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## Political Transition in a Post-Arab Spring Middle East: A Comparative Analysis of Tunisia, Egypt, and Yemen

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POLITICAL TRANSITION IN A POST-ARAB SPRING MIDDLE EAST: A  
COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF TUNISIA, EGYPT, AND YEMEN

by

DOMINIC W. MARTIN

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for Honors in the Major Program in International and Global Studies  
in the College of Sciences  
and in the Burnett Honors College  
at the University of Central Florida  
Orlando, Florida

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Thesis Chair: Dr. Houman A. Sadri

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## **ABSTRACT**

The Arab Spring that began in Tunisia and spread throughout the Middle East shook the region. These populous movements unseated authoritarian rulers whose power and position were well entrenched, potentially setting numerous countries on a path towards democratization. This project seeks to explain why the democratic transitions within the countries of Egypt, Tunisia, and Yemen have been largely unsuccessful.

The large amounts of literature that flooded the academic forums through articles and books are analyzed, providing numerous explanations as to why these transitions have been unsuccessful such as polarization, deadlock, sectarianism, violence, and institutional conflict. This literature focuses on either one or several of the above-mentioned explanations while not pinning down a central cause for these phenomena, since they are all present in all three cases.

This paper asserts that the cause of this hindered transition is the emphasis that these States placed upon electoral democracy. An emphasis placed on elections during transition highlighted and exacerbated factors (polarization, deadlock, sectarianism, violence, and institutional conflict) already present in these societies but kept dormant under authoritarian rule. To illustrate this the initial transitional government, representative body elected, and executive is analyzed to show how each governing unit stressed elections before a constitution. The identification of an overarching cause for the lack of fruitful transition like this project seeks to accomplish is of great importance, filling a much needed gap in the literature of comparative Middle Eastern revolutionary studies; along with providing foreign policy makers a tool to craft more impactful policy.

To my Mother Lucy and Father Patrick,  
For providing and nurturing in me everything needed succeed in life  
Especially my deep-seated love of politics and history

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

There are numerous people I would like to thank and without who this thesis would not have been possible. First off I would like to thank Dr. Houman A. Sadri for serving as my thesis chair and mentor throughout my undergraduate career. I would also like to thank Dr. Waltraud Morales and Dr. Hakan Ozoglu for their time and service as thesis committee members.

I also have to thank Rita Peterson, Justin Faulkner, Gail Garten, and Malia Blake who saw my potential when others did not. They exemplify the type of character needed in a successful educator, and inspired me to become one myself. Without these individuals who mentored me in my youth I would not be half the student I am today and for that I am eternally grateful.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

MENA: Middle East and North Africa  
NDP: National Democratic Party (Mubarak Ruling Party)  
SCAF: Supreme Council of the Armed Forces  
NSF: National Salvation Front  
MB: Muslim Brotherhood  
FJP: Freedom and Justice Party  
SCC: Supreme Constitutional Court  
IAEA: International Atomic Energy Agency  
NUG: National Unity Government (Tunisian Initial Transition Government)  
RCD: Constitutional Democratic Rally Party (Ben Ali's Ruling Party)  
PDP: Progressive Democratic Party  
DPP: Democratic Patriot's Party  
UGTT: Tunisian General Labour Union  
AQAP: Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsular  
JMP: Joint Meeting Parties  
NFP: (Look up)  
PCND: Preparatory Committee for National Dialogue  
GPC: General People's Congress (Saleh's Ruling Party)  
GCC: Gulf Cooperation Council  
NDC: National Dialogue  
YSP: Yemeni Socialist Party



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## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### Introduction

The Arab Spring captured the world's attention when it broke out in late 2010 and swiftly spread throughout the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), so when it came to pick a topic for my Honors in a Major thesis I knew the Arab Spring is what I wanted to study. I was directed to an article, by my thesis chair Dr. Houman Sadri, written by Fareed Zakaria (2013) titled "Arab Spring's Hits and Misses". This article briefly discussed the outcomes of states that stressed elections (democratization) over constitutional change (liberalization) and vice versa.<sup>1</sup> Once I read this article I knew that I wanted to delve deeper into this idea.

The hypothesis formed for this study is that transitioning states transition by elections due to its power as a legitimizer and as a result hinder transition and create instability. To illustrate this both an independent variable (X) and dependent variable (Y) have been identified. The independent variable of this study is a focus put on electoral democracy over constitutional democracy as seen through the stress put on elections over a constitution. For the purpose of this study electoral democracy is defined as a government that focuses on the election of representatives by the people over the drafting or following of a constitution. While on the flip side constitutional democracy does focus on the election of representatives of the people but the drafting and following of a constitution take precedence, due to a constitution's role in guaranteeing civil liberties and reigning in government power.<sup>2</sup> The dependent variable (Y) of this study is instability that interrupts political transition towards democracy.

These variables have a strong positive correlation as will be seen in the three case studies. As in an increased emphasis on electoral democracy through an emphasis placed upon

elections positively correlates with an increased amount of instability that interrupts transition and vice versa.

### Significance

This research is significant because as a result of the Arab Spring, more and more states are throwing off authoritarian regimes that have ruled for decades by way of large civilian protest movements. Or forcing leaders to open up previously closed political systems due to fear of being over thrown by populous movements. This topic is theoretically significant because it is analyzing political transition in two of its forms that are occurring simultaneously in the MENA region through a liberal theoretical lens. That is by emphasizing the role domestic institutions, i.e. the legislative, executive, political parties, and etc., play in this transition. Policy wise, this topic is significant due in part that the Arab Spring states affected have major geo-political significance. Especially for the United States who have seen these regimes as a bedrock of stability and a corner-stone of its foreign policy for more than half a century. This being said States' have had a challenging time shaping policy on how they should handle these emerging regimes or if they should change policy when it comes to the regimes that survived the Arab Spring. So by illuminating some of the pit falls and successes of these post-Arab Spring regimes like this research is attempting to do will inform foreign policy crafters how they should frame their policy in the future. Along with how these policy crafters can create foreign policy that aids in enabling a more fruitful transition in this strategic region.

### Literature

The literature on this topic is quite extensive even though it has only been three plus years since the Arab Spring occurred. But even with this said there are many gaps that need to be

filled within the literature. I utilize three different types of source: books, academic articles, and news articles. Each offers different strengths for my research and must be discussed separately.

The first type of source this project utilizes is academic books, seven in particular. The first book used is Jamil Jreisat's (1997) "Politics without Process: Administering Development in the Arab World". This book covers the development policies and the administrative capabilities to accomplish this within the Arab world. It does not play a major part in this research but has one nonetheless.<sup>3</sup> The second book this project uses is Houman Sadri's (1997) "Revolutionary States, Leaders, and Foreign Policy: A Comparative Study of China, Cuba, and Iran". From Dr. Sadri's book I adopt his process of analyzing leaders and their effect on foreign policy and what that means for the State. But this project also adds its own twist to Sadri's analysis, by looking at leaders and analyzing not just their foreign policy but also their domestic policy and how that policy either contributed to political instability or stability.<sup>4</sup> The third book referenced is Albert Korany, Rex Brynen, and Paul Noble's (1998) "Political Liberalization and Democratization in the Arab World: Volume 2, Comparative Experiences". This book gives a thorough analysis of the liberalization and democratic movements and politics of the Arab World up into the late 1990's, providing a large amount of background analysis for this study.<sup>5</sup> The fourth book is Abo Baaklini, Guilain Denoeux, and Robert Springborg's "Legislative Politics in the Arab World: The Resurgence of Democratic Institutions". This book is a comparative analysis of the legislative politics of the Arab world by analyzing them through the lens of the democratic institutions present and those institutions' capabilities.<sup>6</sup> While none of these have an overarching impact on this project they exemplify the related literature on the topic. As well as provide

important background information about each cases unique experience with democratization and how that experience influenced each of the case study's Arab Spring experience.

The next several books discussed deal directly with the Arab Spring and this project. The first being Foreign Affairs' "The New Arab Revolt", this book is a collection of essays compiled by the academic journal Foreign Affairs that feature all the Arab Spring articles published directly before and directly after the Arab Spring broke out.<sup>7</sup> It shows the initial shock of the academic community towards the populous movements as well as to see the atmosphere of academic towards democratization in the Arab World. Then there's Brynen, Moore, Salloukh, and Zahar's (2012) "Beyond the Arab Spring: Authoritarianism & Democratization in the Arab World"<sup>8</sup>. Both of these works are books published by think tanks as a means of giving a comparative analysis of what occurred during the Arab Spring and what it means for the region. As well as giving individual analysis of what the Arab Spring means for each individual state and how each state reacted to it, which proved to be an invaluable source to this thesis. Finally there is Lin Noueihed and Alex Warren's "Battle for the Arab Spring: Revolution, Counter-Revolution, and the Making of a New Era".<sup>9</sup> This is the book published the latest since the start of the Arab Spring, giving it access to information that provided a more realistic analysis than the early literature.

The literature as it can be seen in the three plus years since the Arab Spring started has provided more than enough information to clearly answer the hypothesis of this project. All this thesis needs to do is illuminate details that other scholars have missed and add my own analysis.

Academic articles from peer-reviewed journals make up the bulk of the sources for this thesis and are the most important of the three. These articles add a perspective on what other

scholars thought of the movement and its aftermath. As such I discovered a very interesting phenomenon that came about due to the sheer amount of articles I read. All the evidence this study needed to prove its thesis on the instability caused by stressing elections was in these articles. But they are just hidden in others analysis as well as for the fact that different scholars analyze different parts of the same subject better. Allowing for different parts of their research to be taken and picked apart for what was relevant and apply my own analysis on it. These academic articles are separated by year because each year since the Arab Spring began the motif seen in the articles concerning these States follow a basic pattern.

In 2011 the year that the Arab Spring started the academic world was reeling from shock that this movement occurred in the first place and raced to catch up. But once articles started surfacing they mostly cover three main themes: what exactly happened and why, what will happen next and usually with a very optimistic tone, and describing the rise of the Islamists. This can be seen from Anderson's (2011) "Demystifying the Arab Spring"<sup>10</sup>, Maddy-Weitzman's "Tunisia's Morning After"<sup>11</sup> which both describe what occurred in the countries of Egypt, Tunisia, and Yemen and why it occurred. While certainly not the only ones written about the subject they are both the most wide ranging and in-depth that I have read. Articles by Martini and Taylor along with those published by the Africa Research Bulletin. These articles give a sort of road map of what people hope for in terms of government within Egypt, Tunisia, and Yemen. El Sherif's (2011) "Islamism After the Arab Spring"<sup>12</sup> and Hamid's (2011) "Rise of the Islamists"<sup>13</sup> both analyze the situation in which after the Arab spring what the future for the Islamist parties within Egypt and Tunisia hold.

Late 2011 and the rest of 2012 the focus of the articles change as well as the quantity of them swell. The themes shift to that of the democratic elections held, newly elected leaders, and the emerging problems. The African Research Bulletin (2011) does an exceptional job covering the elections within both Egypt and Tunisia. Along with Rabou's (2012) "Egypt After the Election: Towards the Second Republic"<sup>14</sup>, here the presidential election and parliamentary election results and explanations on what they mean for the future of Egypt are analyzed. The emergence of problems within these revolutionary states start to be illuminated in the literature quite often in 2012, first in Egypt and much later in the case of Tunisia. With the case of Egypt Brown's (2012) "Contention in Religion and State in Post revolutionary Egypt" gives the best analysis of the emerging problems within Egypt. Within this article he covers the emerging and ever increasing levels of polarization between the secular and more religious elements within Egypt.<sup>15</sup> The best article of that year that encompasses the emerging problems in more entirety would have to be Hilal's (2012) "Charting Transitions in the Middle East: Lessons Learned from Tunisia and Egypt". Within this article Hilal gives very in-depth analysis of a wide range of problems that are emerging in these two states and how to solve these problems.<sup>16</sup>

The articles that have emerged so far in 2013 concern the boiling over of these emerging problems that are seen in later half of 2012 and continued into 2013. One also notices the appearance of more articles focusing on Yemen as a result of the start of actual transition occurring in late 2012. Jones' (2013) "The Mirage of the Arab Spring" covers this topic the best in my opinion. He does a comparative assessment of how Arab Spring States have fared in the two years since the movement and the results are very disappointing. He mentions Tunisia as the only success but that is due to the article being published before the political turmoil that

characterizes Tunisia presently occurred.<sup>17</sup> By just looking at the literature on the states of Egypt and Tunisia and how the themes evolve over time it sheds light on what my thesis covers. What was originally seen as great steps towards democracy boiled over into polarization and political stalemate for both States. Thomas Juneau's (2013) "Yemen and the Arab Spring: Elite Struggles, and State Collapse, and Regional Security" is an excellent analysis of Yemen's transition to date. He also focuses on the institutions and how they influenced transitions, a research method that this study utilizes.<sup>18</sup>

This brings me to my next type of source: news agencies. This thesis relies on news agencies as a source, due to the fact that they allow one to see what exactly happened on a day-to-day basis from many different perspectives. This information can be taken and analysis applied to it as a means to build a substantial argument that proves this hypothesis. The news agency this study utilizes the most throughout this thesis is Aljazeera. This is for two major reasons: un-biased and distinct Spotlights. Aljazeera unlike many American news agencies is highly un-biased. They report what is happening when it happens and what the effect of that event is through many different perspectives. Due to this I was able to make sure I looked at current events regarding political transition within Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen through many different lenses so to speak. As well as being un-biased, Aljazeera also reports big stories such as the Arab Spring through Spotlights. These Spotlights are basically all the stories on that subject located in one place and show how things change over time in regard to that event. Spotlights also include videos that show the opinion of scholars and other politicians within the area. As well as they add new programs as the years go on regarding a topic and how it has changed with time. So for example the Arab Spring within Egypt initially started as the spotlight named



Egypt's Revolution covering the initial revolution and its immediate aftermath. Each time something would happen Aljazeera put out another spotlight to cover the topic. Until finally the most current one is named Unfinished Revolutions: Egypt, discussing why the revolution within Egypt is not yet finished and shines light upon the political instability that is plaguing the Egyptian State.<sup>19</sup> This goes for every single one of the case studies as well, illustrating why Aljazeera is such a useful source for my honors thesis.

#### Research & the Literature

This Research fits well into the literature that covers the Arab Spring and its aftermath. This is important because this subject within the field of International Relations, Comparative Politics is relatively new. Since the Arab Spring erupted only three years ago; this research will be a good addition to the literature that has come out covering the Arab Spring as well as fill more than a few gaps. Majority of the literature that has come out about the Arab Spring seeks to understand and explain why these large populous movements erupted and what they mean for the individual states across the MENA region. This study seeks to explain the failure of these protest movements after they deposed long-standing dictators by trying to identify the culprit responsible for this failure. According to this study this culprit is the type of political transition utilized by each state and tries to analyze what about the type of political transition resulted in these transitions being derailed. So by adding to that portion of the literature as my research does that will fill one gap. But there is also the fact that majority of the literature does not look at transition in the comparative sense. There are very few comparative studies analyzing two different types of political transition seen in the post-Arab Spring Middle East. So this study seeks to explain political transitions by looking at the types of democracy the transition focuses

on together in an comparative analysis as a means of explaining which transition is more beneficial to the region three plus years in. Doing this will most defiantly fill a much needed gap within the literature.

