist Tawakkol Karman participated in a solidarity demonstration with the Tunisian people, and she called for Yemenis to stand against their corrupt rulers. Her arrest on 22 January led to a wave of protests, which in turn led to the launch of a mass popular movement. In Libya, women started the revolution that ended with the fall of the Gaddafi regime, when the mothers, daughters, and widows of the men killed in 1996 at the Abu Salem prison in Tripoli took to the streets of Benghazi to declare their rejection of a system that kills freedom."[1]

But the Arab world teems with difference, under the same label. The women's movements differ from one Arab country to another, according to the interaction of cultural,

economic, and political factors, and the stance of ruling elites toward equality between men and women.

These and other historical differences in the paths of each women's movement have led to the differentiation in the legal status of women from one country to another. All envy Tunisian women for winning full equality in both public and private affairs, whereas international reports provide distressing indications of the situation of women in Yemen in terms of political representation, health, and legal rights.[2] As for the rest of the countries, the situation of women in terms of equality and rights won varies, from gains under threat in Egypt and Syria where severe restrictions on freedoms of expression and assembly do not leave room for women's freedom, and in Bahrain where women still struggle to enter the political sphere.

Differences in the perception of women's rights and the role of Islamic law in legislation

An exploratory survey by Gallup showed that women in the countries of the Arab Spring do not view women's right to work outside the home in the same way.[3] While 92 percent of Bahraini women, 89 percent of Egyptian and Tunisian women, and 87 percent of Yemeni women accept this, the rate of acceptance drops to 66 percent for Libyan women and 58 percent for Syrian women.[4] As for the right to initiate divorce, the rate of acceptance varies from 86 percent of Egyptians to 32 percent of Syrians,[5] while the percentage accepting Islamic law as the sole source of legislation varies from 58 percent of Yemenis to only 15 percent of Syrians. This illustrates how women have entered into the revolutions with different perspectives and aspirations concerning their rights.

But Arab women share in claiming equality with men in terms of educational opportunities (with the percentage of

educated women rising to 80 percent in the past 40 years) and employment opportunities (women still represent just a quarter of the workforce in the Arab world, whereas the proportion is half in the rest of the countries of the world), and likewise they share in their weakness in terms of parliamentary representation (9 percent, that is, less than even the lowest global rates of 10 percent).[6]

Arab women also share in the demand for modern culture, as there are female academics, journalists, artists, lawyers, doctors, and citizens who communicate and network by means of electronic communications, writing blogs, and evincing their opinions on politics, society, religion, and women's and men's affairs. Naturally, they often share language and religion, as well as in marginalization in a patriarchal culture. Yet this did not prevent women from consciously and loudly participating in the revolutions of freedom and dignity that swept the countries of the region.

Tunisia: the avant-garde laboratory

The participation of women at the time of the revolution

Women had a distinct media presence, as female lawyers, activists, and researchers participated in televised and radio debates. Women of all generations participated in organizing demonstrations and led some of them effectively and energetically, and sometimes confronted and challenged the repression of the security forces.

Milestones

Women's rights are guaranteed in the Tunisian constitution: beginning in 1952, the state put a stop to the marriage of minors, banned polygamy, imposed a divorce court, prevented men from assuming automatic guardianship over

the property of their wives, and gave women the right to vote. The historic legal gains have allowed Tunisian women to play a distinctive role in the political movement. After the revolution, women continued to take part in demonstrations and sit-ins to protest against the threat of Islamists, to protect their hard-won rights, and to refuse the intimidation of Salafists.

During the transitional period

Strengths

Women enjoyed the benefit of an election law stipulating parity in the electoral lists between male and female candidates, which led to women winning 24 percent of the parliamentary seats. The Nahda (Renaissance) Party presented a list composed of 24 percent women. Two female employees were appointed to the cabinet, which included 26 men. In response to the suggestion of the Nahda Party, 28 women's associations and human rights associations sent a new draft constitution safeguarding the rights of women and rejecting their political and religious exploitation. Human rights associations and networks supported an open request to the constituent assembly to not interfere with personal status issues during the transitional period.[7]

Weaknesses and trade-offs

The post-revolution situation suggests that cases of violence against women are systematic, leading to further marginalization and the violation of women's rights, such as some officials imposing mandatory gender segregation at universities or forcing female residents of colleges to wear "Islamic" clothing, as well as the return of "customary (*'urfi*) marriage" to smooth the way for reviving polygamy. Since December 2011, a group of Salafists has sought to impose the *niqab* using methods of intimidation and menacing threats.

Challenges

Gender equality has a long history in Tunisia, with women not only going to university, working outside the home, and having political representation, but also being protected by law in terms of equality in personal status and private life, including the right to reproductive health.[8] Therefore, women were strongly present when the revolution started, calling for freedom, justice, and human dignity. The conflicts and contending forces in Tunisian society have multiplied, particularly between political Islam and secularism, such as in terms of drafting a new constitution, since the women's movements fear for their gains, owing to the attempts to impose Islamic law.

Egypt: worrisome change

The participation of women at the time of the revolution

Egyptian women constituted about 30 percent of participants in the revolution.[9] Women confronted security forces from the front row, wrote slogans, shouted chants, organized demonstrations, talked with the media, and were continuously present in Tahrir Square. Additionally, they faced their share of imprisonment, torture, and assault.

Milestones

Some of the female activists wrote almost daily blogs, and some of them persevered for the full 18 days in the square, during which they participated in almost every aspect of the work there, including security and pat-downs. The female protesters on the whole were young girls, but women of all ages, backgrounds, and political tendencies came to Tahrir Square as well. When they were arrested, they were subjected to virginity tests.[10]

During the transitional period

Strengths

The Egyptian women's movement accumulated experience throughout history, and distinctive personalities emerged, like Huda Shaarawy, Nabawiyya Musa, Malak Hifni Nassif, Nawal El Saadawi, and many others. Civil society and the human rights discourse were active and diverse. A new women's leadership emerged with a more radical view of women's rights during the revolution, such Kholoud Bidak or Ikram Yusuf.

Weaknesses and trade-offs

The prevailing political conflict in the 1980s led to the rising authority of religion as a source of legislation in matters of personal status, at the expense of women's rights, with respect to inheritance, marital obedience, patriarchal authority, right to divorce, guardianship over marriage, permission to travel, etc. The military junta, a repressive patriarchal body par excellence, clung to power, which reinforced the exclusion of women from centers of decision-making, marginalized them in the constitutional committee and the committees entrusted with writing the new constitution, and reduced the number of female ministers in the cabinet from three to two. And the victory of the Islamists in the parliamentary elections, with their doublespeak about women rights, increased the tension between the secular liberal currents and the Islamic rulers, particularly the Salafists who recommended abrogating the laws that granted women the rights to child custody and divorce at her initiative (*khala'*).

Challenges

The presence of Islamic movements in power during the transitional period put women's rights on the trading block, at the whims of political bargaining, posing a challenge to the women's movements and their prominent personalities. And this will require them to coordinate their efforts

with human rights associations and other currents (such as Islamic feminism) advocating social justice and equality first, then drawing up a strategy to consolidate the gains of women in the confrontation with Islamist rule.

Yemen: stardom and nonviolence

The participation of women at the time of the revolution

Women and women's associations participated in the demonstrations, provided logistical support for the sit-ins, and organized large women's demonstrations. Women constituted a fifth of the protesters in Change Square, organized coordinating committees in the major cities, and men accompanied their sisters and daughters to Freedom Square.

Milestones

Yemeni women established several committees, among them the Committee on Information, and Tawakkol Karman took the stage to address the crowds, was arrested by the security forces, and released after a week. In October 2011, hundreds of women demonstrated in Sanaa, burning their hijabs in symbolic protest against Ali Abdullah Saleh's reluctant slowness in leaving power.

During the transitional period

Strengths

The revolution allowed women to get out of the private sphere and into the public domain in large numbers, which led to increasing number of female activists in the revolution. The emergence of Karman led Yemeni women to participate more abundantly, as she had been the symbol for the leadership of the revolution and the first Arab woman to win the Nobel Prize. Karman's nonviolent struggle focused on political reform of society and the strengthening of the leadership role of women in light of the Islamic movement's

unclear stance toward the issue of women's rights. Karman remains the living ideal of the "Islamic feminist" movement that supports an approach to the issue of woman through a new effort to interpret the Qu'ran through *ijtihad* supporting "equality of the sexes."[11]

Weaknesses and trade-offs

There is serious discrimination between men and women in Yemen, which is ranked last in the global report on gender differences. The social status of women is very low, 45 percent of the population below the poverty line and 35 percent suffering from unemployment, while women's unemployment is 74 percent. Underage marriage of girls at the age of eight remains in force in rural areas, which contributes to the reduction in the rate of girls' enrollment in school (41 percent in 2007) and the increasing fertility rate (71 percent in 2010) among minors between 15 and 19 years old.[12]

Challenges

Yemen has taken a path of national dialogue between representatives of civil society and the government, seeking to prepare and formulate a new constitution in 2013 and hold general elections in 2014. But in light of the current weakness of the women's movement and the fragile social situation, the basic challenge to female activists remains combating poverty and illiteracy.

