

Peoples' Uprising in North Africa and Middle East: Lessons Learnt and Challenges of Policy Implication-Egypt as an Illustrative Case

SOULEVEMENT DES PEUPLE EN AFRIQUE DU NORD ET AU MOYEN-ORIENT: LES LECONS APPRISSES ET LES DEFIS DE LA POLITIQUE – IMPLICATION DE L'EGYPTE COMME UN CAS ILLUSTRATIF

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Abstract

A revolutionary wave that began in Tunisia first and then moved from Egypt to Libya, Bahrain, Syria, Yemen, Morocco, Lebanon, Oman and other countries in the Arab world was perhaps the most discussed issue in 2011. Years of frustration vented out when people in most of the Arab countries came on the streets, demanding change. This particular article is an attempt to understand what made these people involved in such revolution and how these factors have an impact on policy implication from a change perspective. The study required extensive research and attempts have been made to make best use of existing literatures and secondary sources of information like newspapers, interviews at various news channels, online journals and blogs. Here in the article, Egypt has been taken as a case to narrow down the focus on one particular country taking into account the overall essence of the entire region and similarity in the context. Moreover considering the time and resource factors involved in this kind of work, was also considered while selecting a single case in order to come up with logical conclusions.

Key words: People's uprising; Arab spring; Conflict; Policy implication; Do No Harm

Résumé

Une vague révolutionnaire qui a commencé en Tunisie d'abord et ensuite de l'Égypte à la Libye, Bahreïn, Syrie,

Yémen, Maroc, Liban, Oman et d'autres pays dans le monde arabe était peut-être la question la plus discutée en 2011. Des années de frustration évacuée quand les gens dans la plupart des pays arabes sont venus dans les rues, exigeant le changement. Cet article en particulier est une tentative de comprendre ce qui a fait ces personnes impliquées dans cette révolution et comment ces facteurs ont une incidence sur l'implication politique dans une perspective de changement. L'étude a nécessité des recherches approfondies et des tentatives ont été faites pour faire le meilleur usage de la littérature existante et des sources secondaires d'information comme les journaux, des interviews à divers canaux d'information, en ligne des revues et des blogs. Ici, dans l'article, l'Égypte a été prise comme un cas à affiner la mise au point sur un pays en particulier en tenant compte de l'essence globale de toute la région et de la similarité dans le contexte. Par ailleurs compte tenu du temps et de facteurs liés aux ressources impliquées dans ce genre de travail, a également été examinée lors de la sélection d'un seul cas en vue d'arriver à des conclusions logiques.

Mots clés: Soulèvement populaire; Printemps arabe; Les conflits; Implication politique; Do No Harm

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INTRODUCTION

I was watching a live BBC world telecast of all that was happening at Tahrir Square in Egypt when my five-year old nephew, sitting with me inquired why and for what there were so many people out there. I was pondering for

an answer when a childhood memory of collecting coins in a coin box at Christmas time flashed in front of my eyes. Reminiscing the memory, I told him that it is just like he has a coin box to put coins inside for Christmas, so as to collect them and buy gifts for friends. Similarly, they have gathered there to collect what they have deposited for many years. It is a very simple confession but the question is how it relates to the context of the issue to be discussed here. Coming to that point of the discussion, this paper attempts to understand what made these people to come out in the streets almost at the same time in different countries of the Arab world and North Africa. At the same time, it highlights areas that challenge policy implication in the related context.

Years of frustration vented out when people in most of the Arab countries came on the streets, demanding change and returning back what has been impounded for years. As the discussion progresses, it is expected to open many windows of thoughts. The attempts have been made to understand why people involved in regime change and what the contributing factors of such massive contour were. This article also emphasizes on how these factors have an impact on policy implication from a change perspective.