### Research Design

The research design of this project is one based upon case studies. This thesis is broken up into five sections also known as chapters. The first chapter is the introduction and will introduce the topic and what exactly the paper will cover. This is done by presenting the thesis, significance, literature, the project's addition to the literature, and the project's design. Chapter two and three are the case studies of Egypt and Tunisia. In these two chapters the Arab Spring, initial transitional government, newly elected legislature and election, executive branch, and the counter-revolution will be analyzed. The fourth chapter will be the case study of Yemen, and is organized by the Arab Spring, Gulf Cooperation Council transition deal, and the National Dialogue and transition. This chapter is organized differently from its two predecessors due to the unique nature of Yemen's experience with the Arab spring and its transition after President Saleh was deposed. But Chapter two through four will none the less attempt to illustrate how the focus of electoral democracy derails political transition leading to instability.

These three cases were chosen for numerous reasons. First off all three are Arab Republics that are largely ethnically homologous. Tunisia, Egypt, and Yemen also have a pre-existing relationship with multi-party democratic transition, these democratic experiments all being a failure. Resulting in the establishment of a regime headed by a strong dictator, with a military background. The final reason these three cases were chosen was that as a result of liberalization policies towards the economy mixed with large-scale corruption, resulting in the slowing of the

economy. Mixed with the presence of a large youth population that was both unemployed and disfranchised.

Chapter five is the conclusion. Within this chapter there will be a comparative analysis between the three case studies to see if there are overall themes present in all three case studies that prove the hypothesis of this project. Once the final conclusions are drawn the final portion of this chapter will address briefly what these findings mean for the wider Middle East region specifically for the Persian Gulf monarchies.

### End Notes

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16. Leila Hilal, "Charting Transitions in the Middle East: Lessons Learned from Tunisia and Egypt", *Insight Turkey* 14, no. 2 (2012): 1-12.
17. Seth G. Jones, "Mirage of the Arab Spring", *Foreign Affairs* 92, no. 1 (2013): 55-63.
18. Thomas Juneau, "Yemen and the Arab Spring: Elite Struggles, State Collapse, and Regional Security", *Orbis* 57, no. 3 (2013): 408-423.
19. See Aljazeera.com to view all the spotlights available.

## **CHAPTER TWO: TUNISIA**

### Introduction

The Arab Spring, a revolutionary movement, that spread throughout the Middle East and North Africa has its genesis in the small North African State of Tunisia. This chapter will analyze Tunisia's experience in the Arab Spring and the ground breaking political transition towards democracy that it undertakes after the mass uprisings. It will be shown that Tunisia's path towards democracy has been hindered due to the continuous focus on electoral democracy over constitutional democracy. Tunisian emphasis on elections during transition will intensify certain rivalries that were kept in check under Ben Ali's rule. Examples of these above mentioned rivalries are religious verses secular, fundamentalist Muslim verses moderate Muslim, old guard verses new guard. These rivalries being aggravated lead to polarization, government deadlock, violence, and institutional conflict all of which occur during the Tunisian transition. To illuminate this phenomenon this chapter will give an overview of the Jasmine Revolution that toppled Ben Ali. Then go on to analyze the National Unity Government and initial transition, the Constituent Assembly, the Executive, and last the summer of 2013 protests.

### The Jasmine Revolution

To understand what occurred after the revolution in terms of political transition it is important to understand Tunisia's revolution that allowed the whole process to begin. To adequately analyze the revolution that toppled Ben Ali a number of questions must be answered such as: who was involved, why the revolution occurred, how it occurred, and what it means for Tunisia.

The Jasmine Revolution or Dignity Revolution while having it roots in a small central town of Sidi Bouzid<sup>1</sup>, brought together massive sections of Tunisian society all working to

accomplish an end of Ben Ali's rule, usher in democracy, jobs, human rights, and etc. But the group that had the biggest impact in the Jasmine Revolution was Tunisia's liberal "youth bulge" ranging from the ages of 18-30.<sup>2</sup> These individuals not only played a large part in the demonstrations but also by getting the word out through numerous Internet mediums such as blogs, social media, etc. By the time the revolution reached the capital city of Tunis numerous other groups joined in to support the movement including teachers, lawyers, trade unions, and the unemployed.<sup>3</sup> In the end the combined effort of these groups succeeded in deposing Ben Ali ending his 23 years in power, providing an example for other states within the MENA region.

While the self-immolation of Mohamed Bouazizi in mid December of 2010 served as the catalyst that started the movement, the roots of why the Jasmine Revolution occurred go back much farther. These revolutionary roots can be divided into economic and political categories. Tunisia is home to a modern economy and large middle class that would normally transfer to good economic performance. Instead Tunisians especially the youth are facing large unemployment along with the fact that they are largely well educated. This is due to the massive amount of corruption among the upper classes especially surrounding the Trabelsi family, the family of Ben Ali's wife Leila. The result of this corruption was a large gap between the rich and poor along with the Trabelsi's monopolizing all the business opportunities in Tunisia through their connections with the state.<sup>4</sup> This neopatrimonialism lead to massive dissatisfaction among the citizens and played a large part in leading up to the revolution.

Ben Ali's 23 years in power started in 1987 when he succeeds his predecessor in a "bloodless coup"<sup>5</sup>. Since that time Ben Ali has won numerous elections through ballot stuffing, intimidation, and numerous other non-transparent or legitimate election techniques. Along with

this he also used his massive secret police force to keep the population in check and snuff out opposition quickly.<sup>6</sup> Ruling through fear like many other authoritarian rulers do. These factors along with the permitted political parties not representing the interests of the large young population within Tunisia leaving them with no political representation within their government. This resulted in large amount of resentment for Ben Ali and his regime along with the poor economic performance due to massive corruption from upper etalons created a volatile cocktail for a revolutionary movement.

The Jasmine Revolution started when a man by the name Mohamed Bouazizi lit himself on fire in front of a government building in the town of Sidi Bouzid to protest abuse and embarrassment at the hands of a police officer. Many Tunisians connected with his story due to the lack of opportunity or human rights under Ben Ali, his political party, or secret police. This resulted in protests starting in Sidi Bouzid and spread throughout the entire country eventually reaching the capital of Tunis. As the protests grew in intensity Ben Ali attempted to pacify the protestors by announcing that he would not run in the next election along with visiting Bouazizi in the hospital.<sup>7</sup> But these reactionary moves did nothing to placate the streets down and many saw them as too little too late. On January 14<sup>th</sup> after the army refused to move against the protestors Ben Ali fled Tunisia with his wife and three kids for Saudi Arabia<sup>8</sup>. Ben Ali fleeing Tunisia marked a success for the Jasmine Revolution, this successful largely nonviolent revolution sent out a clarion call for liberalization that shook the region. Tunisia now has the imposing task of transitioning from a police state to one of liberal democracy.

### The National Unity Government and Initial Transition

The National Unity government (transition government/NUG) that took over as the governing body of Tunisia after Ben Ali fled<sup>9</sup>. This government would have its share of problems that hindered its task to start Tunisia's transition to a multi-party democracy. This section will analyze how the NUG undermined democracy through the focus of elections, due to the legitimizing power that elections carry in a democratic system. This will be illustrated by analyzing the contention between the old and new political forces, the major motif for Tunisian transition, and what role the Armed Forces played during this time.

When Ben Ali fled Tunisia Foued Mebazaa the speaker of the Chamber of Deputies stepped in as interim President, as stipulated in Article 57 of the constitution. While the present Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi kept his position as was tasked with forming a government, who would lead Tunisia through transition until elections in early July.<sup>10</sup> This initial government under Ghannouchi was mired with problems from the beginning and interrupted the first stepped during transition. The government that Ghannouchi formed on January 17<sup>th</sup> was filled with old regime stalwarts from Ben Ali's RCD party and only three members of the opposition. Just one day after this government was formed the only opposition member resigned sighting the presence of old regime figures who would monopolize transition and that they could not be part of a government that included men that Ben Ali controlled.<sup>11</sup> This shows that the old regime elements were attempting to hold onto their power after Ben Ali fled by shifting into the new government. But the Tunisian people would not tolerate this and staged massive demonstrations thus ending the first transitional government before the end of January. On January 27<sup>th</sup> Ghannouchi formed a second National Unity government in which he reshuffled the cabinet and dropped the major RCD figures from it. However this did not silence the streets,



since Ghannouchi himself is associated with Ben Ali's regime the people were calling for his resignation as well. In an attempt to save his position as Prime Minister, Ghannouchi did several things to appease the fervor in the streets. Such as suspending Ben Ali's Constitutional Democratic Rally Party (RCD), the party would later be abolished by judicial decree. He also jailed figures that were prominent under Ben Ali's rule such as governors and police officers and seizing the assets of Ben Ali and his close associates.

But these moves while important did little to appease the people demonstrating in the streets for Ghannouchi's resignation as can be seen from the continuation of protests outside of the Interior Ministry and his office. Throughout this time period and until his departure from office Ghannouchi kept mentioning how he would step down once Tunisia held elections. This shows the legitimizing power elections hold during the transitional period and how Ghannouchi used them as a time line for his stay in office. But on February 25<sup>th</sup> 2011 Ghannouchi finally bowed down to public pressure and resigned thus ending the second transitional government of Tunisia.<sup>12</sup> This was an important and divisive moment for Tunisian transition because with Ghannouchi stepping down a new transitional government was appointed and this one did not contain any Ben Ali political figures making a clear break from the path.

With Ghannouchi's leave from office Beji Caid Essebsi was appointed Prime Minister and formed a new transitional government that would govern Tunisia and lead it through transition until the elections. Immediately Essebsi showed his devotion to the Jasmine Revolution by doing three things. He did not include any RCD members in his government and abolished the despised secret police, Ben Ali's major tool for keeping Tunisia under his control and silencing his detractors. But the most significant of these three initial actions was that

Essebsi scheduled the elections for July 24<sup>th</sup> 2011.<sup>13</sup> This series of actions undertaken by Essebsi worked as can be seen in the drastic reduction in both the size and number of demonstrations. So from the start the National Unity government has stressed electoral transition, through the emphasis of the election of a constituent assembly, due legitimizing power of elections. As can be illustrated by Ghannouchi stressing elections to legitimize his stay in office, while Essebsi used elections from the very beginning to legitimize his government being in power and foregoing the mistakes of his predecessor.

The Armed forces had an important role in both the revolution and subsequent political transition. Under Ben Ali there was a clear division placed on the importance of the security forces of the interior ministry and the armed forces. Ben Ali built up the security force to act as both a counter weight towards the armed forces as well as to act as the main enforcers of his government. as can be seen in the vast investment and numbers of the security forces totaling about 100,000 strong while the armed forces were neglected and benefited from less investment with their numbers coming in at around 35,000 men.<sup>14</sup> Yet Ben Ali's security forces were still unable to guarantee his stay in power. When the head of the elite Presidential Guard called a meeting with the heads of the armed forces and internal security forces to create a plan of action against the protestors in the street, but Rachid Ammar the Army Chief of Staff refused to act against the people.<sup>15</sup> This refusal to act against the demonstrators was a major catalyst for why Ben Ali fled so early in the Jasmine Revolution. Not only did he side with the people but when offered the task of governing Tunisia through the transition Ammar refused saying the armed forces would not interfere and that a civilian government should lead Tunisia through this period of transition.<sup>16</sup>

By doing this he depoliticized the armed forces and turned the army's focus to stabilizing the country and making transition as smooth as possible. This task of stabilizing Tunisia would keep the army busy with both the security forces still loyal to Ben Ali<sup>17</sup> and the Salafists actively trying to destabilize the country and transition<sup>18</sup>. Pursuing an agenda that was beneficial to the aspirations of the Tunisian people and reigning in the destabilizing security forces gave the Armed forces a sense of legitimacy in the eyes of the people. Supporting the upcoming parliamentary elections was a way for the Army to increase this prestige and further their influence in the future. This has the possibility to destabilize the transition from a police state to one of liberal democracy only time can tell which move the army will make. But what can be drawn from the period of the National Unity government and initial transition, that held power for nine months, is an emphasis on elections that was used a legitimizer and a battle for prominence between the old and new political forces. These two phenomena are a foreshadowing for the future of political transition within Tunisia.

#### Constituent Assembly and Elections

The Constituent Assembly being elected marks the end of the initial transition period and is an important step towards liberal democracy. This Assembly would be tasked with the dual responsibility of governing the country as well as drafting the new constitution that would be approved through referendum and be followed by new elections in 2013<sup>19</sup>. This body and the election that puts them in power are characterized by the rise of the Islamists and the presence of large degrees of polarization.

The Constituent Assembly elections themselves were scheduled by acting Prime Minister Essebsi to occur on the date of July 24<sup>th</sup> 2011. But this date was pushed many times and finally

occurred on October 23<sup>rd</sup> of that year. Essebi pushed back the date for three reasons. He stated that the elections could not be held among the unstable nature that Tunisia was in mainly due to the protests, time was needed for voters to register, and the political parties needed time to organize so they could campaign effectively.<sup>20</sup> But these parties that he was mentioning were mainly secular and liberal parties. But electing a Constituent Assembly stresses the role of elections as a vehicle for democracy and puts less emphasis on the importance of the constitution. The development of which is hindered by political deadlock within the Assembly as will be discussed later on in this chapter.

This period also saw the return of two major exiled political parties the Islamist Ennahda party and the secular Congress for the Republic party. Accusing them of terrorism and plotting against the state Ben Ali banned the Ennahda party. Its founder Rachid Ghannouchi was sentenced to life in prison and fled to London in exile, he utilized his place of exile as Ennahda's new base of operations. This new base of operations gave Ghannouchi 20 years to keep Ennahda organized, translating in their return Ennahda being the best organized and united party to run in the elections. After Ben Ali fled Ghannouchi returned from exile to a massive crowd of supporters at the airport that has been likened to Khomeini's return to Iran in 1979 after the Shah fled. This scene at the airport along with this comparison made many of the more secular and liberal minded Tunisians nervous; from their point of view they did not topple a dictator to establish an Iranian style theocracy. Ghannouchi and his Ennahda party tried to calm the fears of their political counterparts assuring them that they were moderate Islamists and modeled themselves after Turkey's Justice and Development party. This moderate stance would alienate Ennahda from the hardline Salafists, who started to make their presence known in Tunisia almost

always through negative means.<sup>21</sup> The other party to return to Tunisia is the Congress for the Republic (CPR) a center left secular party that focuses on civil liberties founded and led by Moncef Marzouki. After being banned by Ben Ali the party and its leader established itself in Paris. The CPR while being the best organized of the liberal secular parties still was unable to compete with its Islamist counterparts when it came to organization and fielding grassroots support.<sup>22</sup>

When the Constituent Assembly elections finally came about in October of 2011 they were a resounding success with 90% of registered voters voting. The election was seen as transparent and legitimate and was welcomed throughout the region and international community as a resounding success for the Arab Spring. The clarity and swiftness of the Tunisian elections gave the country international prestige and set precedence for the rest of the Arab Spring countries to follow.<sup>23</sup>

The results of the election had Ennahda as the clear victor claiming 89 of the 217 seats in the assembly but not a clear majority creating a need for them to form a coalition government. While the three major non-Islamist parties won a combined total of 65 seats out of the 217. The CPR being the clear winner in this category claiming 29 of the 65 seats, Ettakatol coming in second with 20 seats, and finally the Progressive Democratic Party (PDP) coming in third with 16 seats.<sup>24</sup>

These election results are interesting and shed light on a situation that most Tunisians faced. Seen throughout the world as the most liberal and secular Arab population one would think that a secularist party would do well in the Constituent Assembly elections. But after facing the secularist policies of Ben Ali for thirty years the Tunisian people were ready for the change

in direction that a mainstream Islamist party brought with it. As well as the fact that Ennahda as a party was more united and better organized than its opponent; also like other Islamist parties was very efficient at obtaining grassroots support through informal channels such as the mosque. Mistake made by other the secular and liberal parties also accounted for Ennahda performing as well as they did. These mistakes included not being united and serious problems with infighting, resulted in it not being able to obtain the amount of votes of their Islamist counter parts.<sup>25</sup> The election results foreshadow the future polarization with Ennahda taking a dominant role and the secular liberals scrambling attempting to keep up.