Bahrain: the strangled revolution

The participation of women at the time of the revolution

The participation of women in Bahrain paralleled that of men, playing a role in the organization and leadership in 2012. Women were in the vanguard of demanding reforms; many were subjected to arrest and torture, and some were tried by emergency military tribunals.

Milestones

Journalists and activists in civil society organizations uncovered the repression of peaceful demonstrations, educators called for general strikes, and female doctors and nurses provided medical assistance to the wounded. Zainab Khawaja went on a hunger strike demanding better conditions for her detained father Abdul Hadi Khawaja, becoming an icon of the Bahraini revolution. The majority of female participants in the gathering of the Pearl Roundabout were those who had participated some years ago in the demonstrations against the women's law.

Strengths

The Gallup poll indicated a high level of awareness among Bahraini women regarding equal rights between the sexes.

Weaknesses and trade-offs

One of the most important weaknesses has been caused by the regime's official propaganda, which framed the demands of the revolution as sectarian and exclusively Shia. This reinforced the vertical division of the Bahraini people, and weakened the trans-sectarian national women's movement.

Challenges

Bridging the sectarian split in Bahrain is the top priority for Bahraini women, who must work to reunify Bahraini society and the women's movement.

Libya: the supported revolution

The participation of women at the time of the revolution

Women played a key role from the start of the revolution, as the mothers and widows of the men killed in 1996 at the Abu Salim prison undertook the first demonstration on 15

February 2011 before the Court of Justice in Benghazi, protesting against the arrest of their lawyer. Libyan women participated in the mass protests of various Libyan cities. When the revolution began to militarize, women participated in the smuggling of arms, organizing relief, and providing support to the injured and their families.

Milestones

The female lawyer Iman al-Obeidi told journalists in front of the lenses of the world media that she had been raped at the hands of the security forces. Suad Wahhabi documented 45 cases of rape, and women gathered in a silent march with their mouths covered and sent a letter to the office of the prime minister demanding support for the victims of rape in November 2011.

During the transitional period

Strengths

Women have gained increasing opportunities for education and work. The revolution mobilized numbers of women who began demanding equality with men, and Libyan women began to form women's associations and seek new members in an effort to improve women's representation.

Weaknesses and trade-offs

Libya stands in 91st place out of 102 with respect to gender equality. This failure is a result of patriarchal traditions rooted in the dominant tribal culture. Although Libyan women have had the right to vote since 1964 and "a charter of the rights and obligations of women" since 1997, these were a dead letter under the authoritarian political regime.

Challenges

In light of the legal, social, and historical background mentioned above, and the lack of an independent women's movement so far, Libyan women will face an existential

challenge to their progress toward equality, participation, and freedom. In the context of transitional justice, condemning rape as a crime against humanity will give Libyan women the opportunity to raise the issue of sexual violence publicly and help them escape from the culture of silence that victims are forced to live.

Syria: the intractable revolution

The participation of women at the time of the revolution

Syrian women demonstrated through the country in women's demonstrations or as a special wing of men's demonstrations. Women participated in the organization of protests, leading some of them and starting chants and songs. They endured detention, verbal abuse, torture, mutilation, rape, and the murder of either herself or one of the members of her family. There was also the phenomenon of abducting women, as a means to pressure members of her family. Women organized some of the local coordinating committees, and worked as volunteer journalists to document events in the field and send information and images to the international media.

Milestones

Women leaders like Suheir Attasi and Razan Zeitouneh emerged, and both male and female demonstrators chanted rhyming slogans like the following:

"The voices of women are *thawrah*, [revolution], the voices of women are not*'awrah* [shame]"

"Our revolution is a revolution of women, salute Suheir and salute Razan"

Syrian women like Zeitouneh were honored with international awards such as the Sakharov and the Anna

Politkovskaya prizes. Syrian women considered the issue of detained rebels to be their central cause through their persistent chants and slogans on the subject, collecting images of the detainees, and bearing the hopes of their families.

Strengths

According to World Bank figures,[13] 68 percent of girls enter secondary school, while 41 percent enter the job market (2011). During the revolution, women have displayed a high level of mobilization, organization, and commitment over 18 months. Women have also produced gifted leaders. The numbers of female journalists, writers, lawyers, artists, and students committed to the revolution has created an image of great potential for the emergence of women's leadership and organizations in the future.

Weaknesses and trade-offs

On paper, Syrians are born equal,[14] while in reality, the representation of women in parliament does not exceed 12 percent. There is a single, governmental women's organization, the General Union of Syrian Women." The regime uses women's rights as a commodity for bargaining with the Islamists, such as abandoning the legal age of marriage stipulated by CEDAW by adding a reservation to this item as "contrary to Islamic law."

The fundamental problem remains the repressive climate, dominant for 50 years, which has confiscated the freedom of opinion and expression, assembly, and demonstration, leading to the freezing of the libratory path for Syrian women. Additionally, Syrian society remains traditional and patriarchal. The Gallup poll showed that Syrian women are the least defensive of the right to divorce and the right to work outside the home among women of the Arab Spring countries.

Challenges

Syrian women stand before an arduous path to equality, freedom, and social justice in light of the militarization and increasing violence of the revolution, including sexual violence, and the wide-spread proliferation of death and destruction.

Common elements among the women of the Arab Spring countries

The implications and significance of women's participation

The active and effective presence of women in the Arab revolutions has humanized Arabs and the revolutions, astonishing the world and making Arabs discover themselves anew.

Shattering the stereotype

Voluntary participation in the revolutions has opened space for women to live equally on the ground with men in reality, and their participation added to the roles that they can assume in the public sphere, such as:

The role of political activist and opinion leader through blogs, or public speaking, or newspaper articles; the role of social activist that uses her abilities and social and professional relationships in the service of the revolution, as this public woman is present, bold, and organizes demonstrations and sit-ins; the role of intellectual played by writers, human rights activists, journalists, and artists that enriches the intellectual level among women, who write and appear on the satellite-broadcast media, speaking with journalists about the purposes of the revolution and the ferocity of its repression.

Women and civil society

In recent decades, there has been a remarkable openness in familial relations, with consanguineous marriage declining (from 25 to 15 percent in Egypt for example), and likewise a decline in the marriage of minors (except in Yemen).[15] Illiteracy, as well, fell from 59 percent in the 1970s to 35 percent in the 1990s, while illiteracy among girls between the ages of 15 and 24 specifically fell from 45 percent in the 1980s to 4.19 percent at the turn of the new millennium.[16] During the past three decades the numbers of female college students has risen, as have the numbers of internet users in the past decade. All of this has created fissures in the traditional family structure, and opened a wide gap in Arab societies, allowing women to infiltrate the spaces of popular revolution in order to express their dreams and aspirations.

Women and the coming of Islamists to power

There is growing concern among many regarding the emergence of political parties and organizations with a hardline Islamic religious reference in public life. There are signs of this trend potentially growing in power in a number of Arab countries, which casts doubts over the aspired progress toward women's rights.

Summation: from participation in the revolution to equality in democracy

In light of the preceding, some issues emerged that strongly support the participation and rights of women, such as:

1. Demanding and participating in the path of transitional justice (Libya)
2. Demanding and participating in the path of national reconciliation (Syria and Bahrain)

3. Working toward the criminalization of sexual violence (Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia)

4. Fighting against women's deprivation of their basic social and economic rights, as stipulated in CEDAW

5. Fighting the dominant male culture through outreach and raising awareness of women's rights as citizens.

In terms of women's rights, national reconciliation and transitional justice open new fields to women to frame discriminatory violence against them as war crimes and crimes against humanity, and to demand the legal criminalization of domestic violence. The women's movement is the key player qualified to lead this dynamic, but this will require a critical review of its rhetoric, practices, and public image, in light of the redrawn public political map. And we should not forget as well the emergence of female and male activists in human rights associations, as well as the presence of female activists in the Islamic women's movement. It is imperative that the existing women's movement keep a watchful eye on the practices and laws concerning women's rights and equality, and that it lead, organize, and pursue a demand-based protest movement. The battle for women's equality is in its infancy, but it is the only guarantee of arriving at an equitable democracy. The voices of the women of the Arab Spring undoubtedly must remain prominent and unstifled.

