COMPETING GOVERNING MODELS IN THE ARAB REGION

By

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To my lovely mother
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ABSTRACT

The issue of the Arab Spring has become one of the main political issues at the regional and international levels. This thesis was motivated by a pursuit to gain a better understanding about the causes and the prospect future of the Arab Spring. In order to achieve my objective, this thesis conducted an assessment study of researches made in this topic and used data from a research survey done by the Lebanese American University about this topic. This thesis aims to find out the nature of these crises in the Arab states undergoing transition and to know the prospect future of the governing models in the Arab world. In other words, the causes vary from a state to state between identity and institutional natures. During this historical turning point in the MENA region’s political life, some governing models which share important aspects with democracy will take advantage and have more influence on the overcoming replacing governments.

Keywords: Arab, Spring, Causes, Future, Crises, States, Models, MENA, Democracy, Government.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I- Introduction to Revolutions</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 The International Reactions</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Democracy</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 The Social Media</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 The Nature of The Arab Spring</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 The Prospect Future of The Arab Spring</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 Methodology</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II- Identity or Institutional Crisis</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Identity Crisis</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Institutional Crisis</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III- Theocracy, Secularism, Sectarianism, and Monarchism</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Introduction to Governing Models</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Theocracy in Iran</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Secularism in Turkey</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Sectarianism in Lebanon</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 Monarchism in Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6 Which Model Forward</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV- Future of the Arab Spring: Governing Preference</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V- Conclusion</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>69-77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter One

Introduction to Revolutions

Throughout history, demonstrations and revolutions have played important roles in changing the political, economical, and social lives of many countries. The duration of a revolution varies from state to state depending on different circumstances and conditions. The revolution varies from one state to another in terms of methods applied, durations taken for implementation and preparation, and reasons for their occurrence. In terms of duration, revolutions can vary from few days to many years. Revolutions occur violently with the use of weapons or peacefully without the use of force. Each revolution has its own reasons, and it differs between states with respect to causes, events, and consequences.

Since late 2010, the world has been shocked with the start of a series of unexpected demonstrations and protests occurring in different states of the Arab World, and this has been known as “The Arab Spring” or “The Arab Awakening”. It was initiated by the people of Tunisia and then spread to include other Arabian states, like Egypt, Libya, Bahrain, Yemen, and Syria. Some revolutions achieved their objectives in a small period of time, but others are going on. Like any other revolution, the Arab Spring is expected to bring a better life for the Arabian people,
and mainly in terms of rights and freedom. Eric Verdeil believes that we are dealing with revolts and revolutions that are essentially urban in nature in the Arab world. (Verdeil, 2011) Revolutions occur in states where societies face difficult life conditions and violation of their rights, so the results of revolutions must include major changes in culture, economy, and sociopolitical institutions.

The governments’ responses to these protests differed from state to state. Some governments had peaceful reactions while others reacted violently. In “Thousands in Morrocco March for Rights”, Souhail Karam argues that in major cities, police armed with batons and shields moved people off the streets wherever they gathered. Karam adds that Protesters broke off into smaller groups, often with police cashing behind (Karam, 2011). As the number of protestors increase, the revolution gets stronger and more effective. This is why many governments started to attack the protestors and divide them into smaller groups and threatened them to weaken their demonstrations. Moreover, many protests faced violent responses from pro government militias and counter protests.

In some states, like Tunisia and Egypt, the revolutionists were able to achieve their main goals. So far, these demonstrations have been able to overthrow four leaders: Zain Al Abidin Ben Ali from Tunisia, Mohammad Hosni Mubarak from Egypt, Muammar Gaddafi from Libya, and Ali Abdullah Saleh from Yemen. In other states, like Syria and Bahrain, daily protests and demonstrations have escalated into violent confrontations between the government and protestors, which meant that changes are difficult to attain.
1.1 The International Reaction

The Arab spring’s influence was not limited to the countries of the Arab world, but this regional unrest affected the western states as well, especially the countries which have vital interests in the region. Most western and democratic countries supported protestors demonstrating for expanded civil rights in these Arab states. Protests in the Arab world attracted widespread support from the international community, but harsh government responses met condemnation (Kuwait Times, 2011).

Economically, the crisis in the Arab world paralyzed the economy of the Arab states, and its influence extended to the global market. The world’s main oil producing countries are in the Middle East and North Africa region (known as MENA). This crisis resulted in a rise in the oil prices. Moreover, this rise in the oil prices may lead to a rise in food prices, other consumer items, as well as other social problems. The rise in prices of oil and food may spread into Western states, so these states’ intervention in the Arab world’s political and economic issues affects their states’ stability, mainly economically.

NATO’s support to the rebels against the government in Libya shows the effectiveness of international intervention in these revolutions. The former government responded by violent attacks against the protestors. The NATO’s goal was to stop this violation of human and civil rights and stop the former government,
led by Moammar Ghaddafi from such abuse of the country, its resources, and people. Aaron Schips argues that unlike the political and social quagmire experienced by the United States in Iraq and Afghanistan, NATO can look at this mission in Libya as a building block where they can launch further aid missions in countries experiencing humanitarian crises. He adds that NATO announced its withdrawal from Libya after it successfully completed its mission and supported the revolution to success (Schips, 2011).

1.2 Democracy

Democracy is a form of government in which the citizens of one state together determine public policies, the laws, and the actions of their state. All people have equal opportunities to express their opinion. There is no single universally accepted definition of democracy. Yet, democracy can be seen as a set of practices and principles that institutionalize and protect freedom. Most observers agree that the major features of democracy include government based on majority rule, the existence of free and fair elections, the protection of minorities and respect for basic human rights (The Economist, 2007). In democracy, all people are treated equally before the law and enjoy the same civil and human rights.

One important issue at the political level in the MENA region is applying democracy, especially in the Arab countries. Spreading democracy has been facing multiple difficulties in such a region due to the variety of nondemocratic governing models in these countries. In their article “The Trouble with Democracy in the Middle
East,” Patrick Basham and Christopher Preble argue, “The Middle East lacks the conditions, such as a democratic political history, high standards of living, and high literacy rates, which stimulated democratic change in central Europe and East Asia.” Basham and Preble believe that many Arab countries are ruled by authoritarian leaders who are more liberal than the citizens they lead (Basham and Preble, 2003). It is clear that the Middle East states need to have a good base to apply and build upon the democratic system. In his article “The Struggle for Middle East Democracy”, Shadi Hamid states that in order to move towards democracy in the MENA region, the Arabs should build a secular middle class, reach a certain level of economic growth, and foster democratic culture (Shadi Hamid, 2011). These are some of the many aspects of democracy that may be introduced into a society before the Arabs seek to live in democratic states.

Although the United States intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq was said to be a part of the plan of democratizing the Arab world, the Arab spring is the first real revolution towards democracy in the Arab world. The reason is that it was created by the Arab people themselves and not by Western intervention. This wave of protests reflects the public’s needs and demands for change, and determines the right of people to express their opinions, which are major aspects of democracy. It is difficult to apply all principle of democracy at once in the Arab states especially where states are completely incompatible with democracy.

In order to keep a good and stable relation between the government and the public while introducing some democratic means to the state’s political life, it is important that the public plays an important role in the political decision making
processes. In order to maintain power over the state, leaders seek to gain the public support. This support comes through putting the domestic interests as priorities for the government even if it does not meet with international interests. The “Dual Game”, or the “Nested Game”, is one in which national leaders find themselves working between domestic and international politics, and generally putting the domestic goals ahead of international ones (Neack, 2008).

One of the most important aspects of democracy is mobilizing the public in the political decision making processes of the government. When the public is being mobilized in the political life of the state, it automatically yields in their right to express their interests and demands. This will bring political, economic, and social improvements to the state. It will also support both the government and the public sectors to cooperate in order to reach a well satisfied society.

What is the nature of the crisis in the Arab World? What is the future prospect for the Arab spring? These are the main questions asked in this study. The answers for these questions will help us conclude the real causes for the Arab spring and project the view of the future of the Arab region. Arab states suffering internal crises are most likely to join the Arab spring. This is why some governments made earlier steps to avoid getting into confrontations with the public. In Morocco, for example, constitutional reforms and the end of corruption came as a result of some protests.

Moreover, because some governing models are going down, other models should replace them. It is an important issue to have an image of the future prospect of the Arab spring. Four different competing models in the MENA region are taken
into consideration in this study. Sectarianism is characterized by plural identity, secularism by institutional hegemony, and both theocracy and monarchy by hegemonic identity. These four differently characterized models shall show people’s preference about which governing models is best for the Arab states. These models are competing in the MENA region to replace the overthrown governments and existing models in different Arab states.

1.3 The Social Media

The social media is involved more than ever in our daily life. It can be considered one of the most important factors in the Arab spring. Nowadays we see the media focusing most on demonstrations occurring in some Arab states. Different and important questions come to our minds. Where was the media before the Arab spring? Was it controlled by the states’ authorities? In her article “Arab Spring Really was a Social Media Revolution”, Kate Taylor argues, “These dictators for a long time had many political enemies, but they were fragmented.” She adds, “So opponents used social media to identify goals, build solidarity and organize demonstrations.” (Taylor, 2011) The governments have been able to control the protests of the opposition before their various enemies ally together into stronger movements. The social media was a very useful mean utilized by the rebels to organize the strongest demonstrations in the history of the Arab world.

These demonstrations have been generally supported by both regional and international social media which played a major role in starting these demonstrations
and calling people to participate and continued to support it. The media would focus on showing the events that happen during these protests to the Arab world and to the world. The local media has been completely under the governments’ authority, and it has not been able to freely cover and show the events and actions during these protests in the Arab states.

Demonstrations in the Arab World brought freedom for the social media in different Arab states. The public has been supported by regional and international media to better express their interests and needs. Also, it is clear that the social media was important for the public to organize their movements, and it facilitated transferring the news all over the world. Rashid Khalidi argues that one important thing we can conclude, is how false most western media images are of the region. (Khalidi, 2011) Most of the news about the Arab spring are covered and shown to the world independent of the governments’ unwillingness to show such news. In this way, the social media helped the Arab spring to become a global event. Moreover, the Arab spring brought freedom to the media from the authority of the governments and its leaders.

