

Arab Spring: The Incomplete Revolution

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ABSTRACT

Theoretical bases of democracy exist in the constitutions and laws of many Arab states. Human Rights, public liberties, freedoms of assembly or forming political parties, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and trade unions, are usually mentioned in the texts. But, the application is far away from democracy. The absence of democracy is only one face of the complex crisis in Arab countries. In fact, the entire system is outdated. It needs to be changed or at least reformed to harmonize the cadence of development in the world. Worried about their future and the destiny of their people, Arab youths have revolted in many countries simultaneously. Changing to democratic and developed society is their main shared objective. The common name used to describe this revolt is “Arab Spring”. This article tries to explain the reasons and motivations of this new phenomenon. It will look at the achievements of the revolutions that took place and examine their internal, regional and international implications.

Keywords: *Arab Spring, revolution, democracy, dictatorship, absolutism.*

INTRODUCTION

Arabs who fought in the First World War (WWI) side by side with the Allies against Germany and Ottoman Empire, found themselves betrayed by the United Kingdom (UK) and France. These powers had previously secret agreements to place the Arab countries under their colonial rule.

Series of revolts against colonialist powers occurred in Arab countries after WWI, representing the first awakening of their people and a breakout with the colonialist. The independence was the main goal of these revolts; even it was related to other political and socioeconomic objectives.

Therefore, some Arab countries had achieved their formal independence in the era between the two world wars. Others had to struggle longer time, after the Second World War (WWII), to reach that aspiration. In most of newly independent Arab countries, civil regimes had been instituted: monarchies, as in Iraq and Egypt, or republics, as in Syria, Lebanon, Soudan and South Yemen.

With the foundation of the League of Arab State in 1945, the first step of a regional integration had been taken. This organization began its activities with 7 member states. Now, they are 22.

Many new independent Arab countries had witnessed political instability when the militaries put an end to civil regimes, especially in Syria, Egypt, Iraq, Libya, Soudan and Yemen. The new governments of these republics were not democratic as well the other monarchies were absolute. Muammar al Qaddafi ruled Libya 42 year since 1969, the Assad family has ruled Syria since 1970. Ali Abdullah Saleh became president of North Yemen (later united with South Yemen) in 1978. Hosni Mubarak took charge of Egypt in 1981 and Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali ascended to Tunisia's presidency in 1987. Neither reigns by democratic way. "These regimes survived over a period of decades in which democratic waves rolled through East Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America, and sub-Saharan Africa" (Gause III, 2011).

Together with the absence of democracy, the majority of Arab regimes were facing various socioeconomic problems. Very few efforts were deployed to depart from underdevelopment situation and to build modern society. It necessitates a second awakening to change this state of affairs.

ARAB SPRING: THE SECOND ARAB AWAKENING

The tragedy of jobless Tunisian Mohamed Bouazizi, who burned himself to death in December 2010 in protest at his inhuman treatment by the police is not an isolated incident. Protest actions were occurring, every day in all Arab countries. However, that event had attracted the attention of the public opinion about their profound tragedy. It was the commencement of a second Arab awakening represented by uprisings erupted across those countries.

“Arab Spring” is the name given to these revolts erupted in Tunisia first followed by Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Syria, Iraq and most of other Arab countries. “*The people want to bring down the regime*” is the most common motto of the protesters. It summarizes all their aspirations and objectives. It means the comprehensive change of the old regime and the installation of new one.

The revolutionaries have shared means of continuous peaceful civil resistance and disobedience such as demonstrations, marches and strikes. In the same time, to organize themselves and to exchange information and news, they use largely the social media on the internet. This technique helps them to communicate faster and to avoid the repression by the authorities.

Manifestly, these revolutions are engaged against the existing regimes. They are inspired by the deterioration of the current political and socioeconomic situation. They are not directed against any foreign power. The participation is general. In other words, they are neither class conflicts, nor religious hostilities, nor ideological confrontations. All classes, religions and ideological tendencies are present.

REASONS AND MOTIVATIONS

There is no one set of reasons or motivations of this new phenomenon in the Arab world. There are common factors contributed to it: the domination of dictatorship, the concentration of power and wealth in the hand of few individuals, the propagation of corruption and the damage caused by the regimes to the people dignity.

AUTHORITARIAN RULE

Democracy refers to regimes with freely elected representative authorities and accountable executive power under constitutional and law regulations respecting the citizen's essential liberties and freedoms and the Human Rights (Guy, 1990).

Free elections have to be fair in order that the elected bodies obtain legitimacy. Moreover, "...the willingness of both the party in power and the loser to accept the result of elections are essential for the legitimacy and stability in a political system" (Baxter, *et al.*, 1998).

