

The Arab Spring In North Africa: Key Comparative Factors And Actors

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THE ARAB SPRING IN NORTH AFRICA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF KEY FACTORS AND ACTORS

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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ABSTRACT

This study analyzed the revolutions in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya (North Africa) beginning in late 2010. The first part of the study focused on variables that the North African revolutions shared. These variables were “personalistic-style of dictatorship”, “sizable percentage of youth in population”, and “economic context”. These factors were then discussed as major descriptive variables that caused the revolutionary events in North Africa. The second part of the study assessed why each North African revolution resulted in varying levels of violence. Concluding thoughts were made regarding the similarities and differences between the 2009 Iranian Green Revolution, events in other North African Arab-majority states such as Algeria and Morocco, and the on-going Syrian Revolution to the North African Revolutions.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NTC	National Transitional Council
UN	United Nations
US	United States
WBG	World Bank Group

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Beginning in late 2010, popular demand for governmental upheaval took hold of the people of Tunisia. This widespread demand for upheaval eventually led to the dismissal of the Tunisian regime and inspired the people of Tunisia's North African neighbors, Egypt and Libya, to follow the Tunisian example. In popular media, these revolutions became collectively referred to and known as the revolutions of "The Arab Spring". This thesis focuses on the revolutions that took place in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya (here forward referred to collectively as the "North Africa" or the "North African Revolutions") and the revolutionary phenomena that occurred in the major North African sub region of the Middle East. More specifically, this thesis discusses the comparative factors and actors of the revolutions in North Africa. This thesis does so by attempting to determine who the "perceived tormentor" was in each of these cases, the "lead group" who took the mantle of, and led, each revolution, and what was a significant "motivational force" for acting was for this group.

This thesis also attempts to account for the violence in the North African Revolutions, as each North African Revolution resulted in differing levels of violence: The Tunisian Revolution was characterized by limited violence; the Egyptian Revolution was marked by moderate violence that flared more than the Tunisian Revolution; and the Libyan Revolution became a full-fledged civil war with far-reaching effects and involvement from the international community. What can these differing levels of protest-related violence be attributed to? This thesis seeks to explain the differing levels of protest-related violence in each of the North

African Revolutions. Explaining the differing levels of protest-related violence in each revolution will be accomplished through examining the root causes of each revolution, analyzing each state's form of governance, and referring to the timeline in which each of these revolutions occurred.

The first key factor of the North African Revolutions regards the regime types of each state and the dictators shaped these regimes. For the purpose of this thesis, this variable will be referred to as "personalistic dictatorships" and these dictators are delineated as the "tormentor" in each revolution. Here personalistic dictatorship refers to a system of governance that is at least partially comprised of and built upon a particular dictator's beliefs, rules, and egocentric behavior. This style of dictatorship seemingly comes to define the system of governance in the three North African case studies. In order to analyze this factor, an in-depth review and summation of the cult of personality of each individual personalistic dictatorship will be reviewed.

These key actors are: Zine Abidine Ben Ali of Tunisia; Hosni Mubarak of Egypt; and Muamar Qaddafi of Libya. The role of these key actors will be analyzed in order to illustrate how the personalistic style of dictatorship contributed to revolution and eventually led to the public's thirst for the ruling regime's demise. It was also be determined how these dictators became viewed as tormentors and how this lended to the mindset of revolutionaries. A section regarding the role played by the personalistic dictators will be included in the chapters

regarding each revolution. Each section will seek to address the role played by each dictator and his personalistic style of dictatorship in the revolutions of North Africa.

The second key factor of revolution in North Africa discussed in this thesis is the role of the subset of population that can be described as “youth” or “young people”. Young people will be discussed as the “lead group” in each revolution, as research suggests that young people were seemingly the most ardent, fervent, and numerous of any particular subset of population that can be grouped into a single statistical category. For statistical purposes this thesis will follow a general definition of youth given by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly and the World Bank Group (WBG), who define youth as “those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years”.¹ According to the UN, one in five people living in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region is between the ages of 15 and 24 (Figure 1).²

However, there are several instances of outliers that may be still categorized as “young people”, mainly those people in their mid-twenties who played a significant role in each respective revolution. It may also be pertinent to note that these young people were in some way disaffected by their statuses in society. For the purpose of this thesis, these young people that played a part in the North African revolutions will be referred to as “disaffected youth”. This section will also address the role played by social networking and social media in each revolution. Research tends to indicate that these social tools were often used by the young people in the North African revolutions for a variety of purposes pertinent to each revolution.

Table 1: Median Age for MENA Countries, 2010³

Source: United Nations Population Division, World Population Prospects, the 2010 Revision

TABLE 1. SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATORS FOR YOUTH AGES 15 TO 24 IN MENA COUNTRIES Youth Population (in 1000s)				% Change		Youth as Percent of Total Population			Youth as % of Working-age Population
Country	1980	2010	2040	1980-2010	2010-2040	1980	2010	2040	2010
Algeria	3,639	7,292	6,108	100	-16	19	21	13	30
Bahrain	79	188	200	138	7	22	15	11	19
Egypt	8,889	16,009	17,624	80	10	20	20	15	31
Iran	7,648	16,253	9,559	113	-41	20	22	11	31
Iraq	2,495	6,205	12,817	149	107	18	20	19	37
Jordan	448	1,332	1,463	197	10	20	22	16	37
Kuwait	246	423	552	72	30	18	16	12	22
Lebanon	569	759	580	33	-24	20	18	12	26
Libya	558	1,124	1,170	102	4	18	18	14	27
Morocco	4,041	6,268	5,423	55	-13	21	20	14	30
Oman	208	611	448	194	-27	18	22	12	31
Palest. Terr.	289	858	1,544	197	80	19	21	19	39
Qatar	45	256	264	474	3	20	15	11	17
Saudi Arabia	1,743	4,947	6,032	184	22	18	18	14	27
Syria	1,748	4,166	4,747	138	14	20	20	15	35
Tunisia	1,362	1,994	1,602	46	-20	21	19	13	27
Turkey	8,919	12,883	11,559	44	-10	20	18	13	26
UAE	185	1,211	1,052	555	-13	18	16	9	20
Yemen	1,524	5,327	9,955	250	87	19	22	19	42
Total MENA	44,632	88,106	92,698	97	5	20	20	15	30

The table above displays the population of youth in MENA, with the youth in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya highlighted. Here it is illustrated that youth comprise roughly 1/5 the population of everyone in MENA, as well as specifically in North Africa. It also pertinent to note that these young people 15-24 have grown up during the entirety of each regime or, at the very least, these people were in their formative years when the regime took power. These young people have known no other regime and it is likely that they have become disaffected by their stagnant political landscape and dismal socio-economic prospects.

A section regarding the role played by the youth populations will be included in the chapters regarding each revolution. A section regarding the role played by social networking and social media will be included in the chapters regarding each revolution. Each section will seek to address the role played by the youth populations and social media/networking in the revolutions of North Africa.

The third key factor discussed in this thesis is the effect that the economic condition of each state played in fomenting revolution in North Africa. For the purpose of this thesis, this factor will be regarded as the “economic context” of revolution. Economic condition will be discussed as the most significant “motivational force” for revolution in North Africa. Another main motivational force that becomes apparent in these revolutions is political change. However, these revolutions, while certainly inspired by the want for political change, they occurred under a harsh economic downturn in these states and thus the economic context is delineated as more significant than truly political motivations. The economic context will be

discussed in order to analyze how certain economic conditions may have contributed to revolutionary upheaval in tandem with the aforementioned variables. Economics seemingly play a large role in all aspects in life and affect how people live from day-to-day. Low economic opportunity seemingly presents a ripe situation for revolution and at the very least has been a contributing factor to many revolutions, as history has sometimes shown (namely the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia). This is often true in states with authoritarian regimes, as the dictator largely controls the economic situation, as well as all facets of society. A section regarding the role played by the economic climate will be included in the chapters regarding each revolution. Each section will seek to address the economic context and the role of economics in fomenting revolution in the revolutions of North Africa.

This thesis will also cover the protest activity that took place in Algeria and Morocco, but did not result in revolutions. Like Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya, Algeria and Morocco are Arab majority states ruled by dictators, with large youth populations, and bad economies. The unique circumstances that occurred in Algeria and Morocco and their “unsuccessful revolutions” will be covered in the conclusion of this thesis.

Research Questions

With regard to the focus of this thesis, pertinent research questions must be raised and answered. These research questions are asked in order to account for similarities in each North African revolution and provide guidelines for the particular research in this thesis. Therefore, the following research questions are proposed:

Research Question One: Do the North African Revolutions share common key factors and actors with one another? If so, which key factor or actor was the most pertinent in deciding the outcome of each revolution? Did each revolution have a different pertinent key factor or actor? Were these revolutions somehow linked or did they come to fruition uniquely?

Research Question One encapsulates the main variables of the study and attempts to account for their similarities and differences in each revolution. It attempts to see how each variable builds upon another and creates a situation for revolutionary activity. Here it will answer how personalistic dictatorships, a large population of disaffected youth, and bad economic conditions combine to build the perfect storm for revolution that resulted in regime change in North Africa. These variables are deemed to be pertinent due to the style and infamous nature of each dictator, the large youth populations that this area possesses, and the slowly degrading economic conditions are congruent in each case and seem to lead to disaffection among the population. This research question also seeks to answer if these revolutions were somehow linked or came about entirely on their own. Although the domino or contagion effect seems to indicate that these revolutions were linked, an argument may perhaps be made that they came about under unique circumstances. This thesis seeks to give an answer to this question as best the research indicates.

Research Question Two: Can an accurate reason be given for the differing levels of violence in each of the North African Revolutions?

Research Question Two attempts to provide reasoning for the differing levels of violence in each North African Revolution. Were the differing levels of violence due to any unique situation in each revolution, or were the differing levels of violence due to the timing of each revolution? Certainly each dictator in North Africa used state security forces to quell dissidence and keep the regime in power through intimidation, but why was this not case in Tunisia and Egypt? Or at least, why were the regimes in Tunisia and Egypt unsuccessful in using violence to quell the dissidence and protests that began each respective revolution.

Answering the two research questions mentioned above will give the possibility of meeting the objective of this thesis, which is mainly to study the key factors and actors causes in the North African Revolutions and account for similarities and differences characterizing them.

Significance

The topic of revolutions in North Africa is significant due in part to the phenomena of widespread revolution likely caused by the North African Revolutions in other Muslim and/or Arab majority states with similar systems of governance (namely authoritarian dictatorships). Understanding how and why the North African Revolutions occurred may allow for some perspective regarding the nascence of revolutions. Concurrently, this thesis aims to use, and potentially build upon, the study of revolution.

The study of the underlying causes and the key factors of the North African Revolutions is justified by the scale of the effect they produced on society in general and individual communities in particular. The revolutionaries in North Africa may have signified the beginning of the end of the authoritarian regimes, as the supposed taboo of encroaching on the image of the “Father of the Nation” has been broken. The revolutionary movement has seemingly exposed “a system of patronage and a culture of corruption” that fails “to address problems facing ordinary people”.⁴

The topic of revolutions in North Africa is significant due in part to the phenomena of widespread revolution likely caused by the North African Revolutions in other Muslim and/or Arab majority states with similar systems of governance as a result of this change in people’s mentality. Understanding how and why the North African Revolutions occurred may allow for some perspective regarding the nascence of revolutions.

The results of the study can be of theoretical and practical significance. Firstly, the results of this study may make a contribution to the study of revolutions by way of widening the sphere of knowledge about the beginning and driving force of revolutions. Secondly, the results of this thesis may perhaps be used in practice to monitor particular situations in modern states to assess the possibility of revolutionary events with regard to the root causes outlined in the present thesis.

Literature Review

The aims of the literature reviewed in this thesis is to provide a sound theoretical backing for the chosen variables being researched as well as provide distinct and trustworthy research regarding the events of each revolution. The literature gap that this thesis aims to cover is the piecing together of variables thought to be of import to the events of the North African Revolutions, as well as comparing and contrasting the events and key factors and actors that these revolutions were comprised of.

The literature used in this thesis can be divided into two general categories: literature regarding the general study of revolutions and revolution theory; and literature regarding specific revolutions covered in this thesis, specifically the events occurring within each revolution.

The first category of literature is geared to present a sound theoretical basis for the study of revolution as a major event affecting a state's economy, political system, as well as social and cultural sphere. The aim of this thesis is to present policy results, but theory will also be discussed and this thesis will attempt to add to revolution theory where it can. Also, understanding revolutionary theory and its import are critical in creating a sound policy framework for this particular research. Reliance on these sources will aim to ensure the viability of the results obtained in the present thesis. Many of these sources are used mainly for inspiration and gathering research ideas for this thesis.

The works of many regarded Political and Social Scientists characterize the literature regarding the general study of revolutions and revolution theory. Use of the beliefs of regarded Political and Social Scientists seeks to ensure a connection between the present study and the so-called generally accepted theoretical background in the studies of Political Science and Social Studies. Historically and presently regarded Political and Social Scientists referenced in this section include Chalmers Johnson, Charles Tilly, David Close, John Dunn, Brian Meeks, and James Samuel Coleman.

This thesis seeks to make some contribution to the sub-study of revolutions within the discipline of Social Sciences, specifically in the area of Political Science. This thesis also seeks to present specifications of policy in the events of the North African revolutions that may add to the study of revolutionary theory concerning North African Revolutions.

First, the thesis utilizes the term “revolution”, a term that could perhaps benefit from a few comprehensive definitions for clarity. It is also important that these definitions illustrate meaning and course of the revolutions in North Africa and give context to these revolutions within modern history. It is also important to note the methods, causes, and history of revolutions (as well as the history of the study of revolution).

Charles Tilly⁵ broadly defines a revolution “as a social movement advancing exclusive competing social claims to the control of a state”. This definition serves to preface the case study chapters in this thesis, as it becomes apparent in each revolution that there are many sects of society that came together to compete for the control of the state, as the state and its

people clearly diverged in opinion of control of the state. This definition is also pertinent because the North African Revolutions seem to have been social movements in nature. Tilly defines a social movement as “a series of contentious performances, displays and campaigns by which ordinary people make collective claims on others.” Tilly argues that social movements are ways in which ordinary people can participate in politics and that there are three major elements to a social movement.

The first element to a social movement is a Campaign. A Campaign is an organized and subsequently sustained public effort in making collective claims against the target of the social movement. In the North African Revolutions, Campaigns are present in the nascent stage of each revolution. Within these Campaigns in each North African Revolution, a lead group becomes apparent.

The second element to a social movement is the Repertoire of Contention, which entails combinations of the following forms of political action: creation of special-purpose associations, public meetings, rallies, demonstrations, petition drives, and the like. In the North African Revolutions, these forms of Repertoire of Contention are present in various forms. Furthermore, “social media use” (and the many ways social media can be used) can perhaps be discussed as the main uses of Repertoire of Contention in the North African Revolution.

The third element to a social movement is displays of worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitments on the part of the public (also known as “WUNC Displays”). Certainly, the North African Revolutions were marked with these WUNC Displays, not necessarily in the W-U-N-C

order. The disenfranchised peoples of North Africa showed up in numbers to fight for their worth, became united in their cause, and committed to the cause of overthrowing the ruling regime.

Jeff Goodwin gives two definitions of revolutions that relate to the North African Revolutions. First, Goodwin gives a broad detail of revolutions. According to Goodwin, revolutions are “any and all instances in which a state or a political regime is overthrown and thereby transformed by a popular movement in an irregular, extraconstitutional and/or violent fashion”. This definition applies to the North African Revolutions in the literal sense that the North African regimes were changed by popular movement by extraconstitutional and in some cases, violent fashion.

Goodwin’s second definition of revolution is a bit more narrow in its scope, “revolutions not only entail mass mobilization and regime change, but also more or less rapid and fundamental social, economic, and/or cultural change, during or soon after the struggle for state power.” Indeed, these revolutions seem to have been carried out by the population in order to seize control from leaders whose claim to the control of the state and direction of the state was no longer congruent with that of the population. However, in order to truly qualify for this definition, more time must pass for the events of post-revolution North Africa to unfold. Seemingly, these revolutions may be heading in the path delineated by Goodwin’s second definition, in that there will be fundamental social, economic, and cultural change, but that remains to be seen.

