

**LEBANESE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY**

**Prerequisites for a Peaceful Transition:  
Lessons from the Arab Spring**

By

Khalil Ibrahim Fayad

A thesis

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School of Arts and Sciences – Beirut Campus

### Thesis Proposal Form

Name of Student: Khalil Fayad I.D.#: 200700125  
Program / Department: International Affairs/Social Sciences  
On (dd/mm/yy): December 12, 2012

has presented a Thesis proposal entitled:

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in the presence of the Committee Members and Thesis Advisor:

Advisor: Dr. Imad Salamey  
(Name and Signature)

Committee Member: Dr. Paul Tabar  
(Name and Signature)

Committee Member: Dr. Sami Baroudi  
(Name and Signature)

Comments / Remarks / Conditions to Proposal Approval:

Merge civil society and social media into one prerequisite; expand on civil-military relations to encompass societal cleavages (sectarian-ethnic).

Date: 12/12/2012

Acknowledged by [Signature]  
(Head of School of Arts & Sciences.....)

cc: Department Chair  
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Student  
School Dean



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### Thesis Defense Result Form

Name of Student: Khalil Fayad I.D.: 200700125  
Program / Department: International Affairs Program / Department of Social Sciences  
Date of thesis defense: Tuesday, June 11, 2013  
Thesis title: The Prerequisites for a Peaceful Transition: Lessons from The Arab Spring

#### Result of Thesis defense:

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 Thesis is not approved. Grade NP is recorded

#### Committee Members:

Advisor:

Dr. Imad Salamey  
(Name and Signature)

Committee Member:

Dr. Sami Baroudi  
(Name and Signature)

Committee Member:

Dr. Marwan Rowayheb  
(Name and Signature)

Advisor's report on completion of corrections (if any):

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Changes Approved by Thesis Advisor: Dr. Imad Salamey Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 11/6/13

Acknowledged by \_\_\_\_\_

(Dean, School of Arts and Science)

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### Thesis Approval Form

Student Name: Khalil Fayad I.D. #: 200700125

Thesis Title: The Prerequisites for a Peaceful Transition: Lessons from The Arab  
Spring

Program / Department: International Affairs/Social Sciences

School: Arts and Sciences

#### Approved by:

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Imad Salamey,

Committee Member Dr. Sami Baroudi,

Committee Member Dr. Marwan Rowayheb,

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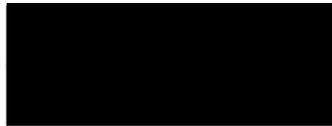
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# **Prerequisites for a Peaceful Transition:**

## **Lessons from the Arab Spring**

**Khalil Ibrahim Fayad**

### **Abstract**

The Arab Spring brought optimism about the prospect of democratization in the region. However, transition toward democracy was often violent, prompting concerns about the price of freedom. While Egypt and Tunisia underwent smooth and relatively peaceful transition in ousting autocratic regimes, both Libya and Syria were devastated by violent confrontations. This thesis examines four claimed prerequisites for peaceful transitions: the existence of civil society, degree of economic disparity, military loyalty to the regime, and the utilization of social media. A comparative country analysis is conducted to compare the various propositions in Bahrain, Egypt, Libya, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen. An index table of peaceful transitions is developed. The thesis reveals that among the decisive factors contributing to violent or peaceful transition lies in the military's loyalty to the regime. Yet, the strength of civil society and the spread-out of economic grievances are significant aspects that can neutralize the regime's coercive apparatuses.

Keywords: Democratic transitions, Military loyalty, Civil society, Economic disparity, Social media, Arab Spring

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

On December 17, 2011, almost two years ago; a young citizen from a small Tunisian town set himself on fire and with the same match ignited a revolution across Tunisia. His name is Mohammed Bouazizi. His story first started when Bouazizi tried to fight a fine issued by a policewoman, by first appealing to the police force, then to town officials, and finally to the regional officials .<sup>1</sup> Each time Bouazizi tried to present his case, the security officers beat him up. After the humiliation and frustration by the officials' cruel treatment, Bouazizi set himself on fire. However, Bouazizi didn't die right away but remained in the hospital until January, 4, 2011. Three weeks after the incident, he died in a hospital in Tunisia and his death resulted in an immediate and unplanned national uprising.

According to Yasmine Ryan (2011), a journalist for the Al-Jazeera English Channel, the news of Bouazizi's death traveled fast, even though the state-run media ignored the whole incident. The angry protests that erupted all over Tunisian soil were indeed spur-of-the-moment; nevertheless these protests were marked by a level of organization that shows how the protesters were determined to create change (Ryan,

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<sup>1</sup> See "How the Tunisia's Revolution began", at <http://english.aljazeera.net/indepth/features/2011/01/2011126121815985483.html>, [Accessed January 28, 2013].

2011). Therefore, by the end of December, 2011, it was through text messages and social media that Tunisian citizens experienced what the sociologist Doug McAdam calls “cognitive liberation” (as cited in Hussain & Howard, 2011, p36). According to McAdam, Cognitive liberation happens when people come to recognize that by mass mobilization, change in the society occurs. As a result, the Tunisian activists were using methods of communication to group and organize themselves, in ways that the state could not control although it tried (Ryan, 2011). Citizens also used digital media to arrive at strategies for action, such as satellite phones to keep in touch with the international media agencies and organizing gatherings against the regime. By the time the Tunisian former president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali fled Tunisia to Saudi Arabian exile on January, 14, 2011, civil disobedience grew against authoritarian rule in countries such as Egypt and Yemen (Hussain & Howard, 2011).