1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The wind that began to blow in December 2010 became a revolutionary wave and spread all over Middle East and North Africa. There are different terminologies being used in western world to name this revolutionary wave as Arab Uprising (Lalami, 2011), Arab Spring (Ashley, 2011), Arab Awakening (The Economist, 2011) and many other synonymous ones. It started in Tunisia first and then moved from Egypt to Libya, Bahrain, Syria, Yemen, Morocco, Lebanon, Oman and other countries in this region. The people involved in strikes, demonstrations, marches, rallies, media, both print and electronic and national and international had been active, showed great interests to know what was happening in the Arab world. Likewise youth have been influential in terms of taking up the responsibility to front the movement ahead. Everything was going on simultaneously for a common cause and that was to change the regime. *Ash-shab yurid isqat an-nizam* (people want to bring down the regime)¹, a slogan used in Arab spring first in Tunisia and then spread all over the Arab countries. President Zine El Abidine

Ben Ali fled to Saudi Arabia, President Hosni Mubarak resigned finally ending his 30-year presidency. Muammar Gaddafi was overthrown by National Transitional Council and killed in his hometown of Sirte after taking control of the city. Both Sudanese President, Omar al-Bashir and Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki have committed not to participate in future elections.

33 years back Michael Hudson (1977) in his observation on Arab Politics mentioned that Political Legitimacy was the main problem in the Arab world. Lack of legitimacy was resulting in a volatile Arab politics and made it autocratic which was found in almost every Arab country (Hudson 1977 cited in Entelis, 2008, p.11). Perhaps the most common factors that contribute towards such upspring was a long lasting autocratic stay in all those countries. Political oppression, social marginalization, economic deprivation and cultural division sometimes perceived and sometimes real, lead young individuals to engage in sometimes demonstration and sometimes in violent conflict (Entelis, 2008, p.10). A sound economic and social condition, improved standard of living regardless of class, religion, ethnicity, better economic performance at both micro and macro level, scope of privatization, direct foreign investment, transparency, rule of law, corruption free state without any nepotism, is what people always expected and wanted from ruling elites of these countries, though it is possible they must have not realized it much, earlier (Entelis, 2008, p.11).

2. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The crisis in Arab world is intensely complex in nature to understand what actually is happening there and how it started, needs time and extensive research. However the difficulty is that, a researcher has to depend on secondary sources of data which in most of the cases is not updated information. One of the reasons is, the way freedom of expression has been violated in the forms of law, police brutality and authoritarian mechanisms over the years. That makes it more difficult to achieve the desired outcome, a researcher might want to get. While thinking about a work on Arab and North African crisis, I tried to collect as much information as possible, reviewing newspapers, watching interviews at various news channels, browsing various online journals and blogs as well. On the theoretical side, I have used *Do No Harm*²

¹ Uriel Abulof, October 10, 2011 "What is the Arab third estate?" The Huffington Post (U.S.A.) http://www.huffingtonpost.com/uriel-abulof/what-is-the-arab-third-es_b_832628.html (Assessed 28 November 2011)

² *Do No Harm* Approach was introduced in the mid 90's by Mary B. Anderson. She was a Development Economist and was the President of Collaborative for Development Action. The Approach was inspired from experiences while working in various conflicting zones of different parts of the world. The Approach was basically designed to analyze context in conflicting situation and how development and humanitarian agencies design their programs, their mandates and priorities come in between the design and implementation phase. It also has sees how particular program can bring new tension or introduce new sources of tension and the messages they carry. While restricting *Do No Harm* in a specific genre is what I feel is a kind of narrowing down it possibilities to open new windows of thought in other fields like policy and development research.

Approach as a ground to land my discussion on. I have used Egypt as a case, narrowing down the focus on one particular country taking into account the overall essence of the entire region since the context and characteristics of uprisings in most of these countries are similar. Moreover considering the time and resource factors involved in this kind of work, was also considered while selecting a single case in order to come up with logical conclusions.

