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Democratic and political dynamics of Middle East: an analysis of internal and external influence

Abstract

The Middle East's democracy deficit is a product of the patterns of political and economic development in the region. It is not because the region is predominantly Islamic or is somehow afflicted by purportedly undemocratic cultures. By itself, culture is not an impediment to transition to democracy as it is subject to influences from the larger polity, especially insofar as the economy and the initiatives of the state are concerned. Instead, transition to democracy is determined by the degree of society's autonomy from the state. This autonomy may result from the empowerment of society as a consequence of economic development, or the state elite's devolution of power to social actors and classes, or, more commonly, a combination of both. The key to understanding democratic transitions lies instead in the nature of state-society relations rather than the nature of society's norms and values in them. Along with other donor countries, the United States should make assistance to civil society a component of new efforts to promote democratic change in the Middle East. But it should do so with a clear understanding of the nature of civil society in Arab countries, of the most effective ways to help civil society organizations to contribute to democratic change, and of the limits of U.S. influence in this zone. To investigate these assumptions, a qualitative research methodology is used, relying on the analysis of secondary academic sources. This study will be emphasizes on the current movements in Middle East and political change.

Keywords: Democratic movements, authoritarianism, Regional Politics, Despotism, Arab-Israel hostility

Introduction.

Middle Easterner Spring comprises of savage and viciousness free challenges, shows, uprisings and common wars, began in Tunis on December 18, 2010, and

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expanded everywhere throughout the Arab world. The early revolts and mobs have been finished yet some are going ahead up 'til now. Every one of the rebellions had some normal strategies for challenges and the utilization of web based life to get the consideration of world network. All the influenced administrations of the Arab Spring utilized their wide range of capacity to smash the demonstrators and subsequently, the dissidents additionally ended up savage. The basic trademark of the nonconformists all through Arab Spring was "the general population needs to cut down the administration (Abushrif 2014).

On December 17, 2010, Mohammad Bouazizi, an unemployed graduate of Tunisia who used to sell fruit due to unemployment, set himself on fire to protest against the amputation of his commodities by the police. It became the start of the most prevalent protests in the history of Middle East. The protests rapidly converted into complete revolutions in Tunis and Egypt. Civil war along with NATO attacks started in Libya. People of different countries like that of Bahrain and Yemen, Syria and Jordan and Lebanon started a protest in their respective countries. The uprising which is commonly known as The Arab Spring was unplanned, unorganized and actually mirrored the tyranny and repression in the Middle East (David, 2013).

The entire Arab world had been overpowered by degenerate authoritarian governments. These despotic administrations had the help of the Western forces. They used to help the tyrants to accomplish their monetary and vital objectives in the district of Middle East. Bouazizi's self-immolation changed the mindset of the Arab common society. Nonconformists of his town of Sidi Bouzid began rebellions that finished the purported tranquility of Tunis. It closed with the expulsion of a pitiless administration in the Arab world. Because of these challenges, Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali was ousted following a lead of 30 years and after that on 14 January 2011, he fled to Saudi Arabia (Khouri 2014).

The revolution was also started in Egypt when a man committed self-immolation in front of the Egyptian Parliament in Cairo as a protest against the deteriorated economic conditions. Such events occurred again and the unrests became rapidly uncontrolled when a huge number of antigovernment protesters assembled in Tahrir Square of Cairo and camped there (David, 2013).

They demanded reforms in political and social conditions. They had to face solid opposition by President Hosni Mubarak and his allies but they succeeded to win and President Mubarak had to resign on February 11, 2011, after a long rule of about 30 years. The Egyptian insurrections were imitated by the demonstrators of Yemen who also demanded the resignation of President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

President Saleh strongly refused to agree to these demands and it resulted in brutal clashes between supporters and anti-government groups (Hamdy,2018).

The anti-government activists attacked the compound of president Saleh by rockets on June 3, 2011, and consequently he had to flee to Saudi Arabia to save his life. Millions of demonstrators came in the streets of Lebanon, Bahrain, Morocco, Iran, Syria Iraq, Palestine, and Jordan. The kingdoms of Jordan and Saudi Arabia tackled the Protests easily by the traditional governments with some subsidies given to them (Cook, 2017).

President Bashar Al-Assad succeeded his father Hafez Al-Assad in Syria. He is a brutal tyrant like his father and he crushed the opposition that had started throughout the country and forced a huge number of people to migrate to Turkey. Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa the King of Bahrain, used excessive power against the Shia protesters who assembled in Pearl Square of Manam (Lister, 2016).