According to many Middle East observers, such as Philip Howard, the Egyptian people shared many hopes and goals with their counterparts in Tunisia. As the second largest internet users in the region, only after Iran, Egyptians shared the news of Ben Ali’s departure quickly (Howard & Hussain, 2011). Moreover, the story of Bouazizi could be compared to the story of Khaled Said, a 28year old blogger, whom the secret police had tortured to death on June 6, 2011 for revealing the regime corruption. Just as Bouazizi photos in the hospital where spread via social media, shots of Khaled Said’s battered face were taken by his brother as Said’s body lay in city morgue were also circulated among Egyptians.

On January 25, 2011, the first demonstration erupted in Liberation Square at the heart of Cairo.<sup>2</sup> Egyptians went to the streets in massive numbers, calling it a "day of rage". Thousands marched in downtown Cairo, calling for Hussine Mubarak to step down from the office. After several days the protesters grew in number across Egypt and were organized by digital media such as Facebook and twitter (Ryan, 2011). Furthermore, in the last week of January, 2011, the former Egyptian president Hussine Mubarak in a desperate attempt, tried to disconnect the country from the internet, in hope that these tactics will marginalize the volume of protesters. However, high tech Egyptian students and bloggers overcame Mubarak's plan by placing backup satellite phones and dial up connections from Israel and Europe (Howard & Hussain, 2011). Therefore maintaining close ties with the outside world. In other words, Egyptian officials, including the president, were about to be "ousted due to mass protests coordinated and announced through social media" (Thompson, 2011, p.175). It only took eighteen days for Mubarak to submit his resignation under huge pressure from the protesters.

Meanwhile, in other countries, such as Lebanon, Sudan, Bahrain, Yemen, Libya and Syria minor protests erupted over issues ranging from economical to political ones. In some countries, such as Syria and to a lesser extent Yemen, violent clashes between protesters and security forces erupted and are still ongoing. As a result, many scholars started calling these movements the "Arab Spring".<sup>3</sup> As mentioned earlier, the transition

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<sup>2</sup> The massive gatherings took place in Tahrir Square (liberation square) as it was seen as symbolic heart of the Egyptian revolution. These events took place over the course of eighteen days, from January 25 2011, through February 11 2011. It is widely accepted that the main catalyst of the revolution was the Face book page, set up by Google executive Wael Ghonim, entitled "We Are All Khaled Said."

<sup>3</sup> To name few scholars, such as Muzammil Hussain and Yasmine Ryan

that Tunisia experienced occurred at relatively the same time as the transformation in Egypt, and they have been followed by democratic transitions in the Middle East in countries such as Syria, Libya and to a lesser extent Bahrain. There have been some explanations on how the Middle East suddenly experienced democratic transition.<sup>4</sup> However, despite high hopes for a smooth democratic shift in the Arab Spring countries, countries like Libya and Syria have undergone violent transitions. On the other hand, Egypt and Tunisia underwent smooth and relatively peaceful transitions. Therefore this thesis aims to explore the different conditions that played a role in determining the end result for the democratic transition in the Arab Spring.

By reviewing the most prominent views given by many scholars such as Georges Corm and Muzammil Hussain , this thesis identifies four main conditions that played a major role in shaping the outcomes of the transition <sup>5</sup>(i.e. whether a peaceful transition or a violent one) . The four major conditions are: the presences of civil society (mainly NGO's), economic disparity, military loyalty to the regime,<sup>6</sup> and social media utilization.<sup>7</sup> In particular, this paper describes how these different conditions influence the democratic transitional outcome either to a smooth democratic change or to a violent one. The paper will study each condition from a comparative perspective in different countries that witnessed uprisings (Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, Yemen, Libya, and Bahrain) with respect to Tunisia.

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<sup>4</sup> These explanations will be discussed in the literature review

<sup>5</sup> The theory behind democratic transition is discussed under the rational part in chapter one

<sup>6</sup> I use the term military loyalty to describe a country's regular army, while other terms such as security services include, but are not limited to Special Forces, police, and intelligence personnel. In order to use simple terms I will refer to these different branches as "armed forces", while I will adopt the term "military forces" to describe the country's regular army.

<sup>7</sup> Social media in this context refers to blogs, social networking sites such as twitter and Face book, and content communities such as YouTube. In some cases I might refer to traditional media such as Al-Jazeera in the context of the effect of social media in the Arab revolution

## **1.2 Rationale**

Before outlining the different chapters in this study, this section will discuss why the study of four main conditions that played a major role in shaping the outcomes of the transition is important. As such, two crucial questions are put forward: what is a democratic transition? What are the four conditions that this paper identifies? In order to clarify the research question, this paper needs to review some theories on transition towards democracy such as James Fishkin in the context of the current research and try to classify the each of the four conditions.