Tilly also differentiated between types of revolutions, such as coup de 'tats, top down seizures of power (wherein the ruling party usurps more power and/or gets rid of other organs of government that were once essential), a civil war, a revolt and a so-called great revolution. According to Tilly, a great revolution is a type of revolution where the economic, social, and political institutions are changed. The North African Revolutions seem to encompass elements of Tilly's civil wars, revolts, and great revolutions.

While simultaneously being "great revolutions", the North African Revolutions can also be characterized as "radical revolutions", as delineated by Goodwin and James M. Jasper.⁶ A radical revolution is one that seeks to transform the method of control in the state and fundamentally alter at least one important aspect of society, such as its economy or culture. Whether or not the goal of radically transforming the state was achieved in these revolutions is debatable, but research suggests that the revolutionaries sought to depose longstanding dictators whose personalistic style of rule became inseparable with the course of society and fundamentally alter the economic course of the state.

Chalmers Johnson⁷, states that revolution is an elusive and complex concept composed from a number of elements. To begin, revolution is a social change of a special kind, as it employs violence to regulate social relations. It concerns the primary level of people's existence within a community, which is its constitution. Indeed, regardless of key similarities and differences, each North African Revolution cannot fit neatly within a historical concept of revolution, nor can they be encapsulated by a mere definition. Having a definition of revolution

and category of revolution is important to frame the research, but does not suggest that the North African Revolutions fit squarely within a single description.

The North African Revolutions encompass many of the elements of revolution and revolutionary theory discussed above. These revolutions were social movement that contained mass mobilization, where “great” in that many institutions were changed, were “radical” in that they sought to transform the method of control, and were brought about after the state could no longer control violence.

Consequently, revolutions are likely best studied within the social context of the societies where they occur instead of studying revolutions as a whole (at least for the benefit of the case studies in this thesis).⁸ Besides, perhaps another necessity in understanding why revolutions happen is to understand why social barriers protecting order and restricting violence have been broken, as one of the major tasks of social organization is to provide order and protect members of a society against violence. Violence has been delineated as an important part of this study and understanding why a breakdown in state control and the resulting violence occurs is crucial in understanding the section in this thesis devoted to violence.⁹

Theories attempting to describe and account for the phenomenon of revolution started becoming a popular subject in the study of political science in around 1789 after the French Revolution. The new concept of revolution that was inspired by the contemporary events contained two incisive assumptions outlined by David Close: firstly, that society can be totally

reconstructed without reference to the past; secondly, inequality is not an inherent part of any society and universal human rights are attainable. A crucial idea elicited from the French Revolution was that common people are capable of changing the society.¹⁰ Capturing the essence of Marquis de Condorcet's *Outline of a Historical Picture of the Human Mind*, John Dunn points out that Condorcet regarded the existing squalor and inequality as a result of the elite's manipulative egoism; the elite "were prepared to keep the majority in a state of abject superstition in order to preserve their own political control".¹¹

Another revolutionary shock was likely caused and powered by the emergence of another societal theory, and it seemingly affected long held views of revolution beyond redemption. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels' *Communist Manifesto* of 1848 was published at the time when a series of revolutions were taking place in Europe. Understanding history as a record of the humanity's progress, Marx utilized the methodology of Hegelian dialectics in order to reveal the mechanism of historical development and linked it to the field of political economy.

The third major impulse in the study of revolution was the Second World War.¹² All these events gave rise to paradigms of scientific perspectives on revolution. According to Meeks, the first wave of revolutionary theorists was contemporary to the French Revolution and included Edmund Burke and Georg Hegel. The beliefs of Marx and Engels can also be referred to this group, though their considerations were rather inspired by the aftermaths of the revolution.¹³ The second wave emerged after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 and

included Crane Brinton, George Pettee, and Gustave LeBon. The third wave responded to the events of the post-Second World War period; Ted Gurr, Chalmers Johnson, Samuel Huntington, Neil Smelser, and Charles Tilly belong here. Since the 1970s, there has been a development of critical thought concerning the Third Wave.¹⁴

Many major revolutions of the recent past served as inspirations for this thesis and for delineating what were the most pertinent variables and events of the North African Revolutions. These revolutions included: the French Revolution, American Revolution, Russian February/Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, and the 1979 Iranian Revolution. In these revolutions an apparent “tormentor” is in place, such as Czar Nicholas II of Russia. Czar Nicholas II has been historically described as an autocrat who sometimes used brutal methods to rule and suppress dissidence. In all of these aforementioned revolution, the leader is most often included and remembered as the main antagonist of revolution (King Louis XVI of France, King George III of Great Britain, the aforementioned Czar Nicholas II of Russia, and Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi of Iran). Russia’s steep economic decline is often attributed as the motivational force behind the people’s want for revolution and indeed many of the revolutionaries were the poor and/or unemployed (“lead group”). In each of the four revolutions listed above, this same pattern is present, albeit in differing forms. These revolutions serve as loose models for the North African Revolutions and basis for comparison and contrast.

James Samuel Coleman¹⁵ indicates that the common focus of research on revolution is restricted to the causes of revolutions in general and revolutions in individual countries in

particular. Political Scientists are seemingly not so interested in the results or the process of a revolution. While investigating this range of issues, political scientists have tended to use a common method. They have examined the societies where revolutions have taken place in the period that preceded the event. This analysis suggested which processes in the society might have caused revolutions. This thesis is concentrated on a different range of problems. What this thesis aims for is a contribution to revolution theory through studying of the interdependence between the population composition in a particular state and the level of violence that characterizes a revolution.

The second category of data regarding the specific groups and events of each individual revolution aims to provide a bulk of data for analysis that will constitute the essence of the thesis. Much of the research in this area comes from freshly written peer-reviewed articles and papers. There are very little instances of scholarly books or textbooks written on these revolutions due to their recent happening. While these scholarly articles and papers do much to fill the data of this thesis, there are cases where research was gathered from reputable news sites and online sources due to the recent nature of the topic. The research culled from these news sites and online sources is used to fill holes in, and answer questions arising from, the cases where the academic literature had not covered, nor caught up to recent events.

The general ideas and hypotheses of these works are often aimed at explaining a single cause or a broad idea about a particular revolution. Many of these articles cover some of the data regarding these revolutions, but no found data culls these variables and events together

such as this thesis. It is in this way that this thesis fills the literature gap on the subject of North African Revolutions – adding each variable, using each variable to build on one another, and introduce differing levels of violence as a unique characteristic and difference of these seemingly very similar revolutions. Since the aim of this thesis is mainly to present policy in each revolution, these sources suffice to fill the data comprising this thesis.

Literature regarding personalistic dictatorships often contained comments about each dictator that were speculative in nature. For the purpose of this thesis, only raw data was used and comments were saved to be made by the author. Literature on the lives and rules of Tunisia's Zine Abidine Ben Ali, Egypt's Hosni Mubarak, and Libya's Muamar Qaddafi belong here.

In a working paper US Ambassador to Tunisia, Gordon Gray wrote a compelling case for why Ben Ali's regime failed prior to the Tunisian Revolution and how Ben Ali's style of rule led to his own demise, in that Ben Ali often ignored the inner regions of Tunisia and did not take protests seriously. Some information about Ben Ali's personality and style of rule were mentioned in this article, mainly regarding how Ben Ali's paranoia and thirst for power perhaps dominated his egocentric personality.¹⁶

Jonathan Schazer¹⁷ wrote a peer-reviewed article regarding Mubarak's cult of personality and nepotistic regime. In his article, Schazer highlights Mubarak's rise to power and promotes the idea that Mubarak is grooming his son, Gamal, to be his successor. This article

also highlights the corruption and style of Mubarak's regime and postulates that Mubarak may never leave office.

Tarek Osman¹⁸ reinforces the views of Schazer on the origins of Mubarak's rule and especially Mubarak's paranoia and other egocentric tendencies. In tandem with Schazer's article, Mubarak is painted as a personalistic dictator who has shaped Egypt in his own image. This article also postulates that Mubarak caused his own demise, in that his constant paranoia regarding his own downfall caused him to become too authoritarian and too leery of allowing freedoms for the Egyptian population.

Stephen Zunes¹⁹ wrote a peer-reviewed article in 2001 that explained Qaddafi's rise to power, touched upon his personality, and explained his history with Libya's relation with the West. Interestingly enough, this article was written prior to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, before terrorist activities and state-sponsors of terrorism became more engendered in the lingo of Western politics and society. Thomas Donnelly and Vance Serchuk²⁰ wrote a peer-reviewed article that illustrates Qaddafi's complete change from leader of a rogue state to ally of the West. This article does not go into much detail regarding Qaddafi's distinct personality, but nonetheless illustrates that he was willing to do anything to stay in power, especially in light of the US-led toppling of Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq – another MENA state that purported to have a weapons of mass destruction (WMD) program and that had long been at odds with the West.

Many of these writers in the field of studying the North African leaders concur that their regime types were authoritarian and marked by each dictator's distinct personality. Literature is clear that the dictators in some way directly caused the revolutionary action against their regime through their unfair rule. No author directly answers the question of whether the regime was personalistic nor do they make the distinction between personalistic dictators and monarchs in the Arab World; this appears to be a unique property of this thesis.

Literature regarding the disaffected youth was culled in order to present the argument that youth comprised a large proportion of the population. Literature was also culled to present that these young people were also disaffected by their role in society and faced many hardships under their regime prior to each revolution. Sources were also used in order to determine the role that social networking played in each revolution, but much of this information on exact use of social networking is not totally trustworthy in nature (although fact-checking was used).

Farzenah Roudi's²¹ paper on demographics and employment in the MENA region served as one of the most important source materials for this thesis. Roudi's paper discusses the unprecedented proportion of youth in MENA society and the challenges they have faced due to this population bulge. Roudi discusses the symbolic role played by Mohammed Al-Bouazizi in Tunisia and noted that Al-Bouazizi's plight largely encapsulates that of the youth in MENA, and especially those young people that lived in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya. This paper contains the table used in the introduction to make one of the central arguments of this thesis, which can be boiled down to: high proportion of disaffected, unemployed young people may be a nascent

variable of revolution. Roudi also discusses the economic hardships that the youth in the MENA region faced. Since the economic context is another major argument of this thesis, Roudi's argument lends to the congruence of the variables in this thesis. An area of interest that Roudi brings about in his paper is delineating whether this youth bulge is a challenge or opportunity. This argument is contextual in nature, and is too broad for the purpose of this thesis, but is an interesting area of future research nonetheless.

Jeffrey Ghannam²² discusses the use of social media in the Arab World prior to the events of the 2011 North African Revolutions. This article creates a useful backdrop for the use of social media in each revolution, although it does not lend much to the core aim of social media section of the thesis, which is to illustrate how exactly social media was used during each individual North African Revolution. However, this article does go into great detail about how social media has opened the Arab World to a rise of vibrant use of social media and increased citizen engagement on the internet, within societies that are generally viewed as closed and unfree.

Ghannam²³ followed this article up with an article discussing the use of social media during and after the North African Revolutions – a sort of sequel to his previous article which was published during the events of the revolutions. In this article, Ghannam's main argument is that social unrest in tandem with the use of social media creates a sort of vortex, in that these factors contribute to quickly mobilizing mass protests and giving a voice to those who otherwise would not have one within society. It is in this way, argues Ghannam that social

media has allowed for Arabs to push the boundaries of free expression, a luxury they were seemingly not previously allowed in society. In tandem with Ghannam's previous article, these articles were used for much of the data comprising the section in each case study chapter regarding social media's role in each revolution.

Jon B. Alterman²⁴ wrote a paper that encapsulates the Tunisian youth's involvement in the Tunisian revolution and their use of social networking to achieve their goals. Alterman was dubious of the attention that social networking received in popular media during this revolution and instead postulates that it was not an important variable, instead pointing more toward the other variables that happened to be used in this thesis, such as regime type and economic context. However, for the purpose of this thesis, Alterman's criticisms have been ignored (but taken into account), in order to illustrate the effect that social media had in the Tunisian Revolution. Furthermore, the source data from this article was all that was necessary to aid the argument of this thesis. Alterman also opines that this revolution may have not reached its resolution, in that it is too early to tell the destiny of Tunisia and the Tunisian populace may be in the same situation it was in under Ben Ali. However, for the purpose of this thesis, this opinion was largely ignored as being too speculative, but it has been taken into account as an area for future. Other information such as youth demographics were culled from source data such as the UN and World Bank.

Alcinda Honwana reinforces the idea that the young people of Tunisia were among the most active participant in the Tunisian Revolution and they were indeed disaffected. According

to Honwana, the Tunisian Revolution was initiated by disaffected young people, whose activeness succeeded in bringing together a broad coalition of social and political forces against Ben Ali's regime".²⁵

Ignacio Marin's article specified specific social media tools and how they were used in the Tunisian Revolution. Marin went so far as to call Facebook, Twitter, and Al-Jazeera the symbols and tools of the Tunisian revolution.²⁶ In the Marin's opinion: "Internet can help revolutions from below to democratize access to information and possibilities of organization".²⁷

Raymond Gilpin, Amal A. Kandeel, and Paul Sullivan²⁸ contribute to an article on Egypt's demographics. This article discusses how youth employment played a large factor in the demands of Egyptian protestors and thus painting a portrait regarding how the youth of Egypt came to be disaffected by their regime and societal role. This article also reinforces Roudi's claims of high youth proportion and high youth unemployment in the MENA region, as well as challenges presented by having a large proportion of youth in a population. This article also largely touches upon the economic situation in Egypt and is used as a source for the "economic context" variable in the Egyptian case study chapter.

Susanne Tarkowski Tempelhoff and Manal Omar's²⁹ paper discussing the involvement and "ownership of the revolution" by various social groups in Libya. This paper attempts to delineate who exactly the rebels were in the Libyan Revolution by discussing different groups such as youth, women, diaspora population and other groups within Libyan society that played

a role in the events of the revolution. The authors discuss The February 17 Youth Movement as an important factor in the Libyan Revolution. The Youth Movement arguably has the largest stake of ownership of the Libyan Revolution, as these young people may have perhaps been among the first protestors and among the best organizers of dissidence. The Youth Movement is largely comprised of young, urban, middle class citizens, most of whom have obtained a higher degree. However, for the purpose of this thesis, only the role of youth will be discussed as a key actor, rather than worrying about which subset of the population “owned” the revolution. Whether or not the youth of Libya owned the revolution is irrelevant, because it is clear that the Libyan youth were a key factor in the Libyan Revolution. This article also proved useful because it gave an idea of who comprised the majority of Libya’s rebel fighters, which lent to the section regarding violence in Libya and the conclusion of the revolution. Once again, it appeared that young people comprised the majority of rebel fighters, thus furthermore proving the large role that young people played in the Libyan Revolution.

The subject of youth involvement and social media use seems to be the richest category of literature regarding the North African Revolutions. Many major contributors to the study of revolutions and Political Science have historically used youth involvement as a basis for social movements, such as Tilly, and therefore this is a well-broached topic.

Literature regarding the economic context in each state prior to the revolution was used to create a compelling case that economics played a major role in upheaval. This information was culled in order illustrate the economic hardships faced by the citizens in each state, as well

as how each regime had shaped the economy. Comments about the economy were made in the literature, but comments in this thesis were left to the author (where comments were applicable).

Lahcen Achy³⁰ wrote a paper regarding Tunisia's economy prior to the 2011 revolution and the problems it may face after the deposal of Ben Ali and his economic policies. The data from Achy's review of the Tunisian economy was helpful in determining its strength (or lack thereof) and why the Tunisian economy was in the shape that it was in prior to the revolution. These economic facts led to ability to surmise the economic context that led to the Tunisian Revolution. Comments regarding the forecast of the future of Tunisia's economy were used to create a sharp divide between authoritarian Tunisia and the new Tunisia. The CIA Factbook's page on the Tunisian economy was used for this section to gather hard data and support the claims made by Achy.