3. THEORETICAL DISCUSSION

The first theory that comes to this discussion is the *Public Choice Theory*. This theory is based on 'rationality' which describes the human behavior of acting rationally and in a calculative manner to maximize utility which comes from self interest (Howlett *et al.*, 2009, p.23). Here the theory sees people as rational utility maximizers in their behavior (Buchanan cited in Howlett *et al.*, 2009, p.32). In the theory, it is assumed that individual political actors like policy makers, administrative officials or voters have their own interests of acting in a certain way to get maximum benefit out of it (Howlett, 2009, p.32). On the other hand *Democratization* is a commonly used approach in the context of modernization, democracy and regime change. Democratization refers to political change moving in a democratic direction. Such movement is directed towards lesser accountable to more accountable government, from manipulative or non-competitive election to freer and fairer competitive election, from restricted to protected civil and political rights, weak association of civil society to stronger and autonomous association of civil society, from autorotation to liberal democracy (Potter, 2005, p.5). There are three main approaches of democratization; modernization approach, transitional approach and structural approach. *Modernization Approach* focuses on a series of social and economic nuts and bolts associated with liberal democracy or successful democratization process. *The Transition Approach* on the other hand is emphasized on political process and choice and initiatives by elites to transform an authoritarian form of democracy to a liberal one. *The Structural Approach* is focusing on structure of power that suits democratization. However all these approaches have some basic ingredients and common ideas that discuss the pattern of democratization that combines element from all the three approaches include economic development, social divisions, state and political institutions, civil society, political culture and ideas etc. The third and the most important approach in this discussion is the *Do No Harm Approach*. This is an approach basically used to analyze aid and development programs in conflicting and war situations, what makes people involved in conflicting situation, what are the basic characteristics of conflict when it forms and how program taken in the context of conflict can become a part of a new or existing conflict (Anderson, 1999, p.1). But what

I feel that it has a unique way of understanding a context as conflicting and difficult as Arab Spring. I believe it will definitely bring new windows of thoughts and an effective tool of analyzing the context within existing realities, from both conflict and policy implication perspective which will be my point of departure as well.

Do No Harm Framework

Systems and Institutions: There are certain systems and institutions in society that divide people and some connects as well. It depends on a particular institution and how they act and whether the system existed in society dividing people, which is forcing them to involve in conflicts (Anderson, 1999, p.25-26). For an instance if an education policy doesn't provide any subsidy and students have to spend a huge amount of money on education there will be dissatisfaction among students which may turn into some kind of revolution which we have seen in the past in UK and recently in Egypt which will be discussed in this paper in later stage. In some other countries like Norway where education is free, the possibility of such movement is minimal, unless in some very exceptional cases. So there are systems and institutions which can both act in favor or against any movement or uprising.

Attitudes and Actions: There are certain actions and attitudes of institutions or individuals that may turn into massive conflict (Anderson, 1999, p.26-27). These may include social division, police brutality as civil rights violation, freedom of expression as political right and manipulation in election as exclusion of certain groups in a democratic process our disrespecting. "*The State of Emergency law-1988/62*" took the whole country into fire and later when protesters came into street they have brutally beaten and many injured. That created like a revolutionary wave in the entire Egypt.

Values and Interests: There are various interest groups and actors in the society with sometime common and sometime diverse values and interests (Anderson, 1999, p.28). Referring back to Ruchemeyer (1992) the dominating class have different interests and values and that can lead to policy and actions against suppressed class and their interest lies on upholding power where common people want freedom and their rights to be secured (Ruchemeyer 1992, cited in Potter, 2005, p.26). In every country of North Africa and Middle East where there was uprising have the dominating, authoritarian rulers who want themselves in power at the cost of people's right and freedom.

Experiences: People have both common and different experiences which sometimes unite and sometimes divide people (Anderson, 1999, p.28). One of the major issues of dissatisfaction and factors behind such massive uprising in these countries was unemployment. Educated students were not getting job and they became frustrated. It didn't matter what ethnicity they belonged or what was their faith by religion, the experience was common for all of

them which united them and they acted together to bring change in the authoritarian regime.

Symbols: There are certain symbols and occasions which unite people and certain symbols divide them (Anderson, 1999, p.31). For instance when Police and Army indulge in torture and exploitation, they become a symbol of power, and common men become powerless that divides society.