### **1.2.1 What is democratic transition?**

“The study of democratic transitions focuses on the critical step in the history of democracy when a country passes a threshold marked by the introduction of competitive elections with mass suffrage for the main political office in the land”( Fishkin, 2000 , p.54). This field of study is merely a part of a boarder field of study in democratic theory, its main characteristics is the ability to move from an authoritarian system to a democratic system. One main indicator of a democratic transition is the ability to have free and fair elections. The pioneer views of Joseph Schumpeter and Robert Dahl on democracy led to a boom in the field of democratic transition (Fishkin, 2000). According to Joseph Schumpeter (1976) democracy is essentially based on free and fair elections that are held on a regular basis. Therefore, it could be achieved if such elections take place in a country on regular basis; however, this definition has been elaborated through Robert Dahl’s definition of democracy. Dahl’s (1989) definition of democracy (or what he calls polyarchy) could be a more helpful approach for

understanding the major element in democratic transition. According to Dahl (1989), democracy consists of different institutions; such as the right for free expression, the right to vote in the election of officials in free and fair elections; the right to run for office, the right to form and participate in independent political organizations, including political parties; the right to gain access to independent sources of information; the rights to any other freedoms and opportunities that may be necessary for the effective operation of political institutions of large-scale democracy (Dahl,1989, p.221).

Therefore, democratic transition is essentially found when countries have the ability to move from one regime (i.e. autocratic – or the ruler who has absolute power) to another (i.e. democratic).

### **1.2.2 What are the four conditions?**

In order not to fall into the trap of generalization, defining and describing the four conditions is necessary.

#### 1.2.2.1 Social media utilization

It is important to study the extent to which social media was utilized, in the form of blogs, social networking sites, such as twitter and Facebook, and content communities, such as YouTube. These social media tools might not be specifically named but will be used to describe some of the events of the Arab Spring throughout the thesis. In some cases this dissertation might refer to traditional media such as Al-Jazeera in the context of the effect of social media in the Arab revolution. It is important to understand how social media with all its different components helped in shaping the current Arab revolution.

### 1.2.2.2 The presence of civil society

The definition of civil society, according to the World Bank refers,

To the wide array of non-governmental and not-for-profit organizations that have a presence in public life, expressing the interests and values of their members or others, based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) therefore refer to a wide of array of organizations: community groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), labor unions, indigenous groups, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, and foundation. (2010)

This thesis will focus mainly on NGO's ability to work and exists in each country.

In this paper, civil society is an important player in the Arab Spring in countries like Egypt in playing a critical role in organizing and leading the youth to their demands.

Therefore, by studying NGO's presence this paper will examine how the civil society functions in terms of political harassment, red tape and the degree of its presence throughout the uprisings.

### 1.2.2.3 Economic disparity

The economic disparity can be attributed as the main trigger for the Arab uprisings. Many scholars such as Georges Corm (2012) attribute that socio-economic factors were behind the massive uprisings in the Arab world. Therefore by examining the gap between the upper and the lower classes, in addition to the deterioration of the middle class this paper will give an indication of how this condition helped in the transition towards democracy.

#### 1.2.2.4 The loyalty of the military to the regime

In this condition, it is important to understand each country's top ranking army leader's decision whether to fight and oppose the demonstrators or to side with them. It is important also to study some tactics used by the regime such as Michael Makara's (2012) explanation of the regimes Coup-Proofing strategies to keep the army bass leaders loyal. Such tactics include lucrative incentives and maintaining the rule of the army with close relatives of the regime.

### **1.3 Research questions**

As discussed in this chapter, by reviewing the most prominent views given by many scholars such as Georges Corm and Muzammil Hussain , this thesis identifies four main conditions that played a major role in shaping the outcomes of the transition (i.e. whether to peaceful transition or to a violent one). As such, in order to explore this topic, one main important research questions has been identified:

1) How do the four conditions (civil society, social media, economic disparity, and military loyalty) influence the democratic transitional outcome?

### **1.4 Significance of the study**

This study is significant for its contribution for understanding the expected outcome of any revolution that possesses similar characteristics as the Arab uprisings. Events in early 2010 in Arab uprisings hold significant ramifications for how the US, among many others, approaches this seemingly unstable region (i.e. Middle East). International observers and scholars need to learn as much as possible about the main triggers, how to

anticipate the outcomes, and how to effectively deal with mass uprisings, while serving in increasingly complex environments. As there does not appear to have been one specific cause for the Arab Spring, this paper examines what can describe as the “four main conditions” for the Arab transition towards peaceful/ violent democracy. It is important to understand these four conditions in order to framework the preconditions of any peaceful (or violent) transition towards democracy. Ultimately, the research question lies therein. How do the four conditions influence the democratic transitional outcome?

## **1.5 Thesis structure**

This section introduces the five remaining chapters in this thesis. It is also necessary to describe the motivation behind this research, along with the significance of the study to be used throughout the paper. Chapter one describes these background elements, while subsequent chapters proceed as follows: chapter two contains a comprehensive review of the existing literature on the different conditions that vary between economic to social factors. This chapter provides a detailed background about the different theories on how the “Arab Spring” blossomed and offers some explanation on the real triggers of the revolution. It will also recapitulate work in these key areas to reveal how each theory is interconnected with the other to form an indicator in shaping the final outcome of the transition.