Ibrahim Saif³¹ wrote a paper mainly illustrating Egypt's perceived economic hardships in the months after the end of the revolutionary events. While this paper mainly focuses on these perceived future hardships, it does detail the previous economic conditions that may have contributed to the demise of the Mubarak regime. These conditions are delineated as massive unemployment among educated youth and perceived corruption, among other minor conditions. Comments regarding the forecast of the future of Egypt's economy were used to create a sharp divide between authoritarian Egypt and post-revolution Egypt. The CIA

Factbook's page on the Egyptian economy was used for this section to gather hard data and support the economic claims made by Saif.

Dutch Professor Julian Lindley-French³² wrote an all-encompassing paper that covers the transition from Qaddafi-led Libya to that of the National Transitional Council (NTC). While this paper covers a broad spectrum of the troubles, and specifically those troubles of a political nature, that Libya has faced and perhaps will face in the post-revolutionary era, it does include specifics about the economic climate in Libya prior to the revolution. Lindley-French paints the Libyan economy as weak and closed to new growth and delineates this weak condition as a factor for the Qaddafi regime's demise. Lindley-French also postulates that the NTC may face the same fate as Qaddafi's regime if it cannot build the Libyan economy into a viable one. The CIA Factbook's page on the Libyan economy was used for this section to gather hard data that Lindsey-French's paper lacked to support the claims made by the author.

Economic context has long been a context for revolutionary activity. This area of literature is also rich with information on the role of economics. As previously mentioned, Marx and Engels are perhaps the most famous historical revolutionary theorists whose theories mainly deal with economics. While the North African Revolutions do not deal with the particular ideals that Marx and Engels wrote about, understanding the economic context is key to reviewing modern revolutions such as those in North Africa. However, most of the literature regarding the economic context here mainly deals with raw numbers to support the claims of the thesis. Certainly many of the authors mentioned above make claims and speculations based

on the economic data in their papers, but it is often very cut and dry or at worst not relevant to the scope of the thesis.

Literature regarding the violence in each revolution was culled in order to illustrate the differing levels of violence and what may have caused violence. This information largely came from news articles that reported on instances of violence and presented numbers of people killed, people imprisoned, women raped, and amount of police/military activity in quelling protests. Exact numbers differed between each source, therefore exact numerations are not expressed in this thesis, but rather indications of the amount of violence used.

As the Tunisian Revolution resulted in very few deaths and what can be described as “limited” violence, very little literature seems to exist regarding violence in Tunisia itself. In this case, an all-encompassing paper was used to describe the violence in Tunisia. This paper was written by Laleh Khalili³³, and discusses the revolutionary phenomena as a whole in the Arab World. Here violence in Tunisia is mentioned mainly in passing, but this is sufficient because violence did not play a large role in the resolution of the Tunisian revolution – especially when compared to the revolutions that followed in Egypt and Tunisia. This paper also served as an inspiration for some of the main ideas of this paper, as well as confirming that the variables chosen were pertinent. This article also served as material and inspiration for comments made in the conclusion regarding events in other Arab states that were perceived to also be primed for revolution. Some other articles of less academic nature were used to fill-in certain gaps in

this area and to reinforce the seemingly widely-accepted fact that the Tunisian Revolution was largely non-violent in nature.

The violence in Egypt was encapsulated by Mohamed Elegati's³⁴ treatise on the Egyptian Revolution as a whole. In this article, Elegati provides a broad approach to covering the Egyptian Revolution and its events. This article was mainly used for its details surrounding the violence that occurred during the Egyptian Revolution, but it also served as an inspiration for guiding the direction of this text, as Elegati enumerates many of the same variables used in this thesis. Elegati provides a simple, yet sound reasoning for why the Egyptian Revolution was not as violent as the Libyan Revolution that followed it, and that is quite simply because the Egyptian military chose the side of the people.

In the case of the Libyan Civil War, Emily O'Brien and Andrew Sinclair³⁵ wrote a timeline encapsulating the major events and describing how the policy of international actors played a key role in the resolution of the Civil War. This article reviews the events of the Libyan Civil War, but does not necessarily give specific details. Therefore this section on the Libyan Civil War had to be aided by the use of other articles to explain specific events. The article itself, while academic and peer-reviewed, was also based on news sites reporting specific revolutionary events.

Literature regarding the violence in each revolution is very cut and dry, mainly dealing with specific events, death counts, or international intervention. Historical literature exists dealing with violence and its dominion of the state, but this literature is not relevant to the

thesis. One small gap in the literature that this thesis fills in regards to violence is connecting it with other variables as well as comparing and contrasting the amount of violence to other revolutions.

Concluding thoughts were made by comparing the Revolutions in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya to the 2009 Iranian Green Revolution the current Syrian Revolution, as well as the situations in other North African states that seemingly shared the same variables as Algeria and Morocco.

Many of the aforementioned articles that were broad or all encompassing in their approach to MENA covered the situations in the Arab states mentioned above, but further research was necessary in order to differentiate between each case study. Mark Almond's³⁶ paper on historical comparison with the modern revolutions mentions Algeria, Morocco, and Syria in detail. Almond uses Algeria and Morocco as foils for the North African Revolutions (as well as the Syrian Revolution). This thesis uses the Algerian and Moroccan case studies in much of the same way as Almond, as examples of where these states shared similar variables and could have resulted in revolution, but did not. Here the Syrian Revolution is used as another case that follows the Libyan case study.

Tara Nesveraderani³⁷ provides a timeline and thoughts regarding the 2009 Iranian Green Revolution. Like the North African Revolutions, Nesveraderani delineates youth involvement as one of the key factors of the Iranian Green Revolution. The Iranian Green Revolution was chosen because indeed it purports to have many of the same variables as the North African

Revolutions. However, the Iranian Green Revolution contrasts the North African Revolutions due to its resolution, wherein the ruling regime stayed in power. The Iranian Green Revolution may have served as a model for the people in North Africa, however, this is purely speculative. Nonetheless, the Iranian Green Revolution is an interesting case study to use to compare and contrast its events with the events of the North African Revolutions.

This thesis uses reputable online sources to fill-in areas that have not been covered or where the aforementioned literature's explanation was not sufficient enough to explain minute details of the variable. Being freshly written and often non-academic in nature, some of online sources such as *Al-Jazeera*, *The New York Times* and *Foreign Affairs* therefore may create a seeming flaw in data and present an area where future research on the topic is necessary in order to prove the veracity of the claims made by these sources. A seeming problem with the information in the recent nature of these events: academic literature has seemingly not yet caught up to the events of each revolution. Information was attempted to be confirmed by using various sources as fact-checkers, but this information is still not totally reliable given that it has not been culled from truly academic sources. The data will be analyzed in accordance with the theoretical considerations presented in the first category of sources.

Major Hypotheses

The hypotheses of the thesis are created in accordance with the research objective and questions of the study. These hypotheses are created in order to analyze each revolution thoroughly and answer pertinent questions that can hopefully contribute to future research on

the subject of each particular revolution, this group of North African Revolutions, as well as revolution theory as a unique study.

The first major hypothesis states: In Arab majority states that have: a dictator who has been in power for at least twenty years and whose style of rule can be best described as “personalistic”, at least 18% of the population being classified as “young people” who are disaffected by their government and low social and economic mobility and, an economy that can be best described as weak with high unemployment, that Arab majority state has nascent variables that will most likely lead to protest activity and perhaps full-scale revolution.

The second hypothesis states: The reason for the differing levels of violence in each North African Revolution is directly attributable to the timing of each revolution and the levels of violence and suppression used by each unique authoritarian regime.

Methodology

The methodology used in this thesis is a primarily qualitative, case study approach. Various statistics and models will be used to explain the events of the North African revolutions and support each variable; however these methods will not be used in such a way that this thesis could be categorized as “quantitative”.

This approach has been chosen for this thesis, as qualitative research methods may be more appropriate for studying such intangible factors as socioeconomic status, gender roles, social norms, religion, and ethnicity – seemingly important factors in these revolutions.³⁸

Qualitative research purports to operate a set of flexible research tools that seemingly allows for describing a phenomenon from different perspectives, permitting to conduct an in-depth study of a phenomenon. In addition, qualitative research methods are most instrumental for the present study, as “there is closeness of fit between theory and data”³⁹, and the analysis of the relevant revolutionary events will be conducted in accordance with the criteria outlined in the literature on revolutionary theories.

Data Collection

Data was collected from various books, scholarly journals, scholarly articles, and web documents that yielded pertinent source data. This data represents a closeness of fit between the objectives of the research and the research itself. Since this is a qualitative study, more focus is based on policy and theory, rather than raw numbers. Raw numbers are used in some cases to build a backbone for the research, but in no way are numbers used to build a quantitative case. Tables were generated or copied from these sources with proper citation being given. This data is academic in nature and serves to provide the source material for this thesis. Due to the recent and still esoteric nature of these revolutions, some sources were used from reputable news sites or reputable online journals such as *Foreign Affairs*. Clearly, with these events being so recent, and in some cases, ongoing, academic research has not quite caught up to the events of these revolutions.

While the sites used for this thesis are purportedly reputable, these sources suffer from not being from a so-called “academic source” due to these articles not being peer reviewed.

However, each article was checked against other sources to ensure the source had credibility. In cases where articles differed, this difference was either noted or the information from this article was not used. This is one area where the research in this thesis suffers, but it leads to an opportunity for future academic research on this topic to benefit researchers and lead to more “widely accepted facts” about the North African Revolutions.

CHAPTER TWO: TUNISIA

The end of 2010, and the beginning of 2011 are considered the period of the Arab Spring – the wave of revolutions in the MENA region arranged with the purpose of overthrowing the most powerful, long-lasting, and reactive violent regimes in such countries as Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, Libya, and Yemen. Tunisia was the first state to involve in the struggle against unfairness, corruption, poverty, and deprivation of the population. The stimulus that caused the massive upheaval was the desperate suicide of the street fruit seller, Muhammad Al-Bouazizi, who refused to give to the street police, and was deprived of all his goods he brought for sale to support his family's living.⁴⁰ Al-Bouazizi was physically abused by a female police officer; facing unfairness and embarrassment at the hand of the political regime, Al-Bouazizi came to the square in front of the city administration, and lit himself on fire with the help of petroleum.

By most accounts, the Tunisian Revolution, and thus the North African Revolutions and Arab Spring phenomenon, began with this self-immolation of Al-Bouazizi on 17 December 2010. However, the seeds of revolution were likely sown long before this tragic, yet inspiring, event. Al-Bouazizi's desperate suicide seemingly became the spark that lit the fire of revolt around the country, and brought about a short and successful struggle to overthrow the regime of Tunisian President Ben Ali within one month.⁴¹

Introduction

The desperate action of Al-Bouazizi found a quick response in the masses of Tunisians who had been suffering from poverty and corruption for many years. The fact that Al-Bouazizi actually protested not against his own mistreatment, but against low wages and widespread unemployment nationwide, likely served as a sound basis for gaining support and response in the minds and hearts of many Tunisians who, despite the resistance of the national forces and the police, continued rioting and protesting around the country.⁴²

The Tunisian police were credited as the first force to begin shooting at protestors, but the violent action could not stop the nation, with riots spreading to the city of Tunis, the capital of Tunisia. After several weeks of rioting, the Tunisian Prime Minister Mohammed Al-Ghannouchi took “temporary control” over the state of Tunisia.⁴³

At present, the motives of the Tunisian revolution are considered critically, since these motives became the impetus for the upheavals in the MENA region, and served as the driving force for the national opposition in other MENA states that did not pass as peacefully or as quickly as it did in Tunisia. In the opinion of Mark Silverberg,

“The revolution in Tunisia was not motivated by ideology or religion, nor was it pro or anti-democracy. Its only catalyst seems to have been the desire of millions of Tunisians for social justice, dignity, the right to work, and to live free of fear and poverty.”⁴⁴

The present focus of the Tunisian Revolution resulting in the overthrowing of the regime of one of the world's most repressive autocrats has perhaps become its key strength.⁴⁵ People not only from Tunisia, but also from the rest of the Arab world recognized the deed of Al-Bouazizi as the call for action in the stagnating world suffering under the pressure of tyranny and autocratic rule. Therefore, the Tunisian revolution marked the beginning of the large-scale fight for the equality, social well-being, and justice in the Arab world.

The Regime of Zine Abidine Ben Ali

The Tunisian President, Zine Abidine Ben Ali, was the leader of Tunisia for a little over 24 years, from 1987 to 2011, which may have contributed to the decay in the political progress, as well as in social well-being and national development. Ben Ali's personalistic style of dictatorship will be discussed in detail in this section, as well as the policies he enacted that may have contributed to his overthrow and the events surrounding his ascension and style of rule. Ben Ali's regime may be characterized by corruption, embezzlement, censorship, and vast human rights violations.

The regime of Ben Ali came to power via a bloodless coup d'état in 1987, after the previous President had been dubiously declared medically unfit to rule. This coup was dually known as the "Medical Coup D'état" and the "Tunisian Revolution"; it is reported that Ben Ali preferred the latter term. Prior to his ascension to the Presidency, Ben Ali was a career military officer, had been ambassador to Poland, and Prime Minister. Ben Ali was periodically re-elected until his eventual ousting as a result of the Tunisian Revolution.⁴⁶ These elections were

reportedly rigged and unfair, with Ben Ali receiving at least 89% of the vote in each election.

The Tunisian legislative branch had room for opposing parties, but these parties were given a minimal voice within the legislature and their voice was softened by intimidation from the Ben Ali regime.⁴⁷

Ben Ali has been accused of embezzling funds from the Tunisian treasury as well as money laundering and drug trafficking.⁴⁸ Embezzlement seems to be the most substantial of these claims, as it led to vast mistrust of Tunisian business within Tunisia. This mistreatment of funds and corruptness was seemingly not so well-known internationally, but within Tunisia it seemed to be very well-known among the population.⁴⁹

Whether or not Ben Ali established a so-called “cult of personality” is unclear. However, it seems apparent that his regime was shaped by his personality and ego, in that it was focused on all-encompassing control and kleptocratic practices such as embezzlement and crooked real estate dealings. Ben Ali was focused on staying in power, as his regime rigged elections, controlled the media, and intimidated dissidents. In this way it is apparent that Ben Ali brought about his own downfall through his long rule of unfair practices.

Ben Ali was seen as the tormentor in the case of the Tunisian Revolution. The people of Tunisia seemingly directed their anger at their supposed tormentor, Ben Ali, and the coverage surrounding the revolution framed the struggle as being between the people and Ben Ali himself. It is quite possible that history will remember this revolution much in the way that it

was framed - as a struggle between Ben Ali and the Tunisian population. This is the product of Ben Ali's personalistic dictatorship and his actions against the people of Tunisia.

The Disaffected Youth of Tunisia

According to 2010 estimates, the youth population from age 15 to 24 comprised about 19% of the population of Tunisia prior to the Tunisian Revolution (Figure 1)⁵⁰. The most characteristic peculiarity of the Tunisian revolution was the active participation of the Tunisian youth in its creation and final positive resolution. According to Honwana, "the Libyan Revolution was initiated by disaffected young people, who succeeded in bringing together a broad coalition of social and political forces against Ben Ali's regime".⁵¹ The youth of Tunisia became the lead group of the Tunisian Revolution, as this section will outline. Young people led the Tunisian revolution in both numbers and desperation for change, and used several tools to carry out their wants.

One of the keys to the youth response to the Tunisian revolution may have been the fact that Al-Bouazizi, the now credited instigator of the revolution, was 27 years old. A couple of hours after his self-immolation, a crowd of young people gathered in the center of Sidi Bouzid to voice their solidarity with Al-Bouazizi; the wave of protests spread to other cities such as Kasserine, Gafsa, Sfax, and caused armed responses from the police as a result of which two 18-year-olds were killed.⁵² This event, coupled with the self-immolation of Al-Bouazizi just a week before the new deaths, seemed to go a long way towards uniting the youth population of Tunisia around the idea of stopping the violence and injustice of the Tunisian government.