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14

WOMEN OF EGYPT: FROM *THAWRAH* (REVOLUTION) TO *'AWRAH* (SHAME)

Shereen Abou el-Naga

Abstract

During the great Tahrir Square sit-in, which lasted from 28 January until 11 February 2011, the women in Egypt succeeded in regaining ownership of the public sphere, which had become an unwelcoming space for women, caught between traditionalist discourse and state feminism. Egyptian women believed that they had reclaimed the full rights of citizenship, but the resistance in the square had summoned a "counter revolution." Egyptian women's post-revolution experience thus parallels the situation of the rights of women in nearly all post-independence third world countries. As soon as the first signs of victory appeared on 11 February, women were transformed into symbolic bearers of tradition, stripped of their humanity and their voices in post-revolution politics.

The extended moment — 18 days — seemed wonderful: no harassment, no discrimination, no segregation, and no ordinary division of roles. A moment like a dream, the slogan "the people want the fall of the regime" ringing out constantly.

During the great sit-in, which lasted from 28 January until 11 February 2011, the women in Egypt succeeded in regaining ownership of the street or the public sphere, which had become repellent to women. Because the street was subjugated to the discourse of either the constantly consumed superficial religious culture that chose to distance itself from the development of society, or a governmental discourse content with the "state feminism" of the National Council for Women and conferences supported by the president's wife, presented at the time as a facade of modernity to Egyptian society in general and to the West in particular.

During the great sit-in, women believed that they had reclaimed the full rights of citizenship. This belief was built on what was demonstrated in the square, the genuine acceptance of pluralism, whether of creed, sex, or appearance.

Despite confirming the opinions of critics, among them Terry Eagleton, that "cultural change is far more difficult than political change,"[1] there is another explanation, which is that the presence of women in Tahrir Square fits the problem of full, genuine "representation" for all walks of life, the different communities composing a people.

Women were present for all of the political activities and events that preceded the revolution, and the authorities did not treat them any differently men, unless perhaps worse, as they often resorted to using the system of corporeal and spiritual honor to exclude women from the public political sphere. Women were likewise found in civil society with a strong and highly visible presence, though not always effective, as was the case for most of the non-governmental organizations and community associations that were subject to freedom-restricting laws.

Thus the emergence of women in the revolution of 25 January was natural, an inevitable result of all the previous struggles. An activist in the 6 April movement, Asmaa Mahfouz, published videos on the internet calling for citizens to come out on 25 January. The public sphere — Tahrir Square in this case — was filled with these women, of all social classes, professions, and age groups, which meant that women had won their place in the public sphere, built around the rights of citizenship and the dignity of the citizen. In this respect, all of the fabricated barriers that had been erected to block the participation of women in public life and in the political sphere ceased to exist, or rather, collapsed. To give just a few examples of such contrived obstacles: the mixing (of genders), the possibility of physical contacts, and dealing with the other as a stranger.

If the square had transformed into a center of stubborn resistance, then this resistance in turn had summoned a counter-resistance outside the square — what is now termed the "counter revolution" — that was standing literally on the margins of the square to hunt for victims. The women in the square were safe, and the men considered the challenge for there to be no prejudice or harassment toward women, since the experiences with the authorities had been bitter and engraved in their minds.

The safety of women was the point of fundamental challenge after the phenomenon of sexual harassment spread over the last decade in Egypt. The authorities frequently promoted the idea that there was always "a few lurkers" in any gathering or demonstration that would sexually harass women. As for the margins of the square, they would change according to the attacks of the "baltagiya" or "thugs,"[2] whose numbers completely contradicted this image. Some of the most horrifying stories came out of the violence of

these criminals hunting for women, terrible stories that made every woman think long and hard before leaving the square, or coming to the square in the first place.

This hunting included brutal beatings, sexual assault, and misogynous slurs. Among the most talked about of these horrific stories was what happened to Noha Radwan, professor of Arabic literature at the University of California, who came specifically to participate in the sit-in, and wrote and published the full story on her Facebook page.[3]

At the same time, the propaganda against the resistance in the square depended on dramatically distorting the image of the women participants, not only fabricating many stories about their behavior, but also employing many women in this propaganda campaign. Famous women in the broadcast media, the arts, and print journalism appeared to try — under the direction of the authorities — to discredit everyone in the square. They all focused on the issue of national liberation. Unfortunately, or rather in order to defend the events in an unprecedented way, these women did not stop to think about the wretched fate of "feminism" before the national cause. This is the fate treated by all feminist literatures seeking to explain the state of the rights of women in the post-independence third world countries.[4]

The body profaned

The Algerian revolution (1954-1962) is still a vivid example, as the militant and academic Zulekha Belkdor pointed out, that after independence "we understood that we had participated in the fighting as citizens with full rights, but that we must return to our homes and keep silent, that is what we could not accept."[5] Things were not much different in Egypt. As soon as the first signs of victory appeared on 11 February, women were dragged to the "national" battleground as the

principal concern at that point, not realizing that they had been used as a tool.

The actual battleground is consistently connected with the restructuring of state institutions, the establishment of new revolutionary parties, and the reformulation of societal thinking in light of the political changes. In this battle, women are stripped of their humanity and transformed into a symbol in order to uphold the values of tradition and heritage, so that women bear the burden of preserving identity. The first sign was the skepticism toward the martyrdom of Sally Zahran in the early days of the revolution, then the placing of a veil on her head in the images of her using Photoshop. Such signs continued to appear, one after another.

On International Women's Day, 8 March 2011, a large group of women headed toward Tahrir Square to celebrate, but they were first scathingly mocked by passers-by, then verbally and physically sexually abused, and chased through the side streets surrounding Tahrir Square. On the following day, 9 March, the sit-in was broken up by force, and everyone who was there was arrested — men and women both — and lead to the Egyptian Museum, where all were tortured, and then transferred to military prison. The women received an additional share in all this, with forced virginity tests, acknowledged by the ruling military council after American and European newspapers wrote about this practice, and international organizations denounced it. In this way, the objectives of the repressive, patriarchal institutions converged with the goals of a culture that sees a woman only as a body to be punished, hidden, or violated.

The story of the virginity tests contains several indications of the status of women in a society that has just won "independence." To begin with, society denied that such a violation had occurred, as demonstrated in readers' comments on newspaper articles and in everyday conversations. After

one of the victims of this violation testified to her experience on YouTube, the comments obscenely challenged her honor, condemning her participation in the sit-in. However, this girl Samira Ibrahim showed uncommon courage, and filed a lawsuit against the military council, and specifically against the doctor conscripted to perform the virginity test. Samira Ibrahim and all the other women received their "reward" for these efforts, when on 10 March 2012, a court deemed the conscripted doctor innocent.

This was an explicit declaration by the military permitting the violation of the female body. The parliamentary majority did not present any gesture of solidarity with the women. The Freedom and Justice Party (the political arm of the Muslim Brotherhood) and the Salafi Nour party considered what happened to these girls to be not their concern in the slightest.

The symbolic indications continued to appear, one after another, near the end of the year when the incidents outside the Council of Ministers occurred, with the forcible breaking up of the sit-in on the morning of 16 December. What happened in the events at the Council of Ministers to the Lecturer in the Faculty of Education at the University of Banha Hind Nafa' was repeated in the case of the "woman among girls."[6]

In the first case, Hind Nafa' was brutally beaten nearly to death by the military police. Her family then punished her by effectively imprisoning her and preventing her from talking to the media, and the people in her hometown slandered her through gossip and hearsay questioning her honor. In the second case, the whole world witnessed a girl lying on the ground who had been stripped by the severity of the lynching, exposing her brassiere. If Hind Nafa' was punished by her family, then "the woman among girls" was punished by society as a whole, which did not hesitate to blame her for what happened.[7] This was the violation of the

revolutionary body that had thought it possessed a place in public space. This thought then quickly disappeared, and the moment of the dream was shattered. If women had begun the year as revolutionaries, then they ended it naked.

Legalizing violation

The emergence of the discourse of the Salafi current was one of the first signs that signaled the end of the role of women in revolutionary action. This was followed by the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafists winning the parliamentary majority. This then enabled the Salafi movement to achieve several goals in record time. First: promoting hardline rhetoric toward women; second: promoting hardline rhetoric regarding other religions; third: preoccupying society with the issue of Islam and the church. The Salafists raised Qurans and the Copts raised crosses. Amidst this conflict, Camilia Shehata, for example, was crushed between two hardline institutions. She did not exist as a woman, but as a symbol in the political-religious conflict, as a means of opening the door to a troubling sectarian discourse.

The Atfeeh Church was also burned due to a rumor about a relationship between a Muslim girl and a Coptic boy. The Imbaba Church massacre occurred only because of a woman who was suffering in her married life and fled from her Coptic husband to marry another man, who was Muslim. In this way, the bulk of the attention of the Salafi movement turned toward conflict with Copts, by taking any available aspect of the Christian religion as a pretext. Women, whether Muslim or Coptic, became the victims of an extremist, patriarchal institution. In other words, the close linkage between sectarian rhetoric and the troubling discourse toward women appears to draw on both preexisting sexism and a desire to curtail the role of women in public amid the proliferation of religiosity.

