

Revisiting the 2011 Arab Spring; New Perspectives and the International Community Response to Crises in the 21st Century

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Abstract

The Arab Spring of 2011 was a phenomenal event that shook the world and took most policymakers, international actors, and world leaders by surprise. A spontaneous event that started with a man in Tunisia spread like wildfire throughout the Arab world and metamorphose) into uncontrollable outrage against the formerly accepted repressive rule and established regime in the Middle East. This paper revisited the circumstance that surrounds the uprising and present dimensions by employing thoughts from concepts like globalisation, civil-military relations and finally argued a counterfactual analysis of the response to the crises from the international community. Why would the same trend of events produce different outcomes? Why did the United States US and Russia react with varying degrees of pressure? Is the African Union a toothless bulldog as widely perceived. These questions are central to the development of the historical analysis of this paper in an effort to provide thought-provoking answers.

Keywords: Arabic Spring; AU; International Relations; Middle East; UN

1. Introduction

Against the repressive rule of authoritarian regimes, a young trader in Tunisia self-immolated as a form of protest against police harassment in December 2010; Mohamed Bouazizi as popularly recalled was this trader and his martyrdom set the pace for a chain of reaction which engulfed the Arab world and North Africa where authoritarian regimes in the camouflage of monarchy and military dictatorship had earlier flourished. The world was thrown into awe as the protest against these regimes spread like wildfire from Tunisia to many parts of the Arab world including Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Bahrain, and Syria, with pockets of demonstration in Iraq, Morocco, and Algeria. It is widely believed in extant literature that the socio-economic realities and hardship experienced by young millennials who witnessed the concentration of state

wealth and resources in a few elite classes led to the spark of the uprising and how it permeates other states like a bonfire (Erzsébet 2012)

This article revisits the Arab Spring of 2011 as a regional crisis that confronted the international system, affecting great powers, international organizations and the world order in many ramifications. It starts by providing a background to the crises, it also creates a timeline of the crises in each of the countries where the protest and demonstration were considered intense, the article further highlights the reason for the different outcomes of the demonstration despite a unified mantra of the protesters; *to bring down the regime*.

While some were able to bring about a peaceful transition to a more democratic society as in the case of Tunisia, some birthed more autocratic rule as in Egypt while others degenerated into crises which the international system still manages today. Yemen and Syria come to mind from this point of view. This paper provides a framework for this comparison from the perspective of Civil-Military relations, in the case of the Military who were loyal to the constitution and remained neutral, the ones who supported the regime in powers and the divided military in times of turmoil.

Furthermore, the article explored the effect of Globalization on the crises, considering the effect of Social Media on the crises and how it creates a fertile ground for mobilization and support from other climes. The paper further explained ways through which the global community responded to the crises as well as how they shaped the outcome of events. In the concluding part of the research, the researcher provides a counterfactual analysis of what could have been done to achieve positive results.

Background to the Arab Spring

The Tunisian uprising of December 2010 ushered in what seemed to be a new political phase in the Arab world, namely the beginnings of the unravelling of Arab autocracy. It was followed by the Egyptian uprising in January 2011 and later the same year by uprisings in Syria, Libya and Yemen. However, several years on this trajectory are yet to take hold region-wide and prospects for democratic transitions in the foreseeable future remain highly uncertain. Tunisia may be forging ahead successfully along a democratic path, but Egypt's democratic course appears hesitant while in the other three countries, the uprisings have turned into civil wars intertwined with outside military intervention, the case of Syria being especially tragic (Simir 2017).

In the longer run, the uprisings may yet prove to be the catalyst that opened the door to a region-wide process of democratisation. However, as of late 2016, with a few exceptions, Lebanon and Tunisia among them, autocracy continues to reign, though of course in varying forms and to different degrees from one country to another, thus outline provides standpoints as a background that provides vantage perspective for the uprising which will be adequately considered.

If, one day, a people desire to live, then fate will answer their call. And their night will then begin to fade, and their chains break and fall. For he who is not embraced by a passion for life will dissipate into thin air, At least that is what all creation has told me, and what its hidden spirits declare.

—Tunisian poet Abu al-Qasim al-Shabi(Critical Muslim 2015)

The above excerpt echoes a subtle allusion that provides the reason why the Arab world choose to depose long-term autocratic rulers which they have been once used to for centuries, before the uprising, the greatest wave of the economic crisis the world had seen in the last twenty years from the Atlantic to the Pacific was evident in the Arab world, young people moved by decades of disappointment with their elite and rejecting

the violent approach to improving their daily life, have chosen to unravel the dust of submission, having exhausted all options, they attempted to shake the status quo which has kept their situation miserable not only since their grandparents threw off the brutal yoke of colonialism, but has also worsened their economic, political, and social conditions. (Hassane 2012)

The wave of social protests that swept through the Arab world during 2011, toppling some long-standing regimes and seriously destabilising others, was the consequence of decades of oppressive and authoritarian political systems, failed economic policies, and socially alienated and disaffected populations, mainly youths. Indeed, when the self-immolated Tunisian citizen Mohamed El Bouazizi committed his final act of desperate protest on 17 December 2010, he was not aware that he was kicking the first domino piece in a long chain of events that are still unfolding today, as many of the countries involved in this crises has not been able to douse the tension of the chains of reaction which triggers civil wars, demonstrations and protest which occurred during this period. (Wright 2011)

This research provides two major causes of the Arab Spring as widely circulated in literature, these include the economic crises and the political dissatisfaction among the masses in the Middle East, from the economic standpoint, after three decades of unsuccessful International Monetary Fund and World Bank economic policy experiment which not only worsen the life of citizens of these Arab countries but make their social and economic existence difficult, the global economic crisis of 2008 also aggravated the situation, before these periods when the Arab countries gained independence, the economic models chosen by the successive regimes were ineffective in creating sustainable and competitive economies (Malik 2012). While a strong public sector managing rentier economies based mainly on the production and export of hydrocarbons has secured a large balance of trade surpluses, the quasi-absence of an independent, globally connected and high-performing private sector left the region with inflexible job markets and a narrow margin to deal with demographic challenges. So much so that major Arab world economies swung with oil price fluctuations while non-hydrocarbon economies saw their energy bills dramatically increase and their solvency questioned (Malik 2012).

