

**REVOLUTION IN TUNISIA: UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF THE POPULAR
UPRISING ON REGIME IN TUNISIA**

ZARINA A/P JACOB

810101

**A PROJECT PAPER SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE IN STRATEGIC STUDIES**

COLLEGE OF LAW, GOVERNMENT AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

UNIVERSITY UTARA MALAYSIA

JUNE 2013



Kolej Undang-Undang, Kerajaan dan Pengajian Antarabangsa
(College of Law, Government and International Studies)
UNIVERSITI UTARA MALAYSIA

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(i) Nama/Name : Prof. Dr. Kamarulnizam Abdullah

Perencana Utama (Principal Supervisor)

Tandatangan
(Signature)

(ii) Nama/Name : PROF. DR. MOHD KAMARULNIZAM BIN ABDULLAH

Professor
Pusat Pengajian Antarabangsa
UUM College of Law, Government and International Studies
Universiti Utara Malaysia

Tandatangan
(Signature)

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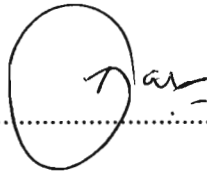
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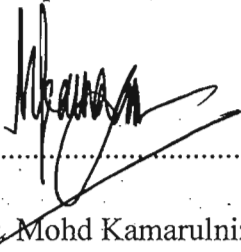
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Name of supervisor,



Prof. Dr. Mohd Kamarulnizam b. Abdullah

Supervisor

College of Law, Government and International Studies

Universiti Utara Malaysia

JUNE 2013

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost praise and gratitude go to God, the Almighty, for bestowing me with great strength, patience and courage in completing this project paper. In the presence of completing this project paper, I have been fortunate to receive numerous of invaluable assistance from many people. I would like to express my immense gratitude to Prof. Dr. Mohd. Kamarulnizam b. Abdullah, my supervisor, whose wise guidance was vital to the success of the project paper. I owe him special thanks for his invaluable and insightful suggestions and his expertise, which contributed significantly to the successful completion of this work. Thanks also to the University Utara Malaysia in general to provide an academic environment conducive to carry out this study. Finally, I wish to record my deepest thanks to all members of my family, friends, who have been very supportive and have shown the greatest of understanding the period of my study.

ABSTRACT

The citizen revolution in Tunisia played a major role in the changing pattern of political in North Africa. The Arab Spring is an event that has radically shifted the political landscape in one of the most unstable region of the world. Many of the experts and policy makers were caught off guard by the speed and organizational ability of disparate citizens that orchestrated and executed this revolution. This study finds out that there are many similar factors and historical background for the uprising in Tunisia. The main cause of the event is economic grievances caused by actions taken by the regime in Tunisia and also the lack of social justice. In this respect, the study aims to serve for a more effective analysis of recent uprisings and the democratic transition of the Tunisia.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Revolutions have occurred throughout human history, particularly during times of strong population expansion and rapid economic transform (Goldstone, 1993:320). However, modern revolution, institutes a new social order, usually is traced to the French Revolution of 1789 but the American Revolution where it begun in 1776 provides an alternate, although less appreciated, model of modern revolution. The both revolutions, which are the most important political events of the modern age, influenced the destiny of generations to come.

The recent revolution in Tunisia constituted a landmark experience in the history of Arab government and politics. The 2010-2011 Tunisian Revolution was the result of a series of protests and insurrectional demonstrations, which started in December 2010 and reached culmination on January 14, 2011, with the flight of Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali to Saudi Arabia, the dictator who had held power for twenty three years. The uprising in Tunisia has been extensively seen as a watershed event which has irreversibly changed the region and the global political landscape and led to a seismic shift in the social contract governing the relationship between Arab ruling elites and their populations. The

revolution was driven by social and economic factors including high youth unemployment, a booming birth rate, exploding food prices, lack of freedom, lack of democracy, restriction on civil society and political repression. The situation opened the eyes of people living in for toppling ineffective and corrupt governments.

Thus, before the revolution, Tunisia was governed by a strong state with strong social policy and also maintaining a level of public social spending by redistribution of income. But the reverse side of the coin is a repressive and controlling welfare state, not based on credit and exercise of social rights but on social favors monopolized by the party state. Tunisia is an exemplary case of a system where social policy is at the same time the vehicle of social improvement and instrument of political despotism (Karshenas & Moghadam, 2005:74)

The apparent stability of the regime vanished with the economic crisis and high unemployment rates that, together with political repression, fed a growing depression in the country. The uprising, which began in the less developed regions of the country, however surprising they were at the time, is explicable in retrospect. Tunisians had enough, unemployed educated youth had nothing to lose. Bouazazi's self-immolation galvanized them into the action, and young people started the first of wave of revolutions across the region. From this revolution, the people of Tunisia are looking to show the world that they have been living in an oppressed society for decades and are hoping to change that through their uprising movement.

1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEMS

The understanding of North Africa and Middle East today is confounded by numerous and challenging questions although many aspect of the region's contemporary politics and society have been strongly discussed and debated. While much of the world democratized, Tunisia is one of the countries in North Africa that have more or less effectively retained the old status quo and their authoritarian powers. The prospects for liberal democracy in the near future seem like close to nil.

Although Tunisian was governed by a strong state with strong social policy and also maintaining a level of public social spending by redistribution of income plus steady economy growth during Ben Ali, the level of public dissatisfaction against the government continued to rise. The manifestation of this dissatisfaction was the "Spring" uprising in Tunisia. The uprising seems to have united people of Tunisia to rise against the rule of Ben Ali. The country has entered a new chapter in the political development. Tunisian demanded political freedom and more economic access. The problem then leads to several questions. Firstly, why the uprising happened in Tunisia? Secondly, how did the Tunisian government or regime in power respond to this uprising movement? Thirdly, how the Tunisian uprisings differ from other uprisings all over the world? Fourthly, to what extend the uprisings challenged the political landscape of the region?

1.3 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To examine the causes of the uprising in Tunisia.
2. To examine the role of Tunisian government responds to this uprising movement.
3. To explain Tunisian uprising is different from that of others all over the world.
4. To analysis the outcome of this uprising.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is important for several reasons. Firstly, a through and comprehensive examination of the causes and the consequences of this “Arab Spring” is imperative and carries great importance for the study of the region moving forward. This effort is a timely and essential addition to the current academic and political discourse. This does not presume to be a definitive explanation, but rather a start to an important conversation that others may add to and refine.

Secondly, the goal is to contribute new knowledge and insights to the debate on the characteristic of the region. Perhaps through future efforts, the general hypothesis explored here can be extended to a more diverse set of cases and more robust and universal conclusion can be extracted.

1.5 REVOLUTION: A CONCEPTUAL AND THEORITICAL DISCOURSE

The trust of this study is to examine revolution in Tunisia and to study this issue; the concept of revolution should be discussed to facilitate greater understanding about the phenomenon. A revolution is a basic change in power in organizational structures that takes place in a short period of time. When the existing structure of power is overthrown, leading to a long-term reconstruction of the political, social and economic order, we can speak of a revolution (Hague & Harrop, 2004:137).

Skocpal defines revolution as rapid, basic transformation of a society's states and class structure; and they are accompanied, and in part carried through, by class-based revolts from below (Skocpal, 1979:4). Therefore, Goldstone sees revolution as an effort to transform the political institutions and the justifications for political authority in society, accompanied by formal or informal mass mobilization and non-institutionalized actions that undermine authorities (Goldstone, 2011).

More importantly, as we have many definition of revolution, there are also many theories of revolution. However, political and socio-economic revolutions have been studied in much Social Science, particularly in Sociology, Psychology, Political science and History. From the sociological perspective, functionalist theorists see society as a system in equilibrium between a variety of resources, demands and sub-systems. From Political science perspective, scholars utilized pluralist theories to explain revolution. Those theories perceive events as result of power struggle between rival interest groups. In such model, revolution happen when two or more groups cannot come to terms

within a normal decision making process traditional for a given political system, and simultaneously have enough resources to employ force in pursuing their goals (Huntington, 1968).

The psychological perspective followed theories of cognitive psychology and frustration –aggression theory and saw the root of revolution in the state of mind of the masses. While they diverse in their approach as to what exactly causes the people to revolt, they agree that the main cause of revolution is widespread frustration with socio-political situations. It shows that the social psychological theory focuses on individual motivations rather than social groups. Consequently, this paper adopts the social-psychological theory for the cause of revolution in Tunisia. Implicit in the theory is that relative deprivation breeds a sense of anger which contributes to political discontent. Gurr (1980) argued that relative deprivation was the key of revolution. For Gurr, political instability only results from deprivation together with a belief that conditions are worse than they could and should be. What matters is not complete deprivation, a condition which often breeds resigned passivity, but relative deprivations which is a sense that rewards fall below expectations or entitlement. Thus, when relative depression is widespread, instability can result. In the same layer, relative deprivation is certainly a background factor in many revolutions.