This discourse of discrimination transformed into the predominant discourse after the parliamentary elections. Some imagined at the outset that the attitude of the "Muslim Sisters" would be different; however, the women's wing of the Freedom and Justice Party seemed more bigoted than the male wing. The Muslim Sisters chose to separate themselves from the masses of women on 8 March. Their first women's conference was inaugurated by Mohammed El-Beltagy, the secretary general of the party, who stressed in his opening speech: "We will no longer be required to report periodically to any party,"[8] in reference to United Nations committees.

This meant that the situation of women would be considered an internal matter, about which reports to international organizations would not be required. This statement likewise paved the way for the idea of abrogating Egypt's signing of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which was later proposed in parliament. On the whole, the conference seemed like a swift step backwards, and a declaration in complete conflict with all of the rights gained by women over years of struggle. Moreover, it launched a severe attack on the National Council for Women, considering it responsible for issuing all of the personal status laws equitable to women, which must be reformulated "according to Islamic law."

There was another march involving thousands of women from the Journalists' Syndicate toward the parliament, celebrating international women's day. These women demanded a role for women in the constituent assembly that would devise a new constitution by allotting 50 percent of the seats to women, full equality between men and women in wages and bonuses, and increasing the penalties for sexual harassment against women and all other forms of persecution and discrimination, in addition to

reworking policies regarding maternity leave and nurseries at the workplace.

Furthermore, they demanded an increased budget for health care and health awareness for women, and the amendment of personal status laws to guarantee the rights of women. Slogans rhyming in the original Arabic were chanted, reflecting the significance of being caught between the hammer of the military and the anvil of the religious trend, such as: "Down, down with military rule… Egypt's women are the red line;" "the voices of women are not 'awrah (shame), the voices of women are thawrah, thawrah [revolution];" "the first demand of women: the military to the barracks;" "Neither Brotherhood nor Salafism… Women in the constitutional convention;" "They are the two dangers, the military and the Brotherhood."

The demands and slogans emphasize that women view women's rights as part of the cause of democracy, as well as that they are fully aware of the serious danger of military fascism and religious fascism. This shows the dissonance between this radical feminist discourse, which calls for more rights and guarantees, and between party feminism, which relies on religious ideology and calls for a return to fewer rights and less guarantees.

The military establishment, which ruled during the transitional period, cannot be considered any better than the hardline religious institutions. If the first crushes women, considers them to be subordinate, and sees them only as bodies that must be hidden, then the second only asks of women the same subservience and submission, seeing them only as bodies to be violated. In both cases, women are effectively reduced to a body, and transformed politically into the ground on which deals take place after the battles end. This does not much differ from what the previous regime did in relation to the status of women, except that state feminism mitigated the severity

of polarization over the issue, as much as it usurped the grounds for women's action from women's rights and defense associations.

Which future?

The future of the women's rights movement, or any intellectual feminist struggle, appears very cloudy. For after the religious trends won the majority of seats in parliament, it seems that a fatwa (non-binding advisory opinion) on women comes out every day, and all of these advisory opinions strip women of their status as full civil actors with active capacities and their citizenship. A project to lower the age of marriage to 16 years old has been proposed. Then the issue of abolishing the 2000 divorce law was raised, under the pretext that it increases the divorce rate and that women have no right to divorce their husbands. This trend, which ostensibly wants to cut ties to the previous regime, only does so by revoking the gains made toward women's right in that era.

Women's rights do not have adequate space in the programs of the parties that were born from the womb of the revolution and took liberalism as their slogan. The Egyptian Social Democratic Party mentions women in only part of one sentence, in the context of speaking about equality. The principles of the Free Egyptians Party states its "belief in the role of women in society and the need to enable them to participate in all fields and take on all public functions." The Popular Socialist Alliance Party is perhaps the one party that accorded the rights of women an appropriate amount of space. Its platform mentions the need to "address all forms of discrimination against women, beginning from citizenship laws, through the inequality of wages in some sectors, and concluding with the right to marry and divorce freely while maintaining all of their material rights; the adoption

of the a woman's right to maternity and childcare leave with full pay and reinstatement; increased deterrence and punishments for sexual harassment of women, especially in the workplace; the expansion and increase of the budget for women's health care and health education; the adoption of state policies encouraging women to hold public office and their professional advancement; and the encouragement of cooperation between men and women in carrying out the tasks of family life and child care."

When the battle of writing the new constitution began to loom, a number of women's organizations[9] presented a careful reading of a group of Arab constitutions (Tunisia and Morocco) and international constitutions (Germany, Sweden, and South Africa) to examine the articles affirming equality and equal opportunities. This means that the issue of constitutional citizenship has now become the core interest of "post-independence" society, in anticipation of its regression.

What is remarkable is that women in particular are the ones turning to this matter, and not the revolutionary political parties, for example. While women are keen to claim their rights with an emphasis on the issue of democracy, it does not seem that men (the parties and the unions) are paying much attention to women's rights. On March 10, a women's delegation to parliament delivered the demands that must be met, through the constitution, to ensure the preservation of these gains[10]:

1. Working toward achieving equality and equal opportunity for all citizens, women and men, without discrimination because of sex, origin, language, religion, creed, wealth, social status, political views, or disability, in all texts of the constitution and laws, and guaranteeing its application on the ground through legally established mechanisms to monitor the application of the laws, and to both record and address violations.

2. Parity in the formation of the constituent assembly to prepare the constitution, with equal numbers of men and women with competence and experience, in order to ensure the fair representation of women in the drafting of the constitution, as a consensus document guaranteeing rights for all Egyptians, regardless of parliamentary majority and minority.

3. Taking all measures to ensure fair civil and political rights for women at all levels and their representation in all decision-making positions, in political parties, trade unions, civil society organizations, and state legislative, executive, and judicial institutions.

4. Securing the economic, social, and cultural rights of all female and male citizens, in order to ensure the realization of social justice and human dignity, including the right to work, education, quality health care, social security, and a clean and healthy environment, with the development of mechanisms to ensure access to these rights.

5. Committing to all international conventions ratified by Egypt protecting the rights of women and children, and human rights in general, and working to remove the reservations on CEDAW, in addition to the need to apply the provisions of the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

6. Establishing rights of citizenship, the rule of law, and the guarantees of an independent judiciary and swift justice, as the basis of stability in society.

7. Adhering to the law of divorce initiated by the wife, which both the Islamic Research Academy and the Supreme Constitutional Court affirmed is in agreement with Islamic law, while ensuring the existence of fair personal status laws for all members of the family, and taking all necessary measures to guarantee the rights of women and children to prompt litigation and

enforcement of judgments, particularly in the provision of alimony.

8. Adhering to the laws relating to children, in order to achieve what is in the best interest for the children, especially regarding education, custody, and supervision.

9. Passing a law as a deterrent against violence in general, and specifically against domestic violence, institutional violence; violence in the street, in the family, and in public places; and the crimes of rape and sexual harassment, in order to provide protection and guarantee the physical and psychological integrity of all members of the family, especially for women and children.

On the same day these demands were delivered, the conscripted physician who had performed the virginity tests was ruled innocent.

Moving forward, the clear features of future milestones regarding the status of women cannot be predicted; however, the pressing, urgent need in this cloudy moment is to strengthen and support all women's organizations, specifically those whose work focuses on advocacy and rights. Attention should be paid to forging alliances and networking at the local, regional, and international levels. And because women's rights cannot be deafened in isolation from the rights of citizenship, the reading of the complex political scene must include all of the entangled political actors who have made the handover of power to an elected president the sole goal, ignoring all of the worsening socio-economic conditions, which directly affect the status of women.