With the elections finished and a Constituent Assembly elected it was now time to decide who would lead the body and play a leading role in governing and the drafting of the new constitution. Due to Ennahda not achieving an overall majority in the elections they had to form a ruling coalition, they picked the CPR as their ruling coalition partners. The assembly elected CPR founder Moncef Marzouki as the acting president while Ennahda secretary general Hamadi Jebali was appointed prime minister. As was part of the coalition deal that both parties entered into. With an Islamists-secular coalition Jebali formed a government many thought of as stable, but as time would show it was only a façade as polarization reached a boiling over point.

This can be seen on many occasions but two in particular exemplify the polarization caused by the stress of elections in Tunisia's transition: the assassination of Chokri Beliad and Jabali's technocratic motion. The clearest example of the tension present within Tunisia as a result of polarization is the assassination of the secretary general of Democratic Patriots' Party (DPP) Chokri Beliad. The DPP was a secular- leftist party and the party along with its founder and leader Beliad were strictly anti-Islamist. On February 6<sup>th</sup> 2012 Beliad was assassinated by

gunman outside his home in Tunis due to his anti-Islamic feelings along with his outspoken criticism of Ennahda and other Islamists within Tunisia. It was discovered that the gunmen were Salafists, hardline Sunni Islamists who have been making their presence known in Tunisia and would continue to destabilize the transition and state. As a result of Beliad's assassination a number of opposition parties withdrew from the government and called for strikes across Tunisia. Many blamed Ennahda for not doing enough to keep the Salafists in check and allowing them to run rampant around Tunisia.<sup>26</sup> Beliad's assassination shook the country and put a spotlight on the polarization and how it was hampering Transition, this surprised many because Tunisia was looked upon as the gold standard in post-Arab Spring transition.

The After months of political deadlock within the Constituent Assembly and the assassination of Chokri Beliad, Prime Minister Jebali came up with a plan to end the deadlock as a means to continue Tunisia's transition towards democracy. He did this by putting forth a motion to create a technocratic government to rule allowing him to circumnavigate the deadlock of the assembly and get transition started up again. The details of this event will be covered in more detail later on in the chapter. But as a result of this motion the leftists and secularists within the Assembly walked out and threatened to quit the government if Jebali and his Ennahda supporters did not back down from their power grab.<sup>27</sup> The mass protests that erupted due to the assassination of Beliad and Jebali's technocratic government proposal destabilized Tunisia and required the reshuffling of the government before stability returned.

This episode of political turmoil and instability within Tunisia excellently illustrates why stressing elections over the formation of a constitution is counter-productive to transition. Elections functioned here as a legitimizer but this method of transition only works for a brief

amount of time. Without the framework of how government is supposed to function that a constitution provides carries negative consequences. High amounts of polarization occur and a zero sum attitude is adopted thus leading to political gridlock, this occurring within an assembly that is tasked with drafting a constitution interrupts the transition and creates instability.

### The Executive

After the election of the Constituent Assembly in 2011, who would lead the country had to be decided; it would be these people who would be a major guiding force through Tunisia's transition. This section will analyze how the executive hindered transition, which has its roots in stressing elections over the constitution, by examining the domestic and foreign policy it adopted.

As was decided in the Ennahda-CPR coalition deal Moncef Marzouki was elected President by the Constituent Assembly in a vote of 155-3 with 45 ballots left blank. Once elected Marzouki appointed Ennahda secretary general Hamadi Jebali as Prime Minister and charged him with forming a government. Within the executive Marzouki as president would function as the head of state while Jebali as prime minister would function as the head of government<sup>28</sup>, thusly both policies undertaken by the two men must be examined.

The domestic policy that both Marzouki and Jebali undertake differ greatly making it easier to pin down how each leader affected transition. The president being a secularist and the prime minister being an Islamist was thought to equate to a good balance and allow for a smooth transition. But as it will be seen this expected balancing effect would be tipped by the presence of high amounts of polarization.



Moncef Marzouki's domestic policy can best be described as walking the middle ground. Throughout his tenure he has consistently urged all sides to show restraint for the long-term benefit for the country. An example of this can be seen from his very first address as president where he urged all sides of Tunisian society whether they be an Islamist or part of the Tunisian General Labour Union (UGTT), a powerful force of opposition within Tunisia, to give the new government six months of peace to accomplish the goals of the Jasmine Movement.<sup>29</sup> Even in the numerous crises that have hit Tunisia during its transition Marzouki has always attempted to play the middleman and urge compromise. But Marzouki was never shy to criticize the Salafists, whom he thought were responsible for a lot of the instability within Tunisia.<sup>30</sup> To a large degree he was right this group has been violently lashing out in a means to establishing their puritanical form of Islam. These events include assaulting people, vandalizing and destroying property that sell alcohol, etc.<sup>31</sup> Alas Marzouki does not have the affect on the domestic policy that his colleague Jebali, the prime minister, had.

Prime Minister Jebali took a different route to ruling and navigating the sensitive politics of transition. Unlike Marzouki's policy of urging compromise Jebali decided upon a path of confrontation. The best example of this confrontational policy can be illustrated by the technocratic incident that occurred early in 2013. Instead of trying to resolve the differences that could lead to compromise and cooperation he instead attempted a power grab. This attempt to circumnavigate the government lead to an even bigger political drama playing out that eventually leads to his down fall and immense instability within the country.

When the Constituent Assembly hit a wall of gridlock that put the brakes on any progress mixed with the assassination of a major opposition figure that put the country into chaos. To

solve this crisis Jebali put forth a motion that would allow for the government to be run by a group of technocrats until new elections and a constitution would be ready. His goal was that this would allow for a quicker smoother transition. But if this motion passed it would reverse the progress and go directly against the aspirations of the Jasmine Revolution. The liberals and secularists immediately rebuked this action of what they saw as a deliberate move to usurp the democratic government and create a dictatorial one that they just overthrew. Jebali threatened that if he did not get a yes vote from the Assembly to proceed with his motion that he would resign thus bring the transition to a momentary halt. Not only did members within parliament disagree with Jebali's power grab but the people did as well.

Taking to the streets in the biggest demonstrations since the Arab Spring calling for the prime minister and his party to leave government. Ennahda seeing this as a threat to their position within the government at the present and in future elections abandoned their leader.<sup>32</sup> Thus resulted in Jebali's resignation and the failure of the first post-Arab Spring elected government in Tunisia.

This event had an immense impact on Tunisia; it ruined Tunisia's international image as a gold standard for Arab Spring political transition and that it was experiencing the same instability seen elsewhere through out the regime. It also put a halt on the transition since the parliament had to regroup and appoint a new prime minister and government. This shows the negative effects that elections have on post-Arab Spring governments. While offering a sense of legitimacy it is only a façade. If constitutional change would have been stressed over elections than this event occurring would have been highly unlikely. Since a constitution would have provided a framework of how the government has to operate it would cut down the ideological

polarization and make gridlock harder to achieve. As well as checked Jebali's power grab automatically forcing him to lose his legitimacy and not require the people to take to the streets in the way that they did thus decreasing the amount of instability within the state.

It was not long after Jebali's resignation that the prime minister-designate Ali Laarayedh presented to the president a new coalition government led by his Ennahda party. This new coalition government would lead Tunisia until the elections at the end of 2013.<sup>33</sup> This new coalition government was put together through last minute talks aimed at solving the political crisis caused by the technocrat incident, government deadlock, and the assassination of Chokri.

The foreign policy taken by Tunisia was a dual effort on both Marzouki and Jebali's part, so as result this section will analyze Tunisia's foreign policy as a whole and the effect of this policy change up. The most telling feature of this policy is the movement from a Europe centered policy to one of non-alignment. Under Ben Ali Tunisia's foreign policy was one that focused on catering the favor of European powers especially with France as a means to create foreign investment, along with to encourage Tunisia as a popular tourist destination for Europeans.<sup>34</sup>

These efforts were largely successful but with the ousting of Ben Ali Tunisia withdrew from this policy to one that embraced not just their northern neighbors but also their fellow Maghreb states along with their African neighbors to the south. This can be seen from Marzouki trying to revitalize the Arab Maghreb Union in order to alleviate poverty by integrating more with Tunisia's North African neighbors. Or through Marzouki stating in interviews that Tunisia's future rests in not just Europe but also Africa and so Marzouki has made it a point to travel to African Summits to make Tunisia's presence known a move that Ben Ali never did.<sup>35</sup> But beside

Tunisia attempts to open up relations with its neighbors the best illustration of the Tunisia's new non-aligned foreign policy can be seen in its stance on Syria.

Tunisia's stance has been one that supports the Syrian rebels but it against intervention by foreign powers. They feel that international strikes lead by the United States and other powers would only create a bigger problem in the end.<sup>36</sup> But this policy puts them at in a camp that is directly opposed to some of Tunisia's closest allies and sources of international aid. These donors include France, Turkey, UAE, and Kuwait all of whom support the rebels but want international intervention to bring down the Assad regime. Especially France who has been the biggest western power calling for the United States intervention into Syria and one of the major suppliers of arms to the rebels. France also happens to be Tunisia's largest source of aid amounting to about 375.6 million every year.<sup>37</sup> This stance has the possibility to alienate Tunisia from its allies and financial backers.

The mixture of focusing less on Europe and going directly against what has been Tunisia's close allies position on certain issues such as Syria has the possibility destabilize the country's transition. Leading up to the Jasmine Revolution Tunisia's economy had been slowing down and was a sticking point in the movements that ousted Ben Ali. After his ouster the economy got even worse due to the instability having negative effects on many industries in Tunisia especially tourism. By alienating these allies Tunisia could loose much needed foreign assistance as well as scaring off tourists located in Europe and the rich Persian Gulf states, who would no longer see Tunisia as a safe travel destination. Without these two things the economy would be negatively affected resulting in more domestic instability caused by the lack of economic opportunities for its citizens.

### Summer of 2013 Protests

With a new Ennahda lead coalition government in power after the fall of Jebali did not mean an end to the polarization and gridlock that characterized the constituent Assembly before Chokri's assassination or the technocratic incident. This behavior only intensified and came to a breaking point in July of 2013 when the opposition figure Mohamed Brahmi was gunned down in front of his house and family, in a similar style of his colleague Chokri. Brahmi was a nationalist and socialist, he was also a leader in the Popular Front coalition. Authorities in Tunisia released a statement saying that the same gun that was used in the assassination of Chokri was used in Brahmi, meaning that Salafi militants were responsible.<sup>38</sup>

The reaction from Brahmi's assassination was the same as Chokri's with Tunisians taking to the streets to protest. But this time a change in leadership was not enough. Around 60 members of the Assembly quit the government making the Constituent Assembly suspend its work indefinitely. Many of these MPs personally lead the protesters to sit ins at the interior ministry and out front of the constituent assembly. The protestors were calling for Ennahda to step down from power and put majority of the blame on the Islamist party like they did in the previous assassination. This period sees the largest protests in Tunisia since the Arab Spring and split society into two camps: anti-government and pro-government.

The anti-government protestors want to see the government disbanded due to what they see as an utter failure to fix the economy, produce a constitution, and rein in the militant groups present in Tunisia especially the Salafists. This group had the power UGTT on their side and the labor union released a statement saying that the government should resign and allow for a technocratic government to be placed in power like what was seen in Egypt.<sup>39</sup>

While on the other side the pro-government protestors uphold the legitimacy of the government as the elected representatives of the people. They say the anti-government protestors are lead by old regime figures that want a derail democracy. These rival protest groups clashed on several occasions and needed police to break up the clashes with teargas and other anti-riot tactics.<sup>40</sup>

The instability resulting in this latest episode of political deadlock and polarization resulted in national dialogue being called. Ennahda said it would resign but not until the constitution was finished, an electoral commission formed, and a date for new elections established. Even though they said they would resign Ennahda dragged its feet resulting in more turmoil on he streets. Finally Laarayedh, the prime minister, announced the date of the new elections would be on December 17<sup>th</sup> 2013. But this was too little to late for the opposition who called for the immediate resignation of the government. This leads to the national dialogue that began in October of 2013 and would have mediators attempt to compromise between the separate political factions within Tunisia. The goals of this three-week dialogue are to finish the constitution, electoral commission, and an election date that every faction can agree on. A technocratic government will then be placed in charge until the new elections.<sup>41</sup> This is the solution that was come up with to end the years of political deadlock, polarization, and instability that have characterized Tunisia since the fall of Ben Ali.

### Conclusion

Throughout this chapter it has been illustrated that the political transition towards democracy that Tunisia has embarked upon since the ousting of Ben Ali in the Jasmine Revolution has been a rocky one. This is due to the large amounts of polarization, political

deadlock, old versus new political forces, sectarian violence, and many more all of which stemmed from the stress placed upon electoral democracy over constitutional democracy. This is due to the power elections possess as a legitimizer and are often utilized to put a new government into power before a constitution is written. But the legitimacy that an election provides is only a façade that soon fades away once already present problems within society listed above become exacerbated.

Once these problems are exacerbated within the government body, in this case the Constituent Assembly, that is responsible for crafting the constitution that will provide not only a framework for how government is to be run along with a social contract the political transition comes to a grinding halt. Once this transition is interrupted the gridlock and polarization usually is reflected in society, who become dissatisfied and take to the streets usually amalgamating into two or more blocs. As can be seen in the summer 2013 protests where there was pro and anti-government movements that cashed in the streets on more than one occasion. This turmoil not only slows transition down more but it also has negative effects upon the economy within the state, by pushing away foreign investment as well as tourism both of which Tunisia is in dire need of.

Tunisia has the best chance of having a successful transition out of any of the other states affected by the Arab Spring. But this success relies heavily on the success of the national dialogue-taking place currently within Tunisia. This dialogue is an attempt to streamline the constitution process as well as provide a date for new elections and the formation of an electoral committee. With a new constitution and a new government whose sole goal is to govern has the potential to bring stability back to Tunisia. That and the success of security forces reigning in of

militant groups especially the Salafists who have been terrorizing the country throughout the transition process. Yet this reigning in of militant groups requires a stable government elected and backed with a set constitution so they can craft effective policy to battle these extremists.

While yes Tunisia has a long bumpy road ahead of itself in terms of becoming an established democracy. The success of the national dialogue, a finished constitution, and a new elected government under the auspices of this new constitution can make the road towards this long term goal a little bit smoother.



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## **CHAPTER THREE: EGYPT**

### Introduction

The populous movements that started in Tunisia and spread throughout the region, later to be known in the press as the Arab Spring shook the Middle East and the rest of the world. These revolutions unseated authoritarian regimes whose power and position were well entrenched and thought to be secure. This chapter will analyze Egypt's experience in the Arab Spring and more importantly the political transition towards democracy that it has embarked upon since the mass uprising. It will be shown that this democratic transition has been derailed through a focus on electoral transition over constitutional transition. An emphasis put on elections during transition within Egypt has highlighted and exacerbated factors already present within Egyptian society kept dormant under the iron fist of authoritarianism. Examples of this are the sectarianism both political and religious that shows itself in numerous forms such as religious versus secular, Muslim versus Christian, and old guard versus new guard. These divisions it will be shown lead to polarization, political deadlock, violence, and institutional conflict all of which hinder political transition. To illustrate this point the following chapter will start with a brief overview of the actual Arab Spring movement that unseated Mubarak then go on to analyze the Supreme council of Armed forces and the initial transition, the Parliament, the Presidency, and last the July 3<sup>rd</sup> coup d'état.