Still towing this line of thought, the political realities of the Arab world also provided a justification for the Arab Spring of 2011, the fact that democracy is absent and autocratic regimes which stifle the human rights of citizens has been widely accepted by the older generation made millennials questions the current socio-political reality, this is a reflection that the society is still aspiring to establish strong and stable national political systems that really mirror their history and bear their ambitions. As opined by Bernardino (2011) in his public lecture titled 'Arab Spring; An European Perspective: *Indeed, the centres of power in the Arab countries have traditionally been held by the ruling dynasties or families, the military, nationalist secular parties or influential tribes. As such, the Arab population have never been perceived as a crucial player in the process of power transfer except when it comes to endorsing what has already been decided for them inside palaces and usually accepted by foreign stakeholders.* Such truism supports the idea that democracy failed in the Arab world given that No Arab head of state (except in Lebanon) has changed by democratic means for a generation: the average tenure of an Arab leader is 22 years (The Economist Online 2012).

The West which often brings about a forceful wave of democratization through aid and monetary conditionalities has been trapped by the emergence of deadly terrorist organizations from the Arab states, they have been divided to pick the worst of two bad situations, hence they choose autocracy and stability

over Al-Qaeda and global terror, therefore their continued supports for the autocratic rules characterized by the 22 Arab states.

Causes of the Arab Spring in Each of the States

Tunisia

The Arab Spring started in Tunisia before it spread to other parts of the Arab world and many analysts have continued to provide some comparative perspective into what led to this explosion that engulfed the Middle East, surprisingly, some factors such as inflation, poverty, deep economic inequality are hardly evident in Tunisia before this events took place, Tunisia enjoyed continuous though modest economic growth, relatively secular society and free education for everyone. Its birth rates have been declining since the early 2000s, approaching European levels. As suggested by Florence (2012), Tunisia's successful transformation into a tourism hub for Europe, and a comparatively well-structured economic sector gained it the title of 'most competitive state in Africa' by the World Economic Forum in 2010. In contrast to other Arab states, its economy did not experience a downturn as a result of the global economic crisis., President Ben Ali managed to reduce the percentage of Tunisians living below the poverty line (living on less than 1\$ a day) from 11% to 2% of the population in 2011 (10% of the population live off less than 2\$ a day) (World Bank Report 2011)

The state's institutions, while considered "efficient" and strong by Western observers and thus providing a high level of security conducive to economic development, proved to also suppress the population, particularly organisations which could challenge state authority, such as labour unions, students' associations and journalists (Amnesty International 2011).

Unexpectedly, some authors have also argued that the government in its own dealings created room for the large-scale uprising through mass education and huge budgetary spending on the sector thereby creating young educated citizens who could questions the workings and inadequacy of an authoritarian regime like that of Ben Ali, In the process of educational reform initiated in the early 1990s, Tunisia rapidly expanded, the number of students, tripling their rates in just 10 years to 365.000 in 2005. At a gross enrolment of 31%, Tunisia reached German levels. As the government devoted 20% of its budget to education, it continued to create, and expand, an expectation gap as the labour market was not capable of absorbing these large numbers of highly educated people (World Bank Report 2011).

In another dimension, human rights abuses in Tunisia facilitated the large-scale uprising, only two months before the outbreak of the unrest, a number of imprisoned journalists went on a hunger strike in order to protest against their detention and its conditions. The elections bringing President Ben Ali to power with 94% of the votes in 2004 were widely recognised as rigged; physical abuse by security forces, including torture and arbitral arrest continued unsanctioned, and political freedoms were systematically curtailed (Human Right Watch 2012), the young trader who left high school for other life pursuits before bagging a degree was quickly presented to the populace as a symbol of a graduate who could not secure employment and the whole nation sparked in a twinkle of an eye. After 28 days of protest, the military who was more professional in terms of Civil-Military relations took sides with the civilian masses and guarded the constitution jealously by protecting the right of the people to protest, the regime of President Ben Ali was eventually ousted out.

Egypt

The Arab Spring version in Egypt started on 25th, January 2011 and spread across Egypt. The date was set by various youth groups to coincide with the annual Egyptian "Police holiday" as a statement against increasing police brutality during the last few years of Mubarak's presidency. It consisted of demonstrations, marches, occupations of plazas, non-violent civil resistance, acts of civil disobedience and strikes. Millions of protesters from a range of socio-economic and religious backgrounds demanded the overthrow of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. Violent clashes between security forces and protesters resulted in at least 846 people killed and over 6,000 injured. Protesters retaliated by burning over 90 police.

The Egyptian protesters' grievances focused on legal and Political issues,(including police brutality, state-of- Emergency laws, lack of political freedom, civil liberty, Freedom of speech, corruption, high unemployment, food- price inflation and low wages. The protesters' primary demands were the end of the Mubarak regime. Strikes by Labour unions added to the pressure on government officials (Defend Democracy 2011).