Those practices are generally respected in democratic systems, while most of Arab peoples are submitted to governments that concentrate power in one leader or one family: the republics are dictatorial while the monarchies are absolute. The beautiful texts of liberty, equality, justice and freedom, enshrined in the constitution of those countries, are merely for the political consumption. The opposition is excluded and the authorities use repression to hush any voice. Here we are in regimes where the sovereign considers himself as the system, the state and all powers: useless to speak about separation of powers. The police state is the common nature of those regimes. There is a systematic use of brutality and oppression against any opposition.

Abuses of Human Rights and repressions are associated with the promulgation of emergency law in many countries such as Egypt, Algeria, Syria and Yemen. This law provides legal cover for the tyranny to prevent any individual or group to manifest opposition to the regime, under the pretext that the country is menaced. Accordingly, thousands of opponents are detained in prisons for political reasons, other fled to foreign countries.

The existence of authoritarian regimes In Arab region is often attributed to Islamic culture and values. Some argue that Islam and democracy are incompatible. They assert or underscore that democracy is a new, *western* value and institution. But others think that: "neither Islam nor its culture is the major obstacle to political modernity" (Wright, 1996).

To be objective, in the Holy Qur'an it is mentioned that the righteous determine their affairs by mutual consultation or "*Shura*" (42:38 Qur'an). This is expanded through traditions of Prophet Muhammad (*Sunna*) and actions of early leaders of Muslim state, to mean that it is obligatory for Muslims, in managing their political affairs, to engage in mutual consultation (Walsh, 2007).

The successful Turkish experience of democracy is only one example that consolidates the idea that Islamic culture is not the obstacle. In Indonesia, when the military regime of Suharto was brought to an end, the new elected president in 1999 was Abd al-Rahman Wahid, the leader of the Islamic organization: *Nahdat ul-Ulama*. He did not campaign on a platform of Islamizing the political system. When his term came to end, his successor was elected by democratic process and power had been handed over smoothly without any confrontation between his followers and his opponents.

Furthermore, while most West thinkers accuse Islam of disadvantaging women, it is noticeable that three largest Muslim states in the world; Indonesia, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, have had elected women as their heads of government. None of these women was explicitly Islamist.

It is just to argue that the realm of values and the socioeconomic realm are the most compelling explanations to understand why some nations fail to institutionalize a democratic regime (Friedman, 1994). Basing on this argument, facts from a round of the World Values Survey (WVS) reveal broad support for democracy among Arab peoples, both in absolute terms and relative to world regions (Jamal, 2006).

But then again, “democratization emerges from a political process of clash and compromise and consensus building” (Friedman, 1994). It represents an accepted pace when it guarantees the interests of the major social sectors not a clan of individuals.

FAMILIAL, TRIBAL AND SECTARIAN RULE

In many Arab states, the country becomes a “private farm” of the ruler and his clan who cannot realize that they have to hand over the power to the people which are the source of every legitimate power.

Around the regime, we often find a number of factions and institutions, close to the ruler, defending him and their privileges in the same time. However, if the ruler has the intention to reform the regime; they do not let him to proceed. They constitute a real obstacle to any change.

In Tunisia, Ben Ali built a police state which was ready to practice all kinds of oppression and subjugation. Considerable corruption and influence of his family in the country’s economy affairs were the other characteristics of his regime.

In Egypt, a group of businessmen and members of governing party; National Party, close to Mubarak family, maintained their exclusive domination in politics and economy. Everyday, they were becoming richer while millions of Egyptians were becoming poorer.

In Syria, the family of Assad and followers from Alouit sect direct the important positions in the governmental hierarchy, the army and the security forces. In addition, they control the economic vital sectors.

Since 2003, the successive governments in Iraq, installed by the occupying Americans authorities are based on sectarian divide: domination of Shiites and remoteness of Sunnites. Religious figures, especially those who are connected to Iran, have major role in decision making process. To perpetuate in power, rulers concentrate on oppression methods rather than on plans of development. Consequently, the country has been diving in sectarian conflict. It is situated in the top of countries in corruption and at the bottom of the list in human development.

What is more, the Arab hereditary republics became a common phenomenon. In Syria Bashar Al Assad took over the presidency when his father passed away. Mubarak was preparing his eldest son Jamal to replace him. So did Ali Abdullah Saleh, in Yemen, concerning his son Ahmed. In Libya, Qaddafi sons were strong pillars of the regime together with their father. The situation, in many Arab countries, became even worse by the grant of familial privileges. They are extended to close as well to far relatives such as in Tunisia and Egypt.