Syria can be considered an important state in which the media has been dominated by the government. One interesting issue to be remembered is that the foreign media is not able to go to Syria and show the facts of the situation. Still, people are able to use different means, like cell phones, to show the harsh and violent attacks by the government over the protestors. In his article, “Why Syria is not Egypt or Libya”, Peter Hagen states, “The new phenomenon, which is stopping Assad from carrying out a similar massacre to that of 1982, is the ability of some rebels to capture
events on camera and smuggle these outside Syria to broadcast on the world’s media.” (Hagen, 2011) Day after day, technology, mainly telecommunication, has been evolving rapidly, and it is being used by the public of the Arab states undergoing transitions to communicate with the social media all over the world.

1.4 The Nature of the Arab Spring

What is the nature of the Arab spring? The causes of the Arab spring are multiple, and it differs from one state to another. Eric Verdeil believes that these protests are urban in nature, and there are multiple factors behind these public movements. Verdeil argues that factors like unemployment, better life conditions, and demands for democratic freedom are reinforced in these protests (Verdeil, 2011). These factors might be the real reasons in some states like Tunisia and Egypt, but it was used in other states as an excuse to cover the real reasons.

Views about the nature of the crisis in the Arab World are divided into two. Some political scientists argue that the reasons behind these revolutions are of an identical nature while others believe these are institutional. Sectarian, religious, sex and class divisions are examples of identity crises. On the other hand, governmental, judicial and economic topics are examples of institutional crises. Both types of problems might be found in a state, but in this study, we are focusing on the reasons that led the public to create this wave of protests against the governments in different states of the Arab world.
Crises between different identity groups have caused demonstrations in some Arab states. For example, the tribal conflicts in Libya and Yemen and the religious crisis in Syria and Bahrain all lead to a struggle for power between different identity groups in these states (Hadar, 2011). Sunni minorities rule Shiite majorities in Bahrain and Alawites minorities rule Sunni majorities in Syria. Both in Syria and Bahrain, rebels said their main purpose was to live in a democratic state. These exemplify how democracy is being used as an excuse for demonstrations in some Arab states. It is important to note that whatever the reasons were, these protests have shown a sign of opposition against the existing governing models whose leaders have brutally ruled for decades.

On the other hand, the Arab spring was caused by institutional reasons in some states. Reasons such as unemployment and violation of human rights like in Egypt and Libya support the view that the Arab Spring came as a result of institutional crisis. In such states, the public demands more democratic representation in the government ruling the state. In this case, revolutions do not translate a struggle for power between different groups, but it seeks to provide a better life conditions for the public who has been deprived of many of its civil and human rights for decades.

Recent demonstrations in different countries in this MENA region show how people are more knowledgeable about their rights and interests. The public seeks to play important and decisive roles in the decision making process of their states. The public drive towards democracy is confronted by at least four competing governing models in the region as expressed by Iranian Islamic theocracy, Turkish secularism, Saudi monarchism, and Lebanese consociationalism. Scholars, politicians, and
revolutionists are fighting a war of choices and their determination will ultimately determine the future of Arab governance.

1.5 The Prospect Future of the Arab Spring

What will happen next? Which models will replace the overthrown ones? Will the future governments satisfy the public? Which governing models will spread in the MENA region? These are some of the questions that will rise at the time post the Arab spring, which become the most debatable topic between political scientists and analysts. Another important issue is about the change of the governing models ruling these states in the Arab world. Scientists have different views and expectations of the future of the Arab Spring and the changes that will happen to the Arab states’ governing models.

In fact, some scientists believe that secularism will have a greater influence on the Arab states’ political life in the post Arab spring era. Turkey has come as a regional power playing an important role in the Middle East region on both economic and political levels. Austin Bay shows the advice of the Turkish President to the Egyptian revolution leaders. The Turkish President asked the Egyptians to stay united for Egypt and not to worry of secularism. He believes that secularism could be the solution for states where people would neither be divided according to any identical group nor ruled by a dictator. He argues, “No dictator, no sectarian minority repressing the majority.” (Bay, 2011) Turkey represents a state with a stable political life and improved economy as a result of its secular system. For this reason, many scientists believe secularism can bring the solutions of the crises of these Arab states.
Moreover, some scientists believe that sectarianism is expected to replace most overthrown governing models in the Arab region. Although sectarianism does not solve the problem of an identity divided society, it seems to be a suitable model for different political and religious groups to share power in a religiously divided state like Lebanon. Since its beginning, the Arab Spring has been expected to pass through each and every Arab state except Lebanon. The reason is not because it has a perfect social and political life. It is simply because there is no central power that rules the country. Rodger Shanahan argues, “While change sweeps across the region, there is no large-scale movement for change in Lebanon, despite its ossified political system. The reasons are many. But in part it is because, even if most people wanted to agitate for political change, there is no real center, let alone a single autocratic figure against which to mobilize” (Shanahan, 2011). For this reason, Lebanon seems to be on the safe side of these changes in the region, and its status is expected to remain stable. Shanahan calls the Arab Spring as the “Lebanese Summer” because Lebanon is expected to have the greatest advantage from this situation in the region. Tourists from the Arab States will spend their summer vacations in Lebanon, and this will have a positive impact on Lebanon since it will strongly support Lebanon’s economy.

Also, some scientists argue that theocracy is best suited for the future of the Arab states’ governments and has an advantage over other models to spread in the Arab world. Such demonstrations have been positive for the Iranian government because of the attention of the superpowers and the international community, keeping Iran’s nuclear program as a second priority. This helps the Iranians to extend their political interests in the region and expand theocracy to the MENA states. “Iranian
leaders see the Egyptian revolution as an extension of their Islamic revolution and a new source of support for the Palestinian cause, which is why Iran was one of the first countries to welcome the Egyptian-brokered reconciliation between Hamas and Fatah. Nor did it come as a surprise that Tehran made new overtures to Egypt and offered its moral backing to Egypt’s African and Arab roles.” (Maged, 2011) Iran seems to depend on its common interests with the Egyptian revolution activists on regional and international levels for cooperation and maintain such a good relation. Iranian theocracy sees the Arab spring as an important opportunity for it to have a higher influence in the future Arab governments.

1.6 Methodology

This study will start with an overview about the reasons for these revolutions and its different political compositions. After examining the challenges of democratic transitions in the MENA region, this paper will reveal major political schisms debating the best political model for Arab society.

Moreover, this study will draw four main proposed governing models as exemplified by four states in the MENA region: sectarian consociationalism in Lebanon (plural identity), theocracy in Iran, monarchism in Saudi Arabia (hegemonic identity), and secularism in Turkey (hegemonic institutionalism). These models are differently characterized and considered to be competing with each to replace the overthrown governments in the Arab states undergoing transition. The choice of these models came from the fact that Iran, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia are three important
regional powers that play important roles at the different political, social, and
economical aspects of the MENA states while Lebanese sectarianism shows a
successful model in a pluralized society.

The two main questions are interrelated to each other. The main purpose is to
know which model among these competing forms of governments will have a higher
influence in the region after the Arab spring. The replacement of the old governments
by new ones depends directly on the nature of the crises in different states. For
example, governing models which are institutionally characterized will mostly take
place in states facing institutional crises, and states facing identity crises will
probably seek identity characterized governing models to solve their conflicts.

A survey and interview with activists from the region was made by the
Lebanese American University. These activists belong to different societies which
experienced the Arab spring. Activists from Libya, Syria, Egypt, and Yemen were
asked different questions concerning the Arab spring. These different issues included
general information about the revolutionary protestors, revolutionary causes,
revolutionary mobilization, and revolutionary prospects, foreign attitudes of the
revolution, and post revolution challenges and regimes. This survey would be
conducted in order to understand their preferences about a specific governing model.
Depending on the results, in addition to the information and research analysis about
the influence of the public opinion about a particular political model, this thesis will
reveal preferences and provide hypothetical confirmations on the models. This will
provide significant clues regarding future prospects and changes at the regional and
international levels.
The next chapter is about the nature of the crisis in the Arab World, and this would answer the first research question of this study. This question is related to which governing models will compete in order to spread after these revolutions. In this chapter, the methodology and design of this research and the research methodology conducted, via interviewing prominent revolutionaries and activists in the Arab spring. The data collected will be also presented in this chapter. Following that, the third chapter will present the four governing models considered in this study: Lebanese consociationalism, Turkish secularism, Iranian theocracy, and Saudi Arabian monarchism. These models are related to the nature of the crises of different Arab states. Chapter three also describes the idea about how some aspects of democracy are, or are not, being applied in these states. The fourth chapter includes the answers for the second research question, with analysis of the data collected and the information needed from different resources. Both would help us have a clearer image about the expectations for the future of the Arab spring concerning the governing models which will replace the overthrown ones. Finally, the last chapter presents a brief explanation about the importance of this study, summarizes the steps done, and suggests some research questions for any future study as a continuation of this one.
Chapter Two

Identity or Institutional Crisis

What is the nature of the Arab Spring? What are the real reasons for this wave of demonstrations against the Arab governments and leaders? Are the Arab political governing choices determined largely by an identity crisis, consequently leading to religious or ethnic based governments? Does it stem from a national institutional crisis, resulting in the reconstruction of power towards greater democratic representation and transparent government? Views about the nature of this crisis in the Arab states are divided into two. Some scientists believe these crises in the Arab states are of an identity nature, and others argue that the Arab spring is caused by institutional crises.

This chapter answers the first question of this study. It shows views and opinions of different scientists who argue the nature of the Arab spring. The fact is that answers for such questions cannot be generalized for all states of the Arab Spring. Causes differ from one state to another as the reactions of the governments differed. There might be some common causes among several states, but it does not mean that conflicts in these states are interdependent on each other. Demonstration in a state may encourage another protest to take place in any other state. The Arab
Spring was initiated in Tunisia and spread through different Arab states, but the causes of the protests in one state were never the same causes for protests to occur in different states.