Moreover, underlying conditions in Egypt resembled the Tunisians to some extent. 34% of the population are illiterate, and unequal distribution of wealth was significant but not to the same extent as in Tunisia, According to statistics available from the catalysts which eventually led to the events in early 2011 a component absent in the Tunisian case, namely the price of food. Egyptian food inflation was at 19% in 2010, whereas it was at 4% in Tunisia; the prices of food groups such as dairy, fats and oils, and fruits went from declining by 9%, 3%, and 1%, respectively, in January 2010 to increase by 27%, 28%, and 14% in January 2011.¹⁶ In addition, poverty rates had fallen to 16.7% in 2000 (World Bank Food Price Watch 2011), only to return to current rates since 2005. In other words: Egyptians had experienced, in a very short time, a significant improvement, and subsequent worsening, of poverty rates which then acted as the catalyst acting on the existing conditions. In another dimension, the Egyptian media had experienced a period of relative freedom since 2005, where criticism of the government was permissible to a considerable extent. Internet access is low in Egypt with 21% of the population online; the strong focus of the media.

The impact of organized Labour in mobilizing for the demonstration can not be over-emphasized too, organized by several opposition groups and the state's labour union (representing 2.3 Million workers), the rapid growth of the labour unions movement which then led to another chain of protests, eventually leading to President Mubarak's stepping down after 17 days of demonstrations. A determining factor in the Egyptian uprising was the role of the armed forces, which sided with the protesters and facilitated the transition of power. It is comparatively high professionalism, and a certain distance from politics allowed it to do so as this will be discussed subsequently in this research.

Libya

Libya an oil-producing state has on paper, the highest per capita income in Africa and is thus classified as an upper middle-income country by the World Bank. However, the crassly unequal distribution of wealth levels this out, with 40% of the population living below the poverty line and 30% unemployed. Libya managed to crunch its youth bulge in the early 1980s, reducing birth rates from over seven children per woman in the beginning of the 1980s to less than 3 in 2005-2010, but it still showed a population rate of 30% under the age of 25. (Wanings & Earlings 2007)

Gaddafi scored great successes after coming to power. After years, two British journalists, Andrew Lycett and David Blundy would describe Libya as follows in their books published in 1987:

The Younger generation is well dressed, well nourished and has a good education. Libyans have a higher per capita income than English people. The inequality between the annual incomes of people is much less than in many countries. The wealth of Libya has been distributed quite fairly among different classes of society. All Libyans generally benefit from perfect education (Andrew & David 1987)

Describing Gaddafi's success from another perspective, the World Factbook collection in which the CIA presents actual information about all the countries, per capita income in Libya was 14 000 USD in 2010. This was a figure that was too close to the highest per capita income in Africa. In the same year, it ranked 53rd in the human development index of the United Nations, which was considered a high level of development. World Health Organization stated that all Libyan citizens benefited from health services free of charge and consequently a high level of success has been achieved in the field of healthcare services. WHO further stated that while 160 out of 1000 children died before the age of 5 in 1970, that figure had dropped to 20 in 2000. The average life expectancy in Libya was 77. According to the data from UNESCO for 2009, the rate of literacy among adults rose to 80 % and 97 % of male and female children went to school. The state gave an interest-free credit at the amount of 50 thousand Libyan Dinars (approximately 50 000 US dollars) to newly married couples (World Health Organisation 2011)

Despite the fact that the basic economic needs of the Libyan people were met, the political situation was far from being stable. Gaddafi wanted to create economic welfare but also maintain its traditional political-cultural structure that has been entrenched throughout the centuries. For example, the citizens whose basic economic rights were granted were deprived of most of the rights of citizenship because they couldn't get rid of the repression of the feudal power and become real individual citizens. Gaddafi ruled the country as the dictator on top of an alliance of tribes.

There were about 2000 tribes in the country. 140 of them were the main tribes. The biggest 50 out of those 140 tribes played a big role in and dominated the socioeconomic and political structure of the country, against this background of perceived deprivation of political rights, flowing through the trend of the Arab uprising, a group of people launched an uprising against Gaddafi government beginning from the month of January to February of 2011. Protest movements began in Benghazi spreading to all cities of Libya (Erzsébet (2013)

The protest wave was also supported by some of the tribe leaders. Libyan opposition united on February 27, 2011, and set up the Libyan National Council. Mustafa Abdul Jalil, the former Justice Minister of Libya, became the head of the council. Some countries like France, Italy and Spain supported the opposition in Libya and officially recognized the Libyan National Council. The group which came to the fore the most among the opposition movement was the Libyan Islamic War Group, human rights abuse and suppression of the protesting crowd led to the intervention of NATO bombing of major military installations of Gaddafi, under the guise of disrupting the regime collaboration with terrorism, the invasion and foreign intervention further plunge the country into a civil war which divided the country along loyalists lines. Gaddafi was eventually overthrown captured and killed (Aljazeera 2011).

As suggested by Erzsébet (2013) the Arab Spring uprising was unique in Libya because of three major factors, First, no one expected that Muammar Gaddafi's 42-year rule could be challenged. Second, it was the first in a series of Arab Spring uprisings in which a dictator fought back. Third, it was the only Arab Spring event in which the international community intervened militarily, and the first case in which the

Arab League appeared as a visible actor supporting such outside intervention. Fourth, the uprisings led to a full-scale civil war that ended with the violent death of the former dictator. Libya announced its liberation by the National Transitional Council in October 2011, which has since been running the country through its executive committee.