Resource Transfer: When a particular program is taken and the way it is transferred to the people may have various effects that are often overlooked while in the formulation or planning phase (Anderson, 1999, p.37-53). Taking for an instance, a health policy is taken where the public hospitals are asked to reduce the services by giving lesser budget for medicine, personnel and medical instruments and allowing private sector to come up with service. In that case there are two types of effects may be observed immediately i.e. market effect where the price of services in private medical clinics and hospitals may go up and substitution effect where public hospitals might replace with private hospitals and clinics and skilled doctors and technical staffs will join private clinic in higher salaries which will effect those who can't afford to pay such amount of money as service fee in private clinics. There are also distribution and legitimization effects that will be discussed in the later part of discussion.

Implicit Ethical Messages: When it comes to the implication of the program there are some implicit messages that are passed to people intentionally or unintentionally (Anderson, 1999, p.55-66). Referring back to "The State of Emergency law-1988/62" in Egypt it allows enormous power in the hands of police department to do whatever they can; arresting and hassling common people whoever they think is being involved in some kind of protest. This is actually giving a strong message that police is powerful and rest are powerless. This actually turned around people have mass protest against this act. Rather bringing a stable condition in the country it worse the situation in Egypt.

Mandate and Program: When we design a program there are series of the question to be asked why it is to be taking? What is it to be all about? Whom it is targeting? By whom it is to be implemented? When it is to be applied? Where it is to be applied? (Anderson, 1999, p.69). It goes same with a policy staring from the agenda setting to formulation and even at the evaluation stage the same question can be asked to understand a policy at several different platforms and what implication it has in a certain context.

4. MIDDLE AND NORTH AFRICAN UPRISING - REALITY MAP

What made people in all these countries go for such massive uprising? What were the reasons of similar kind

of movements taking place at the same time? These are the questions that come first in our mind. Now referring back to the 'Do No Harm (DNH) Framework' in lines with the above questions, we find systems and institutions that divide people. The authoritarian system has been a common scenario in most of these countries which led to become a symbol of exploitation and deprivation. On the other hand, unemployment, deteriorating economic condition etc. were common experiences of the people, regardless of caste, creed, and ethnicity. For instance, unemployment was a major issue of the discussion as the unemployment rates in Egypt were 9.4 % (Human Rights Report 2009), Syria 12.6% (The State Department of US, 2011), Libya 20.7% (Returns Africa, 2009), Yemen 35% (Zawya, 2009), Morocco 10 % (MENAFN, 2010). If we take some of the issues in all these countries, we can find many commonalities. Almost in every country there was some kind of special law or constitutional change that went against political and civil rights of the people. For example, the Emergency Law in Egypt, Syria and the constitutional change in Yemen and Bahrain, civil rights violation in the form of torture, harassment, restriction on speech, assembly were found everywhere. So in light of the DNH framework, we can see that all these countries have had similar experiences and that drove people into such movements.

As mentioned earlier, most of the countries that went through this revolutionary wave of regime change have issues and factors in common and for the benefit of discussion and availability of facts and information Egypt has been selected as an illustrative case. The following discussion that focuses on the factors associated with such uprisings will be based on facts collected from various secondary sources.

4.1 State Emergency Act - The Violation of Constitutional and Human Rights as an Act of Controversy

A controversial Emergency Law was reinforced to continue the legacy of Mubarak, violating all the political and civil rights. Freedom of expression, freedom to speak, freedom to move, and freedom of press was completely stolen away. Even one of the worst and criticized elements of the law was to violate personal security and privacy just on a basis of suspicion. People can be suspected without any proper allegation and send to imprisonment. Judicial service was also in the hands of the state authority and armed forces member. Nothing was left for citizen to claim and every attempt was made to keep the citizen out of the street.