In some other cases, defending the president or struggling against him is not based on his personal characteristics or on the successes and failures of his programs to develop the country. The tribal attachment is more noticeable than the national feeling. In both Yemen and Libya, the devotion to ruler is mixed to the loyalty for the tribe to which belongs the ruler.

POLITICAL CORRUPTION AND MARGINALIZATION OF PEOPLES

Peoples in Arab countries are marginalized at two levels: First, the important decisions are taken without participation of people and even without taking into consideration of the people's position. For instance, Mubarak imposed embargo on Gaza, helping Israel in its aggression on Palestinians, while Egyptian people were manifesting against that aggression. Second, the

existences of marionette political and social institutions attached to regime, such as puppet parliaments, apparent political parties, unreliable syndicates and illusory civil society organizations, which execute the regime policy and replacing the people's will.

There were legislative or presidential elections in some Arab countries. Typically, they are artificial with frauds and irregularities. In some cases the results of those elections were known before even they begin. The regime men win their seats, with few exceptions to provide the appearance that it is a democratic and fair practice. The elected or nominated houses are manipulated by the regime. They are used to issue the laws and take the decisions needed to perpetuate the regime. A flagrant example comes from Syria when the puppet parliament amended the constitution during a short meeting to enable the young Bashar Al Assad to be president after the death of his father.

In these regimes, the parliamentary game between majority and opposition and the accountability of government is vague. The ruler will is always executed by the political circle around him. In cases when there was some opposition to the leader, from inside the regime, the consequences were tragic. Hence, the aspiration for democratic society where freedoms, liberties and Human Rights are respected constitutes imperative motivation in Arab revolts.

PSYCHOLOGICAL MOTIVATION

The new generations are more open to the progress and evolution in the world through the internet and mass media, compare their disastrous situation with that in developed countries. Aware that the gap is big, they decided to change. Their massive participation in the revolutions put an end to the wrong idea which stipulates that Arab youths are indifferent in politics and lack of concern about the destiny of their people. For them, it is the occasion to crystallize their dreams of modern and democratic societies.

The new generation found themselves in this participation, believing in their ability and relying on them to change. That is only one example that Arabs did not passively accept authoritarian rule.

COMPLEXITY OF SOCIOECONOMIC PROBLEMS

In many international experiences, economic stagnation has been an important driving force behind the demands for political change. Most of famous revolutions in the world exerted efforts to achieve political and economic reform simultaneously. The socioeconomic situation in Arab countries is believed to be as shocking as the political one. For different reasons, the growth of the middle class in some Arab countries has participated in the spread of awareness of the profound problems and the need to change.

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

The Middle East, which includes the Arab countries is the region with the highest rate of unemployment in the world. International Labor Organization (ILO) reports that unemployment in the region is 10.3% compared to 6.2% on average globally. Youth between the ages of 15 – 24 constitute the largest age group among Arab populations, representing more than one third of the total inhabitants. The situation is dramatic because the Arab youth unemployment rate is estimated to be 40% (ILO, 2011).

Unemployment is particularly acute among the educated: joblessness among college graduates is ten times than that of people with primary educations in Egypt, five times as high in Syria, and three times as high in Algeria. And as the locus of employment has shifted from the public to the private sector, female graduates appear to have had a particularly difficult time gaining a toehold in the job market. In Egypt, some 25% of college graduates cannot find full-time jobs. In Tunisia, the figure rises to 30% (UNDP 2011).

The competition in employment market is fierce. As more urbanization is increasing throughout Arab countries, more people move from the countryside to cities. Huge slums have grown in the cities as poor people arrive and cannot find jobs. Crimes and drugs are flourishing in such social conditions.

The governmental programs to reduce the impact of youth unemployment among were not effective. The need to change this situation constitutes a stimulating factor for youths to participate in the revolution.

POVERTY AND UNDERDEVELOPMENT

If parts of the Arab region have come to be known for wealth, millions of people in other countries are suffering from multi-dimensional poverty and absence of modernity. In the Least-Developed Countries of the region like Yemen, nearly a half of the population is living in poverty. Approximately 100 million of Arabs live under the poverty line (1\$ per day) struggling to meet basic human needs such as access to water, education, shelter, and health care. The unprivileged classes even suffer from food shortage on a daily basis (UNDP, 2010).

This situation is deteriorating by the penury of other essential services such as electricity, sewage systems and transportation. The percentage of illiterates is alarming showing the failure of governmental programs in this regards, 30% of Egyptians are illiterate.