Eric Hudack supported the idea about the exceptional role of the Tunisian youth in the flow of the Tunisian revolution by stating, “Tunisian youths, and their use of social media outlets, played a significant role in the success of the Tunisian Revolution”.⁵³ Citing the words of Dr. Zakia Robana, the Assistant Professor of French at Alfred University, Hudack noted that the use of Facebook, Twitter, and Wiki Leaks, impossible without an active involvement of progressive, technologically educated youth, was the key contribution to the success of the Tunisian upheaval that inspired many other Arab world states.⁵⁴

The active participation of youth was also stimulated by the targeted governmental actions directed against young revolutionists – detention of Slim Amamou, Aziz Amami, Soufienne Bel Haj, and other cyber activists, the arrest of the Tunisian hip-hop artist Hamada Ben-Amour known as El General, a vocal supporter of the revolution, and other numerous similar cases.⁵⁵ Finally, the seeming empty promises of the Tunisian government to invest funds in the creation of jobs for youths, and in the employment of new university graduates, played its role in the intensification of dissatisfaction among the young population of Tunisia, and causing an organized and technologically advanced resistance leading to the overthrow of Ben Ali’s regime.

Social Networking in the Tunisian Revolution

The role of social media can hardly be exaggerated in its impact on the outcomes of the Tunisian revolution of 2010-2011. According to Yasmine Ryan of Al-Jazeera, the people of Sidi Bouzid, the southern region of Tunisia ignored by Ben Ali for the sake of developing the

tourism-rich northern regions of Tunisia, broke through the media blackout and the strict online media censorship established within the country.⁵⁶ In fact, this effort likely contributed to securing international media coverage and recognition of the Tunisian revolution. According to the opinion of Horchani, the relative of Al-Bouazizi, the rioters could continue protesting for several years, but would never succeed in case the protestors did not secure the video and photo coverage of events in Tunisia.⁵⁷

Mike Giglio also commented on the agile internet activities of the Tunisian rioters; in his interview with “Ali”, one of the more interesting cases of an active protester who did not leave his home, it was noted that Ali would spend upwards of eighteen hours daily in supporting and updating the Facebook page of the Tunisian revolution. The author noted that the Facebook group known as SBZ News, a team of cyber-supporters of the riot, were already undergoing their sixth effort to skirt Tunisian internet restrictions and reach their target audience.⁵⁸ Five previous supporters of the group’s site were arrested by the Tunisian government.

It was claimed that the Tunisian government made drastic and invasive efforts to eradicate youth using social networking to broadcast the revolution. The Tunisian government went so far as to “phish passwords from Facebook and email accounts” of Tunisian youth actively promoting the media coverage of the revolutionary events.⁵⁹

Al-Saqaf admitted that alongside the popular nickname of the “Jasmine Revolution”, the revolution in Tunisia also acquired the title of the “Facebook Revolution”, since the Facebook coverage of the main events of the revolution was the key source of the news coverage for the

majority of Tunisians afraid of the governmental sanctions, and for those fearing to outright join the upheaval.⁶⁰

However, the internet was a very powerful tool for promotion of revolutionary moods, ideas, and activities – Tunisia is considered the North African country with the largest number of Internet users (3.6 million).⁶¹ Therefore, it is reasonable that Ignacio Marin called Facebook, Twitter, and Al-Jazeera the symbols and tools of the Tunisian revolution.⁶² In the Marin's opinion: "Internet can help revolutions from below to democratize access to information and possibilities of organization".⁶³ This also suggests that the Tunisian people were already well acquainted with various internet tools and were thus readily able to use these tools to meet their needs. This is what happened in Tunisia by means of active support of young bloggers, journalists, and activists. Young volunteers traveled throughout the country and provided the photo and video coverage of the events in Tunisia – protests, violence of the police, etc.

Afterwards, the elicited content was uploaded at Facebook, downloaded by the international media such as Al-Jazeera, and re-broadcast through satellite channels to other residents of Tunisia and residents of other states.⁶⁴ This way, the worldwide, objective, and full-scale coverage of true events in Tunisia became possible; Al-Jazeera was the first channel to broadcast the peaceful protest of Al-Bouazizi's mother near the municipality building on December, 14, while the national Tunisian channel Nessma TV showed the first news release regarding the revolution only on December, 29.⁶⁵

The Economic Context in the Tunisian Revolution

Prior to the Tunisian Revolution, post-revolutionary literature regarding the Tunisian economy in 2010 can best be described as weak. Tunisia has a diverse, market-oriented economy, with important agricultural, mining, tourism, and manufacturing sectors but faces an array of challenges associated with low economic opportunity and high unemployment.⁶⁶ Following an ill-fated experiment with socialist economic policies in the 1960s, Tunisia successfully focused on bolstering exports, foreign investment, and tourism. Key exports now include textiles and apparel, food products, petroleum products, chemicals, and phosphates, with about 80% going to the European Union (EU). Coupling Tunisia's interdependence with the EU and the worldwide economic collapse of 2009, certainly did not bode well for the Tunisian economy.⁶⁷

Prior to the Tunisian Revolution, Tunisia achieved four decades of 4-5% annual GDP growth. As the presidency wore on, cronyism and corruption under former President Ben Ali stymied economic performance and unemployment rose among the university's graduates.⁶⁸ Given that young people comprised about 1/5 of the population of Tunisia, the unavailability of jobs for recent university graduates predicated the fall of the Ben Ali regime and gave fire to the masses of youth who organized protests against the Ben Ali regime.⁶⁹

The ousting of Ben Ali sent Tunisia's economy into a further tailspin. The state's newly elected government faces immediate challenges stabilizing the economy. The new government seemingly must reassure businesses and investors, bring budget and current account deficits

under control, shore up the state's financial system, bring down high unemployment, and reduce economic disparities between the more developed coastal region and impoverished interior.⁷⁰

It is unclear what precise role the Tunisian business community played in the Tunisian revolution. It is likely that several businesspeople or those claiming to have a business affiliation or interest played a part in revolutionary activities. However, the current crop of literature is hazy at best regarding the role of the Tunisian business community. Business in Tunisia came to a grinding halt during the Tunisian Revolution, with some business owners and business people striking or leaving their jobs to join protestors. This phenomena likely aided in the protestors ambitions and expedited the process of regime change in Tunisia.

There is some literature regarding how the Tunisian business community was faring before and is faring after the events of the Tunisian revolution; this literature will be analyzed in this section to attempt to find a way in which business interests affected the Tunisian Revolution.

Tunisia's business climate was seemingly open and stable to the outside world prior to the revolution; according to the estimate of John Thorne, who elaborates on the economic information given previously, the economy of Tunisia grew steadily within the past decade after the liberalizing reforms conducted by President Ben Ali gave Tunisia increased access to the wider European market.⁷¹

However, the nationwide economic trends in Tunisia apparently did not reveal the real-life distribution of capital in Tunisia; wealth was concentrated in the hands of the richest people of Tunisia, mainly in the hands of Ben Ali, his family, and their closest associates.⁷² Ben Ali was found to have direct links to nearly half of the overall Tunisian business enterprises, as revealed by the Wiki Leaks.⁷³ As a result of corruption and wealth concentration, the vast groups of the Tunisian population turned out to live below the edge of poverty, distrustful of the apparently corrupt business practices of President Ben Ali and his regime.⁷⁴ As a Gallop report regarding the Tunisian population's trust of Tunisian business practices, results indicated that,

“Tunisians' confidence in local entrepreneurship, asset security and the government's willingness to let businesses make money fell by 14, 10 and nine percent respectively from 2009 to 2010. Meanwhile, living standards and public services were seen to deteriorate”.⁷⁵

Eileen Byrne supported the findings of Thorne claiming that Ben Ali and his wife Leila Reabelski were found to have links with approximately 180 companies in Tunisia.⁷⁶ Therefore, after the overthrow of the Ben Ali regime, the Tunisian business community found it hard to restructure its activities to fit the new demands of the democratic and pluralistic society.

Unsurprisingly to many in Tunisia and around the world, the Tunisian Revolution was followed by a series of corruption revelations – the Tunisian government identified ten individuals whose assets and property were subject to seizure by the state authorities, 48 people were recognized by the European Union and the Swiss authorities as accused of

corruption and embezzlement, and much wider and larger categories of unproven gray area conglomerates were subject to investigations.⁷⁷

The procedure of forcing the enterprises into criminal relationships was alike for many companies; in case they refused to pay to the President's family, the businesses were closed or acquired by the President's family members. At times, the owners were intimidated and blackmailed, and even physically abused. Hence, undoubtedly, the Tunisian business community was happy to see the end of the autocratic rule of Ben Ali, and to start a new era of freer, more just, and more loyal business opportunities.⁷⁸

The weakened state of the Tunisian economy can perhaps be attributed as the lead motivational force behind the revolutionaries desire to carry out change. Once again, the self-immolation of Al-Bouazizi is relevant due to his poor socio-economic status, as many Tunisians seemingly could relate to him. Al-Bouazizi's condition was indicative of that of many young Tunisians and thus indicative of the poor economy and low opportunities that pre-revolution Tunisia presented.

Violence in the Tunisian Revolution

The total death toll during the whole course of the Tunisian Revolution to this date is ambiguous; some sources state that twenty people were killed within the revolutionary month, while other sources provided other figures (Amnesty – 23 people dead; Human Rights Watch – 35 victims).⁷⁹

The Tunisian revolution traveled its course in a less violent way than the subsequent North African revolutions; however, the people of Tunisia still likely suffered much, and were seemingly liable for conducting numerous violent activities. Protesters demanded jobs during riots, while Ben Ali condemned their actions, and described the actions of protestors as acts of terrorism.⁸⁰ People burned banks, stoned police stations, and looted, among many other criminal acts.⁸¹

To restore order and keep the strength of the regime, the police force, who after the events leading to Al-Bouazizi's self-immolation became the most hated authority in the country, beat back protestors mercilessly with batons and tear gas.⁸² During the events of the revolution, approximately 200 people were arrested. In July 2011, riots resumed after police officer fired tear gas inside a mosque, seemingly without reason. One can note that the violence in Tunisia persists, since many witnesses showed photos and videos of the police trashing young men off the Casbah Square.⁸³

Violence against the free press and dissemination of information should be noted as well, since the Tunisia under the rule of Ben Ali was characterized by fierce control and strict censorship of mass media coverage, specifically during the revolutionary events of 2010-2011. The Facebook and Twitter supporters of the revolution were arrested, resulting in the youth community guiding and fueling the revolution creating new sites dedicated to the media coverage of the revolutionary events time and again.⁸⁴ The organizers of web support for the revolution admitted the high risk of acting on the internet, but confessed to being ready to take

those risks, since only the break through the strong censorship and misinformation could have contributed to the successful ending of the revolution.⁸⁵

Finally, the fundamental, long-lasting symbol of the revolution was the violent act of self-immolation by A-Bouazizi. In the opinion of Didier Fassin, a sociologist, the state has a fundamental relation with violence, mainly due to the history of its formation, as well as to the existence of intricate and complex mechanisms of control and guidance in any country.⁸⁶ However, the author claimed, “the Tunisian case is exemplary in that the violence of the state and the resistance of the individual are embodied in one person”.⁸⁷ Hence, the author recognized Al-Bouazizi’s response to the unfairness, structural and political violence of the state over its people, as the most violent one that can be issued by a person. The violent roots of self-immolation characterized the Tunisian revolution, and made it so over-grasping and inspiring for other people in the Arab world.⁸⁸

Concluding Thoughts on the Tunisian Revolution

Going forward, it may be essential to note that the profile of the Tunisian revolution is a unique and impressive example of the ways in which the nation can demand justice in the light of active internet and social media coverage, and with the support of the worldwide community. The fact that the revolution was youth-led explains the enthusiasm and the high level of technical coverage and social media activeness with which the protesters approached their struggle, and won a quick and relatively easy victory. As Giglio noted, the present revolution is highly consonant with that of Iran’s Green Revolution of 2009, since the primary

function of both of them was to “get around the government’s iron grip on information flows”.⁸⁹ As soon as the task was fulfilled, the international and national community got full and timely access to information about the events in Tunisia, which contributed to the quick end of Ben Ali’s regime, and the beginning of what was hoped to be a new pluralistic and democratic era in Tunisia.

Table 2: Tunisian Revolution Variables

VARIABLE	PROBLEM PRE-REVOLUTION	ROLE DURING REVOLUTION
Ben Ali Regime	Authoritarian, Repressive, Corrupt. Personalistic: Weak	Sought to Remain in Power but Capitulated. Violence: Limited
Youth	Unemployed & Disenfranchised	Tactful Use of Social Networking
Economics & Business	Largely State-controlled, Low Economic Opportunity, Regime Embezzlement	Shut Down, Strikes, Expedited Process of Regime Change

The revolution seemingly opened up new opportunities for self-expression, education, employment, and economic development for the vast groups of Tunisians. It has also seemingly opened the opportunities for forming a much more representative government, and a much freer expression of numerous political, social, and religious groups of Tunisians seeking group unity and political self-actualization.

At present, the situation in Tunisia is seemingly far from peaceful and stable, mainly due to seeming widespread uncertainty about the new direction of the state's development, the composition of the ruling government, and other pertinent political and economic related concerns. However, the regime of Ben Ali that was largely characterized by censorship, deprivation, unemployment, and social injustice has come to an end, perhaps showing a blueprint to the populations of people of the MENA region states who share the same social, economic, and political plight.

The Tunisian revolution was accomplished successfully mainly due to the active support of key population groups such as the youth and political activists, which should be noted in the further analysis of the revolutionary model employed in Tunisia; its strengths, weaknesses, and implications for further state development. The economic condition in Tunisia can best be described as weak, which seemingly led to unemployed masses armed with revolutionary fervor. However, it is still unclear as to what precise role the Tunisian business community played in the Tunisian revolution.

CHAPTER THREE: EGYPT

The revolution for democracy, justice, and equality emerged in Egypt right after the successful end of the Tunisian revolution; the Egyptian events were also characterized by a desperate self-immolation of a disenfranchised youth who suffered from the political and structural abuse.

On January 17, 2011, an Egyptian man also set himself on fire near the Cairo parliament building because of the inability to receive his monthly coupons for bread.⁹⁰ This action was likely inspired by the desperate example of Al-Bouazizi in Tunisia that occurred just a month prior; however, some other experts state that this action did not directly instigate the Egyptian revolution as Al-Bouazizi's self-immolation did in Tunisia.

People gathered on January 25, 2011, likely inspired by the positive outcome of the Tunisian revolution, to protest against poverty, unemployment, corruption, and autocratic governance of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak who had been ruling the country for more than thirty years. Under the regime of Mubarak, Egypt was characterized as being under strict military rule, so raising an upheaval seemed to present more hardships than the preceding revolution in Tunisia. However, the massive waves of dissatisfaction, protests, and uprisings led to the beginnings of a new revolution in Egypt that was likely based on the seeming success of the preceding revolution in Tunisia.

Introduction

The first day of anti-government demonstrations in Egypt took place on January 25, 2011. On that day, thousands of anti-government protesters reportedly gathered to voice their protest against the autocratic and unrepresentative regime of President Mubarak. Reportedly, people armed with rocks and various makeshift weapons climbed aboard armored police cars and cried out anti-government mottos to bring about the seeds of foment. These protesters were reportedly ousted by the Egyptian police force by considerably non-harmful means, such as the use of water cannons, tear gas, and batons.

However, the protest of January 25, 2011 grew to become the most massive and populous protest in many years. Even though the Egyptian police and regime responded somewhat peacefully in large part out of fear of sharing the fate of that the Tunisian President Ben Ali's regime faced in Egypt's neighbor Tunisia (although Tunisia does not neighbor Egypt directly), the seeds of revolution in Egypt were planted on that day.⁹¹

The events of January 25, 2011 did not end with the police response to the first act of protest; some protesters moved on to the residence of President Mubarak, and later returned to the Tahrir Square, waving Tunisian and Egyptian flags as symbols of their alignment with their Tunisian neighbors and their successful protest for eliminating poverty and corruption, and providing people with decent working and living conditions. The situation intensified in the capital because that day was a national holiday set aside to honor the police force, who served

as a symbol of the unfair rule of President Mubarak and additionally served an irritation factor for the police force.⁹²

The next day, January 26, 2011 was a seeming direct repetition of the previous day – the protests resumed, and many more people came out to join the fight for social justice and equality. However, the government unleashed a ban on social media the next day, shutting down internet connection nationwide, likely as a result of witnessing the way in which social media empowered revolutionaries in Tunisia.⁹³

Likely from seeing the scale of the disaster in his state and perhaps to assuage revolutionary notions, President Mubarak spoke in front of his people on January 28, 2011 promising to leave the state and to form a new government; however, his promises did not stop the physical protestors in Egypt and those protestors who preferred arranging anonymous internet support by communicating the latest news about the revolution to Egyptians and sympathizers around the world.