Early on, namely on 8 March 2011, the well-known Turkish researcher Deniz Kandiyoti wrote an article on the hope and the dangers for women in the Arab Spring: "In short, whatever the sociological realities on the ground there is no automatic path leading from a mobilized citizenry to an inclusive democracy, from aspirations to governance. The nature of the political compacts in successor regimes will be

absolutely crucial to determining the degrees of latitude for a politics of gender equality (or, for that matter, for a pluralist politics of inclusion). The greatest peril lies in truncated and aborted transitions where women's rights are offered up as an item of populist compromise."[11]

Endnotes

1. Terry Eagleton, *After Theory* (London: Penguin, 2003).
2. A colloquial term given to outlaws, repeat offenders, and those who profit from the use of violence.
3. Noha Radwan tried to enter the square at a point where some of the "baltagiya" were congregating, and one of them asked her explicitly for her opinion of Mubarak. When she said "difference of opinion should not spoil cordiality over the issue," the man grabbed her and threw her to a group of men who beat her severely, and one of them sexually assaulted her. All the while, she called for a help to an army officer standing nearby on a tank, who refused to help her. But when he realized that she was near death, he allowed her to hide inside an armored vehicle.
4. See for example, Kumari Jayawardena, *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World* (London: Zed Books, 1986).
5. *Middle East Online*, 16 March 2012.
6. A girl was dragged, beaten, and stripped naked at the hands of army soldiers, and this was all filmed by the cameras of the mass media. She subsequently disappeared after she was subjected to this violation, and refused to reveal herself. Activists have given her title of "woman among girls" to honor her.
7. A crude discourse spread regarding what the girl was wearing, and the reason why she went to this area. Women themselves reproduced this discourse in many cases.
8. Ikhwan Online, "The Freedom and Justice conference sets women's priorities for the next stage," 8 March 2012
9. The "Women and Memory" Foundation invited individuals, parties, and civil society organizations, for example.
10. Statement of the rally "Women with the Revolution," signed by a coalition of women's organizations and several other organizations as well. The statement is published on the website of the New Woman Foundation and the Women and Memory forum.
11. Deniz Kandiyoti, "Promise and Peril: Women and the 'Arab Spring'." 8 March 2011.
    http://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/deniz-kandiyoti/promise-and-peril-women-and-%E2%80%98arab-spring%E2%80%99

15

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE ARAB SPRING

Nazih Darwish

Abstract

The sudden "Arab Spring" has been characterized by a number of new elements, perhaps most notably the professional and highly efficient use of information technology for the first time in the history of revolutions. This study specifically discusses the usage of social media such as the cell phones, mobile networks, and social networking sites for networking, communicating, and transmitting video, images, messages, and information. This paper contains a brief overview of the state of the internet and social media in the region and a rapid review of the impact of these media on the revolutions in Tunisia, Egypt, and Syria

Introduction

The sudden "Arab Spring" has been characterized by a number of new elements, perhaps most notably the professional

and highly efficient use of information technology for the first time in the history of revolutions. Even the Arab dictator did not hesitate, in his moments of rage and despair, to blame this new media for the outbreak and spread of the revolution.[1]

This study specifically discusses the usage of cell phones equipped with digital cameras; telephone networks now capable of providing internet access; and social networking sites: YouTube, Flickr, and Daily Motion for transmitting movies and images; Facebook and Twitter for networking, communicating, and sending and receiving messages and information; and blogs to raise ideas, start discussions, and incite public opinion.

Things begin with a simple digital camera-equipped mobile phone carried by the "demonstrator,"[2] recording events as they are witnessed; their images are uploaded to a website like YouTube or Flickr, and shared from there on social networking sites.

The world, in awe, discovered the capacity and effectiveness of social networking sites, especially Twitter and Flickr, in transmitting the proceedings of the "Green Revolution," which in a few short hours after the announcement of the results of the presidential elections in 2009 swept through Tehran, protesting against electoral fraud through invalidation or vote stealing. Angry Iranians resorted to Twitter, after journalists and reporters were banned from covering the bloody repression, as a window for the world to the Iranian street. The Western media did not hesitate to transmit "tweets" directly from the place of the events, to build websites dedicated to this, and to name this revolution the "Twitter Revolution."

In the Arab Spring, the traditional media has similarly been absent, and alternative media have surfaced and gained great legitimacy, becoming in many places and times nearly the sole source for news and images. Social

networking sites have transformed into sites of combative political activity, attracting thousands of young Arab male and female protesters. Technology has quickly snowballed, its influence growing as it rolls from one space to another.

This paper contains a quick overview of the state of the internet and social media in the region, as well as a rapid review of the impact of this media on the revolutions in Tunisia, Egypt, and Syria, and concludes with an attempt to answer the question: "Are the Arab revolutions truly 'Facebook revolutions'?"

I. The internet and social networking sites

The following statistics[3] are necessary to understand the reality of the role played by Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube:

A. Facebook: Facts

The total number of Facebook users in the Arab world reached 45,194,542 by the end of June 2012, compared with 37,390,837 in at the beginning of the year, which was already a 50 percent increase from June 2011 (29,845,871 users).[4]

At the end of June 2012, the average percentage of Facebook users across all Arab countries was slightly more than 12 percent, compared to 10 percent at the beginning of the year, 8 percent in June 2011, and less than 6 percent at the end of 2010.

The number of Facebook users in the Arab world almost tripled in the past two years (June 2010 – June 2012), an increase of almost 16 million users to 45 million users.

The percentage of female Facebook users remained constant, ranging between 33.5 to 34 percent over the past two years (33.7 percent in June 2012). This is lower than the global average, which is that nearly half of the Facebook users around the world are women.

Young people (between the ages of 15 and 29) constitute around 70 percent of Facebook users in the Arab world, a percentage that has remained fixed since April 2011.

The United Arab Emirates occupies first place among Arab countries, followed by Kuwait, then Qatar, Lebanon, and Jordan.

Egypt still has a quarter of all Facebook users in the Arab world. There have been more new users in the past year than in any other Arab country, adding 1.6 million new users in the period between January and June 2012. There were 4 million users during the period between January and October 2011.

14 Arab countries added more new Facebook users than Canada (as a percentage of the total population).

It is apparent that with the events of 2011 in Tunisia and Egypt, the number of new users in those two countries significantly increased, whereas the continuing Syrian revolution has contributed to the continuing rise in numbers of new users (in 2011 the percentage was 4.9 of the total population, and 6.5 percent in 2012.

B. Twitter: Facts

The number of active Twitter users in the Arab world at the end of June 2012 was estimated as 2,172,565, compared to only 652,333 at the end of September 2011.

The number of tweets produced by these active users in the Arab world in March 2012 was around 172,511,590, for 5,750,380 tweets daily. The monthly total for September 2011 was 36,889,500, for 1,229,650 per day.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia leads Arab countries with 830,291 users. Egypt, Saudi, Kuwait, the UAE, and Lebanon are the five largest Arab countries in terms of number of Twitter users.

In terms of percentage of total population, Kuwait has the most in the region with 12.83 percent.

C. YouTube: Facts

The number of views of video clips on YouTube doubled in the past two years in the Arab world, to 167 million views daily, which puts the area in second place (behind the United States of America, and in front of Brazil).

The number of views increased by 120 percent in the last six months.

Saudi Arabia leads the region with the highest number of views, followed by Egypt, Morocco, and the UAE.

II. Social media as a partner

This section quickly goes over the "living" examples that show the role played by social media in the revolutions of Tunisia, Egypt, and Syria. It should be noted that social media played a similar role in the revolutions of Libya and Yemen, the Bahrain uprising, and the movements in Jordan and Morocco.

A. The case of Tunisia

The Tunisian authorities have closely monitored the internet since 1995, preventing access not only to political sites, but also to social media, such as "Dailymotion." Video sharing sites were a special target for government censorship. Then the Tunisian authorities began launching attacks on the accounts of activists using Gmail or Facebook. When the "riots" began in early 2011, the government began arresting prominent web activists online.

At the beginning of the Tunisian movement, the Ben Ali government seized control over all kinds of media, preventing journalists from covering the Sidi Bouzid protests, and issuing reports through the official media describing the events as subversion or terrorism. However, Tunisians received an alternative view from Facebook, which was

uncontrolled, and could be used to transmit news and video clips to the rest of the world via YouTube and Dailymotion. As unrest spread, Tunisians documented the events on Facebook and followed others' updates, encouraging demonstrations in other parts of the country and citizens to take to the streets in every city. Through social media, video clips offered continuous views of the protests to the outside world.

Slim Amamou, one of the most famous Tunisian bloggers and founder of the blog "Ammar 404," was appointed "writer of state" in the first transitional government after the departure of Ben Ali, which was an acknowledgement of the importance and the important role played by social media. Amamou, known as slim404@, had been arrested in early 2011 no charges of piracy and hacking official governmental website, and was not released until after the fall of President Ben Ali. The revolution took him from prison to the ministry, along with the abolition of internet censorship in Tunisia. Amamou resigned from the Tunisian government on 23 May 2011.

Bashir Blaghi, founder of the "Free Tunis" page on Facebook said: "people called the revolution of Tunisia by a number of names: the Jasmine Revolution, the Sidi Bouzid uprising, the Tunisian Revolution, but there is one name that truly sums up what happened in Tunisia, which is the Facebook revolution."[5] He added: "side by side with Twitter, Facebook helped organize huge crowds that began to coalesce out of small, poor neighborhoods. This was essential and necessary to the organizational effort."