In general, after decades of formal political independence, significant big powers hegemony on Arab states politics remain shaping the relations between the two parties. The economy of most Arab countries still related to big economic powers. Often, it is mono-economy: mining, oil or agriculture. The industrialization of the society is far to be reached.

MARGINALIZATION OF WOMAN

Women have made considerable gains in the past decade in some Arab countries, particularly in the areas of health and education. However, they remain less economically and politically empowered than women in other regions of the world. The low visibility and representation of Arab women in the labor force and political structure is unfortunate given that the skills and knowledge they have acquired through improved educational achievements are not being utilized (ESCWA, 2004).

In most Arab countries, woman's role in the society is limited by social practices. There are real challenges and impediments that Arab women face as they work to become effective and powerful stakeholders within their families, communities and societies.

CORRUPTION AND FAVORITISM

While the majority of people live in poverty, rulers in Arab states, their families and close circle have billion dollars fortune inside the country and abroad. They dominate the main economic activities. Often, to maintain their dictatorship, the leaders offer privileges to those who serve the regime. The case of wealthy ministers in Mubarak era stands for a good example.

From the other side, in most Arab countries resentment at official corruption has become a galvanizing factor for opposition movements, providing them with opportunities to claim the moral high ground. Corruption flourishes at all levels where the social climate is conducive. It ranges from petty “survival” corruption where government employees supplement their meager salaries by extracting money from the public in small amounts, to “structural” corruption involving government contracts and “commissions” on them, often with the knowledge and blessing of the highest echelons of power (Whitaker, 2009).

In general terms, corruption has many negative effects on the development process. It is essentially unfair; undermines democratic processes, denies people equality of opportunity and in general creates obstacles to progress because contracts are endorsed to those who pay more commission not for the best companies. Corruption in Arab countries has made it hard for firms to think beyond the short-term and discourages foreign institutions from investing because it represents an additional cost.

As for petty corruption, it also has the effect of making more inefficient bureaucracies: delays and obstructions proliferate in order to maximize the revenue from bribes that circumvent them. Bribery has the effect of lowering standards, undermining government policies and lowering respect for the legitimacy of government.

Concerning Arab countries, according to the Corruption Perceptions Index for 2011 compiled by Transparency International, Somalia is in the last rank (182) followed by Soudan (176), Iraq (172), Libya (168), Yemen (164), Lebanon (134), Syria (129) and Egypt (112), (Transparency International, 2011).

ROLE OF ARAB STATES IN WORLD AFFAIRS

We have to say that the slogans raised by the insurgents in Arab Spring revolutions are concentrated on internal affairs. Nevertheless, there is always a relation between what is happening inside a country and the world affairs.

The role of Arab states in world affairs is average. It is not compatible with the strategic position of these countries and the importance of their natural resources, especially the oil. Similarly, the part of Arab countries in the World Economy is low (4.2% of exports, 2.8% of imports). This situation is due relatively to the kind and nature of regimes adopted in Arab countries. However, most of these countries still suffering from the colonial era and confronting the consequences of one or multiple external political factors such as war, invasion, occupation and foreign pressure. Consequently, the failure of existing Arab regimes to deal with these external factors has significantly shaped the new visions of the protesters. They advocate for sovereign, developed and democratic society.

INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL IMPLICATION

The remarkable revolts have drawn worldwide attention. The most famous international media organs provided continuous coverage of the events. Leaders of other countries unceasingly have delivered their comments and perceptions of what is happening. International Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have been very active providing observations on the internal situation of the concerned countries. The Arab Spring influenced the centers of decision making every where; including the grant of Nobel Peace Prize to a Yemenite rebel.

The echo is global. In China, online activists inspired by the Arab Spring called for a “jasmine revolution.” In Singapore, opposition members called for an “orchid evolution” in the run-up to the national elections. Perhaps as a result, those watching from the West have been positively triumphalist in their predictions. The Arab uprisings could herald “the greatest advance for human rights and freedom since the end of the cold war”, argued British foreign secretary William Hague (Kurlantzick, 2011).

Therefore, referring to Arab spring revolutions as a product of foreign powers policy is a simplistic idea. It neglects the people aspirations and will. It denies to Arab peoples the ability to change and consider them as pawns that are used by foreign powers to achieve their strategies.

The dictators themselves tried to delegitimize the revolts by arguing that they were not genuine popular movements but actually Western attempts (conspiracy, complot) at regime change (Kurlantzick, 2011). When this argument did not stand up and produced negative results, the dictators began to state that Arab revolts were connected to extremist Islamist movements and terrorists. They tried to legitimize their repression against the insurgents and to solicit the USA and Europeans support. But this maneuver failed as well.