### January 25<sup>th</sup> Movement

To have a reasonable grasp on what has occurred in terms of political transition in Egypt it is imperative to start from the beginning and analyze the revolution that toppled Mubarak. For

this section to accomplish this a number of questions must be answered. Starting with who was involved, why it occurred, how it occurred, and what is meant for Egypt.

The Revolution or January 25<sup>th</sup> Movement as it came to be known brought together every aspect of Egyptian society all demonstrating towards the same goals: democracy, an end of Mubarak's rule, human rights, jobs, etc<sup>1</sup>. But the individuals who played the biggest part in making the revolution were the liberal youth between the ages of 18-30. Also known as the "youth bulge" a demographic characteristic seen across the board in Arab States.<sup>2</sup> Once the movement started to gain momentum other factions within Egyptian society started to join in, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, who were tired of living under the shadow of Mubarak and his cadre of crony capitalists<sup>3</sup>. While the Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia illustrated to the Egyptian people and Arabs across the region that deposing a long-standing dictator was possible, the roots of the Egyptian revolution go back much further than January of 2011. These roots can be divided into three main categories economic, political, and media. The years leading up to 2011 were some of the most economically prosperous for Egypt showing greater amounts of Foreign Direct Investment and privatization than the 15 years prior. But this growth was overshadowed by large unemployment, inflation, and a growing gap between the rich and poor. This is due to the large-scale corruption that is present at all levels within Egypt.<sup>4</sup> Privatization resulted in an "oligarchy of quasi-private sector companies controlled by figures related or close to the ruling elite"<sup>5</sup>. This resulted in the public viewing privatization of making the cadre of capitalists around the president rich while they remained largely jobless and facing abject poverty. While this wealth gap continued to grow with very few jobs being created the Egyptian economy was hit with massive inflation that ended up being crippling to majority of the Egyptian public<sup>6</sup>.

The economy was not the only feature within Egypt facing stagnation the political system was facing a similar problem. Mubarak's 2007 election laws made it increasingly hard if not impossible for political parties other than the ruling National Democratic party (NDP) to run candidates.<sup>7</sup> Coupled with that fact that the existing political parties were filled with old political figures that had nothing in common with the Egyptian youth. Leaving the massive youth population of Egypt without an inkling of political representation. The interior ministry, police and secret police, became increasingly brutal over this period of time only increasing Egyptians pre-existing hate for ministry.<sup>8</sup> But the final straw politically was the widely held belief that Mubarak was grooming his youngest son Gamal Mubarak to take over after his death like what was seen in Syria<sup>9</sup>. Living under the shadow of Mubarak and the state of emergency for the last three decades was viewed as too long for most Egyptians that a second Mubarak in power was unthinkable.

These economic and political problems coupled with the growth in independent media presented in the Arabic language, Al-Jazeera, also had a massive impact in igniting the revolution. These new news channels enabled Egyptians to see how the rest of the world lived. Along with disarming the propaganda machines within Egypt that attempted to present Mubarak as the protector of the people as well as the father of the nation, leading to many being disenchanted with the political system as a whole.<sup>10</sup>

The January 25<sup>th</sup> movement itself started on social media outlets and resulted in the mass protests in Tahrir Square. It took 18 days of large-scale non-violent protests for Mubarak to leave office ending his 30-year reign. While eventually stepping down Mubarak did attempt to sabotage the public out on the streets several times through use of violence or by attempting

small reforms mainly seen as too little too late. But after it was obvious that the people would not leave the streets until Mubarak stepped down the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) stepped in and deposed Mubarak in a soft coup.<sup>11</sup> This resulted in the SCAF, an integral part of the old regime, being in charge of the initial transition to democracy. It is this factor that is unique to Egypt's experience in the Arab Spring and why many scholars do not see the Arab Spring within Egypt as a revolution. While the January 25<sup>th</sup> Movement did not lead to total regime change it did depose Mubarak; an important step for Egypt where the entire state is centralized around the office of the executive. But the ousting of Mubarak would turn out to be the easy part while the transition to democracy would turn out to be a difficult and long road that is interrupted and stalled through the stress placed on electoral change, as it will be shown later on in this chapter.

#### SCAF & Initial Transition

The Supreme Council of Armed Forces or SCAF is the council of top generals that took over as a military junta after they deposed Mubarak in a soft coup<sup>12</sup>. They were entrusted by the people with the task of guiding Egypt through the process of becoming a multi-party democracy and forming a civilian government. This section will analyze how the SCAF deterred transition by analyzing their initial power grab, how they facilitated elections, and their numerous attempts to undermine democracy. It will be illustrated through this analysis that the SCAF used electoral change due to the legitimizing power of elections and how this change provided them an atmosphere to conduct their many schemes to stay in power.

The military, an integral part of the old regime, taking power and being in charge of the initial transition is what makes Egypt's case unique. Other Arab Spring cases were

uncomfortable with allowing an institution so close to the old regime guide them through the transition. As well as creating a situation where the Egyptian revolution is looked at as half complete due to the military being seen as the backbone of the ruling regime since the 1950's when the Free Officers Movement occurred. But the fact that the SCAF sided with the people in the streets, many whose vision for Egypt is the direct antithesis of the military's, is very telling. It reflects inter-regime rivalries between Mubarak and the military leadership mainly over Mubarak's attempt to create dynastic succession with his son Gamal. A similar sticking point that the population in the streets held not only for the fact that he was not well liked by senior leadership but also due to the fact that he lacks a military background, a characteristic that translates in a lack of trust between Gamal and the SCAF.<sup>13</sup> The SCAF also saw siding with the protesters as a means of keeping their political power and image. By siding with the demonstrators they got to keep their position as an integral part of the regime and this played out for them in that they got to play Egypt's guide through early transition. Their decision to betray Mubarak and force him to step down was also a brilliant public relations move. Egyptians already saw the military in a positive light, of respect and necessity; due to the institution employing members from every strata of society it is highly relatable for the people. This image only improved when they refused the order to clear Tahrir Square a fact that can be seen from the many social media pictures of protesters sitting on tanks and chants in the degree of "the people and army are one hand".<sup>14</sup>

Once Mubarak stepped down and the SCAF took control one of the first things they did was dissolve the Mubarak era parliament, whose seats were filled with National Democratic Party, Mubarak's ruling party, candidates and suspended the constitution. This was a way to

show the Egyptian people that they were making a break with the past and were serious about leading Egypt towards parliamentary elections and democracy. The SCAF then set up a committee and drafted an interim constitution and presented it to the Egyptian people on March 19<sup>th</sup> 2011 by way of referendum. This referendum had three major themes. It gave a brief overview of what the presidency would look like within Egypt mainly by defining who could run for office and a few other factors meant to scale back the executive's power such as term limits. It also empowered the judicial branch by giving them full oversight over elections. But the most important and far reaching effect of this referendum is that associated with how to amend and/or rewrite the constitution. It gave this responsibility to the new parliament who would be responsible for electing a 100 member constitutional assembly to make the required changes<sup>15</sup>. The problems with this are that it puts emphasis on elections over the constitution that can lead to many problems. This is because two of the main functions of the constitution are provide a framework of rules on how things are to be run within government. As well as provide the basis of the social contract between the government and the people and the two will interact an idea going back to Rosseau.

While the basic function of the parliament is to give a proper space for the population to air grievances by way of their representatives, resulting in a body that represents the whole spectrum of society<sup>16</sup>. Without this framework provided by the constitution than a group who claims an overwhelming majority can usurp the whole process leading to minorities being sidelined. In a region such as the Middle East and its contemporary history of sectarian conflicts sidelining groups leads to far reaching negative effects counter-productive to democratic transition. This is effectively what happens in Egypt when the new parliament is elected and will



be covered in greater detail later on in this chapter. With over five decades of political experience the SCAF knew the risks of focusing on elections over constitutional change. It was the first step in their attempts to undermine democratic change and they did it for several reasons. The first is that elections are a legitimizing force and provide a facade that the SCAF is leading Egypt towards serious transition. Stressing elections also leads to quicker parliamentary elections; this translates into the SCAF not being burdened with the day-to-day tasks of government<sup>17</sup>. Making the new parliament the scapegoat for the growing problems within Egypt and preserving the SCAF and militaries image. While at the same time giving them time to consolidate their power so that with the rise of a civilian government they stay a central roll in Egyptian politics and economics.

But by pursuing numerous schemes to inhibit transition the SCAF threatened the very legitimacy the people entrusted in them and as a result when they over stepped their bounds the people would take to the streets to act as a counter balance. The most notorious example of the SCAF attempting to grab power can be seen in the Declaration of the Fundamental Principles of the New Egyptian State also known as the al-Selmi Communiqué. This was a supra-constitutional document that was presented by the interim Deputy Prime Minister Dr. Ali El Selmi in close conjunction with the SCAF. This document gave far-reaching powers to the SCAF making the military more politicized and free from the control of other state institutions and over the drafting of the new constitution. In respect to the growth in power this document gave to the military it gave them the right to “defend constitutional legitimacy”, oversight of the military budgets and appointment, and veto power when it comes to military related legislation. If passed this would take the parliaments power to check the military away from the institution as

well as allow the military to intervene within government whenever they felt it was necessary. This would not only create a non-proportional checks and balances system in a system where the executive is already the center of political power but it would also hinder the development of full democracy. This document also gave the SCAF more control over the writing of the new constitution. In the referendum given to the people in March of that year the responsibility of rewriting the constitution was given to a 100 member constitutional assembly selected from inside the parliament. But this new document only gave the parliament responsibility for selecting 20 percent of the 100-member assembly with the rest being appointed by the SCAF from various sectors of Egyptian society<sup>18</sup>. Thus giving the SCAF an overwhelming influence in the writing of the new constitution. This had three major benefits for the SCAF: with their power to appoint half the assembly they could outvote the Islamists within the assembly, if the assembly did not meet the six month deadline due to deadlock they could appoint a new one, and if all else fails they could utilize their veto power.

The communiqué as a whole was the military's response to feeling threatened. They saw the trends occurring within the country especially with the rise of the more Islamist elements of society and this made the SCAF uncomfortable. They did not like the idea of a civilian government especially one filled with Islamists, the military's longest most outspoken critic, having control over their actions and budget. This civilian government having control over the budget was a major sticking point it would threaten the vast military-industrial complex<sup>19</sup> present in Egypt. As well as their major international sponsor, the United States, due to the fact that Washington gets anxious when it comes to the subject of Islamists in power and could translate into them cutting the immense amount of foreign military aid they provide to the

Egyptian military. While a devious way to keep their power in the presence of an unstable civilian government it was an obvious power grab that both experts and Egyptians saw through.

The SCAF underestimated the desire for change that Egyptians had and they would not tolerate old regime practices of holding onto power in a new light. Upon seeing this power grab Egyptians took to the streets and well as reoccupied Tahrir Square in numbers not seen since the revolution that toppled Mubarak. As these protests intensified the SCAF had no choice but to abandon the document and Selmi was forced to step down<sup>20</sup>. The basic sentiment among the people was that they did not topple one military dictator to be ruled by a group of military dictators. But with the election of the parliament and later a president the SCAF seemed to fade off into the back ground but it would come to pass that they did not stop their attempts to grab power and in the summer of 2013 their attempts succeeded, an event that will be covered later on within the chapter.

### Parliament

Even though it took almost a year after deposing Mubarak the parliamentary elections at the end of 2011 were hailed as a success for the January 25<sup>th</sup> movement and that transition was back on track. But it was this need to legitimize the transition through emphasis of electoral change over constitutional change that would exacerbate dormant rivalries within Egyptian society and eventually lead to the political deadlock that has characterized Egyptian politics since the revolution. This section will analyze the parliamentary election, the quagmire of the constitutional assembly, the dissolving and reinstating of parliament, and the rise of the National Salvation Front (NSF).

The 2011 parliamentary elections were governed by a set of poorly written election laws drafted up by the SCAF and can be described in one word: convoluted. These laws not only confused the candidates running for office but also the voters themselves.<sup>21</sup> But never the less these elections were met with great enthusiasm and an atmosphere of transparency, especially considering the growing trend of apathy towards voting that occurred throughout Mubarak's reign. The results of this election yielded a result that many of the more secular elements within Egypt and the West feared but expected. The Muslim Brotherhood's (MB), moderate Islamists, Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) won a majority with 47 percent of the parliamentary seats. While the ultra-conservative Salafists al-Noor party won 25 percent of the seats.<sup>22</sup> This was a huge victory for the Islamists, a group that has faced wide spread persecution under authoritarian rule, within Egypt.

The Islamists performed exceptionally for several reasons. First the timeline for these elections was so brief that between the lack of time and new election law the secular and liberal political parties could not organize or solve internal disputes in time to stand a fair chance. Especially when the Muslim Brotherhood, almost a century old, is well practiced in organizing and fielding their resources to gain grass root support. This is due to the vast amount of social welfare programs the MB provides to the Egyptian lower class; these programs include healthcare, teaching, prayer, and etc<sup>23</sup>. Therefore the MB enjoys the political support and votes of a large proportion of those Egyptians living in poverty.

While the Salafists, an ultra-conservative group who believes Islam plays a central role in all circles of life and is a relatively new player in Egyptian politics. Their al-Noor party was able to gain the large amount of seats through their control of numerous mosques within Egypt<sup>24</sup>. This

group rose as a challenger to the MB forcing them to present a split identity, to the secularists they would put on their moderate stance but to the Salafists they would take on a more hard line Islamist stance. This lack of a concrete position would create confusion over what the MB's platform was and would be used against them later on. But the liberals and more secular political forces could not compete with the "rise of the Islamists" as it came to be known for many reasons. Internal disputes being the main one, resulting in an inability to unite and pool their resources to successfully compete against the highly organized Islamists<sup>25</sup>. These forces also lacked the organizational capabilities of their Islamist counter parts. Results of the parliamentary elections did illustrate a theme a prominent theme of Egyptian transition; that is a growing sense of political sectarianism between the religious and secular political forces. While the FJP did form a coalition with secular elements this was a political move and the coalition soon fell apart.

One of the parliament's main duties was to elect the 100 member constitutional assembly from within its ranks of whom would go on to draft a new constitution. But before much work was done two things happened to interrupt the writing of a new constitution. First the majority of the secular members walked out citing that the Islamists were monopolizing the new draft and they would boycott the constitution<sup>26</sup>. Then the Supreme Constitutional Court (SCC), Egypt's highest court, dissolved the whole parliament saying it was illegitimate due to the occupation of seats by party candidates that were meant for independent candidates resulting in the SCAF resuming legislative responsibility<sup>27</sup>. This highlights not just the ideological polarization but also the institutional polarization present within Egypt and is the beginning of a political war that would play out between the legislative and judiciary. The executive would pick up this fight when the president is elected and reinstates parliament and the assembly to finish the

constitutional draft. Critics of this decision say the SCC, an institutional body stacked with Mubarak era judges<sup>28</sup>, are trying to derail transition because they feel threatened by the Islamist within parliament and Morsi the FJP presidential candidate.

