

Arab Spring: Egypt as a Model

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Abstract: *The Arab countries have witnessed a major events and changes that have greatly influenced the internal and external policies of the Arab countries and their relationship with the biggest country represented by the United States of America. The (Arab Spring revolutions), according to the researchers, were happened due to number of reasons and factors at the internal and external levels, represented by economic, political and social factors, besides the role of Major Powers in the outbreak of those revolutions, especially the role of the United States of America in Egypt and the impact on the nature of the political system and society in Egypt.*

Keyword: Arab Spring, The concept of the Arab Spring and similar concepts such as movement and change, The role of the United States of America in the Arab Spring, The role of the United States of America in Egypt

1. Introduction

The concept of the Arab Spring differs from other concepts such as Revolution, Change, and Movement, and according to what is stated in the literature, we find that the concept (Arab spring) appeared in the Arab world in the end of 2010, where some Arab countries witnessed the disintegration of the authoritarian regimes structures by popular uprisings started from Tunisia and Egypt to reach Libya, Bahrain, and Oman. Their aim was to overthrow decrepit regimes that ruled their peoples by force for a long time.

The Arab Spring emerged as a result of a combination of political, economic, social and cultural factors, as well as the role of the foreign powers, especially the role of United States that had a massive role in Arab Spring events especially in Egypt, where it witnessed changes and internal and external pressures and failures at that time which had major role in the instability and chaos in society.

2. Review of References

2.1 In the beginning, it can be said that the Movement in the language of politics means the general trend that leads a class or a certain social group to organize their ranks in order to do a unified work to improve their economic, social or political situation or improve all these factors together, and the movement is more comprehensive but at the same time less coherent and disciplined than the Party, As it can be a wide trend with intellectual, political and ideological orientations, While the concept of Change is different, the researchers differed in the definition of the Change concept, and there are those who defined it as a transition from a specific social situation to a more developed one⁽¹⁾.

The Revolution can be defined as a method of social change that includes political, social and economic conditions and structures. There are those who define it as a process of dynamic movement characterized by the transition from social structure to another social structure⁽²⁾.

The revolutions are divided, objectively and extensionally, to major revolutions, whose it's speech is an external

speech rather than an internal one, and leads to changes in different areas, such as the Bolshevik, French, Iranian and Chinese revolutions. The other types of revolutions are a minor revolution that has internal speech and weak external speech such as the revolution of January 25th, 2011 in Egypt. While in terms of application, there is a difference in revolutions, for example, white revolution not based on violence, where colorful revolutions such as the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, and other non-peaceful revolutions that used types of violence to make its plans successful, such as the Libyan revolution⁽³⁾.

In addition to the above, Dr. Abd al-Rida al-Ta'an defines the revolution as the project promoted by the mating of revolutionary consciousness and objective conditions, and that cause an activation of the relationship between the dominant social forces and the submissive social forces, and a qualitatively transformation of existing social relations toward the future⁽⁴⁾.

The definition of the revolution in Marxist thought is based on class struggle. Where the theory of the revolution depends on analyzing the class situations in society where a massive contradiction between the relationship of the owners of means of production and the forces of production. The society is in a state of sharp polarization between the ruling class and the class that forms the majority (the controlled class), which bears the burdens of class contradictions that generates awareness of the necessity of revolution. Lenin connects "the success of the revolution with the existence of a vanguard class", he says: "In order to ensure success, the uprising should be based not on conspiracy, not on the party, but on a vanguard." Lenin designates the conditions of the uprising as follows⁽⁵⁾:

Revolutionary advancement

Basing on a decisive shift in the history of the auxiliary revolution when the activity of the advanced classes of the people is greater than the enemy hesitation.

Dependence on the vanguard class

The term "Chaos" is a political concept used to describe political behavior and phenomena such as wars, revolutions, political instability, and simple and complex

political problems. Chaos is a latent system, and the development of the system under chaos theory is associated with an element of attraction that determines the development path⁽⁶⁾.

While social movements can be defined as "organized efforts by a group of citizens as representatives of a popular base lacking formal representation in order to change existing conditions, policies or structures to be closer to the values of the movement."⁽⁷⁾

When on the other hand, the Arab Spring term can be designated on the movement of change that witnessed by some Arab countries. Opinions varied on this term: Some confirm that this term has no Arab roots, and that it dates back to the literature of 19th century European movement, specifically the Communist Declaration of 1848 and the spring of 1968, when Soviet forces entered Prague, and that was known as "Prague Spring". At the outbreak of Egyptian events, an American newspaper (Christian Science Monitor) published this description on January 15th, 2011, while French journalist "Dominique Moisi" used it after the events in Egypt on 26th January 2011.⁽⁸⁾

In the beginning, the writer (Abdel Ghani Salama) believes that there are three important factors that contributed to the outbreak of the Arab spring revolutions. These factors have been exacerbated since those Arab countries liberated from foreign colonization and obtained their political independence⁽⁹⁾:

1. The nature of the ruling Arab regimes.
2. The totalitarian parties, including trends of political Islam.
3. External factors, which played a major role in the maturation of the revolution.