1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW

There are several studies about the Revolution in Tunisia. Most of these studies discuss the causal and immediate factors that led to revolution in Tunisia and also few of these studies discuss the role of Tunisian government responds to this uprising.

In his article, *The Arab Uprisings: Revolution or Protests?*, George Lawson re the causal review factors that led to revolution in Tunisia:

“Crucial to revolutionary success are three factors: first, levels of state effectiveness (in particular, the resilience of intermediary institutions which can channel grievances between state and society); second, the degree of elite fracture (particularly its hold over the coercive apparatus); and third, the commitment of the opposition (both in terms of its ideological unity and its organizational capacity)” (Lawson, 2012:12).

On the other hand, he describes that “the lack of intermediate associations between state and society meant that there were few effective channels by which to meet grievances and institutionalize contestation” (Lawson, 2012:13).

In their article, *Egypt's Second January Uprising: Causes and Consequences of a Would-be Revolution*, Andrea Teti and Gennaro Gervasio reviews the roots the uprising by asserting:

“The causes of the uprising lay in a combination of three kinds of factors: ongoing trends towards the impoverishment of poorer sectors of society and the

pauperisation of the middle class, the facade of democratic institutions masking a reality of increasing political repression since the 2005 “Cairo Spring,” and a series of trigger issues, primarily Mubarak’s attempt at having his son Gamal “inherit” the Presidency (*tawreeth*), state security forces’ torture and assassination of Khaled Said for wanting to expose corruption, (global) food price spikes, and, of course, the success of the Tunisian revolution itself” (Teti & Gervasio, 2011: 30).

Besides, they also mentioned that increased youth unemployment, a population bulge and middle class pauperisation was the factors behind the Arab Spring.

In his article, *Syria, the Arab uprising, and the political economy of authoritarian resilience*, Bassam Haddad found that economic reforms such as welfare, subsidies and job provision that have usually compensated for the failure of the market to keep people out of poverty and hardship. Besides, he also stated that this phenomenon contributed two dangerous related phenomenon. Firstly, there was increased poverty whereby societies were increasingly losing their middle class and secondly economic exclusion from the “market”. It was guided by Nadine Marroushi (2011) where he has noted that there continues to be support in the direction of the free market and privatization from both the liberal and Islamist parties.

In his article, *Political Change in the Middle East: First Consolidated Reflections and Challenges Ahead*, Hani Albasoos stated that this uprising is a result of decades of oppression in which President Zain Al-Abidine Ben Ali’s authoritarian policy stripped Tunisians of their dignity by banning opposition and rejecting religious

freedom. Sustained inactivity on economic policies led to catastrophic unemployment rates, and corruption and nepotism resulted in instability (Albasoos, 2011:118). The statement was guided by Rogers (2011) saying that from the beginning of the uprising in Tunisia, in mid of December 2010, it was clear that its roots were in profound social and economic trends along with more serious political circumstances. Hani Albasoos adds that the regime in power responds to this uprising by cutting off the Internet and arrested hundreds of demonstrators, with violent clashes extensively covered by media.

From this literature review, there are many factors behind the revolution and role of Tunisia government responds to this revolution which were discussed and debated by many scholars. The findings of this literature review will help me to gain insight and clarity and also able to produce a study on the issues debated in this study.

1.7 RESEARCH METHODS

The research methods for this study will use a qualitative method. It will rely on analytical approach. Data collection of this study relies on document study, using both primary and secondary sources. For the primary sources will using research reports, speeches, press releases, newspapers, resolutions, agreements, reports, laws, along with other official state key document that are deciding to make an accurate analysis. Secondary sources were obtained through searches of library consists of some printed information derived from other scholar's field work, press release, journals, electronic journals, articles, newspapers, magazines and reports or other important document.

1.8 ORGANIZATION OF CHAPTERS

Compilation of chapters in this master thesis will focus on the movement and continuity writing itself where it can be translated to more realistic and adapted a more transparent understanding of the highlighted problems. Chapter One will focusing on the introduction of the background as it had full disclosed and followed by Chapter Two will lead to discussion on Tunisia in pre-uprising moment where I will discuss about the situation Tunisia under Habib Bourguiba and Ben Ali. Besides In this chapter, I will examine factors and causes that lead to the uprising in Tunisia. Chapter Three will discuss the citizen revolution in Tunisia and explaining the phenomenon. I will analysis about the prerequisite factors that make the regime in power been able to stay along. Chapter Four will discuss about the uniqueness of Tunisian uprising compare to that of other Arab countries. It will as to examine the challenges that Tunisia has to overcome in order to successfully achieve its democratic transition and move towards a sustainable steady state. Chapter Five will be conclusion which will contain the concluding remarks.

CHAPTER TWO

TUNISIA IN PRE-UPRISING MOMENT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

A common story of the uprising in Tunisia was the depression of authoritarian state where the people felt lack of freedom and human rights. For decades Tunisia had lived without basic human rights such as freedom of speech and also fear from their governments while they themselves lived in wealth and power without taking care of their population. Mostafa Bassyouni argues in *Labor Movement Absent in Syrian Revolt* (2011) “.....what Tunisia had in common was the exclusion of the vast majority of Tunisian people from any say in the decisions that affected their daily life. Even the most predictable decisions made under this regime were often devised to ensure their stability and power before the interest of the people” (Bassyouni, 2011).

Tunisia was in theory democratic and claimed to be, but in practice there was huge democracy deficit. The people had for decades not been in part of any decision-making even though they became the effected ones such as with the rise in food prices, which made poverty in further, even though Tunisia was supposed to belong to in a democratic state. Moreover, the state ruled only in favor of the power and their wealth

with no consideration of their people. Those who opposed against the regime, were exposed to police brutality, torture, executed, imprisoned, exiled, and dissent silenced in many other ways and even to death. This situation had been the fear among the Tunisian's people. Throughout the past decades this fear barriers has been slowly broken by different riots and events in the state as people were suffering further which lead to the event of 2010/2011 in Tunisia.

The economic policies that have been highlighted by many in order to study the uprisings in Tunisia deserve special interest. Tunisia's economic structure and structural issues share many common features with the rest of the Arab countries. The high unemployment, sectoral problems and scarcity of supply of the increasingly young population can be considered as general examples. However, the economic explanations have some limitations to understanding the recent developments in the region in generally. The political discontent fed by the region's authoritarian regimes is another important determinant, while the historical process gives many clues in analyzing the factors behind the uprising. At this chapter, this article provides a broad historical perspective, including a briefing on Tunisia's foreign, political and economic policies during period of Habib Bourguiba and Ben Ali and also will discuss about the factors behind the uprising in Tunisia.

2.2 HISTORICAL PROCESS IN TUNISIA

Northern Africa and the Southern Sahara, which covers the area from Egypt to the Atlantic Ocean, including Libya, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco and Mauritania, was known as Maghreb in the context of Islamic. The region became an object of competition for dominance between Spain and Portugal in the 15th century (Seyban, 2007:16). As the struggle between these two countries continued, the Ottoman presence in the region emerged by the beginning of the 16th century. During Ottoman rule, Tunisia was divided into 22 sub-districts.

The French impact on Tunisia stemmed from France's occupation of Algeria. The impact, which started as good and close relations between France and Husainid Dynasty, was distorted by the power change in France. The control and balance instrument enabled Tunisian province to continue to exist France's occupation of Algeria. French occupation lasted from 1881 to 1956. France took charge of domestic political issue, foreign affairs, and the military aspect. In the educational system, contrary to early French colonies, the attempts to use the education mechanism as a tool for social transition which were not applied in Tunisia. This policy succeeded in making the French language one of the symbols of privilege, spreading throughout the region without much resistance (Perkins, 2004:65-6). The intellectual class who both spoke French and Arabic played main role in the future of Tunisia. In addition, the judicial dualism formed by the Frontier Law on property and land in 1885, the Civil Code of 1906 established and approved by French lawyers and the juridical laws of 1921

(Perkins, 2004: 47-8) framed the historical background of the basic tension in Tunisia's politic.

2.3 THE INDEPENDENT PERIOD

2.3.1 Habib Bourguiba (1957-1987)

Prior to the December-January demonstrations, Tunisia was viewed as having a stable, authoritarian government that placed a higher priority on economic growth than on political liberation. It had only two leaders since gaining independence from France in 1956; the late Habib Bourguiba, a secular nationalist whose political rise was together to Tunisia's independence movement and Ben Ali, a former Minister of the interior and prime minister who became president in 1987.

Gaining Independence since March 20, 1956, Tunisia was the first of a growing family of African states to merge a mass party regime. Tunisia represents a highly original political system in which both democratic and autocratic rules can be observed. In analysis of the system, one must pay as much attention to personal and historic facts as to the ideological positions that have been propounded over the years. The main reason lies with Habib Bourguiba, the Tunisian leader. Habib Bourguiba, known to his people as the Supreme Warrior, led Tunisia's fight for independence from its colonial master, France. He was one of the most consistently pro-Western of all the Arabs leaders and also was one of the first politicians to call for a negotiated settlement of the

Palestinian problem. Besides, though a Muslim himself, Bourguiba rejected militant Islam he is also credited with promoting women's right and scrapped polygamy and the veil.

