

THE ARAB SPRING: ON MASS PROTESTS AND  
POLITICAL OPENINGS

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İŞIK UNIVERSITY

2019

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B.A., Department of International Relations, Işık University, 2014

Submitted to the Graduate School of Social Sciences

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of Master of Arts

in

International Relations

IŞIK UNIVERSITY

2019

IŞIK UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL SCIENCES

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APPROVAL DATE: 22/08/2019

# **THE ARAB SPRING: ON MASS PROTESTS AND POLITICAL OPENINGS**

## **Abstract**

During the past decade, public resistance increased against authoritarian regimes throughout the world from the Middle East to Europe and the United States. These large-scale protests have shown that popular uprisings can overthrow autocratic leaders. The aim of this thesis is explaining how leaders react when they face a popular uprising (mass protest). In case of a demonstration, do leaders respond with democratic opening or repression? This thesis analyzes the reason why authoritarian leaders of Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Syria reacted differently to similar uprisings and experienced different transitional outcomes on the way to democracy following the Arab uprisings in 2011. More specifically, this thesis analyzes how leaders responded to the uprisings in the Arab countries through the Arab Spring with the goal of contributing to general theories that aim to predict leader behavior (such as embracing a democratic speech vs. using police pressure and the approach of military) in response to mass protests. The thesis argues that leaders' initial speeches can predict post-movement political environment. When leaders adopt a moderate speech and police violence against protestors is low, then there is more chance for peaceful change through a democratic election.

Key words; Arab Spring, political opening, authoritarian regime, popular uprising, democracy

## ARAP BAHARI: HALK AYAKLANMASI VE SİYASİ AÇILIM

### Özet

Geçtiğimiz on yılda, Ortadoğu'dan Avrupa ve Amerika'ya kadar tüm dünya genelinde otoriter liderlere ve rejimlere karşı halk direnişleri artmıştır. Bu geniş çaplı protestolar otoriter liderlerin halk ayaklanmalarıyla devrilebileceğini göstermiştir. Bu tezin amacı da, bir liderin halk ayaklanması (kitlesele protesto) ile karşı karşıya kaldığında bu durumlara nasıl tepki göstereceğini açıklamaktadır. Herhangi bir protesto ve halk ayaklanmasından sonra liderler demokratik açılmaya mı veya kapanmaya mı gider? Bu tez Tunus, Mısır, Libya ve Suriye'deki otoriter liderlerin benzer halk ayaklanmalarına neden farklı tepki gösterdiklerini ve 2011'deki Arap ayaklanmaları sonrasında demokrasiye geçiş açısından farklı sonuçlar yaşamalarının nedenlerini analiz ediyor. Bu dört Arap ülkesinin benzer otoriter rejimlere sahip oldukları görülmesine rağmen Arap Baharı sırasında liderler kitlesele protesto gösterileri karşısında neden farklı tepkiler verdiler? Daha belirgin bir şekilde, bu çalışma liderlerin Arap Baharı sürecinde Arap ülkelerindeki ayaklanmalara nasıl cevap verdiklerini açıklamakta ve kitlesele protestolara cevap olarak lider davranışını (örneğin demokratik ve yatıştırıcı konuşmalar yapmak veya polis baskısı uygulamak ve ordunun protestoculara yaklaşımı gibi) tahmin etmeye yönelik genel teorilere katkıda bulunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışma, liderlerin ayaklanmaların başlangıcındaki ılımlı söylemlerinin ve protestoculara karşı polis şiddeti kullanıp kullanmama durumunun ve buna ilaveten ordunun protestoculara karşı yaklaşımının Arap Baharı ayaklanmaları sırasında liderlerin demokratik açılıma gitmesine büyük ölçüde etki ettiğini savlamaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Arap Baharı, siyasi açılım, otoriter rejim, halk ayaklanması, demokrasi

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to express the deepest appreciation to my supervisor, Assoc. Prof. Seda Demiralp, who has the attitude and the substance of a competent advisor: she continually and convincingly conveyed a spirit of adventure in regard to research, an excitement with teaching. Without her guidance and support, this dissertation would not have been possible. On my Bachelor's degree, I also benefited from her knowledge and support. Additionally, I am thankful to Assoc. Prof. Ödül Celep for his contributions to my Bachelor and his participation in my thesis committee with his advice and comments, also I am grateful to Asst. Prof. İbrahim Mazlum, who has in my thesis committee as well.

I am also grateful to my beloved family; I am most thankful for you; my mother and my father. You made an effort to raise your four daughters and support me all my life, both financial and especially psychological during the process of my thesis. Thank you to my sisters, especially my older sister Gülşah, and my brother in law for giving me support during this challenging time.

Next, I would like to thank my best friend, Berrin, for her continuous support and encouragement in helping me complete my thesis.

Love you all,

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## **Lists of Abbreviations**

AFC: Air Force Commander

AKP: Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi)

AL: Arab League

EU: European Union

ICC: International Criminal Court

LGBT: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender

MENA: Middle East and North Africa

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization

SCAF: Supreme Council of the Armed Forces

SNHR: Syrian Network for Human Rights

UGTT: Tunisia General Labor Union

UN: United Nations

US: United States

VDC: Violations Documentation Center

# THE ARAB SPRING: ON MASS PROTESTS AND POLITICAL OPENINGS

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Relevance of the study

Referred to as the ‘*Arab Revolutions*’, ‘*Arab Awakening*’ or ‘*Arab Spring*’ (hereinafter referred to as the ‘Arab Spring’ in this thesis to indicate hope, rebirth and a new beginning as used in Hamid Dabashi’s article ‘*The Arab Spring: The End of Post-colonialism*’) the uprisings in the Middle Eastern countries started in Tunisia, where a Tunisian man, Mohammed Bouazizi, set himself on fire on December 17, 2010. This event ignited massive protests and uprisings against the authoritarian regimes, not only in Tunisia but in multiple countries across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, including Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Bahrain, and Syria. The Arab Spring emerged as a reaction against unemployment, inflation, political corruption, dictatorship, abuse, and bad conditions of life in the MENA and changed the regimes in all these MENA countries, although to different extents. In Egypt, Hosni Mubarak, who had been in power with a 30-year regime, was ousted in Egypt a month later, on February 2011 and in Libya Qaddafi, who had been in power for 42 years, was killed by opposition groups. In Tunisia, the 23-year regime of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali collapsed on January 14, 2011. President of Yemen, Ali Abdullah Saleh, who was in power for 33 years, on November 2011. In Syria, the protestors were brutally repressed and there is still great uncertainty since the violent conflict continues (Sümer, 2013).

Why is this research important?

This research matters because it considers a relatively new topic in Middle Eastern studies, namely, mass movements for democracy and political openings. Most studies in the field focused on the persistence of authoritarianism in the Middle East, and some of these scholars have viewed the region as culturally resistant to

democratization (Hinnebusch, 2006). Bellin (2012) mentions the relations between democratization and the Middle East and explains why the MENA resists against democracy focusing on civil society, economic conditions, and the culture of the region. This thesis shows that the authoritarian leaders and regimes in the MENA can be destabilized by the mass protests and uprisings during the Arab Spring and analyzes the reactions of leaders during the uprisings. The thesis also makes another contribution. Considering leaders' initial speeches following mass protests the study aims to predict leaders' future behavior vis-a-vis protestors and the prospects of democratic transition. In contrast to previous studies that make little difference between autocratic leaders of the Middle East, this study considers their differences, focusing directly on their own speeches, without mediation. The aim of the content analysis in this thesis, it applies the initial speeches of leaders to measure reactions of leaders; thus, it explains whether they accept the demands of protestors. The reactions of military and security forces play critical roles on the way to democratic transition (opening). This thesis also argues that leaders' police violence to protestors and its significance on how Arab militaries responded to the demonstrations, so it is crucial to understand the regimes different reactions. Therefore, this thesis is an essential part of understanding the variations between the militaries in the MENA, which will shed light on their particular role in the different outcomes of the uprisings.

## **1.2 Aim of the study**

This thesis is designed to analyze whether authoritarian leaders adopt democratic initiatives or oppressive methods, following mass protests. To answer this question, a comparative analysis is made of Arab countries during the Arab Spring. This research question is scrutinized within the framework of the Arab Spring with a focus on the cases of Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, and Syria, in which leaders reacted differently during the course of mass protests and uprisings.

The Arab world had the most dramatic transformation between the end of 2010 and 2011. The political landscape of the Arab world became more diverse after the beginning of the Arab Spring. This thesis also clears up the matter why Tunisia ended up transitioning to democracy, while Egypt, Libya, and Syria did not, and perhaps became even more authoritarian as well (Heydemann and Leenders, 2011:

647). Tunisia approved a new constitution in 2014 after two interim governments as well as over two years of controversial. Egypt experienced a military coup in July 2013 and removed the Muslim Brotherhood from power, which was a democratically elected Islamic opposition party (Battera, 2014: 545). Besides, the Arab Spring has caused a civil war in Libya and Syria (Dabashi, 2012).

### **1.3 Historical Framework**

The thesis is supported by limited historical information on the process of the Arab Spring, so it includes data from between the years of 2010 and 2011. The reason is the tenure of leaders of the case countries considers in the thesis. All other leaders except Assad left his office, overthrown or escaped in 2011. Assad still resists keeping his power in Syria (Dabashi, 2012). The comparative perspective enables us to trace the reactions of the leaders and study the various factors that shaped it. It is an effective analytic tool to explain complex social phenomena. Thus, the study can be analyzed through comparative research to answer the research question.

This thesis is based on the beginning of the uprisings in the Middle Eastern countries called the Arab Spring. Geographical border of the thesis includes four countries of MENA, which are Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Syria between the years of 2010 and 2011. These four countries are examined with their net results and significant processes during uprisings.

### **1.4 Research Question**

The thesis explores how leaders act in the face of threat due to a mass uprising. This research question is scrutinized within the framework of the Arab Spring with a focus on the cases of Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, and Syria. These cases are selected since they produce different reactions during mass protests and uprisings, which allowed observing which different conditions produced different outcomes. From this perspective, this thesis dwells upon the questions ‘How authoritarian leaders react against uprisings to their power? Did the Arab Spring cause more or less authoritarianism in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, and Syria? How do leaders act in the face of a popular uprising (mass protest), oppression or threat?’ In this regard, the research provides a solid ground as to how leaders in Arab countries responded to the

uprisings. In addition, the reasons for demonstrations as well as expectations from protests scrutinizes in-depth.

This study finds that leaders' initial speeches in reaction to mass protests and the extent of police and military violence towards protestors during the uprising together predict post-uprising chance of democratic transition. Furthermore, leaders' initial speeches and police violence to protestors (use of excessive power of police and military forces on protestors) and the approach of security forces to protestors are examined to understand their effects in protests. It explores whether the responses of leaders upon uprisings is since their regimes are overthrown, while democratic opening will be measured based on whether leaders go to the election after the protests.

This thesis strongly builds on Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (2014)'s study on autocratic regimes. The authors categorize regime types as personalist regimes, single-party regimes, and military regimes. Personalist regimes, in contrast, are more likely than other types to end in violence and upheaval. Their ends are also more likely to be precipitated by the death of the dictator or external pressure, and they are more likely to be followed by some new form of authoritarianism. Single-party regimes last the longest, but when uncontrollable popular opposition signals that the end is near, like the military, they negotiate the transition (Geddes, Wright and Frantz, 2014). Their study also includes four Arab countries Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, and Syria. In light of Geddes, Wright, and Frantz's categorization, this thesis concentrates upon the unique and differentiating characteristics of the Tunisian, Libyan, Egyptian, and Syrian regimes. Geddes categorizes these cases as follows: Egypt and Tunisia are single-party regimes; Libya and Syria are personalist regimes. In the thesis it regards that the meaning of peaceful change through the democratic election is democratic opening; if the leaders do not get to change through democratic election refers to the democratic closing.

The research finds that, one of the factors that signals a democratic transition following mass protests is leaders' initial discursive reaction to mass protests. Leaders who use moderate speeches at the beginning of protests go to the democratic opening.

The second factor that matters in prospects of democratic transition after mass protests is how leaders use the police tolerance towards protestors and demonstrators, that is, if there is excessive and disproportionate use of force against them. In this

regard, police tolerance vs. intolerance and/or violence against protestors and demonstrators shapes chances for democratic transition. In addition, the approach of military and security forces towards protestors is another significance factor during the Arab Spring. With emerge of the Arab Spring, leaders of Egypt and Tunisia were adopted a moderate approach towards protestors in their countries on the way democratic opening. On the other hand, Libya and Syria did not adopt such an approach against the uprisings and demonstrations but applied violence against the movements of the Arab Spring. Within this framework, this study further takes reference from Machiavelli's *The Prince*, an analysis on politics which mainly draws attention to the traits a political leader should have. Accordingly, a leader who is loved by his people does not fear any complot, but if a leader who is hated by his people, everything is a source of fear for him. Thus, smart leaders try to keep their citizens/people as pleased and comfort as possible (Machiavelli, *The Prince*: 202-203).

### **1.5 Methodology**

This thesis examines the consequences of mass protests and explains whether they will be followed by the opening or closing of political regimes. It expects to clarify how a leader reacts when facing a popular uprising. It focuses on whether a leader goes to respond with democratic opening through election or repression, with using two independent variables. These are initial speeches of leaders during protest and police violence towards protestors (use of excessive power of police and military forces on protestors). This thesis relies on secondary sources. These sources include documents, articles, newspapers, and books. This study uses the hypothetical deductive method as dividing into countries and discusses on Arab Spring countries; Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Syria as one to one.