Iran hailed the revolutions attacking and conquering the Middle East but when these protests came to it, about 1500 persons, were arrested here and hard-liner Politicians demanded that the architects of these demonstrations should be executed. Libya has a totally diverse story. Mu'ammar Al-Qadhafi also had to face the anti-government protests after ruling for about 41 years. The situation became uncontrolled very speedily when Qadhafi's security forces used the excessive power against the rebels brutally. It turned the clashes between the supporters and anti-Qadhafi groups into civil war. The United Nations Security Council supported to permit military action in Libya. It was a dangerous foreign interference aimed at avoiding bloody insurgency of insurgents by government forces. NATO forces started a wide operation of air strikes against Colonel Qadhafi and his government on 19th March. It was a wide ranged warplanes and missiles attack on Libya (Abrahamian, 1980).

A number of causes led the protesters towards Protests. Unemployment, corruption, inflation, autocratic rule, excessive use of Power by the security forces lack of freedom, lack of basic necessities of life etc were the common issues of the Middle Eastern states. The authoritarian rulers were ruling the countries from decades, people do not have the right to change the corrupt rulers and to bring the person of their own will (Lasensky, 2011).

The Egyptians saw only three rulers from 1954 when for the first time an independent Egyptian became the ruler. Gamal Abdel Nasser became president in 1954 after forcing General Nagib to resign. He ruled the country from 1954 to 1970. He was succeeded by Anwar Sadat in 1970 after his death. Anwar Sadat was assassinated by an Islamist in 1981 and was succeeded by vice president Hosni Mubarak through a referendum (Abou-El-Fadl, 2015).

Hosni Mubarak ruled Egypt till his ousting from office after huge protests in 2011. During the rule of these military and civil dictators, Egypt remained approximately under the state of emergency. People were not allowed to speak against the wrong policies of the government or the right to change the government through their vote. The Interior Ministry and security forces were given the special powers to crush the opponents of the government (Rutherford, 2013).

In 2011 widespread protests started against President Hosni Mubarak. Protesters demanded his removal from office. Security forces used the excessive powers to crush the rebellions but they failed. Demonstrators camped in the Tahrir Square and remained there till the ousting of Mubarak. The military came out of barracks to protect the lives of Egyptians and in this way, protesters succeeded to achieve one of their goals; the removal of Hosni Mubarak. Egyptians succeeded to bring a revolution named 25 January Revolution (Sonay, 2017).

An overview has been discussed that democratic issues central to understanding the current growth of political changes in the Middle East. The complexity of the issue, as well as the vastness of the region under study, means that this study cannot do justice to the many studies dealing with this subject nor embrace fully the regional diversity with respect to these issues. Instead, there is an emphasis on some key subjects that are central to a better understanding as well as some of the theories used to explain this growth. In particular this study will examine the prospects for

Democratic Revolution in the Middle East

From the mid of the twentieth century, there was a situation of disorder and war for a long period in the Middle East against and under the tyrannical despotic rulers like that of Europe. A wave of remonstrance and uprising started throughout the Arab world which named "Arab Spring" in 2011 (Abushrif, 2014). The citizens of Arab countries raised their voice for different reforms in government, to give political representation to common People and to award basic human rights to the inhabitants of these states' People started the structured protests but it rose to the civil war and their demand to enhance basic rights changed into the slogan of total regime change. All Arabs were uniting on single Point that their demands must be accepted. (Tucker, 2012).

The governments which are changed have adopted democratic principles. This question is still to be answered that whether these governments can be classified as liberal democracies and what stance they will show towards their citizens in the coming years. To understand the type of democracy and its progress throughout the Middle East region. (Cochran, 2011).

Arab Revolts

Arab Spring comprises on violence and violent free protests, started from Tunis in 2010 and extended all over the Arab world. It reached to Egypt in 2010 where it ended the long term autocratic rule of then President Hosni Mubarak in the same year. A democratic movement started against the long-term President to establish democracy. People wanted to obtain the power of vote and their basic rights to change the government according to their wishes and to some extent they succeeded. The initial revolts and riots ended but some are ongoing as yet. All the revolts had some common methods of protests and the use of media to awake the worlds and to get attention of world's community. All the effected regimes of the Arab spring used their all sorts of power to crush the demonstrators and protesters else became violent. The common slogan of the protesters throughout the Arab world was "the people want to bring down the regime (Saikal,2013).

After the start of Arab Spring, whole of the Arab world became the Centre of violent protests.. Tunisia, Libya, Egypt and Yemen can be considered as the major targets and effected states of the protests. All these states were under the control of political disorder completely. Arab Spring was consider the sign of political change in the region, but after passing four years there is a somehow progress. The experts have a deep eye on the situation of Middle East are of the view that it will be too early describe the impacts of Middle East on other states. The protestors could not change the despotic rule and achieve their goals and they could not even succeed to get their desired results as yet. About five years have been passed but the expected desires are still away (David, 2013).