Bahrain, Syria and Yemen

In January 2011, Yemen's youth reacted to the events in Tunisia and Egypt through demonstrations which soon spread to important Yemeni cities. Protesters initially opposed government plans to modify the country's constitution. They also opposed high unemployment, poor economic conditions, and widespread corruption. However, the demands soon included a call for the removal of long-time President Ali Abdullah Saleh who responded with a mix of political manoeuvring: patronage and bribery, co-option, repression, and propaganda. (Tobias 2012) In a notorious incident, snipers shot and killed dozens of unarmed civilians on March 28, 2011, declared as the 'dignity day'. In the face of this brutal repression, the initially youth-dominated movement expanded into a mass uprising. Furthermore, the support for the protests declared by a key figure of the regime, Major General Ali Muhsin Al-Ahmar, opened the way to mass defections by half of the army, most of the government's civil servants, and prominent politicians. Therefore, the uprising gained unprecedented momentum, but at the same time, it became dominated by defective figures, who favoured a mediated resolution to the conflict.

In Bahrain, Inspired by the popular uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt, mass protests began in Bahrain in February 2011, calling for greater political freedom and equality for all Bahrainis. Although the ruling monarchy in the small Gulf state has witnessed popular opposition for decades, the local Arab Spring events constituted an unprecedented wave of protests across the country. (Aljazeera 2012) Socio-economic discontent, a high level of unemployment, especially among the youth, discrimination against the Shia majority, the slow pace of democratization, and popular anger at perceived corruption have brought tens of thousands of mostly young Bahrainis to camp in the centre of Manama. The panicked reaction of the Al-Khalifa regime resulted in a brutal response, as government forces opened fire on sleeping demonstrators in the middle of the night (Uelrischen, 2012). Immediately thereafter, armed soldiers, tanks, and military checkpoints were deployed in the streets of the capital.

The monarchy also convened the National Dialogue in July 2011, an initiative to promote reform and encourage discussion on the governance of Bahrain. But the transformation process was completed in the hands of the ruling elite. The opposition agreed to this initiative since Saudi Arabia, as proven by its military intervention, was unwilling to allow a fellow ruling family in the Gulf to fall from power. The Al-Wefaq, the largest opposition group, was designated only five seats out of 300 in the National Dialogue and therefore withdrew from the forum, questioning the regime's commitment to reform. Since then Bahrain's policies have swung between reform and repression leaving the roots of Bahrain's political and economic inequalities unaddressed and thereby empowering radical voices across the political spectrum (Aljazeera 2011)

In spite of these internal political upheavals, Bahraini foreign policies have not changed dramatically. The kingdom usually takes positions in line with the GCC, especially with Saudi Arabia, and the Arab League, the autocratic monarchy the Arab Spring protest targeted was not replaced by any firm, thus it can be referred to as a thwarted revolution.

As presented by many analysts, Syria represents one of the worst prospects for the Arab Spring uprising, while most of the nations involved in the demonstration have either moved on from the autocratic regimes to intend to change to a more democratic society or just a simple revert back to what was obtainable before the Arab spring, Syria uprising till date has no prospect of where, how and when the damages caused by the demonstration and subsequent civil war that heralded the uprising will lead to, after the authoritarian regimes in Tunisia and Egypt had already been toppled, the Syrian town of Deraa witnessed an uprising in March 2011. While protesters initially claimed reforms, demands rapidly escalated into a call for the resignation of President Bashar Al-Assad. Resentment against his rule had been on the rise as complaints about the power position of the Alawi sect and dissatisfaction with the country's economic situation had mounted. The increasingly violent response of the Syrian Army, deployed by the president to suppress the initially peaceful protests, fuelled the anger. Assad blamed "criminal armed gangs, intent on stirring up sectarian divisions within Syria's heterogeneous population" for the violence (Ulrichsen 2012).

At the same time, he also introduced some reforms, ending a 48-year-long state of emergency and offering a constitution that allowed parties other than the ruling Ba'ath to run for elections, as well as limiting presidential rule to two terms. These modest reforms were greeted with widespread scepticism. The opposition mobilized by creating various factions, including the Syrian National Council and the Free Syrian Army (FSA) to respond with force to the regime's army, which inflicted over 9,000 deaths during the first year of the uprising. The overarching goal of the opposition forces is to remove Assad from power. Violence spread to the disenfranchised areas of the country infamously to the towns of Homs and Hama, In July 2012, the International Committee of the Red Cross declared the internal fighting in Syria a civil war (International Crises Group, 2012).

An Analysis of Civil-Military Relations During the Arab Spring

Political science as a field of study questions why political phenomena appear as it is, that is given the same circumstances, why do political realities across climes turn out to be different? Examining these factors may help us in building generalization which is one of the major objectives of the behavioural revolution in Political Science. Therefore, the researcher presents Civil-Military relations case studies as peculiar to the Middle East and uses them as an avenue to explain the outcome of the Arab Spring uprising in each of these states, but before diving into this, it is germane to consider a brief conceptual perspective of Civil-Military Relations.

As an area of study, civil-military relations is generally concerned with the relationship between the military and the civilian authorities, or in a broader sense between the military and society as a whole. Most analyses in this field subscribe to the normative assumption that civilian (and democratic) control of the military is preferable to the absence of such control. In other words, the military should be subject and accountable to the (democratically elected) civilian authorities, whereas the latter should be free from interference by the military in exercising political power. (Derek, 2012)

While civilian control and non-interference of the military in politics are seen as a desirable state of affairs, there has been some disagreement among analysts as to how this is best achieved. Two main schools of thought suffice in this debate, represented by Samuel Huntington on the one hand and Morris Janowitz on the other. According to Huntington, the development of a distinct form of 'military professionalism' is the best way to ensure civilian control of the military. Focusing in particular on the officer corps, Huntington had argued that 'military professionalism' implies specific expertise in the use of force, a primary

responsibility within the state for military functions and the existence of a bureaucratic-military organisation with its own internal hierarchy and rules of advancement.