Contrary to using the quantitative method of Geddes, Wright, and Frantz's study whose theoretical framework strongly inspired my study; this research adopts a qualitative method. The qualitative method is appropriate for my study because it has a small sample (Neuman, 2006). The study includes four case studies; Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Syria. The dependent variable of this study is defined as the availability or absence of peaceful change through democratic election.

To sum, this thesis considers autocratic leaders' acts against uprisings in four countries, based on whether or not they promote a peaceful change through democratic election. This study is grounded on the method of comparison of differences and similarities. Ragin (1987) mentions that "*The comparative method is superior to the statistical method in several important respects.*"

In light of the data provided by Geddes, Wright, and Frantz, this research discusses the cases of several Arab countries within the framework of the Arab Spring. Geddes et. al. categorizes regime types in the following manner: Personalist regime, single-party regime and military regime. Accordingly, Egypt and Tunisia are single-party regimes; Libya and Syria are personalist regime as well. In this context, this thesis evaluated how a leader reacts when a leader faces mass protest they are surrounded with. For this, this thesis uses initial speeches (discourses) of leaders during the protest, and police violence towards protestors (use of excessive power of police and military forces on protestors). The dependent variable is measured by democracy scores of each case based on whether they go to the democratic election leading to peaceful change or not.

To measure the first independent variable, namely leaders' initial speeches in response to mass uprisings, a content analysis is used. Content analysis is a widely used qualitative research technique (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005: 1277). It is typically used to derive valid inferences of texts. These inferences should consist of "*a sender of the message, the message itself and the audience of the message*" (Weber, 1990: 9). Holsti (1969: 14) defines content analysis as "*any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages.*" Weber (1990) suggests that content analysis can be used in many areas and purposes as determination the psychological situation of a person or a group or designation the existence of propaganda. Mayring (2000) explains content analysis as an informative material and related to the communication sciences. The qualitative content analysis has been mostly used in sociological and psychological researches.

In this study, content analysis is used to consider the initial speech of leaders concerning the breaking out of the uprisings in Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, and Syria. Ben Ali, Mubarak, Gaddafi, and Assad all responded to demonstrations not only with actions but also with speeches targeting the protestors. Thus, a brief content analysis shows leaders' attitudes on their speeches during mass protests and uprisings. Furthermore, the speeches and rhetoric of leaders are analyzed before and after



relevant uprisings to see how their speeches change or whether there has been any alteration in their approach through the course of events. Further evidence is collected from newspaper archives to evaluate these autocratic leaders' and reactions. Special attention is paid on public speeches and discourses delivered by the four leaders. This thesis applied the short quotations from speeches of leaders to examine. To reach these speeches international newspapers, mainly in the English language are used, due to my lack of Arabic language skills.

Finally, to measure my second independent variable, namely the use of police and military forces towards protestors from 2010 to 2011. I considered the number of deaths, injury and arrest between these years. The research is limited to this time period because leadership change typically occurred in this period. All leaders, except Assad, left his office or escaped in 2011. This independent variable is important because during the Arab Spring, there was severe violence during most of the uprisings in the Middle Eastern countries, which affected the outcome of these uprisings. When the uprisings and protests were not ended by protestors (citizens), some leaders began to use the power of the police and army to stop them. Undoubtedly the loyalty of the military and security forces played a vital role through the Arab Spring process (Heydemann and Leenders, 2011: 647). In each case, the actions of the military and its decision of suppressing the demonstrations are crucial events that shaped the fate of the uprisings through the Arab Spring process (Brooks, 2017). Goodwin (2011) mentions in his article that there was less bloodshed in these Arab countries where the leaders fell quickly and the armies refused to support them. This was the case in Tunisia and Egypt. On the contrary, there was much bloodshed in the countries where a dictator is in power for long time and in countries where the army retained their loyalty to the regime. Examples include Libya and Syria. Goodwin says the determining factor that made the difference here was the fact that there were more professional and institutionalized armies in Tunisia and Egypt. In other words, how institutionalized the military is critical for the success of mass protests and prospects of democratic change in the Middle Eastern countries. Posusney (2005) mentions leaders who hold power are in jeopardy since the high level of institutionalization encourages the military's effectiveness and cohesion. Besides, Goodwin (2011) emphasizes that disciplined armies usually press the uprisings quickly, but still, massive protests and riots can depolarize this discipline. Gause (2011) asserts that the military, which was more

institutionalized in Tunisia and Egypt, sided with the protestors, acting as part of their homogeneous societies. Henceforth, these armies stepped back. These two countries are mostly Sunni populated, and the armies are professional rather than being entirely submissive to the political authority. Goodwin (2011: 455) suggests the army remained loyal to the regime if the dictator's clan, tribe, religious sect, or ethnicity dominated the army. The army of Libya is less institutionalized; therefore, these have split against the popular uprisings. In divided societies, the regime and its army represent an ethnic, regional, or sectarian minority, while the armies support their regimes. With this hypothesis, it can be deduced that regime change also the structure of the military in a country. In the Syrian case, Assad's family commands an Alawites army in the Sunni-majority country. Sectarian minorities disproportionately lead armies and security agencies; it affected the diffusion of popular uprisings from the mostly homogeneous societies of Egypt and Tunisia to the more heterogeneous and divided societies of Libya and Syria (Heydemann and Leenders, 2011: 647).

## **1.6 Organization of the study**

Following the introduction, the first chapter includes the relevance and the aim of the study, historical framework, the research question, methodology, and organization of the chapter. The second chapter will tackle theoretical framework, focusing on theories of democracy. The third chapter focuses on the emergence, reasons, and process of the massive uprisings in the Middle East to become what is known as the Arab Spring. The fourth chapter provides an analysis of the data presented in the previous chapters with a comparative view on Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, and Syria. Here, leaders' speeches in response to the rise of mass protests will be considered and the extent of police violence and the approach of military are examined. The cases will be compared according to the availability of causal variables (peacefulness and inclusiveness of leaders' initial speeches and extent of police violence) and the outcome if interest availability of peaceful changes through democratic elections. The final chapter is the conclusion summarizing the main arguments of the thesis and presenting an overall evaluation.

## **CHAPTER 2: THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

In this chapter the thesis analyzes and discusses the theoretical and conceptual foundations. Firstly, the relevant literature is considered and key concepts are defined, focusing particularly on democratization, liberalization, authoritarian regimes, and transitions. Authoritarian regimes are significant concept because, before the beginning of the uprisings in 2011, authoritarianism prevailed throughout the Middle East. The concepts of democratization and liberalization are also important as this research attempts to understand the factors that lead to democratization following mass uprisings. The two concepts must be examined separately as liberalization does not automatically lead to democratization. Democratic transition is one of the essential points to be considered in this research. Why leaders of Tunisia and Egypt accept democracy, while in Libya and Syria they do not? After that, democracy in the Middle East throughout recent history was analyzed.

### **2.1 Definitions**

#### **2.1.1 Democratization and Liberalization**

The essential traditional philosophers explain democracy differently; Aristotle explains as the notion of a “constitution” and it refers to an organization which all the citizen distribute have the common good as their aim. He identifies the constitution as bad and good. They are divided into three in themselves. A good constitution, according to Aristoteles, is monarchy, oligarchy, and republic. However, these good constitutions of governance are not absolute. They corrupt over time and turn on a bad constitution as tyranny, oligarchy, and democracy (Lintott, 1992: 115-116). The Greek philosopher Plato who is also a teacher of Socrates mentions democracy in his book *“The Republic”* and divided five regimes; aristocracy, oligarchy, democracy, tyranny, and timocracy (Ferrari and Griffith, 2000). J.J. Rousseau explains that democracy is incompatible with representative institutions, a position that renders it all but irrelevant to nation-states (Miller, 1984).

Democratization means that a transition to democracy from the non-democratic regime. O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986) mention citizenship are essential in democracies and democracy should be equally accountable and accessible for all members of the community. It should be distinguished the concepts of democratization and liberalization because their theories are different from each other. O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986) explain the liberalization as a process in extending and redefining of rights, and there is no definite result. Thus, while liberalization is aimed at specific areas in the state, democracy must be established to democratization occurs.

Samuel Huntington, in his article "*The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*" (1991) mentions that there are three ways for democratization. According to him, the criterion for democracy is free, honest and fair elections with free competitions of candidates for votes. Huntington specifies that the main point of democracy is selected leaders by citizens with competitive elections. As to Adam Przeworski in the article "*Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950-1990*" (2000), he defends the electoral process. The voting process reflects abstention from violence as a systematic method of conflict resolution and presents moderation analysis of the behavior of the incumbent. Larry Diamond, on the other hand, mentions in the article, "*The Spirit of Democracy: The Struggle to Build Free Societies Throughout the World*" (2008) that the political meaning of democracy in contemporary terms has made it easier to study democracy, and even its harmony to social and economic factors. The best logical and possible way states can reach is a representative democracy. Michael Bratton emphasizes in his article, "*Vote Buying and Violence in Nigerian Election Campaigns*" (2008) that democratic consolidation includes the acceptance of political competition and participation; this is the way to give the right of choice to ordinary citizens by the rules. However, it is worth noting that there is not any guarantee that elections are sufficient for sustainable democratic transition and consolidation on their own.

Bellin (2004) explains the reasons why the Middle East and North Africa resisted against democracy. Even if some countries in the Middle East (Morocco, Jordan, Bahrain, and Yemen) tried to show progress for liberal democratization, none of them could catch up the wave of democratization. According to the author, one of the main reasons for this was that civil society was and still is quite weak. Labor unions

are not functional, and therefore, weakness of associations or public organizations in a country means restraining of the accountability mechanism by the state against citizens. The second reason is that the state controls the economy, while the third reason is that people live in rather poor conditions in financial terms. Finally, the author suggests that the culture of the region mainly posed inhibition of democratization due to the Islamic faith. None of these reasons are sufficient alone in explaining the ideas for obstacles in front of democracy in these countries. Bellin (2004) further refers to the significance of financial well-being: In the relevant countries, the military is usually directly linked to the country's economic infrastructure and therefore, finance is always at risk since the state may not be able to pay salaries of soldiers. Under such circumstances, the military would be fragmented, and military materials would deteriorate along with the finances. In this regard, the democratic transition can only be possible when the military is weak or ready for an opening to give space for democratic demands. Bellin also mentions patrimonialism: most of the Middle Eastern and North African countries (Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia) are governed by patrimonial logic.

Sarihan (2012) scrutinizes in his article, *'Is the Arab Spring in the Third Wave of Democratization? The case of Syria and Egypt'* -the movements in Egypt and Syria- during the Arab Spring through the third wave democratization from the perspective of Huntington's theory. Besides, he analyzes the uprisings and demonstrations of Egyptian and Syrian citizens during the Arab Spring movements and whether these shall be evaluated within the scope of the third wave of democratization, which is propounded by Huntington. Indeed, not only two Arab countries being Egypt and Syria, all other states involved in the Arab Spring were analyzed in-depth in Ali Sarihan's research. Huntington's theory is about modernization, and accordingly, democratization is formed by urbanization, transparency in the use of resources, high level of literacy, and technological development. And this ensures the transition from undemocratic society to an ideal democratic system. According to the third wave approach, mass movement contends that society should believe they can bring in democratic values through mass demonstrations, uprisings or revolution with the middle class which plays a crucial role against dictatorial regimes. Ali Sarihan further says according to his analyses that demonstrations and uprisings in the Arab Spring originated from indigenous sources from the perspective of Huntington's third wave theory. The other quality of

the third wave democratization approach is that the regimes which transform to a democratic system are military and one-party systems, personal dictatorships as in Syria. For instance, the one-party regime of Assad and Egypt are militaristic-dictatorships. The author argues in line with Huntington's theories that democratization process takes place in five phases: First is the emergence of reformers, second is acquiring power, third is the failure of liberalization, fourth is backward legitimacy, and the last one is the co-opting opposition. Using these five phases, he examines the uprisings and demonstrations in Syria and Egypt during the course of the Arab Spring. In this study, Syria and Egypt will be analyzed in detail under Chapter 3 titled, States and Uprisings in the Middle East.

In the 1980s, the argument of the rentier state has risen to explain the relations of oil trade from the perspective of democracy. The common explanation is that rentier states usually provide the natural resource to citizens in renting to be less accountable in politics so that they do not need to pay taxes. Yates (1996) and Ascher (1999) discuss that poor governance usually uses the notion of rentier states since state officials use resources to rents citizens. Besides, Mahdavy (1970) describes it as the lack of oppression from below for democratic opening in the Middle East. On the other hand, Haber and Menaldo (2011) argue in their study that the relations between natural resources (oil) and regime types are quite evident. And useful in governance, while most studies also indicate that there are negative relations between the oil and authoritarianism. Nonetheless, Haber and Menaldo cannot find that natural resources cause authoritarianism. They examined 53 resource-reliant countries and even argued that Iran and Algeria, which have natural resources, became more democratic than before. Thereby, the wealth of natural resources does not clarify the presence of authoritarianism in the Middle East and North Africa. Beck and Hüser (2012) mention that it is a regional phenomenon and requires distinct attention. In the same line, Ross (2001) examines the relations between natural resources and anti-democracy, arguing that the most important problem of poorest countries is to have precious natural resources which, in turn, affect the development of these countries. Nevertheless, it is well observed that oil-rich countries are undemocratic.