2.3.2 Foreign Policy under Habib Bourguiba

Bourguiba's foreign policy can be measured in the context of developing relations with the Arab world, Africa and the third world. During this period, Tunisia supported both the Non-Aligned Movement and the National Liberation Movements. In addition, the relations between Tunisia and the Arab Maghreb countries were strengthened, and, as an extension of these policies, good relations with Arab states were built. Yet relations worsened in 1965 in response to the Tunisian agreement in foreign policy on behalf of Israel, which was critiqued both inside and outside the country and resulted in the withdrawal of representatives in Egypt, Syria and Iraq (Joffe, 1987:181).

Bourguiba's foreign policy doctrines on the Palestine and Israel issue different from other Arab countries. Bourguiba believed that political rights could be gained over time; thus, he had been accepting the United Nation (UN) resolution while calling the establishment of the state of Israel an injustice. Bourguiba argued that Palestinians had to accepted this fact and remove their rigid policies to establish their own state. In addition to his radical position on the Palestine and Israel issue, Bourguiba stood apart from other Arab countries by starting with diplomatic relation with West Germany.

However, after the Arab-Israeli War of 1967, Tunisia tried to mend relations with the Arab states and representative were revived mutually (Joffe, 1987; 182)

In 1963, Tunisia became a member of Organization of African Unity (OAU) and held anti-colonial arguments in the UN and OAU to involve in developments in Congo. Besides, Bourguiba invited many African leaders to Tunisia to improve close relations with them. Under Bourguiba's rule two goals became prominent in Tunisia's foreign policy towards Africa. Firstly, to increase cooperation among African countries and secondly is to end colonialism in the region and these two goals were vital for shaping and developing in Tunisian economy (Moore, 1962: 229-30).

Tunisian-American relations were formed within the scope of economic and military aid in general terms. The relations between Tunisia and Westerns states could be assessed as positive in general term. The UN became an esteemed organization because its positive impact in the solution to the Bizerte issue. In 1961, Tunisian delegate was elected to the UN General Commission.

2.3.3 Domestic Policy under Habib Bourguiba

The 78 years of French administration ended in 1956 when Tunisia became independent. However, independence brought about the repressive regime of Habib Bourguiba, who is a prominent leader of the Tunisian independence campaign in

the 1930s and the neo-Destour Party established after World War II. Both became important and deterministic actors in post-independence period.

Moreover, free and standard education was created while mosques and schools were separated and Quran courses were taken under control of the state through educational reform (Moore, 1962: 465-6& Nasr, 1987: 421). Bourguiba's goal in these reforms was to end dualistic structures in education and the jurisdiction established by the French protectorate while sustaining the control of the state over all instruments and institutions within the country.

The Tunisian Republic was declared on 22 July 1957, and Bourguiba became the first President of the country. President Bourguiba realized that major changes in the country by nationalizing foundation and private property as well as many foreign industrial and transportation companies by signing agreements with France in 1957, 1960 and 1963. The European population in Tunisia had to leave the country during this time because of these reforms. In addition, several economic reforms were initiated in order to break France's monopoly over the Tunisian economy (Nasr, 1987: 348).

During the 1960s, the Tunisian economy was subjected to statist policies and development plans formulated under the name of Destour socialism. During this period, state owned iron and steel factories, oil plants and sugar mills and glass factories and peasant production cooperatives were established. Besides, olive groves in Msaken were also nationalized. The opposition that emerged in response to these nationalization policies was suppressed by the use of force. In addition, while the policies implemented

were not successful in creating enough job opportunities, a program of compulsory labor with ill pay in such projects as the construction dams, irrigation canals, and forestation led to the strengthening of the opposition among the population. The failure of the economic policies and other reforms such as secular education, the outlawing of Shariah courts, the prohibition of wearing the “niqab” or full-face Islamic veil, and the closing of the Islamic University of Al-Zaytuna mainly were objected by Islamic opposition who did not recognize such reforms. Islamists and all opposition groups were marginalized during this period. The opposition groups encountered state oppression and many of them were arrested and exiled (Moore, 1962: 50-3).

After 1966, Tunisia fell into range of economic and political crisis, and political Islam subsequently emerged as an actor in Tunisian political life. In 1978, massive protest began because of the high rate of inflation and unemployment where these protest were suppressed using force.

In 1984, the government under Bourguiba’s rule increased pressure on social life, forbidding civil servants from praying during working hours, women from wearing veils in universities and workplace, and also taxi drivers from having a beard symbolizing Islam and listening to Islamic music in their cars (Jones, 1988: 20). The Islamic Tendency Movement (MTI) under Rashid al Ghannushi refused to obey these bans and continued to offer courses in Islamic Tendency Movements’ School and write articles in newspaper. Ghannushi and his followers were arrested after a preaching that brought forth students riots. The arrest of Ghannushi was the fire for the riots in the country, where tensions already existed there because of the economic recession and

political suppression. (Jones, 1988: 21-22).Habib Bourguiba dominated Tunisian's government until his removal in 1987.

2.4 ZINE EL ABIDINE BEN ALI GOVERNMENT (1987-2011)

2.4.1 Domestic Policy

Ben Ali was the Minister of interior under Habib Bourguiba. In 1987, Tunisia entered an important and rapid change process. At that time, General Zine El Abidine Ben Ali discharged Bourguiba through bloodless coup. Ben Ali promised to follow liberal policies and opposition members in exile. In addition, many political figures who had been arrested during Bourguiba period were released (*Encyclopedia of World Biography*, 1998: 519). Al-Zaytuna University, which had been closed by Bourguiba in the early 1960s, was rehabilitated; radio and television were allowed to broadcast call to prayer and the Socialist Destourian Party which was founded in 1934 by Habib Bourguiba, was changed to the Constitutional Democratic Rally (RCD) to refresh the image in the eyes of public. Besides, Ben Ali further declared that he accepted the Islamic cultural identity of Tunisia.

Ben Ali was successful in managing the discontent against him as a control mechanism in the domestic affairs until the end of his rule despite the fact that he brutally suppressed the opposition. Besides, election law reforms aimed to increase the participation rate in elections and facilitate voting. The reform process extended over a

period of time by giving more quotas to opposition parties in parliamentary elections in 1999 and 2004 (King, 2009: 2004-5) and the opposition was mostly eliminated.

Ben Ali used the rhetoric of an “Islamic threat” to secure and consolidate his authority. In 1991, state pressure increased on the Islamist Party of Ennahda, the moderate (BBC, June 16, 2013) Islamist political party in Tunisia which also known as Renaissance Party, with allegations of a plot against the regime. Some of the Ennahda members were arrested by the army, which alleged that they were preparing a coup in 1992 and they were finally released in 2008. Besides, Ben Ali also used another internal pressure which was state control over the internet. A filter was imposed by the state control all internet cafes. All local internet suppliers belonged to the Ben Ali’s family members.

2.4.2 Economic Tunisia under Ben Ali

Before the January 14, 2011 Jasmine Revolution, Tunisia was neither an economic marvel nor a full success story, but it was doing better than its neighbors. Investment in energy and mining sectors increased during these years as well and Tunisia became an important tourism centre under Ben Ali’s rule, and tourism income constituted a crucial share of economy. Besides, Tunisia is considered a middle-income country and one of the best performing non-oil exporting Arab countries. The Tunisian economy was described positively in the African Economic Outlook 2010 Report. By addressing

economic diversity, the banking system has become a strong institution that can protect the country economic.

However, unemployment continued to be chronic issue for the Tunisian economy under Ben Ali, particularly among young people. This issue caused periodic riots in Tunisia, where the education level in Tunisia is high. According to a Global Employment Trends 2010 Report, North Africa is one of the regions where unemployment rates are highest. The report stated that the impact of the global economic depressions has been limited in the North Africa, which has faced high unemployment rates among the young and educated population in Tunisia.

2.4.3 Foreign Affairs under Ben Ali

During Ben Ali's rule, Tunisia's foreign policy was restrained and never attempted to become a regional power. Ben Ali's foreign policy consisted a maintaining a careful balance of power between close relations with Western Europe and the United States along with increasing inter-Arab cooperation. In this respect, it would be not wrong to state that Ben Ali applied similar foreign policies as Bourguiba. Tunisia's biggest trade partner, France, supported Ben Ali during his 23-year rule. The historical ties and single market have strengthened Tunisian-French cooperation as well. The tension between France and Tunisia that affected the economic policies of France were moderated during Ben Ali's rule. This cooperation and the close ties did not lose their intensity until the last day of Ben Ali's presidency. The advertising conferences held in October 2010 in

Paris to appeal for investments in Tunisia, which had French support until the last moment, are important in this context (Think Tunisia, May 9, 2013).