To be objective, we do not neglect the role of external powers in what is happening in Arab states. We have to say that any big power has its important political, military and economic potency enabling it to play a significant role in world affairs. Accordingly, big powers, as well as regional powers, are very active during the wave of revolutions in Arab world. They are present to influence the situation in the way to protect their interests. They interpose by different means. In general, there is a vast political and moral support provided generously to the rebels, through the declarations of foreign leader, the use of international mass media networks such as Cable News Network (CNN), Al Jazeera and British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and the use of regional and international organizations and NGOs especially the Arab League, United Nations (UN), European Parliament, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) military intervention in Libya was carried out following to many decisions of the Arab League imposing sanctions on Libya.

POSITION OF USA AND EUROPE

The USA and European are main players and have vital interests in the Arab region especially access to oil, set up regional balance of power, subordination of national markets and protecting Israel.

For longtime the Americans and Europeans supported absolute Arab regimes. They thought that those regimes guarantee their interests and can diminish the influence of Islamist radical movements. They also supposed that national built democracy could bring new rulers more independent in their foreign policy and in their development programs. During G. W. Bush administration, Americans and some Europeans believed in imposing democratization. Their experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan generated to the occupation of the two countries and the destruction of their institutions, economy and society were a total failure.

For this reason, they are observing carefully the revolts in Arab countries, to seize the opportunity and influence the situation. In this context, their intervention is implemented by different means according to each case: the mass media, moral and political support to the opposition and imposing sanctions on the regimes. Their participation by the use of NATO attacks to Qaddafi forces was decisive in ending his regime.

MAIN REGIONAL PLAYERS

Israel

The Arab Israeli conflict is a major factor in determining politics in Arab states. Israel stills occupying Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese territories. It continues its acts of aggression and repression against Palestinian people. The new Arab generations feel humiliated by the continuity of this situation. They consider it as a result of ineffective policies of their rulers.

To obtain the international support permanently, Israel pretended that it was the only democracy in the Middle East. Now as Arab countries close to have democratic regimes, Israelis say that they expect another democracy. They are worry from the success of Islamist movements in the recent elections after the regime change in Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt.

In fact, strong Arab democratic states constitute a nightmare for Israeli leaders. The decisions on important issues in Arab states, such the conflict with Israel, will be deliberated and taken according to the people's will through their representatives. It will put an end to the resolve of one dictator who may possibly scarify the national interest for staying in power.

Turkey

Turkey's relations with Arab countries are deep-rooted in historical and geopolitical context. Many Arab countries were under Ottoman rule for centuries. It has long borders with Iraq and Syria, with important economic relations with most Arab states. Turkey is considered by many Arabs as the main regional power that can counterpart the Iranian policy of domination by propagation sectarianism.

With its special secular regime, Turkey symbolizes an appropriate example of moderate and democratic Islam. Hence, it plays the role of soft power in the region. It shows readiness to help any democratic change and

expressing caution about any foreign military interventions in neighboring countries.

Iran

At the beginning of the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt, Iran attempted to have a role in the events. Khameni tried to persuade Arabs that their Spring is an extension to the Iranian revolution. But when the uprising reached Syria and Iraq, the official position became more complex. Iran opposes any uprising inside its allies in the region considering it as foreign conspiracy. As a matter of fact, Iranian leaders fear from the proliferation of the rebellion to their country.

Indeed, Iran wants to get advantages from the new situation to reach the goals of its policy in the region. On the one hand, it exploits the sectarian division between Muslims to infiltrate in the Arab societies. The case of Bahrain stands for a blatant example of this policy. On the other hand, it makes profit from the actual situation in managing its conflict with US and Europe concerning the nuclear issue. Iran in its position during the Arab spring is the good image of hard power in the region. It is difficult to predict its act.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF ARAB REVOLTS

We have to say that Arabs revolted because of what had been stated previously to achieve the following:

1. Defense of the human dignity
2. Support of human freedoms and democracy
3. Application of real democratic changes
4. Treating peoples as source of legitimacy
5. Allow people determining their own future and governments
6. Hold all governments and leaders accountable for their actions
7. Implementation of real economic and social development and the eradication of poverty.

These are the ambitious objectives of the rebels. It will take years to achieve them. Ousting regimes is the least difficult part of the challenge.

Democratic revolution is a tall order; often we are left with change that is less than revolutionary, and politics that are less than democratic (Haass, 2011).

Nevertheless, we can conclude that there are some success registered here and there with the existence of critical difficulties.