But once the President reinstated Parliament against judicial decree so they could continue drafting a constitution, polarization only sharpened especially when the secularists walked out yet again. This did not stop the Islamists from continuing the draft rather it enabled them to rush through the process, all the while pulling the document more into their ideological camp, and swiftly push its approval through parliament<sup>29</sup>. This 2012 constitution did not represent the entire Egyptian society and many boycotted the referendum vote. Yet it was approved with haste and become a sticking point for the opposition that would manifest itself in the summer of 2013. Numerous attempts for the Islamists to monopolize the political game within Egypt lead to the opposition in desperate need to organize and unite.

This organized and united front presented itself in a new movement called the National Salvation Front (NSF) and was the merging of numerous political parties as a means to counter these Islamist power grabs. The major player within the NSF was former International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) chairman and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Mohammad ElBaradei. ElBaradei is a well-liked politician and very popular abroad due to his superb record as chairman of the IAEA<sup>30</sup>. Having him as a central figure gave the Egyptian opposition a degree of international legitimization a factor that would embolden it. The positive effects of this movement are that it gave the opposition a chance to actually compete in the political process. But while it did indeed give them a better chance it also drove political polarization deeper and eventually lead to deadlock. With the NSF boycotting everything the Islamist government

attempted to do and adopting a zero-sum attitude. This zero-sum attitude is detrimental to transition for obvious reasons. To have a legitimate and meaningful transition there needs to exist a sense of understanding and maturity among all groups involved. This understanding and attitude towards others allows for an atmosphere of serious discussion where real compromise, the heart of any democratic action, can take place. But this was nowhere to be found within Egypt neither side was willing to compromise and allow the country to move forward. Yet this high degree of polarization that has characterized the parliament since its election has only highlighted differences and increased instability. An occurrence which is sad due to the fact that while parliamentarians argued over the same issues day after day you can see the general exhaustion of society who so desperately want some stability so they could move on to a brighter future.

#### The President

The election of an executive to lead the country is an important step in any political transition. Especially for Egypt due to the fact that historically speaking the political power within Egypt has been centralized within the office of the executive<sup>31</sup>. So depending on who gets elected it will give the Egyptian people and experts alike an idea of what to expect on how the country's transition will pan out. This section will analyze the way in which stressing presidential elections in the already unstable political environment of Egypt negatively affected political transition. This will be achieved by observing the presidential elections as well as both the domestic and foreign policy undertaken by the new president.

The presidential elections were called 15 months after the SCAF took over Egypt and was hailed as one of the most important political events since the revolution that toppled

Mubarak. But using elections, as a legitimizing device is what has put Egypt's transition in trouble thus far and as it would be seen drag the country into deeper instability. The surprising part of the presidential elections was not who won at the end but who did not win in the beginning. The two candidates who were favored to win the first round of elections were Amr Mussa, former Arab League head and foreign minister, and Abdel Moneim Aboul Fotouh, an independent Islamist candidate. These two politicians even conducted the first televised presidential debate in Egyptian history. But to the surprise of many Egyptians on May 28<sup>th</sup> when the Election Commission announced the two finalists, neither one was the two initially favored to win.<sup>31</sup>

The candidate in the lead was Mohammed Morsi, the Muslim Brotherhood's second choice candidate, and Ahmed Shafiq, a military man and former Prime Minister under Mubarak<sup>32</sup>. The fact that the first presidential election since the revolution would be a faceoff between the Muslim Brotherhood and the military discouraged many Egyptians. As can be seen in the number of people who voted in the second round of elections. Morsi, while not being associated with the old regime, did run on a religious platform. This made many of the secularists and religious minorities such as the Coptic Christians uncomfortable. He did pledge to honor the goals of the January 25<sup>th</sup> Movement and not alienate secularist and minorities<sup>33</sup>, but many of these groups still did not trust him. Shafiq on the other hand was seen as a bringer of internal stability, a major part of his running platform, yet many people saw him as a new Mubarak and a lackey of the SCAF<sup>34</sup>.

In the eyes of most moderate Egyptians they had to choose between the lesser of two evils so they either voted on whom they thought would do less damage or just stayed home



exasperated by the results thus far. Needless to say Muhammad Morsi won by a slight majority and became the Republic of Egypt's fifth president<sup>35</sup>. He was sworn into office in a symbolic and nationalistic ceremony in the middle of Tahrir Square. An example of this symbolism can be seen when he opened his suit jacket to reveal that unlike his predecessor, Mubarak, he was not wearing a bulletproof vest.<sup>36</sup> This was meant to show that he was one of the people and did not need a vest since they the people were his protection. The ceremony also was meant to show transparency as the people's president and to show his legitimacy, a fact that would become a motif of his presidency. There was also a second ceremony on a base outside Cairo; this is where the SCAF legally bestowed Morsi with presidential powers.<sup>37</sup>

Now that Egypt has a democratically elected president many were optimistic that transition could now occur at a smoother pace. But not long after taking office these hopes were dashed. Due to Morsi Undertaking a domestic policy that put him in a collision course with two of the most powerful institutions within Egypt, alienating another important institution, and unwise appointments.

The first so to speak battle between the executive and an institution was with the SCC and Judicial Branch. There are several factors that must be covered in this conflict especially due to the fact that some of the most controversial issues of Mori's presidency occur due to it. The SCC has a long history of checking the presidential power when it comes to the election of a parliament and the laws that elect the body. The exertion of judicial authority can be seen under Mubarak where the 1987 and 1990 assembly was dissolved due to a SCC ruling against the parliamentary body.<sup>38</sup> This battle between Morsi's executive and the judicial branch starts when he goes against the SCC ruling and reinstates the Parliament and Constitutional Assembly. With

this body reinstated they could continue to draft the constitution thus moving the transition process forward. In response to Morsi's disregard to their legal ruling the SCC and Judicial branch said they would boycott any constitution the assembly came up with.<sup>39</sup> This boycott of the judicial branch creates a situation that is counter-intuitive to transition because the power to oversee the referendum and adding an air of legitimacy to the constitution rests in the judicial branch alone.

In response to this boycott on November 22<sup>nd</sup> 2012 Morsi made what some tend to think as one of the biggest if not the biggest mistake of his tenure. He issued a presidential decree that bestowed upon him sweeping powers that would allow him to circumnavigate the Judicial Branch<sup>40</sup>. This presidential decree was meant to do two major things. First it was how Morsi felt he could move transition forward and end the deadlock created by both the Judicial branch and the Liberal Secularists within Parliament. It also served as Morsi's way of testing the waters so to speak viewing how far the various aspects of Egyptian Society would allow him to go. Yet this political experiment blow up in his face. Polarization within Egypt hit an all time high after this decree with people taking back to the streets and staging protests<sup>41</sup> whose size and violence had not been seen since the January 25<sup>th</sup> Movement. To curtail the street demonstrations staged by his opposition Morsi imposed curfews in numerous cities<sup>42</sup>, but instead of bringing the streets to order like it was meant to this curfew only angered demonstrators leading to more chaos. Along with the demonstrations the rise of the National Salvation Front, a fusing of numerous opposition groups into a single party<sup>43</sup>, was the direct result of this presidential decree. As discussed earlier in this chapter the NSF provided a united front for the Liberals and Secularists that lead to a higher degree of polarization. This added with the hastily drafted and approved

constitution lead to the adoption of a zero-sum attitude towards negotiations with Morsi and the Islamists. Due to Morsi's lack of political dexterity and calculation he exacerbated an already polarized representative body and population causing a deadlock, a phenomena he was unable to break and create a consensus to move transition forward.

Not only did Morsi create a rivalry between the Judicial Branch for power but he also went toe to toe with the most powerful institution in post-revolutionary Egypt: the SCAF. He did this by supporting the younger generation of officers over the older well-established leaders of the SCAF. By forcing the two leading members of the body, Mohamed Hussein Tantawi and Sami Hafez Anan, into retirement bestowing special honors on them and promoting them to the largely irrelevant position of advisors.<sup>44</sup> This was really Morsi supporting a power grab by younger officers and Tantawi was replaced by General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi<sup>45</sup> as head of the SCAF and ergo the military. Morsi did this as a way to separate the close relationship between the SCAF and the executive. By giving himself more autonomy to enact his policies while gaining a useful ally in the SCAF leadership.

This is a bold step for Morsi's domestic policy because it was his attempt to but some influence over the SCAF by supporting a soft coup within the leadership and discharging with long standing leaders within the body. While the power transition was relatively smooth it had the possibility to destabilize the whole country both through the lens of security and economics. Heavy fighting against jihadists in the Sinai and the possibility for this violence to spread<sup>46</sup> a shake up within the leadership could make it more difficult for the security forces to keep the already shaky stability within the state. As well as it could put the massive military industrial complex<sup>47</sup> within Egypt at risk and with the Egyptian economy already in dire straits it could

drive the country into a deeper recession. But on a ironic note Morsi supporting al-Sisi's rise to power within the SCAF would come back to haunt him with the same man he supported would turn out to be the bringer of Morsi's political doom.

Besides his confrontation of institutions directly through his policies like what was seen with the Judicial Branch and the SCAF, Morsi also alienated the institution of the Coptic Christian Church in a different way. He did this by just ignoring the atrocities being committed against their community by hardline Islamists such as the Salafists and did nothing to stop these events from occurring. These atrocities include the burning of their churches as well as physically harming the Coptic minority.<sup>48</sup> Morsi just brushed these incidents under the rug so to speak as well as painted them in a negative light through use of the state propaganda machines. This resulted in the Coptic's who have always been weary of Morsi becoming some of his harshest critics and playing an important role in the demonstrations against him. Through his confrontation and alienation of institutions within Egypt Morsi instead of succeeding in moving transition forward put the brakes on it. He did this by contributing to the polarization seen in post-Mubarak Egypt increasing it until it reached a point where compromise was highly unlikely.

Morsi's domestic policy that was counter-intuitive to democratic transition did not stop at his policy towards institutions. Throughout Morsi's tenure there were several appointments made by him that focused more along ideological lines instead of the ability to do the job. This was what many term as the Muslim Brotherhood's power grab and is when the organization through its party attempted to fill positions of power and influence with their own members and allies. Since being effectively locked out of the political process for most of its existence, the MB finally saw this as their chance to play a major role and take the reins of directing Egypt. But this

angered many of the other members of society because they saw these appointments for what they were party loyalty over state loyalty. Majority of the people saw this as Morsi lacking political autonomy in his decision making process and effectively being controlled by the Freedom and Justice Party and the MB leadership. The most prolific example of this MB power grab through position appointments can be seen in Morsi's appointment for the governor of Luxor. Adel al-Khayat was appointed by Morsi as governor of Luxor, a major tourist destination within Egypt, and is a hardline Salafist; his appointment was an attempt to solidify Morsi's support from the Salafists within Egypt. But besides the obvious bias with this appointment what angered Egyptians was that al-Khayat is a member of Gamaa Islamiya the group responsible for the massacre of tourists within Luxor in 1997.<sup>49</sup> Putting someone who was responsible for such an atrocity in power is politically unwise and had two major effects. It further deters tourists from Luxor harming the already hard hit tourist industry within Egypt leading to even greater economic instability. But the principle of the appointment and how obvious the opposition views Morsi's biased policies are becoming only solidified their zero-sum attitudes towards comprise with the President and his Islamist supporters within government.

But Morsi's job as president is to not only form domestic policy but he is also the framer of Egypt's foreign policy. With this said it is important to look at his foreign policy to see if it destabilized Egypt further by alienating Egypt on the international stage. Egypt is one of the founders of the Non-Aligned Movement that came as a bi-product of the Cold War international system. Simply it was a way for the Third World to claim neutrality and provided options that translated into a sense of foreign policy independence<sup>50</sup>. But while Egypt was a founder of this movement under Nasser once Sadat came to power and furthered by his successor Mubarak took

power, Egypt drifted farther and farther into the West's sphere of influence. Mainly through Egypt's relationship with the United States as can be seen from the extensive amount of foreign aid provided by the United States that both the Egyptian military and economy heavily rely on. The close US-Egyptian partnership can also be illustrated in the Egyptian government giving the United States its full support in the widely controversial War on Terror.

But it is known that the MB and the other Islamist elements now in control within the Egyptian government do not share the same western-ophile feeling of their technocratic predecessors. This gave Morsi a unique challenge as the framer of foreign policy. Morsi had to live up to the ideology of his supporters and the party that he stems from that favor Non-Alignment as a foreign policy due to the way it easily fits in Islamist political ideology. While a shift away from Egypt's western allies, like his supports wish, could have severe political repercussions. For one if there were a complete shift away from the west then that would risk losing the billions of dollars worth of US aid. Possibly resulting in a military coup staged by the SCAF who refuse to lose the billions of dollars worth of military aid that the United States provides.

To play things safe Morsi continued to keep a close relationship with the United States while slowly drifting away from its sphere of influence so that he could appease both sides. But this slow drift to a more Non-Aligned position was perceived by many around the globe as policy geared against western interests. One of these major foreign policy changes was re-opening diplomatic relations with Tehran and a warming of the frosty Egyptian-Iranian relations. Illustrated by President Morsi's visit to Iran for a Non-Aligned conference making Morsi the first Egyptian President to visit Iran for official business since 1979.<sup>51</sup> While seen by some as a

harmless gesture this was a very symbolic move. Iran is currently under heavy sanctions due to its nuclear policy, the implementation of sanctions being a policy spearheaded by Washington and its allies. Morsi reintroducing these ties shows that he is attempting to take Egypt back to its diplomatic roots and step away from complete western influence.

Changing up Egyptian foreign policy has significant destabilizing effects for Egyptian transition. First off it alienated Egypt's allies who could provide the country with resources, mainly money that the economy drastically needed. Such as the 450 million dollars in aid the United States promised to provide as well as the vast amount promised from the Saudis and other Persian Gulf countries excluding Qatar<sup>52</sup>. With this change up in policy as well as several of the factors discussed earlier many in Washington and Riyadh were weary to provide a government controlled by the MB with the aid they promised. The Secular and Liberal forces in Egypt condemned this change up in policy that they saw as selling Egypt to the Iranians and Qataris. Thus providing another dimension for polarization to surface within Egyptian politics and only digging the divisions deeper in an already divided society.

President Morsi's election was initially met with great promise thinking that with an elected president, transition could continue on a somewhat smoother path. Since the president could act as a figure of compromise bridging the gap between the different political groups in Egypt to end the polarization and deadlock. But instead of this Morsi went down a different path. This path included challenging the Judicial Branch and SCAF along with alienating the Secularists, Liberals, and Coptic Christians. While at the same time backing his Islamist supporters and their attempts to monopolize the transition process and grab the reins of power for themselves. Along with a foreign policy that further alienated these different political sects as

well as Egypt's traditional western allies. Through the undertaking of this policy Morsi instead of pushing transition forward brought it to a screeching halt. Making an environment where polarization reached an all time high as well as the adoption of a zero-sum attitude by the opposition creating an environment where compromise could not take place. While all this derived from policies that Morsi undertook it all started with the stress of electoral democracy over constitutional democracy. A presidential election without a new democratic constitution allowed for the poor policy undertaken by Morsi to derail transition. Morsi's lack of political dexterity as well as a unifying agenda would come to a boiling point only a year after his inauguration with the July 3<sup>rd</sup> when a military coup ousted him from office along with his party.

#### July 3<sup>rd</sup> Coup

In July 2013 the problems that have been stalling and derailing Egypt's political transition reached a boiling point resulting in a military coup. The coup that transformed Egypt's transition will be analyzed by looking at what happened, why it happened, and the effect of this event.