Between 1995 and 2009, the EU provided 1.7 billion Euros in aid and loaned 2.8 billion Euros to Tunisia. The EU also accounts for 72% of Tunisian exports and 68% of its imports. Meanwhile, Tunisia offers cheap labor for European investments. Given this general picture, the EU paved the “advanced status” of Tunisia in the context of the European Neighborhood Policy in 2010 (European Commission, May 9, 2013).

Tunisia had been also the official home to the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) since it was forced out from Lebanon in the wake of Israel’s invasion from 1982 to 1994. Ben Ali’s support of the Palestinian issue earned the respect of the Arab world. Ben Ali played an important role in the Arab Maghrebi Union (AMU) and the Organization of African Unity, serving as president of these unions and encouraging economic cooperation between Europe and Africa (Jhazbay, 2004: 162-3).

2.5 THE FACTORS BEHIND THE UPRISING

For 23 years, a combination of ruthless authoritarianism and inspiring socio-economic development ensured a certain level of stability of Ben Ali’s regime. Moreover, many of Tunisian people acquiesced to the lack of civil and political freedoms in exchange for access to a relatively good level of social services and benefits. An explosive mix of

socio-economic problems and widespread and deepening political grievances constituted a common causal thread behind the uprising in the Tunisia.

2.5.1 Socio-Economic Problem

Poverty in absolute terms does not take us very far by way of explanation (World Bank, April 19, 2013), but relative deprivation and a clash between expectations and reality played a role. As the regime tested its legitimacy on ensuring a relatively high level of socio economic development for the Tunisian people, worsening living standards contributed to raise popular discontent and frustration among Tunisian population. The tacit social contract between Ben Ali and the Tunisian people, latent upon political repression in exchange for social benefits, was no longer satisfactory, at least for a part of the population.

Youth unemployment was the most prominent features that fed increased frustration and resentment among the Tunisia population especially among young people. Although over the last decade, unemployment at the national level declined from 15.8% in 1994 to 14.1% in 2007, the unemployment rate among the young, particularly those with secondary and higher education, increased intensely (Mahjoub, 2010). The recent global financial crisis contributed to further intensify Tunisia's labour market challenges, raising further youth unemployment among graduates, while job creation significantly slowed down.

Since 1987, Tunisia went through a process of economic liberalization, which accelerated in recent years. However, while promoting a relatively high level of economic growth, the market-oriented reforms implemented by the regime did not contribute to creating sufficient employment opportunities for a young people in Tunisia. The rise in export was concentrated in low skills activities, such as clothes and agricultural product, providing little job opportunities for the highly educated newcomers in the labor market (Heidi, 2009: 123-144).

Besides, while Tunisia succeeded in the industrial transformation to produce more diversified and sophisticated goods, it is still struggling to move forward. The reason is because Tunisia exports rely heavenly on the European market, and innovation potential was previously stifled by a limited freedom of ideas and entrepreneurship. Though the country's export- oriented policy successfully developed the relative competitive Tunisian manufacturing industry, it nevertheless remained confined to the export sector without important spillover effects on the rest of the economy. As a result, Tunisia felt the global crisis more acutely other southern Mediterranean countries, such as Morocco and Algeria (Paciello, 2010: 51-69).

The implications of youth unemployment for the middle class living standards were significant. As the coverage of social security to the Tunisian population depends on having job in the formal economy, the increasing number of unemployed meant that a large number of Tunisians were underprivileged of these benefits (Ben Romdhane, 2007). In recent years, Tunisians' purchasing power was also hit hard by rising world food prices and salaries for many public sector workers became low mapped against the

rising cost of living and were no longer enough to meet the rising expenditure expectations of the Tunisian middle class, as the high level of private indebtedness suggests. Moreover, in the context of the global crisis, the observed decline in remittances from Tunisians working abroad further worsened the living standards of many households depending on these incomes.

2.5.2 State Corruption, Political Repression and Lack of Freedom

Moreover, widespread corruption, coercion and authoritarianism seriously inhibited the capacity of the Tunisian economy to ensure well-balanced development and sufficient jobs. Economic reforms were used primarily to redistribute privileges to the families of the president and his wife, to protect their vested interests and to reinforce the regime's control over the private sector. In spite of market-oriented reforms, such as trade liberalization and privatization, Ben Ali and his families continued to exercise deep control over the private sector, adopting various instruments to inhibit their independence such as, coercive taxation (Hibou, 2004; 2006).

One of the major factors behind the poor performance of private investment in Tunisia was the level of corruption and lack of lucidity and rule of law which made many Tunisians and foreign entrepreneurs unwilling to invest in new business opportunity in the country. Given that corruption and other byproducts of the authoritarianism system generated deep flaws and inefficiencies in the economy, the country's socio-economic problems remained addressed. In view of high

unemployment, discrimination became the main channel to distribute jobs and benefits under the strict control of the ruling party, fueling increasing social frustration particularly among the young.

Political repression and the lack of civil liberties was also one of the factors that provoked popular discontent. Tunisian was not allowed to voice any criticisms of Ben Ali and his government, and the regime systematically repressed any forms of political dissent. Human rights activists, journalists, and members of the opposition were subjected to constant surveillance, harassment and imprisonment (Kausch, 2009). Legislation used to exert pressure on journalists and editors was amended to tighten restrictions on freedom of expression. Moreover, independent organizations and opposition parties had a very limited margin for maneuver, since they were not allowed to hold public meetings or engage in any sort of public criticism of the regime (Kausch, 2009; Paciello, 2011)

Moreover, under Ben Ali, internal political and economic conditions hindered large organized political mobilization against the regime in power. However, the political void left by the absence both organized strong opposition forces and of formal channels of political expression proved unsustainable in a context of deteriorating socio-economic conditions. As socio-economic problems and the regime's repression became unbearable for a part of the population, people's frustration and anger culminated in public unorganized protest against the regime. This pattern of mobilization is evident in the uprising event in December 2010 – January 2011 which took place in Tunisia.

All this led to the frustration of a population that was constantly subjected to intimidation, to the most blatant forms of injustice, and to feeling increasingly offended, yet with no outlet to express any discontent. No one could denounce injustice or call for justice to be done. The well-policed system of control had managed to normalize an entire society, using the cruelest means of repression where there was no respect for the most basic rules of law, the fabrication of false evidence, iniquitous judgments, defective legal procedures, harsh sentences, and of course torture, the use of which was rampant.

Table 1: Summary of Protests by Country in North Africa (2010-2011)

Country	Date started	Types of protest	Outcome
Tunisia	18 December, 2010	Mohamed Bouazizi's immolation, Nationwide protest; occupation of public spaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ousting of President Ben Ali • Resignation of minister of Ghannouchi • Release of political prisoners. • Dissolution of the political police and the former ruling party.
Algeria	28 December 2010	Self-immolations; major protests; riots, road blockings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifting of 19-year old state of emergency.
Libya	13 January 2011	Nationwide protests; armed revolt; occupation of cities by opposition forces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opposition force seizes control of numerous Libyan cities. • Formation of Benghazi-based national transitional council.
Mauritania	17 January 2011	Self-immolation, protests.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State repression. • Opposition condemned the ruling government.
Sudan	17 January 2011	Minor protests.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President Bashir will not seek another term in 2015.
Egypt	25 January 2011	Self-immolations; Nationwide protests; Occupation of public Spaces; attacks on Official buildings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ousting of President Hosni Mubarak. • Assumption of power by the army. • Suspension of the constitutions and dissolution of the parliament. • Resignation of Prime Minister Ahmed.
Djibouti	28 January 2011	Major protests; occupation of public spaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protest Leaders were arrested.
Morocco	30 January 2011	Self-immolation; minor protests, attacks on public properties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political concessions by King Mohammed VI. • Referendum on constitution reform.

Source: (International Crisis Group, 2011)

CHAPTER THREE

THE JASMINE REVOLUTION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia was a long-standing desire for freedom and justice denied by the autocratic regimes in the region. Youth formed the vibrant force behind the uprising and the role of social media network in maintaining the momentum of the uprising was decisive.

3.2 CITIZEN REVOLUTION IN TUNISIA: EXPLAINING THE PHENOMENON

The Arab resistance which has been termed as “Arab Spring” or “Jasmine Revolution” originally started with an individual protest of self immolation by an unemployed graduate young man, Mohamed Bouazizi, against police brutality in Tunisia. His story and tragic, has become the stuff of legends and he was hailed of the as the hero of the revolutionary narrative. As we can see, Tunisia has recently suffered from high employment, mostly among university graduates. Besides, the corruption grew

significantly within Ben Ali's administration, where the investors had to bribe and partner with Ben Ali's family members in order to get business and deals and authorizations.