### 2.1.2 Authoritarian Regimes

Linz and Stepan (1996) define authoritarian regimes can be characterized as a unique limited political system that bears no responsibility and is not supportive of political diversity. The system is not elaborate in which there is little to no political mobilization. The instances of mobilization are marked with its development, and predictable leader led exercises of power.

Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stephan, for instance, examine consolidation of democratic transition in their article *“Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation”* (1996). In this work, Linz and Stephan remark the paths of democratic transition and consolidation for each regime type. They emphasize that political identities are practicable under state guarantee, although there are some conflicts between the logics of democracy and nation-state. Linz and Stephan deduce the notion of boundaries between democratic regimes and totalitarian regimes.

As Andreas Schedler mentions about electoral authoritarianism in his article *“The Politics of Uncertainty: Sustaining and Subverting Electoral Authoritarianism”* (2013) sometimes elections can be used to dissemble and justify authoritarian rules. Posusney (2005) mentions the significance of political parties in electoral competition. She looks on disputable legislative elections in Arab countries between the years 1970-2000 and according to her research; these elections went in incumbent executives' favor by coercion and manipulations of elites.

Chapter 1- Lineages of the Rule of Law by Stephen Holmes titled *‘Democracy and the Rule of Law’* by Adam Przeworski and Jose Maria Maravall (2003). The article explains the fear of leaders of revolts, uprisings, and assassination as cited from *The Prince* of Machiavelli. Accordingly, a rational ruler should please the citizens so he can be in safety themselves. Machiavelli points out to power as well. According to Przeworski, as cited in this article, the fear of violent rebellion motivates rulers to surge the population in a state of paralysis, resignation, and docility. To protect against the uprising, a ruler can use the divide and rule strategy and govern in uncertainty. A ruler who fears from bodily harm will try to keep his population apprehended, disorganized, and uneducated. Fear of violence from below does not exactly explain why a ruler accepts the restraints on his power, although a ruler controls the repression. According to Machiavelli from his book *‘The Prince,’* a ruler who is loved and respected by citizens do not fear conspiracy but if he is a ruler

of hatred, everything and everybody is a source of fear for him. Thus, a ruler should try to keep their citizens as pleased and merry as possible. Rulers should want to be feared, not hated, and avoid hatred rather than fear.

### **2.1.3 Transitions**

O'Donnell, Schmitter, and Whitehead (1986) explain transition as a process of dissolution that occurs during the interval between political regimes. They are constrained to either the transition of an authoritarian regime to democracy or the other way around. An observable phenomenon of this transition is the modification of self-enacted rules into a different version that supports individuals and groups. The extent of these modifications thus depends on the power of those who enact the rules themselves.

Recently, narratives on the term “democratic transition” have fostered, and studies have begun to diversify for more general social, economic, and other requirements involving a wide variety of factors. Gause (2011) also focuses on the significance of the economy: Arab countries have oil reserves; therefore, they use it to control the economy and social services. In this way, autocratic countries buy support because they pay money in return. The state controls the economy, and the change is very hard. The most crucial factor to consider, however, is the way how a state purchases its oil. Gaddafi's example is significant to show how money is wasted to protect the regime. It can be used for the public rather than a pet project to prevent mass protests. Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (2014) mention the economy and autocratic survival as well. They emphasize that there is a general expectation that high economic growth leads to lengthening leaders' tenure in office and prolonging the time of autocratic regimes while high growth would not be expected to lengthen autocratic spells. Ajami (2012) mentions that young people started to demand economic opportunities and political freedom after the awakening in the Middle East and this demand crossed the limits via newspapers and social media on Twitter, Facebook and other means of communication. While the democratic wave came from Europe to Latin America and from Eastern Asia to Africa, there was not any process for the MENA countries due to the fact that leaders assumed these countries as their properties.



Within this perspective, some studies dwell upon the issue of democratic transition in the Middle East during the Arab Spring. In the article, '*Why Middle East Studies Missed the Arab Spring: The Myth of Authoritarian Stability*' (2011), Gregory Gause mentions that Western leaders do not want democracy in the Middle Eastern countries due to their stability relations in the region. Autocratic leaders tend to establish stable relationships with their alliances than leaders who come to rule by-elections. In '*What is Democracy? Promises and Perils of the Arab Spring*', Valentine M. Moghadam (2013) analyzes democratization through the cases of the Middle Eastern countries (Tunisia, Egypt, and Morocco) which have similarities and differences concerning the Arab Spring compared to other democratic waves. Moghadam argues that there may be some similarities and some differences between cases like Morocco and Tunisia. These two countries appear to have an effect on successful democratic transitions and have enough citizens to consolidate democracy. There are some democratic and political models in front of them as well as a substantial popular demand to ensure the transition.

In some instances, the democratic transition can be violent, unstable, and uncertain by widespread protests and demonstrations. The article of Barbara Geddes, Joseph Wright and Erica Frantz (2014) evaluate that when autocratic leaders lose their power, one of three options come to place: the incumbent leadership group is replaced by elected leaders (democratically), someone from the incumbent leadership group replaces another one, and the leadership survives entirely, or the incumbent leadership loses the power and replaces it with a new autocracy.

Geddes explains all three kinds of transitions with using a new data set to identify the processes of how regimes fall from power during transitions and how much violence occurs according to analyses of currently-available data. From this perspective, autocratic regime breakdowns are identified regardless of the level of democracy, while clarifying the reasons why ousting of dictator leaders sometimes leads to democracy and sometimes does not. The author also mentions why dictators start wars and why autocratic breakdown sometimes results in a new authoritarian regime rather than democratization.

According to the analysis, as mentioned earlier of the new data set focusing on all authoritarian regimes since 1946, WWII, findings demonstrate that military regimes survive less than other types of regimes on average. They are more likely to

negotiate their extrications and to be followed by competitive political systems. They are less likely to end in coups, popular uprising, armed insurgency, revolution, invasion, or assassination. Personalist regimes, in contrast, are more likely than other types to end up in violence and upheaval. Their ends are also more likely to be precipitated by the death of the dictator or external pressure, and they are more likely to be followed by some new form of authoritarianism. Single-party regimes last the longest, but when uncontrollable popular opposition signals that the end is near, like the military, they negotiate the transition.

In this regard, Geddes (1999) examines modes of transition and transitional outcomes using the data set for post-1945 authoritarian regimes in her article. In this context, it is explained why some transitions go on through peaceful negotiation while others are finalized by a popular uprising or bloody civil war. Moreover, the analyses shed light on why some transitions from authoritarianism result in stable democracies, while others lead to new dictatorships, instability, or warlordism. In the years from WWII on, %45 of leadership changed the regime in autocracy and less than half transited from autocracy to another type of regime. Besides, it is found that transitions from dictatorship to democracy were broad in scope. The *modus operandi* for the collapse of a regime is also explicated through coups, popular uprising, armed insurgency, revolution, invasion, assassination, or elections.

Departing from this point, it is critical to ask the question about the Arab Spring, “How an ousted dictator lead leads to a renewed autocracy or chaos rather than democracy?” For the Arab Spring, activists and most of the journalists began to hope for democracy in Arab countries while some observers deliberate about the success of the democratic transition, instability in the region and whether the transition in the relevant area caused dictatorship.

Based on new data sets obtained in recent times, two proxies are generally compared and contrasted in common quantitative research: Ousting the leader versus democratization for the autocratic breakdown. Two types of data are used in the above-mentioned article: War and democratization. Geddes (1999), as mentioned above, argues that although after WWII, studies predict that autocratic breakdowns resulted in democratization, the data for the Middle East is pessimistic. For supporting this claim, they show evidence that personal dictators who have authority to make policy tend to less democratize after the regime-breakdown (Yemen, Libya)

and these dictatorships most often end by violence. Besides, if foreign intervention helps end the dictatorships, it cannot contribute to the democratization.

With regard to the transition to autocracy, some theories link economic performance with autocratic survival. Analysts also use democratization as a proxy for autocratic regime collapse, leading to underestimates of autocratic vulnerability to the economic crisis. For example, it causes an expectation that high economic growth leads to lengthen leaders' tenure in office and prolong the time of autocratic regime, however, high growth would not be expected to extend autocratic spells. When Przeworski's assumption is pondered, it can be observed that economic crisis does not indicate an incremental possibility of democratization as a response to the question whether economic crisis has more damaging effects on the survival of democracy or dictatorship.

Furthermore, the author suggests that autocratic regimes end when certain conditions are met. Since it is well associated with the argumentation of this thesis, the assumption purporting that a government is ousted by a coup, popular uprising, rebellion, civil war, or invasion and is replaced by a different regime will be quite relevant in explaining the level of democratization and the effect of the phenomenon of regime change in countries. As a matter of fact, the end of a regime is marked by ousting, death, resignation, flight, or arrest of the outgoing regime leader.

The observations above used to compare and contrast Middle Eastern countries with former communist countries after the Cold War (post-1990). The Arab Spring seems as waves of widespread opposition on the collapse of communism in East Germany and Romania, while the results are not the same with the MENA countries. Two questions are arising in this regard: What happened after the old regime fell and is democratization possible after regimes are ousted? Until this time from the beginning of the Arab Spring, Egypt and Tunisia were regimes marked by dominant party rules and Yemen and Libya by personalist regimes. According to the data in Geddes' article, democratization is supposedly to follow dominant-parties than personalist regimes. The only remaining dominant-party autocracy in the MENA countries is Syria, and it still has unstable conditions.

Bratton and Van de Wale (1992) refer to widespread protest and political reforms in the 1980s. African countries faced protests and uprisings after 1989 by students, workers, and civil servants. As Geddes mentions in his in-depth study on Africa, transitions in Africa seem to be occurring more commonly from below. In

this line, this study seeks answers to the question of how a ruler/a dictator or a leader answers to these uprisings, demonstrations, protests, or threats. In this example, the initial government response was threats, repression, and selective compromise and then tried to becalm the insurgents with piecemeal concessions to reconciliation. Then, some leaders began to make political concessions as they had no choice. After the protests became politicized, the African head of state submitted the pressure and attempted at political liberalization and extended the political reforms across African countries (Bratton and van de Wale, 1992).

Military dictatorships tend to negotiate for transitions; violence is less likely in this type of regime. Contrary to this, personalist dictators and monarchies are more likely to go arrest, exile, or death after their regimes are ousted. The research conducted by Barbara Geddes further manifests that the possibility of post-ousted punishment causes dictators to behave differently than they would otherwise do. Therefore, new analyses with new data endeavor to the fates of dictators after being ousted. The Archigos data set identifies whether leaders are exiled, imprisoned, or killed immediately after leaving the office. The data shows that in personal dictatorships, 69% of leaders face exile, imprisonment, or death after being ousted. In contrast, in dominant-party dictatorships, the rate is 37%.

Stepan and Linz (2013) bring into light the fact that there had been determinant relations between the Arab Spring and the transition to democracy marked particularly by ties between religion and democracy in predominantly Muslim countries. In this regard, the scholars argue in this study that the referred Muslim countries are a sort of hybrid regimes incorporating authoritarian and democratic principles as well as sultanism & inferences of transition to democracy. Contrary to the arguments of Samuel P. Huntington, Alfred purports that there are negative relations between Islam and democratization and argues that secularism is not pre-requisite for democracy. From this perspective, Stephan also emphasizes what is called twin tolerations, where religious authorities do not control democratic officials and vice versa. As a matter of fact, certain Muslim countries such as India host Muslims and Hindus and they both support democracy at a high level. Besides, the scholars, as mentioned above, refer to Muslim countries which have recently adopted the democratic rule, including Indonesia and Senegal in that there is twin toleration between Islamic policies and democratization in these countries. The authors further suggest that the Holy Book of Muslims, Koran, does not impose

compulsion in religion, which fosters tolerance. On the other hand, Tunisia is deemed as a public state rather than being marked by secularism from the perspective of the Arab Spring. In such a public state, religious authorities respect democratic privileges, and the local state recognizes religious rights.

Stepan and Linz (2013) categorized regime types in five as democratic, authoritarian, totalitarian, post-totalitarian, and sultanistic. They also added a new type, which is called the “authoritarian-democratic hybrid” regime. According to this last type of regime, the country is not defined as authoritarian, but not democratic either, which is why it is an ‘authoritarian-democratic hybrid’ regime. Since this cannot be initialized yet, this cannot be called a regime officially; therefore, the authors refer to this type of administration as ‘situation.’ Moreover, the reasons for the emergence of hybrid regimes are expressed in detail in Stephan and Linz’s article. In Arab countries such as Egypt, people are observed to demand dignity and attribute great importance to democracy. Mubarak fell due to passiveness in democracy in his long tenure and could not adopt democratic principles. The Muslim Brotherhood and the liberals tried to limit democratic institutions in their policy-making.

On the other hand, people protested in Tahrir Square and realized that Muslim Brothers were not democratic. In elections, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) supported the Brotherhood for a nominal fee. After the resignation of Mubarak, Muslim Brothers had a military position in the new constitutional organization. Stephan and Linz compare and contrast Tunisia and Egypt, and they utter that these countries were somewhat successful in a mixture of authoritarianism as a hybrid regime or situation. The authorities in these countries claimed that democracy was necessary but not acceptable. Also, these countries hosted innovative pacts to avoid the fear of democracy about allowing competitive elections. Another reason for the argument that these countries did come up with a hybrid regime is that there was the formation of political society, particularly in Tunisia believing in the need for building democracy.