PRINCIPAL CHANGES

The revolts resulted in the overthrow of four heads of state:

Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali fled to Saudi Arabia on 14 January 2011. A constitutive body was elected. It will write a new constitution. Moderate liberal Islamist party Al Nahdha won the majority in this body but there was a partition of powers between the main political parties for the transitional period. The prime minister interim from Al Nahdha, the president from Conference for the Republic (left) and the parliament speaker from the Alliance for Liberties and Work (Center).

Ben Ali circle including the former leaders of the regime and his Constitutional Party are banned from any political participation. The country is taking strong steps to install the new regime and secure the stability.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak stepped down on 11 February 2011, after 18 days of protests, ending his 30 years presidency. The army assumed the authority. An interim government is assigned. A “constitutional declaration” for the transitional period was approved by a referendum according to which legislative elections have been performed to choose the members of two chambers. The moderate Muslim Brotherhood and Al Nour Party (Islamic salafist) won the majority. The new elected bodies have to choose a constitutive institution to write the new constitution which has to be submitted to a referendum. It is a very long process which is not sure to succeed.

Mubarak, his sons and most of the former leaders are under custody for corruption, illegal use of public resources, abuse of authority and killing insurgents. They risk very heavy judgments.

The Libyan Muammar al-Qaddafi refused to step down. A civil war between his loyalists and the rebels had been ended by his death and regime change, with the help of NATO. The National Interim Council together with the government leads the country. A temporary constitutional declaration is issued for the transitional period. It is expected that a constitutive body will be elected to write the new constitution which will be approved by the people.

In Yemen, after several attempts to continue in power, Ali Abdullah Saleh accepted the initiative of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) to step down against immunity for himself, his family and former leaders of the state. The initiative encloses other terms:

1. Transition of power to vice-president
2. Formation of a government from all parties
3. Organization of new elections within 3 months
4. New constitution to be adopted and further legislative and presidential elections according to the new constitution.

OTHER CHANGES

Protests in Jordan have caused the resignation of government and the appointment of former Prime Minister and Ambassador to Israel Marouf al-Bakhit as prime minister. There is popular tendency to move towards a constitutional monarchy. From his side, King Abdullah II expressed the need to reform the regime, but the situation remains the same. It is expected that the demonstration will influence the regime to proceed.

The case of Morocco is significant. The regime's response to the demonstrations was prompt and effective implementing real reform. According to the amendment of the constitution approved by referendum, many king's authorities are assumed now by the legislative or executive powers establishing essential measures for constitutional monarchy. More, the new legislative elections were executed in new liberal environment. The opposition Party of Justice and Development (liberal Islamist) was first with 30% of seats in the parliament. It formed the government with the participation of the Democratic Block (the traditional political parties which governed many years).

Influenced by the environment of Arab Spring, other Arab rulers, such as Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, announced that they would not seek re-election at the end of their current terms.

In Arab Gulf countries, the Iranian exploitation of the sectarian division in Bahrain was alarming signal. On the one hand, they decided to be firm against the Iranian infiltration in the region and on the other hand, they performed minor reforms such as municipal elections. It seems that these countries count on the prosperity rather than on democracy.

FUTURE OF ARAB SPRING

The majority of participants in the Arab uprisings are spontaneous. There are several centers of decisions or initiatives. The absence of single leadership led, in all cases, to a confused situation and to the lack of coherent political and economic reform programs. “The one party able to lead a gradual reform process, ironically the ruling elite, such as the military in Egypt is largely unwilling to embark on a process that would slowly rid itself of its privileges and install a pluralistic, stable and prosperous system based on merit rather than patronage” (Muasher, 2011).

To avoid the inclination to anarchy, civil war, harsh police states or sectarianism, there is an urgent need to form new political parties, civil society organizations and trade unions. Besides, as protesters have achieved the political change, they need to begin the institutionalization of the new society. The Tunisian experience shows that it is a worthy idea to begin with the democratic elections through an “agreement” and reinforce democracy later when the new constitution will be written. Such elections were also performed using a “constitutional declaration” in Egypt.

Further, in order to enjoy peace, prosperity and full participation in today’s global economy, Arabs must embrace not only political change but far-reaching social and cultural change too (Whitaker, 2009).

Hence, the solution lies mainly in the hands of Arabs themselves. Intervention by western governments to impose changes is catastrophic. Iraq, which after 9 years of American occupation continues suffering of civil strife and now experiences what can generously be described as dysfunctionality, is a textbook case.

Accordingly, it seems more logical and human to leave other peoples choosing the means and timing to change to democracy. The root built democracy is more reliable and accepted by peoples. Any external intervention to change the political system is seen as a means of neo-colonialism and foreign domination.