On February 2, 2011, internet access was given back. This reconnection to the internet coincided with intensifying national uprisings that were seemingly due to violent acts against the protesters that were attributed to being arranged by Egyptian authorities. Finally, February 9, 2011 manifested a nationwide expansion of the Egyptian revolution – massive labor strikes began throughout Egypt as a response to the unfair working conditions, low wages, and unemployment in Egypt. President Mubarak, though initially refusing to step down as late as

February 10, 2011, decided to resign from his Presidential post and left the state on February 11, 2012.⁹⁴

The Regime of Hosni Mubarak

Hosni Mubarak's personalistic style of rule will be discussed in detail in this section, as well as the policies he enacted that may have contributed to his overthrow and the events surrounding his ascension. Mubarak's rule can be characterized by mistrust of his subordinates and population, corruption, and gross embezzlement of public funds.

Hosni Mubarak ruled Egypt for approximately thirty years beginning in 1981 following the assassination of Anwar Sadat, whom Mubarak served as Vice President under beginning in 1975. Prior to Mubarak's appointment as Vice President, he served as a career officer in the Egyptian Air Force and served as its commander prior to his appointment. Accusations that Mubarak was complicit in the assassination of Sadat are present, but even though some evidence suggests these accusations have some merit, they remain highly circumstantial.⁹⁵ Even though Sadat was an unpopular figure in Egypt, and all of the MENA region, near the time of his assassination for signing peace treaties with Israel, there still existed a dubious cloud of mistrust regarding how Mubarak came to power.⁹⁶

The assassination of Sadat also seemingly resulted in Mubarak becoming very leery of his subordinates and peers. Mubarak increased the strength of Egyptian state security services and anti-riot squads, seemingly to alleviate the chances that he would suffer the same fate as his predecessor. Likely due to Mubarak's steadfast agreement with Sadat's policies on Israel, he

drew the ire of Islamic fundamentalists; Mubarak reportedly was the object of approximately six assassination attempts during his rule. In turn, Mubarak also appeared to have a tendency to favor the advice of top ranking military and security personnel within his regime on all matters, rather than those who had been appointed to consult him on specific areas of governance.⁹⁷

The process in which Mubarak stayed in power is also indicative of the political climate of Egypt during his rule, which was marked by corruptness and a noninclusive electoral process. Mubarak was re-elected via referendum on three different occasions, with the validity of these referendums being dubious at best. Finally in 2005, Mubarak seemingly opened the electoral process after internal and external pressure, but this election was once again deemed a sham by independent authorities and the international community. Those who opposed and challenged the electoral results were thrown in jail on dubious charges. In the case of Ayman Nour, a dissident and candidate from a rival party, his unfair trial and subsequent jailing after his protest resulted in an official condemnation from the US.⁹⁸

Mubarak's personalistic governing style may best be described as corrupt, focusing on remaining in power by closing the political process, and strong use of state-controlled media and police forces. Mubarak reportedly embezzled billions for his personal bank account and rigged numerous elections to remain in power. Mubarak's hold on Egypt lasted for approximately thirty years, based on fear, quelling of political dissidence, and absolute control of all state organs to propagate the existence of his regime. This long rule and the lack of

freedoms that it included seemingly led to the disaffection of Egypt's young people and seemingly led to the overthrow of Mubarak.

More than the Tunisian case and the Ben Ali example, Mubarak was truly seen as a tormentor by the Egyptian people. Mubarak can perhaps be viewed as a grand tormentor in the same vein as Shah Pahlavi of Iran, as they have both been historically viewed as violent and ruthless toward dissenters. The Egyptian Revolution was once again framed as a struggle between the Egyptian people and Mubarak, with Mubarak being clearly designated as the tormentor in this case.

The Disaffected Youth of Egypt

As young people had done previously in the Tunisian revolution, Egyptian youth played a critical role during the course of the Egyptian revolution. According to 2010 estimates, young people aged 15-24 comprised about 20% of Egypt's population (Figure 1).⁹⁹ The youth of Egypt proved to be one of the most vulnerable, unprotected, and underprivileged subsections of the population. According to Jean-Pierre Filiu, "the unemployment rate among Egyptian youth is twice the world average, and a mind-boggling fifty million jobs needs to be created by 2020 to fully absorb the young people due to come on to the labor market".¹⁰⁰

In addition to the unfavorable employment opportunities for the youth of Egypt, there is a lack of training and recruitment programs because of structural adjustment programs, which is worsened by the fact that those who received education and diplomas do not suit the technical and vocational skills demanded in the contemporary labor market.¹⁰¹

Thus, it is not surprising that the youth of Egypt were among the first to respond to the revolutionary calls, being tired of poverty and unemployment, requiring better employment, training, and educational opportunities, as well as having no employer of note to report to during the heat of the revolution.

The baby boom of the late 1970s-1980s has resulted in a prevailing number of people under 30 in the population of Arab countries, Egypt included. In addition to the numeric prevalence of youth, they are dissatisfied with the unemployment rates (25% in Egypt before the revolution), and are well-educated (because of free higher education opportunities in Egypt).¹⁰² Therefore, dissatisfied and intellectually developed youth served as the prime guiding force of the Egyptian revolution; according to the opinion of an unnamed Cairo University Professor, “to them, they have known no other President, no other ruling party and no other political system. They have for years been groomed on the government’s realpolitik on the one hand, and the empty rhetoric of opposition groups on the other”.¹⁰³

Therefore, it is reasonable that the Egyptian youth did not agree to the superficial change in the government, nor to the promised economic reforms and prosperity; the educated youth of Egypt realized that the root cause of their socio-economic problems was in the political system itself that had not changed for more than half a century and had no end in sight prior to the events of the Egyptian revolution.¹⁰⁴¹⁰⁵

Sara Cannon also insisted that the April 6, 2011 actions of the group known as “The Youth Movement” should be taken into account as a powerful force in the Egyptian Revolution.¹⁰⁶ The

Youth Movement is a youth activist group created in 2008 with the aim of supporting the workers of the El-Mahalla El-Kubra that planned the strike on April 6, 2009. The group had been growing since the planned strike, and by the moment of the revolutionary outbreak, The Youth Movement purportedly accounted for more than 70,000 members actively participating in the organization of opposition to governmental oppression.¹⁰⁷ The extensive work in social media, communication, and timely news updates arranged by the young revolutionary leaders in Egypt likely went a long way towards bringing about the successful resolution of the situation in Egypt within roughly 18 days.

Social Networking in the Egyptian Revolution

Similarly to the revolution in Tunisia, the access to social media likely played a strategic role in the Egyptian revolution's outcome. On the first day of demonstrations, the protesters found out that access to Twitter was blocked by the government.¹⁰⁸ As Gordon Crovitz noted, a key role in the Egyptian revolution was played by a 30-year-old Google executive named Wael Ghonim; he worked as product and marketing manager for the Middle East at the Google Company at the time when the revolution broke out.¹⁰⁹

Ghonim seemed to play a crucial role in promoting internet use among Egyptians; he is credited with promoting the ArabNet conference, creating the Google AdWords vouchers for small businesses in Egypt, and launching a website in Arabic to teach people basic skills in internet use such as searching for information, writing e-mails, and chatting.¹¹⁰

Contrary to the official versions of Khaled Said's death, a young man killed in early 2010 by the Egyptian police under dubious circumstances, Ghonim created a Facebook page titled "We Are All Khaled Said" showing real-life photos of the dead body of Said to try prove the power abuse and violence of the Egyptian police.¹¹¹ Ghonim and his followers conducted active work through Facebook to publish timely accounts and photo reports of the events in Egypt to keep the Egyptian population and the global community updated about the violence and injustice of the Egyptian police forces.

Sam Gustin also supported the opinion of Crovitz by stating that the social media obviously did not cause the revolution in Egypt, but that social media helped speed up the process of the revolution by being used to organize the revolutionaries and transmit the messages of protesters to the rest of the world. Thus using social media to inform international media and bring support to the struggle of the Egyptian protestors.¹¹²

In the Egyptian case, Facebook played a crucial role in organizing the revolutionaries, while Twitter served as the primary tool of transmitting the revolutionary messages to the rest of the world.¹¹³ Ghonim officially thanked Mark Zuckerberg, the founder of Facebook, for the inspiration and opportunity, since Ghonim believed that the true revolution started on Facebook.¹¹⁴

Simon Mainwaring also recognized the key role of Facebook in creating the mass wave of protest and revolution. Among other stimuli to the revolutionary actions, Mainwaring mentioned the following reason,

“One of the early catalysts for the January 25th revolution in Egypt was a Facebook page created in honor of Khaled Said, a young man who had been brutally beaten and killed by the police. This page became a focal point around which 470,000 "fans" organized their dissidence while a YouTube video about his murder was viewed by more than 500,000 people fueling further public outrage”.¹¹⁵

Some other positive effects of social media were recognized by communications experts as related to their contribution to revolutionary waves. The consequence of active use of social media is that the false separation between the countries of the Arab world was destroyed, showing the universal values, and the unifying power of struggle against the autocrats and tyrants that the Arab world came to know, and the newly realistic possibility that change can come from below.¹¹⁶ Hence, the role of social media in the Egyptian revolution was the timely information sharing that inspired and strengthened the revolutionaries, demonstrating that protestors are not alone, and that others have succeeded, thus opening new chances for regaining the strong national identity in Egypt, as well as other states in the MENA region and elsewhere across the world.¹¹⁷

The Economic Context of the Egyptian Revolution

Despite the relatively high levels of economic growth in recent years, prior to the Egyptian Revolution in 2011, living conditions for the average Egyptian remained poor and contributed to public discontent. Therefore, the Egyptian economy can be best described as weak and non-inclusive. Like in Tunisia, what mattered most is the perception of the economy by the people

of Egypt. Any particular metrics or opinions of international pundits are not of much consequence if the people of Egypt believe their economy is weak and non-inclusive – which Egyptians seemingly did believe.¹¹⁸

Many attributes of the Egyptian economy can be attributed to its geography: occupying the northeast corner of the African continent, Egypt is bisected by the highly fertile Nile valley, where most economic activity takes place.¹¹⁹ Egypt's economy was highly centralized during the rule of former President Gamal Abdel Nasser but opened up considerably under former Presidents Anwar EL-Sadat and Mubarak. Cairo from 2004 to 2008 aggressively pursued economic reforms to attract foreign investment and facilitate Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth.¹²⁰

After unrest erupted in January 2011, the Egyptian Government drastically increased social spending to address public dissatisfaction, but political uncertainty at the same time caused economic growth to slow significantly, reducing the government's revenues. Tourism, manufacturing, and construction are among the hardest hit sectors of the Egyptian economy, and economic growth is likely to remain slow at least through 2012. The government is utilizing foreign exchange reserves to support the Egyptian pound and Egypt may seek a loan from the International Monetary Fund.¹²¹

Like the Tunisian revolution before, it is unclear what role the Egyptian business community played in the Egyptian revolution. It is likely that several businesspeople or those claiming to have a business affiliation or interest played a part in revolutionary activities. It can

be said that business in Egypt came to a grinding halt during the Egyptian Revolution, with some business owners and business people striking or leaving their jobs to join protestors. This phenomena likely aided in the protestors ambitions and expedited the process of regime change in Egypt. However, the current crop of literature is hazy at best regarding the role of the Egyptian business community in particular revolutionary events.¹²² There is some literature regarding how the Egyptian business community is faring after the events of the Egyptian revolution; this literature will be analyzed in this section to attempt to find a way in which business interests may have affected the Egyptian Revolution. ¹²³

The Egyptian business community, though a strategically significant element of the country's economy, failed to sustain its goals and needs in the time after the Egyptian revolution, with the population seemingly forgoing their realistic economic needs for the sake of religious identity.

According to the opinion of Ahmed Heikal, the overwhelming, indisputable victory of Islamists in the first democratic elections in Egypt is alarming, since the Islamists are more involved in secular promises of better afterlife than the realistic change in the present-day lives of Egyptians.¹²⁴ Indeed, a January 2012 poll shows that 75% of respondents see the contemporary direction of the Egyptian economy as wrong.¹²⁵ The tendency of economic development, namely the presence of foreign reserves in Egypt, supports the present pessimistic vision:

According to Kinninmont, the presidential election in Egypt showed the weakness of businesspeople of Egypt, and proved that they are far from becoming a coherent and monolithic force in the country.¹²⁶ The businesspeople mostly voted for the leaders capable of conducting the smooth political transitions rather than for business-specific objectives they planned to pursue. The present situation is aggravated by the one million job loss since the inception of the revolution, which is also indicative of the worsening of the economic and business situation in Egypt.¹²⁷

The economic factor, in the opinion of Barry Rubin, is a very important contributing element that predetermined the outcome of the Egyptian revolution.¹²⁸ Economic experts characterize Egypt as fixated on survival, and trying to get out of the economic trouble in which the country has recently found itself.

The present-day economic potential of Egypt is projected as being very low, including “some oil, the Suez Canal, not enough arable land, low labor productivity, restrictive social rules (which will now become worse), and too many people” coupled with a pronounced lack of expected international aid.¹²⁹ The consequences of such situation can be disastrous for the state, since the historical experience shows that low economic opportunity often leads to radicalism, anti-Western, and anti-Israel moods.¹³⁰

Taking into account that the Egyptians are now demanding pay rises and higher subsidies, the economic and business community of Egypt have to work jointly on identifying the possible

sources of funds to fuel the economy, and to satisfy the newly raised demands and expectations of the Egyptians to avoid further upheavals and unrest.

Violence in the Egyptian Revolution

Although Mubarak seemingly tried to prevent violence by at first ordering the police to respond as peacefully as they could to the anti-government protests, the Egyptian Revolution was still characterized by limited, but still noteworthy, violence from its very start on January 25, 2011. As characterized by many firsthand accounts and video feeds, the police officers beat the protesters with batons, and fired tear gas into crowds; they also beat foreign and domestic journalists, and smashed their cameras to avoid the dissemination of information about the revolution.¹³¹¹³²

A year after the successful resolution of the initial protests Abdel-Rahman Hussein, opined that the Egyptian revolution was mistakenly idealized as a peaceful one, stating that the fighting on and after January 28, 2011 was extremely violent, and the country witnessed numerous armed protests and battles on January 25, 2011.¹³³

February 2, 2011 known as the day of the Battle of the Camel, is still considered of the most violent days of the 18-day revolution.¹³⁴ According to journalist Denis Campbell's first-hand account, that day differed from a usual routine of protesters; on this day, the peaceful revolution turned very violent.¹³⁵ The day was filled with long hours of hand-to-hand battles during which the protesters had to conquer each new meter of the Tahrir Square as though it were a war.¹³⁶

One more notable feature of violence against the Egyptian population during the revolution was the extensive complex of violent attacks on women. According to Janine Zaltsman's account, the Mubarak regime was characterized by oppression and harassment towards women; this harsh treatment of women even continued during the period of revolution, women were subject to sexual attacks.¹³⁷ The armed forces of Egypt conducted "virginity tests" representing the sexual assault with the pretext of checking whether sexual assaults had been conducted over those women before. The most awful account about those tests was that they were purportedly authorized by the Egyptian government as a way of perhaps oppressing the revolutionary forces.¹³⁸¹³⁹

Moreover, after Mubarak fled the country, and the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces took over the rule in Egypt, the humiliating sexual violence persisted. Zaltsman documented the acts of "arbitrary detention, beatings, attempted chokings, and sexual assault and harassment, including attempts to strip women, threats of rape, insults of a sexual nature, and other kinds of degrading and inhumane treatment".¹⁴⁰ Hence, as one can see, even despite the fact that the Egyptian revolution passed with a relatively lower number of deaths, and less violence than in the other North African revolutions, violence was still an indispensable element thereof.¹⁴¹

The fact that the Egyptian Revolution resulted in more deaths and violence than the Tunisian Revolution likely resulted from higher population demographics in Egypt's urban centers as well the fact that the Egyptian Revolution lasted a bit longer than its predecessor in Tunisia. As for why the Egyptian Revolution resulted in less violence than in Libya (where the

revolution became a full-scale civil war), this phenomena can seemingly quite simply be attributed to the fact that the Egyptian military took the side of the people over Mubarak. Not having the whole of his military at his side, Mubarak simply did not have the choice to enact widespread violence to quell the dissidence in his state.¹⁴²

Concluding Thoughts on the Egyptian Revolution

The revolutions in Egypt and Tunisia are viewed as the more peaceful and smooth of the North African revolutions during the whole Arab Spring period. As protestors had done Tunisia, the Egyptian protestors managed to organize a strong and active movement for the overthrow of the ruling regime, and succeeded in their endeavor within a relatively short period of time. The 18-day period is illustrative of ways in which Egyptians have managed to show their dissatisfaction and protest, and the inability of the government to calm their revolutionary zeal with promises of a new government and new reforms.