Sultanism, as Max Weber said, together with patrimonialism tend to occur when dominant personalist administration and military are present. In this case, there is no autonomy of states. The difference between sultanism and authoritarianism is that there is not any mechanism to control the leader in sultanism as referred to Rafael Trujillo, who was the dictator of the Dominican Republic between 1930 and 1961. He made his son a brigade using his power. An example of an authoritarian

leader, on the other hand, is General Augusto Pinochet who ruled Chile between 1973 and 1990; however, there is one exception that there was a military organization in the country as an autonomous institution.

When the Arab countries are examined before the uprisings in 2011, it can be observed that Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, and Syria exhibited the characteristics of sultanism. Among these countries, Libya was the most sultanistic. Gaddafi was using his power as he wished. Gaddafi's relatives were positioned in military services. To build a democratic state, there must a priority given to international promoters. Yet, in the case of Libya, this was not accomplished since there was an attack against a US consulate in Benghazi where other US citizens were killed. Therefore, the Libyan government lost US support. Thus, this incident manifested human rights, or the rule of law cannot be presented unless there is a democratic state. Syria, which is under the control of Bashar al-Assad, features sultanistic characters as a dynasty. Syria has some internal autonomy within itself. The Syrian army was regulated by Assad and combined by an Alawite religious minority. The organized military was aware that if Assad's regime fell, they would be in danger. With the civil war in Syria, we can say that there is no change for democracy.

Mubarak's Egypt was beginning to exhibit sultanistic characters, including unconscionable corruption, "crony capitalism," and the "dynastic" features. At the same time, the Egyptian military was rather institutional as well. It was powerful enough to push Mubarak out of power and to internal exile. In the end, the military as an institution is affiliated with democracy. In Tunisia, as mentioned in the above article, Ben Ali's regime also had sultanistic characters since the royal family was regarded as a threat to the Tunisian economy with their personal expenditures. However, Ben Ali's oppressive administration could not prevent the formation of political society and an opposition group. Ben Ali had his military as an institution to be helpful in the transition. The army could protect Ben Ali from police violence and provided the opportunity to go to Saudi Arabia safely. Afterward, the army returned to support the democratic transition. According to the army officials, the Arab Spring was at least a meaningful effort to gain dignity by people of the Middle East.

Beck and Hüser (2012) examine the reasons of the Arab Spring as demographic changes, social media, human dignity, and economic liberalization without political reforms. They further point out to four types of political rules emerging by the effect of the Arab Spring: Stable Authoritarian Systems (the Case of Saudi Arabia),

Unstable Authoritarian Systems (the Case of Syria), Stable Systems of Transition (the Case of Tunisia) and Unstable Transition Systems (the Case of Egypt). Saudi Arabia is a stable authoritarian country, and when the Arab Spring began, a wave of change was also expected in this country. Indeed, Saudi Arabia faced same problems like other Arabian countries as corruption, unemployment, and political repression. There were protests in the country where Shiite lives, and then the state used the 'stick and carrot' policy. In this way, the regime used the revenues provided by the oil sector to calm down the protestors. In addition, the security forces were tremendously increased in number by the regime. In Syria, although opposition groups indicated their dissatisfaction, the Assad regime succeeds to take control. Nevertheless, mass protests began with the Arab Spring, and a civil war broke out within the country. Now, the Assad regimes still try to keep a particular part of a country under control. The demonstrations in Tunisia finished the ongoing regime. Ben Ali, who had been the president for 23 years, had to resign after the protests. Compared to other countries in the region, there was a need to meet specific prerequisites for the democratization of Tunisia. And a transition process took place with the resignation of Mubarak in Egypt; however, it seems that Tunisia's transition is more consolidated than Egypt. Demonstrations in Egypt were massive, and the state's reactions caused political and economic instability.

On the other hand, Anderson (2011) analyzes the conditions which brought along the emergence of uprisings in the Arab world specifically focusing on three cases in her study. This study underlines the fact that globalization forms demand by protesters using developing technology to share their ideas and aspirations. Young activists in the Middle Eastern countries share similar ideas, and they support each other emotionally; however, these countries also have different contextual conditions and opponents. Anderson utters that a unified approach towards the demonstrations in Arab countries would be wrong since there are various causes and duties attributed to each demonstration. As a matter of fact, Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya encounter new types of challenges in the transition process with political unrest, bloody civil wars, or changing governmental institutions.

Dalacoura (2012) explains how the Arab Spring began and spread in the Middle East, particularly in six countries: Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Bahrain, and Syria. The civil war and violent conflict in Syria did not pave the way for democracy. The

dictatorship in Libya collapsed, yet it did not create an effect for change. Tunisia has also been one of the countries farthest from being democratic. The press of Ben Ali enfeebled opposition parties and civil society. Egypt, on the other hand, is more complicated with regard to democratic reform when compared to Tunisia. Mubarak's ousting was an advantage as well as a disadvantage for democracy.

In brief, this chapter examined particularly on democratization, liberalization, authoritarian regimes, and transitions.



## **CHAPTER 3: BACKGROUND OF THE ARAB SPRING**

### **3.1 States and Uprisings in the Middle East**

Regime shifts and democratic transition in the Middle East has always been an ongoing issue in academic studies. The democratic wave started in Europe (Spain, Portugal, and Greece) in 1975 (Bellin 2004: 139) and by the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989 authoritarianism case stepped up (Battera, 2014; 546). Then, it spread to the Balkans and East Europe with the dissolution of the Soviet Union at the beginning of the 90s. The question why the Middle East has been far away from the democratic movements raises with the arrival of the wave to these Europe countries (Bellin 2004: 139). Arab societies did not accept the authoritarian rule inactively, Arab leaders suppressed violently the people who tended to revolt; however, these leaders were successful in preventing these attempts. It seems evident that the Arab countries have economic, political and demographic issues (Gause, 2011: 81), and there are many reasons stated by various scholars: Underdevelopment, Islamic culture (religion), geographical condition, oil, unemployment, corruption, education, health care and regime types. Contrary to expectations, the uprising at the end of 2010 came into sight, beginning in Tunisia spreading to other Arab countries (Bellin 2004: 139). Most of the suppressed people ruled by dictators or authoritarian leaders have been observed to struggle for their freedom and rights (Inglehart and Welzel 2009).

The Arab Spring, which started in the last days of 2010, is a milestone in the MENA's history. Mass social protests for justice and democratization in the region began to collapse the ongoing authoritarian regimes, particularly in Tunisia and Egypt. These uprisings came to exist as a reaction for unemployment, inflation, political corruption, dictatorship, abuse and bad condition of life in Middle East and North Africa countries (Sümer, 2013). Protestors demanded to remove the dictators and their regimes and asked for their rights and changes in the region with mass protests. The Arab Spring was initiated by a young man to protest his inability to maintain a livelihood in Tunisia. The protests quickly combined and spread to other

geographies in the Middle East, including Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Bahrein, Morocco, and Syria at the beginning of 2011 (Moghadam, 2013). Jones (2012) also focuses on why the Arab Spring was met with surprise and explained the reasons for protests. The demonstrations began and spread in a domino effect and caused by economic and political rights.

The most important question about the Arab Spring in the Middle East is why and how these demonstrations appeared in their local context since the demonstrations varied in their patterns and populations. The protests in Tunisia spread from below toward the capital of the city. By contrast, urban and liberal young people in the big cities organized the uprisings in Egypt. In Libya, armed groups in the East provoked the protests and showed up in the dissolutions within the country. Despite the fact that these movements shared common aims to raise their rights and dignity in these three Middle Eastern countries, they varied with respect to their economic (the inflation of food prices due to 2008 financial crisis and other global and local factors) and social conditions (Anderson, 2011: 2). Mobilized youth and middle classes in the Arab countries undertook the role to organize through the social media to manage the uprisings. One of the most important factors is that this manifestly shows the existence of solidarity between people who did not know each other.

### **3.1.1 Factors that Paved the way to the Arab Spring**

There are several factors that played a role in the social discontents in Middle Eastern societies that eventually led to mass uprisings in 2010. These factors can be summarized as economic, social, and political factors.

#### ***3.1.1.1 The Economic Factors***

Socio-economic difficulties including high unemployment, high inflation, poverty, and rising food prices persisted in the MENA, and eventually began to make the daily life of people unbearable. In the region, poor people became poorer, and rich people became richer (Mnawar, 2015: 39). These conditions forced people to demand their rights and justice (Jason, 2013).

These poor economic conditions were a consequence of a weak national economy and the global 2008 economic crisis (Anderson, 2011: 2). The uprisings in

the Middle East were also influenced by global movements such as other similar protests in Europe, Russia and China. In addition, the Arab uprisings inspired the protests in the Wall Street-New York in 2011 as well (Öniş, 2012: 47). In addition, the economic conditions also induce political unrest in the region.

Corruption, unemployment and natural resource (oil) are examined under the title of the Economic factors.

#### ***3.1.1.1.1 Corruption***

Goldstone (2001) mentions that corruption in any country makes a less stable state, indicating that this state apparatus is not effective to follow politics in the system. Mnawar (2015: 40) mentions six causes of corruption in the Middle East and elsewhere. These are reasons related to the rule of law and the punitive of deterrent, reasons associated with the public administration, reasons related to public finance of the state, reasons related to the institutional framework, reasons related to the structural relations among the authorities of the state and finally reasons related to the social culture.

#### ***3.1.1.1.2 Unemployment***

Unemployment is one of the most important factors behind the Arab Spring. Fearon and Laitin (2003) argue that unemployment encouragement citizens to protest against the government. If a high portion of the population of a country is unemployed, it indicates mismanagement at the level of government and means that the government could be caught unprepared to organize itself against the protestors. This weakness creates opportunities for protests (Fearon and Laitin, 2003).

The demographic boom and the decrease in production were also significant factors that increase the unemployment in Arab countries (Mushtaq and Afzal, 2017: 2). Yet, as the Arab Spring demonstrated, if the authoritarian leaders ignore the unemployment issue, it can create a big problem for their regimes. Mushtaq and Afzal (2017: 3) examines the unemployment rate in Tunisia and Egypt, the most important countries of the Arab Spring. The total unemployment rate of Tunisia in 2010 is 13.0, and the youth unemployment rate is 29.4. For Egypt in 2010, the total unemployment rate of Tunisia is 8.9, and the youth unemployment rate is 24.8 (Mushtaq and Afzal, 2017: 3).

Other causes of unemployment include the weak national and the sale of state enterprises to multinational corporations, high young population, mismatch between

education supply and market demands, and lack of other economic opportunities (Barany, 2011).

#### **3.1.1.1.3 Natural Resource (Oil)**

The incomes from oil sales is crucial for many MENA countries. The oil income provides stability to the autocratic regimes in the region. Beblawi (1990) described the Middle Eastern states as a rentier state where “*citizenship becomes a source of economic benefit*” (Beblawi, 1990: 89). The government receives rent from oil and then redistributes some of it to citizens. In this way, the ruler is seen to provide a pecuniary resource to the public instead of the tax collector (Beblawi, 1990).

Ross (2001) examines the relationships between natural resources and absence of democracy through an empirical analysis, to find that the essential problem of poorest countries is to have precious natural resources which prevents democracy. Infact, when examine the link oil exports with the Arab Spring, some scholar discuss that although Egypt, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen have low amount of oil exportation, there was large-scale protests happened in these countries.

#### **3.1.1.2 The Social Factors**

Rising social inequality in the Middle East was another factor that contributed to widespread discontent. The other side, authoritarian regimes applied the suppression of the freedom of the speech, human and political rights (Jason, 2013). Unemployed and young people comprised the majority of participants in these protests. The people in the Middle East desired equal opportunities with pure idealism, community involvement, or the achievement of social ideas.

Education, young population, social media and the freedom of speech and press are examined under the title of the Social factors.

##### **3.1.1.2.1 Education**

Education is one of the significant factors in the social development of the Middle East countries. Education is essential to economic growth according to the modernization theory, which suggests that high educational level enriches the democratic process (Mushtaq and Afzal, 2017: 2). Education can also provide a convenience to coordinate people so they can organize better (Bueno de Mesquita and Downs, 2005).

One of the factors leading to Arab uprisings in the Middle East is that educated young people can not find a job. Hence, Mohammed Bouazizi, who burned himself

of 26 years-old, was also one of the educated and unemployed young in Tunisia (Sümer, 2013). He started the spark of the beginning of the Arab Spring. Bouazizi became a street vendor due to could not find any job, and his vegetable stand is embargoed by police (Dabashi, 2012).

#### ***3.1.1.2.2 Young population***

Young people played an essential role during the uprisings in the Middle East. In history, the nations with a young population do not fear the clashes and uprisings. As in the 1990s, there were more clashes in the countries which had a young population (Terrill, 2011). Thus, the high number of young people in the Arab countries pose both the challenges and opportunities for the region. Huntington (1996) also mentions that these young people, especially single males, are correlated with rebellion, violence due to their inclination to these actions.

Young people in the Middle East countries face different challenges due to the levels of literacy, job opportunities, and urbanization. Typically, they have to deal with unemployment, increasing food prices, and low wages. These young people are closer to technology and social media. These factors together encouraged the youth to mobilize against authoritarian leaders (Schwartz, 2011).