The Emergency Law (Law No. 162 of 1958) was enacted in Egypt after war in 1967 and continuously been in effect since President Sadat was killed in 1981. The Mubarak governments extended the emergency law and point of agreement was Muslim Brotherhood. Mubarak's political opposition might come into power in Egypt if

the current government participates in parliamentary elections. According to Emergency Law, the Executive authority could impose restrictions on the freedom of individuals and their constitutional rights, that included the right to peaceful assembly, movement and living, arrest and detention of suspects, and investigative their houses without abiding by criminal procedure law. This can be considered a clear violation of the constitution of Egypt according to the article 41, 44, 50, 54, that ensure personal freedom, sanctity of homes, freedom of movement and residence and the freedom to hold meetings (The Egyptian Organization for Human Rights, 2008).

The Law also says that the authority has the right to monitor and control and exhibit letters, leaflets and publications before publishing and control, stop or even impose ban against newspapers. The Article 48 of the Constitution and Article 19 of International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights (1966) guarantee freedom of the press, printing and publishing and the media and right to hold opinions without interference.

Under Emergency Law, the President is allowed to present crimes penalized by public law, to the Emergency State Security Courts. Nobody is allowed by any means to appeal on the issued decisions taken by State security courts. According to Article 9 & 14 of International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights everyone has the right to liberty and security. Anyone arrested or in detention to have the right be informed about charges against him and have right of equal and fair hearing in impartial tribunals by law (International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights, 1966). Article 40 of the Constitution also ensures the equality among citizens. Citizens are equal in rights and public duties before the law and there is no distinction related to sex, origin, language or religion or creed (The Egyptian Organization for Human Rights, 2008).

The most controversial article was Article 3 of Law No.162/1958 about the right of citizens' personal security and privacy, by giving the interior minister the right to arrest people and inspect their houses and detain them up to 8 days by verbal orders. They can also review personal messages based on suspicion without any evidence of having committed any offence (The Egyptian Organization for Human Rights, 2008). Article 17 of International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights ensure that privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his honor and reputation are protected (International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights, 1966).

Now coming back to the '*Do No Harm Framework*' it says there are *systems and institutions* that divide people and people get involve in conflict. The Act as a system became a mean of exploitation and its implication on common people was a controversial move from the government side. A Government as an institution became

extremely powerful and wanted to retain its power by violating all political and civil rights. People having gone through common experiences of sufferings, injustice and exploitation found them united and it came like a wave and uprooted the empire that symbolized a legacy that never belonged to a common man.

4.2 Manipulation in the Presidential Election - A Contradictory Act Within Different Interest Groups and Value System

The presidential election on 7 September 2005 was not between President Hosni Mubarak and imprisoned Ayman Nour (Ghad Party) or Noman Gomaa (Wafd Party), but between the regime and Egyptian civil society (Hall, 2009). Found in 1978, The National Democratic Party (NDP) was in power of Arab Republic of Egypt in both People's Assembly and the partially elected Shura (Consultative) Council since 1971 through constitutional amendments. Executive authority resides with the president and the cabinet. President Hosni Mubarak won his fifth consecutive terms with six years each. "It was at this point that the contest shifted, and was no longer between the 77-year old incumbent and his other rivals, but between the Mubarak regime and Egypt's civil society," said Dr. Saad Eddin Ibrahim, a famous Egyptian human rights activist (Hall, 2009). He got 88 percent of the vote in the country's first presidential election, despite low voter turnout and charged of fraud where opposition was strictly protected to participate effectively.

In his 30 years rule, Mubarak has only appeared once in the election. That was in 2005 when there was continuous demand of elections, both inside the country and from international community. It was an un popular mandate that was highly manipulated and stolen away a verdict which could have gone against it, if there was no election engineering and all controversial emergency law to make opposition out of election competition. Referring back to Do No Harm framework it says different group of people may have different values and interests that can involve these groups into conflicts (Anderson, 32). Here in this case, Mubarak's interests lie to retain his power and on the other hand oppositions and even common people wanted a change which into a conflict and later violent clash between the two groups with diverse interests. Here the attitude and actions taken by Mubarak government completely went against common people and they reacted in a big way.