The coup that removed Morsi from office and placed the transition into the opposition's hands started weeks before the actual event. In the weeks leading up to the first anniversary of Morsi's election as president the Tamarod movement<sup>53</sup>, an opposition group, called for protests demanding for early elections. The other factions of the opposition including the National Salvation Front, April 6<sup>th</sup> Youth Movement, and Coptic Christian Church joined in on these demonstrations calling for the president to step down and hold early elections. The demonstrations themselves were staged in numerous large cities across the country but the retaking of Tahrir Square captured the media's attention. These demonstrations ended up being



some of the largest in Egyptian history with even the police joining in calling for the downfall of the President.

Seeing these anti-Morsi demonstrations the President's supporters called for demonstrations to counter the oppositions and show their support for Morsi. These demonstrators belonged to the National Coalition for the Support of Legitimacy and consisted of mainly the Muslim Brotherhood and their supporters. While their political opposites were retaking Tahrir Square they concentrated their pro-Morsi demonstrations in Nasr City outside the Rabia al-Adawiya Mosque.<sup>54</sup>

On July 1<sup>st</sup> 2013 after seeing the atmosphere of Egypt General al-Sisi declared an ultimatum to both the President and the Egyptian People. Morsi had 48-hours to bring the multiple political factions of Egypt together to solve the political crisis as well as satisfy the demands of the Egyptian people in the street. If this deadline was not met the SCAF and the military would impose their own road map to solve the political crisis that has been gripping Egypt.<sup>55</sup>

Following this declaration all of the non-Freedom and Justice Party ministers within the government resigned leaving Islamists as the only remaining representatives within government. Morsi rejected this ultimatum saying he was the legitimate President of Egypt and would bring about consensus in a way he sees fit and not be swayed by threats from the military. The solution Morsi sought to enact was the forming of a consensus government to solve the political crisis.<sup>56</sup> But this last minute attempt to bring the opposition to the bargaining table to compromise and move transition forward thus ending the crisis failed.

The opposition as well as the anti-Morsi protestors in the street saw this solution as too little too late and wanted more than anything to see him gone. The military's ultimatum gave them exactly what they wanted, an Egyptian government free of Morsi and his heavy-handed policies towards the Secularists and Liberals. When the deadline of the ultimatum came, on July 3<sup>rd</sup> 2013, Morsi was still defiant of the military's deadline that would expire later that night. Sticking to the words from a speech he gave the night before that he "would protect his constitutional legitimacy with his life"<sup>57</sup>. Morsi was under the assumption that since he was democratically elected that he could save his position due to the legitimacy elections bestow upon those who win. But in the eyes of the many Egyptian's protesting his rule throughout the country he lost his legitimacy and was now just the Muslim Brotherhood's president instead of Egypt's.

Throughout the day of the ultimatum deadline General al-Sisi met with numerous leaders from different spectrums of Egyptian society in order to get their support for Morsi's departure. Besides support for the coup al-Sisi also wanted to get these leaders support for his proposed road map for Egypt's political transition. These leaders include Pope Tawadros II the head of the Coptic Christian Church, Grand Imam of al-Ahzar Ahmed al-Tayeb, Mohammad al-Baradei from the NSF, numerous youth leaders from Tamarod and the April 6<sup>th</sup> Youth Movement, and the Secretary-General of the al-Nour Party. The FJP, Muslim Brotherhood's political party, rejected the invitation saying they already had a president.<sup>58</sup> With the Ultimatum deadline passed and wide ranging support from the various sectors of Egyptian society the military made its move later into the night on July 3<sup>rd</sup> and announced over state television that they had fulfilled the will of the people. The military usurped power in a way that made it seem that they had been planning to take control for months. They took control of the state institutions, dissolved

parliament, suspended the Islamist constitution, and placed Morsi in custody. They then appointed the Chief Justice of the SCC Adly Mansour as the interim president who would then appoint an interim government and a 50-member constitutional assembly to amend a new constitution. Membership into the assembly would be appointed from various factions of Egyptian society and as a result would create a constitution that would represent Egypt and be less divisive than the 2012 constitution Morsi and his allies passed through parliament and referendum.<sup>59</sup> Upon hearing that Morsi was deposed by the military Tahrir Square erupted in jubilation, while not far away the Pro-Morsi supporters in Nasr City felt anger and resentment towards the military. While the SCAF was taking over they not only detained Morsi but also arrested many of the MB's leadership starting a state sponsored crack down of the organization.<sup>60</sup>

The protests that sparked the coup and resulted Morsi's ouster have their roots in the policies he pursued during his first year in office. Many Egyptians viewed these policies as a major contribution to the polarization in the country. Along with the view that these policies were monopolizing the political system for the Islamists, while alienating and driving out the opposition. By pursuing these policies Morsi and his supporters crossed the line and as a result led to the protests that called for his downfall. While the military's involvement stemmed from numerous sources. They claimed to be supporting the wishes of the people but the leadership in the SCAF had several ulterior motives. With Morsi out of the picture the SCAF could put in place a civilian government friendlier to not only them as an institution but also to their pragmatic political views. A new administration could also get the transition that has been stunted for months to move forward and in a direction that would benefit them. The protesters

calling for Morsi's downfall also gave the military a green light to get rid of Morsi without the backlash from the public that had been keeping the military's policies towards Morsi somewhat dormant. While the military had its ulterior motives for supporting the peoples' call for Morsi's downfall the SCC had theirs as well. Morsi had made an enemy out of the SCC and Judicial branch through his numerous policies aimed at curbing their power such as the reinstating of parliament and his presidential decree that gave him sweeping powers. The SCC's support of this coup was their political revenge as well as benefiting themselves as it can be seen from the Chief Justice becoming the interim president. The reasons why the Egyptian people called for Morsi's departure and why the SCAF and SCC supported them are important details that prove the effects of electoral transition but knowing what effect this has had on Egypt and its transition is imperative.

The effect of the July 3<sup>rd</sup> 2013 coup has had on Egypt and its transition includes a instauration of the whole process, the Muslim Brotherhood's fall from grace, and setting precedence for military-civilian affairs. With Morsi gone, the parliament dissolved, and the constitution suspended the process of transition was revamped. This was done through the creation of a new interim government and a constitutional assembly that brought together all the portions of Egyptian society. Except for the Muslim Brotherhood due to their rejection of the new government and holding onto the idea of Morsi as the legitimate president; this boycott of the new transition ended up hurting them more than anything with them being excluded from the whole process thus far. This new atmosphere was one that allowed for compromise as can be seen from the Salafist rejection of the possible nomination of al-Baradei as the interim prime minister and threatened to boycott the interim government if he did get nominated. Not wanting

to lose the Islamic credentials the Salafists bring with them they negotiated to have al-Baredei appointed as the vice president instead and transition continued on.<sup>61</sup> Polarization within the government also decreased mainly as a result of the Secularists and Liberals monopolizing the process. But the polarization in the streets only increased especially towards the Coptic Christians. With the Coptic's support for the coup many pro-Morsi supporters felt the need to take revenge and started a wide campaign of burning and harming Christians throughout Egypt.<sup>62</sup> But besides the wide spread polarization in society the alleviation of it in the political environment due to secular monopolization of the process sped up the transition.

The constituent assembly is amending the Islamist constitution and believes it will be ready for referendum by November of 2013, once passed elections will be scheduled. This time the drivers of transition are focusing more on having a solidified constitution, drafted by experts and representatives, before electing a government. Once elected the new government can go straight into governing, rather than worrying about drafting a constitution bypassing the stalls in transition that has characterized Egypt for the past two years.

The long-term effect on Egypt's political transition is the Muslim Brotherhood's fall from grace. This phrase is meant to show how when the MB were in charge of the government for the first time in their long existence they wanted too much too fast. Instead of making an environment that was welcoming to every part of society and creating an atmosphere for compromise, a different path was taken. But through their monopolization of the transition along with their unwavering support for Morsi after he was deposed resulted in the MB and its political party the FJP being blacklisted from the new transition along with many other effects that will be

discussed briefly. After Morsi was deposed the MB and other Morsi supporters refused to leave the squares that they occupied until Morsi was reinstated as the legitimate President of Egypt.

After numerous failed attempts to compromise by both domestic and international actors the pro-Morsi supporters refused to give up their zero-sum attitude on this matter. So in late July General al-Sisi asked the Egyptian people to take to the streets to give him approval to crack down on the terrorists threatening Egypt, referring to the pro-Morsi supporters in the streets.<sup>63</sup> This set into motion the August 2013 demonstration break-ups that turned out to be a chain of massacres for the Muslim Brotherhood with several hundred killed and thousands injured<sup>64</sup>. A state of emergency was put into place for a month and then was extended for two months, a move that brought reminiscence of the old regime. In September of 2013 the Cairo Court for Urgent Affairs ordered that the Muslim Brotherhoods activities be banned and froze the groups assets as well as shut down the MB newspaper, Freedom and Justice newspaper.<sup>65</sup> Yet no transition can happen without the Muslim Brotherhood being involved due to their influence within a certain sector of society. So this heavy-handed policy being taken by the SCAF and interim government if not changed soon has the possibility to derail transition.

The final major effect of the coup that deposed Morsi was that it set a dangerous precedence for a country in transition. This action set a new standard for civilian-military relations, where the military can intervene if it feels that needs to in order to protect Egypt, similar situation that Turkey faced for a large part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### Conclusion

In the two and a half years since the January 25<sup>th</sup> Movement started with protests against Mubarak's authoritarian rule and demanding his downfall. There has been two coups, numerous

demonstrations, and little transition to democracy. This stems from the old and new regime forces trying to grab power, high levels of polarization, and deadlock. All of these things while stemming from many different sources have one starting point that enabled it to derail transition in the way that it did: the stress of electoral democratic transition. This is seen in the initial period of transition under the SCAF's leadership, then within the elected parliament and constituent assembly, and is carried on by Morsi once he is elected president. After a year of polarization and deadlock under Morsi's leadership the people demanded he step down and the military was there to answer their call.

But with the new military backed regime and the military itself violently suppressing the Muslim Brotherhood they are putting the formation of a stable democracy at risk. This is due to the fact that even though a large portion of Egyptian society demanded Morsi's departure and supported the coup the MB still has a very large following especially among the poor. This translating into the fact that any long term stable democratic system being established will have to involve the MB. As history as shown the MB will go underground for a period of time but eventually they will regroup and come back into the political scene. When they do it would be wise for the new Egyptian government to allow them to participate. Labeling the MB as terrorists<sup>67</sup> will only destabilize the Egyptian state because the Brotherhood's large support network will support them through large protests as was seen after Morsi's fall from power. Or worse the Brotherhood seeing no other options could give up on institutionalized politics and turn back to the militarized way of their past. A possibility that could be disastrous not only for the principles of democracy within Egypt but also for the economy; due to the threat that terrorist activity and internal instability have on tourism as well as foreign direct investment.

At this point in time Egypt's transition has been rebooted and is focusing on constitutional transition this time around. While Egypt still has a long bumpy road towards democracy maybe with a new constitution the hardships of that road can be alleviated if only slightly.



## End Notes

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## **CHAPTER FOUR: YEMEN**

### Introduction

Yemen located on the southeastern corner of the Arabian Peninsular has had a tumultuous modern history that has experienced dictatorship, Marxism, civil war, reunification, and a failed attempt at democracy<sup>1</sup>. So in 2011 with the eruption of mass uprisings across the region dubbed the Arab Spring, it is no surprise that Yemen was engulfed by this movement, especially after its success in dislodging long standing dictators in Tunisia and Egypt. But given Yemen's unique history from the rest of the MENA region its experience with the Arab Spring shared Yemen unique character falling somewhere between a drastic decentralization of power away from the central government and a civil war. Yet Yemen's transition towards democracy, no matter its unique quality, still stresses electoral change over constitutional change, that exacerbates pre-existing problems that Ali Abdullah Saleh, Yemen's long standing President, has remarkably kept to tame through cooptation, military action, etc. This chapter will analyze how the stressing of electoral politics bogged down Yemen's democratic transition by looking at the initial breakdown of the state, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) transition deal, and the actual transition as prescribed by this deal.

### Yemeni "Revolution"

The Yemeni Revolution that deposed Ali Abdullah Saleh from the Presidency was an extended conflict that started off as large non-violent protests and quickly morphed into a series of armed struggles characterized by a disintegration of the Yemeni state. This section seeks to briefly explain Yemen's experience with the Arab Spring by analyzing the causes of it, who were involved, what exactly happened, and what this experience means for Yemen.

The Arab Spring within Yemen was the result of numerous factors the primary one being economic factors. Yemen is economically weak possessing one of the lowest GDP's in the world as well as having one of the highest levels of unemployment. The oil resources located in Yemen are small and revenue from these resources has been used to bankroll the regime as well as to line the pockets of high level regime supporters. But these reserves are expected to run dry within the next decade leaving Yemen without its main source of revenue. As well as economic factors Yemen's experience during the Arab Spring also has political factors to blame. Yemeni's wanted to put an end to the violence that plagued has plagued their country since reunification in the early 1990's. This violence is the result of rebels in the North, secessionists in the south, militant fundamentalist such as Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsular, and drone strikes increasing in frequency. The other political reason that contributed for the break out of the Arab Spring within Yemen was Saleh attempting to amend Yemen's constitution so that he could be president for life.<sup>2</sup>

The Arab Spring in Yemen has numerous groups and people who played an important role for the movement to happen but this section will focus on the five major ones. The group who started the Arab Spring in Yemen was the University students located in the capital of Sana'a, who marched calling for Saleh to step down in order for them to gain more opportunities.<sup>3</sup> It did not take long for other parts of Yemeni society to join in. Such as the Join Meeting Parties (JMP), them being the established opposition to Saleh and is made up of six parties of varying political ideologies that range from the secular socialist parties to the Islamist Islah party. The JMP holds 57 of the 301 parliamentary seats and at first only wanted to change the NFP of the country but finally bowed to public pressure and called for Salah to step down.<sup>4</sup>

Another major player is the Preparatory Committee for national Dialogue (PCND), this is an umbrella alliance that includes: the JMP, other opposition parties, Houthis (Northern Shia rebels), civil society, and several tribes. The PCND due to its size and diverse make up was able to call thousands to the streets demanding that Saleh step down. Then there are the seccionists in the south who have longed demanded for more autonomy from the North.<sup>5</sup> But the newcomer to the scene is the Civil Coalition of Revolutionary Youth. This is an amalgamation of liberal youth groups that consists of the youth bulge, a demographic prominent in many Middle Eastern countries.<sup>6</sup> This group was formed in the wake of Tunisia and Egypt embarking upon their own individual Arab Spring experiences.