If the officer corps is recognised by the state and society as a distinct body of experts which is seen as competent and as primarily responsible for military tasks, and is free from direct interference from the civilian world, the military would, according to Huntington, be willing to submit itself to the civilian authorities. In other words, it is through the development of a distinct and relatively independent professional category of soldier and officer, and thus of military professionalism, that the military will become politically neutral. (Huntington, 1957).

A somewhat different and to some extent even opposite path towards ensuring civilian control of the military has been suggested by Janowitz. Like Huntington, Janowitz highlighted the fundamental difference between the military and civilian spheres, with the former based on hierarchy, order and strict discipline, while the latter is disorderly and values individual freedoms. However, in contrast to Huntington, Janowitz did not advocate a separation between the military and civilian realms in order to achieve civilian control of the military, but rather 'convergence' between the two. According to Janowitz, the best way to make sure that the military remains responsive to the demands of the civilian authorities is to encourage mutual exchange and regular interaction between the two domains. This would ensure that the values and expectations of society remain present within the military establishment (Janowitz 1974).

Towing along the line of thoughts provided by these two eminent political scientists on the concept of Civil-Military relations, three segments of the Arab Spring events can be recognised, the military that supported the regime, the one that supported the constitution, that is the people protest which is the popular mandate for resignation for the government of the day, and the divided military where loyalty was divided along ethnic lines for the people and the regime, Egypt, Libya and Tunisia will be used in this outline as an object of analysis.

In Egypt and Tunisia, the military acted professionally and supported the people's request, the armed forces remained at least politically neutral and/or maintained a non-interventionist attitude towards the process and, by and large, refrained from violent repression against the mass protestations. In a way, it was a manifesto that the military is a national, professional and integrated institution which serves the interest of the nation and not that of the regime. However, at the same time, it could also be interpreted as meaning that the military turned its back on the regime which aimed at preserving its organizational integrity and/or vested interests (Steiman 2012).

In Tunisia, the armed forces retreated backstage in a relatively early phase of the revolution, leaving the power to the newly organized Higher Committee to Protect the Goals of the Revolution. In Egypt, the military junta, which called itself the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, assumed power and tried to maintain control of the country as long as possible. Whereas in both cases the military endorsed and protected the process of regime change, the difference between the two might arguably derive from the sheer size and weight of the vested interests of the institutions.

Under the dictatorial rule of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, Tunisia was transformed into a police state. Ben Ali intentionally subordinated the Tunisian military to the impetuously enlarged security and intelligence forces. It was widely believed among senior officers that Ben Ali might have engineered a helicopter crash in 2002 which devastated much of the military's high command. When the December 2010 demonstrations

erupted, there was no love lost between the regime and the military, and therefore the army sided with the demonstrators even to the point of opening fire against security and intelligence troops

The case of the Military who supported the regime points directly to Egypt and Bahrain. A somewhat different response to anti-regime uprisings was shown by the Egyptian military. Even though the Egyptian Armed Forces ultimately also sided with the protestors against the country's ruler, when compared to their Tunisian counterparts, the Egyptian armed forces have generally been less open to the protest movements. When in response to the massive anti-regime demonstrations in late January 2011 the Egyptian armed forces were deployed in different parts of the country, not unlike the Tunisian army, they declared that the demands of the protestors were legitimate, and pledged to "not use force against the Egyptian people (AFP 2011)

Nevertheless, compared to the Tunisian military, the Egyptian armed forces have overall been less firmly behind the protestors, and have shown more support for the country's ruler, Hosni Mubarak. The International Crisis Group has summarised the role of the Armed Forces during the Egyptian uprisings as follows:

Throughout the protests, the army played a consistently ambiguous role, purportedly standing with the people, while at the same time being an integral part of the regime they were confronting. It found itself almost literally on both sides of the barricades (ICG 2011)

The Egyptian Armed Forces' more limited openness to, or support for, pro-reform movements was evidenced, for example, when after the first week of protests, armed Mubarak supporters riding on camels and horses charged into Tahrir Square and attacked the pro-democracy protestors there. Even though several demonstrators were reportedly killed by pro-Mubarak thugs, the army units present in the square did not intervene, instead calling upon the protestors to leave the square and go home (ICG 2011).

The same was evident in Bahrain as when the same protest and movement of demonstration engulfed the state, the uprising was met with stiff resistance from the regime with the support of the Military, demonstrators have come mainly from the country's Shiite majority population, which has called not only for democratic reforms and respect for human rights but also for an end to the discrimination suffered by Shias in all sectors of public life (ICJ 2011). However, Bahrain's security forces have shown fierce opposition to pro-reform movements, and have forcefully suppressed the pro-democracy uprising. The government crackdown on protestors began in mid-February when security forces surrounded the demonstrators on "Pearl Roundabout", which had become the centre of the protests. Many of the demonstrators were reportedly still asleep when the security forces started firing rubber bullets and tear gas at them, killing at least four protestors (Katzman 2011).