Uprising began in 2010 from Tunis which ousted President Zine El Abidin Bin Ali's government in 2010. The Ennahlda Islamist party succeeded to win the elections of 2011but it was forced by the protestors to quite in 2013. Power passed to independent technocrats who framed and passed a new constitution in 2013 and hold new parliamentary and presidential elections in 2013. Tunisia was the only single state among the revolutionary affected ones which succeeded to progress towards nonviolent transition to a constitutional democracy. Tunisian took some realistic steps that proved their commitments to pluralism. Tunisian revolutionary process was inspiring in its attempt to be comprehensive. New constitution of Tunisia reveals consensus of vision as its electoral provisions make complicated for any single political parties in constituent assembly increased to 19 from previously 7 in the unicameral parliament in Tunisia. The moderate Islamist political party, Ennahda party, got first position in October 2011 elections and formed a coalition government with two other secular leftist political groups. Tunisia saw numerous conflicts between Salafist Islamists and other secularist in 2012 (Nielson,2015).

January 25 was an important day in the history of Egypt as it is named as “25 January Revolution”. Wide spread protests started when a bloody clash occurred between security forces and demonstrators of 18 days in 2011. Parliamentary elections held and the Muslim Brotherhood became victorious. Muhammad Morsi became the first elected President of Egypt. Protests again started against the traditionalist’s rule and Morsi removed from his office by a military coup de tat in 2013. A technocratic government was established after Morsi’s removal. A brutal crackdown was made on activists of Muslim Brotherhood in which thousands of them were put behind the bars. A number of activists were killed and some were sentenced by court. Elections again held in 2014 and General Abdel Fateh Al-Sisi, the former military chief, elected as the president. Egypt does not have the ability to develop a mechanism for conversion based on consensus of everybody. Currently Egypt is again in a situation where it is being run by one man (Torelli, 2015).

The number of political parties which presented the people in the first post-Mubarak parliament enlarged from 9 to 15 in Egypt. Parliamentary elections were held in numerous rounds from in 2011, in which freedom and justice party of the Muslim Brotherhood got a mass victory. With the collaboration of fundamental Salafists Nour party, they subjugated parliament. Liberal activists who were the motivating forces at the back of the anti-Mubarak revolution could not perform well because of their disintegration and domestic clashes. Supreme Court suspended the recently elected parliament even after a few weeks of survival (Torelli, 2015).

Libyan people came in streets and on roads in 2011 to protest against the long term ruling President Mu’mmar Qadhafi. He had to leave the presidency in 2011 on the pressure of demonstrators and NATO forces. Soon he was killed in a NATO attack. Libyans succeeded to remove the authoritarian ruler but could not control the post revolutionary situation. The current situation of Libya is worst as compare to the pre-revolutionary period. Demonstrators failed to achieve their goals to maintain peace, harmony and democracy in Libya to keep their control there. In 2012 elections for National Congress were held but the unskilled government could not stop different factions including Islamists groups to operate their activities. Before the revolutions, situation was not as so deteriorated as different foreign countries have close their embassies. In post revolutionary period it happened as Canada and some other western countries have closed their embassies (David, 2013).

Protests were started in 2011 in Yemen against President Ali Abdullah Saleh’s long term rule. He had to hand over his powers to vice President Abid Mansur Hadi in 2011. Elections held in 2012 in which Hadi was the single Presidential candidate. Due to the growing influence of Islamists in Yemen, US led NATO

forces started to carry the drone attacks against Al-Qaida here. A comprehensive national level dialogue was conducted in Yemen in which all participants agreed to create a system of decentralizes government. Even after the removal of President Saleh, national identity could not take the place of regional or tribal ones. The whole country is divided into tribes as yet. Different tribes are fighting with each other and even some against government. The current situation of Yemen is more deteriorated as compare to the pre-Arab spring era. (Blumi, 2018).

Autocrated rulers were ousted from Egypt, Libya and Tunis. They were replaced by generally elected representatives. Such a change came in Libya after about seven months of armed clash between government supporters and protestors. It finished with the killing of the President during the fight. A civil war is being fought in Syria as yet. Is has caused a serious humanitarian predicament with the huge number of internal and external refugees. After old governments were expelled in Tunis, Libya, and Egypt, free and fair pools with high input rates and just a few reports of abnormalities were held in these countries (Allora,2017).

It is with high input rates and just a few reports of abnormalities were held in these couples. A caretaker regime was shaped to make the country for coming elections Islamist factions which were concealed under earlier leaders, predominantly benefit from the cut political situation and freedom. A number of Islamist groups practiced a moderate languaged admired the need to give respect to international promises and civil rights to some extent in the death of the Arab spring also pled to keep them open towards the West. Asher the advent of Arab spring, a more mental strain of Islam and Salafist movement rose rapidly particularly in North Africa. (UnverNoi,2013).

In the end, it can be concluded that in spite of all its negative aspects, Arab Spring marked the formation of a public political sphere where common people could discuss politics at public places and discuss their expected future and effort to attain democratically transition in the Arab world. One of the major triumphs of the Arab Spring was of the Arab citizen.

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