Within days of Bouazizi's self-immolation, citizens of every sectors of society; student groups, teachers, lawyers, doctors, trade unions, journalists, human right activities and opposition politicians joined the protest to bringing the president Ben Ali into exile on January 14th, 2011. The remarkable showing of unity emerged from a quiet, but well-organized civil society and groups in both official and unofficial opposition. Over the years, a diverse range of social organizations was achieved by largely steering clear of debatable political issues and instead focusing on philanthropy, culture, etc.

NGOs organizations, such as Tunisian League for Human Rights (LTDH) and the National Council for Liberty in Tunisia, toed the line of adequate activities by working toward general political aims not at odds with the regime. Moreover, most of the civil society organizations were carefully managed by the regime, which was created by government elites or threatened with repression (Erdle, 2004). While there were legal oppositional political parties like the Democratic Socialist Movement (MDS) and the Republican Congress, their limited impact in parliament had left their ranks of supported exhausted (Erdle, 2004).

In light of the dramatic development of events, on a considerable scale, it has become evident that new media had been playing a key role during uprising in Tunisia in keeping the momentum going, and bringing the voices of the disengaged Tunisian

youth to the attention of world media, and hence to international public opinion. Coupled with the effective leveraging of social media applications, information was quickly spread and mass mobilization happened almost spontaneously. Besides, new Technology also helped the opposition leadership organize protest and easily communicate with followers. Mobile phones, blogs, YouTube, Facebook pages and Twitter feeds had become important instrumental in mediating the live coverage of protests and speeches, as well as police brutality in dispersing demonstration. Consequently, social media has become the central location for generating information and broadcasting it to Tunisians via international channels such as Al Jazeera.

In particular, Tunisia's biggest union, the Tunisian General Labor Union (UGTT), which claims over half a million members, reportedly played a key role in sustaining the December-January protest, which its leadership framed as rooted in economic grievances (UGTT, June 17, 2013). Besides, the Union took the lead, organizing rallies around their headquarters in cities throughout the country (Rifthai, 2011). The Union decided to stand alongside civil society and the Tunisian people in all their diversity, to defend not only the working masses but also the republic and its institutions.

Throughout the period following Bouazizi's self-immolation, both Ben Ali and his ministers played active and visible roles in responding to the protest. As the protest broke out in Sidi Bouzid, the Development minister in Tunisia, Mohamed Nouri Jouini, went to the region in person to announce a 10 million US dollar employment plan

(Saleh, 2010). Four days later, however, the protests were continuing to expand throughout the country.

As the protest gained steam, the security forces were mobilized. Although an interior ministry spokesperson claimed the security forces only shot in self-defense, crackdowns were ordered and many people were injured and killed. On January 11th, 2011, regime Ben Ali announced a curfew and deployed the army into the capital Tunis. Over the course of the month, the security forces used tear gas and guns, killing dozens of protesters (Byrne & Khalaf, 2011). President Ben Ali attempted to personally appeal to the people of cease the protesting. Almost two weeks after Mohamed Bouazizi lit himself on fire, Ben Ali went to visit him. On December 28th, Ben Ali broadcast a national television addressing criticizing “the use of violence in the streets by a minority of extremists,” threatening repression, and warning of the negative impact protests would have on the economy (AlJazeera, June 17, 2013). He sacked many of his ministers and governors of several provinces on charges related to the uprising. None of these actions seemed to have an effect on demands of the people (Bowring & Cook, 2011).

The social media facilitated the spread of up-to-date and accurate information and allowed for easier coordination between opposition actors. More than that, it eliminated the government’s control over information. A huge symbolic break with regime order came when the national Tunisian television, Nessma TV, broke their silence on the protest on December 29, 2010 (AFP, 2010 & Rifai, 2011). In an attempt to regain that lost control, the Tunisia government initiated a systematic “phishing”

operation and they arrested bloggers and web activists (Ryan, 2011). These efforts to quell online dissent proved to be, not only woefully inadequate, but also showed that the government was losing its grip (Ryan, 2011).

The uprising created turmoil in Tunisia, giving concerns for many international actors. The uprising witnesses the manipulation, intervention and suppression by regional as well as international actors. By January 2011, the international community too was closely following the events. The US State Department made a statement that criticizing Ben Ali's regime for its interference with the internet (Lister, 2011). A few days later, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton noted her concern about instability in Tunisia, as well as the "underlying concerns of the people" (Clinton, 2011). On the other hand, the regime received support from the French. In particular several cabinet ministers and Foreign Minister Michelle Alliot-Marie recommended that French riot police be sent to assist in restoring order. The messages ceased to be mixed, however, when the European Union announced it would not accept "the disproportionate use of force by the police against peaceful protesters" (Byrne & Khalaf, 2011). Consensus seems to be, however, that the international role was minimal.

After the army presence and curfews failed to affect the tens of thousands of people who continued to march, Ben Ali and his Prime Minister Rachid Ghannouchi announced a slew of concessions. Among the promised concessions, they said detainees would be released, corruption would be investigated, many jobs would be created for graduates over the course of the next two years and by 2012 all unemployed graduates would be given jobs. Ben Ali ordered the government to cut the prices of sugar, milk,

bread, fired his cabinet, promise to hold parliamentary elections within six months and declared that he would not seek another symbol as president. At the same, however, armored army vehicles moved into the heart of the capital (Bowring & Coke, 2011).

On January 13, 2011, hundreds of protesters ransacked the mansion of a presidential relative, which is destroying one of the most hated symbols of the regime. That night, Ben Ali gave 10 minute speech to the nation. For the first time, he expressed remorse over the deaths of protesters. He also said he had ordered security forces not to use live rounds against demonstrators. For the few days before, the demonstrators had witnessed the military forced backing up from the key positions in the capital. It later emerged that the chief of the Tunisian army, General Rachid Ammar, had refused Ben Ali's orders to fire (Arieff, 2011). When the protesters saw that the army and police were keeping to the sidelines, their number increase to the thousands (Chick, 2011). Among the largely affluent crowd were doctors, lawyers and other young professionals, as well as a large numbers of young women (Kirkpatrick, 2011).

The next morning, President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali fled to Saudi Arabia, leaving the government in the care of the Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi. The protests did not stop there and Ghannouchi was eventually forced to step down as well. While the shape of the future government is uncertain, the Tunisian people successfully knocked down a seemingly indomitable authoritarian regime due to a combination of widespread disgust with the government, opposition solidarity and ruling elite defection and mismanagement of the state institutions that kept them in power in the past (Ben Bouazza & Riffai, 2011).

The Jasmine Revolution has ended one of the most oppressive and authoritarian regimes. Mr. Bouazizi's self immolation has created a domino effect in North Africa and the Middle East. The Jasmine Revolution has shown that the power of the people was able to bring down one of the strongest dictators the world has ever known. Dar Al-Hayat, an Arab newspaper which is located in London, said the "Jasmine Revolution" is a gift to the entire Arab world and is the best answer to those who do not believe in the possibility of change from the inside ("Islamist set sights," 2011, para. 5).

As a result, the Jasmine Revolution is considered to be relatively successful, particular compared to the revolution in Egypt and Libya because of the limited numbers of lives lost in Tunisia (Blas, 2011). This was a revolution of breaking through fears, only to realize that everything is now possible. They stood in the face of bullets, arrest, and murder. They prevented the dictator from holding on power or returning to it after a power vacuum. The uprising prevailed without any external interference or support; in fact, it prevailed against the external forces that supported the dictator.

3.3 PREREQUISITES CONDITIONS THAT MAKE THE REGIME IN POWER BEEN ABLE TO STAY ALONG

3.3.1 Barriers to Change

For Tunisia, there are four significant prerequisite factors that make the regime in power been able to stay along. Firstly, the factor of historical legitimacy of the regime

acquired from the leadership's role in the independence movement, which was then perpetuated by its ability to maintain stability in the face of the perceived Islamist threat. Second factor is the economic resources which contributing to the national income to Tunisia. While development has undoubtedly been uneven, it has benefited the regime and made it stronger. Thirdly, the factor of international support for regime and disinterest in its abuses which has given it the freedom to pursue its objectives unchallenged. Finally, issue of culture has merit, not due to an Islamist liking for authoritarianism, but rather due to the lack of experience with democracy and the efficient repression of dissent that has been refined by the regime.

3.3.2 Historical Legitimacy and Stability

Tunisia was colonized by the French in 1881 and remained a colony until guerilla armed resistance and a succession of negotiations with the French led to independence in 1956. The accepted leader to fill the void left by French Administrators was the Neo-Dustur ("constitution") Movement headed by Habib Bourguiba. Neo-Dustur which was founded in 1934 was the face of the resistance against the French and thus had the loyalty of the people. After a short struggle, Bourguiba took the presidency. As anti-French rhetoric became less prominent, the new regime successfully rallied the people behind its social and economic policies, easily consolidating power under the premise state-building. The Neo-Dustur built a political party with broad membership and no opposition. The regime came to stand for socialism, gender equality, and education for

all and also secularism. The public approval was not unanimous, but any opposition, where mainly from those supporting Bourguiba's exiled rival Salah Ben Yusuf and some in the religious establishment which was effectively co-opted with economic incentives or suppressed (Perkins, 2004).