Chapter three describes the methodology this paper utilizes, that is the comparative approach in order to reveal the role of each condition in the transition, either peaceful or violent. The focus will be on the different relative levels of each condition to understand

the outcomes of each transition, whether it would lead to a peaceful transition towards democracy or towards a violent one. By focusing on each condition independently during a crucial time and location within the Arab Spring concentrating mainly on Egypt, and using it as a benchmark because of its relatively peaceful transition in comparison other countries, this paper will serve as a link for these different conditions. Moreover, this study will propose a theoretical index table which will help understand the effects of each of the four condition's major role in shaping the final outcome of the transition. Chapter four fully describes this framework, based on the different assumptions of what triggered the Arab Spring (i.e. different theories), and assess the findings of this study through the lens of the proposed framework. Furthermore, the use of specific examples from countries (Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, Yemen, Libya, and Bahrain) that witnessed the uprising will arrive at a useful answer to the central research question.

This thesis, will argue for the importance of understanding the four conditions that this paper identifies, that played a major role in shaping the outcomes of the revolution. The paper also suggest that a useful way to consider the four conditions is to examine each condition from a comparative perspective based on its relative existence or absence in one country and then try to link the outcomes with other Arab countries that witnessed the uprisings, such as Syria and Yemen. Further, this study argues that the abundance of some of these four conditions (i.e. civil society "mainly NGO's", Economic disparity, Military loyalty to the regime, and Social media utilization) will lead to a smooth democratic change, while the absence or lack of some of the four conditions will lead to a violent transition towards democracy. Finally, in chapter five, this thesis will share the findings that emerge during the course of this study, reveal the

significance of the study's conclusions, the limitations, and make recommendations for future research in this critically important field.

## **1.6 Possible findings**

Based on the proposed framework, this study will lead to understanding the conditions that help in the democratic transition in a peaceful way. This thesis argues that the abundance of civil society and social media utilization by the country will lead to a relatively peaceful transition towards democracy, while the abundance of the economic disparity and military loyalty to the regime will lead to a violent transition towards democracy. As a result countries such as Egypt that possesses a high level of civil society with a high level of social media utilization will lead a relative smooth democratic change. On the other hand, countries such as Syria that that possesses a high level of economic disparity with a high level of military loyalty to the regime (i.e. bass army leader) will lead to relatively more violent transition towards democracy.

# CHAPTER TWO

## LITERATURE

### 2.1 Introduction

The process of democratic transition is by no means an easy procedure. While some countries had succeeded in peaceful democratization, in others the process of establishing democracy was the result of violent conflicts triggered by socio-economic factors and failure to repress the revolution by the regime. This chapter reviews some of the major themes and debates on transition toward democracy. In addition, this section highlights some key theoretical issues in the literature on transitions to democracy. This chapter also examines violent vs. non violent transition and correlate it to the democratic revolutions. Furthermore, this chapter examines the theories on social media, civil society, military army, and finally economic disparity in the context of their ability to affect the transitional outcome. By studying these four conditions given by prominent scholars<sup>8</sup>, this chapter concludes on the importance of empowering the civil society and increasing the free flow of information in the country. It also stresses on the importance for determining the right method for handling the military role during the transitional phase and understanding the role of economic disparity in the transitional phase. A final section will elaborate on the rate of these different conditions and significance during the Arab uprisings.

### 2.2 Defining democratic transition

The pioneer work of Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe Schmitter (1986) offers a useful definition on how transition occurs. According to O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986),

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<sup>8</sup> To name few Philippe Schmitter, Justin Clardie, and Seymour Martin Lipset

“the ‘transition’ is the interval between one political regime and another” (p.6).

furthermore, “Transitions are delimited, on the one side, by the launching of the process of dissolution of an authoritarian regime and, on the other, by the installation of some form of democracy, the return to some form of authoritarian rule, or the emergence of a revolutionary alternative” (p. 6). However, the only disagreement with their discussion of the concept of transitions is their dispute that “the extent that there are any effective rules and procedures, these tend to be in the hands of authoritarian rulers” (p. 6). This might be true in the early phases of transitions, but it cannot be the case for the whole transitional phase. Gradually, at some point the authoritarian regime will lose their ability to unilaterally name the rules and regulations (Mainwaring, 1989).

Moreover, moving from an authoritarian regime to a democratic one is by no means a small achievement. Thus, many scholars, such as Andreas Schedler argue for the ability to sustain the democratic transition and to move into the process of consolidating democracy.<sup>9</sup> In the immediate aftermath of the “third wave” of democracy, countries started looking for ways to strengthen and stabilize these newly found regimes (Schedler, 1998). The concept of “reverse waves” (Huntington, 1991), where countries go back to authoritarian regime, has led to an increased focus on the methods and techniques to strengthen and stabilize the democratic transition phase. This is what has come to be called “democratic consolidation” (Schedler, 1998, p.91). According to Schedler (1998), democratic consolidation “was meant to describe the challenge of making new democracies secure, of extending their life expectancy beyond the short term, of making

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<sup>9</sup> Is the process of deepening and strengthen the democratic values in a country

them immune against the threat of authoritarian regression, of building dams against eventual reverse waves" (p.91).