When these revolutions began in succession in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, and Syria, the main objective of these revolutions, regardless of slogans, was to overthrow the authoritarian regimes that have ruled those countries for so long and in different ways. Four of them entered a new stage called (transitional), which is supposed to see arrangements for the establishment of new systems, on different bases to achieve the goals of those revolutions in better terms⁽¹⁰⁾.

The term "Arab Spring" was designated on the protests, disturbances and revolutions that took place in the Arab region from Tunisia at the end of 2010, and then spread rapidly in most Arab countries including Egypt, Libya, Bahrain and Yemen. These events represented an important historical transformation in the Arab region and their effects on Arab-Arab relations and neighboring countries. The Arab Spring revolutions are the result of a variety of internal political, economic and social factors, as well as external factors. Therefore, the Arab revolutions calling for political change led to destabilization of the authoritarian state structure, which helped in the fall of some Arab regimes⁽¹¹⁾.

The reasons of Arab Spring

A number of economic, political and social factors have contributed to the outbreak of Arab revolutions, such as:

A) Economic Factors:

Although the Arab countries have a great wealth of natural oil, Arab countries import a large part of their consumption needs. So, food security is one of the most important challenges facing Arab countries. In addition, the dependence of their economics to the global market.

B) Political Factors:

The Arab regimes have started, under the slogan of political reform, security, military and financial laws that have prevented the development of peoples and kept them hostage to backwardness and stagnation, and established new norms incompatible with democratic practices, including inheritance, favoritism and corruption.

C) Social Factors:

The Arab world is characterized by one of the highest rates of population growth in the world, with increasing the migration from the countryside to the city. As the Arab society is a young society, it is threatened by several dangers due to the high population density in some Arab countries with limited economic resources such as Egypt, Sudan, and Yemen, While countries with low population density and rich like Gulf countries bring their labor needs from the Asian markets in large numbers.

As for the external factors of change in the Arab world, it can be said that there are a number of factors:

1. Communications Revolution:

Technology revolution has opened the information blockade, which was practiced by the dictatorships towards their peoples, in an attempt to isolate the peoples from each other, as well as the communications revolution has made the people look forward and seek to obtain their freedom, and enabled them to communicate through mobile phone, Internet or E-mail, which can be described as the most important factors in the youth's rejection of the ruling policies⁽¹³⁾.

2. Globalization:

In the end of the Cold War, an appropriate opportunity was provided to the United States to market its ideological values which inspired by the capitalist philosophy of economic freedom, as one of the most important requirements of which was called by the Economic Stabilization and Structural Adjustment by most of Arab countries in an attempt to adopt concepts of free economy.

The United States of America was able to market the principles of political freedom of human rights, good governance, the peaceful transfer of power, and concepts

of the spread of the phenomenon of democratic transformation in the world, which contributed to increase and feed the Arab feelings against the rule of tyrannical and unfair regimes⁽¹⁴⁾.

3. International Terrorism:

Extremism and terrorism have resulted from the Arab region because of being a suitable environment to produce such a culture due to many factors like: poverty, deprivation, ignorance, lack of political participation, and the confiscation of public and private freedoms. It is worth mentioning that the Arab regimes did not take the initiative to reform by itself because they realized from a long time that doing such things means "suicide". Therefore, It is expected to reject political reform calls coming from outside, but it has succeeded, to some extent, in the recruitment and investment of historical negative attitude of Arab public opinion towards US policies in the region. One of the mistakes made by the civil administration in Iraq after 2003, is that it has worked hard to destroy the democratic experiment in Iraq through regional intervention contributed by all the neighboring countries of Iraq, to discredit the US and Europe reform speech. Large sectors of Arab public opinion have become suspicious about the usefulness of intervention and pressure for reform, and are somewhat convinced of the theory of governments that put stability in the face of reform or see it as an enemy of security and civil and social peace. Thus, the reform and promised democratic transition, in the eyes of the public, appeared to be a foreign project aiming to cover up a new plan for the return of Western colonial domination over the Arab countries⁽¹⁵⁾.