2.1 Identity Crisis

Some scientists argue that the causes of the Arab Spring have an identity nature. The public demands democracy and more political rights in order to get the media to transmit and support their movements, but the main reasons for these protests would be a crisis of identity. Identity in politics refers to the perspectives of self identified social interest groups and aspects of their identity through different factors such as race, class, religion, and others which may shape people’s political interests. “One can say that they are actually living proof of the identity crisis and reverberating bankrupting of Arab nationalism.” (Masalha, 2011) Salman Masalha argues that the Arab Spring came as a result of an identity crisis and not of an institutional one, but the revolutionists are demanding democracy and better life conditions. The best examples of such cases are those demonstrations of Bahrain and Syria.

The revolution in Bahrain supports the view that the crisis in the Arab world was of an identical nature. Bahrain is strongly affected by the sectarian division within its society. The government, like most of those in the Arabian Gulf states, is controlled by the Sunni, but the majority of its public belongs most to the Shiite community. Ethan Bronner believes that although the protests in Tunisia and Egypt were cited as an inspiration for people to demonstrate in Bahrain, the major root
cause was the tensions between the ruling Sunni minorities and the Shiite majorities (Bronner, 2011). The ostensible reason for these protests was sectarian division between the two major sectarian groups in the country, so it caused huge demonstrations created by the Bahraini Shiites who demand democracy in their state and extend that to the whole Gulf region. The revolution was supported by Iran and its regional and international allies. On the other hand, the government and the Sunni minorities were supported by the Sunni states, mainly Saudi Arabia.

The protests of Bahrain were later seen as a struggle for power on a regional level between the two regional powers, Sunni Saudi Arabia and Shiite Iran. Andrew Hammond states that the Bahraini government invited Sunni neighbor Saudi Arabia to send troops to help crush the movement in March, saying that most Shiite protesters had sectarian motives and backing from Iran (Hammond, 2011). The image of Bahrain as being the battleground between the Sunni and Shiite communities was clear when protests in Iraq arose to support the demonstration in Bahrain after the Saudi intervention (Arango, 2011). Shiite community has the majority between the other religious groups in Iraq. This community demanded an international intervention to support the Bahraini public. It was no surprise that Saudi Arabia had an advantage to intervene and stop the demonstrations in Bahrain because it came after a call from the Bahraini government. Any change in Bahrain’s politics will have a direct effect on the other Gulf States, mainly Saudi Arabia as well as the royal family which rules the country.

Iran saw the Arab Spring as the perfect time to improve its status as a regional power in the MENA region. Nevertheless, Bahrain became a battleground between
two regional powers, Saudi Arabia and Iran, and the victim of this indirect confrontation was the Shiite community in Bahrain. Jennifer Gulbrandson argues that thousands of peaceful protestors, students, professionals, and journalists were arrested by the government, and most of the protestors belong probably to the Shiite community or to government opposing groups (Gulbrandson, 2011). In order to avoid the revolution from getting any opportunity to revive itself, the government sought to warn these activists from any movements against the government.

Syria is another example of a case where the crisis in the MENA region was of an identity nature. One important characteristic about the Arab Spring in Syria is that people have been demonstrating for more than one year in contrast to the protests in other countries which lasted for much shorter time. These demonstrations were transferred into an internal violent conflict between the government and the revolutionists. Some scientists believe that, in Syria, this is an institutional crisis as the protesters demand political freedom in the country, resignation of the President Bashar Assad and the end of the rule of his political party, which ruled and as a result controlled the country for decades. Still, others argue that the conflict is of an identity nature as these demonstrations are strongly supported by Sunni majority in Syria and the Arab states which also oppose the Assad Alawite family and party. Kim Sengupta argues that the uprising has sectarian undertones, though neither faction in the conflict has described sectarianism as playing a major role. The opposition is dominated by Sunni Muslims, whereas the leading government figures are Alawite Muslims (Sengupta, 2012). It is clear that the Syrian revolution is a struggle for power between the Sunni and the Alawite communities, and this led to violent
confrontations between the rebels and their counterparts. The free Syrian army composed of Syrian militaries who split from the Syrian army was created to join the revolution and stop the government’s violent actions against the rebels and innocent families.

### 2.2 Institutional Crisis

On the other hand, some argue that the causes of the Arab Spring are institutional in nature. The institution refers to any structure or mechanism that determines the behavior of the community. Demonstrations resulting from institutional crises are usually urban in nature and seek to provide better living conditions to its society. Protests that reflect this view would be: Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya. In “Arab Cities in Revolution”, Eric Verdeil argues, “Functions such as unemployment, urban living conditions, the exposure of corruption, and demands for democratic freedoms all come together and are reinforced in such protests.” (Verdeil, 2011) He also states factors differ from one country to another, but he does not mention anything about an identity crisis in these states. Societies not characterized by pluralism are far from facing identity crises, but conflicts in such communities usually come as a result of institutional problems.

Tunisia is supposed to be the origin of the Arab Spring. It was the first state in which demonstrations started in the streets demanding institutional reforms and democracy in the country. As Richard Spencer argues, the demonstrations in Tunisia followed high unemployment rate, food inflation, and corruption (Spencer, 2011). So,
a poor living condition has driven the masses to ask for the resign of the government. Political rights were also violated where the public did not enjoy political freedom. Ryan Yasmine argues that an important cause for the protests in Tunisia was the lack of freedom of speech and other political freedoms (Yasmine, 2011). Crises like unemployment, corruption, and violation of political rights are all examples of institutional crises, so these crises were the main reasons for the Arab spring to begin.

In their article “The Global Warming and the Arab Spring” Sarah Johnstone and Jeffrey Mazzo talk about the global warming as an important cause of the Arab spring. Johnstone and Mazzo argue that forty million Egyptians rely on ration cards, and the bread subsidy system is riddled with corruption. This is about democracy, equality, and political freedom (Johnstone and Mazzo, 2011). The authors linked the problems, which the public suffers from in these states directly to democracy and political issues and not to power seeking between specific sectarian or religious group. This argument was also supported by Julia V. Zinkina in her article “Egyptian Revolution: a Demographic Structural Analysis”. She argues that most explanations about the causes of the huge revolutions in Egypt follow the same pattern, blaming economic stagnation, poverty, inequality, corruption and unemployment.” (Zinkina, 2011) This supporting view was showed by Salman Ansari Javid. Javid names the demonstrations in Cairo and Alexandria as the day of revolution against torture, poverty, corruption, and unemployment (Javid, 2011) He adds, “Half of some 80 million people live on $2 per day.” Both Zinkina and Javid believe that institutional crises caused the Egyptian revolution. Although there are different religious groups in
Egypt, no identity crisis were found between these groups during the demonstrations. The debate was between the government's followers and oppositions.

Other important cases supporting the idea that the Arab Spring is of an institutional nature are the revolutions of Libya and Yemen. Unemployment and bad economic conditions can be said to have driven people in Libya to protest against the government. Libya is a country rich in oil, and both the state and the public should benefit from the important resources of the country. This should support the economic growth of the state and the life conditions of the people. According to Reuters Africa, more than 20 percent of the Libyans are unemployed. It adds that this is the highest rate in the region, and more than 33,000 families live in unhealthy housing conditions, including some city slum shacks (Reuters, 2011). The case was not much different in Yemen, where BBC News reports that reasons like unemployment and corruption forced the public to ask for the removal of Ali Abdullah Saleh (BBC, 2011). For Tom Finn, almost half of the population of Yemen lives on $2 or less a day, and one-third suffer from chronic hunger (Finn, 2011). In both states we can see that these crises in these Arab countries has no relation with any problem related to identity conflict, but people demand democracy and better economic conditions in their states. Social and economic problems led the public of both Libya and Yemen to rise against their leaders and governments. People demand for more political reforms and democratic laws to protect their rights. Their aim is to be ruled by governments that should improve the social and economic aspects of the lives, as well as providing political stability.
At this point, the economic and social conditions of the country have a direct effect on the people’s living conditions. It is important to notice that there is a strong relation between economy and democracy as both are interrelated and affect each other. As Gasser Aly argues, “There is an important connection between economy and democracy. In fact, if the economy improves, that should help consolidate democracy; if it falters, so will political actions.” (Aly, 2011) People demand democracy so they can improve their life conditions after an improvement of their economic conditions. This direct relation between both democracy and economy puts the economic growth as a priority for the non democratic Arab governments to avoid more social and economic conflicts in their societies.

As a result, it is clear that reasons for demonstrations in the Arab world differ from state to state. Each state has its own conflicts independent from the other, including the neighboring ones. Rebels claim to be demanding democracy and political freedom in most demonstrations, but the real aim from these protests may be different. We can see that neither the Sunni majority in Syria, nor the Shiite majority in Bahrain accept to be governed by minority groups. On the other hand, it does not eliminate the choice that the Arab Spring is of an institutional nature. In states such as Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen we have not seen any identity related divisions, nor did any tensions appear between sectarian or religious groups like the ones which appeared in Syria or Bahrain. This is why the nature of the crisis in the MENA region cannot be generalized and grouped into one category. It is divided between crises of identity nature and other causes of institutional nature.
Survey interviews with various informants and activists from different countries undergoing transition in the Arab world were made by the Lebanese American University (LAU). The countries included in this survey were Syria, Libya, Egypt, and Yemen. These interviews aimed to answer different questions concerning the Arab spring. Informants expressed their opinions about what caused these demonstrations in different Arab countries, how these protests were made, and what changes and challenges they expected to happen in these states after these revolutions. Moreover, informants were asked about their states’ foreign policy with some regional and international powers and whether it may change or remain the same after these protests and the political reforms are concluded. According to this survey, “The most common feature of all countries of revolts was having a strong autocratic regime based on the extended rule, familial nepotism, strong sectarian or tribal affiliation, and a single party dominance. “All these countries combined autocratic rule with an economically controlled public sector; thus concentrating power and political decision making among a very small ruling circle.” (LAU, 2011)

It adds that there were some reasons like injustice, violation of human rights, and corruption, listed as common reasons for these protests. The survey also shows there were common political demands like freedom and anti-corruption.

At the end of this chapter we conclude that the reasons for the Arab spring differ from state to state. Some states, like Egypt, Libya, Yemen, and Tunisia, the demonstrations came as a result of an institutional crisis, where people are seeking better life conditions. In other states, like Syria and Bahrain, identity crises between different groups of the society drove the public to protest against their governments
and leaders. In these states demonstrations reflected a struggle for power between different religious groups. The answer for the question about the nature of the crisis in the Arab world is that the causes for Arab spring are both institutional and identity crises.