When it comes to the armed forces level of institutionalization, Libya represents an extreme case. If Tunisia, with its highly institutionalized and largely apolitical army, represents one end of the spectrum of Arab countries, Libya is arguably located at the very other end of the spectrum with the lack of institutionalization and the level of patrimonialism and politicization of the security apparatus have arguably nowhere been higher than in Libya. Following long-standing leader Muammar Qaddafi's vision of a 'stateless society', the Libyan political system as a whole has been largely devoid of functioning state institutions, dominated instead by patrimonial Syria and Yemen represent that of a divided military along ethnic and religious affinities, Even within the regular army, the most elite units were commanded by close relatives of the Libyan leader, and were concerned primarily with securing the Qaddafi regime. The most notorious among these was the so-called 32nd or Khamis Brigade, which was led by Qaddafi's youngest

son, Khamis. The Khamis Brigade reportedly counted some 10,000 men and was equipped with a variety of heavy weaponry, including battle tanks, helicopters and rocket launchers. It was commonly considered Libya's best-trained and equipped force and the main coercive instrument of the regime (Reuter 2011). These features shaped the Libyan armed forces response to the anti-regime uprisings which erupted in different parts of the country in early 2011. When the protests began in February 2011, parts of the Libyan army defected relatively quickly to the opposition. Qaddafi reportedly even put Libya's army chief, Abu Bakr Yunis Jabir, under house arrest, most likely out of fear of a military coup.⁹⁰ In the eastern city of Benghazi, which became the stronghold of the rebels, defecting army units are said to have overpowered pro-Qaddafi forces and driven them out of the city (African Confidential 2011). The highest-profile defection within the Libyan armed forces was General Abdul Fatah Younis, Qaddafi's interior minister, whose 'Thunderbolt unit' was reportedly instrumental in ousting Qaddafi's forces from Benghazi. As such the military was divided into those who were pro-Gaddafi force and anti-Gaddafi.

Effect of Globalization and the Media on the Arab Spring Crisis

The Arab Spring uprising has been closely tied to the effect of Globalization on domestic governance, the conquering of the barriers of time and space as we have tremendous improvement in technological advances has made local happenings ripple into international events, towing this line of thought, this research will not abandon the effect of Social media in the Arab spring and how it escalated the whole situation. Firstly, it has been argued that close societies without free access to the internet are easily motivated to use this same internet as a way of mobilization in the cases of the uprising, as they see it as a blatant disregard for government order which they are in fact ready to disobey giving a situation of public protest or demonstration.

It is not at all surprising that there is so much interest and excitement about the potential impact of social media on collective action. At first glance, the new technology provides movements with powerful, speedy, and relatively low-cost tools for recruitment, fundraising, the distribution of information and images, collective discussions, and mobilizing for action (Bennett, 2004). While a good deal of this literature deals with the role of social media in Western democracies, here more emphasis will be placed on the role of social media in the Arab Spring,

Social media is one of the most important global leaps forward in human history (Omidyar, 2014). It provides human beings with the means for self-expression and mutual understanding. *It enables rapid information of networks and demonstrates our common humanity across cultural differences* (Omidyar, 2014). It is a phenomenon that connects people and their ideas like never before. Prior to the existence of social media, the Middle East only had news media outlets, where everything was censored by the region's governments. No one was allowed to tell the truth; if any organization dared to do so, the government would silence them. Before the revolutions, the Middle East had witnessed tremendous growth in digital communication technologies in a way that made it possible for people to express their frustration via social networking. "Using these sites allowed people to communicate in real time and thereby was effective in developing democracy because social media sites gave people a voice to express their opinions about government, television, political leaders, and any other issues of concern (Bhulyn, 2011).

From Morocco to Bahrain, the Arab world has witnessed the rise of independent vibrant social media and steadily increasing citizen engagement on the Internet which is expected to attract 100 million Arab users

by 2015 (Ghannam, 2011). With so many of the youth surfing the web, they turned to the internet to express their rage and dissatisfaction with the problems they faced each day, such as unemployment, rigid economic conditions and government.

Prior to the Arab Spring, some countries in the region had had vibrant online civil societies where open political conversations took place beyond the control of government censorship. Even before their revolutions began, Tunisia and Egypt had active bloggers. *Often the most critical government coverage of government abuse was done not by newspaper reporters, but by average citizens using their access to the internet in creative ways* (Howard & Hussain, 37). In 2007, a video of the Tunisian president using an aeroplane to visit one of Europe's most prestigious shopping destinations became notorious. Once the video went viral, the Tunisian government cracked down on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and other online applications.

In Bahrain, it was Bahrainonline.com that first attacked the prime minister for corruption, and by 2010, every country in the region had an online source for credible information about corruption and regime abuse, and spaces for political conversations (Howard & Hussain,). Given all the advances that social networking offered Arab citizens, it was met with limitations and challenges from the respective regimes. Arab governments waged widespread crackdowns on journalists, bloggers, and human rights activists. *Hundreds of Arab activists, writers, and journalists have faced repercussions because of their online activities* (Ghannam, 2011). For example, in Egypt, a blogger named Kareem Amer was imprisoned for more than four years, according to authorities, for insulting Islam and defaming Mubarak (Ghannam, 2011).

In a nutshell, the effect of Globalization took toll on the Arab spring and caused a ripple effects to heightened the situation and present the undiluted demands of the protesters to the world, first the lack of freedom of access to the internet and crackdown on web triggered the chain of reaction making more of the protesters to maintain an online spot to fuel their activism, secondly the censorship of traditional media which are mostly state owned made the digital media an alternative for youths and millennials who want to take control of their fate themselves, in another dimension social media facilitated the recruitment and mobilization proves of protesters such as we have during the EndSars protest in Nigeria, information about convergence, meeting points, flashpoint of security forces are passed in social media to help protesters mobilize and have a smooth demonstration, lastly social media encourage success stories of people in other region who has passed through the same phase of protest as an inspiration for new demonstrators in other climes, with the use of Facebook and Twitter, success stories of demonstration are passed and any harm done on protesters are publicly aired and accessible by foreign observers who are keenly interested in human rights abuse or other cases.