The blog "Nawaat" (nawaat.org), founded in 2004, filled the information vacuum left by the official blackout of news regarding the opposition and the revolution between December 2010 and January 2011 with information and live reports, documented in both Arabic and French, and supported by images and video. After the revolution, it

continued to play a prominent role in the media, and was nominated for the "Netizen" of the year award for 2011 from Reporters without Borders and the award for "indexing media censorship." The site remained blocked in Tunisia throughout the period preceding the departure of Ben Ali. Likewise, its founder Riad Gervla was forced to leave the country and move to France, where he helped to provide virtual space for opposition networks to contest censorship.[6]

The phenomenon of social networking sites closely resembles the snowballing effect, growing in importance and size as it rolls down the hill. The Facebook page "The people of Tunisia are burning themselves alive, Mr. President" attracted 15,000 visitors in just a few days, influencing thousands of young people in the surrounding countries and encouraging them to establish similar pages in support of the Tunisian revolution and to transmit information about its current events. One of the most important examples of this was the founding of the page "Egyptians support the Tunisian Revolution." Then the triumphant victory of the Tunisian Revolution came to encourage young Egyptians to rise up.

B. The case of Egypt

The government made efforts to disseminate information and internet technologies as two essential tools for the country's social and economic development, with governmental initiatives since 1999 to subsidize computers and provide free internet access to the public.[7]

The internet began to be used in revolutionary activity when the activist Israa Abdel Fattah called for a strike on 6 April 2008, to coincide with a strike by textile workers in the spinning mills of the city El-Mahalla El-Kubra. After the great success of this call to action, which involved extensive communication by SMS (text messaging), Abdel Fattah was arrested.[8] In the summer of 2010, Khaled Said was killed by

the police, after being forcibly led from an internet cafe to a police station in Alexandria. His death accelerated the pace of calls for demonstrations and sit-in.

The page "We are all Khalid Said" was established on Facebook, which published his picture before and after his death following the brutal torture to which he was subjected. Although the name of the page's founder at the time remained unknown (later it became known that it was Wael Ghonim), nearly 400,000 young people quickly registered from all over Egypt and from abroad. This page organized youth events attended by thousands, and was one of the first to call for demonstrations on Police Day, 25 January, in protest of their violent practices.

It seemed that young Egyptians' dreams of revolution reached their final phase with the emergence of the political activist Asmaa Mahfouz on YouTube and Facebook, where she announced that she was "going down to Tahrir on 25 January 2011," calling for dignity and freedom. In a few short weeks, the pages on Facebook circulated and relayed the call.

On Facebook pages and in tweets, information circulated about the entrances and exits of the squares where people would assemble, ways to diminish the effects of tear gas, and methods of confronting the batons of Central Security, among others. It could be argued that the most significant evidence of the success of the internet and its tools in igniting the revolution was the decision by the authorities to cut off the internet for the entire country. While the Egyptian security forces treated the demonstrators with the utmost cruelty and violence, they also saw a need to close cyberspace. But the real surprise occurred when the demonstrations continued not unabated, but even more abundantly.

A group of protesters resorted to international contacts in order to access the internet and transmit news moment

by moment to the outside world. Internet activists had taken pictures of the events in detail, in preparation for uploading videos to the internet, when Egypt lost contact. Google had announced that it was cooperating with Twitter to launch system for Egyptians to microblog using regular phones, and thereby circumvent the authorities efforts cut off internet service to the country.

Egyptian blogs, which later generated the robust electronic movement via tools such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter, were the virtual foundation upon which the revolution of 25 January 2011 was built.[9]

Nora Younis, Egyptian Girl, Egyptian Awareness, Manal Alaa, and hundreds of blogs cultivated the beginnings of the Tahrir Square revolution on the internet. Exposing police brutality against citizens, waves of mass harassment, and several prominent cases of corruption sufficed to open the eyes of the security personnel who called themselves the "anti-blogging forces." The Executive Director of the Arab Network for Human Rights Information Gamal Eid told the newspaper *Al-Hayat* that "the most credit for breaking the long-standing barrier of fear for Egyptians goes to the bloggers."[10]

Although Egypt's revolution was sparked by young people on the internet and launched from Facebook, an important element to the revolution's success was remaining alive on Arab blogs during the outage of all private internet communications. As Eid said: "During those days, I was one of the few who was able to stay on Twitter via an international telephone line. The main purpose was to feed Twitter with moment by moment news of the revolution, which Arab bloggers who raised the flag of the Egyptian youth revolution seized upon throughout this period."

In conclusion, it may be necessary to shed light on some of the personalities who played important roles in

the revolution by using social media, such as Omar Afifi, a former police officer and expert on the media. Afifi published a book in 2008 presenting advice to Egyptians on how to avoid police brutality.[11] The book was banned and the author received threats, forcing him to leave the country and seek asylum in the United States. There, Afifi benefited from social media, turning his tips this time into videos on YouTube and publishing them through Facebook and Twitter. Afifi was active at the outbreak of the revolution in Tunisia, producing detailed YouTube clips to teach Egyptians how to use techniques of taking the initiative, remaining peaceable, hiding, and escaping.[12]

Ahmed Gharbia,[13] a blogger specializing in software protection, spent several years providing advice and know-how to Arab activists and human rights defenders on how to protect their files, communications, and websites, and how to access blocked websites, in partnership with his brother Amr, who also works in information technology for Amnesty International in London.

The blogger Ahmed Maher, one of the founders of the April 6 Movement and member of the Kefaya movement since 2005, called several times for strikes between 2006 and 20008, and was repeatedly arrested.

In the weeks preceding 25 January, activists hovered around Wael Ghonim, Ahmed Maher, and Ahmed Gharbia among others in numerous meetings to exchange ideas and plans, discussed down to the smallest details, from choosing hashtags to preparing guidelines for the demonstrators.

The filmmaker Ahmed Abdalla, winner of the Tanit d'Or at the 2010 Carthage Film Festival for his film *Microphone*, set up a "field" studio equipped with the latest photographic equipment, tethered to computers loaded with digital editing and production programs. This allowed dozens of hours of footage to be filmed, visual journals of

daily life in Tahrir Square throughout the period and even during the digital blackout. As soon as internet access was restored, this studio uploaded its work directly onto the internet.

C. The case of Syria

As most foreign journalists had left Syria, "citizen journalists" were the ones active in keeping the Syrian uprising in the global media, through their pictures, taken by their mobile phones.

The Syrian activist Osama Munjid said in late May 2011: "In the last few weeks, we were able to develop effective networks, through which we can now see what is happening in every city and village in Syria. The regime is no longer capable of stopping the information, images, or videos from reaching us."[14]

Munjid issued daily reports on the "news of the Syrian revolution" dealing with the protests, clashes, and violence in Syria, based on eyewitnesses, photographs, and films shot by the mobile phones of protesters, which were verified and then sent with reports in English, Arabic, and French to human rights organizations and the world press.

Munjid said: "A kind of operations room was developed to gather all of what was coming from around the country, so it would be reflected in the report." He pointed out that "people on the ground contact us, provide us with information, images, and phone numbers to call, and all of this is then distributed to the media." Syrian activists resorted to satellite phones when the internet or telephone networks were disrupted. The activist Rami Nakhla said: "Our communications largely depend on equipment operating using satellite connections."[15] Nakhla published a daily report on the Syrian "Jasmine Revolution" about protest movements and repression, distributed to reporters worldwide.

Since 15 March, the start date of the protest movement, Syrian authorities have tightened their control over the work of the media and the internet. Entrance to areas witnessing protests was prohibited to members of the media without prior authorization and security escorts.

Facebook pages like "Syrian Revolution 2011," "Shaam News Network," and "Tal al-Malluhi"[16] have become the primary sources of news coming from Syria. Within days, these sites disseminated footage shot with mobile phones of military deployments, such as tanks entering the city of Daraa or snipers prowling the rooftops, and of the victims of the conflict, showing the bodies of civilians and military personnel in a Home morgue. The source for all of this is ordinary citizens. In their videos, these citizen journalists have become cognizant of the need to constantly mention the date, or to film a handwritten sign or a newspaper, any-thing that can indicate the place or the name of the city where the events depicted are taking place, so the videos authenticity can be beyond question.

A report entitled "Social media: a double-edged sword in Syria"[17] described the panic among young men and women, particularly students, regarding the threat of arrest and prosecution due to Facebook activities, and how Bashar al-Assad repeatedly allowed the use of Facebook (which has been periodically banned since he took power) to keep track of people using an army of citizen informers. Reuters reported that American officials had informed the *Washington Post* that Iran had already begun to provide the Syrian government with sophisticated surveillance equip-ment to track down dissidents and opponents of the regime via the internet, a technique perfected during the suppres-sion of the 2009 uprising in Tehran. But in spite of all the limits and dangers resulting from the initiatives of Syrian electronic media activists, news of the Syrian intifada occu-pies the headlines thanks in large part to their activism.