4.3 Violation of Civil Rights; A Message of Powerful to the Powerless

There have been continuous charges against security forces who were involved in human rights abuse, harassment, imprisonment and detention of civilians and restrictions on journalists, NGO workers to express their opinion. Serious violation of constitutional rights made things extremely difficult for the common people to go

outside and expression their opinions (Human Rights Report, Egypt, 2009). Judicial system was controlled by high level executives. According to Human Rights Report of US Department of State, only between the first three months in 2009, 57 journalists from 13 newspapers faced legal penalties for criticizing government's action. Three of the largest daily newspapers offices have been closed and their licenses have been canceled (Human Rights Report, Egypt, 2009). The reports from various news agencies like Al Jazeera, BBC News and others the estimated death toll was 846 and around 6500 people were wounded and approximately 12000 were arrested. In the light of the DNH framework, when people have similar kind of experiences and at the same time they receive the implicit ethical message of powerlessness, when they found themselves isolated and involved in conflict. Whenever people, not representing a dominating class have been suppressed from their social, political and economic rights, they more or less react to the situation. It is then, as a result of this suppression that they come to play important role in changing a system that dominated by an authoritarian and dominating class (Potter, 2005, p.26).

4.4 Poor Economic Condition Featuring Unemployment and High Inflation as a Common Suffering

Scholars like O'Donnell (1986), Diamond (1992) and others also agreed on the fact that economic condition of a state can lead to regime change from authoritarian to liberal or other political form. Empirical researches by scholars on democratization also came to a conclusion that economic development correlates with transition of power or newly formed democracy. The poorer the economic condition greater the possibility of transition of power or regime change and better the employment opportunity lesser the chances of dissatisfaction (Potter, 2005, p.24).

Egypt was in economic crisis and people were on the streets because of rising food prices, high unemployment, and the corruption that spread through the region. In the last two years, 90 percent of the unemployed in Egypt were aging between 15 to 40 (Nagar, 2011). Going back to the 80's, massive external aid was coming to Egypt from International Monetary Fund for being a part of the Coalition in the Gulf war. At that time the macro economic condition of the country started improving and entering into a new millennium, change in fiscal monetary policy, structural reform and privatization, the country's macro economic development was in pace. But what were the causes of unemployment in the region, was something perhaps forgotten by the state owners. The following discussion is on to highlight some of those areas, perhaps unnoticed or never taken into serious consideration by Mubarak Government.

According to Egypt Human Development Report (2010), at least 90% of the unemployed are aged less than 30 years and many more are affected by underemployment

(United Nations Development Report, 2011). The 2006 Census data indicates that the total number of workers in the informal sector increased to 7.9 million, up from 5 million in 1996 (Egypt Human Development Report, p.6). In 2011 it was around 17 million representing 14 percent of the workforce in the Arab population. The problem is not only about how the capital and natural resources is utilized, but also how the youth specially aging from (15-40) who constitute 99% of the total unemployment are used. Educated youth who constitute 88% of the unemployed have had the feeling that they have wasted a lot of money to get them educated and now depending on their family for bread is unrespectable and frustrating from their side (Nagar, 2011). This means a student investing on education with an expectation to get a job and take responsibility of the family, is himself becomes a burden for the family. Out of frustration they came into the street against unemployment and state owners who failed to provide them jobs.

From the government's side it was also difficult because the global economic crisis and the oil prices were decreasing at the same time (Kouame, 2009). It also had an impact on tourism and real state business which worked together against a regime that could not respond in the crisis properly and there was no strategy whatsoever, in Egypt to solve the unemployment problem. From Government's side there was program called "Injaz" to deal with unemployment aiming to train graduates to resolve the problem. But providing some additional skills for small jobs and some technical skills, graduating after successfully obtaining a diploma not finding a job was even worse. This made them depressed and was neither realistic nor scientific (Nagar, 2011).