It is imperative to explore what actually happened in Yemen throughout the Arab Spring so that the political transition the country eventually embarks upon can be properly analyzed. The Arab Spring started in Yemen in January of 2011, these protests started out as small non-violent protests lead by students. But it soon gained momentum becoming larger and spreading from the capitol of Sana'a to other major Yemeni cities such as Aden, Ibb, and Ta'iz. Saleh's reaction to the protestors calling for his resignation goes back in forth between repression and bargaining. So he initially attempted to repress the protests resulting in numerous civilian deaths. Then when he sees that the usual tools of civilian repression by way of violence do not deter the protestors as well as several members of the General People's Congress (GPC), his ruling party, resign he tries to bargain with the people in the streets. He does this by assuring the people that he will not run in the presidential elections in 2013 and that he will also not hand power over to his son.<sup>7</sup>

But these attempts to bargain and promises made by Saleh fell of deaf ears in the streets with many Yemeni's seeing this as too little to late. Seeing this reaction from the street Saleh switched back to repression to deal with the protestors and try and protect his presidency. On March 18<sup>th</sup> snipers in Sana'a shot at protestors leaving 54 people dead. This massacre lead to massive anti-Saleh rallies as well as numerous resignations. The most important of these resignations was that of General Ali Mohsin who pit his loyal troops from the First Armored Division against pro-Saleh troops found in the Presidential and republican guards in order to protect protestors. While he acted under the guise of aiding the protestors many saw this as Mohsin's attempt to increase his political clout. In may, Sadiq al-Ahmar head of the Hashid tribal federation and the second most powerful man in Yemen announced his support for the protestors. He sided with Mohsin against Saleh. As the months passed the conflict got more violent and eventually lead to deadlock and the revolution to gain more freedom and economic prosperity was high jacked by political elites seeking greater political clout.<sup>8</sup>

In April of 2011 the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), an economic pact dominated by Saudi Arabia, seeing the deteriorating security situation negotiated a deal that would allow for transition to occur within Yemen. After numerous negotiations President Saleh finally agreed to sign the deal, but at the last minute backed out. This resulted in an increase in tensions within Yemen as well as an increase in violence. This came to a head on June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2011 when there was an attack on the Presidential compound and a rocket hit a mosque located on the compound seriously injuring Saleh. Due to his injuries Saleh has to flee to Riyadh for medical treatment caused by severe burns. He returned to Yemen on September 2011 to the disappointment of many Yemenis and an increase in violence. But Saleh did agree to finally sign the deal and flew

back to Riyadh on November 23<sup>rd</sup> and signed the deal thus starting political transition within Yemen.<sup>9</sup>

The effect of 2011 has had a major impact on Yemen and its future. With Saleh momentarily absent from Yemen seeking medical treatment in the United States, Yemen has a long road ahead of itself towards democracy. As per the GCC transition deal power was handed down to Yemen's vice-president Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi, who was then charged with forming a government and holding a single candidate presidential election within three months. This coincides with the Houthi rebels in the north and the secessionists in the south getting more bold along with the AQAP getting more dangerous as well as Yemen being politically fractioned along tribal lines more than ever.<sup>10</sup>

#### GCC Deal

The transition deal negotiated by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) that would ensure Saleh stepping down peacefully before Yemen broke out in a full fledged civil war. This section will analyze what this deal was, how did it come about, what exactly the effect of this deal was, and how it stressed elections and the problems that resulted from it.

This transition deal was negotiated by the GCC between Saleh and his ruling GPC party and the established opposition of the JMP. This deal was spearheaded mainly by Saudi Arabia who holds the most political clout of the GCC and was firmly backed by the United States and several other international actors. Saudi Arabia sought this transition deal with such passion due to the Kingdom viewing instability within along its southern border as a security threat, especially with the Shia Houthi rebels and AQAP operating within Yemen's borders two groups who have no love for the al-Saud ruling family. The actual deal was negotiated relatively quickly



but Saleh's flip flopping on whether or not to sign it caused conflict and instability to grow within Yemen. But finally in November of 2011 Saleh agreed upon the deal and thrust Yemen into a period of transition.<sup>11</sup>

This deal resulted in Saleh stepping down from the presidency and handing power over to his vice-president Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi. Who would be charged with forming a transitional government chaired by the opposition, this transition deal called for this government to have a power sharing deal between the GPC, whose president was still Saleh giving him political clout, and the opposition of the JMP. This deal also called for a single candidate presidential election, this single candidate being nominated by the transitional government who already agreed to have Hadi as their nominee. The new president and government would then enter into a national dialogue. This dialogue would be charged with drafting a new constitution and then holding elections once this new constitution was approved through a national referendum.<sup>12</sup> In order to get Saleh to agree and sign this transitional deal it guaranteed him and his family immunity from prosecution, this portion would be a sticking point for many players within both the established formal and informal opposition who believed that Saleh should stand trial for the multitude of crimes committed during his tenure.<sup>13</sup> So much so that one Yemeni newspaper called the deal "the best legal and political package, which any dictator has ever gotten"<sup>14</sup>.

This GCC transition deal would operate as Yemen's road map through transition and towards democracy but its stress of elections would derail an all-encompassing transition that the Yemeni people so desperately want and need. This is due to the deal being lead by the Saudi government who want stability more than democracy and who would not be comfortable with a

full-fledged democracy being located along their southern border. This deal stressed elections through its emphasis on the elections of a president and the formation of a government. By putting the emphasis on electoral politics before a constitution the deal made sure power stayed in the hands of the established political elite within Yemen; these figures being Amhar, General Mohsin, the Islamist Islah party, and Hadi. The problem with this deal is it does not bring other facets of Yemeni politics that are part of the informal opposition into the transition thus having the possibility to destabilize and interrupt transition due to this new government not representing all parts of society like a democracy should. The three most notable parts of the informal opposition are the Houthi in the north of Yemen, the secessionists located in the south of Yemen, and the large youth groups who played a pivotal role in the Arab Spring protests.<sup>15</sup>

#### National Dialogue and Transition

After the GCC deal was signed by Saleh Yemen's transition officially started. Hadi was nominated and elected President of Yemen through a single candidate election. This section will look at this transition that started in late 2011 by looking at the lead up to the National Dialogue, the National Dialogue itself, and the effects of this and how it is related to an emphasis placed upon electoral politics.

The lead up to the start of the National Dialogue is a period of time that starts in December of 2011 and ends in February of 2013. With the signing of the GCC deal Saleh's faction within Yemen took a considerable hit to their political clout. This allowed for President Hadi and the opposition to shake up the security services and bureaucracy and purge many Saleh loyalists from their ranks. But President Hadi and his major supporters were not only seeking to curtail Saleh's faction but also that of the major opposition of the Ahmar, Islah, and Mohsen

triumvirate. Something he did in December of 2012 by disbanding the military units under Mohsin's command weakening the hard power of the opposition.<sup>16</sup>

Throughout 2012 elites on both sides of the political spectrum attempted to strike deals with Hadi in order to gain his support for their centralization policies. This is due to the popularity of federalism among many Yemeni interest groups, population, Houthi, Hirak, some JMP and GPC members, and Hadi himself. The policy calling for federalism went against the overall centralization policies that major elite groups had economic interests in. The informal politics undertaken by the elite of Yemen made many of the youth and original participants in the revolution feel uncomfortable. In their eyes they saw these new elites of the opposition as attempting to create a new Saleh style regime beholden to the popular accountability that was a major sticking point for the revolutionaries. While this was going on in the political arena life among the every day Yemeni people only got harder in 2012. With crime increasing due to the increase in kidnappings and AQAP becoming bolder in their activities. As well as the living standards among the people continued to drop. Hadi had an inability to stop this from happening due to the state and its apparatuses continuing to unwrap. For example it took him a full year to set up a committee to handle the calls for autonomy among the southern Yemenis.<sup>17</sup>

The National Dialogue (NDC) that began on March 18<sup>th</sup> 2013 is seen as the “only game in town”<sup>19</sup> for transition to occur due to the GCC deal. The NDC is made up of 565 delegates hailing from the major political parties and social groups of Yemen. The political parties present in the talks are the GPC (112 seats), Islah (50 seats), the Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP) (37 seats), Nasirist Party (30 seats), and five minor parties (4 seats each). The social groups are the Houthi (35 seats) and Hirak (85 seats), a southern group who calls for southern Yemen's independence

from the north. The NDC is divided up into nine committees; each committee is in charge of handling and coming up with a solution to a specific issue facing Yemen. Out of the nine committees three are specifically sensitive and cover the issues of southern autonomy, the Houthi issue in Sa'ada, and the building of the state.<sup>19</sup>

Once the committee has come up with a specific solution they vote on it and if it passes through a vote this said solution goes before the entire assembly. Once the committee has presented their option to the assembly it is voted upon and has to have a three fourths vote in the affirmative. When and if the committee proposed solution passes the assemblies vote it goes directly to the constitutional drafting committee to be added into the constitution. While this sounds like a sound process in a state such as Yemen it is riddled with problems. For one the informal politics that the Yemeni elite is familiar with utilizing have been trumping formal group dialogue. Along with the lack of expertise held by committee members in the fields such as state building and electoral engineers are making the creation of options hard to come by. These two factors lead to dead lock among party lines that could eventually lead to the withdraw of certain groups from the dialogue damaging their legitimacy.<sup>20</sup>

The effect that the NDC has had on Yemen is too early to tell but at the time of this project the results do not look promising. This has the focus on electoral politics to blame, due to it placing power in the hands of well-entrenched elites enshrined as the opposition. Many of these elites have no interest in full democratic transition due to it negatively affecting their grip on Yemen as well as their individual economic interests. The NDC also has major obstacle with implementation of their policies. Since the Yemeni formal institutions are divided along tribal lines and it is the leaders of these tribes who make up the Yemeni elite. Thusly if transition goes

against the interests of this elite group implementation will be near impossible. The weakness seen in these institutions also has to do with the fact that within Yemen formal politics typically enshrined by institutions has always been trumped by informal politics along familial and tribal lines. An example of this can be seen in Southern Yemen and the Houthi's call for more autonomy, this goes directly against the interests of Islah and the GPC.<sup>21</sup> If not handled with care this could lead to political deadlock and walk outs resulting in a failure of the NDC's purpose.

### Conclusion

Yemen's experience in the Arab Spring is unique to any other Arab state falling between Tunisia's massive peaceful protests and Libya's civil war. This is due to Yemen's unique history as well as the fact that it is the most heavily armed country in the world in terms of civilian possession of firearms behind the United States of America<sup>22</sup>. The future of Yemen does not look bright for many reasons. To start with the massive amount of problems the state faces are enough to cripple any government. These problems range from lack of oil and water, corruption, literacy, and etc.<sup>23</sup> Along with the fact that there is international intrigue in making sure Yemen is stable not necessarily democratic. Especially since Saudi Arabia spear headed the GCC deal and is infamous for not tolerating democratic regimes within the region much less as close as its southern neighbor. Alas there is hope, if all faucets of Yemeni society band together and create a system of formal institutions by enshrining them within a constitution. Yet enshrining them in a constitution is only one part of the equation of a stable democracy, Yemen's only hope involves sticking to the rules and ideals enshrined in said constitution.

### End Notes

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## CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

### Introduction

Through out the preceding chapters this study has attempted to explain and analyze why transition after the Arab Spring movements that shook the Middle East became bogged down and interrupted within the starts of Tunisia, Egypt, and Yemen. This study suggests that it was due to the focus placed upon electoral democracy and transition over constitutional democracy. Many of the societal ills such as political and religious sectarianism that authoritarian regimes within these states were able to keep in control were left to boil over. Resulting in polarization, political deadlock, violence, and institutional conflict all of which hinder political transition, all of which were major causes of halted and half hearted transition. The focus these states placed upon electoral transition exacerbated these factors; unlike electoral transition constitutional transition places emphasis on the institutions and actual citizens putting into place a set of rules that would alleviate these pressures and allow for a much smoother transition to occur.

This section will look at all three cases for over arching themes that validate the weakness and trouble with a focus being placed upon electoral transition and democracy. To do this the Arab Spring movements themselves, parliament their election and the NDC, and the executive of all three cases will be analyzing to find these common themes. Once these conclusions are drawn this chapter will end with what this means for these three cases as well as what this study means for the rest of the region as a whole, especially the Persian Gulf monarchies and sheikdoms.

### Arab Spring Movements

The Arab Spring movements that shook Tunisia, Egypt, and Yemen have had an immense impact upon their political make up and overall stability. This section will analyze the movements themselves in each of these states and how much each separate experience is similar or different. To do this several factors must be analyzed such as why these movements happened, what happened, who was involved, and the result of them. This will allow for a comprehensive profile of the Arab Spring within the numerous republics it influenced.

Within all three cases there lies three major causes for the Arab Spring these being economic, political, and media related. Within the realm of economics all three cases embarked upon a free market system as a means to increase economic performance as well as increase the size of the middle class. But within the years leading up to 2010-2011 these policies started to bog down. Resulting in wide spread unemployment and inflation. With a population that is more or less mostly young people this resulted in many of them graduating with secondary degrees and unable to find a job. As a result many of these individuals were forced to stay in poverty and work low wage low skill jobs just to support the family. This lack of economic opportunities would be a major catalyst for the break out of the Arab Spring. Each case had a different economic outlook but all of them bleak especially for Yemen, whose main source of income (oil) is due to run out within the next decade. The common question was why did none of these free market economic policies benefit the people like they were suppose to? This is due to the fact that all three regimes were surrounded by a group of crony capitalists who single handily benefited from the opening of the economies.<sup>1</sup>

Political stagnation coupled with the economic stagnation. In all three cases the executive is an authoritarian leader who held power for a expansive amount of time; in Egypt there was



Mubarak (since 1981)<sup>2</sup>, Tunisia had Ben Ali (since 1987)<sup>3</sup>, and Yemen was ruled by Saleh (since 1978)<sup>4</sup>. All three leaders over the course of their rule subjugated the institutions to be subservient to the executive as well as co-opted or pushed out the established opposition. This left the large youth population with no representation and would become a major sticking point for the populous movements. This lack of representation coupled with large amounts of political corruption at all levels of the state angering the people.<sup>5</sup>

Traditional these authoritarian leaders could use their propaganda machines to give their population an image of themselves that suited the leader. As well as release information that they approved while censoring information that would cast them in a negative light. But with the proliferation of satellite television, Internet, and cell phones the population of these Arab Republics had access to information they never did before. Additionally this allowed for people to connect with each other through social media and blogs. Social media and blogs would play an imperative role in the formation of the large protest movements because citizens used them to coordinate protests and show the atrocities of the regime to each other and the rest of the world. New stations especially Al-Jazeera played an important role in starting the Arab Spring by bringing people independent news in the Arabic language as well as providing programs that encouraged debate. These news sources also showed people that they should expect more from their government by showing how people around the world interacted with their government. The combination of these three factors gave the people of these Arab countries more than enough reason to take to the streets, demanding their leaders step down as a means of obtaining more liberties and a better life for themselves and their family.<sup>6</sup>

The January 25<sup>th</sup> Movement of Egypt, Jasmine Revolution of Tunisia, and Yemeni Revolution all followed a similar format. It all started in Tunisia with the self-immolation of Mohamed Bouazizi in late 2010, after which a series of anti-government protests broke out in response that eventually came to a head in the capitol of Tunis.<sup>7</sup> This wind of change that charged Tunisians to protest and demand change soon spread to Egypt and then after Egypt it landed in Yemen.

These three different movements that succeeded in toppling three longstanding and thought to be stable dictators shared a number of factors. First they were started by the same demographic, something that will be covered later on in this sections, and were coordinated largely online through the blogs. These protests were all large well-coordinated movements that were largely non-violent. As well as these protest movements being greeted by the government with violent repression, while not deterring the protestors it did result in all three cases in the resigning of important figures that controlled hard military power within the state. Such as was seen with the Military in Egypt and Tunisia and General Ali Mohsin and his troop within Yemen, playing an imperative role in the down fall of the president.

The protest movements in all three of these cases also centered around the idea of the President stepping down, as can be seen in the common chant of “get out” used in all of this studies cases. While this being a central demand of these populous movements it was not the only one, the Arab Spring symbolized the people coming to the streets demanding more civil liberties (i.e. freedom of speech), better economic opportunities, a stop to government corruption, and more representation within the government. While many of these demands take years to accomplish these movements did succeed in toppling the presidents of each respective

country. But that does not mean that the regime that supported that individual left power with them, in most of these cases the real power brokers of the regime stayed in power; a fact that would come to cause major problems once transition was initiated.