The transition period will be long or short according to the degree of maturity of social and political components. All revolutions will face the problem of changing and reforming the institutions, laws and the mentality. And as a matter of fact, the rebels have to decide what to do with the old regime men and with their wealth.

For the purposes of this research and to try predicting the future of the Arab region, we will focus on some examples:

Syria

The situation in Syria seems to be alarming. There is continuity of demonstrations across the country and escalation of repression by the regime. The regime men are unified. For them defending the regime is equal to defending their privileges and interests. The family Assad and most of those who control the state are from the Alouite minority (12% of the population), while the majority of Sunni and the other 17 ethnic and religious minorities are marginalized.

The regime relies on the security solution by the use of the army, the intelligence and security forces. The rulers think that with time the insurgents will be weakened. The insurgents rely on the continuity of their protest to gain more popularity and international support, especially with the regime's persistence to use repression which produces more victims and more indignation.

Two regional powers are implicated in the Syrian issue. First, Turkey, the secular neighbor and the former main economic partner, allowed the Syrian opposition to organize many meetings on its soil. Also, it established a camp to receive the Syrian refugees near the borders. Turkey constitute important player for the USA and Europeans. We think that any decision of military intervention in Syria will be followed by Turkey as member of the NATO. For Turkey it is important to show that it is central regional power.

Second, Iran, the "ally", supports the Syrian regime against the protesters, by all means including the use of pro- Iranian Iraqi Shiite militia. The Iranian position is based on sectarian consideration; the Alouit sect is very close to the Iranian Shiism. Iran will deploy all efforts to keep in power the actual rulers in Syria, because any deficiency of the Syrian regime reduces the Iranian influence in the region mainly in Iraq, Lebanon and the Arab Gulf countries.

From its side, the Arab League used diplomatic, political and economic pressure on Syrian regime. After suspension of participation in the meetings and activities of the League, series of economic and financial sanctions are approved according to decisions from Arab Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and foreign ministers on 27 November 2011, including:

1. Stop flights to and from Syria
2. Ban of trips of Syrian leaders to Arab countries
3. Stop all commercial transactions with Syria except for food and medicines

4. Freeze projects of investment in Syria
5. Freeze assets of Syrian leaders in Arab Banks
6. Stop dealing with Syrian Central Bank
7. Stop all financial transactions with Syria except the transfers of Syrian worker to their families.

Later, the league sent a team of observers to monitor the situation in the country according to the Arab Initiative accepted by the Syrian side. It represented a difficult mission, taking in consideration that they had to monitor the withdrawal of governmental forces from the cities and that the authorities had to leave the people demonstrating peacefully. Confident that the success of such mission can not be assured, the Arab foreign ministers, declared on 22 January 2012, their new initiative concerning Syria. Inspired by the GCC initiative concerning Yemen, it contains similar terms and more details:

1. Transition of President Assad's authorities to his first vice-president to work with the opposition to form a government of national union within two (2) months and to nominate a prime minister accepted by all parties.
2. Within three (3) months, the new government organizes elections, under Arab and International supervision, to choose members of a constitutive body
3. Within six (6) months, the constitutive body write a new constitution to be approved by referendum and promulgate elections law according to the new constitution,
4. Organization of further legislative and presidential elections according to the new constitution and the law of elections
5. The resolution invites the government of national union to declare immediately after its formation, that its main goal is to set up a pluralist political system
6. Nomination by the Arab league of special representative to monitor the predictable political process.

Basing on the nature of Syrian political system and to its way to deal with the resolutions and decisions of the Arab League, it is difficult to imagine that President Assad will easily step down. It is expected that the country will live difficult times in the near future. Furthermore, the refusal

of this plan could lead to the internationalization of the issue and to a sad scenario similar to Libyan one.

Egypt

The situation in Egypt is special. Non-violence succeeded because the army was not prepared to sacrifice its legitimacy to save Hosni Mubarak (Haass, R. N. 2011). After one year since the revolution, this legitimacy facing a real challenge. Three main players dominate the political scene; the army, the youths and the Islamist movements. No one trusts the others. The army wants to be higher than politics and any other power in the society to protect its gains and privileges. As for youths, they want to save their revolution and see real changes in the country.

Finally the Islamist movements, which secured the majority in the elections, want to design the new constitution according to their perception. The long procedure adopted to build the new system could lead to chaos and uncertainty. This could happen by acts from interior or exterior anti-revolutionary forces. We can mention the risky manipulation of the division between Muslims and Copt (Christians) which led to some perilous clashes. Others push for sectorial demands and strikes which have repercussions on the economy and the stability in the transitional period.