Finally, it is important to note that the choice of models is critically linked to whether the problem in the Arab world in linked to identity or institutional crisis. These models represent different ones in the Arab world that are characterized by either institutional or identity aspects. The Turkish secularism is characterized by hegemonic institutional, and there are no political, governmental, or institutional issues based on identity divisions in the state. Although the society is composed of different religious groups, all people are ruled equally independent of their identities. Theocracy in Iran is characterized by hegemonic identity where one religious group controls the state and the other groups are living in this state. Monarchism is similar to theocracy, but there are important different aspects between both models, which are both strongly influenced by religion. Most states in the Arab region are ruled by monarchism, and demonstrations against this system took place in Bahrain. Finally, Lebanese sectarianism shows a plural identity system that is based on power sharing between the state’s different religious groups.

The following chapter talks briefly about the four governing models considered in this study, including definitions and important aspects of these models. Moreover, the next chapter shows how mobilized is the public in Arab states that apply these models. The chapter also provides an idea about the four competing models in the Arab region and whether the public is satisfied or not with its form of governments.
After the Arab spring specific governing model or models will have an advantage over others to spread in the Arab region. This advantage is dependent on the similarities and common aspects of these forms of governments and democracy.
Chapter Three

Theocracy, Secularism, Sectarianism, and Monarchism

3.1 Introduction to governing models:

There is a large number of governing models in the world. Each country has its government, but the form of government differs from state to state. A state may be ruled by one specific model, yet it may apply a combination of different models. The form of government refers to the set of political institutions by which a government of a state is organized. It represents the means by which the state policy is enforced and applied.

The Arab world is by no means an exception or something of the nature. Arab states are characterized with their nondemocratic governments that have always ruled. Some states in the Arab world are monarchies like Bahrain, Morocco, and Saudi Arabia, and some states are republics like Syria. The Middle East and North Africa region is an important region where transitions towards democracy face many difficulties due to different views about which governing model is most suitable for these states.
According to democratic theories, mobilizing the public opinion in the political decision making processes of the government is vital. The involvement of the public in such processes brings political, social, and economic improvements. This issue also supports both the government and the public sectors who may achieve common interests. Recent demonstrations and protests in different countries in this region show how people in the Middle East are more knowledgeable about their rights and interests. They also seek to play important and decisive roles in the political decision making processes. According to a lecture at Hilla University for Humanistic Studies, democracy is defined as a system of government of four key elements:

- A political system for choosing and replacing the government through free and fair elections.
- The active participation of people, as citizens, in politics and civic life.
- Protection of the human rights of all citizens.
- A rule of law, in which the laws and procedures apply equally to all citizens.

It is important to note that all these key elements are related to the public. Democracy encourages the public to enjoy an active participation in the political life. The government should seriously take into consideration the public opinion, needs, and demands in order to satisfy it and avoid any local opposition.

In order to maintain power over the state, leaders seek to gain the public support at the domestic level even if it does not meet the interests of the state or the government at the international level. The “Nested Game” is an interesting and
important term because its helps us understand the political decision makers’ behavior. Laura Neack defines the “Dual Game” or the “Nested Game” as one in which national leaders find themselves working between domestic and international politics, and generally they put the domestic goals ahead of the international ones (Neack, 2008). To show the importance of this term, Neack also gives the example of India where the prime minister almost brought the nuclear treaty with the United States to collapse because of some parties’ opposition to the agreements with the United States. This opposition emerged although this treaty would lead India to be considered a nuclear weapons power and thus improve the economy of the country.

However, the public drive towards democracy in the Arab world is confronted by at least four competing governing models as expressed by Iranian Islamic theocracy, secularism in Turkey, sectarian consociationalism in Lebanon, and monarchism in Saudi Arabia. It is important to examine each model and compare it with democracy including the mobilization of the public in these different governing models.

The four different governing models considered in this study reflect the different characteristics and the diversity in the region’s governments and laws. These models are applied in Lebanon, Iran, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia. Lebanon is considered to have succeeded in solving the identity crises between different sectarian parties over power. Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey are three important regional powers that have played important roles at both the regional and international levels. It is important to discuss these governing models in the Arab spring because some models are overthrown and with a gap for other models to fill. These four considered
models are either identity or institutionally characterized since the crises of the MENA states are of both identity and institutional natures. First, the Iranian theocracy represents the hegemonic identity government. One religious group or party has the authority over the government and state, and the constitution is based on religious laws. Second, the Turkish secularism is characterized by hegemonic institutionalism where identity does not have an influence on any constitutional or governmental affair. Moreover, another important model to discuss is sectarianism in Lebanon. Lebanon represents a state whose society is characterized by pluralism, and the government is dependent on sectarian power sharing between the different groups of the country. Finally, monarchism, like theocracy, is considered by hegemonic identity, but there are differences between the two models. It is important to talk about monarchism because it is supported by the Gulf States, the richest and most important states in the region. Scientists believe these competing models will play an important role in the future of the Arab spring, so it is necessary to give a brief overview about these different models.

### 3.2 Theocracy in Iran

The last decades sought the emergence of Iran as a regional power, and theocracy became an important model that faces the emergence of democracy in the region. In her article, “Sunni, Shiites, and Theocracy,” Sarah Spiker gives a brief overview about theocracy and some aspects of this model. She defines theocracy and presents the structure of the government. Spiker states, “A theocracy is a form of
government in which the state recognizes divine guidance in its daily functioning. Theocracy is usually headed by the religious leader or a divinely appointed individual who acts on behalf of a divine power, generally God or Allah.” She adds, “All laws and practices of the country are rooted in this religious belief” (Spiker, 2009). Current theocracies vary in respect to religion and form of government. Iran is an Islamic state that has adopted Islam as its foundations for political institutions and has implemented the Islamic ruling system. The Vatican City State is another example of theocracies from our present world.

The inspiration for a new government in Iran came from Ayatollah Khomeini, whose purpose was to create a government that would be entrusted to Islamic clergy. The Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979 brought an end to the rule of the Pahlavi era which for fifty years witnessed the attempt to modernize and westernize Iran. The revolution replaced the monarchy in Iran with a theocracy.

What is the structure of the government in Iran? Sarah Spiker also stated, “The Islamic Republic of Iran is one such theocracy based on Islamic beliefs. Iran departs from traditional Muslim theocracies because leaders exercise power directly. Divine law is interpreted by a group of religious leaders called the ulema. These proceedings overrule any democratic law not rooted in Islamic beliefs” (Spiker, 2009). At the top of the government structure is the Faqih, the Supreme Leader, who is the ultimate decision maker. Below the Faqih a distinct separation of powers exists between the executive and legislative branches. The executive branch includes an elected president who selects the prime minister and a cabinet. The cabinet must be approved by the elected legislative assembly. The judiciary is independent of both branches.
As mentioned before, the public drive toward democracy in the region is confronted by theocracy. There are important major aspects that differ between both models. Aron states that theocracy and democracy are two forms of governments that show differences when it comes to their concepts (Aron, 2011). The most important difference presented by Aron is that in theocracy the government is a religious based one, but in democracy the government is elected by the public. The point here is that in democracy, the leader can be changed with respect to the public’s decision through free and fair elections while in theocracy the leader has a supreme power for lifetime.

It is clear that the major aspects of both theocracy and democracy do not meet. So applying a specific model in a state decreases the probability of another model in that state. In his article, “How Democracy became Halal,” Reuel Marc Gerecht argues that the race between theocracy and democracy has been a defining theme of the Islamic Republic of Iran since the Islamic revolution. Gerecht states that when the legitimacy of theocracy started to unravel and the regime’s corruption and brutality in the late 1980s, democratic ideas including powerful democratic interpretations of the Islamic faith roared forth (Gerecht, 2011). The main aspects of these two governing models cannot be applied in a state at the same time. If a state like Iran seeks to apply a democratic government, it should start abolishing laws and institutions related to theocracy. On the other hand, applying more theocratic institutions leads the state to get far from democracy.

In “Theocracy is Incompatible with Religious Liberty,” Walker argues that when one religion is favored in theocracy, it is often privileged to the exclusion of
other religions. The religious liberty of everyone is diminished or eliminated no matter how often they vote (Walker, 2009). In this way, we can say that the Islamic revolution brought the rule of one religion, the Islam, to the country. But, on the other hand, it did not protect the rights of the non Muslims who must enjoy their rights and beliefs according to their religions. From this point of view, Susan Jacoby believes that theocracy destroys democracy. She argues, “There can be no guarantee of individual rights or democracy under religious rule. Never has been, never will be.” (Jacoby, 2009) It is a human right that each person can choose his own religion, and in democracy people should be treated equally regardless of their religions. So, it is a violation of human rights and democracy that all citizens of different religions are ruled by a specific religion. In other words, if democracy is to be applied in Iran, the religious laws of Islam on all Muslims and non Muslims should end.

A study made by the International Peace Institute shows that the public in Iran is not being mobilized in the government’s decision making processes. The Iranian government seems to focus on its international goals rather than its domestic ones. This study argues that the majority of the public is dissatisfied with the economy of the government, worried over sanctions and isolation, favored closer ties to the west, and wanted to focus on domestic affairs (IPI, 2008). We cannot generalize the results of a study over all issues regarding the mobilization of the public in the government’s decisions. Still, most studies, as argued by the World Public Opinion and the Terror Free Tomorrow organizations, concur that Iranians want the government to focus mainly on the domestic issues of the country including the economy and thus having better relations with the West (Richman, 2008). For the last decades, Iran emerged as
a regional power, and its concentration has been on its nuclear program. The United States and its allies want to prevent Iran from achieving its goals. Still, Iran joined the anti American allies and focused on its foreign policies with these states. Another reason would be the strong support of Iran to Syria and Hezbullah. This costly support, in terms of money, has moved many citizens against the government’s policy.

During the last decades, Iran’s relations with the US and Europe got worse as a result of different political disputes regarding the Arab world. This had a negative impact on Iran’s economy and its cooperation with the world’s major powers, and it negatively affected the interests of the public. In his article “Iran and its Discontents,” Fareed Zakaria argues that we are watching the fall of theocracy in Iran as it does not realize the importance of the public support and its role in the stability of the state. He adds, “For three decades, the Iranian regime has wielded its power through its religious standing, effectively excommunicating those who defied it. This no longer works, and the mullahs know it. Millions of Iranians know that, the regime has lost its legitimacy.”(Zakaria, 2009) Although the Iranian regime has been facing many internal problems on the economical and political levels, it has not shown any signs of reforms to regain its public support.