When socialist-economic policies backfired, the resulting crisis led to demonstrations and frustration. As Bourguiba's behavior became erratic under the continually deteriorating economic conditions, the Prime Minister Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali, in accordance with the constitutional provisions, had Bourguiba declared unfit to rule and took over in a peaceful transition to power. Moreover, Ben Ali had become popular after negotiating with Bourguiba not to execute several key opposition leaders and so he took office with considerable goodwill of the people behind him (Perkins, 2004).

Over the next two decades, Ben Ali adapted the institutions when needed to reassert his dominance. At first, he cautiously opened the political system up by legalizing opposition parties, welcoming exiled leaders home, releasing detainees and modernizing other state institutions. He also renamed the Neo-Dustur Party the Constitutional Democratic Rally (RCD). This season of revitalized political participation and freedom ended, however, when Islamist opposition became visible. In 1989, a massive repression of the Islamists commenced, where effectively destroying the movement such as Ennahda. Moreover, the regime broadened its repressive policies to silence all, even secular, opposition. As Tunisia integrated with the global economy, it tried out a new state-controlled pluralism that permitted formal political participation for

legalized opposition parties, but at the same time ensured that previously free social spaces like mosques and universities were tightly monitored and controlled. Thus, a sophisticated system of formal, but token opposition participation gave the appearance of pluralism, while other forms of real dissent were repressed (Erdle, 2004).

3.3.3 Economic Victory and International Support

Perhaps one of the most important factors contributing to Tunisia's political stability has been its fiscal wealth. While it lacks significant natural resources, Tunisia's geography location and strategically neutral foreign policy has enabled it to become the useful bridge for trade Europe, the Middle East and Africa. Since the late 1980s, the country's pragmatic development strategies, with a focus on export-led industrialization, led to a consistent growth average of about 5% yearly (Versi, 2009). With its impressive, stable growth, Tunisia has secured a better standard of living for the substantial middle class, and an engaged community of foreign investors who are attracted by low labor costs, low tax rates, and stability (Boubekeur, 2009).

In the early 2000s, efforts at economic and political reforms, called *Mise a Niveau* ("Upgrades") (Versi, 2011), began in full swing where it working to improve infrastructure and domestic production processes, as well as expanding Information and Communications Technology (ICT) to foster a more knowledge which was based economy. In addition, important strides were also being made to promote universal education, women's rights and poverty reduction. As a result of these policies, Tunisia

landed the top slot in the World Economic Forum's African Competitiveness ranking, where they placed 40th in the world (Versi, 2009).

The success in economic did much to help maintain the political status quo. First, the international support for the regime has been very strong. Europe, in particular, sees Tunisia as a vital trading partner. The political stability benefited the many European investors who saw Tunisia as a secure and profitable market for their capital. In addition, while Tunisia's private sector is strong, the state still holds the reigns to the economy. Their assets included vast real estate, bank, insurance, tourism and much more. Likewise, the system for dealing out contracts and capital is still marked by intense crony capitalism (Lewis, 2011). Thus, while the overall economy remained robust and living standards high, the regime was still able to control distribution of resources and made use of its both economic and political capital.

Despite the Tunisian economy's laudable successes, significant challenges still plagued it at the microeconomic level (Boubekeur, 2009). The financial crisis of 2008-2009, while its effects on Tunisia were limited, exacerbated some of the core economic struggles of the population. (Aljazeera, June 17, 2013). The inflation rate, for instance, experienced moderate growth, rising to 5.1% by the first quarter of 2008, causing a steep increase of the relative food prices (Aljazeera, June 17, 2013). Although rates are not entirely reliable, general unemployment was estimated at 14.1% in 2008 and recent university graduates in the 20-24 age range were starkly and disproportionately affected (*Tunisia Overview 2010*, May 29, 2013). Money from the important tourism industry and remittances also fell (Tunisia: Financial Sector Profile, 2010 & Country Report:

Tunisia January 2009, May 23, 2013). All in all, while the economy was good shape compared to the rest of the region, recent years saw disparities rising, particularly with respect to unemployment.

Another source of extreme frustration for Tunisians was the widespread corruption. While used by Ben Ali too buy favors and appoint potential opposition figures, the general population did not reap any benefit (Kirkpatrick, 2011). While the revelation did not tell Tunisians anything they didn't already know, the Tunisia-related wikileaks released just a few months before the uprisings showed the extend the corrupt practice prevailed and revealed that the US government was also alert of them and was not supportive. An expert from one of the cables written by US ambassador to Tunisia, Robert F. Godec, appropriately sums up the prevalence of corruption and the ill-will it engendered:

“Often referred to as a quasi-mafia, an oblique mention of “the Family” isenoughto indicate which family you mean. Seemingly half of the Tunisian business community can claim a Ben Ali connection through marriage, and many of these relations are reported to have made the most of their lineage. (Godec, 2008).

The perception that a few privileged elites were benefiting while the rest of the country suffered presented a tremendous disparity in the public mind. More than simple deprivation was the feeling of “being cheated” (Rimas, 2011). Speaking out against these inequitable conditions, however, was not tolerated. At the most, there was a small

tolerance for ventilation of economic grievances, but even that was limited. In fact the most significant unrest Tunisia had experienced over any issues on economic or political-in the recent years, for example, were demonstrations held in the mining region of Gafsa in 2008 and again in early 2010, fueled by unemployment. In response, the government promptly sent in the army to aid police in containing protestors and arresting participants (Arieff, 2011).

3.3.4 Culture

One aspect that is often referred to with respect to Tunisia is the acceptance of a social contract where the economic prosperity in return for restricted political rights. For many years, this seemed to have had the implicit support for the Tunisian people, many of whom benefited from the availability of education, high levels of home ownership, and the other aspects of a middle class society (Arieff, 2011). An additional cultural factor that contributed to this social contract is that, of all the Muslim- majority countries, Tunisian is perhaps the most secular. Although political Islam was brutally repressed four decades ago, and has made no resurgence, the possibility of an Islamist takeover has continued to serve as justification for a strong state. The repression of the rest of the society, moreover, pushed all dissent underground and left the public sphere, including the robust civil society and business community that emerged over the years which in compliance with the regime (Angrist, 1999).

As a result, the barriers to change were present where political and economic power was intense firmly in the hands of Ben Ali, his extensive family, and also close

circle of advisors, the economy was performing well at the macro-level, and suppression of dissent seemed as effective as ever. However, the young, educated population saw the rising disparities between what they could achieve with their university diplomas, both compare to similarly educated people in liberal democratic countries and compared to the unfairly privileged regime elites. This and couple with the several repression, created frustrations among Tunisian people.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE OUTCOME OF THE UPRISING

4.1 THE UNIQUE OF TUNISIAN UPRISING

The uprising in Tunisia was not like any other uprisings that took place in the human history. This uprising has unique features and one way to describe these features would be swiftness. Although the uprising in Tunisia came to an end in less than two months after the uprising took place, however, this uprising was spread very quickly to neighboring countries within less than a year. Besides, this uprising received very direct and immediate reaction and support from the global society. This uprising not only was successful in producing political results, it also drew global attention. The success of the Tunisia revolution was due to latent aspiration of the Arab Spring present throughout the country during the beginning of the movement.

Tunisia's uprising was the first mass movement toppling an established government in the Middle East and North Africa since the Iranian Revolution of 1979. It was first time ever in history that an Arab dictator has been removed by a popular revolution rather than a coup. There have been mass movements before in the Arab world, notably the one in Iraq in 1958 which overthrew the British-linked monarchy and installed a left-talking military regime; but the nationalist, developmentalist, statist

regimes introduced in the 1960s have been long-lived, mostly modifying themselves only by palace coups.

In Tunisia, the military has historically played a professional, a political role. The military took on secondary role in domestic and political actions to the much-feared state secret police. Tunisia's military played a less significant role in the country's uprising than the armed forces in the other nations in the Arab Spring. Unlike militaries elsewhere in the Arab world, such as Egypt, the Tunisian army has never experienced combat and does not dominate the domestic economy. Under Ben Ali, it served as a distant second to the country's domestic security services, from which Ben Ali, a former military police officer, hailed. Its refusal to support Ben Ali's regime contributed to the nature of the country's overall peaceful revolution. Furthermore, the military has not participated meaningfully in managing the transition period and is unlikely to shape the ultimate outcome in any significant way. Since January 2011 (post-revolution), and at the direction of the executive branch, the military has taken on increasing responsibility for domestic security and humanitarian crisis response. This meets the criteria of good civil-military relations.