The role of the United States of America in Egypt

The January 25th revolution in Egypt and the overthrow of Mubarak regime led to a decline in the political influence of the United States. The US calm role in Egypt post-change period seems realistic and practical from the point of view of some in the light of the internal and external developments in the United States of America, although it is different from the nature of the post-Cold War American policy of unilateralism and hegemony in the management of most of the global files, especially in the Arab region. Robert Satloff, the director of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, said that "the United States played an important role in supporting the first phase of the transition in Egypt, which was relatively peaceful"⁽¹⁶⁾.

A study by the Brookings Institute for Political Research in Washington, entitled "The Arab Awakening, " refers that the collapse of despotism regimes, including Egypt, would lead to a change in the map of the region's geopolitical influence, similar to the results of the Berlin Wall fall in 1990. The study determined that the events came as a surprise, and it indicates that⁽¹⁷⁾:

1. The fall of the dictatorial regimes in the region is the fourth wave of democracy, where the first one began with the end of World War II in 1945.
2. The regime in Egypt is sagging on the edge of falling after 25th January 2011.

3. Egypt is the center country in the Arab world, and the center of the new wave of democracy will be Egypt.

The United States has used its powerful influence in the Egyptian army, firstly by encouraging the army to pressure on President Hosni Mubarak to step aside, and then the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces to declare that it gives guarantees to Israel and the international community that Egypt will respect its regional and international obligations, secondly by urging it to keep its promises to manage an orderly transition to democracy.⁽¹⁸⁾

The Egyptian foreign policy system, as it has been established since the mid-seventies, expresses its main principles of solid interests and deep-rooted orientations in the state and the Egyptian society. Despite the arrival of a president of the Muslim Brotherhood in June 2012, which represented a big challenge to the possibility of Egypt continuing to maintain the fundamentals of foreign policy, the year spent by the Brotherhood in power has not seen any radical changes of foreign relations.

In November 2012, Mohamed Morsi sponsored a truce agreement between Israel and Hamas, employing the same method and tools that the Mubarak regime has followed since 2005 to mediate such agreements. This was evidence of the solidity of the Egyptian foreign policy system and its connection to the state bureaucracy and the influential interests of society more than their relation with the system of government.⁽¹⁹⁾

Although the main engine of the Brotherhood overthrow came from the Egyptian interior, a great political change was more important than the regional component which is that the regional system has been subjected to a violent shake-up as the Brotherhood's accession to power, not by adopting a specific policy or by taking specific positions on a particular issue, but because their arrival in the government cast doubt on the continuation of Egypt in its traditional position in the conservative camp.

It is worth mentioning that the phenomenon of the Islamic movements rise in the countries of the "Arab Spring" was not only on the Egyptian situation. With the fall of the dictatorial regimes, many of the forces and currents are advocating to emerge in the Arab political scene, at that time the Islamists arrived. This progress of the Islamists in the Arab political scene has been presented two basic assumptions⁽²⁰⁾:

- The Islamic movements did not have a prominent role in igniting the Arab revolutions, for a number of reasons, including the approach and method of these movements, which avoids direct confrontation with the authoritarian regimes, and some of them related to the nature of the historical moment and the fate mood that passes in the Arab countries.
- The Arab revolutions provided a historical opportunity to the Islamic movements in terms of obtaining legitimacy and enjoying legal legitimacy, It also poses many challenges to these movements, the most important of which is the ability to work in an open political and ideological environment. It used to work in

secrecy and in accordance with a closed organizational structure based on intellectual and motor mobilization, including the ability to cohesion and remains uniformly without being exposed to internal divisions.

In addition to the above, it can be said that the internal and external challenges and pressures that facing the Muslim Brotherhood were great, as well as the failures that accompanied the Brotherhood administration, in addition to the popular mood which was not prepared for this experience and the division between supporters and objectors to that experience, all that was enough to happen events to what it reached, Although the Arab revolutions created a new era for the Islamists in the beginning, where the Islamic forces were transformed from prohibited social and political forces into recognized social and political forces, Which led to the emergence of a new phenomenon in the Arab world which is the movement of Islamists from the ranks of the opposition and chases to decision-making centers⁽²¹⁾.