How the International Community Responded to the Arab Spring

The major deliberation of this article is to present the actual events of both covert and overt reactions from the international community to the Arab Spring. The Middle East is a part of the international system which holds a lot of stake in terms of how the damage done to this part of the international system could affect other parts of the world. for example, the Middle East and North Africa are rich in oil and most of the oil-producing countries of OPEC come from this region, Egypt on the other end has within its territory the world-renowned Suez Canal. Given this economic and geo-political importance, it is no doubt that major

powers, international organizations, and non-state actors will take a deep interest in the development emanating from the Middle East and North Africa during this period.

But before going into this it is important to consider a major international backing that supports state interference with other sovereign states in times of crises as a lone state or by forming a coalition as we see in the US-led intervention in Libya during the aftermath of the Arab spring uprising in Libya.

The term, Responsibility to Protect, (R2P) has become the pre-eminent framework for discussing humanitarian intervention and issues related to human rights protection generally. Its origins lie in the 2001 report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), which first proposed the notion of the '*Responsibility to Protect*'. Its adoption at the 2005 United Nations (UN) World Summit, with over 160 heads of state in attendance, has led to numerous inter-disciplinary debates within academia and beyond. (Aidan & James 2015). The R2P has often been controversial, but the eruption of the 'Arab Spring' in late 2010 has constituted the concept's most exacting test and prompted a further spike in interest in both its efficacy and desirability.

The international reaction to the Arab Spring was initially one of significant optimism and some degree of support, albeit nervous. There was a sense that it could lead to long-lasting, democratic rule in the Middle East and this was an important moment for the region. In Libya, the crackdown by the Gaddafi regime on the protesters led to robust action by the international community. Resolution 1970 referred the situation to the International Criminal Court and imposed an arms embargo, as well as a travel ban and asset freeze on many members of the Gaddafi regime. In Resolution 1973, passed in March 2011, the UN Security Council authorised the imposition of a no-fly zone and the use of all necessary means to protect the Libyan population under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. (Axworthy 2012)

In Syria, the R2P has similarly informed the debates about how the International community should react to the subsequent civil war between the Assad Regime, the Free Syrian Army and, increasingly, Islamic extremists. Yet the USA and other states backed away from undertaking humanitarian intervention in 2013 in response to chemical weapons attacks by the Assad regime and, ultimately, little has been done to stop the bloodshed in Syria. For some, this shows the R2P fails to have any impact, a major backdrop to the doctrine of responsibility to protect as applying to the Arab Spring is the National interest of states, as exposed, the findings of Albornoz and Hauk correspond with the idea that states will only intervene if their economic interests are at stake. They analyzed the US involvement in civil wars and found that they were much more likely to intervene in a civil war if it would benefit them economically (Albornoz and Hauk 2014). This analysis also determined that foreign intervention in civil wars would often prolong these conflicts. That is because it was always uncertain how much the third party would intervene so one side would never truly know the capability of their opponent (Albornoz and Hauk 2014). The intervening state often does not give a full commitment to ending the conflict as it only will assist to the point in which the economic benefit of intervening outweighs the cost of war (Albornoz and Hauk 2014). These commitment problems were also troublesome for the side receiving the foreign help because they were not sure how much the third party would help them and if the help they were receiving was serving their best interest in the conflict.

Another perspective is that of Collins and Rothe (2012), who opined that Western states will often act under the neoliberal framework and intervene to protect their interests under the guise of promoting democracy. The United States will promote the spread of democracy and social justice to protect foreign

political and economic agendas (Collins and Rothe 2012). Collins and Rothe used the revolution in Egypt as an example of when the US put their interests over democratic ideals. Before the Arab Spring Revolution in Egypt, the US and its allies supported the repressive Mubarak regime (Collins and Rothe 2012). The US provided Egypt with \$2 billion per year since 1979 of military aid to secure an ally in the Middle East and have access to the Suez Canal (Collins and Rothe 2012). At any point from this time, the US could have put economic pressure on Mubarak to treat his people better, but they never did (Collins and Rothe 2012). After protests broke out, President Obama was hesitant to turn on Mubarak and waited until the Egyptian people were ready to overthrow him.

Christopher (2011) also argues that the West and the US especially will only react based on established enmity or friendship that they have with a state in the case of an uprising, crisis or human rights abuse, pursuing military options to end regime rule in the guise of ensuring the spread of democracy. For example, the Obama administration was quick to criticize the use of force, torture and arrest of protesters in the case of Libya, in fact, fourteen days into the uprising in Libya, Obama called on Gaddafi to step down, and fourteen days later the U.S. supported, and indeed largely drafted a U.N Security Council resolution authorizing the use of force to end Gadhafi's rule.

This fast response was owed to the tense relationship that exist between the the US and Libya under Gaddafi, the blocking of bringing the headquarters of AFRICOM to Africa before it was relocated to Stuggart, Germany where Gadaffi led the campaign amongst African heads of State comes to mind for this quick reaction from the US. Albeit, the same US babysit Bahrain when force was used on minority shites Muslims, the response by the U.S. to the violent suppression of the pro-democracy movement in Bahrain, the strategic headquarters of the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet, has been notably muted. The U.S. has been critical of the minority-Sunni monarchy's arrest and detention of Shiite pro-democracy movement members, but such criticism has fallen short of support for a democratic transition and proper response to human rights abuses.