#### ***3.1.1.2.3 Freedom of speech and press***

The restriction of the freedom of speech and press is another essential factor in the demonstrations against leaders in the MENA region. The authoritarian state here typically monitored the media, journals, and other online publications. As Dimitrov (2009) suggests the absence of press freedom in a country is typical in authoritarian regimes, as leaders believe that absence of free press prevents uprisings. Sometimes we saw Arab governments to allow publishing different viewpoint of the news to portray a more open-minded image that respects the freedom of the press. Yet, the fact is that there has never been a freedom of speech in this region, as seen by the brutal suppression of opposition voices during the Arab Spring protests. These authoritarian states also consider the internet as a threat to themselves. Thus, the government seeks to control the internet. The internet came under state control with the law. The governments increased the restrictions and censorship on the news more excessively before the Arab Spring and then these restrictions gradually increased with the beginning of the Arab Spring. During the Arab Spring, the internet was disconnected by Mubarak in 2011, and some bloggers were arrested due to collaboration of people on Twitter and Facebook (Beaumont, 2011).

Many journalists were imprisoned for reporting cases of political. A famous example is Slim Boukhdhir, who was a blogger, reported on the corruption of the Tunisian regime and Ben Ali's family. After his reporting, he was forced into a car and beaten up. Further, Tunisian government enacted a law on to limit the media and free speech in 2011. Thus, the penalty could go to 25 years in jail in case of infringement (Henry, 2011).

#### ***3.1.1.2.4 The Social media***

The role of social media proclaimed to play a decisive role in the Arab uprisings. Beaumont (2011) argued that communication means are significant in terms of shaping future actions. Bellin (2004) highlights the role of social media and considers it as one of the key factors leading to the Arab Spring. Lotan, Graeff, Ananny, Gaffney, Pearce, and Boyd (2011) argue that social media has the power to provoke and maintain a protest and uprising by using the information. Dalacoura (2012) expresses the role of social media in fostering hope for a transition to democracy. The social media, as the global communication tool, provided the opportunity to coordinate the opposition groups and create solidarity between people. It played an active role during the incidents of the Arab Spring. The new technology provides convenience with the flow of information and robust mobilization between people. With globalization, the ability of citizens to gain access to social media is easy, and their motivation is high to take the streets (Wolfsfeld, Segev and Sheaffer, 2013).

In Arab countries, leaders tried to control access to social media by societies, and then lots of authoritarian leaders pulled the plug of Internet services and 3G networks in their countries (Wolfsfeld, Segev and Sheaffer, 2013). Most Arab countries were exposed to state censorship by authoritarian leaders. The social media channels Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, are banned, but people tried to reach their social media by mobile phone in Tunisia. The Anonymous and Telecomix, which are the hacker communities from outside the country, tried to help to get the encryption off the websites of government (Howard and Hussain, 2013).

Besides, the role of social media in demonstrations in uploading videos showing the brutality of the police and coordinated demonstrations should not be underestimated. It must be remembered that the fight between Mohammed Bouazizi and the police who threw away his groceries, before he burned himself to death and triggered a mass protests, was videotaped and expanded on social media. Through

this way, everybody witnessed the incident, while the protestors' images featured through social media sites. At the beginning of the upheavals in Tunisia, two million people used the “Facebook” and talked on it to communicate during Ben Ali's dictatorship. In Egypt as well, the information on the demonstration was uploaded on Facebook and Twitter, and a 12-pages long guide was issued by e-mail (Beaumont, 2011). According to first data, 168,663 tweets are posted between January 12 and 19. It includes the hashtags of “#sidibouzyd” or “#tunisia.” The secondary data is that 230,270 tweets are posted between January 24 and 29. It contains the hashtags of “#egypt” or “#jan25.” These hashtags are popular among Twitter users. Besides, 39,696 distinct users are identified in the Tunisia dataset, and 62,612 different users in the Egypt (Lotan, Graeff, Ananny, Gaffney, Pearce, and Boyd, 2011). Egyptian protestors have used the social media and internet mostly during the Arab Spring. Especially they sent the message to Mubarak with the hashtag of “#Leave!” on Twitter (Travis, 2013: 94). Libya was facing the Internet outage too, but even so, social media had a major impact on conveying the news to other countries to inform about what happened in Libya during the demonstrations, since the mainstream media in Libya did not broadcast the truth about the process of uprisings (Beaumont, 2011).

### ***3.1.1.3 The Political Factors***

The Arab Spring perhaps most directly and strongly related to the lack of political freedoms. While all MENA countries lack democracy, they differ among each other, according to their regime types and state of political freedoms, which are considered below (Özekin and Akkaş, 2014).

#### ***3.1.1.3.1 Regime types***

Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (2014) categorize autocratic regimes as the following: personalist regimes, single-party regimes, and military regimes. Accordingly, Egypt and Tunisia are single-party regimes and Libya and Syria are personalist regimes. These different regimes typically await different deaths. Geddes, Wright, and Frantz, explain that personalist regimes are more likely than other types to end with violence and upheaval. Their ends are also more likely to be precipitated by the death of the dictator or external pressure, and they are more likely to be followed by some new form of authoritarianism. Single-party regimes last the

longest, but when uncontrollable accessible opposition signals that the end is near, like the military, they negotiate the transition.

Stepan and Linz (2013) analyzed the Arab regime types in five categories: hybrid, authoritarian, totalitarian, post-totalitarian, and sultanistic. When the Arab countries are examined before the uprisings in 2011, it can be observed that Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, and Syria exhibited the characteristics of sultanism. Among these countries, Libya was the most sultanistic. Syria features sultanistic characters as a dynasty of Assad. Syria has some internal autonomy within itself. The Syrian army was regulated by Assad and combined by an Alawite religious minority. The organized military was aware that if Assad's regime fell, they would be in danger. Mubarak's Egypt was beginning to exhibit sultanistic characters, including unconscionable corruption, "crony capitalism," and the "dynastic" features. In Tunisia, as mentioned in the above article, Ben Ali's regime also had sultanistic characters since the royal family was regarded as a threat to the Tunisian economy with their personal expenditures. However, Ben Ali's oppressive administration could not prevent the formation of political society and an opposition group.

#### ***3.1.1.3.2 Political freedoms***

The protests in the Arab countries began due to the oppressive policies of the state that disregarded political freedoms (Brooks, 2013). The demands of protestors concentrated on an end to police torture and arbitrary detention and the development of a fair judiciary system. Yet, these demands were met with suppression by the government. Ottaway and Hamzawy (2011) explain that first, there emerged a solidarity between the public after the self-immolation of Bouazizi in 2010. Quickly after it became about political freedoms and civil liberties (Goldstone et al., 2010).

Below is a consideration of the process of the rise of mass movements in the MENA region starting at the end of 2010 and how these movements transformed politics, with a focus on the cases of Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Syria. The cases are compared and contrasted based on the how leaders reacted to these protests and the degree of the political opening observed in the end.



### 3.1.2 Tunisia

The Arab Spring began with the self-immolation of 26 years-old Mohammed Bouazizi on December 17, 2010, from Sidi Bouzi in Tunisia. Protests began on the same days in Sidi Bouzi (Dabashi, 2012). The demonstrations in Tunisia were spread from rural areas to the city center with similar reasons as a labor movement (Anderson, 2011: 2). Tunisian citizens demanded to oust their existing autocratic, dictatorial, corrupted, and anti-humanist rulers. Economic poverty, government corruption, unemployment, and limited social, political, and economic rights in Tunisia encouraged the educated youth people who were dissatisfied to live there to undertake protests (Sarihan, 2012). The protest spread to Tunis on December 27, 2010, and teachers, lawyers, and other professionals joined the demonstrations on December 28-30 and went on in the form of strike (Burns, 2018: 83).

Afterward, the protests spread to other Arab countries. After the beginning of the protests in Tunisia, President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali who had been on duty since 1987 was warning citizens by punishment. Unarmed protestors began to be victims in return to their protests (Dabashi, 2012). Anderson (2011) mentions that Tunisia seemed to have the best education, middle class, and labor union in the Arab world, yet, at the same time the government of Ben Ali restricted plural parties and free expression. For casualties, Ben Ali began to promise the public concessions and then the following days with demonstrations in Tunisia, it fell, and Ben Ali ran away from the country (Dabashi, 2012). At the end of the Arab Spring in Tunisia, Ben Ali left the country on January 14, 2011, with his promise that was taking over of a transitional government for democratic elections and declaration to unleash of political prisoners until at the end of the year. After the revolution, free elections, the realization of the power changes based on this elections and the adoption of the new constitution that links the evolution of the power to the rule formed essential steps of the transition to the democratic regime. The Islamist Ennahda movement has legitimized after lifting ban under the rule of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali with the returning of the Rachid Ghannouchi from London after twenty years in exile (Aljazeera, 2011).

After he left the country, the Islamist Ennahda party won the election in October 2011 and a transition process started. In the election on October 2011, the Islamist Ennahda party won the election with %41,47 on the transition period (Aljazeera,

2011). It is too early to say that democracy will fit in Tunisia; nonetheless, Tunisia is one of the most critical cases in the Arab Spring on the democratic journey. It is not an easy path to reach democracy (Burns, 2018: 85).

### **3.1.3 Egypt**

Immediately afterward, Egyptian Abdou Abdel-Monaam Hamadah set himself on fire on January 17, 2011, in Egypt to protest limited social, political and economic rights and the demonstrators were already motivated to get rid of the autocratic leader and the corruption of the country (Dabashi, 2012). The demonstrations in Egypt began by urban and young people in city centers (Anderson, 2011: 2). The protestors had expectations that improvements in three areas: political competition (like multi-party system), freedom of speech and accountability of police or army (Dalacoura, 2012: 73). He declared to constitute a new government to ensure political, economic and social rights and reforms of citizens and assigned Omar Suleiman as the vice-presidency instead of his son Gamal. But protestors still maintained to demand the resignation of him. At the final speech on 10 February, which addressed to the nation Mubarak specified that he had lost his authority and resignation of his office (Dalacoura, 2012: 65). As public demands, Constitutional amendments which consisting of limiting presidential period of office, anti-terrorism, and state of emergency and consolidation judicial control of fair elections—were approved by referendum on 19 March (Dalacoura, 2012: 65).

In the Egyptian revolution, social media also had an essential and useful role. Protestors organized on Facebook, Twitter, and other social media channels to garner members to revolt against brutal regimes. After a few weeks later, tens of thousands took to the streets to disclose the Mubarak regime. Massive protests were in Tahrir Square, with numerous protestors from different ideologies, ages, and classes (Sarihan, 2012).

Egyptian troops were on the streets as well. Mubarak was requested to absolve his government by the protestors by fire and other methods, yet he did not accept to abdicate. As seen in Tunisia, armed forces in Egypt did not take side with their leader during the massive protests (Burns, 2018: 95). As a result of this, hundreds of thousand people took Tahrir Square to continue their protests. Mubarak gave a promise for democratic reform and that he would not run in the future

elections, but Egyptian people demanded more than a promise and the demonstrations continued to grow gradually. After a few days later, pro-Mubarak groups sent their armies to attack protestors. These interventions to protestors and their demonstration in Egypt received a massive reaction in the world media. Mubarak regime withstood the protests for days, but finally, his 30-years regime was overthrown on February 11, 2011. According to officials of Egypt, more than 6000 people were injured, and 846 people died during the protests (Sarihan, 2012: 71). Mubarak's promised privileges had failed, and the military argued that increasing this violence and disorder could hurt the military's legitimacy and influence. In this way, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) assumed control of the country, and they induced Mubarak to him resign even though he was reluctant (Barany, 2011: 32). Omar Suleiman, the new vice president, announced that Mubarak had been toppled and now the army was in charge (Dabashi, 2012). Unlike Tunisia, the military in Egypt did not resign the power to an interim government. The military controlled the country, and if temporary elections were held, the army officials would allow the Muslim Brotherhood with Mohammed Morsi to take control in the parliament and assume the role of the president. After the collapse of Mubarak, the army indicated its effects on the society and encouraged citizens to protest for justifying the coup. The military, under the control of Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, took power in Egypt (Burns, 2018: 95). Contrary to the other Arab countries, the Egyptian military was respected by the public (Anderson, 2011: 4). Thus, Egypt has not yet to establish a democratic and reformist government. There were also questions about the role of the military and how the military would play with the new democratic system (Sarihan, 2012: 73). The military decided to keep its authority over the government, and the democratic transition process in Egypt was interrupted by the army in 2013.

#### **3.1.4 Libya**

And the next country would be Libya. On February 16, the protests broke out in Benghazi- Libya focusing on political corruption, human rights violations, and at the end; they caused the end of Muammar al-Gaddafi's power. The demonstrations were started by armed revoltors in the eastern part of Libya and caused fragmentation within the country (Anderson, 2011: 2). Libya yielded to civil war for a long time.

One of the main reasons for this was the desire to maintain the power of Muammar al-Gaddafi. To produce artificial luxury products from everything caused famine and corruption in Libya. Libya, under the control of Gaddafi, banned private property, trade, and free press (Anderson, 2011: 6).

The regime of Gaddafi began to apply the strategy of ‘divide and rule’, and in this way, the regime dissolved, and the Libyan society was ultimately divided (Anderson, 2011: 6). On February 21, hundreds of protestors were killed in the conflicts with security forces and the police. The International Criminal Court (ICC) declared that Muammar al-Gaddafi, who had been in power since 1969, must be arrested for crime against humanity. There would be foreign intervention by the UK Prime Minister David Cameron and the US President Barack Obama (they were in power in 2011) if Gaddafi did not step down (Dabashi, 2012). Thereby, lots of ministers turned their back on Gaddafi and called the international society to mobilize people’s movements in Libya. The Minister of Internal Affairs, Abdel Fattah Younes el-Abidi and the Minister of Justice Mustapha Abdeljalil announced their resignation from their duties. They also called the army to join people in their demands (BBC News, 2011). The UN Security Council declared a no-fly- zone in Libya and then the ICC announced that Gaddafi committed war crimes and was to be arrested. On March 5, 2011, the National Transitional Council was established, and it provided consolidated the civil commotions in Libya (Dabashi, 2012). In this context, Libya entered into a different process than Tunisia and Egypt. Democratization is a long and challenging process, and under those circumstances, Libya’s movements turned from peaceful uprising to a bloody civil war due to the hard and oppressive regime of Gaddafi, the intervention of the UN and the NATO as well as the effects of the Arab League.