III. Are the Arab revolutions "Facebook Revolutions?"

Statistics indicate a low level of access to internet media among Arab citizens. For example, only 20 percent of Egyptians, out of nearly 80 million people, have intermittent internet access. Would the Revolution of 25 January have occurred if there was no internet in Egypt? Wael Ghonim has said it is essential to neither inflate the role of internet, nor to minimize its impact.[18] It is likewise worth mentioning that 2010 saw more sit-ins caused by economic reasons than in the last three decades. But if the events of 25 January occurring 20 years ago, then the fate of the demonstrators would have been prison, and would have been forgotten, like the "Bread Revolution" that took place in 1977, which was violently suppressed by the late President Anwar Sadat.

Therefore, we can say that social media alone did not launch the Arab revolutions, but, it was a powerful catalyst, creating the right conditions for the robust, effective, and efficient dissemination of information and giving people the opportunity to express themselves freely. This opportu-nity for self-expression was not provided by the traditional media, which is often affiliated with the authorities.

In a different but related line of questioning, as to whether the Arab revolutions helped to spread social media: the numbers show us that the usage of new media has doubled since the start of the revolutions — becoming sources of news and images for the traditional media, which have themselves started pages on Facebook, opened accounts on Twitter, and created different kinds of news sites.

Therefore, Facebook did not make the revolution. The revolution came out of the decades of peoples' suffering from oppression, injustice, corruption, and disregard for human dignity, which silently accumulated inside. Facebook contributed to a process of de-atomization, by breaking

the barriers of fear, encouraging people to speak out, and convincing one that change was not impossible. But most importantly, Facebook made people feel that they are no longer alone!

Endnotes

1. The speech of President al-Assad to the Syrian parliament on 30 May 2011, in which he said: "What has increased the difficulty of the situation is the presence and spread of the internet."
2. The American magazine *Time* chose "the demonstrator" as the person of the year for 2011.
3. The information and figures are from the Arab Social Media Reports, published periodically by the Dubai School of Government between 2010 and 2012.
4. Arab Social Media Report, 4th edition, July 2012, published by the Dubai School of Government.
5. The Huffington Post through Firas Al-Atraqchi from the American University of Cairo.
6. Farhad Khosrokhar, *The New Arab Revolutions that Shook The World*, Paradigm Publishers.
7. Hamdy, N. (2009). "Arab citizen journalism in action: Challenging mainstream media, authorities and media laws." Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture, 6(1), 92–112.
8. Amina Khairy, *al-Hayat* 30 December 2011.
9. "Arab bloggers are the heroes of political mobilization and the face of modern struggle [in Arabic]," *Al-Hayat* 14 February 2011.
10. Ibid.
11. "Social Media in the Egyptian Revolution: Reconsidering Resource Mobilization Theory," NAHED ELTANTAWY & JULIE B. WIEST, *International Journal of Communication* 5 (2011)
12. Afifi, O. January 14 Tunisian Freedom Day & our date is January 25. [YouTube video]. Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gdJQRz0BtU8&feature=related
13. Claude Moniquet, *Printemps Arabe, printemps pourri*, Ed. Encre d'Orient, 2012.
14. *Al-Hayat*, 27 May 2011.
15. Ibid.
16. The name of a young female Syrian blogger from Homs, detained by the regime since 2009 as a prisoner of conscience.
17. "Social Media: a double-edged sword in Syria," *Reuters* 13 July 2011
18. Wael Ghonim, *Revolution 2.0* (Fourth Esate Publications, 2012).

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PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS: WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES AFTER THE REVOLUTIONS?

Ziad Majed

Abstract

There are four key challenges and potential sources of difficulty for the future: First, the adaptation of the currents of political Islam to the parameters of secular democracy; second, the building of democratic institutions; third, economic growth; and, fourth, human rights and equality between men and women. In the meantime, the balance of power in each country continues to shift. Simultaneously, developments in other countries that have not completed their revolutions or putative reforms will lead to further changes, influencing both themselves and their neighbors. But these coming transformations await a more detailed assessment and additional conclusions at a later date.

Introduction

It is difficult to rely upon definitive conclusions when it comes to the Arab revolutions. First of all, though there are many similarities in their causes and their slogans, the revolutions differ in their paths, their fates, and in the specifics of the driving political and social forces. Secondly, the immediate and direct effects of the revolutions are as yet unfinished, while the indirect effects will remain influential for years to come.

The papers in this book have developed many points of similarity and difference on the one hand, and many aspects of incompleteness on the other.

Despite this fact, today we can identify conclusions on three different levels, almost two and a half years from the start of the transformative movement in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Bahrain, and Syria, in interaction with some of the social movements in Morocco, Jordan, and other nations.

The first level is linked with some of the circumstances that came together to make the revolutions possible, beginning in late 2010. The second level is connected with what can be considered their achievements, which will be difficult for any Arab regime to reverse in the future. As for the third level, it is related to the existing challenges and difficulties resulting from what can be called the return of politics, in the forms of elections, choices, and tradeoffs.

The first level: What prompted millions of people to launch massive uprisings and revolutions in the past three years?

There are numerous factors that can be studied by sociologists, political scientists, and economists, including those related to the predominance of authoritarianism, coupled with corruption that in the past decade rose to the level of debauchery and became a provocation to the people, with their outrage pushing them up to and beyond their limits, breaking the spell of complacency and quietude.

There are also the causes connected to the rising literacy rates and levels of education in Arab societies, leading to a new generation with the necessary tools of rebellion against systems to which their people (like their parents) had surrendered, whether via connections and communication with the world through the internet or a growing sense of individual identity that awoke self-consciousness and dignity.

Additionally there are the effects associated with economic changes in the last two decades, which marginalized the agricultural and industrial sectors and polarized the workforce in favor of new service and commercial sectors, which may be necessary to keep pace with global economic developments, but are insufficient to create plentiful job opportunities or extend the benefits to compensate for the losses of the families previously involved in traditional sectors.

As well, there are the demographic shifts that the Arab world has witnessed generally over the last two decades, in terms of the slowdown in population growth, declining fertility rates, and a rising age of marriage. This has meant more space for the new generation to become politically active, unhampered by the premature and heavy social burdens to the same extent that their parents and earlier generations had been weighed down. These facts, along with increased personal choice, allowed young men to take to the public squares, and drove young women to participate as well, an affirmation of their equality in aspirations and demands, regardless of the arduous journey that still awaits young women to impose their presence in public, or even just be present in public spaces, and wrest back their stolen, confiscated, or forgotten rights.

Also, the expansion of cities and residential areas so as to allow immediate geographic contiguity between human

blocs has meant the sharing of spatial characteristics, even if the people come from different backgrounds or origins.

In addition to all that has been mentioned, social networking sites made possible the expansion of internet-based networks in the region (and steadily increased the number of users), becoming a critical element in making access to media and information nearly boundless, and enabling citizens to dialogue and construct political stances together.

As soon as the revolutions began, the difference between the virtual world and the real world became minimal. The virtual itself turned into a means of real mobilization, a space to meet and rise up, one allowing all kinds of creativity. Social networks enabled the public expression of accumulated frustrations on one hand, and the yearning for freedom and dignity on the other.

The second level: What did the revolutions accomplish, and make difficult to roll back?

Since the recent revolutions, Arab societies have regained their relationship to politics and to political time, and citizens both as individuals and groups have regained in more than one country their rights of expression, to speech, action, and gathering in public spaces. This means that the time of perpetual power in the ostensible republics, which even saw the ruling families become dynasties where the son could inherit the presidency of his father directly, has ended. Presidential terms and leadership have become connected to dates determined by the constitution and electoral laws, ensuring a periodic transition or rotation of power. This is something that most Arab have not seen since their eras of independence.

Also, this regaining the right to expression has prevented governmental censorship and individual self-censorship, which together have dominated for decades, from rebuilding

the walls of fear that have stifled freedom of opinion. The "emergency" or "anti-terrorism" laws that provided the basis for doing so were aimed at combating political diversity and transforming speech into a mere declaration of obedience and loyalty to the existing authorities. And for us, what is occurring today in most Arab countries — cultural, political, and legal brainstorming on issues that were unthinkable to address previously, or the rejection of complacency toward attempts to achieve political hegemony, or artistic expression of thoughts and aspirations that were suppressed in the past — this is what allows us to assert the difficulty of turning back the clock and stifling expression again, because of the sheer number of mouths now open.

If we focus on this liberation by male and female citizens of public spaces, and their regaining the right to protests and sit-ins as a peaceful objection to any practice, law, or choice that the ruler can adopt, which is what was happening in all the states that experienced revolutions, we can then say that the return to the confiscation of public spaces to serve the interests of the ruler and his supporters alone has also become extremely difficult. It is no longer possible for any one power to monopolize the right to demonstrate and to mobilize crowds.

To this can be added another, connected to the idea of accountability, whose features began to take shape in different forms, but which means that there is no absolute immunity for the ruler. The media, citizen activism, statements by intellectuals, questions from politicians (including elected officials), social networking sites, and political talk shows have all begun to participate in monitoring and following political life, statements, and actions, and to encourage the formation of public opinion and a new relationship to politics. None of this was allowed under one-party regimes, a controlled or directed media, and rubber-stamp parliaments.