Moving further, it is also imperative to analyze another major power's reaction to the Arab Spring uprising, Syria comes to mind when we want to mention Russia's immediate reaction to the aftermath of the Arab Spring, interest as earlier mentioned is the core of state's intervention in crises situation. On official request, Russia formally joined Assad forces which are losing ground to hold sovereign of the country from rebels groups partly sponsored by the USA, a vantage perspective to also interpret Russia's incursion into the war is global relevance, Russia pulled into an isolationist posture after US dominance as world police and emerging unipolar order sees the intervention in Syria as an avenue to rise to global relevance, interest in Syria was also fueled by her control of the port of Tartus, a strategic counter to the US fifth fleet and Syria once being a communist state. The intervention also gives Russia a better chance of engaging in a proxy war with the USA which wants the Assad regime out by training the moderate terrorists and rebel groups fighting Assad.

Although it has been argued that the AU is a toothless bulldog, this misconception has been exaggerated as the continental organization plays a major role in the aftermath of the Arab Spring in Libya. For example, the AU was compelled to intervene in the peace process in Libya. This intervention was intended to bring an end to hostilities between Colonel Gadhafi's forces and the rebel groups making up the NATO-supported TNC in Libya. Besides its mediation role in Libya, the AU accepted the new regimes and leaders of Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, with their distinct orientations, into its fold. Finally, the AU was confronted with various security challenges associated with the Arab Spring and was compelled to react to these issues.

For instance, various African countries had to contend with renewed forced migrations occasioned by internal displacements and refugee movements, as well as the scourge of terrorism and arms proliferation. In West Africa, the influx of weapons stolen from Libya heightened the subregion's vulnerability to terrorism and rebellion. For instance, following the mass return in September 2011 of heavily armed Tuareg fighters that had previously been part of Ghaddafi's forces, Mali was faced with armed rebellion and political turbulence that resulted in a military coup. The Tuareg fighters, organized under the Movement National de Libération de l'Azawad (MNLA), initiated a rebellion and demanded a Tuareg state of Azawad comprised of parts of Algeria, Mali and Niger.

A Counterfactual Analysis of Reactions

History cannot be rewritten, events and international occurrence that has the gravity to exert influence on the world order are spontaneous and not always pre-planned set of actions by foreign policymakers. On this note given that policymakers may not be able to provide a one-way end product of their decisions, therefore mistakes, blowback, and foreign policy failure will continue to emerge as a result of these actions. The Arab Spring of 2011/12 caused a great change in the power structure of the Arab world, Tunisia succeeded in ensuring a democratic transition within a reasonable time, Egypt receded into worse Autocracy, Libya is currently war-torn at the moment, while other countries such as Yemen, Syria are still engulfed in a conflict stemming from the aftermath of the uprising. This suggests some things were done right or wrong from the external influence and intervention in the crises, these events can be presented in a counterfactual statement, Martin (2004) provides the meaning of a counterfactual statement: *It is, at the very root, the idea of conjecturing on what did not happen, or what might have happened, in order to understand what did happen.* These events would be reconsidered and what could have been done better if certain actions were taken and the envisaged outcome will be stated.

US-Led Nato Intervention in Libya

The US lead coalition against Gaddafi in Libya is the first occurrence that could have been averted to avoid another chain of reaction and other issues in Africa, the coalition in its miscalculated attempt to overthrow Gaddafi opened his arsenal to black market arms deal in Africa. The campaign which targets Gaddafi's forces in a series of bombings overthrew a dictator but failed to monitor the aftermath thereby exposing the growing military might of Terrorist organizations; Mali, Kenya, and Nigeria, now face the consequences as sophisticated arms are now readily available at a cheap price to terrorist organizations in the black market. Particularly, Tuareg mercenaries used by Gaddafi to fight the rebel forces and the US coalition came back after the crises and revolt an armed rebellion in Mali, From this view, the coalition should have after the intervention monitored and secured Libya's armoury from being looted (Samuel 2022).

The Proxy War Between Russia and The United States

Russia and the United States used the opportunity they entered into a proxy war after the Arab Spring uprising, the two states renewed their cold war proxy war and used states involved in the uprising as a testing ground for new weapons, for example in Syria, the US supported the rebel groups trying to depose Assad regime while Russia supported its old ally in Syria. However, given almost the same conditions,

Russia covertly supports Hafter forces, and the US supports the formation of the Government of National Accord, these proxy war events further escalate the hostilities between warring factions and did not try to mitigate the crises.

AU Toothless Bulldog Posture

The first major test for the AU after its transformation from OAU was the Arab Spring crisis which engulfed most states in North Africa, the AU leaders however failed to respond decisively to the crises as most of them were divided on major issues, the intervention of NATO in Libya proved the AU should have had a standby force on response to crises situation rather than the intervention of external forces who have their own interest in the crises situation. (Andre 2012). On this note, if the AU has responded swiftly to the crisis situation in the North Africa region, the use of external forces such as NATO invasion which leaves no room for dialogue with Gaddafi's forces would have been mitigated.

2. Conclusion

The Arab Spring uprising is one of the prolonged international crises that challenged international politics in the 21st century, after the 9/11 attack and the US counter-war against terrorism, the Arab Spring would come undoubtedly as the next trouble that gave international relations experts, global policymakers, and world powers, and International Organizations much debate to deliberate about. In this paper, the researcher revisited the uprising, and provide a fresh perspective that if actors involved had acted contrary to the action they took during the crises, it might have created lesser evil for the protesters rather than a receding into authoritarianism and instability that engulfed the states at the present.

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