3.3 Secularism in Turkey

Another important governing model facing the spread of democracy in the Arab world is the Turkish secularism. For the last years, Turkey has emerged in the region
to play a major role on both the political and economical aspects. It is important to remember that after World War I, the Ottoman Empire fell, and secularism came to fulfill the space led by the overthrown of the empire and to reorganize the country’s situation. Secularism was able to bring stability to Turkey after political and cultural revolutions, led by Mustafa Kamal Ataturk, which came to replace the rule of the empire. In “Modernity, Islam and Secularism,” Alev Cinar argues, “Official Turkish modernity took shape basically through a negation of the Islamic Ottoman system and the adoption of a west-oriented mode of modernization, but a la Turca” (Cinar, 2005). This revolution brought the Islamic Ottoman Empire and its supporters under the authority of a Turkish secular state, and the religious laws were also put under the secular institution of the state.

If Ayatollah Khomeini was the leader of the Islamic revolution in Iran, then Mustafa Kamal Ataturk was said to be the leader of the Turkish revolution that called for a secular state in Turkey. In his article, “Turkey between Secularism and Islamism”, Jacob M. Landau argues, “When Mustafa Kamal Ataturk founded the Republic of Turkey, and he set as his main objective the modernization of the new republic. His preferred means were speedy, intensive secularization and, indeed, every one of his reforms was tied up with disestablishing other Islamic institutions from their hold on Turkey's politics, economics, society, and cultural life.” (Landau, 1997) The Western societies were generally known as secular, so Ataturk’s objective was to establish secularism on the overall issues and eliminate the religious influence on Turkey’s society and government. For example, Islamic elements were abolished in all schools, and the religious courts were replaced by the secular courts.
As Barry A. Kosmin defines it, secularism refers to the view that human activities and decisions, especially political ones, should be unbiased by religious influence. (Kosmin, 2007) Unlike theocracy in Iran, secularism was applied in Turkey to separate the religious institutions from the governmental institutions in order to rule all citizens fairly and equally regardless of their religious beliefs. During the era of the Islamic Ottoman Empire, an Islamic institution was applied on the empire, so this would violate some Christian’s beliefs and prevent them from enjoying all their rights. Like in theocracy, it is a violation of human rights to apply specific religious laws over a society with multiple religions. Secularism supports the spread of democracy and democratic aspects in the Arab world.

It was hard for a new governing model in Turkey to replace theocracy because the majority belonged to the Muslim community. Secularism came to rule a state where Muslims were considered the majority, made people from different religions equally treated, and ruled all citizens by civil laws. In this way, it is most logical to agree with Noah Feldman who argued that secularism is said to add democracy by protecting the rights of religious minorities. (Feldman, 2005) Secularism did not lead to power sharing between different groups, nor did it give power to minorities. Secularism avoided a specific religious group to rule and others to be ruled and gave the right of all people to be ruled equally.

If we look at the present parties and politics in Turkey, we conclude that Ataturk did not oppose Islam, did not fight Muslims in Turkey, and did not support the non-Muslim minorities to reach power. Nowadays, the Justice and Development Party, AKP or JDP, is considered an Islamic party, and it has been the largest and most
supported party in Turkey. AKP has the largest number of ministers in the parliament, but this party does not seek to get the Islamic state back to the country. Otherwise, the AKP seems to seek Ataturk’s objectives and drive Turkey towards more westernized and modernized state. James D. Lamond states, “In fact, the AKP is the most ardently pro-European of the parties in Turkey, and under its leadership the country has made more progress than any party did before towards European Union membership.” Lamond adds, “Both economic and political reforms have brought Turkey much closer to the current conception of a European state. Under the AKP, Turkey has recovered from its financial crisis and benefitted from steady economic growth.” (Lamond, 2008) Lamond believes that the AKP party has provided the public with more individual political and economical freedom. This would also be considered as a step towards a more democratic state. Economic growth leads to a better life and to satisfy most public needs and interests.

The most influential division in Turkey is between the post Islamist Justice and Development Party (JDP) and the Kemalist regime. Philip Robins shows the ideal behavior made by these groups. He argues that the JDP puts its identity aside and focuses on the objective to join the European Union. (Robins, 2007) It shows the important step done by this Islamic party which, unlike other Islamic groups, does not look at the West as the enemy, but it sees in this step the best for the state. The cooperation of Turkey with the Western states leads to economic and political improvements. After the assassination of the former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafic Hariri, the United States campaigned for the isolation of Syria, but both Turkish parties sought not to spoil the good neighboring relations with Syria, and this cooled
down the US pressure over Syria. This does not mean that there is an alliance between Syria and Turkey against the United States, but good relations between neighboring states benefits both states.

To show the importance of the public opinion in the Turkish political decision making processes, Bulent Aras and Rabia Karakaya Polat argue that de-securitization at the domestic level within the Turkish society is the reason of this shift in their foreign policy. Then Aras and Polat define the term “de-securitization” as the process of moving issues off the security agenda and back into the realm of public political discourse and normal political dispute and accommodation (Aras and Polat, 2008). Once again this shift in the foreign policy of Turkey towards Iran and Syria reflects the interests of the state to avoid any political conflicts and security instability to the state and the society.

3.4 Sectarianism in Lebanon

Pluralism is one of the characteristics of Lebanese society because of the eighteen different religious sectors living together in this small state. Most of these groups are supported by regional or international powers, and this makes the Lebanese political life as one of the most disputable issues in the region. Before the withdrawal of Syria from Lebanon in 2005, the political issues were dependent on Syria. After 2005, political confrontations between the different Lebanese sects emerged over the authority over the Lebanese government and other political issues. In his article “The Art of Impossible: The Foreign Policy of Lebanon”, Bassel
Salloukh argues, “In post-Syria Lebanon, foreign policy has reemerged as a battleground between overlapping local and external actors bent on redefining Lebanon’s position in the international system and the regional geopolitics.” (Salloukh, 2008) So, this shows the reflection of the domestic consensus on the foreign policy of the state. This is why international and regional powers seek to support different groups in Lebanon and play an important role at the domestic and international politics. The political life in Lebanon reflects the struggle for power between the different sectarian groups in the country whether seeking its own objectives or these of the supporting states.

Sectarianism refers to the governing model in which the government represents the different groups within a country. These groups represent people of different religions, class, sects, etc... Sectarianism in Lebanon began since the independence of Lebanon in 1943 when the national pact applied a political system that favored the majority Maronite Christians over the Muslims. Arend Lijphart argued that consociationalism was intended to deter sectarian conflicts to fairly represent the demographic distribution of the different religious groups of Lebanon in the government. (Lijphart, 1969) Because of the public’s high diversity according to its religious beliefs, consociational sectarianism was the most suitable mean to represent fairly not only the majority groups, who were also given the highly ranking offices, but the minorities too.

Demographic changes occurred in Lebanon after its independence. Christians left Lebanon towards Europe and the Americas while the Muslims moved into the cities of Lebanon for a better life. Christians and Muslims became almost equal. This
fact gave a background for a civil war in Lebanon, which led to a political crisis in the county. As Imad Harb argues, it was only after the civil war (1975-1990) that the Taif agreement granted equal representation for both communities, and this was the direct reason for the end of the killing in Lebanon during the civil war. (Harb, 2009)

Another agreement was the Doha Agreement signed in Qatar in 2008 to solve another Lebanese political conflict, and it also included the distribution of power among the different religious groups.

Similar to the government in Turkey, the Lebanese parliament is elected by the public. The difference is that in Turkish secularism candidates are not distributed according to their religion. In Lebanon each region has a specific number of candidates representing different sectarian communities living in these regions. The parliament elects the president and the speaker of the parliament, and then with the president it elects the prime minister. Elections are an important aspect of democracy as it gives the public the right to choose the government that rules the country. In Lebanon, the president should be a Christian Maronite, the prime minister a Muslim Sunni, and the speaker of the parliament a Muslim Shiite. It seems that the different sectarian political groups in Lebanon are aware of the danger of changing this distribution because it was applied by all agreements since the independence in 1945 till our present time. It was created by the national pact and then supported by the Taif and Doha agreements, and it has never been a dispute or demand to change this set-up.

It is clearly seen that Lebanon has always faced political conflicts between its different religious groups, and sectarianism has never solved these conflicts. The
three agreements signed since Lebanon’s independence have shown that consociationalism was not, is not, and will never be the solution for these political debates among the religious groups in Lebanon. Each agreement calmed down the tensions between the Lebanese political groups. It supported the application of sectarianism although it has not given the country an eternal solution for tensions and fightings between these sectarian political groups. Fouad Hamdan believes that we all agree that the Lebanese sectarian system fails to provide peace and stability, social justice and a future for our children. He also adds that we know that this anachronistic system allows regional powers like Syria, Iran, and Saudi Arabia to interfere via their local proxies and degrade Lebanon to their fighting ground. (Hamdan, 2011) Since system has never provided the country with political stability, important issues like security and economic growth are threatened too. All these problems worsen the life conditions of the Lebanese people.

3.5 Monarchism in Saudi Arabia

Finally, one of the most important difficulties for the Arab’s drive toward democracy is the form of government established in the rich Gulf States, mainly Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia has an important geographic location since it is surrounded by seven states. Most of these states are ruled by monarchies. Monarchism is a governmental system that has one person as the permanent head of state until he dies or gives up his position. Soldatkin Vladimir and Natassia Astrasheuskaya argue that Saudi Arabia has an absolute monarchy government which
refers to its system as Islamic. It is the largest state in West Asia with respect to land area, and the second largest in the Arab world, after Algeria. It represents a regional super power both politically and economically. Saudi Arabia has the world’s second largest oil reserves and is the world’s second largest oil exporter. (Vladimir and Astrasheuskaya, 2011) Saudi Arabia plays important roles in the Arab states’ political and economical status too. Politically, it is one of the founding members of the Arab League, and it has a high influence on the Arab and Muslim states. Economically, it is a member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, the OPEC.