Table 3: Egyptian Revolution Variables

VARIABLE	PROBLEMS PRESENTED	ROLE DURING REVOLUTION
Mubarak Dictatorship	Corrupt, Closed, All-controlling Personalistic: Moderate	Sought to Remain in Power Via Police Control, but Capitulated. Violence: Moderate
Youth	Disaffected by Unemployed & Low Social Mobility	Tactful Use of Social Networking

Economic Context	State-controlled, Low Economic Opportunity	Shut down, Strikes, Likely Expedited Process of Regime Change
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A sizable portion of the Egyptian population is constituted of people under 15 to 25, and 25 to 30 years of age, who happen to also be educated and unemployed. These young and educated masses with no employment opportunities to appease their needs contributed to the strong, unified, and technologically advanced response to the injustices in their state.

The Egyptian government tried to block access to the social media and the internet, since it had become evident from the example of the Tunisian revolution that social media has become one of the prime tools of organizing protests and communicating up-to-the-moment state of affairs in the revolutionary areas to the rest of the Egyptian community. Hence, the Egyptian focus on social media as a source of timely and truthful information, the support of the revolution by vast business and political circles, and the organized struggle contributed to the successful and quick resolution of the situation.

The present-day Egypt is obviously far from the democracy that was thought to be desired by the revolutionaries, and the business community of Egypt is seemingly suffering hard times due to perceived growing economic imbalances. Hence, there is a strong reliance on the new political forces that can ensure a smooth political transition of the state, and overcome the challenges of business and economy in Egypt visible nowadays.

CHAPTER FOUR: LIBYA

The revolution in Libya almost immediately followed the Egyptian revolution – in mid-February, 2011 (the exact date differs according to various sources), a Libyan human rights activist Fethi Tarbel was arrested in Benghazi, which seemed to start a string of events that perhaps made Libyans question the state of human rights in Libya.¹⁴³ Of course, this event could not have had worse timing as it came on the heels of two successful revolutions in North Africa – those revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt. The results of this anti-democratic move, perhaps in tandem with the overall optimism regarding the successfully ended revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt, are what possibly caused the massive national upheaval that became the Libyan revolution.

The purpose of the Libyan revolution was similar to its predecessors in Tunisia and Egypt, to overthrow a longstanding dictator. Although in this case, Libyans had to overcome the power of the longest-standing ruler in North Africa – Muammar Qaddafi. President Qaddafi came to power in Libya in 1969, and had been ruling the state for more than forty years after the Libyan revolution of 1969. However, it became readily apparent that President Qaddafi did not want to repeat the destiny of his Tunisian and Egyptian predecessors who left their rule due to national uprisings, seemingly without a fight. President Qaddafi unleashed a powerful and large-scale armed response to the national protests, and committed widespread oppression and massacre in the attempt to keep the power over Libya in his hands. The revolution in Libya

resulted in a civil war, and lasted for about eight months until its seeming “resolution” upon the murder of President Qaddafi in October 2011.

Introduction

The revolution in Libya differed significantly from those in Tunisia and Egypt, though it was inspired by the success of these two states. The opposition was violent and bloody, and it lasted much longer than it had in Tunisia and Egypt; it turned into a full-scale civil war. The winner of this civil war remained unclear until the intervention of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the UN, who backed the revolutionaries against Qaddafi. The roots of this bloody struggle can be seen in the massacre conducted by Qaddafi in February 2011 as a fierce attempt to regain the atmosphere of control and intimidation in the state after the unrest and demonstrations beginning in Libya in response to the first two North African revolutions.¹⁴⁴

However, this bloody tactic of resolving the internal tension in the state caused major dissatisfaction of the key international players such as the US, France, Great Britain, and international authorities such as NATO and the UN. The UN Security Council issued resolutions condemning the actions of Qaddafi, and accusing him of the crimes against humanity. A series of resolutions (1970, 1973, 2009, 2016, and 2017) were passed by the UN during the bloody and violent civil war in Libya to condemn the tyrant, and likely to help bring about international action against Qaddafi’s lawlessness.¹⁴⁵

In March 2011, the National Transitional Council (NTC) was formed by convening Libyan generals, ex-members of the Qaddafi government, who declared themselves the only legitimate representative body that can speak on behalf of the Libyan people as of March 5, 2011.¹⁴⁶ On March 17, 2011 the UN Security Council authorized the creation of a no-fly zone over Libya, and NATO and UN forces conducted a military intervention that aimed to decrease the number of Qaddafi's armed forces, but at the same time may have been responsible for causing many innocent deaths among rebels.¹⁴⁷ The end of major military activity is attributed to ending on November 20, 2011, when the hometown of Qaddafi, Sirte, was occupied by the forces of rebels.¹⁴⁸

The Regime of Muamar Qaddafi

Muamar Qaddafi's personalistic style of rule and cult of personality will be discussed in detail in this section, as well as the policies he enacted that may have contributed to his overthrow and the events surrounding his ascension. Qaddafi's rule can be truly described as personalistic, with his unique style, panache, and personal treatises on government marked his rule in Libya. Qaddafi's rule can be characterized by his complete shaping of all aspects of Libyan society from his own ideals, clashes with the West, harsh treatment of dissidents, and lack of freedom. Qaddafi was also known internationally for his unique fashion sense and use of an all-female cadre of bodyguards regarded colloquially by Western journalists as the "Amazonian Guard".¹⁴⁹

Qaddafi came to power in Libya in 1969 via a bloodless military coup over the Libyan monarch King Idris. Qaddafi stayed in power until 1977, when he supposedly stepped down and became more of a figurehead. However, it is widely speculated that Qaddafi remained as Libya's de facto dictator until his overthrow as the result of the 2011 Libyan Revolution. Like Ben Ali and Mubarak, Qaddafi made a career in the military where he rose to prominence. He and other junior military officers staged the aforementioned coup against King Idris, wherein Qaddafi became head of state at 27 years of age and proclaimed the Libyan Arab Republic.¹⁵⁰

Qaddafi's early rule was characterized by Qaddafi shaping Libya based on his unique ideology. Qaddafi shaped Libya into an Islamic, socialist, Arab nationalist state that opposed the West and Israel. Qaddafi also promulgated nepotism in his regime by giving appointments to close friends and family and created committees for raising political consciousness to the people that often became enforcers of Qaddafi's ideology. Having been the target of numerous assassination attempts, Qaddafi was zealous in quelling internal dissent with numerous surveillance and informant activities marking his rule.¹⁵¹

Qaddafi stylized himself as the leader of Arab nationalism; he made numerous attempts to intervene in the dealings of other Arab and African states and was decidedly interested in becoming a major player on the world stage. Qaddafi also became internationally recognized for becoming a supposed state-sponsor of terrorism. Qaddafi has been linked to several terrorist attacks, including the 1986 Berlin discotheque bombing, and the infamous 1988 Lockerbie bombing of Pan Am Flight 103. Qaddafi also obtained chemical weapons and had

made attempts to create a weapons of mass destruction (WMD) program that was halted after the capture of infamous Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in 2003.¹⁵²

After the dismantling of Libya's WMD program, Qaddafi experienced better relations with the West, as he pronounced himself an ally in the post-9/11 war on terror and was removed from the US's list of state sponsors of terrorism. Qaddafi fashioned himself a new ally of the West, but in light of the events of the 2011 Libyan Revolution, it seems that this alliance was fragile on both sides. For Qaddafi, this alliance may have only been forged to stay in power, as he did not want to follow the example of Saddam Hussein.¹⁵³

Seemingly, Qaddafi did whatever he could to stay in power and was seemingly exposed as not only an unwavering tyrant bent on total power over his state, but also a hypocrite. Qaddafi ran the most personalistic dictatorship of the three North African states and had the longest, and perhaps most interesting, career of the three. Qaddafi's long and bizarre rule is characterized by his totalitarian control, relationships with terrorist organizations and other pariah leaders such as Idi Amin, and in his latter days, hypocrisy.

Qaddafi is perhaps the most indicative of a tormentor in all three cases. With the Libyan Revolution resulting in a Civil War that pitted Qaddafi and his loyalists against the majority of Libyans, Qaddafi became a tormentor in the truest sense. Qaddafi will perhaps be remembered as the most "evil", violent, and ruthless of the three former North African autocrats discussed in this thesis, and his status as a perceived, and true, tormentor is seemingly guaranteed.

The Disaffected Youth of Libya

The revolution in Libya, as well as in the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions that preceded it, was largely initiated, organized, and conducted by the Libyan youth. According to 2010 estimates, young people comprised about 18% of the population of Libya (Figure 1).¹⁵⁴ The youth of Libya appeared to be among the most active fighters, and apparently organized the resistance to Qaddafi's forces in Benghazi at first, and then later in other cities of Libya. The mass wave of resistance that started as a mostly peaceful protest quickly turned bloody.

The Libyan revolution took many of the young population into a civil war within weeks after the first peaceful demonstrations of February, 2011. The youth of Libya appeared ready to fight for their emancipation from Qaddafi's cruel regime, but it was unclear at first how far these young people would go to fight for their cause. As Anthony Shadid noted, "young men at the front parade with the swagger that a rocket-propelled grenade launcher grants but hint privately that they will try to emigrate if they fail."¹⁵⁵

A prominent role in the organization of youth revolution was in the hands of the "Youth of 17 February" organization. It is this youth organization that initiated the peaceful demonstrations on February 17, 2011 which follows from its name, and who sustained the armed resistance to Qaddafi's forces for many months since the inception of the revolution.¹⁵⁶

Overall, the revolutionary motifs that had been apparent in Tunisia and Egypt also seemingly found a quick response in the hearts of young people in Libya. The youth of Libya seemingly looked at their parents' lives in disgust and vowed that they will not live without

dignity as their parents had. The Libyan youth demanded a say in their future and a constitution which guaranteed them the rule of law".¹⁵⁷

Perhaps a key cause of such prompt and massive anti-government uprising is seen in the fact that over 70% of the Libyan population are under 34 years of age. These demographics are similar to those in Tunisia and Egypt. It is likely that at some level, the Libyan youth understood that an oil-rich country as their own has to have better employment and social welfare conditions, which was seemingly viewed by the Libyan population neglected by the government by decades.¹⁵⁸

Therefore, the revolt in Libya was seemingly guided by the young groupings, as the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt were. However, it is reasonable to assume that given the results in Tunisia and Egypt, these young, perhaps naïve, protesters did not expect the civil war, the massacre, and violence that Qaddafi unleashed as a response to their reasonable claims for better living, working, educational, and other conditions. Therefore, the Libyan revolution led by the inexperienced and naïve young people was at first a bit chaotic and unformed, which changed within about a month with the creation of the NTC, and with the UN intervention targeted against Qaddafi's terror.

Social Networking in the Libyan Revolution

Social networking efforts played a crucial role in the organization of Libyan protesters, with the communication of timely and realistic updates on the situation in the country being of great value to protestors and the media alike. Daoud Kuttab, a Libyan journalist, provided a

detailed account of the hard and painful process of regaining access to, and control of radio stations and filling the content of radio broadcasts.¹⁵⁹

Peter Beaumont voiced more skeptical considerations regarding the role of social media in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya.¹⁶⁰ The author noted that even despite the blocked social media access, the uprisings continued and intensified throughout the countries, which proves that they were indeed helpful but not crucial.

However, Beaumont agreed that the symbol of the North African revolutions was not a soldier with a gun, but a young man or woman with a smart-phone, which is a perhaps a fundamental change of perspective from which revolutions are considered.¹⁶¹ Here it may be pertinent to ask: whether or not the Libyan, or North African revolutions as a whole, would have been as swift or as purportedly successful without social networking?

Justin Bomberowitz provided a list of key social media links through which the informational support and communication were conducted during the Libyan revolution.¹⁶² On Facebook, the Libya Protest News site was highly popular, and had many viewers and followers. As for Twitter, the tags “Feb17Libya” and “@ShababLibya” (“shabab means “boys” in the Arabic language) enjoyed enormous popularity.¹⁶³

It may also be pertinent to note the popularity of Al-Jazeera and CNN blogs updated by the journalists closely following the events in Libya; some materials were provided by the protesters, while others were collected by the journalists at the places of conflict. Hence, it can perhaps be surmised that social networking again played a fundamental role in the

dissemination of information, and communication of the timely real-life situation in Libya to the global community, which would hardly have been possible without the realistic, and at times horrifying accounts of the events' witnesses.

The Economic Context in the Libyan Revolution

The Libyan economy was characterized by a sort of brand of Qaddafi-led socialism. Whether or not Qaddafi's brand of Arab socialism can be described truly as socialist in nature, it is clear that prior to the events predicating the Libyan Revolution, the Libyan people were fed up with anything that the Qaddafi regime could do. Like in Tunisia and Egypt before, for intents and purposes the Libyan economy can best be described as weak and non-inclusive.

The Libyan economy depends primarily upon revenue from energy, which contribute about 95% of export earnings, 70% of GDP, and 80% of government revenue. Substantial revenue from the energy sector coupled with a small population give Libya one of the highest per capita GDPs in Africa, but little of this income flowed to the lower orders of society.¹⁶⁴

Libya, in the past five years prior to the Libyan Revolution, made progress on economic reform as part of a broader campaign to reintegrate the country into the international fold. This effort picked up steam after UN sanctions were lifted in September 2003 and after Libya announced in December 2003 that it would abandon programs to build weapons of mass destruction. The process of lifting US unilateral sanctions began in the spring of 2004; all sanctions were removed by June 2006, helping Libya attract greater foreign direct investment, especially in the energy sector. Libyan oil and gas licensing rounds drew high international

interest, but new rounds are unlikely until Libya establishes a government with a better sense of permanence. The National Oil Corporation set a goal of nearly doubling oil production to 3 million barrels per day by 2012, but the goal is unlikely to be met by the target date.¹⁶⁵

Libya faces a long road ahead in liberalizing its primarily socialist economy, but the revolution probably increases the opportunity for entrepreneurial activity and the evolution of a more market-based economy. The service and construction sectors, which account for roughly 20% of GDP, expanded over the past five years and could become a larger share of GDP after political volatility subsides. Climatic conditions and poor soils severely limit agricultural output, and Libya imports about 75% of its food. Libya's primary agricultural water source remains the Great Manmade River Project, but significant resources will be needed in desalinization to meet growing water demands.¹⁶⁶

As with the Egyptian revolution, it is unclear what role the Libyan business community played in the Libyan revolution. It is likely that several businesspeople or those claiming to have a business affiliation or interest played a part in revolutionary activities. Business in Tunisia came to a grinding halt during the Tunisian Revolution, with some business owners and business people striking or leaving their jobs to join protestors. This phenomena likely aided in the protestors ambitions and expedited the process of regime change in Tunisia.