### **3.1.4 Syria**

Following the uprisings in Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt, the wave of the Arab Spring finally reached Syria, and it has grown into the bloodiest uprisings ever since. Syrian people also announced February 5, 2011, the “day of rage” as other Arab countries did via social media channels such as Twitter and Facebook to protest against the status quo and that uncertainty still continues in Syria (Dabashi, 2012).

Syrian people used Facebook and Twitter to organize more effective demonstrations, and they named after February 4-5 (Sarihan, 2012: 72). Protestors had taken the courage to attend to the protests in the other Arab countries. However, the military defended their leader with brutal and violent force. While protestors were demanding the release of political prisoners, more protestors were arrested day by day (Dabashi, 2012). Although the Syrian Security forces reacted with armed violence against demonstrations, Syrian people did not give up on their demands and ideals during the uprising. On March 25, the biggest protest with over hundred of thousands of protestors began in Syria, and the Syrian Security forces killed 23 people on that day due to the hard and oppressive regime of Bashar al-Assad (Sarihan, 2012: 72). The U.S. announced that there would be sanctions imposed on the Syrian government, and besides, the EU determined human rights violations by the regime. Nevertheless, the demonstrations in Syria fell to persuade Bashar Al-Assad and his regime to leave his power. Although international actors called to end his power due to the Arab uprisings, Assad did not find these calls favorable. The former U.S. President Obama called the U.N. Security Council about establishing sanctions against the Assad regime due to using military force against civilian citizens. Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan - currently the President of Turkey - also indicated that Turkey would use sanctions against Syria. The United Nation (U.N.) imposed sanctions on the Syrian regime, and new investments were forbidden in Syria. Bashar Al-Assad used his Army to control the demonstrations when the Army killed thousands of civilians. Assad took advantage of this Army's loyalty to suppress uprisings (Sarihan, 2012: 80-82). The Syrian regime's army tanks entered some Syrian cities to crush anti-regime protests. After a few months, thousands of Syrians left their country, Syria to migrate to Turkey due to persecution, death, and oppression. According to reports from the United Nations (U.N.), hundreds of people (at least 2,900) were killed by soldiers in Damascus, Syria since pro-democracy protests began in March 2011 (Dabashi, 2012). Besides, the Syrian Army arrested more than 10000 protesters (Sarihan, 2012: 80). As a result, uncertainty continues in Syria.

## CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS

Sarihan (2012) considers the Arab Spring vis-a-vis Huntington's (1991) theory on the "Third Wave". Accordingly, democratic demonstrators should force authoritarian leaders/dictators to be ousted when they face mass protests and uprisings. Furthermore, he gives an example using Former Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf, who was the head of the government and the army of Pakistan both. He had to withdraw from his position against the public oppression in Pakistan. Thus, for Sarihan, Arab Spring shares similarities with the "Third Wave" democratization (Sarihan, 2012: 73).

In this section, each case will be considered based on the availability of independent variables (initial speeches of leaders and police violence towards protestors and the approach of the military) and dependent variables peaceful change through the democratic election.

In all case studies of countries, it was seen that the leaders reacted and called out differently to the protesters. One of the variables of the thesis is that at the beginning of the uprising, leaders who applied initial moderate speeches to protestors are more likely to go the peaceful change through the election. Geddes (2014) mentions that some studies show that dictators who fear punishment after being ousted tend to start a war. In his research, Huntington (1991) argues that when an authoritarian leader dies, his/her successor becomes more open to democratic ideals. As it is mentioned above, Geddes (2014) analyzes that some studies show that dictators who fear punishment after being ousted tend to start a war. Other findings show that dictators who are ousted from their regimes or who are replaced by another autocrat face severer punishment than being ousted, and this does not necessarily bring along regime change or democratization. In his article, Sarihan (2012) gives Soviet Russia as an example: Considering Gorbachev's reformist policies, it is important to note that Gorbachev came to power in Soviet Russia after the death of tyrant leaders, Brezhnev and Khrushchev. When a leader does not want to face a coup or a revolt and wishes to prevent it, they tend to accept changes in leadership.

For this reason, the article explains that a leader becomes more democratic and open than his/her pre-leader because he/she is conscious of why a leader accepts the leadership of the state (Sarihan, 2012: 73).

The other variable is police violence of leaders towards protestors (use of excessive power of police on protestors) and the approach of security forces to protestors. This thesis tries to predict that when leaders suppress with violence to protestors whether peaceful change through a democratic election. Violence towards protestors is more common in cases where the military is less institutionalized. Leaders who are using excessive police power to protestors are usually not going to peaceful change through a democratic election. The critical point in violence is whether countries have the institutionalized military. The countries which have institutionalized the armed forces are the more open they support to pro-democracy demonstrations. When military forces are unwilling to attack or arrest protesters, and no longer protect rulers, even the most tyrannical leaders are left powerless and vulnerable. Bellin (2014) explains that if the degree of institutionalization is high, the army does not interfere with the masses. She states that the degree of “institutionalization” of the military is a pivotal factor to measure how they react to pro-reform movements. She also explains the more institutionalized military is more willing to disconnect from power and to tolerate political reform in four case studies of countries. The military has reacted in various ways to these popular uprisings: Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Syria. In the four cases, the military's response to the public movements is explained based on the institutionalization of the military. One of the aims of this study is to analyze the role of armed forces in these Arab uprisings. Mighty armies generally have been seen as a significant factor in the Middle East and North Africa. (Lutterbeck, 2012: 29) This study argues that police violence towards protestors (use of excessive power of police on protestors) explains how leaders use the intense police power to demonstrators during the uprisings. These differences can be explained with the degree of the military of institutionalization in the countries of the region. In this regard, Bellin (2014) underlines the relations between the institutionalized military and incumbent leaders, while Gause (2011) examines two predominant factors: military and security complex. Until the Arab Spring, Arab military coups in the 1950s and 1960s had control on the military forces and armies and helped press the uprisings and civil

wars; therefore, the beginning and expanding of the Arab Spring was unexpected for scholars. Brownlee (2002) also regards the capacity of security mechanisms in oppressing oppositional movements during political crises and points out to the fact that survival of regimes may be threatened by popular demonstrations. According to Bratton and Van de Wale (1992), on the other hand, the power and appliances of the military are regarded as an essential requirement for the transition to democracy in the Middle Eastern countries.

#### **4.1 Peaceful Change through Democratic Elections**

In this section, it analyzes two countries; Tunisia and Egypt under the title of the peaceful change through democratic election.

##### **4.1.1 Tunisia**

Leader's Initial speeches during the protest and police and armed forces are examined under the title of Tunisia.

###### ***4.1.1.1 Leader's Initial speeches during the protests: Zine El Abidine Ben Ali***

After Mohamed Bouazizi burnt himself at the age of 26, on December 17, 2010, in Tunisia, protests broke out in the city of Sidi Bouzi (Dabashi, 2012). Protestors demanded their rights to oust the existing autocratic, dictatorial, corrupted, and anti-humanist ruler, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali who ruled for 23-years in Tunisia starting from 1987 (Sarihan, 2012). Ben Ali resigned on January 14, 2011, and fled to Saudi Arabia together with his family upon incrementing protests.

Right after the beginning the uprisings in Tunisia and demonstrations against his authoritarian regime, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali delivered three speeches to calm down the public. The first speech was on December 27, 2010, the second on January 10, 2011, and the third was on January 13, 2011. The first and last speeches delivered by Ben Ali are of great importance in this analysis since they were extensively long and uploaded on Facebook and YouTube, while full-text editions are still available on the Internet.



During his seven-minute first speech on December 27, 2010, Ben Ali emphasizes patriotism, freedom of expression, and liberty to meet the demands of the protestors. Besides, his statement continued with informing people about false news and broadcast of foreign television channels, declaring them hostile to Tunisia. In this first speech, Ben Ali was rather courageous in mentioning his achievements in the past, such as investments made for a better future for the entire country (Kesseiri, 2014: 249). About the issue of unemployment, he explained that it is a global problem, and his state was ready to put effort to struggle against unemployment. He promised that the state would put effort to improve the living standards in Tunisia for all citizens. The speech further underlined the quality of the education system and increasing the number of students graduating from Tunisian universities. Referring to Tunisia as a state of law, the speech signified that violence and demonstrations on the streets would be unacceptable. He argued that freedom of expression and opinion should be within the framework of law and the rules. Radia Kesseiri contends in the article, *“The Political Discourse of the Arab Revolution: The Cases of Egypt, Tunisia, Libya and Syria (2014)”*, Ben Ali discussed unemployment, education, and development rather than democracy and freedom in this speech to maintain his power and domination. His first speech addressed his nation through sympathy and indication that he understood people’s feelings and experiences. He was unwilling to accept his success (Kesseiri, 2014: 249).

In his third speech on January 13, 2011, he used a more sensitive and understanding language and preferred a reliable approach to use the notions of democracy, freedom, and multi-party systems. At the beginning of his speech, he mentioned that change is required with calling Tunisian citizens and continued to say that he understood his citizens well:

*“I am talking to you now, because the situation requires a deep change, yes a deep and comprehensive change. I understood you. Yes, indeed I understood you. I understood all, the unemployed and the needy, the politician and the one who is asking for more freedom” (Al-Bab, 2011).*

By always underlining that he thoroughly understood his citizens, Ben Ali tried to respond to the needs of the citizens. He addressed to the public in his last speech and mentioned his regret for demonstrations (Kesseiri, 2014: 250). He decided to

reinforce freedom of expression and abstain from any form of censorship in communication, including the Internet, uttering that:

*“However, the political demands, I told you that I understood you. Oh yes, I understood you. I understood you. I have decided full freedom of information of all means, and to refrain from shutting down Internet sites, and rejection of any form of censorship against them, enforcing respect of their ethics and the informational principles of the profession” (Al-Bab,2011).*

He continued his speech saying that civilized demonstrations were acceptable and that freedom of expression would always be supported in Tunisia. Consistently, he emphasized the significance of democracy and freedom as well as promoting pluralistic democracy. At the end of his speech, he underlined that he would not run for president in the next elections of 2014.

#### ***4.1.1.2 Police and armed forces’ treatment of protestors***

Zine El Abidine Ben Ali was in uniform before he was officiated as president in Tunisia; however, the military stood by Tunisian citizens, although Tunisia has one of the most homogeneous societies in the Middle East as Egypt. Tunisian armies have usually been entirely professional, yet they are also known to specifically serve to leaders under their full command (Gause, 2011: 84). The Tunisian military played an essential role in the process of the Arab Spring. Contrary to the other Arab courtiers, the Tunisian army rejected supporting the regime of Ben Ali while the military did not directly participate in the revolution (Anderson, 2011: 3).

After the beginning of the protests in Sidi Bouzid, the police responded by pepper gas and violent incidents took place. Especially in rural areas, areas, the regime took severe measures on demonstrators. In the city of Thala and Kasserine snipers, who were private militias of Ben Ali, killed protestors (Burns, 2018: 83). Ben Ali called out to the Army to use force against the protestors as well although the police and security forces had already been using tear gas, rubber bullets, and beatings to scatter protesters (Brooks, 2013: 205). After Ben Ali’s regime called the Army on duty to suppress the protests on January 9, and when the military commanders refused to open fire on the civilians, armed clashes began between the

military and the police/militias. The Army Chief of Staff, General Rachid Ammar, warned that if the police would continue to open fire, the Army will also respond to them. General Ammar from the Tunisian Armed Forces has played a significant role in this case. As it is expected from the institutionalized military, the Tunisian military showed its support the pro-reform movements (Lutterbeck, 2012: 34). Due to Ben Ali fear from the coup, he increased the number of police. Thus, the Tunisian military was downsized and limited its sources (Brooks, 2013). From the United Nations (UN), Navi Pillay, High Commissioner for Human Rights, mentioned that the police used hard power against protestors and reflected their concerns on reports about the violations of human rights and the freedom of expression as well as cruelty. She emphasized that the government should have improved amelioration politics with regard to freedom, human rights, and liberties (Travis, 2013: 91). The conflicts between the military units and the special units belonging to Ben Ali continued until January 14. During the public movement, 74 citizens were arrested and sent to prison, and in total, 219 citizens were killed in Tunisia (Ayhan, 2012: 77).

In his speech on January 13, Ben Ali called for an end of the fire. Despite the underlined that he would not be a candidate for the next presidential elections in 2014, demonstrations and protests did not cease but expanded further. The UGTT (Tunisian General Labor Union) called all citizens to unite for general strikes, and the demonstrations on January 14 turned into violent incidents with police power. On January 14, Ben Ali declared a state of emergency; however, he ultimately consented to leave the country and fled to Saudi Arabia (Burns, 2018: 84). In Tunisia, the degree of institutionalization of the Armed Forces designated the openness of the Armed Forces to the pro-reform movements (Lutterbeck, 2012: 34).