In Saudi Arabia, the political system is dominated by the royal family. There are many family members, and this allows the royal family to control most of the kingdom’s important posts and to have an involvement and presence at all levels of government (Library of Congress, 2006). The family controls all the economic, social, and political issues of the state. In his article “Monarchies in the Middle East,” Duane Jackson states that in an absolute monarchy, the monarch has full authority over the government and its populace. A cabinet of advisers might be assembled to assist the monarch, but members of the cabinet do not make the major decisions. (Jackson, 2011) The monarch usually participates in running the nation, but he may have mostly ceremonial powers or may be able to act only with the approval of the prime minister and other government officials. He is also able to dissolve the chamber of representatives under certain circumstances.

Marshall Cavendish talks about the violation of the Saudi Arabian government over political rights in the country. He states that no political parties are allowed nor
national elections are permitted. (Cavendish, 2007) Elections can be considered one of the most important aspects of democracy in which the public chooses by whom they want to be ruled. In Saudi Arabia, political parties or national elections are not allowed. Since the public is not allowed to enjoy its political rights, democracy faces serious difficulties in this Gulf state. It is clear that the government feels the danger of the fact that the public is being deprived from different political and social rights, so it takes regular steps forward towards solving such issues. “On 25 September 2011, King Abdullah announced that women will have the right to stand and vote in Future local elections and join the advisory Shura council as full member and be able to run as candidates in the municipal election.” (The Guardian, 2011) Although the government attempts to satisfy the public with some political rights, the leadership and the major posts of the government are still ruled by the royal family. As Gerhard Robbers also argues, Saudi Arabia remains the only Arab Nation where no national elections have ever taken place, since its creation (Robbers, 2006). This is also a political right that the Saudi public is not allowed to enjoy. According to democracy, the state’s president should be selected by the majority of the public through fair and free elections. From this point, unlike monarchism, democracy gives the public the power to choose the leader of its government and state.

Where does the law come from in Saudi Arabia? If we remember again the fact that theocracy represents Islam in Iran, we agree that it is against democracy that non-Muslims are ruled by Islamic laws. The same situation is repeated in Saudi Arabia. Christian Campbell, in “Legal Aspects of doing Business in the Middle East,” states that the primary source of law is the Islamic Sharia, the Islamic laws, derived from
the teachings of the Quran and the Sunna, the traditions of the Prophet.” (Campbell, 2007) Islamic laws and courts are forced in Saudi Arabia on all people, Muslims and non-Muslims. Like in theocracy, it is a violation against the right of all people to choose a religion and enjoy its beliefs.

Although monarchism appears as a nondemocratic government, it may, or may not, satisfy the citizens. Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates are two of the richest countries. Many argue that this is because both states are rich with oil. We can also see other states, like Libya and Nigeria, that also contain oil, but they have not shown signs of progress and improvement at the economic level. In “Democracy or Monarchy” Imran Bokhari believes that Saudi Arabia is making amazing progress as a result of the form of government they have, monarchy. The government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) is providing excellent governance. He adds, “The great Monarchs of the Middle-East are very intelligently protecting their countries, their governments, their people and their natural resources from greedy super powers and European nations, Americans, and from all kinds of enemies, while they have no or very little military power. They are in fact successfully using the military powers, and political and economic powers of different nations of the world to their own benefit.” (Bokhari, 2011) Unlike most regional and international powers, Saudi Arabia is a regional power due to its strong economy and foreign policy and not due to any military power. Its oil revenues make from Saudi Arabia an important state with respect to the international powers and Western states. Saudi government focuses on this issue to gain the support of these powers and states in order to protect its country and economic stability from any threat.
On the other hand, the government of Saudi Arabia faces serious internal problems. David Pollock argues that the Saudi society faces a number of serious and dangerous conflicts like corruption and religious extremism (Pollock, 2010). Pollock also believes that a small number of Saudis believe in an economic improvement in the following years. Also some tensions emerged within the Saudi society as a result of the government’s policies. The good relations with the West have led many groups in Saudi Arabia to desire the overthrown of the royal family while other groups want a more open government with good relations with the Western states. It seems that the Saudi people are also divided into two groups. Rich people and those who benefit from the government’s policies are supposed to be satisfied with the government. The opposition groups against the royal family come from different sources. In his article, “Divided we Survive: A Landscape of Fragmentation in Saudi Arabia,” Ondrej Barenek states that opposition in Saudi Arabia come from Sunni Islamist activism, liberal critics, the Shiite minority, and the regional particularistic opponents (Barenek, 2009). The royal family faces local and regional opposition groups, and these groups may also be supported by different regional and international states. This makes it more difficult to the Saudi government to face these groups and their movements. For example, the Shiite minorities are supposed to be supported by Iran and Syria against the royal family.

Monarchism in Saudi Arabia does not seem as the most suitable form of government to the Saudi public, but it is for the royal family and its followers. The public is not allowed to enjoy all its human and political rights. There are many differences between monarchism and democracy. The public that is close to the royal
family and its followers benefit from the government’s policies and support it, but there are many people from different groups and communities who are against the royal family, the eternal leaders of the state.

3.6 Which Model Forward

After presenting these different governing models in the region and the way it faces democracy, we conclude that some models are closer than others to democracy. As explained before, complete democracy cannot be applied directly in any state that lacks a suitable basis for democracy. Democracy will probably emerge in states where its forms of government have few common aspects with democracy. The Arab public’s drive towards democracy is faced by at least four different models, but these models that are close and have common aspects with democracy will have the advantage to spread in the region and influence the Arab states and governments in the following years.

First, there is a big difference between theocracy and democracy because the major aspects, like the rule of the majority, of both models do not meet. For example, there is the rule of one religion in theocracy and the exclusion of all other religions while in democracy all people are treated equally regardless of their religion. Most of the Iranians are dissatisfied, and the authorities do not realize the importance of the public. Second, Turkish secularism seems to have the advantage among the other models in the region. Secularism brought stability to the state, and the secular institution and the civil laws rule all citizens equally regardless of their race, gender,
religion, or any identity division. The public’s opinion has a strong influence on the government’s decisions, and this enforces the position of secularism in the race of the Arab public towards democracy. Third, sectarianism has a strong advantage in Lebanon because it represents most of the different groups of the state, and there is a power sharing among all groups. Sectarian power sharing proved to be the only solution to solve the political conflicts between the different Lebanese groups. Still, these groups have always been supported by regional and international powers which transferred the country into a battleground between these powers, and it has never driven the state into a real stable status. Finally, monarchism in Saudi Arabia has its advantages, but it also has many disadvantages, which have driven the state too far from democracy. There are violations of political and human rights, and the source of law is the Islamic law, which violates the rights of people from other religions. Some people who benefit from the government and its policy support the royal family, but the opposition to the government comes from regional and local groups, having local conflicts with the government. There are many differences between monarchism and democracy, and it is hard for democracy to take place in these states before any serious reforms take place.

In the Arab Spring, people have been asking for political and social rights to ensure their mobilization in the government’s decisions and bring a better lifestyle. As we will see in the next chapter, among the four models, secularism can have the biggest advantage to fill the space in the Arab world after the Arab spring because it has common aspects with democracy. Sectarianism has few common aspects with democracy, but an important point is that it has cooled down serious political tensions
between different political groups. Theocracy and monarchism lead to religious tensions among the community of any state, and it excludes the major aspects of democracy. Chapter four includes different views about the future of the Arab spring, and it will analyze the data collected from these articles and survey interviews with activists from the Arab world. All this gives us a clear scenario about the public’s preference after the Arab spring.
Chapter Four

Future of the Arab Spring: Governing Preference

What are the future prospects of the Arab Spring? Which governing models are expected to take place in the states undergoing transitions? Which models will spread in the region? Is there a specific model, or models, that will have an advantage in the Arab world? Is it possible to see a combination of two models or new model in these states? This chapter includes scientists’ different views about the future of the post Arab spring in the MENA region. It analyzes the data collected in chapter three, information from different articles, and results of the survey interviews with activists and informants from different Arab states undergoing transition. These activists were asked about their preference about which governing model to rule their states. These interviews also provide some views about the causes of these protests and challenges for these states during the post Arab spring era.

Some scientists argue that theocracy has an advantage over other governing models, and it will be able to spread in the Arab states after the Arab spring. The Arab Spring has had a positive effect on Iran because it takes the attention of the superpowers and the international community away from Iran’s nuclear program. This influence helps the Iranians to extend their political interests in the region and expand theocracy to the Arab states undergoing political transition. “Iranian leaders see the Egyptian revolution as an extension of their Islamic revolution and a new
source of support for the Palestinian cause, which is why Iran was one of the first countries to welcome the Egyptian-brokered reconciliation between Hamas and Fatah. It never came as a surprise that Tehran made new overtures to Egypt and offered its moral backing to Egypt's African and Arab roles.” (Maged, 2011) Iran seems to use its common regional and international interests with the revolutionaries to build better and cooperative relations with the future governments. From these common views and interests, Iran attempts to play an important and effective role in the upcoming governments. If Iran continues to be an important regional power and influence the future governments, theocracy will be strongly facing the emergence of democracy in the Arab states.

In the article “The Arab Rising: Iran Spreads its Theocracy,” Jamsheed K. Choksy and Carole B. Choksy argue, “Iran’s leaders hope events in Arab countries will converge with their propaganda to create a unified Muslim Middle East that looks to Tehran for guidance against the West.” (J.K. Choksy and C.B. Choksy, 2011) Iran also pursues its interests by supporting the protestors in particular states. These states mainly contain Shiites, like Bahrain, and this is the main reason for Iran to support and protect them. J.K.Choksy and P. Choksy added, “Iran increasingly works with Shiite rebels who are seizing territory along Yemen’s border with Saudi Arabia, as it does too with al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.” Their view show that Iran seeks to spread theocracy in the Arab States so that religious rule takes place in the future, so Iran can continue to be an important regional power. Theocracy and its religious power face a big difficulty against the public’s drive towards democracy where religion has no major importance in the state’s political decisions. “The Arab
awakening against authoritarian pro-Western governments marks the beginning of a new struggle between secular democracy and Iranian theocracy.” (J.K. Choksy and P. Choksy, 2011) It is important for Iran and its system to fight other models in the region, mainly in states where Shiites live. Iran supports those Shiites to rebel against the governments of their states in order to spread its system to other states. It is not a surprise that Iran supports the opposition groups within the Gulf States’ societies. Weakening these rich states will improve Iran’s position regionally and maybe internationally.