In order to create this overarching profile of the populous movements dubbed the Arab Spring one has to look at who was involved. Unlike what one would typically expect it was not the traditional opposition of the Islamists within Egypt and Tunisia or the Houthi and secessionists within Yemen who started and spear headed these movements. Rather it was the liberal youth, often times called the youth bulge, who made up the vast majority of the protests.<sup>8</sup> It was not until these youth lead protests gained ground that the other more established opposition came forth and joined the ranks within the series of protests. Below is a table illustrating the complete profile of the causes, what occurred, and who was involved across the board of all three cases giving a visual element to this overarching profile.

Table 1 Arab Spring Profile

Cases/ Descriptors	Economic, Political, and Media (Causes)	Large and Unexpected	Youth Bulge	Hard Power holders side with Protestors	President toppled quickly	Regime stays in power/ in charge of transition
Tunisia (Jasmine Revolution)	X	X	X	X	X	X
Egypt (January 25 <sup>th</sup> Movement)	X	X	X	X	X	X
Yemen (Yemeni Revolution)	X	X	X	X		X

These populous movements achieved their goal of toppling the person who they felt represented the economic woes, lack of political representation, and wide spread corrupt from power. This process took anywhere from a number of weeks to a number of months depending upon the case. But just because they toppled the president does not mean that they got ride of the regime that supported them. In fact these elements were the ones who were put in control of the political transition all three cases were about to embark upon. This would lead to a number of issues due to these elements stressing electoral transition as a means to keep their power due to elections being an elitist game while constitutional transition is geared more towards the people.

#### Initial Transition

Transition in each of these cases started with the toppling of the president and with each movement succeeding it gave the next more momentum to dislodge a long standing leader; starting with Tunisia then moving towards Egypt and after that picking up ground within Yemen. This section will look at the three cases of this study and how each faired with initial transition to see if there are common themes. To accomplish this goal the following section will analyze how the old political forces attempted to derail transition in order to keep power within their hands, how they did this by stressing elections, and how the people tempered the old guard's power grabs.

It is imperative to look at who exactly took over after Mubarak, Ben Ali, and Saleh fell and what each transition initiator did to keep a hold of their power. After Mubarak fell the armed forces under the SCAF took control of the country. They tried several schemes to hold onto power the first being dissolving parliament and the constitution. They then drafted a transition constitution putting it to referendum. But this was to provide the illusion that they were doing

what the people entrusted them with. The most famous example of the SCAF attempting to grab power would be seen in the “al-Selmi Communiqué”, this document was an attempt to gain far reaching powers that even when a civilian government rose the military did not have to worry about being under its charge.<sup>9</sup>

While in Tunisia once Ben Ali fell his Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi stepped in and was charged with forming a unity government. He filled this government with pro-Ben Ali figures from the ruling RCD party. This was an attempt used by post-Arab Spring Tunisian political elites to solidify their hold on power. All the while stressing to the people that they would only rule until elections were held.<sup>10</sup>

Yemen is a unique case because unlike the first two Saleh was not leaving without a fight leading almost to a civil war. Seeing this the GCC stepped in and crafted a deal with the political elite of Yemen that would avert a war. Especially since the de-facto leader of the GCC, Saudi Arabia, shares a border with Yemen. But this did allow transition to start but it kept all the political power within the hands of elites, leading to really no change in policy. The important portion of Yemen’s transition would happen during the NDC. But this deal itself stressed elections just like the two cases above for the fact that it called for a single member presidential election with the candidate being Saleh’s Vice President.<sup>11</sup>

In all three of these cases old regime forces put an initial emphasis on elections due to the legitimizing power that they hold. In their eyes it was a way for them to consolidate their power. But in all three cases new political actors and citizens saw through these power consolidations. Actively protested these moves forcing these old regime remnants to back off, but the damage was done and this initial stress of elections would set into motion destabilizing forces seen

throughout future transition. In Egypt after the al-Selmi document was published some of the largest protests in Egypt took place in response forcing the SCAF to drop their support of the document.<sup>12</sup> Or in Tunisia where the protests resulting from a RCD filled government resulted in that government's downfall.<sup>13</sup> As well as the Houthi and Southern Secessionist's constant threats to step down if informal politics were emphasized in the NDC resulting in an emphasis placed on the committee.<sup>14</sup> Even though these groups did face off with old regime power consolidation they still enforced these political element's stress on electoral transition, but it does highlight a motif of old verse new that is seen throughout this period in all the cases.

Table 2 Initial Transition Profile

Cases/ Descriptors	Electoral Transition	Old regime power consolidation	New political forces challenge consolidation	Successful
Tunisia (RCD)	X	X	X	X
Egypt (SCAF)	X	X	X	X
Yemen (NDC)	X	X	X	

#### Parliament, Elections, & the NDC

Eventually these initial transition governments gave way and scheduled elections that gave rise to new parliaments and constituent assemblies. Or in Yemen's case a National Dialogue Conference. These new representative bodies were in charge of drafting a new constitution and presenting them to the people through a referendum as well as run the country. This section will do a comparative analysis of the elections, a phenomenon labeled the rise of the Islamists, and how these new representative bodies interrupted and halted transition.

In Egypt and Tunisia the people elected these representative bodies while in Yemen they were appointed as agreed in the GCC agreement. Yet even with this difference the results and effects of these bodies follow a similar pattern. It was in these elections that the phenomenon that

came to be known as the rise of the Islamists occurred. This name derived from the fact that the Islamist parties dominated in states where they traditionally did were not a majority in the representative bodies. This is seen in Egypt where the Muslim Brotherhood FJP and ultra-conservative Salafists al-Noor party won 72% of the seats in Parliament<sup>15</sup>. As well in Tunisia where the Islamist Ennahda party won 89 of the 217 seats, still not a clear majority but more than any other party<sup>16</sup>. Or in Yemen where the GCC agreement gave the Islamist party Islah 50 seats at the National Dialogue conference<sup>17</sup>. While the liberal and youth groups who went against the Islamists in the election did not perform as well as was expected, even though these groups especially the youth groups spearheaded the Arab Spring.

This domination by the Islamist groups across all three cases is due to several factors. The most important being the grassroots support that these Islamist parties have at their disposal. Grassroots support coming from the large population living in poverty in all three of these cases and the fact this segment of the population receives a large amount of services from these parties. Such as health care, job placement, and transportation. These Islamist parties are also highly organized especially compared to other parties.<sup>18</sup> In Yemen the Islah party made out so well in the GCC agreement because its head al-Ahmar is the second most powerful man in Yemen, giving him a large degree of political clout<sup>19</sup>.

On the flip side while the Islamist parties thrived in this election, it is important to look at why the liberals performed so poorly. Unlike their counterparts the Liberals were divided due to being prone to infighting as well as their lack of organizational skills and inability to get grassroots support. These liberal parties also gave some citizens a bad taste in their mouths due to their connection to the old regime even if these parties were not directly attached to it.<sup>20</sup>

Once in power these representative bodies were tasked with drafting the new constitution. But before much headway could be made more liberal and opposition elements within these bodies saw felt that Islamist’s were attempting to monopolize the process.<sup>21</sup> This is marked by an increase in polarization that resulted in deadlock when these elements walked out and boycotted the process in essence halting transition. In Yemen’s case it almost came to this but at the last minute a deal was made before the Houthi and secessionists walked out. The effect of this halting of transition was wide spread internal instability that was characterized by people taking to the streets and in Yemen the AQAP gaining more ground.<sup>22</sup> This instability caused the already ailing economies of Egypt, Tunisia, and Yemen to get hit even harder causing more instability, thus starting a vicious cycle all the while the political arena was at a standstill.

Table 3 Representative Bodies Profile

Cases/ Descriptors	“Rise of Islamists”	Old regime candidates	Polarization	Deadlock	Internal Instability
Tunisia (Constituent Assembly)	X		X	X	X
Egypt (People’s Assembly)	X		X	X	X
Yemen (NDC)		X	X		X

### Executive

The election of a new executive to lead the country is an integral part of any transition from an authoritarian state to one of democracy. But the emphasis put on elections throughout the transition process before a new constitution would create problems. Due to a constitution creating a framework and rules for that executive to follow as well as a constitution’s role in clearly illustrating the job description of the executive. This section will analyze the new figures who were elected to the executive branch in Egypt, Tunisia, and Yemen. Analysis will include



the elections that brought them to power, their foreign policy, and their fall from power. Except the case of Yemen, due to the unique way that transition occurred. it will be shown in all cases that these new executives contributed to the polarization and deadlock within their respective countries. Ending this section will be profile that shows the executives elected followed a similar pattern of behavior.

The elections that brought these three men to lead their respected countries differ greatly and the unique situation in which they came to power play an important role in how they behave. Egypt possesses a long history of centralization of power in the executive and in this election it would be no different<sup>23</sup>. So the election of a new executive was an important step for transition and it would allow Egyptians and scholars alike to have an idea of where transition was heading. So when it came time to elect an executive they did it in a series of elections that ended with the first ever democratically elected President. Mohammed Morsi, the Muslim Brotherhood candidate, was sworn into office on June 30<sup>th</sup> 2012.<sup>24</sup>

After deposing the Ben Ali, the transitional government decided that they would place more power in the hands of the prime minister rather than the president. The President who would be elected by the constituent assembly and the President would then appoint a Prime Minister who would then form a government. so after the constituent assembly was elected and a ruling coalition was formed it was time to select who would be the head of the executive and lead the country through transition. As was part of the coalition deal Moncef Marzouki was appointed as president of Tunisia, he then selected Hamadi Jebali as Prime Minister and charged him with forming a government.<sup>25</sup>

In Yemen since transition started due to an international agreement set up by the GCC; the election of a new executive to lead Yemen through transition was bound up in terms set by the agreement. As per the document Yemen would hold a single member presidential election with the candidate being picked out by the political elite within the state. Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi the vice president under Saleh was agreed upon to be the nominee and would become the new president of Yemen.<sup>26</sup>

The domestic policy of the new president's of Egypt and Tunisia follow and similar pattern, while that of Yemen's new president follows a different path but it would seem he is trying to accomplish the same goal. In both Egypt and Tunisia's case the President's instead of acting as a mediator to end the polarization and deadlock that had been plaguing the parliaments and constitutional drafting committees. They instead sided with their Islamist parties. In response to this favoritism the liberal political elements within both countries walked out and boycotted the process. Practically halting transition and leading to a political crisis for both countries.

While in Yemen, President Hadi and his supporters were proving to be capable political forces when many thought the existing political elements would just push him around. He proved capable of balancing the wants of the many political forces vying for power within Yemen, while concurrently solidifying his power base. But even though he proved adept at the balancing act needed to lead Yemen and solidify his support he did not seem willing to stress the pressing issues of the Houthi in the north and secessionists in the south.<sup>27</sup> This made the two groups threaten several times to walk out if nothing was done in regards to their political demands.

Analyzing the foreign policy undertaken by these executives is imperative due to how interconnected the international system is now a major change up in a State's foreign policy can

lead to internal instability especially during political transition. Like the domestic policy explained above Egypt and Tunisia share similar foreign policy changes while Yemen's does not. Egypt under Morsi and Tunisia under Jebali both direct their countries' foreign policy from that of a western centered one to one of non-alignment. This can be seen in Egypt's slow turn away from the United States while Tunisia started looking south of its border rather than towards Europe.<sup>28</sup> This put the already troubled economies of both countries at risk due to the large amount of financial assistance they get from the West. Yet in Yemen one does not see a change in foreign policy, in fact Hadi strengthens Yemen's ties with the United States<sup>29</sup>. The re-strengthening of ties instead of a turn towards non-alignment in terms of foreign policy can be explained by the fact that Yemen has not seen a real regime change. The same people who have been in power in Yemen are still there, only a change in leadership has occurred.

But the people soon lost faith in these leaders and in the summer of 2013 you see a counter-revolution in Egypt and Tunisia. Due to it still being in the early stages of transition Yemen has not experienced this yet and probably will not, so Yemen is omitted in this section. These counter-revolutions are characterized by large-scale protests calling for the President/Prime Minister to step down while initially denying the demands coming from the streets both leaders are eventually forced out of office. In Egypt it was through a military coup that occurred a few days after Morsi's one-year anniversary in office. Egyptian's rallied against Morsi because of his lack of political skills, economic malaise, and authoritarian tendencies. So the military under General al-Sisi's command stepped in and overthrew him.<sup>30</sup>

While in Tunisia the streets filled with protestors rallying against Prime Minister Jebali. They were protesting the political deadlock that he is blamed for, economic malaise, and the

assassination of an opposition figure. Jebali presented a motion for a technocratic government to take over for the rest of transition and if it was not accepted he threatened to step down. Protests intensified with the news of a technocratic government and Jebali ended up resigning. He was replaced with Ennahda member Ali Laarayedh, who soon presented president Marzouki with a new coalition government. But it was not long until another assassination rocked Tunisia bringing people back to the streets calling for a downfall of the whole government. Forcing Laarayedh to enter into a national dialogue.<sup>31</sup> Since this study ends around this time frame results of this dialogue are still waiting to be seen.

Table 4 Executive Profile

Cases/ Descriptors	Democratically elected	Contributed to deadlock & polarization	Non- Alignment Foreign policy	Overthrown
Tunisia (Jebali)	X	X	X	X
Egypt (Morsi)	X	X	X	X
Yemen (Hadi)	X	X		

#### Overall Significance

The overall significance that this study tries to accomplish is that the type of transition embarked on is imperative. As this study has shown transition is not a one-size fits all term. Also to have a successful democracy there are a number of things that are imperative. There needs to be institutions that balance the power of the state with the needs of its people; as well as perpetuate the ideals and customs of democracy. Especially in cases where authoritarianism transitionally runs rampant and institutions are weak or non-existent compared to the executive. Constitutional transition does this as it had been shown throughout this study, this is because it

solidifies the power of the institutions if the constitution drafted it properly followed. On the other had electoral change that stresses elections due to their legitimizing power keeps power in the hands of already established elites and opposition, this is due to elections being an elitist game and not taking the needs of the people into account. Or elections not establishing, strengthening, and protecting the rights of the basic citizen like a constitution will.

This phenomenon can be seen to varying degrees in all three cases especially in Egypt and Tunisia. While it is not as see in Yemen it is there. Critics of this study's findings will say that this theory's application in Yemen was forced when compared to Egypt and Tunisia. While a valid criticism one has to take into account the way that transition started in Yemen as compared to Egypt and Tunisia. In Yemen there was international intervention in the form of a GCC agreement while in Egypt and Tunisia domestic actors started transition. As it was seen this played a massive role in how transition preceded but none the less it all three cases stressed elections before a constitution.

This study has serious implications for the rest of the region, especially for the Persian Gulf Monarchies, specifically for Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Kuwait. All three of these Monarchies have done battle with the protest movements instead of liberalizing. They have done this through buying their people such as in Saudi Arabia, arresting bloggers as in Kuwait, and by using the military to forcefully put down the protest movements as was seen in Bahrain. Through it all these absolute monarchies have stuck together in the face of calls to liberalize such as Saudi Arabia sending troops into Bahrain to help quell the protest movements.<sup>32</sup> But these tactics can only work for so long. A much better option in the long run for both the rulers and the people is for these states to open up the political system slowly. This opening up can be done by way of

evolutionary change as can be seen in the constitutional monarchies of Jordan and Morocco<sup>33</sup>.

While yes liberalization has the possibility to spin out of control, if done correctly the Monarchy can stay in power as the executive while at the same time empowering the people with political representation and civil rights.

### End Notes

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