Moreover, the role of the military in pre-revolution Tunisia is different from the other countries in the world. The Tunisian military is small sized, non-politicized force, whose chief of staff, Rachid Ammar, pointedly refused Ben Ali's directive to fire on protestors, instead acting to control police officers, security and intelligence personnel. He also turned aside any suggestion that he and his fellows officers, and not civilians, assume control of the country. The stance of military in relation to the government's

leadership represents one of the most decisive factors in explaining why Tunisian uprising is different from other uprisings all over the world.

Almost two years ago, no one could have foreseen the tumultuous events that ousted the two decade-long dictator. Even though most commentators still think of Mohamed Bouazizi as the figure behind the Tunisian uprising and one cannot deny his frustration and consequent self-immolation as a tipping point in rousing popular venom, one still adheres to the figureless image of the uprising. Indeed, with the emergent communicative systems of cyber warfare and the rise of social networks, subversive ideas against despotism have become effortlessly accessible. In a postmodern setting, the information no longer points in one direction like the needle of a compass, but rather has become multiple and diffuses. It belongs to any knowledge seeker, where there is no single hub, but an infinite numbers of pathways to communicate.

So, popular uprising in Tunisia proved to the world that the Arab mind, away from the orientalist narrative, can change the needle of the world political compass and overthrow Western puppets not matter what costs them. They can defy police states for their sake of their dignity, and while it might need huge individual sacrifices, it remains doable.

Unlike in Egypt, Jordan, Algeria and most other secular Arab autocracies, the main challenge to the Tunisian regime has not come from Islamist opposition but from secular intellectuals, lawyers, and trade unionists. The absence of Islamist presence in the result of an aggressive attempt by successive Tunisian regimes, dating back over a

half-century, to eliminate Islamists from public life. Ben Ali enthusiastically took up his policy in the early 1990s, putting hundreds of members of the al-Nahda party, Tunisia's main Islamist movement, on trial amid widespread allegation of torture and sentencing party leaders to life imprisonment or exile. Most influential Tunisian Islamists now live abroad, while those who remain in Tunisia have been forced to form a coalition with unlikely secular and communist bedfellows.

The history is vital to understanding why the protest was successful in removing Ben Ali's government. There is in appreciation within the corridors of power in Tunisia that the Islamists are not at the top of the pile of the latest unrest. This is one of the factors that make Tunisian uprising differ from other uprising among Arab countries. 2011 will remain a very special date in the history of Arab region and for the Euro-Mediterranean area as a whole. Former Tunisian President Zi el-Abidine Ben Ali, the first Arab dictator to fall to mass protests which is initially seemed an unlikely victim. The uprising in Tunisia has been widely seen as a watershed event which has irrevocably altered the region and the political landscape of the region and also led to a seismic shift in the social contract governing the relationship between Arab ruling elites and their populations.

4.2 CHALLENGES FOR A NEW DEMOCRACY

After several weeks, of anti-government protests, Ben Ali and his family fled the country on 14 January 2011. While the process of democratic transition has begun, a number of political and socio-economic challenges may threaten its direction. The main risk in Tunisia's political transition lies in the uneasy coexistence of the old system of power with the emerging new one. As a result, the fate of Tunisia's political transition primarily depends on whether or not the country will be able to dismantle the previous power structure. There are several principles challenges that Tunisia has to overcome in order to successfully achieve its democratic transition and move towards a sustainable steady state.

4.2.1 The Interim Government

The interim government was established with the mandate to drive the early phase of the political transition and since its inception; the interim government has been facing a number of difficulties, which have significantly undermined its credibility and support as well as its capacity to define a clear and consensus-based strategy. There were only three interim governments so far. The main problem, particularly with the first two interim governments, lies in the fact that they were composed by members who were disreputably tied to the previous regime. The first interim government which was established on 17 January was dissolved after ten days of popular protests. The reason is because, although it had nominated a number of ministers from former opposition

parties, it was headed by Prime Minister Mohammed Ghannouchi, who was a cabinet minister under Ben Ali's rule.

The second interim government was a step in the right direction compared to its predecessors, as the weight of the old establishment in key position was reduced, regional representation of its members was widened, and civil society's representatives were included. However, the interim government continued to be headed by Mohammed Ghannouchi and it did not completely eliminate the presence of people linked to the previous regime (Tunisia Watch, May 21, 2013). Moreover, although former opposition parties were included in the interim government, members of formerly banned parties and other new political forces were not. The interim government therefore continued to be largely unaccountable to Tunisians, although the Tunisian General Labour Union (UGTT) and the former parties under Ben Ali expressed their support for it. As a result, many Tunisians continued to demand a radical change and did not trust the second interim government.

Reflecting its mix composition, the interim government under Mohammad Ghannouchi was hesitant and ambiguous in breaking with the old establishment, making its concessions to the revolution without doing away with the old power system. On the one hand, in an attempt to respond to the protestors' demands, it took a number of measures. Among these, we note the legalization of an increasing number of political forces; an amnesty for political prisoners; the establishment of three national committees, tasked respectively to inquire into human rights violations by police forces during protests, investigate into cases of embezzlement and corruption and reform the

constitution; raising the issue of an international arrest through Interpol for Ben Ali and several close relatives who fled the country.

On the other hand, the interim government led by Mohammad Ghannouchi was hesitant in distancing itself from the previous regime. It did not elaborate a clear schedule of reforms and deadline for elections. Moreover, with regard to the three committees, a number of concerns have been raised, for examples, the Committee on human rights violations was said to have neither the resources nor the personnel to confront the extensive security police. The Committee also has no legal authority and its mandate is limited. (*Tunisia Watch*, May 22, 2013)). In addition, while the government replaced 24 provincial governors, the newcomers were nominated with no prior consultation with political forces and 19 of them were selected from former members of the Constitutional Democratic Rally(RCD), which triggered strong protests across various regions (*Le Monde*, June 1, 2013). With regard to the former ruling party, the Interior Minister initially limited himself to suspend the activities of theConstitutional Democratic Rally (RCD) and, only on 21 February, formally presented a demand for its dissolution. Yet, no measure was taken to reform the old and repressive security apparatus, which was put in place by Ben Ali to intimidate and control the Tunisian people.

Beji Caid-Essebsi, who was headed the interim government from February 27, 2011 to December 24, 2011 has been sending some encouraging signals aimed at breaking with Ben Ali's regime. Apart from the six ministers who were left, the composition of the government remains unchanged, (*Tunisie*, May 23, 2013) the

appointment of Beji Caid-Essebsi as Prime Minister was seen as a major improvement. He served in various positions under Habib Bourguiba and distanced himself from Ben Ali in 1994, when he retired from political life. Moreover, shortly after the new cabinet was formed, the prime minister announced the dissolution of Ben Ali's political police and security apparatus, a central demand by protesters and political forces, thus building national consensus. By taking this historic measure, the current interim government appears to be moving in the right direction. However, whether or not and to what extent, it will be able and willing to dismantle the previous power structure as a whole remain to be seen.

Young people, who were the major players of the Tunisian Revolution, continue to ask for a completely new government because they being suspicious about the interim government which was led by Beji Caid-Essebsi, who was 84 years old and past political career, were perceived to belong to the old system of power (Tunisie, May 23, 2013). Moreover, the old oligarchy which refers to Ben Ali's government still permeates the state apparatus, occupying key positions in the administration, the Interior Ministry, the media and so on. Its means that the old guard is still in the position to influence the future direction of Tunisia's political transition. Major reforms in key strategic sectors such as the security, justice and media systems are required. For examples, the reform of the justice system, which under Ben Ali lacked independence and transparency, has been so far neglected by interim authorities. Many activists, lawyers and judges have denounced the Ministry of Justice, still dominated by people of the previous regime, for being completely insensitive to any demands for reform.

In addition, given its limited mandate, the Committee that has been charged to investigate human right abuses during the December-January 2011 protests will continue to be ineffective and human rights violations perpetrated under the previous regime will remain unpunished, unless the justice system, which is the only responsible authority to investigate and take legal measures against these acts, is deeply reformed.

4.2.2 Security-related challenges

Since the departure of Ben Ali, the country has been plagued by a lack of security. Armed militants, who are presumed to be Ben Ali's loyalist and led by officials in the Interior Ministry, have sowed chaos and fear among the population (Al Jazeera, May 25, 2013). These groups probably aim at discrediting the interim government and highlighting its incapacity to restore order.

The state of insecurity also stems from the police force, which expanded significantly under Ben Ali. As many of the police forces have refused to resume work, owing to low wages and public stigma, several provinces have been left in a chaotic and unstable situation. Moreover, the so-called "political police" and the repressive apparatus put in place by Ben Ali are reported to continue operating against Tunisian people, particularly the young. This has further compromised the credibility of the interim government, as it is unclear who is behind these oppressive acts. An additional factor, which puts at risk Tunisia's public order, is that many of the numerous prisoners

(11,000) who escape during the protests days have not been arrested yet.(Tunisia Watch, June 16, 2013).