Other scientists argue that secularism has an advantage over other governing models in the region. They expect secularism to have a higher influence in the Arab States’ political life after the end of the demonstrations in these states. Most societies in the MENA region are characterized by religious divisions. These divisions play an important role in increasing the tensions between different groups politically and socially. Secularism seems suitable to solve this problem by abolishing religious influence from the states’ political life. Mark Levine argues that the Turkish Prime Minister Rejep Tayyip Erdogan, in his recent tour of the Arab world made it clear to the Arab states that Turkey is being held up as the best model for change across the region. Levine adds that at first glance, Turkey has become a model of democracy and pluralism, and it is serving as a beacon for other Islamically oriented parties looking to participate in their emerging political systems” (Levine, 2011) There has always been different religious political parties in Turkey, but this religious divisions have not made any influence at the political life of Turkey under secularism. After secularism replaced the rule of the Islamic Ottoman Empire, Islamic parties continue
to play vital roles in the Turkish political life, which was supported by the majority of
the public. The Turkish experience shows us that secularism does not present any
threat to these religious groups, but it decreases the probability of religious tensions
and inequality to occur within the Arab societies.

In his article “Arab Spring and the Paradox of American Leadership,” Austin
Bay claims that both identity and institutional problems led to the demonstrations in
the Arab world. He also mentions the advice of the Turkish President to Egyptian
revolutionary leaders. He asked the revolutionaries to stay united for Egypt and not to
be wary of secularism. (Bay, 2012) The Turkish President believes that secularism is
the perfect mean to bring reforms to these Arab states. The revolutionists should
unite, and their behavior should seek the interest of the state rather than the interests
and objectives of specific groups. Bay adds that there will not be dictator or sectarian
minority repressing the majority. In a secular system, no certain family or party
enjoys an eternal power over the state, and minorities will not be distinguished
according to their identity or beliefs. It is important to know that no religious laws
will rule a state of different religious groups. Civil laws, which are biased by human
and political rights, treat all people equally. The Turkish President shows us that
secularism does not remove religion from people’s lives, but it makes the state and its
political aspects unbiased by any religious rules and thoughts. Secular Turkey is lead
by an Islamic Party which was first considered a threat to democracy, but it brought
political and economic improvements to the state and its citizens. Turkey’s success in
applying a secular constitution to rule people of different religions is viewed as a
perfect model for the Arab and Muslim states undergoing transitions.
Secularism has not improved not only the country’s political life but its economic status too. States that passed through revolutions usually face dangerous economic conflicts to reconstruct because of the paralyzed economy during demonstrations. In his article “The Arab Spring”, Rachid Khalidi argues that Turkey provides a model of how to reconcile a powerful military establishment with democracy and a secular system with a religious orientation among much of the populace. It also serves as a model of economic success, of a workable cultural synthesis between East and West, and of how to exert influence on the world stage (Rashidi, 2011). The secular system is suitable for the Arab states to be more opened to the Western states and their markets. Secularism supports the existence of cooperative relations with the Western states which will probably lead the Arab states to a better economic status and support the economic growth of the MENA region as a whole. Better life conditions and more job opportunities will be provided, and this will solve serious problems within the Arab societies.

Moreover, some argue that sectarianism is favorable to have an advantage over other models in the Arab World during the following years. Although sectarianism deepens the society into more identity divisions, it also seems suitable to be applied in many Arab states, in particular in divided societies like Lebanon. Since its beginning, the Arab Spring has been expected to reach every state but Lebanon. The reason was not because it provides perfect social, economic, and political lives, but simply because there is no central power that rules the country. There is a power sharing between different groups to avoid any political and social tensions within these groups.
For this reason, Lebanon seems to be among the safest states in the region, and this situation is not expected to change. Rodger Shanahan compares the Arab Spring to the Lebanese summer because Lebanon is supposed to get benefit from this instability in other Arab states during the summer season. Shanahan argues, “While change sweeps across the region, there is no large-scale movement for change in Lebanon, despite its ossified political system. The reasons are many, but in part it is because, even if most people wanted to agitate for political change, there is no real center, let alone a single autocratic figure against which to mobilize.” (Shanahan, 2011) Shanahan believes Lebanon will be the least affected state by the Arab Spring. Tourists from the Arab World will come to Lebanon because of the stability in the country compared to the other Arab states. This case will bring advancements to the Lebanese economy.

The fact that the revolutions in different Arab states has been led by Islamist groups, in particular the Muslim Brotherhood, supports the argument that sectarianism has the biggest possibility to spread, and have an influence on the political life of the Arab world. Hussein Ibish claims that across the Arab world, terrifying sectarian dynamics are starting to emerge, essentially pitting Arab Sunnis versus all religious minorities. He adds that it is impossible to deny that the single most important factor shaping the Arab regional dynamic is a sectarian divide, not between Sunnis and Shiites, but between Sunnis and everybody else (Ibish, 2011). The Arab spring has caused a dispute between the Islamist groups, which led the protests within many Arab states, and other minority groups. These minorities face the challenges to be ruled by Islamic laws and not to be represented in the future
governments. These groups will probably ally together to play significant roles in their states’ political lives. From this sense, scientists believe political stability will emerge in different Arab states after the power sharing of all political groups, including the minorities.

Finally, some scientists argue that monarchism will not be diminished by the Arab spring, and it will spread and play an important role in the future of the Arab states. Saudi Arabia, like other Gulf States, can be described as the major power that protects monarchism in the region, and its protection for the government against the demonstrations in Bahrain supports this view. These rich states are protected by international super powers like the United States and Europe. Little change is likely to occur in the region’s political life because the United States and Saudi Arabia are able to protect and preserve monarchism in the region as they did in Bahrain. In the case of Bahrain, Saudi Arabia supported by Western states, prevented demonstrations to grow and drive the state to an unstable situation. “Meaningful democratic reform in the Gulf States is unlikely to happen, unless Saudi Arabia experiences upheaval.” (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2011) Saudi Arabia is the strongest and richest states in the Gulf region, and it seems to play a vital role through its relations with the Western states to protect the Gulf States from any threat. Any political conflict or instability within its neighboring states will negatively affect Saudi Arabia’s political life and stability. One important Saudi policy is to protect its neighboring states and its political systems, and the royal family will use its good relations with the Western states to protect itself and maybe spread its influence in the region.
After viewing these views about the expected future of these governing models in the Arab region, we conclude that theocracy is strong in specific states which have not experienced different governing models. It may be difficult for demonstrations, protests, and revolutions to happen in states such as Iran and the gulf state, but it is also not likely for other states to apply theocracy and introduce more religious rules into its political life. On the other hand, a strong argument is that the Sunni community can be considered to be the main founding member in these revolutions. These religious groups are said to be the largest in the Arab world, and this is not possible to change in the future. Sunni groups are gaining more power in different states, like in Tunisia and Egypt, through free elections by the public. All demonstrations aim to apply democracy and secular constitutions in their states. Because of the close similarities and common aspects between secularism and democracy, states undergoing transitions are expected to abolish religious rules from its constitutions and political life and replace it with secular laws. The survey at the Lebanese American University claims that the prospect of the future alternative models will be a combination of purely secular or theocratic, but as a mix of both. In almost all states where respondents interviewed, participants chose a prospective regime to be ideologically inspired by both Islamic laws and civil laws.

Three things can be concluded from the causes of these revolutions and the different views about the expected future of the Arab states after the end of the Arab spring. First, the causes of the Arab spring are of both identity and institutional in nature, and it differs from one state to another. It was an identity issue that led to the revolutions in Bahrain and Syria, but the demonstrations in Libya, Egypt, and Yemen
were of an institutional nature. Second, pure secularism or sectarianism is not favorable to replace overthrown governments, but a combination of both is expected to take place in different Arab states undergoing transition. Arab societies and governments will be strongly influenced by religious groups, but secular institutions will rule these states. Identity division will continue to be an important characteristic in the Arab states because the Islamists are considered to be within a debate with all other minority groups in the Arab states. Future struggle for power within the societies will be between the Islamists and their Allies against the other minorities. Finally, the era post Arab spring will bring different challenges and changes to these states in order to repair its economies and reconstruct the states’ political life and stability. States undergoing transition faced a stage of paralyses at the political and economic levels during its demonstrations, so the new governments will face difficulties in order to make these states function regularly.

The survey also introduces some of these challenges and changes after the Arab spring, but these differ from a state to state. It argues that the foreign policy of these states undergoing transition will differ after the new governments rule the states. For example, under Mubarak’s government, Egypt’s attitudes were in favor of the United States and Europe, but after the overthrown of Mubarak it became slanted towards Iran and Turkey who supported the revolution in Egypt. It presents common challenges between most states. “Common primary concerns are imbedded in the ability of future regimes to build a modern transparent state, divert civil war and divisions, and achieve economic prosperity.” (LAU) The future governments will face the difficulties to repair the states’ political and economical lives and provide
security. The security issue is a dangerous topic for all future governments. It will be most difficult in states, which faced confrontations between the revolutionaries and counter revolutionaries like Libya and Syria.

As a result, among these four different governing models secularism and then sectarianism have more advantage than theocracy and monarchism to spread in different Arab states after the Arab spring. Secularism has many common aspects with democracy and equality between all citizens. Also, most of the public in Turkey seems to be satisfied with its government because of the advanced political and economic improvements brought to the state. There are also few common aspects between sectarian consociationalism and democracy. Sectarianism allows the participation of most political groups including the minorities within the government. It has not maybe brought improvements to the state, but sectarianism has cooled down political tensions between different sectarian groups. Like Lebanon, the Arab states are characterized with the sectarian diversity within its societies, and it is important for these groups to share power to avoid any serious political tensions between them.