However, the current crop of literature is hazy at best regarding the precise role of the Libyan business community. What makes the role of the business community murky in particular is that it can mostly be described as socialist. There is some literature regarding how

the Libyan business community is faring after the events of the Libyan revolution; this literature will be analyzed in this section to attempt to find a way in which business interests may have affected the Libyan revolution.

At present, the Libyan business community is undergoing multi-faceted development and improvement of cross-border cooperation and trade. Among the most favorable neighbors in terms of commercial relationships, the most notable states that have arisen are Egypt and Pakistan. As for the Pakistan-Libya trade relations, the Embassy of Pakistan in Libya claimed the Libyan textiles and garments, food items, leather garments and products, sports goods, surgical and dental instruments, IT, oil and gas, and engineering products to be the fields of cooperation with the greatest potential for the trade partners and for Libyan businesspeople.¹⁶⁷

Egypt has also suffered some adverse effects of the Libyan civil war and revolution, so the cooperation on the economic recovery and liberalization is quite close for Egyptian and Libyan authorities after the events of each respective revolution. According to the report of Mariam Kamel, following the adoption of the Cairo Declaration of July 2012, Libya and Egypt continue to pursue closer cooperation and business partnership objectives.¹⁶⁸ The leaders of both countries expressed their interest in intensifying trade, and removal of customs fees between the two states. Moreover, the role of the private sector in the economic recovery and revival of Libya has been stressed.¹⁶⁹

The CEO of Joint Libyan Construction Company (JLCC), Mario Zotelle, told the representatives of 60 companies from worldwide that Libya is currently in need of

infrastructural upgrade and general housing and business reconstruction.¹⁷⁰ The JLCC is owned by Asamer Holdings, one of the most experienced foreign investors in Libya who also were one of the first companies to return to Libya after the end of the revolution.

Other challenges for the business community recognized by Mr. Zotelle include the absence of a sound educational reform to meet the demand for professionals in the Libyan labor market, and the need to restore the transport, electricity, and gas supply fully to improve the overall infrastructure in Libya destroyed by military actions during the civil war.¹⁷¹

It is also notable that the strategic role of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) has grown tremendously in Libya. According to the information provided by Kamel, the Libyan economy suffers from non-diversification of economic activities mostly concentrated on oil and gas production.¹⁷² As previously stated, the oil and gas sector occupies 70% of the Libyan GDP, and 80% of governmental revenues, which is seen by top economists as unacceptable in a modern, democratic country catering for the consumer and social well-being needs of its population. Therefore, building a strong SME environment in Libya is now one of the top priorities for the Libyan business community directed at the restoration of the country's key functions and activities, especially in the economic plane.¹⁷³

Violence in the Libyan Revolution

The largely peaceful demonstrations by Libyans against the power of Qaddafi that had been ongoing in Libya for more than four decades turned into a violent civil war in which

thousands of people lost their lives, and the infrastructure, welfare, and social well-being of people was seemingly irreversibly destroyed.¹⁷⁴

As previously mentioned, the large-scale uprising began in the middle of February, 2011, when the human rights activist Fethi Tarbel was arrested in Benghazi.¹⁷⁵ On February 17, twelve people were killed, and dozens were injured during the anti-government protests in the cities of Al-Baida and Benghazi.¹⁷⁶ Later in February, 2011 the response of Qaddafi to these demonstrations against his rule was so violent, that the UN Security Council approved sanctions against Qaddafi and his closest advisors on February 28.

There are many reports about events of February, 2011, making it difficult to pinpoint the validity and precise dates of events during the Libyan civil war; however, many witnesses reportedly claimed that on February 21, 2011, helicopters and warplanes struck parts of Tripoli in a move by the ruling regime to intimidate and kill protesters.

Following this massive violent attack, February 23, 2011 became the day of massive evacuation of foreigners from the state of Libya.¹⁷⁷ Following these events and despite the official condemnation of his actions by the UN Security Council, Qaddafi still continued his official callings to oust the protesters, and to cleanse the country from them house by house.

As a result of such unprecedented neglect towards the opinion of the international community, the UN Security Council agreed to refer the situation in Libya to the International Criminal Court, imposed a strict arms embargo on the Libyan territory, froze the financial assets

of Qaddafi and some of his closest family members, and imposed the travel ban on Qaddafi, his family, and his closest advisors.¹⁷⁸

In March, 2011, the NTC was formed, and further officially recognized as the sole legal representative of the Libyan nation by many Western supporters. However, violence did not end with the formation of the NTC, and in April 2011, Great Britain was officially recognized as the first state to decide upon sending military advisors to aid the rebels in conducting their struggle against the ruling regime of Qaddafi. The British example was soon followed by France and Italy, while the NTC leaders were invited to the US White House in Washington, DC to discuss their further plans on rescuing the country from the tyranny and massacre of former President Qaddafi.¹⁷⁹

Libyans finally saw an end of the majority of the violent and bloody resistance in Libya on October 20, 2011, with the death of former President Qaddafi during the seizure of his hometown Sirte.¹⁸⁰ On October 23, 2011, the declaration of liberation by the NTC was officially proclaimed in Benghazi, marking perhaps the final step of the revolution against the tyrant.¹⁸¹¹⁸²

However, as Ross Douthat noted, there are apparently many doubts among the Libyan people regarding the US and its motives in the initiation of the intervention to Libya; there were many fears that the UN and NATO interventions would further split the opposition in two poles, one of them being the Islamic radicals, and the other one being rebels favoring the support of the West.¹⁸³ The fear of this split, is seemingly that it would result in yet another protracted civil

war or conflict on the scale of the current US and NATO-led war in Afghanistan, or the finally resolved war in Iraq. The divide seemingly did not occur, and the newly freed Libya gladly received the support of numerous states including the US, Turkey, and the European Union as a whole.

Concluding Thoughts on the Libyan Revolution

The Libyan anti-government revolution obviously belongs to the list of the Arab spring revolutions inspired by the youth movements, the extensive use of social media, and the striving towards better living, employment, educational, and social welfare conditions that Libyans believed they deserved.

Table 4: Libyan Revolution Variables

VARIABLES	PROBLEMS PRE-REVOLUTION	ROLE DURING REVOLUTION
Qaddafi Regime	Authoritarian, Repressive, Surveillance/Informant Activity Personalistic: Very Strong	Sought to Stay in Power by Heavy Use of Violence Violence: Strong
Youth	Unemployed & Disenfranchised	Tactful Use of Social Networking & Comprised Majority of Opposing Militia
Economic Context	State-controlled, Low Economic Opportunity	Limited Function During Civil War, Supported Militia

However, even though the experience of two previous revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt inspired the population, these experiences in neighboring North Africa likely wizedened, frightened, and rendered Qaddafi paranoid, forcing him into using acts of violence in a desperate effort to maintain control over the country by means of intimidation through show of military force and outright massacre. As the Libyan population had learned from the experiences and lessons of the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions, so too had Qaddafi – and he set to ensure that he would not suffer the same fate that Tunisia’s President Ben Ali and Egypt’s President Mubarak had faced. However, Qaddafi seemingly suffered a worse fate – brutal execution at the hands of his own people that was videotaped and shown around the world.

As a result of an unexpectedly violent response of the government to the calls for fairness and progress, the Libyan population united and likely fought for the democracy, justice, and equality with a strength and perseverance that their Tunisian and Egyptian neighbors did not have to endure.

The revolution likely lasted much longer than the majority of Libyans could have supposed given the results in Tunisia and Egypt, but with the help of the international community, and the NATO military intervention, the rebels were saved from the violent rule and oppression of Qaddafi.

Seemingly, the consequences of the revolution in Libya are much harsher than they are for Tunisia and Egypt. It goes without saying that as result of numerous military actions and

battles, the infrastructure, housing, and supply networks were destroyed, which implies the need for a multi-faceted and comprehensive recovery for the newly-born democratic state of Libya.

It is also necessary to note the powerful role of the NTC that formed a couple of weeks after the outburst of the Libyan revolution, and managed to organize and keep rebels fighting against their oppressor. Even the best initiatives may often fail without a strong leader, so the NTC managed to play a role in keeping the revolution alive, and achieving the goals of the oppressed population. So far, it is too soon to assess the consequences of the disastrous civil war in Libya, but the near future will show the course of state development, and will delineate the closest perspectives of the free nation.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Starting in Tunisia, the North African revolutions brought about an unprecedented and unforeseen change in the political map of the North African sub region. The people of these states, who had been ruled by authoritarian leaders for decades, overthrew the ruling regime with hardly any notice and in quick fashion.

These revolutions likely started a movement toward establishing innovative, progressive, and democratic political systems. The rule in the states grasped by the fire of revolution was authoritarian and oppressive; hence, the reaction of such states as Egypt and Libya to the successful overthrow of the tyrant in Tunisia is fully reasonable and expected. There are many inconsistencies in the present-day rule established after the revolution in the states which were involved in the North African revolutions.

However, there is seemingly much hope that with help, support, and supervision of international authorities and advisors (as well as some favorable results domestically) the events of the North African revolutions will yield democratic results, and will result in the improvement of the overall quality and social well-being of those states' populations.

The North African Revolutions

This thesis analyzed the effect of three supposed key factors and actors of the North African revolutions: personalistic dictatorships, disaffected youth involvement, and economic context on the outcomes of the particular revolutions in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya. The first

major hypothesis states: In Arab majority states that have: a dictator who has been in power for at least twenty years and whose style of rule can be best described as “personalistic”, at least 18% of the population being classified as “young people” who are disaffected by their government with low social and economic mobility and, an economy that can be best described as weak with high unemployment, that Arab majority state has nascent variables that will most likely lead to protests activity and perhaps full-scale revolution.

Table 5: North African Revolution Variables

STATE	ROLE OF YOUTH & SOCIAL NETWORKING	ROLE OF ECONOMY	STYLE OF DICTATORSHIP	VIOLENCE?
Tunisia	Strong	Weak Economy: Played Strong Role	Somewhat Strong Personalistic: Weak	Very Limited
Egypt	Strong	Weak Economy: Played Strong Role	Strong Personalistic: Strong	Moderate
Libya	Strong	Weak Economy: Played Strong Role	Strong Personalistic: Very Strong	Massive

In all three cases, much of the research indicated that in the North African Revolutions the young population took the leading role in the organization, initiation, and progression of the revolution, and the resulting political opposition led by the youth was well-formed and united toward the purpose of overthrowing the ruling regime (once political opposition groups were given free rein to openly operate). These resistance groups and their causes were spurred on by the dictators in each state and their style of rule. In order to conclude the research, the effect of each of the studied key factor and actor will be summarized and discussed in detail. The following section will attempt to answer research questions one and two.

To re-state, Research Question One is as follows: Do the North African Revolutions share common root causes with one another? If so, which root cause (or level of involvement by a particular subset of the population) was the most pertinent in deciding the outcome of each revolution? Did each revolution have a different pertinent root cause (or level of involvement by a particular subset of the population)? Were these revolutions somehow linked or did they come to fruition uniquely?

Young people were the dominant cross-section of population in all three states discussed; in addition to young people's numeric dominance, young people turned out to be among the most disadvantaged and vulnerable category of population in the three North African states. The young people in Tunisia suffered from fierce unemployment and poverty at the hands of what appeared to be a greedy and nepotistic regime.

The young people in Egypt were often highly educated, yet disenfranchised, thus this seemingly provided the impetus the young people needed. Therefore, it is apparent that the change occurred that the young people in Egypt demanded. This was of course built on the heels of what the Egyptian youth seemingly deemed to be a successful revolution in neighboring Tunisia.

The Libyan youth expressed their discontent with the economic and political course of Libya, likely reinforced by doubts that such an oil-rich country should provide such poor working and living conditions for its people. The Libyan youth were also likely galvanized by what they seemingly deemed as successful revolutions in their neighboring North African states. However, the Libyan youth were marred by a bloody, and likely unforeseen, civil war.

Therefore, it can be surmised that the North African revolutions started with somewhat similar dissatisfaction criteria and ended somewhat similarly: with the overthrow of the authoritarian regime that has been tormenting the nations for decades.

The key to youth discontent may be seen in the stagnating political systems of Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya. The youth that raised the revolutions had not been alive long enough to see any other regime, ruling party, or any other singular dictator. Having access to a worldwide resource of information through the internet, the youth of these three countries could perhaps better observe how other countries develop and prosper, which may have naturally raised doubts and fears in the young people of North Africa regarding whether they would ever be able to see a change in their lives.

Hence, not seeing any change, and being instigated by the manifestations of authoritarianism and absence of freedom of press and speech (the self-immolation of Al-Bouazizi as a sign of protest against the lawlessness of the state police in Tunisia, the mysterious murder of Khaled Said in Egypt¹⁸⁴, and the arrest of Fethi Tarbel¹⁸⁵ in Libya on the eve of the revolution¹⁸⁶) – all these signs of the aggravating political and socio-economic situation intensified the instability in the states, and allowed the youth to popularize the revolutionary messages to the rest of the population.

The success of revolutions in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya can largely be attributed to the active participation of the youth in the upheavals, and the active involvement of social networking sites, and social media in the coverage of the revolutionary events in the states. The power of social media has been at the forefront of research and discussion recently, and the North African revolution seemingly provide additional proof of the potential of social media in the timely and realistic updates about the events in a revolutionary state.

Indeed, the practice of concealing certain facts, and misleading the international community regarding the state of affairs in a certain state have seemingly become a rule rather than an exception in modern international political discourse. Therefore, the public has seemingly grown more trustful and fond of the independent accounts of witnesses sent from their smart-phones which seem to provide the freshest photo and video records of the events that would otherwise likely have never be shown on televisions, or through any other official media.

Hence, the role of the youth in the uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya can hardly be exaggerated, since the young revolutionaries seemingly became the backbone of the organized and massive revolution that brought about the positive and relatively easy revolutionary outcomes (in Tunisia and Egypt, at least). The challenge that Libyan revolutionaries faced was the relative readiness of Qaddafi to the revolution after learning from two successful experiences of the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions. In all likelihood, Ben Ali and Mubarak could possibly not be ready for such revolutionary events, and thus these embattled leaders had no time to respond with aggression and massive acts of intimidation, which likely saved the Tunisian and Egyptian people from the acts of violence and mass murder on the scale of the Libyan civil war.

The economic context in each of these states presents a clear desire for revolution. All three North African states faced a weak economy and high unemployment, as well as corrupt practices stemming from states' dictators and their cronies. The presence and involvement of an organized business community is a disputable factor in the North African revolutions.

In looking at the case of the Tunisian revolution, there were somewhat announced views and complaints of Tunisian workers who had been suffering for decades from the "kleptocratic" policy of the Tunisian President Ben Ali. Many, if not all, of Ben Ali's family members, and his closest advisors owned a share of roughly 200 Tunisian enterprises; in many cases Tunisian business owners and businesspeople were forced to pay to Ben Ali's associates – otherwise, these professionals were deprived of their business enterprises.¹⁸⁷ Therefore, the business

community of Tunisia had a breadth of reasons and incentives to contribute to the successful resolution of the revolutionary events in Tunisia.

As for the Egyptian economic context, Egypt's weak and stagnating economy seemingly played a direct role in the disaffection of the youth and of the population as a whole. However, the voice of the Egyptian worker as a collective was not heard a great deal during the revolutionary period leading up to the dismissal of Mubarak. However, considering that the Egyptian revolution may not be truly over and that sizable protests are still being conducted, widespread changes may still be on the horizon. Presently, the workers of Egypt are taking a more active role in re-shaping the nation. The 2012 political elections illustrated a direction opposite to business initiative development in the choices of the Egyptians after the overthrow of Mubarak.

The workers of Egypt were not expected to support the Muslim Brotherhood, historically known for its radical Islamist beliefs and policies, which is seemingly destructive for the Egyptian business, especially in terms of foreign direct investment from the US and its Western allies.¹⁸⁸ However, in the light of the large support of the Muslim Brotherhood in the newly emancipated Egypt, it seems apparent that the Egyptian business community did not have any significant power or influence in the Egyptian revolution. Seemingly only in the revolution's aftermath and the subsequent election of seemingly business illiterate and anti-Western regime is the Egyptian economy making its voice heard.