#### **4.1.2 Egypt**

Leader's Initial speeches during the protest and Police and armed forces examine under the title of Egypt.

##### ***4.1.2.1 Leader's Initial speeches during the protests: Hosni Mubarak***

Hosni Mubarak who had been in power for 30 years in Egypt was ousted in February 2011, following a series of protests against him (Sümer, 2013).

During the uprisings in Egypt, Hosni Mubarak delivered two critical speeches about the protestors in the Tahrir Square, first on February 01, 2011 and the second on February 10, 2011. His first speech was a call for calming down the citizens and unites people. He convinced people to end their protests and demonstrations. Nonetheless, the protests grew and expanded to other cities in Egypt. Mubarak applied his peculiar way of dealing with the crisis, which was to remind citizens of a better future for them. He addressed the Egyptian youth as well as peaceful citizens by the first statement in his speech. Mubarak referred to the fact that the demonstrations performed by people transferred from freedom of expression to uncivilized and uncontrolled movements. He made an effort to meet the democratic demands of the citizens, yet he often left the citizens between two options: Chaos if they continued demonstrations or stability if they supported him (Kesseiri, 2014: 244). Mubarak addressed his people as follows:

*“We are living together painful days and the most painful thing is the fear that affected the huge majority of Egyptians and caused concern and anxiety over what tomorrow could bring them and their families and the future of their country. The events of the last few days require us all as people and as leadership to choose between chaos or stability and to set in front of us new circumstances and a new Egyptian reality which our people and armed forces must work with wisely and in the interest of Egypt and its citizens” (The Guardian, 2011).*

He continued in his speech to utter that he would endeavor to respond to the demands of the youth and citizens and promised to provide democratic reforms including social equality, reducing poverty and new job opportunities for people (Kesseiri, 2014: 246). Besides, Mubarak mentioned that his vice president was charged for improvement of the political and democratic reforms as demanded by citizens through the following expressions:

*“Dear brothers and citizens, I took the initiative of forming a new government with new priorities and duties that respond to the demand of our youth and their mission. I entrusted the vice president with the task of holding dialogue with all the political forces and factions about all the issues that have been raised concerning political and democratic reform and the constitutional and legislative amendments required to realize these legitimate demands and to restore law and order but there are some*

*political forces who have refused this call to dialogue, sticking to their particular agendas without concern for the current delicate circumstances of Egypt and its people” (The Guardian, 2011).*

Afterward, Mubarak called his parliament to discuss the articles of the constitution to set presidential term; however, he pledged to people about unclear constitutional amendments. Besides, he assigned a new government to ensure political, economic, and social rights and reforms of citizens.

*“According to my constitutional powers, I call on parliament in both its houses to discuss amending article 76 and 77 of the constitution concerning the conditions on running for presidency of the republic and it sets a specific period for the presidential term. In order for the current parliament in both houses to be able to discuss these constitutional amendments and the legislative amendments linked to it for laws that complement the constitution and to ensure the participation of all the political forces in these discussions, I demand parliament to adhere to the word of the judiciary and its verdicts concerning the latest cases which have been legally challenged.*

*I will entrust the new government to perform in ways that will achieve the legitimate rights of the people and that its performance should express the people and their aspirations of political, social and economic reform and to allow job opportunities and combating poverty, realizing social justice” (The Guardian, 2011).*

During his second speech on February 10, 2011, he applied democratic approaches, freedom, and transparency when compared to his first speech, while this second speech was more of a personalistic feature. His message seemed to guide citizens in their future focusing mainly on national independence, the importance of democracy, and freedom of people. He tried to show himself as a sympathetic and compassionate leader. Mubarak underscored that he would punish police officers who were responsible for violence against protestors. Furthermore, he used the term martyr for those who lost their lives during protests (Kesseiri, 2014: 244).

*“First and foremost, I am telling you that the blood of your martyrs and injured will not go in vain. I assure you that I will not relent in harshly punishing those*

*responsible. I will hold those who persecuted our youth accountable with the maximum deterrent sentences.*

*I tell the families of those innocent victims that I suffered plenty for them, as much as they did. My heart was in pain because of what happened to them, as much as it pained their hearts”(BBC News, 2011).*

While Mubarak referred to constitutional amendments in his first speech, he left office a few months later and did not take any responsibility about issues arising during the demonstrations in the country. In his second speech, he mostly referred to the duties of the regime and governmental members rather than those of himself and the most significant point was that he urged people to be aware of these responsibilities as follows:

*“The mistakes can be made in any political system and in any state. But, the most important is to recognize them and correct them as soon as possible and bring to account those who have committed them” (BBC News, 2011).*

Mubarak stated that he would not run for president in the next elections in September and undertook the responsibility to ensure that the elections would be free so that Egypt had a bright future:

*“My sons, the youth of Egypt, brother citizens, I have unequivocally declared that I will not run for president in the next elections, satisfied with what I've offered my country in over 60 years during war and peace.*

*I declared my commitment to that, as well as my equal commitment to carrying out my responsibility in protecting the constitution and the people's interests until power and responsibility are handed over to whoever is elected in next September, following free and candid elections with guarantees of freedom and candor” (BBC News, 2011).*

#### ***4.1.2.2 Police and armed forces' treatment of protestors***

The army, under the control of Mubarak, announced that they would not fire on protestors to prevent them until the end of January. While tension increased day by day, Mubarak offered new privileges to protestors. Even though Mubarak promised

democratic reforms to citizens, it was not enough for people; therefore, approximately 1 million people went to Tahrir Square to protest him (Dabashi, 2012). In particular, military leaders promised not to use force against protesters. It was a signal and ensured the growth of the protests in Egypt (Brooks, 2017). The Pro-Mubarak regime sent an army to attack the demonstrators upon incidents (Dabashi, 2012). As it is mentioned above under the title, “*The Background of the Arab Spring - Egypt*” in Chapter 3, hundreds of thousands attended the protests in Tahrir Square. After a few days, the pro-Mubarak side sent their armies to attack protestors. These demonstrations and interventions in Egypt received harsh criticism in the international media (Sarihan, 2012: 71).

The Egyptian armed forces can be defined as a professional and meritocratic force, which are an important element of institutionalization as well as in the case of Tunisia. Egyptian military pursued a crucial role in the regime since after establishing the republic and it have played a stronger political role in Egypt during the Arab uprisings (Harb, 2003). The Egyptian military has strong professionalism and Mubarak also was depended to the military (Droz-Vincent, 2007). Hosni Mubarak would like to limit the army's political influence and reduce the military presence in the Egyptian government. While the Egyptian armed forces' effects decreased in the political area, the military has become the most important economic factor in Egypt. The Egyptian army has obtained U.S. military aid (Lutterbeck, 2012: 34). When demonstrations continue in-country, Mubarak said that he would make some privileges as promising not to seek re-election next term. Despite all, protestors were not mitigated, and protests continued in Egypt (Nepstad, 2011: 487). With the growth of anti-regime demonstrations, Mubarak has deployed the Egyptian army along the streets with police (Bekaroglu and Kurt, 2015: 25).

Upon this fact, protestors demanding regime change in Egypt attacked a police station and set fire on the armored cars on January 27. In response, the police opened fire against the protestors who attacked the building of Interior Ministry in Cairo. In February, the incidents ended up with the death of one protestor and physical injury of twenty others due to their attack on the police station (Travis, 2013: 95). The Mubarak regime withstood the protests for days, but finally, his 30-years regime was overthrown on February 11, 2011. During the protests in Egypt, according to officials, more than 6000 people were injured, and 846 died (Sarihan,

2012: 71). The blogger Khaled Said, who launched the uprisings in Egypt, was killed by the Egyptian police, and there was a campaign to honor him (Anderson, 2011: 5).

According to the National Transition Council officials, 25000 people lost their lives, and 50000 people were injured, and at least 4000 people in the country are also missing within six months. More than 22000 people arrested between July 2013 and July 2014. One hundred eighty-three people died due to political violence on February 2015 (HaberTürk, 2011).

## **4.2 No Peaceful Change through Democratic Elections**

In this section, it analyzes two countries; Libya and Syria under the title of the no peaceful change leading to democratic election.

### **4.2.1 Libya**

Leader's Initial speeches during the Protest and Police and armed forces examine under the title of Libya.

#### ***4.2.1.1 Leader's Initial speeches during the protests: Muammar al-Gaddafi***

Muammar al-Gaddafi's speech does not differ from the statements of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. On February 22, 2011, Gaddafi called not only to Libyan people and all Arab states but also the entire world. He sent his message to all people who were against him as defending himself nationalist and defiant. He described himself as follows: "*Muammar Gaddafi is history, resistance, freedom, victory, and revolution*" (Kesseiri, 2014: 250). The video of his speech is available on Aljazeera News and also YouTube.

It was a call to people who wanted to capture the streets of Libya through the grassroots movement. Gaddafi believed that these movements were a foreign conspiracy, and the USA was the one to hold guilty for its desire to demolish Libya. During his speech, he always blamed foreigners referring to international terrorists and armed offenders, and he ignored the internal causes of the public movements. He also defined protestors as "cockroach, terrorists, and mouse" and warned the demonstrators to use the power within the international law (Kesseiri, 2014: 251).



In his speech on February 22, 2011, he sounded like a dictator, and his tone of voice was defiant. He tried to put pressure on his people in all the manners of this conversation. Gaddafi uttered that he was not a president, he was the leader of the revolution, and at the end, he would die as a martyr with the following words:

*"I am a fighter, a revolutionary from tent... I will die as a martyr at the end. Muammar Gaddafi is the leader of the revolution; I am not a president to step down... This is my country. Muammar is not a president to leave his post. I have not yet ordered the use of force, not yet ordered one bullet to be fired... when I do, everything will burn" (Aljazeera, 2011).*

Indeed, he tried to spread the message that he would use power against people who would not surrender and end protests, indicating that he would not hesitate to cleansing Libya house by house. Somewhat, Gaddafi threatened protestors with civil war due to their participation in the movements stating that:

*"I have not yet ordered the use of force, not yet ordered one bullet to be fired.. when I do, everything will burn.*

*You men and women who love Gaddafi... get out of your homes and fill the streets. Leave your homes and attack them in their lairs... Starting tomorrow [Wednesday] the cordons will be lifted, go out and fight them" (NewStatesman America, 2011).*

It follows from his speech that Gaddafi did not have any intention to withdraw from his power and would not hesitate to fight against protestors. He did not mention any democratic right or freedom of expression to be granted to people.

#### ***4.2.1.2 Police and armed forces' treatment of protestors***

After the family members of Muammar al-Gaddafi used force against protestors, the demonstrations began to be more violent. While some part of the military remained faithful to Gaddafi, some of them left the regime (Brooks, 2017). It is not possible to say that there was an institutionalized and modern military. The security units of Gaddafi rather than the regular army were the regime's first tool of defense. In Tunisia, the activity of the regular army in the country was limited. Gaddafi relied on the security units that were tasked with protecting himself and his regime rather than the regular army. There were also tribes which have armed forces

depending Gaddafi (Kurt, 2014: 18). The military in Libya was and is still divided by the cleavages of region and kin. Gaddafi distributed the army and made it uncoordinated and confused. Thus, some forces joined the opposition groups; however, they were prevented from being organized as capable military units (Anderson, 2011: 6).

After the angry crowd in Benghazi set fire on cars and used gasoline bombs on February 16, 2011, there was a new page for the demonstration in Libya. In the “Day of Revenge,” approximately two dozen Libyan protestors were killed in Benghazi. The government sent the message to threaten the protestors by killing them and also arrested demonstrators and writers. When the protests reached the capital of Tripoli, pro-Gaddafi soldiers and the police killed dozens of anti-government demonstrators. Until February 19, the government killed more than eighty protestors and rebels due to open fire. The Human Rights Watch announced the death toll as 173 by February 20 (Travis, 2013: 104). According to Gaddafi, he used his army and police officers against the protestors to maintain order and security of the community, and he called protestors as “terrorists” (BBC News, 2011).

There was a humanitarian crisis between the United Nations (UN) and the Libyan government with the complaint of a deputy ambassador of Libya to warn against genocide by Gaddafi imposed on Libyan people. As mentioned above in the analysis of his speeches, Gaddafi warned that the government would kill the protestors who were described as cockroaches by him and clean the house by house. It seemed like a threat to spear fear among Libyan people to end their protests (Travis, 2013: 106).

According to reports, twenty-five soldiers opened fire against massive demonstrators and killed around thousands of Libyan people in February. Right after this incident, the U.N. Secretary, Ban Ki-moon explained they estimated that a thousand of protestors were killed in two weeks and the U.N. Security Council expressed that there were scenes of crime against humanity in Libya and this violence should be ended by prohibition of arms sales to Libya (Travis, 2013: 107). Human Rights Watch asserted in March that the Libyan government made use of violence and deadly forces against protestors even when those protests were peaceful (Travis, 2013: 108). According to reports of the U.N. High Commissioner of

Refugees, 660000 Libyan people, ran away from the country, and 200000 were relegated in Libya in February 2011 (Travis, 2013: 132). According to the National Transition Council officials, 25000 people lost their lives, and 50000 people were injured, and at least 4000 people in the country are also missing within six months (HaberTürk, 2011).

#### **4.2.2 Syria**

Leader's Initial speeches during the protest and Police and armed forces examine under the title of Syria.