On the other hand, democracy is different from theocracy and monarchism. There are many opposition groups in such states because of the government’s violation to many human and political rights. People are ruled by specific religious laws. For example, one significant aspect in democracy is the rule of the majority, but in theocracy and monarchism the leadership has an eternal rule over the state. The Arab public seeks to be organized and ruled by democratic governments and rules. Through democracy political stability and economic growth both should emerge to
improve the social life of the public. Human and political rights are not violated in
democracy, and this ensures the public participates in the government’s various
important decisions politically, economically, and socially.
Chapter five

Conclusion

The Arab spring started in late 2010, and it has not ended yet. Revolutions started in Tunisia and passed through different Arab states in Northern Africa and the Middle East. In some states, like Egypt and Libya, governments and leaders have been overthrown. In other states, like Iraq and Sudan, leaders announced their intentions to step down when their terms end. In few states, like Bahrain and Syria, no changes occurred. The causes of the Arab spring differ from a state to state, and these causes vary between identity and institutional. Nowadays, the Arab spring is being the most important topic concerning the Arab world and the international community. The Arab spring era is a very important topic because it came to change the regions’ governments and politics in a way that would satisfy the public. This wave of revolutions and changes will draw the future of the Arab region. This study focuses on two main points. The first is the causes of these revolutions in different states from different parts of the Arab world. The second is concerned with the expectations about the future governing models of the Arab spring. The intention is to show the real reasons for the Arab spring and how it differs from state to state. Although the Arab spring is a recent event that has emerged for the last few years, it will bring vital changes to the Arab states. Governments in states, which had undergone transition, should be replaced by new governments that meet the needs of the revolutionaries.
In fact, the real reasons for these protests in some Arab states are different from what the media shows because most of these states do not allow an unregulated media. The Arab spring is a turning point that will have a big influence on the future of the MENA region. It is also difficult to know the future of these revolutions in the states undergoing transition. The post Arab spring era is expected to bring new form of governing model to the region and spread through the Arab spring states. This new model will be a combination of both secularism and sectarianism. This model will reflect the pluralism in the Arab societies and their demand for democratic and civil laws.

There are many issues concerning the prospect future of the region like the following challenges: governmental changes, institutions, security, reconstruction of these states, political and economic stabilities, and a number of other structural issues. Due to people moving in streets to protest against their governments, the second part of this study focuses on the different views of the expected future governments of the Arab states. A combination of both secularism and sectarianism is expected to take place for two reasons. First, secularism is closer than other models to democracy, and the rebels are seeking more democratic rights in their states. The Arab spring is known as the public’s drive towards democracy, and models more similar to democracy are most favorable to govern. Second, some aspects of sectarianism will take place in the new governments after the rise of religious divisions between the Islamists and other minorities. The Arab spring has deepened the Arab societies into more religious divisions mainly in societies where the revolutions were caused by identity conflicts. These revolutions showed the superiority of specific religious or
sectarian groups over other groups, and it has not diminished the influence of religion in these societies.

The Arab region is a strategic region that attracts the attention and interests of the international major powers like the United States, France, and Russia. It had been an important region throughout the years, passing through the world wars through the era of imperialism till the present time where it is acted as a battleground between these international great powers. This region started to take more attention politically after 2000 as being the major part of the US plan to spread democracy in the world and fight terrorism. It is also an attractive region economically because of the many oil producing states. The Western states were also negatively affected by the Arab spring, mainly economically. As this study shows, the oil prices increased because of the shortage in producing oil by the Arab states undergoing transition.

Some states and their governments are said to be allies of international states and powers. The international debate over a universal hegemony between the United States and its supporters and its oppositions moved into the region to divide these Arab states in terms of their support or opposition to the US government. For example, Saudi Arabia and Jordan are considered to belong to the United States alliances while Syria is considered to be against the United States and belong to the anti US alliances. These international states have always played different roles in the Arab region’s political and economical sectors. Whether in Africa, the Middle East, or the Gulf region, the Arab states have been the target of the great powers. The major powers have always had their own interests and used their own politics and policies in the region to protect such interests.
The future governments may or may not allow influence by international states and thus not protect the interests of these great powers. Changes in the region will most likely take place in the region, which will change political and economical policies too. We can say that the unknown or unexpected future of the Arab spring is behind its importance to the region and to the world. The foreign policy of the great powers towards the new Arab world and Arab governments and that of these new governments towards the Western powers will play important roles in the regions political life. New governments should maintain good relations with the international community and benefit from the global market to reconstruct its states at both political and economic levels.

Presenting information in any study is very important, so the chapters flow in a way not to confuse the reader. The data was collected from different sources: articles, newspapers, and LAU survey interviews with activists from different Arab states undergoing transition. These interviews included important questions like the reasons for the Arab spring and the expected future governing models, and their answers were useful to answer the questions of this study.

In the introductory chapter, a brief overview about the Arab spring and the methodology followed in this study was essential. The second chapter was about the causes of the Arab spring, which answered the first research question. It included the nature of the crisis in the Arab world, and with a conclusion that these demonstrations and protests in different parts of the Arab world are of both identity and institutional natures. It was clear that each country is different with its problems, and reasons for these conflicts differ from a state to state. In the third chapter, the four different
governing models considered in this study were analyzed, clarifying their important aspects in addition to the mobilization of the public as being one of the main characteristics of democracy. From this part, the conclusion about secularism was demonstrated being closer to democracy than the sectarianism, theocracy and monarchism, and that sectarianism allows the states to avoid political tensions within the societies’ different religious groups. This part was significant because it also provided the basis to answer the question about the expected future of the Arab spring, which was discussed later in the fourth chapter. The fourth chapter provided the analysis for the views about the expected future for this struggle between the different governing models in the region. There are many common important aspects between secularism and democracy, but it is hard for pure secularism to be applied in these states. More sectarian and religious divisions are being deepened in the Arab and Muslim societies. The other governing models, theocracy and monarchism, are not expected to spread in these states undergoing transition. The Arab public is more knowledgeable about its rights and is asking for more democratic rules and political freedom. Unlike sectarianism, monarchism, and theocracy, secularism excludes the high influence of religion in the state’s political life. The reason that the expected future model will be a combination between secularism and sectarianism and not pure secularism is because pluralism and sectarian division are major characteristics in the Arab societies, and it is not expected to be easily removed in the near future.

This study is useful for those who want to know about the causes of these revolutions while learning some brief general ideas about the Arab spring. This study can be also used by those who seek to gain brief information about the some
governing models. The important states that passed through transition were mentioned in this study in addition to the reasons for protests in these states, so it is also useful for students working on studies about a specific state or all states of the Arab spring. Students or researchers who work on a similar topic can use the information and the results of the survey interviews in addition to those who want to have an idea about the expected future of these competing states in the region.

Several related topics and questions can be made as possible development and progress for this research. First, what are the challenges and difficulties of the new governments after the end of these demonstrations? Some states have already been in this era, the post Arab spring era, and this is actually considered as a hard examination for the new governments. The new regimes will be responsible for reconstructing these states and make it function properly. This also includes the difficulties new governments will face to gain the confidence and support of the public.

What is the role of the Western powers in the after Arab spring? An important related topic is about the foreign policy of these Arab states with the regional and international states. This topic may belong to political changes, but it should be specialized because the international powers have always played major roles in the MENA region. Wars between different Arab states happened in favor of Western states, and these confronting Arab states were completely supported by international powers. Leaders and governments from different parts of the world either supported the governments or the rebels during these waves of demonstrations in the Arab world. For example, in some states the governments were overthrown, and new
governments are to replace. Good attitude are to be held towards states which supported the rebels, and it will worsen towards states, which supported the dictator rulers who controlled the country for decades or the counter revolutionaries.

Finally, what are the effects of the Arab spring? The effects of the Arab spring in the Arab states are important topics to be considered in future studies. Views about the effects of these revolutions are divided into two. Some scientists argue that these demonstrations have positive effects. Adrian Holman noticed the freedom of expression as one of the most important political reforms as a result of the protests in northern Africa and the Middle East (Holman, 2011). For example, non Muslim religions were not able to freely enjoy their traditions and beliefs in Algeria. The Protestant Church was able to be officially registered after it had been harassed and discriminated for decades. This decision was taken by Algeria’s Minister of Interior in order to avoid any rise of the public against such religious rights. Moreover, there will be positive economic effects on the Arab states. Amro Lubnani states that some of the Arab economies will be transformed into strong economies that garner influence in the region on a par with European economies (Lubnani, 2011). Since the economy of the Arab states undergoing transition has been paralyzed during the demonstrations, other states will benefit and improve its economic cooperation with the Western states in the global market. The Gulf States, which did not face such crisis, are expected to increase their oil production and oil revenues to cover the shortage caused by states which faced protests and economic crises.

On the other hand, other scientists argue the Arab spring has negatively affected the Arab states. Politically, the Arab spring gave power to the Islamist groups in most
Arab states. This will lead to a new dispute between these groups and the minority within these states. Oliver Walton argues that Islamist movements will face internal challenges, and tensions may emerge from younger activists, some of whom may support greater pluralism and openness (Walton, 2011). The emergence of these tensions depends on the willingness of the Islamist groups to meet the rising demands for democratization. The Arab public seems to support the revolutions in their states until they meet their needs and interests including quick advancements at the political and economic levels.

The insecure and instable conditions in these states have weakened the economy of most Arab economies. The President of the Federation of Arab Businessmen, Hamdi Tabaa, indicated that the economic losses to Arab spring countries exceeded hundred billion dollars (Nuqudy, 2012). Until the economic situation stabilizes in these countries, this negative effect will continue to impact most Arab states, mainly the neighboring countries. Economic crises will probably cause tensions between the public and the future governments, and the political crises may also emerge by the public. The Arab states will continue to be adversely affected by the Arab spring as a result of economic losses during the revolutions.

This is a wide topic because it includes the changes and effects of the Arab spring at the social, economic, and political aspects. Demographic changes are expected to differ in these states undergoing transition mainly after the rise of the Islamists who can be considered the main supporters of these demonstrations. Other religious groups may find it safer to leave these states and move to Western states, mainly non-Muslim communities. Economic growth is expected to emerge to
increase the employment rate and compensate the high economic losses. The political changes will be the most important changes because demonstrations in these Arab states came against governments, leaders, institutions, and laws. The future governments will be responsible for reorganizing their states and provide more political and human rights to the revolutionaries.
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