Nevertheless, one should not take the process of democratic transition as a constant set of rules, nor as a set of constant change. But there are better ways to interpret the process of transition towards democracy. For instance, O'Donnell (1988) in his more advanced explanation of democratic transition clarifies the two stages that any transition to democracy should go through: first the transition towards a democracy (I.e. the initial stage of breaking up an authoritarian regime) and then to a more sophisticated stage which is the transition to a consolidated democracy. A further argument given by Scott Mainwaring (1998) is to differentiate between a "democratic government" and a "democratic regime" (p.2). For him "Regime, of course, is a broader concept than government and refers to the rules (formal or not) that govern the interactions of the major actors in the political system. The notion of regime involves institutionalization, i.e., the idea that such rules are widely understood and accepted, and that actors pattern their behavior accordingly" (p.2).

One of the core criticisms of Schmitter and O'Donnell's theory is that they do not consider that mass movements can lead to a political threat to the regime. As mentioned earlier, Schmitter and O'Donnell (1986) describe the notion of transition to democracy in the hand of the authoritarian rulers. Therefore, the degree of success of the democratic transition relies on the degree at which the elite's political reforms become more important to them than maintaining the status quo (Bermeo, 1997). This is called transition from above. However, Nancy Bermeo (1997) acknowledges the role of the elites in the transition to democracy, but it puts more weight on the role of the mass

mobilization in the democratic transition. To further illustrate, Jean Elisabeth Wood (2000) in her book “Forging democracy from below: Insurgent transitions in South Africa and El Salvador” tries to dissect the process of democratic transition in South Africa and El Salvador. She argued that due to the mass pressure from the population, these two countries had to democratize. This is referred as transition from the bottom.

Furthermore, the notion of peaceful democratic transitions is usually parallel with high levels of civil liberties. Such a transition reflects the social agreement between all groups which are politically representatives and those rulers who intentionally abstain themselves from wasteful rent extraction (Cervellati, Fortunato, & Sunde, 2011). On the other hand, any democratic transition that goes into violent conflict is more likely to lead to a system with low levels of civil liberties. Rulers deliberately do not give up to the people’s demands and respond to these demands by violent means. As a result “the politically (and economically) deprived segments of the population can trigger violent conflicts to obtain control over the state apparatus” (Cervellati, Fortunato, & Sunde, 2011, p.1). It is commonly accepted that peaceful transitions lead to improvements in economical libration and political freedom. However, this is not the case for democratization during violent conflicts where civil rights and political freedoms are restrained. Moreover, according to Lipset (1959) the increase in equal wealth distribution and the relative increase in human capital (among many others) are central for the emergence of democracy. In order for any revolution to succeed, it needs some conditions (identified by this paper as social media, civil society, military army, and economic disparity) which determine the specific transition scenario (peaceful/violent transition).

## **2.3 Military role in democratic transition**

According to Justin Clardie (2010), the literature on the role of the military in the transition to democracy has reached consent on the fact that any new democratic government must give priority to its civilians to control the role of the military army. Therefore, the main argument is how the military's role affects the democratic transition. Clardie (2010) examines two schools of thoughts; the first one argues the importance of increasing the resources for the military during any transitional phase. The other argues the importance of decreasing the level of resources given to the military during the transitional phase.

The literature behind the importance of increasing the military resources relies on two reasons. The first reason is simply to "placate the military" (Clardie, 2010, p.4). The logic behind this reason relies on the process of the transition where there are winners and losers in the political sphere. Therefore, it is important for the new government (supposedly democratic) not to establish the wrong perception to the military as a loser in this democratic transition (Clardie, 2010). If this were the case, the new government could face a big problem with the military leader since they might perceive democratic transition as a negative thing. Therefore; the military personnel would use coup-tactics that would lead to other forms of government (Clardie, 2010). As has been noted, it is in the interest of the new government to increase the military resource to overcome such a problem in the transitional phase. Huntington (1991) recognized the importance for the government to

Co-opt with the military by providing them with better housing allowancing, better salaries, and to increase the overall budget for military equipment.<sup>10</sup>

The second reason behind increasing military resources is to ensure “domestic stability in the post-transition democratic environment” (Clardie, 2010, p.4). The logic behind this argument is that often countries that go to the process of democratization generally face conflicts and chaos. Some of these conflicts could be tribal or civil or even simply the inclusion of new parties in the political sphere (Clardie, 2010). As a result, new democratic countries face political insecurity and instability. For that reason, democratic governments need to assure their survival and should have a strong military power that can stabilize the country when needed. Moreover, a strong military would provide the new government with the legitimacy needed to control the country (Makara, 2012). However, one should not simplify the role of the military, because increasing the military resources might lead to internal conflicts with the new democratic government (Clardie, 2010). This argument lead to the second school of thought that recommends weakening the military role to achieve democratic transition.

Similar to the first school of thought that recommends empowering the military, the literature on the second school also provides two reasons on why transitional governments need to decrease the resources given to the military. The first reason suggests the fear of military intervention in domestic politics, since the military has greater resources in hand (Clardie, 2010). Therefore, it is the best solution for the newly democratic government to limit the resources of the military in order for it to play a minimal role in changing the domestic politics (Cawthra & Luckham, 2003). According to Clardie (2010) the paradox

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<sup>10</sup> These may include new airplanes, defensive weaponry, military tanks etc...

of maintaining domestic stability may be a potential threat to the democratic government once the military is strengthened. The second reason behind decreasing military resources is its economic impact on the society (Clardie, 2010). Furthermore, newly democratic countries need to focus on re-allocating these resources in favor of the society. Such resource re-allocation could be in better education, social welfare, and consolidating the democratic system in the country (Haggard & Kaufman, 1995). These tasks will lead to better public support for the democratic transition and would create the proper legitimacy needed for the government to operate. However, if the government decided to increase its resources towards military budget, this may lead to a social in-justness that would hurt the democratization process (Clardie, 2010).