We esteem to save the revolution, Egypt needs to change the general political environment characterized by the legitimacy crisis and the proliferation of all kinds of slogans. This certainly needs new institutions and new mentality of political leaders. In the current of events, the revolutionaries could oblige others to accelerate the political changes. But the real economic and social changes will take years if not decades. From their side, the Islamist movements need to reach a deal, with both the army and the insurgents, which at least guarantee the minimum of aspirations of each side.

Yemen

Yemen has important geopolitical situation. It is situated in Peninsula Arab near the main oil exporter countries. It controls Bab Almandab Strait between the red sea and the Indian Ocean. The international navigation through Suez Canal depends on the situation in this strait. In the recent years, the spread of piracy near the Horne of Africa offered more importance to the country in the international efforts to combat this crime.

The country is prototype of tribal society with archaic traditions. Beside the complications of the revolution, Yemen is facing critical problems. In the south which was peacefully unified with the North, the separatist forces profit from the actual situation to intensify their action of secession. Meanwhile, the problem with Hothists (pro-Iranian) is another dangerous problem because it is related with the Iranian infiltration in Yemen. It constitutes a security concern and an element of division in the society. This concern is doubled by the activities of Al Qaida in the country.

There are multiple players in the political scene; the revolutionary youth people, the army, the tribal leaders, the coalition of opposition parties, the National Party of president Saleh and Secessionist Parties in former south Yemen.

We think that the country is passing through critical period. Aware about this matter and fearing from any instability in Yemen and from Iranian incursion, Arab Gulf countries are deploying all efforts to reach smooth and real change in Yemen. USA and Europe are politically supporting these efforts. Their success depends largely on the good will and intentions of internal forces.

After the promulgation of Yemenite parliament a law granting immunity for former President and his departure from Yemen on 22 January 2012, it seems that the situation leans towards peaceful transition. Any vengeance activities in tribal Yemen could lead to civil war and to the fragmentation of the country. Hence, many voices in Arab countries and inside Yemen asked the rebels to focus on the regime change as well the development of the country rather than on the judgment of former regime leaders.

FUTURE OF ARAB REGIONAL SYSTEM

For longtime, the League of Arab states has been considered as the institutional framework of Arab regional system composed of all Arab States. The fragility of this system originates from its decision making procedures based on consensus and that decisions are binding only for those who have voted for them. The League has been facing many challenges; the differences between big and small member states, disputes between them, rivalries between their leaders as well the disparity between rich and poor populations. Moreover, the role of the league is diminished by the creation of sub-regional systems of cooperation such as the GCC.

In the past, this system was characterized by the division between “progressive” and “reactionary” states. With Arab Spring, will the division be between “democratic” and “no- democratic” states? We think that it is too early to reply on this interrogation. But we think that a new Arab regional system, sooner or later will be shaped. The initiative of Arab Gulf states inviting both Morocco and Jordan to join their Council is listed in this course. If they accept to join the Council, it means the division will be between monarchies and republican regimes. The idea has been accepted by Jordan, but Morocco did not show enthusiasm for it.

The continuity of problems inside main former players in Arab system such as Egypt, Syria and Iraq has been diminishing their role in Arab affairs. Consequently, new players appeared, enjoying of their relative political stability, wealth and close relation with USA to influence the current situation in other Arab countries. For example, Qatar became key mediator or participant in most actions concerning Arab Spring.

Nevertheless, as we saw previously, the Arab league tried to have some role in the current situation especially in Libya and Syria. The decisions and resolutions adopted in both cases can be considered as an attempt to shift from the state of negative abstention to the state of positive action in the Arab system. In fact, the Arab league needs to establish rules and procedures to deal with the perilous situations in the member states. We think that it is time for Arabs to reform the system of their League to be more adequate to changes inside the members states and globally. It will be an Arab Spring in the Arab League.

CONCLUSION

All Arab states are expected to live this wave of revolutions, simply, because of the similarity of the situation inside them. There is a common feeling amongst youths that the revolution is their only chance to exist as human being and to their countries to be respected in the world.

In order to ensure the support of their people and the world, the revolutionaries have to present an example respecting the great human morals and ethics, specifically the refusal of vengeance and insisting on participation of all in building and reconstruction. To be reliable, their programs have to refuse the exclusion of others due to their religious or political believes. They have to understand that the revolution needs time

to reach its objectives. Overthrowing a regime is the easiest step in the revolution, but building a new system is more challenging. The coming years could be more difficult than the passed year and the sacrifices could be not less important than what had been offered till now.

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