It can be said that "The group's transition" to power on June 30, 2012 for the first time since 1928, After the victory of President (Mohamed Morsi) against the candidate of the old regime, the lieutenant general (Ahmed Shafiq) with narrow margin, put "The group" in front of the great challenges, most important one was transition from the state of thinking as an opposition movement to a ruling party, Which did not happen at the organizational level or at the level of the policies and tactics adopted by "The group" throughout the year spent in power, At the level of organization, the way of "The group" thinking did not change neither the balance of power within the decision-making institutions, specifically the "Consultative - Shura" Council and the Guidance Office, where the conservative current continued to dominate it, while on the level of policies and tactics, the Brotherhood failed to act as a ruling and confident power that doesn't have a clear vision for the future, Although "The group" has professional cadres such as doctors, lawyers and engineers compared to other political and social forces, it lacks the expertise and skills that help it to form an effective political bureaucratic elite that enables it to run a big and complex country such as Egypt⁽²²⁾.

In addition to that mentioned above, it can be said that the counter-forces stood by all the policies of "The group" inside the authority as well as the fears that began to penetrate to the secular and the Copts, who constitute 10% of Egypt's population and are supported by international and external forces. These fears increased with the acceleration of the drafting of a new constitution in an attempt to make political changes. The Brotherhood was supposed to take into account the interests of civil and liberal parties and the privacy of the Copts, which was sufficient to increase the number of protesters and threaten the political stability of Egypt. In addition, the slogan of 25th January revolution - when it broke out - was (Bread, Freedom, Social Justice). After Mubarak resignation, none of these slogans was realized. The importance of addressing economic and social weakness was a pivotal point of change. The increasing of the growth and building of confidence bases with financial institutions and banks in

order to encourage the entry of foreign investments that have stopped, as well as the decline of the tourism sector to its lower levels, which is an important source of hard currency, in which more than six million Egyptian employees work in tourism services⁽²³⁾.

Thus, the Brotherhood has lost the two broadest social categories in Egypt: the poor (40%) and the middle class.

It realized the ability of the poor to manage their livelihood because of insecurity, lack of government support, or access to procedural facilities, such as setting up small enterprises in an effort to absorb their resentment and anger of their work interruption because of the revolution⁽²⁴⁾.

Even when the Muslim Brotherhood's government tried to stamp out corruption networks of the old regime that distributes state-subsidized services and goods such as bread and fuel at prices higher than government-declared, under the patronage of the security services, most of these networks are founded by bureaucratic networks and include thousands of Egyptians throughout the country. The group tried to build parallel networks that distribute services free of charge, using partisan elements and a large number of charities, but it collided with a number of complexities that were behind the so-called "deep state."⁽²⁵⁾

Besides all these factors, there was the loss of security and stability, these factors were accelerated the overthrow of the Muslim Brotherhood Ruling System and the control of the military led by the Minister of Defense (Presently the president of Egypt) Abdul Fattah al-Sisi that created a wide controversy between those who see it as a military coup against a legitimate elected president, and who see it as a popular revolution against adespotic president that responded by the army who implemented the will of the masses. But it described by the Iraqi researcher (Abdul Hassan Shihab) when he said that "it is not a complete revolution and not a complete military coup, but located in the status between the two situations."⁽²⁶⁾

When the President Abdelfattah al-Sisi reached rule in June 2014, Egypt came back again as a player in a region witnessing profound and accelerating changes. Egypt now finds itself in a position similar to its position in the 1950s with a major political change within it and a region around it that will be reshaped on the basis of the disintegration and fragmentation from side, and attempts of hegemony and domination on the other side. Its regional policies in the subsequent phase are specific with the following points⁽²⁷⁾:

1. It has become clear that the large gap, between the priorities of foreign policy as practiced by the state, and the trends in the political and cultural circles, represents a great burden on the legitimacy of the system. The gap emerged at the end of Mubarak era, As the overall deficit of the system is clear, as well as its weak capacity to act, then the gap has shrunk in recent times. As it appeared that the Egyptian position in the regional conflict was justified, and that it is

necessary to constantly work to reduce this gap by presenting the external orientations of the state and the principles governing these trends openly and transparently in front of public opinion.

2. Positioning in the heart of the conservative camp remains the core of Egypt's foreign policy, because the alternatives of the existing regional system are: Iranian hegemony, the escalation of political Islam, the resumption of conflict with Israel, total chaos are revived by armed militias and jihadi groups, all of which contain clear threats to Egyptian interests.
3. The biggest challenge remains the erosion of the national state concept, which is reflected in the disintegration and fragmentation of a number of political entities in the Mashriq (The east of Arab land) and the Maghreb (The west of Arab land).
4. Continuation to defend the regional system from weakness position rather than strength, till it restores its political and economic stability.
5. The necessity for cohesion of the internal fabric in the face of the waves of fragmentation and dismantling that sweeping the area.

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