The role of the military affects the scenario of the democratization process. It is vital for the military and the new elected representatives to have a strong relationship that is defined according to democratic principles. If the military bass leaders decided to nourish the newly democratic transition, the country would most likely follow a relative peaceful transition. With the military blessing, the democratic government could sustain stability and focus on the economic prosperity of the country. On the other hand, if the military personal saw the democratic process as a negative thing, this could lead to a violent clash between the newly elected government and the military army. With this happening, it is certain that the process of democratization will be followed with violent acts and conflict between different institutions and different groups in the society. To conclude, these are the two main schools that study the military effects on transition towards democracy. The first favors the full participation and strengthening the role of military during the transitional phase. On the other hand, the second school of thought tries to minimize the

role and power of the military in the domestic politics. Moreover, it is for the best of government to create the proper relation with the military institution to eliminate any possible violent scenario in the democratic process.

## **2.4 Civil society role in democratic transition**

In order to understand the role of civil society in shaping the transitional outcome it is important to define and categorize the different institutions in the civil society. Before doing so, it is best to see the origins of civil society in the word of the famous Greek philosopher Aristotle<sup>11</sup>. Essentially he defines *Politike Koinonia* as:

a public ethical-political community of free and equal citizens under a legally defined system of rule. Law itself, however, was seen as the expression of an ethos, a common set of norms and values defining not only political procedures but also a substantive form of life based on a developed catalogue of preferred virtues and forms of interaction. (Cohen & Arato, 1992, p.84)

Aristotle's definition introduces modern civil society in its basic elements; this shows that since early times civil society has played a major role in the political sphere. However, the notion of 'Civil Society' is rather blurred, unclear or simply undefined and continuously evolving. For the context of this thesis, the World Bank definition of civil society will be adopted:

To the wide array of non-governmental and not-for-profit organizations that have a presence in public life, expressing the interests and values of their members or others, based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) therefore refer to a wide of array of organizations: community groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), labor unions, indigenous groups, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, and foundation. (2010)

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<sup>11</sup> "politike koinonia" was the term Aristotle's used to describe modern civil society .

Concerning the relationship between the transition to democracy and civil society; democratic theory presupposes that civil society:

should act merely as a support structure for democracy proper at the level of the state-shaping parliamentary deliberation by providing a voice to public opinion, educating citizens in democratic values, and generally acting as a watchdog over those in power, but otherwise leaving the real business of democracy to representatives.(Baker, 2002, p.928)

Therefore, according to Gideon Baker (2002), the relationship between the civil society and the democratic system is inseparable. Moreover, as has been showed civil society is not considered to be private sector nor state sector, but rather it acts as mediator between these two sectors (Yom, 2005). Indeed, many academic scholars such as Sean Yom (2005) view civil society as a systematic tool that is ideal and central for the entrenchment of democratic transition. Furthermore, civil society institutions are related to the democratization process through both internal and external ways. According, to Booker Magure (2008) “internally civil society engenders cooperation, solidarity, public spiritedness and trust (develops social capital) while externally it calls for a limited government that is responsive and accountable to its citizenry” (p.31). Despite the fact that all civil actors’ (i.e. NGO’s, faith-based organizations etc...) main aim is to work for the common good of the citizens, they might have different conceptions of what makes a “common good” (Kocka, 2004). In addition, civil society is an important tool for the public to spread their demands and make sure that their voices are being heard. By doing so, civil society has the chance to influence the decisions of the government. During the democratic transition, civil society plays a major role in organizing and facilitating the proper environment that best serves the democratization process (Kocka, 2004).

The civil society is an important institute in determining the specific transition scenario. As the civil society groups are independent from the political sphere, it implies that the process of democratic transition is most likely to be peaceful one. Moreover, an energetic civil society would strengthen citizens' demands and enforce the respect of both parties (i.e. state and its civilians) and promotes positive engagement of both parties. In contrast, the lack of civil society in the democratic transition could lead to violent transition in the country. With the absence of civil society, governments have no independent institute to be accounted for their actions or to expose corrupted conducts of public officials. Thus, the absence of civil society as a watchdog for the public officials would create the legitimacy for governments to repress their citizen's demands for reforms and economic enhancements. By doing so, any attempt for democratization will be followed with violent acts that hinder the process of democratization. To conclude, civil society (often called the third sector) plays the role of a mediator between the public and its government. The basic role of the civic actors is to hold the government accountable for its acts and help them consolidate the democratic transition in the country. While there are many interpretations for civil society, they all stress on the importance for democratic transition by changing public attitudes, protecting human rights, and encouraging the rise of institutions of law. As a result, the word "civil" means tolerance and promoting pluralism and diversity in the country.