Coming to the difficult phase of Mubarak's regime and also in the case of other Arab and North African countries, there was global economic crisis and they had a tough time facing the challenges of food crisis, inflation, unemployment. Another major drawback of the government was that they were inactive in a sense there was no such measure to address the issue of growing unemployment and frustration built among students gradually and when government became aggressive in imposing emergency law without considering such a vital issue into consideration had a double bladed effect on the government as youth became vibrant and wave of protest started all over Egypt. Now coming back to the *theory of Democratization*, it says poorer the economic situation the greater the chance of regime changes. In the case of Egypt, it was the unemployment which cost the regime heavily and rest everyone knows, the Uprisings which came as a revolution not only in Egypt but had a ripple effect in most of the other countries of the Arab world. Common sufferings of the people, was an *experience*, as stated in the DNH Framework, that every unemployed youth had that time and it is this experience which united

them and made them act together. Government as *an institution* could not respond to people's demand and need and rather doing that they have been involved in civil rights violation which the people could take any more and an institution and its *attitude* towards people resulted in such uprising.

5. LESSONS LEARNT AND HOW TO BUILD ON THEM: IMPLICATIONS' PERSPECTIVE OF FUTURE POLICY-AN OVERVIEW

As discussed earlier, Egypt has been selected as a case best suited for a unified discussion and understanding about the situation that exists in terms of factors that led to the foundation of such revolutionary movement. Here the discussion concentrated on details about the issues related to Uprising, both based on facts and also linked with the theoretical framework. Going through the discussion and analysis what we found was people's desire to change a regime, to see themselves out of sufferings and problems they were going through. The People's Uprising in Arab world and North Africa are constituted on some common grounds.

There are some country specific issues as well but what was evident that there are two basic issues common in all of these countries; *First*: the authoritarian leadership and their long tenure and means of retaining power through Emergency Law, security forces, seizing political and social rights and fraud election mechanisms. *Second*: the economic condition that include unemployment, food crisis, inflation, increase price of daily commodities, Macro economic crisis.

The point of our departure will be to address how these two factors have been taken into consideration as policy agenda and what implication it has in the recent changes(if any) after the uprising and what could be the reflecting elements that is expected from policy to be taken in future based on recent experience.

5.1 A Democratic Government with Free and Fair Election

The first and foremost issue that is to be taken into consideration is to bring a democratic government in power. This is the biggest challenge that any interim government faces. It is not only to bring people back home but also to prepare themselves for an election which they want to participate in and making them believe that it should be free and fair without any interference. This is a challenging task and the government needs to be careful about actors and interest groups involved in the process. It is also important that everyone participates in the process to make it acceptable one for everybody knowing that any disagreement may lead to a new conflict as the fire is not disappeared yet. If we take a look on the current scenario

in all these countries we can have a clear idea why this issue has such significance and needs.

Initially, the military had been seen as the key player of the transition to a more democratic regime. The Muslim Brotherhood was expecting an early election where their possibility of winning the election was high. But after nine months of uprising, the common Egyptians wondered whether they are going to see another military regime in coalition with the Brotherhood. The present military rule has an 18 member council of its top leaders. They have suspended some of the unpopular provisions from the constitution but the worrying point is the existence of "State of Emergency Laws" and creaking down demonstration that going on now in Egypt. They promised that they will hand over legislative power after parliamentary election and executive power after presidential election that may took place in late 2012 or in 2013 (The New York Times, 2011). In October, they declared they will retain control over Egyptian government even after the new parliament. The legislature will remain in a subordinate role similar to Mubarak's former Parliament, they said, with the military council appointing the prime minister and cabinet. In November, demonstrators seized Tahrir Square and public anger exploded, and armed forces attacked civilians before 40 people were dead and 2,000 wounded (The New York Times, 2011).

Before coming to an agreement of "A New Civilian Cabinet" headed by a Technocrat Prime Minister not a politician to make Presidential election as quickly as possible, a meeting was held between Muslim Brotherhood and military officials where most of the political parties were absent. Though they promised a new constitution, but people have already started predicting a possible civilian government reporting to the Military. The Parliamentary election is going on and the result might come soon and according to Muslim Brotherhood 70% of the voters casted there votes. The council's top officer, Field Marshal Mohamed Hussein Tantawi, declared that "the position of the armed forces will remain as it is - it will not change in any new constitution" (The New York Times, 2011). At the same time, the generals have set a political timetable calling for the Parliament to be seated in March and disbanded perhaps as early as July (Fam, 2011).