As for the Libyan revolution and Libya's economic context, it is somewhat clear that Libya's lagging economy played a role; but it is unclear what role the Libyan business community played in the revolution, as private enterprise was virtually absent in the state. Prior to the Libyan revolution, 90% of state revenues were concentrated on the oil and gas sector.¹⁸⁹ It is only now, after the ouster of the Qaddafi regime from Libya that the Libyan population has been able to begin structure what could be considered a tangible and cohesive business community. Since the seeming conclusion of the Libyan revolution and subsequent civil war that Libya endured, the business community is now able to start developing freely and independently barring any unforeseen setbacks.

Discussing the power of organized political opposition, political opposition indeed played somewhat of a role in all three North African revolutions. Even in instances where organized political opposition was formally outlawed, groups claiming a political stance or affiliation seemed to crop up during the revolutionary period in each individual North African revolution.

There were many organized political opposition groups in Tunisia that were seemingly lying in wait for an opportunity to freely express their opinions – an option these opposition groups did not have under Ben Ali's dictatorship. These political groups served a role in organizing and structuring the concerns of the population. After the revolutionary period, the opposition in Tunisia was quick to gain legitimacy at the political level, which was shown upon the results of the first democratic elections.¹⁹⁰

A somewhat similar situation can be observed in Egypt, even though the temporary rule over the country was taken by the Transitional Military Council after the revolutionary period. The continued discontent of Egyptians after what is regarded as the revolutionary period over what seemed to be a truly unchanging situation in terms of strict authoritarian/military rule soon brought about the change. This seemingly occurred when the organized religious-political grouping of the Muslim Brotherhood took over the rule of the country after the 2012 Egyptian elections.¹⁹¹

In Libya, the National Transitional Council played a vital role of the guiding and uniting force for the revolutionaries. Since the revolution had not been planned to be carried out as a bloody civil war, and the youth guiding the upheaval turned out not to be anywhere near ready to organize military activities into which the revolutionaries were forced into by actions of President Qaddafi. The NTC was able to guide the military activities and serve as a liaison between the young fighters and NATO. It is likely that it would certainly not have been as easy to coordinate military exercises and topple President Qaddafi and his forces without a military chain of command provided by the leaders of the NTC.

Therefore, the political opposition, which was brought about by the long, unfair, personalistic regimes of the North African dictators. Although political opposition was considered officially banned in all three states before the outbreak of the North African revolutions, played a decisive role in the outcomes of the revolution, and can be reasonably considered a sound contributing factor in the discussion of the outcomes of the revolutions.

These political groups are also playing a large role in the reformation of these states after what is now considered revolutionary period. Although, it may be important to note that these North African revolutions may not truly be over, as the region is still largely in disorder.

The research in each case study chapter seems to indicate that these revolutions were in fact linked and not *sui generis*. These revolutions definitely shared major root causes such as personalistic dictators who stunted economic growth, promulgated unfair tactics, and used violence/intimidation to quell dissidence as well as youth leading the charge in each revolution largely by using social networking to organize and spread the message of the revolution. Social networking is the main factor that supports that these revolutions were linked. The support and displays of solidarity given through social networks from other Arabs in the region (for instance, Egyptians supporting and networking with Tunisians, and so forth) is key; it is arguable that these displays of support and solidarity are important in sustaining revolutionary movements, going back to Tilly's theories on revolutions covered in the introduction to this thesis.

Answering the second research question (Can an accurate reason be given for the differing levels of violence in each of the North African revolutions?) the extent of violence can be somewhat attributed to the style of rule (dictatorships) by the all three leaders. However, the level of violence in each revolution is more attributable to the timing of each revolution and the pattern comparable patterns these revolutions illustrated. All three leaders, Ben Ali, Mubarak, and Qaddafi, were known as harsh and authoritarian rulers; hence, all three could

have conducted serious acts of violence against their population. However, only the Libyan revolution turned out to be extremely violent and bloody.

The extent of violence here can be referred to the succession of revolutions, the Tunisian revolution was massive and unexpected, which could have contributed to its quick and successful resolution. The quick and successful resolution of the Tunisian revolutions left Ben Ali no real time to react with aggression.

The shock of the Tunisian revolution appeared to have radiated to Egypt, raising the concerns of both the population and the ruling regime; hence, the Egyptian Revolution was a bit longer, and would not have ended as quickly as it did if the strategic military forces, a key source of Mubarak's reliance, had not abandoned him to join the revolutionaries. Also, to speculate just a bit Mubarak likely did not realize the full extent of what had just occurred in Tunisia and could not have been cognizant of the revolutionary zeal that would spread through the MENA region and become known colloquially as The Arab Spring.

Finally, after two successful cases of revolutions in Libya's neighboring states, Qaddafi, now likely cognizant of a pattern of revolutionary activity that was likely headed to Libya, had both time and incentives to get ready for the potential of a revolutionary uprising in his state. Therefore, Qaddafi consolidated the military forces against the Libyan revolutionaries in the attempt to intimidate them by violent and bloody responses to their first revolutionary acts.

It is highly likely given their background and past non-reticence in using security forces against the population, all three leaders were likely willing to maintain power in their hands if

the perfect opportunity presented itself, and it is not out of the realm of possibility that all of them would intimidate their population into submission if granted such an opportunity. Therefore, while type of regime and strictness of rule may have something to do with violent responses to revolutions, there is no evidence given by the North African revolutions for a strong correlation between the type and strictness of the regime and the extent of violence.

The Iranian Green Revolution: Similarities and Comparisons

In this section, a quick comparison will be made between the 2009 Iranian Green Revolution and the North African Revolutions. The Iranian Green Revolution is a pertinent revolution to comment on because it shares many of the same characteristics of the North African Revolutions and may have served as a model for the revolutionaries in North Africa.

The regime of Iran can be described as authoritarian and personalistic, albeit that the personalistic style of rule was mainly shaped by the deceased Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini; the youth of Iran took a strong role in protesting, tactfully used social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter to coordinate protests and spread their dissent to the international community and can be described as disaffected by their political and social condition; and the Iranian economy was weak, with low social mobility and high unemployment. However, unlike the North African Revolutions, dissent was essentially successfully quelled without regime change and perhaps moderate violence. It is difficult to say why exactly dissent was successfully dispatched in Iran and not in the North African Revolutions (although the North African dictators certainly tried, with Libya's Qaddafi being the most notable example), but nonetheless

the Iranian Green Revolution shares many of the same variables with the North African Revolutions, albeit with a decidedly different outcome. As the literature regarding the Iranian Green Revolution and the North African Revolutions becomes more populated, the reasoning for the differing results of these revolutions may be interesting to study.¹⁹²

Table 6: Iranian Green Revolution Comparison

STATE	ROLE OF YOUTH	ROLE OF ECONOMICS	ROLE OF REGIME	VIOLENCE?	REGIME TOPPLED?
Iran	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	No
Tunisia	Strong	Strong	Somewhat Strong	Very Limited	Yes
Egypt	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Yes
Libya	Strong	Strong	Very Strong	Massive; Civil War	Yes

Algeria and Morocco: Arab Spring Outliers

Despite the fact that revolutionary zeal seemingly spread like an infection throughout the North African sub region, some states have remained largely immune to the effects of the national upheavals that have been shaking the Arab world for more than a year. Two of these

states include Algeria and Morocco. For Algeria and Morocco, there is a set of unique political, economic, and socio-demographic characteristics that have contributed to, or mitigated the national uprisings that led to the overthrow of the national governments. Algeria and Morocco, for instance, are seen as perhaps less capable of achieving the results similar to those of Egypt, Tunisia, and Libya.

In regards to Algeria, the threat of a national uprising is perhaps minimal, which has been somewhat proven by the recent parliamentary elections in which the ruling party won nearly 50% of seats.¹⁹³ However, the participation rate of Algerians is very low, about 35% of the general population, which likely indicates the low trust of, and confidence about the modern Algerian government.

Stability is nevertheless obvious in Algeria, which is mainly the result of the political inclusiveness in the state – unlike the political opposition in Egypt and Tunisia where the radical Islamists were banned, claimed illegal, and sent to exile, the Algerian government includes moderate Islamists in the presidential majority, and gives them an equal right to participate in the political life of the country.¹⁹⁴

In the opinion of Lahcen Achy, there are two prime factors that contribute to refraining from revolutionary actions in Algeria. First, it is the richness of oil and gas reserves in Algeria that has allowed the government to increase public spending by 50% over the past two years.¹⁹⁵ Moreover, the civil war of the 1990s that took the lives of about 100,000-150,000 Algerians is still likely looming in the memories of the people.¹⁹⁶ The violent and bloody

extensions of peaceful demonstrations in Libya and Syria serve as additional evidence of the fact that the revolutionary messages against the Algerian government may turn into a new civil war. Therefore, it is somewhat likely that the population of Algeria is less optimistic about initiating struggle against their long-standing government, preferring to disengage with the state of political life instead.

In the Moroccan case study, the King of Morocco Mohammed VI managed to take a series of seemingly wise steps in response to the first North African uprisings. Despite the fact that Morocco is one of the poorest states in the Arab world, and the average salary of the Moroccan is twice as low as the salary of the average resident of North Africa, there is still lack of attention to the revolutionary protests and acts of discontent among Moroccans.

According to Nicolas Pelham, there have been more than twenty cases of self-immolation, with five fatal cases, but they did not attract the attention of the larger Moroccan audience to the despair in which the population finds itself due to unemployment, lack of social welfare services, and extreme poverty.¹⁹⁷

The strategic response of King Mohammad VI to the North African revolutions were the unveiling of a new Constitution on March 9, 2011, in which he refused his divine rights of a sovereign, but retained the position of the Commander of the Faithful, similarly to that of the British Queen/monarchy.¹⁹⁸

Moreover, while other heads of Arab states were anxious about whether to initiate parliamentary elections, King Mohammad VI conducted ones quickly, in November 2011, and

declared the leader of the winning Islamist party, Abdelilah Benkirane, the Prime Minister of Morocco.¹⁹⁹ As a result of these actions, the political tensions in Morocco released to a certain extent, but the socio-economic status of Moroccans remains very low, and the legislature is still far from effective. Article 41 of the new Constitution claims that any decision of the Moroccan Parliament can be overruled by the decree of the President, which likely decreases the potential power of the former significantly.

Algeria and Morocco displayed some revolutionary activity but this activity was quickly met with capitulation from the ruling regime. Unlike the deposed leaders of the North African states discussed in the case studies of this thesis, those in Algeria and Morocco chose to give into public demand by increasing or introducing democratic rights to their citizens instead of meeting the protestors with violence. Introducing these reforms was not the sole factor that these protest activities did not result in full scale revolution. As outlined in the previous paragraphs, Algeria and Morocco had unique factors such as Algeria's recent civil war weighing on the minds of many and Morocco's extreme poverty and low rate of highly educated young people.

The Syrian Revolution

The events in Syria are the example of an inverse way of the development of events as compared to the 2009 Iranian Green, 2010 Tunisian, and 2011 Egyptian revolutions more peaceful model of conducting a quick and effective revolution to overthrow an authoritarian ruler.

Syria was one of the first states to take on the lead of the North African revolutions (although Syria is located in the Southwestern Asia portion of the Middle East, it is relatively close to North Africa), and the peaceful demonstrators started gathering at the central squares of the main Syrian cities early in 2011.

However, the ruler of Syria, Bashar al-Assad, decided not to give up his power over the state as easily as his peers in Tunisia and Egypt, and as a result, the events in Syria developed much similarly to those developed by President Qaddafi in Libya in 2011. The military opposition between the state's authorities and the people started in late summer 2011, following months of peaceful mass demonstrations against President Al-Assad's regime.²⁰⁰

The peaceful revolutionaries confessed to being forced to militarize themselves – after facing a number of military offenses from the police officers and militaries of President Al-Assad, the peaceful demonstrators reportedly started buying smuggled weapons brought to Syria from Lebanon, Iraq, and Jordan.²⁰¹

It is notable that in contrast to Libya, the violence in Syria is much more intense, and the number of deaths is increasing. The independent journalists and UN observers face the horrifying reality of non-compliance with the promises President Al-Assad repeatedly gave to the international community on mitigating the violence in his territory, and entering the peaceful and constructive negotiations with the revolutionaries.

Perhaps the key reason for the continuing violent and bloody revolution in Syria is the supposed strategically significant position of Syria in the MENA region, and its purported key

role in the negotiations between the West and many potentially conflicting countries in the East such as Palestine and Israel.

Therefore, the solutions are not as easy to find as they were in Libya – the international conflict in the Middle East that can potentially be raised by Syria in case of unauthorized Western forces interventions to its territory retains the forces of the international observers outside the conflict in Syria so far. Therefore, the destiny of the Syrian revolution is still undecided, and the military resistance persists.

Table 7: Revolutionary Prospects in MENA

STATE	REGIME TYPE AUTHORITARIAN? PERSONALISTIC?	% OF YOUTH IN POPULATION	REGIME RESPONSE
Algeria	Authoritarian: Yes Personalistic: Weak	21	Leader Capitulated to Public Demand
Morocco	Authoritarian: Yes Personalistic: Weak	20	Leader Capitulated to Public Demand
Syria	Authoritarian: Yes Personalistic: Strong	20	Leader Refused to Capitulate or Flee: Violent On-going Civil War
Tunisia	Authoritarian: Yes Personalistic: Moderate	19	Leader Fled/Removed
Egypt	Authoritarian: Yes Personalistic: Strong	20	Leader Fled/Removed
Libya	Authoritarian: Yes Personalistic: Very Strong	18	Leader Resisted to Capitulate or Flee: Violent Civil War

Concluding Thoughts

To conclude and review the events of the North African revolutions in various states in the Arab world, the destiny of every uprising was unique, and depended on the individual socio-cultural, economic, and political factors. The Tunisian and Egyptian population had the power to mobilize large groups of the population against the authoritarian regimes in which they were subjected to for many decades.

The powerful reaction and subsequent guidance of the progressive youth in Tunisia and Egypt seemingly took the rulers by surprise, and seemingly did not leave any other alternative to President Ben Ali and President Mubarak other than to yield and flee. As for Libya, the result of the revolution was much bloodier and more violent, since the time spent for two successful uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt was enough for President Qaddafi to get ready for the possibility of a similar revolutionary move in his country.

All three revolutions discussed in detail in the thesis seem to prove that it is likely that an organized and coordinated mass uprising in a state is potentially capable of conducting a peaceful and quick revolution with the purpose of overthrowing a leader. It is obvious that both Tunisia and Egypt had a well-armed military force subjected to each respective president, and in case of necessity, they would be able to oppress the upheaval for the sake of maintaining the president's power.

However, the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt were both massive and unexpected, which deprived the rulers of these countries of the strategic advantage – time and organization of

response. On the other hand, the Libyan ruler, Qaddafi, managed to organize an armed response to the revolutionaries in an attempt to squash the beginning protests with fear and blood. The only failure Qaddafi may have suffered was the neglect of the inspiration and perseverance brought to Libyans by the two previous successful efforts of their neighbors in Tunisia and Egypt.

Comparing the events surrounding the three North African revolutions discussed in detail in this thesis to the events to the states of Algeria, Morocco, and Syria, it should perhaps be noted that the states discussed in this thesis are only some of the sites of revolutionary hopes of the Arab Spring.

The leaders of some states in the MENA region were seemingly wise to recognize the revolutionary discontent of their people, and to respond to their requirements before the revolutions started. However, in some states such as Syria, the bloody and violent struggle persists. Beginning in Tunisia, the North African revolutions brought about a fundamental change in practically all states of the Arab world regardless whether they were involved in a direct and open struggle or not. The governments of the states that remained in power wisely recognized the growing wave of resistance, and grew aware of the need to initiate changes in their states.

In addition to overthrown despots, the result of Arab spring is increased public spending, the involvement in Parliamentary elections, the growing political and secular pluralism in the

Arab world, and other manifestations of the end to stagnation resulting from the multi-decade rule of authoritarian Arab rulers.

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