## 2.5 Social media role in democratic transition

For centuries media<sup>12</sup> was an essential tool for many authoritarian regimes to control the flow of information and to spread the regime's ideology all over the country. Moreover, the ability for the state to monopolize the media in the country assured the regimes' manipulation of information and control over what is right and what is wrong in the eyes of the government. However, due to the advancement in technology, it is no longer applicable for the authoritarian regime to control the information flow to its citizens. Therefore, it is not a secret that modern media (or what Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) describe as new media) has a major effect on the process of the democratic transition. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) there are six types of new media that revolutionized the flow of information.

The six types are:

1. 'Blogs' (i.e. personal/ celebrity weblogs, Twitter)
2. 'Collaborative projects' (i.e. Wikipedia)
3. 'Content communities' (i.e. YouTube,)
4. 'Virtual game worlds' (i.e. Everquest)
5. 'Social networking sites' (i.e. Instagram ,Facebook)
6. 'Virtual social worlds' (i.e. Second Life)

(Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p.61-3).

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<sup>12</sup> Traditional media includes but is not limited to local TV's , radios , newspapers, and printed magazines.

While others<sup>13</sup> may include other types of modern digital media such as mobile phones and modern satellite television, this dissertation will focus only on the effects of social media on democratic transition.

Perhaps the social movement theory is the most prominent theory to describe how social media can become a part of the political change in the country (i.e. transition to democracy). According to Hank Johnston (2011) Social movement is defined as:

made up of multiple organizations, as well as less formal groups, circles and nonaffiliated individuals. Members and groups coalesce around an issue or grievance to make their demands known publicly, and show their force to representatives of the state in order to effect a change. (p. 13-4)

It could be concluded from this definition that, social movement is collective action that consists of ordinary citizens along with more influential citizens seeking to start a new public change by mobilizing the members or groups and unifying them to force the government to change. Therefore social movement theory often empowers the popular interests instead of the elite interest, and is often referred to as “politics by another means – popular politics, not elite politics” (Johnston, 2011, p. 1).

In order to have a successful social movement it has to be built on “a campaign around limited but important objectives, that are winnable, and that can engage a broad collation of people” along with “small but real successes” (Hackett & Adam, 1999, p. 130-1). Without a doubt, social media is an ideal example of a social movement. Citizens are mobilized with new ideas, and ambitions to establish new policies or to improve existent ones. It is no longer applicable for the authoritarian regime to control their

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<sup>13</sup> Such as Muzammil Hussain

citizens. Now with the help of social media, people are no longer passive consumers for the government propaganda. Modern social communications are not new characteristics of social movements, but rather a new kind of social power that made people control the flow of information's rather than accepting it. The new social media challenges the hard physical power of the state through the process of decentralizing the state hegemony. According to Robin Thompson (2011) social media differs from traditional media because "anyone with a cell phone can become a reporter and take a cell phone video of news while it is happening" (p. 171). The advancement in modern technology had enabled people to organize and discuss matters that the states can no longer control.<sup>14</sup> Undeniably, the revolution in social media had profoundly affected social life and culture whereby "Facebook and Twitter actually welcome and encourage users to support causes for political and/or social change" (Thompson, 2011, p.168).

Nowadays, people don't need to be in a physical place to revolt against the authoritarian regime; instead people can become journalists who expose the regime's corruption and brutality that traditional media couldn't. It is best described in the words of Manuel Castells (2009):

The powerful have been spying on their subjects since the beginning of history, but the subjects can now watch the powerful, at least to a greater extent than in the past. We have all become potential citizen journalists who, if equipped with a mobile phone, can record and instantly upload to the global networks any wrongdoing by anyone, anywhere .(p. 413).

Therefore, the new media (i.e. social media) is challenging the authoritarian regime, through collective actions and mass mobilization in cyber space where the regime can no longer has control. This process of decentralization of information and the wearing a way

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<sup>14</sup> To name few, religion, sex , and economic conditions

of the authoritarian regime has created a new culture among the people to move towards a more democratic regime (Van Ham, 2010).

Social media has a great impact on the possible outcomes of the transition (i.e. whether peaceful or violent). With the possibility of free flow of information and the social media tool, citizens are now capable of accessing techniques to gather and organize themselves to overthrow any authoritarian regime. Likewise, the authoritarian regimes can no longer hide their brutality (if they decided to repress the uprisings) from the rest of the world. This new form of technology has diminished the role of the authoritarian regime to repress the people aspiration for democracy and equal rights. Therefore, with the new media help it is no longer applicable for the regime to use violent acts against its citizens. Rather, it would allow for a more peaceful negotiation between the elites and their citizens for a new democratic system. On the other hand, the absence of social media usage would allow governments to repress any demands for democratic transition. Therefore, people would go for more violent acts, such as military overthrow to overcome the authoritarian regime.

## **2.6 Economic disparity role in democratic transition:**

Many Political scholars such as Seymour Martin Lipset (1959) have long suspected that an association exists between economic development and transition towards democracy. One reason offered for this relationship is that people demand democratic transition as their country becomes economically better off because of enhanced economic conditions. These economic enhancements can spread democratic desires and ambitions over a wide range of people (Dahl, 1989; Huntington, 1991). Moreover,

advancements in economic development would promote democracy because non democratic countries may change their political systems since they are able to afford the cost of having a democratic system.<sup>15</sup> Under this assumption, many have started to see a relationship between economic development and democratic transition. For that, this paper will examine how economic inequality may lead to democratization.