Keeping the current scenario in front there are no significant changes noticed if comparison is made with the previous one. Probably, only one progress is the parliamentary election that is taking place. However, where it will take the fate of the Egyptian youth who gave their lives and blood in the street of Egypt is in question. It seems there is a military backed Civilian Government in power, something the people who protested nine months back, never wanted to see. Absence of liberal parties also indicates disagreement on what is cooking inside military

minds. There are protesters in the street that indicates people's expectation has not met the reality. It also leaves a question in my mind and may be also who are seeing this entire progress closely have the feeling of another military regime in Egypt or a similar story at Tahrir square.

5.2 Meet the Challenges of Economic Crisis and Address the Question of Unemployment

Unemployment problem among youths, especially in Egypt, was an acute one which blasted in all over Egypt like an explosion. The just came out of their house and never left the street of Egypt until they made Mubarak to step down from the power. These youths had a sky high expectation from a new regime solving their problems and creating new opportunities. Taking the lesson from Mubarak's regime, they can come up with comprehensive plan to address the issue of unemployment.

Reference to the "*Do No Harm Framework*", while thinking of a comprehensive policy, especially on employment generation, the policy members should think about why certain policy is to be taken? Who will be benefited and how? What the policy will be aiming at? Where it is to be implied? When it is to be taken? Besides, it is also important to identify key policy actors, particular systems and institutions that are going to be involved with it. Whether the policy will have Market, Substitution, Distributional or Legitimization Effect? which might create conflict in the society. Keeping the entire scenario and theoretical discussion into consideration there are areas in my understanding Government should think about. The following points are some of my reflection based on my learning while understanding the context in Arab and North Africa.

- There should be special priority given to industrial, agricultural and service development that will create new employment opportunity for the youths.
- The policy should encourage new projects and ideas in collaboration with private companies and sell them ideas to invest.
- The government should think about creative ideas that can be lobbied at international level and create conducive environment for investment.
- The government here should be creative and innovative to face this crisis. They could create jobs for the new graduates through several avenues.
- The government should think about prospective sectors where the educated youths can be accommodated.
- The government can also negotiate with foreign friends countries for manpower transfer.

This is actually too early to comment on the changes or policies that the new government will take in Egypt and how it will address the issue of unemployment and the interrelated factors related to that. But one thing Government should remember that the Egyptian youths

are in need of employment and if they are not provided with employment opportunities they might involve in another revolution (Davis, 1962) which whoever is in power do not in Egypt by any means.

CONCLUSION

Autocratic regime, economic crisis, unemployment, poor governance, collapsed states, human rights violence, corruption etc. these are what that come to our mind when we think about Middle East and North Africa. Like me, millions of people around the world want to see this part of the world changed economically, socially, culturally and politically and emerging as a united force in the world arena. I wish the wave that came like a hurricane and took away all the dirt for a new beginning is not wasted in vain. But what really matters is the realization about what they have seen in the past and how they want to lead the foundation for future Arab world. It depends *firstly* on how the challenges of economic crisis is addressed, *secondly* how effectively political authorities are involving people in a democratic process and *finally* how interest groups regardless of caste, creed, ethnicity are joining hands and working as a dynamic force. The immediate problem that needs to be taken care of is to bring a democratic, pro-people government in each of the countries that involved in regime change. At the same time government should identify their priorities and focus on comprehensive plan based on which they can bring all those changes they have fought for. They should recognize key actors and how their roles are to be determined in a changed perspective and the Do No Harm Framework says what are questions that a government should ask before taking up any policy or plan regarding choice of action, mode and means of production. While taking Egypt's progress as a possibility of another class not mass oriented government system in center, something common people do not expect neither they want to be trapped and lost again. Many new challenges are on the board but all the actors, interest groups, civil society in each of these countries should take up these challenges together and give Arab a true spring that never ends.

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