It is remarkable that political pressure on journalists, activists, and artists is now being applied through the judiciary. This is what makes public solidarity in support of their rights so dissimilar from the past, when repression drew on the fear of the secret police and intelligence agencies. The confluence of lawyers jockeying to advocate and defend for the accused is but a confirmation of the strong challenge to the reenlistment of laws intended to undermine and discredit political opponents of the regime.

And at least as important as what has been mentioned is of course the return of free elections, and the return of competition between different political powers, which seek to strengthen their relationship to the voters in order to earn their trust and their votes. The revival of political competitiveness — if firmly established — can by itself be a cause of deep and profound change in the political culture and political behavior of candidates and citizen-voters.

The third level: the most prominent challenges facing most Arab states today

As is confirmed day after day, the significant changes mentioned above do not negate the incredible number of difficulties and challenges that continue to hinder democratic transformation in the various Arab cases, and threaten to make it extremely costly on more than one level.

The following lines review these difficulties and challenges under four headings.

First: the adaptation of the currents of political Islam to the parameters of secular democracy

For the first time since the emergence of Islamic political parties in the first half of the 20th century, some of them — represented by the groups of the Muslim Brotherhood — have come to power through the ballot

box (such as in Tunisia and Egypt).[1] This poses major challenges.

The first is a test of the capacity of these Islamic parties to deal with the messiness of everyday politics, in isolation from the "sacred," on the one hand.

The second is the test of the abilities of secular forces to both deal with these parties and impose a balance of power that allows Islamic parties to test their programs in power while respecting democratic principles (in a world that defines international relations and major interests by power and self-interest), so that Islamic parties can no longer draw legitimacy from their claims of suffering under the repression of allegedly secular, militaristic, and authoritarian regimes whose "preemptive objection" of Islamic parties' platforms or even mere entrance into politics, according to the rhetoric of these parties, blocked the implementation of viable alternatives to existing problems.

If the year following the victory of the Islamic Brothers in the Tunisian and then Egyptian elections (and to certain extent Moroccan as well) is not enough time to judge the extent of their success or failure in the experience of being in power, then it is at least sufficient to say that their claim of quick fixes to worsening problems was hasty or even rash. Their pragmatism won out over their dogmatism, which makes hiding behind the "sacred" after their immersion in the worldly and the profane harder than ever before. Likewise, the Brotherhood has been caught between the pressure of the often more dogmatic and radical Salafists

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1. This process does not include the arrival of the *Front Islamique du Salut* in Algeria to power in 1991, as the military stopped the electoral process at that time, leading to a vicious civil war. Likewise, it does not consider Hamas to be a typical case of "political Islam" taking power, owing to its involvement in the conflict with Israel and its partial arrival to power, followed by quarreling and then violent clashes with Fatah.

on one side and the civil-secularists on the other, forcing the Brothers into constant bargaining and tradeoffs — the essence of politics as the art of the possible — in isolation from the political legitimacy provided by religion, its conditions, and the options presented in its name. These are lessons that could lead to positive revisions of their politics and platforms before the coming elections, which they will contest, though it has also presented serious challenges to their leadership, causing many problems and much tension, and making the first transitional stage that much harder.

The fact remains that important discussions are happening for the first time in more than one Arab country, in conjunction with work on the ground and political activism (sometimes resulting in clashes). These political activities stem from the accumulated pressures that could not previously express themselves, centered on issues of identity, religious diversity, individual freedoms, and the rights of women. And all of these discussions have come into conflict with the discourse of different Islamic forces, even if it is difficult to divide our societies reductively according to the classical Islamic-secular binary, since positions have multiplied with respect to this divide. Some secularists or those calling for secularization are no more open or necessarily democratic, particularly those hailing from experiences of authoritarian rule, affected by years under totalitarian regimes supported by the military and intelligence services through the imposition of martial law.

The issue of "political Islam" and democratic transition is thus an open question, and the balances of power will subsequently determine the fate of this and many others.

Second: the building of democratic institutions

One of the most prominent challenge that can be found in Arab countries today is the challenge of building democratic institutions according to the principles of the separation of powers, independence of the judiciary, and professionalism of the police and security services, to be subject along with the military to elected civilian authorities.

These challenges or tasks demand ongoing reviews to election laws so as to provide integrity to the emerging electoral processes in the region, in terms of justness and representativeness for all political forces in each country, and to strengthen the legitimacy and credibility of parliaments and the emergence of governments from their majorities.

Another requirement is the reform of the judicial services to protect their independence and to rebuild the trust of citizens in the philosophy of the rule of law and in its enforcement mechanisms. By demonstrating the effectiveness and the uprightness of judicial bodies, it is possible for the rule of law to prevail after decades of its suspension, marginalization, and subjugation to the interests of the rulers and their supporters.

A change in the roles of the military, police, and security services in Arab societies is also necessary, considering that the old roles were undertaken on the basis of loyalty to the ruling regimes and parties in power on the one hand, and according to a culture of authoritarianism, practices of repression, and corruption on the other.

The culture and practices of loyalty to the state and its constitutional and political institutions will need to be changed. New legal curricula must be developed. Any violation against the public will need to be prosecuted. The very concepts and functions of the judiciary, long in place, will need to be replaced.

Of course, this is easier said than done. There is no doubt that dealing with the obligations of the institutional difficulties recalled above, like those connected with reforming public and municipal administrations and services, will be time consuming and demand experience that is lacking or limited on the ground today.

Third: economic growth

In societies distinguished by their youthful demographics and a need to create hundreds of thousands of jobs each year to absorb the influx of new job seekers, focusing on reforming economic policies, organizing productive sectors, and confronting high rates of unemployment should be of a high degree of importance.

Since it is difficult to discuss the major changes needed without taking into account the regional and international contexts, it can be said that developing new bases for economic cooperation among the Arab countries on the one hand, and between near and far states on the other, is the great challenge now and in the future.

Additionally, providing incentives, seeking to attract investments, focusing on differential advantage and securing balanced development geographically within each country are priorities, lest socioeconomic conditions alone become an imminent danger, in light of the insecurity of the transitional stage.

Matters do not seem simple even now, considering the state of anxiety, the internal instability, and the decline in external credibility experienced by a number of countries, giving rise to frustration among many groups, especially young people and the unemployed.

Fourth: human rights and equality between men and women

The Arab revolutions have been characterized by the wide participation of women and civil society activists, as well as by slogans calling for freedom and both individual and collective dignity. However, the translation of slogans and aspirations into lived reality is another matter entirely, and remains a stumbling block. The ongoing challenges to draft legislation and move toward practices that accord rights to women, guarantee equality of citizens before the

law, and protect human rights according to international conventions have become exponentially difficult as a result of the long-extant problems and obstacles accumulated over a lengthy period of time, and also as a result of the more recent governments dominated by Islamic movements, whose parliamentary majorities enable them to reject whatever is considered contrary to religious principles, at least according to their own interpretations.

Of course, other headings can be added to the four categories described above, including issues of national identity, Arab nationalism, sectarianism, and tribalism, among other competing and often overlapping ideologies and sources of identity. The Syrian exception also needs to be addressed, where the greatest of the popular Arab revolutions continues against the most brutal and tyrannical of the Arab regimes (the number of victims of the oppression exceeds 100,000 killed in addition to millions injured, detained, or displaced), a country transformed into a zone of regional and international conflict. Additionally, sectarian tension, particularly Sunni-Shiite, has escalated throughout the entire Arab East, also known as the Levant or in Arabic as the *Mashriq*. The growing, negative influence of the rentier Gulf states and their conservative culture can also be included.

Another factor is continued Palestinian suffering in light of the refusal of successive Israeli governments to respect international law and UN decisions, and end the military occupation and colonial settlement of Palestinian land in the West Bank and Jerusalem. If tensions escalate or explode, the effects on the paths of political transitions in several Arab countries would be monumental. All of these issues deserve detailed analysis on their own, and more attention than can be given here in this conclusion.

Ultimately, the Arab world today, especially in the countries whose revolutions have succeeded, seems to be in the

midst of a thorny path, where problems emerge and are compounded. Some issues float to the surface today, while others fade away. While new problems arose and continue to arise out of the transformations, so have great successes and major achievements, which neither internal nor external parties will be able to ignore or act again with the same authoritarian mentality from before.

It is likely that the coming months and years will witness shifts that reflect the emerging balances of power in most of these countries. At the same time, developments in other countries that have not completed their revolutions or putative reforms will lead to new, further changes, both to themselves and to their neighbors. But these coming transformations await a more detailed assessment and additional conclusions at a later date — after this stage, one of the most politically vibrant and fluid in contemporary Arab history, and correspondingly, one of the most open to further questions and assumptions.

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