The fate of Tunisia's political transition will depend critically on the interim government's capacity to restore security. A safe security environment is a necessary precondition for allowing fair and transparent elections, sustaining people's support for a genuine democratic transition and escaping the risk of rising resentment among Tunisian's themselves. Restoring security, among others, will depend on the government's ability and political will, to identify who, in key security-related positions such as the Interior Ministry, continues to foment chaos. Moreover, the decision by the current interim that was headed by Ennahda movement to dissolve the old and powerful security apparatus is a key move in the right direction. One of the main issues at stake is the reorganization of the security apparatus to make it accountable to the rule of law and transform it into a body that protects, rather than intimidates, Tunisian citizens. However, beyond announcements, the interim government needs to be more transparent on how it aims to pursue this goal.

4.2.3 The role of Political Parties and other civil society groups

The trajectory of Tunisia's political transition will also depend on the current and future role played by political and social forces and, particularly, on the extent to which they will be able to shape the course of political events. As a major factor, which may compromise the outcome of Tunisia's political transition, is the fact that existing

political forces are still weak, lacking financial resources, experience and a clear political agenda. Many opposition activists who were ostracized by Ben Ali have been allowed to return to the country and have obtained, or are still pending, the legalization of their political parties. While it is still unknown which of these parties will be able to participate in the elections for the Constituent Assembly and the parliament, what their popular likely to have more chances to enter such institutions and present successful candidates.

Moreover, the extensive number of parties may increase the difficulty of new parties to build their constituencies. Given the pace of events, most Tunisians are still unaware about the changing political landscape in their country and the majority claim to know only three parties, namely the former ruling party, the Progressive Democratic Party(PDP) and Ennahda Movement (Tunisia Watch, June3, 2013). The risk is that the Constitutional Assembly and successively, the new parliament, emerging from the next elections will not be as representative as expected, because most parties will be unable to organize, find adequate candidates and resources and campaign (Tunisia News, May 22, 2013).

Yet the dissolution of the Constitutional Democratic Rally (RCD), which finally took place on 9 March, will not be sufficient to dismantle the past power system. (Tunisia Watch, May 21, 2013) One can expect that members of the former ruling party will create new political parties, as seems to be the case for Kamel Morjane, who was former minister under Ben Ali, and recently, obtained the legalization for a new party, but the extent to which these parties will break with the past is an open question. Given

that the former ruling party was financially strong, well-organized and structured, it is reported to be in the position to exploit the weakness of the other political forces in order to gain votes in the next elections. However, if the provision banning senior members of RCD from upcoming elections is accepted by the interim government, this could partially contribute to undermine its capacity to re-emerge under new shapes.

4.2.4 Socio-economic problems

The economic repercussions of political events after the uprising have been dramatic. During the first two weeks of Tunisia's popular upheaval, an estimated 4.5% GDP was lost. (International Monetary Fund, May 25, 2013). All economic activities have incurred dramatic losses due to growing insecurity and curfews, while during the upheavals, 15, 000 became unemployed (African Development Bank Group, June 2, 2013). The country now faces a double challenge, where the first is to coping with the economic crisis, which was inevitably caused by the political upheaval and second is addressing structural socio-economic problems, which have been inherited by the previous regime and contributed to its demise.

Unless these problems are not tackled effectively, Tunisia's political transition may be at risk. Owing to deteriorating socio-economic conditions, wage and labour protests in the forms of sit-ins, occupations for example have been mounting in the country, in both local and foreign enterprises, contributing to insecurity and chaos. The risk is that conservatives' forces in the country can exploit growing social tensions as

an excuse to convince the majority of Tunisians that stability and security are preferable than radical political change.

As seen above, Tunisia is faced with a number of challenges that may undermine its transition to democracy and, as a result, the long-term sustainability of the Tunisian state. While the fate of Tunisia's democratic transition is still uncertain, there is no doubt that, in the long term, it will depend on whether or not, and to what extent, the country will be able to marginalize the old power structure. If the interim government was to remain vague in breaking away from the previous regime, particularly as far as the reform of the security and justice system is concerned, the supporters of the old power system will continue to be strategically placed to influence the direction of political events in Tunisia. For example, should the interim government not address effectively the dismantlement of the old security apparatus, there is risk that insecurity and threats towards political activists will re-emerge. Rising insecurity and chaos may weaken the country, where this situation can create an unfavorable context for the next election and raises the risk of internal tensions. Moreover, by keeping intact the old justice system could compromise the fairness and the legitimacy of next elections. In the long term, the lack of profound reforms in the security and justice sectors could create a crisis of legitimacy of these institutions.

Furthermore, if political parties and civil society groups remain weak and fragmented, this could be exploited by supporters of the old power system in future elections. Similarly, if only a few political forces, namely the former opposition parties and those supporting the old power system, are able to organize for the next legislative

elections, the new parliament will be unaccountable to the majority of Tunisians and risk being dominated or conquered by the people who tied to the old system. The situation where the failure to integrate the young, under their multiple voices, in all phases of political transition, from rewriting the constitution to entering parliament, may seriously de-legitimize future institutions and raise discontent.

In the absence of effectual policies that ease the crisis and respond to Tunisia's urgent socio-economic problems, youth unemployment and regional disparities will increase, raising social dissatisfaction and instability. If Tunisia's political economy constraints are not addressed with specific measures, crony capitalism and widespread corruption will continue to maintain the old system of power and slow down the emergence of a vital, independent and dynamic business sector, which could help to respond to the unemployment issues in Tunisia.

Should the above-mentioned factors materialize, the most plausible situation is that of an authoritarian involution, finally leading to increasing instability and rising social and political tensions among Tunisian population. Besides, a more open confrontation between the state and trade unions as well as radicalization of political Islam may happen. As long as people's expectations, particularly among the young who are frustrated will support for violence and radicalism may expand rapidly. Growing instability and social tensions could also weaken support for democratic transition among the majority of population, thus reinforcing conservative forces. Yet, attempts at destabilizing the country through support provided to undemocratic forces inside Tunisia could emanate from neighboring countries that are interested to abort the

revolution (De Vasconcelos, 2011). In this regard, the fate of Tunisia's political transition is strongly tied to what will happen in other Arab countries. Finally, persistent instability, political vacuum and rising social tensions could open the stage for the intervention of the army, which enjoys great popularity but whose political intentions are not yet clear.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Summary and Concluding Remarks

In this study I have discussed the Revolution Tunisia during the period 2010-2011, where in particular I focused on the causes of this phenomenon. I analyzed the political, economic and social factors by looking at the role of each other factor that leads to the uprising in Tunisia. Besides, the study also examines the historical background of the Tunisia, including a briefing on Tunisia's foreign, political and economic policy during the period of Habib Bourguiba and Ben Ali in order to get a clear picture of the evolution of events. I had made clear in this study that the uprising were precipitated by high unemployment, food inflation, corruption, a lack of freedom of speech and other political freedoms constituted a common causal thread behind the uprising in the Tunisia. In this concluding chapter, I will outline the results of each of the preceding chapters and formulate some general conclusions.

Besides, the study analyzed the Jasmine Revolution by explaining the phenomenon and the role of regime in power to respond to this uprising movement. The revolution prevailed without any interference or support from international level; in fact,

it prevailed against the external forces that supported the dictator. The elite in power were completely disconnected from their people in Tunisia. As a result, when the people's revolt broke out, the ruling class had no choice but to resort to violence.

The outcome of the mass protests is likely to vary in accordance with the nature and level of cohesion of the present regimes and their ability to maintain their monopoly on the use of force. While in some cases this might lead to a democratic transition from the bottom up, in other cases the outcome may be more gradual top-down reforms. In Tunisia, a critical change took place when strong economic growth brought into being a young urban lower middle-class. These people were highly connected and therefore relatively independent of the state media system. However, it should be noted that the political upheavals in Tunisia had also been marked by a spreading sense of animosity where this has found expression in the symbols of the past regime. It shows that the resulting "purging" processes can lead to violence and open up deeper societal conflict.

The Tunisian revolution of January 2011 drew upon the participation of nearly every social stratum. Organized labor threw its weight into the struggle early on, in an important mark of the breadth and depth of opposition to the rule of the dictator, Zine El Abidine Ben. Tunisian revolution has now changed the political calculus and the dialogue on politics and revolution. Not only this revolution transformed the consciousness of the people, it has also given the rise to a new rupture of resourceful energies and become school for new revolutionary techniques for 21st century.

These energies could be translated into various actions geared toward revolutionary transformations across North Africa and the Middle East. Clearly, the changes in economic order which the people are calling for will not be success by the types of reforms financed by foreign donors to promote in term of “more” economic freedoms. Besides, they will only be success through electing new leaders and governments with the courage to implement alternative economic policies which focus on addressing the circumstances of life as opposed to the interests of foreign investors and local elites.

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