##### ***4.2.2.1 Leader's Initial speeches during the protests: Bashar al-Assad***

Bashar al-Assad delivered a few speeches during the Arab Spring; however, three of these speeches will particularly be elaborated in this study: The first speech on March 30, 2011, and the second on June 20, 2011. In his first speech, Assad blamed foreign enemies for the reasons of uprisings and protests in Syria. He did not offer any reforms such as democratic freedom, economic improvement, or accountability that protestors demanded. He merely mentioned internal dynamics and his responsibilities towards his citizens with the following words:

*“On the internal level, our policies had been based on development, opening up, and communicating directly between myself and the Syrian people. I am speaking about principles regardless of certain negative and positive aspects and what has and has not been achieved. In principle, these are the pillars of our internal policy” (Al-Bab,2011).*

As it can be observed, he believed that there was a conspiracy in Syria and said that people wanted freedom and covering of their daily needs. He promised to be transparent and explained the details of the conspiracy: Foreign powers and media groups were responsible. Assad also confessed that he could not meet most of the demands of people stating:

*“...So, they mixed up three elements: sedition, reform, and daily needs. Most of the Syrian people call for reform, and you are all reformers. Most of the Syrian people have unmet needs; and we all discuss, criticize, and have our disagreements because*

*we have not met many of the needs of the Syrian people. But sedition has become part of the issue and started to lead the other two factors and take cover under them. That is why it was easy to mislead many people who demonstrated in the beginning with good intentions. We cannot say that all those who demonstrated are conspirators. This is not true, and we want to be clear and realistic.*

*...In principle, we support reform and meeting people's needs. This is the duty of the state" (Al-Bab,2011).*

Assad realized that the security forces were accused by killing more than one-hundred unarmed protestors in Daraa although there was a command not to harm Syrian people and also accepted that he made a mistake.

*"...There were clear instructions not to harm any Syrian citizens. But unfortunately, when things move to the street, and dialogue is conducted in the street and outside institutions, things naturally become chaotic and reaction rather than action rules the day. What we might call mistakes of the moment becomes the dominant mode and people get killed. This is what happened, and you all know that" (Al-Bab,2011).*

In his second speech on June 20, 2011, he addressed the Syrian people again and referred to people who died during the demonstrations in the status of martyrdom. He uttered that the next parliamentary elections would bring in a new parliament and that the reform package would be completed. His aim, as he purported, was to bring in a new constitution and administrative mechanism to overcome the ongoing corruption.

*"I felt that there is a strong desire to eradicate corruption as a major cause for the lack of justice and equal opportunities and for feelings of unfairness, injustice, and oppression, in addition to its dangerous moral consequences on society" (Al-Bab,2011).*

In his speeches, Assad did not mention terms of democracy, freedom, or demonstration. These were the most popular terms during the Arab Spring; hence critics believed that these terms should have been used in leaders' speeches delivered to the public. On the other hand, Assad always used the terms of reform, achievement, security, homeland, and conspiracy. The term reform meant change for

people. He did not feel any responsibility; he only blamed foreign forces and always mentioned conspiracy (Carnegie Middle East Center, 2013).

#### ***4.2.2.2 Police and armed forces' treatment of protestors***

In Syria, Assad decided to respond aggressively to the uprisings and used disproportionate force against demonstrators and protestors in March. It appeared that Syrian authorities had not learned the right lessons from the other countries during protests, and therefore, they used the strong repressive response against early protests (Brooks, 2017).

The brutal treatment of the regime of some teenagers who had graffitied anti-regime slogans started to increase the tension in Syria in 2011. The teenagers were arrested and agonized (Brooks, 2017). It was clear that not only the security forces and military would defend and stand by the regime, but also, they would apply brutal force (Brooks, 2017). Sectarian identity had reasoned the military's decision to support Assad's regime and resort to massive violence in its defense (Barany, 2011: 36). Assad family's members usually commanded most of the army in Syria, and although there was a Sunni-majority in Syria, Alawites and the other minority groups were responsible as officers. Militaries of the same sectarian identity with the regime supported the Assad regime (Gause, 2011: 85). The Alawite Syrian officers controlled the military section of the Baath Party (Barany, 2011: 36). The Alawi minority senior officers of Bashar al-Assad's regime remained allied with him and maintained their support to the regime as well (Brooks, 2017). Until July, the number of people who lost their lives in Syria had reached 70000. The pro-Assad military used tanks and other heavy weapons against unarmed demonstrators, as well as imposing massacre on hundreds as protests continued until March 2011 (Barany, 2011: 36). Even in 2013, at least 2 million Syrian people had been displaced from the country, and more than 4.5 million people were internally removed (Christia, 2013: 9). At the present time, over 5 million people are in the position of refugees abroad, and over 6 million people are internally displaced according to the data provided by UN agencies (Human Rights Watch, 2017).

The civil war continues in Syria, and Assad is resisting to prevent the end of his office by using heavy weapons. The Syrian government has initiated the use of

chemical weapons against civilians indiscriminately and implemented torture and maltreating on civilians (Human Rights Watch, 2017). According to Human Rights Watch reports, more than 4 million Syrian people died, 65000 people arrested by government security forces and 4 million people are also refugees abroad in Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon as a result of the Syrian conflict since 2011. The coalition of the Russian-Syrian military organized air attacks on medical facilities. According to the Violations Documentation Center (VDC), 446 civilians, including 91 children, were killed as a result of the bombings in eastern Aleppo between September 19 and October 18, 2016. Afterward, the attacks of Assad persisted by airstrikes and ten civilians were killed near a school in the south of Daraa. Human Rights Watch explained that there were at least 22 air attacks in 2017 (Human Rights Watch, 2017).

Besides, the Assad regime maintained using chemical weapons in at least four attacks since 2016 in cities of Syria. As a result of the attacks, 92 civilians were killed, including 30 children and while more than hundreds were injured (Human Rights Watch, 2017).

Arbitrary detention, maltreating, torture, and enforced disappearances prevailed in Syria. The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) explained that more than 4252 people were arrested arbitrarily just in 2017. According to SNHR, over 80000 people disappeared as of August 2017 (Human Rights Watch, 2017). On the contrary to other cases, the Syrian case was examined until 2017 due to continuing the civil war.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

### 5.1 Summary and Discussion of the Findings

Over the past decade, the uprisings have come to exist in the MENA region as called the “*Arab Spring*”. The uprising, which started in Tunisia in the last month of 2010 expanded to other countries in the area, demonstrating a domino effect (Dabashi, 2012). Right after these incidents, especially when the European Union crisis and the Occupy Wall Street in the city of New York have risen, it seems like a new phase has started for the entire world. As a result, studies, articles, and theses on uprisings and demonstrations in recent years have significantly increased with the impact of the “*Arab Spring*” in the Middle Eastern countries.

This thesis was designed to provide a theoretical contribution to such studies, shedding light on the way in which authoritarian leaders react in the face of protests or uprisings and to determine whether their reactions yield into democratic openings by election. In this way, thesis benefited from and contributed on studies on democratization, liberalization, authoritarian regimes, and democratic transitions. In this regard, the Arab uprisings in the Middle Eastern countries including Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Syria were scrutinized with particular attention to leaders’ initial speeches at the beginning and during the protests as well as police violence by leaders towards protestors (use of excessive power of police and military forces on protestors) by qualitative method.

Considering how leaders reacted when they face popular uprising (mass protest), the thesis aimed to predict the outcome of such behavior. That is, the thesis considered which leader reactions were associated with political openings at the end. More specifically, this thesis analyzes how leaders responded to the uprisings in the Middle Eastern countries through the Arab Spring (democratic speech and police and military pressure) in response to mass protests and predict the impact of such behavior on the possibility of a democratic transition. This thesis used a qualitative method using two independent variables. These included the initial speeches (discourses) of leaders during the protest and the police violence towards protestors

(use of excessive power of police and army on protestors) during the Arab Spring between 2010 and 2011. The outcome variable had two categories: peaceful change through democratic election or the absence of such change.

The thesis finds that the democratic election leading to peaceful change are typically preceded with initial moderate speeches of leaders. If leaders apply harsh speeches, violence can be predicted during this process. When examined the cases of Tunisia and Egypt, it can be seen that Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and Hosni Mubarak were resigned from their power through to going to the election. These two leaders had promised not to be candidate for the next election when they called out to their citizens. During the protests, the speeches of Ben Ali were moderate to protestors. Mubarak also accepted to leave his office against the mass demonstrations and protests due to the dictatorial regime in Egypt. Even Mubarak did not volunteer to go his autocratic power; he resigned from his position peacefully. When Mubarak realized that Egyptians would overthrow the leader and were somewhat willing to change their future. When Mubarak realized this fact, he left his 30-year power to prevent more violent demonstrations (Sarihan, 2012: 73). This research showed that the moderate initial speech/discourse of leaders is not enough on the way to democracy. As shown in Table 2, violence towards citizens can rupture of relations between state and citizens.

These findings also support Geddes et. al. (2014)'s single-party regimes last the longest, but when uncontrollable popular opposition signals that the end is near, like the military, they negotiate the transition. As seen in the case of Tunisia and Egypt, which are single-party regimes, Ben Ali and Mubarak have tended to moderate speeches to calm down protestors and demonstrators. These leaders expressed that they will not run and seek for the next election.

On the contrary, in the case of Gaddafi and Assad had tended to harsh speeches. Besides, demonstrations in the Egyptian case also affected international organizations which supported people on the street to their ideals through uprisings and protests. Hence, the global effect is observed to be present on authoritarian leaders as well (at least on Mubarak) so that they leave their power in a peaceful way against demonstrations (Sarihan, 2012: 79). In Libya and Syria, the speech (discourse) of Qaddafi and Assad was so harsh to protestors. Contrary to Egypt, Syria President Bashar Al-Assad endeavored to persuade Syrian people who used



uprising and demonstrations against to end their protests through small and temporary political reforms. Assad was not willing to leave his position and power in the system; therefore, he used cruel military forces against Syrian people to press their requests/demands for democratization (Sarihan, 2012: 74). On the other hand, Libya’s uprising turned into a bloody civil war due to the oppressive regime of Gaddafi. In the case of Syria, Assad did not respond to the demands of his citizens at all, and he started a civil war in Syria, where there is still uncertainty.

**Table 1 Comparison of the countries through initial speeches of leaders and police violence on protestors, the approach of militaries towards protestors**

	<b>Tunisia</b>	<b>Egypt</b>	<b>Libya</b>	<b>Syria</b>	
<b>Initial Speech</b>	moderate	moderate	oppressive	oppressive	<b>IV1</b>
<b>Police violence</b>	no excessive	excessive	excessive	excessive	<b>IV2</b>
<b>Democratic elections (leading to) peaceful change</b>	Yes	Yes	No	No	<b>DV</b>
	Yes	No	No	No	

This thesis also found that leader’s use of power by an army or the police force (law-enforcement officers) on protestors and approach of security forces to protestors predicts the possibility of peaceful change at the end of the protests. The thesis finds that violence against protestors is associated with a lower change of democratic transition. Predictably, violence to protestors is more common in cases where the military is less institutionalized. Geddes (2014) also mentions that leaders who fear punishment after their overthrow starts war and intensify their power on people by violent. When violence occurs during the protests and uprisings, this creates fragmentations in society and possible civil war. Yet, a leader would prefer to be in power, more than any time, when there is a possibility of civil war, since not to be in power can be deadly.

**Table 2 Comparison of the countries through number of death, injuries and arrests**

<b>From 2010 to 2011 in Arab Spring cases</b>	<b>Tunisia</b>	<b>Egypt</b>	<b>Libya</b>	<b>Syria</b>
<b>Casualties</b>	240	1118	25000	7841
<b>Injury</b>	1464	6000	50000	15000
<b>Arrest</b>	74	174	1500	20000

(Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, The New York Times, HaberTürk)

A summary of the numbers of death, injury, and arrest during the Arab Spring can be found in Table 2. It shows that the violence towards protestors is less in Tunisia. A more institutionalized military prevented the leader to use the military against protestors. Droz-Vincent (2007) mentions that the Tunisian army has always kept its distance to the regime. Also, the smaller size of the Tunisian military contributed to its distance to politics. In Libya and Syria case, the army was divided by the cleavages. On the contrary, the Libyan military was divided by the cleavages of region and kin (Anderson, 2011: 6), Syria was divided by sectarian identity (Barany, 2011: 36). Gaddafi distributed the army and made it uncoordinated and confused.

**Table 3 Freedom House scores (Freedom Rating 1: Best- 7: Worst)**

	<b>Tunisia</b>	<b>Egypt</b>	<b>Libya</b>	<b>Syria</b>
<b>Status/ Freedom Rating in 2010</b>	Not Free / 6.0	Not Free / 5.5	Not Free / 7.0	Not Free / 6.5
<b>Status/ Freedom Rating in 2019</b>	Free / 2.5	Not Free / 6.0	Not Free / 6.5	Not Free / 7.0

(Freedom House, 2019 / <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2018>)

As seen in Table 3, Tunisia is just on the way to democracy successfully. According to the data of Freedom House (2019), Tunisia has reached the free status with 2.0 rating (best score since 2010) in 2015 and retains its status since then. Tunisia has transitioned to democracy successfully; it is still building its democratic

institutions. Tunisia affirmed the new Constitution in 2014 but touched upon on the concerns raised by the task force about the initial 2012 draft constitution, including women's rights, religion, and limitations on freedom of speech (Freedom House, 2019).

To conclude this thesis argues that leaders' initial speech (discourse) can predict post-movement political environment, along with use of power by the army or the police force against protestors. A moderate discursive approach as well as absence of violence against protestors signal a higher chance of peaceful change through democratic elections.

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