There are three main schools of thoughts which argue that economic inequality among people would lead either to democratic transition or to a repression of the people desire to democracy. First school of thought is argued by different scholars such as Edward Muller (1995) and Robert Dahl's (1971). These authors claim that authoritarian regime is less likely to democratize in case the economic inequality is extremely high, due to the fear of redistributing the wealth among the people. In other words, the cost for democratization in the eyes of the regime will be higher than the cost of maintaining the gap between the elites and the populace. Thus, it is at the higher levels of economic disparity, the cost of redistribution the wealth outdoes the cost for the regime to repress the revolts (Houle, 2010).

The second school of thought is given by Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson's (2006) work on "Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy". These two authors argue on the ability of some countries not to democratize (mainly oil rich countries), is due to their ability to maintain equal economic distribution among its people. Therefore, the fear of any revolts by the regime is not found as long as the economic distribution is equal (Houle, 2010). In other words, citizens are content when they have relatively equal

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<sup>15</sup> Some of these expenses, included better infrastructure and new educational system

distribution of wealth; therefore, they have no affiliation to overthrow the current political party (even if it's authoritarian).

On the other hand, the third and final school of thought given by scholars such as Lipset (1959) and also been discussed by Acemoglu and Robinson (2006) argues when regimes realize that the costs of redistribution is lower than the cost to democratize, they will change their authoritarian system to a democratic one. In other words, when the economic disparity is relatively in the intermediate level, people are motivated to revolt against the regime, while the ruling party is unwilling to use force to repress the people due to the cost of redistribution is relatively low. Therefore, the regime elites are forced to democratize in order not to face the uprisings (Houle, 2010).

The role of economic disparity is an important indicator on how peaceful the democratization process will be. With better economic equality, people start looking for other attributes to correlate with interpersonal trust, life satisfaction, and political freedom (among many others). Thus, the representative's voters will have increased incentive to vote for people that promote democratic values. Moreover, the better the economic equality the better the educational system becomes. In other words, people with better education commonly follow peaceful resolution for conflicts during the democratization process (Lipset, 1959). On the other hand, when the gap between the rich and the poor is higher, it will lead to the social uprising and instability of democratic institutions. In other words, the higher the gap the more violent the protesters are willing to be to achieve some social justice between social classes. To conclude, economic disparities have a major impact on the democratic transition in any country. The need to understand the degree in which there is disparity between different classes

is important to anticipate the ruling party willingness to transit from authoritarian regime into democratic regime.

## **2.7 Transitions in the Arab Spring**

In the immediate aftermath of the Tunisian revolution followed by revolutions in the Arab world, many scholars attributed different theories and explanations on what made the revolution fail or succeed. This paper identified the most prominent views (social media, civil society, military army, and economic disparity) as the main indicators of determining whether this transition is peaceful or violent. However, these condition rank in importance and influence during the Arab uprisings. This paper identifies the order of importance as follows: first the military loyalty to the regime, second civil society presence, third the usage of social media, and finally economic disparity. During the Arab uprisings, the military army role was the most prominent attribute in determining the transitional scenario. For instance, in Egypt and Tunisia the role of the army was to withstand from any direct conflict with the protesters and to secure vital institutions of the country that eventually lead to a peaceful transition towards democracy. Whereas, in Yemen and Syria the military personal loyalty to the regime lead to a direct (in most cases armed) conflict with the protesters. These had lead to violent acts from both sides that attributed to the violent transition towards democracy. In Bahrain's case, the absence of strong military to support either the protesters<sup>16</sup>, led to a passive revolution with no true progress towards democratization.

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<sup>16</sup> The Bahraini regime had to ask for the Saudi Arabia desert force intervention to halt the protests.

The second condition is the presence of civil society. As mentioned earlier, civil society plays an important role in holding the government accountable for its acts and to raise awareness for its citizens about human rights and political freedom ( among many others). These civil society organizations (especially NGO's) played an important role in organizing and planning the protest movements during the Arab uprisings. In Egypt and Tunisia, where civil society is very strong, helped in determining the democratization scenario. By acting as the watchdog for the regime brutality and supporting the protesters demands, the authoritarian regime of both countries had to submit to the protesters demands for democratization. Moreover, civil society groups, such as Egyptian Movement for Change (EMC), also known as Kefaya (Enough) managed to break the fear of people to peacefully protest against their leaders and to demand freedom. Thus, it is not unusual to acknowledge the role of civil society in the Arab Spring as the mediator for the protester and the new government. On the other hand, Syria and Bahrain lack the presence of civil society in these two countries. This absence had lead to major conflicts in the process of democratization. In Syria's case, protesters had no means of communication with the government through independent initiations; their demands were crushed by the military army. Thus, the protests became more violent and the process of democratization in Syria took the form of military combat between both sides. Whereas in Bahrain, protesters had gone passive with their demands due to the lack of presence from civil society (NGO's) that promotes democracy.

The third condition is the usage of social media. Many scholars such as Muzammil Hussain argue that the Arab Spring would never happen without the help of social media. Although this paper acknowledge the importance of social media in the Arab

uprising, but it distance itself from this statement. Social media was a catalyst for the Arab uprising, not a reason for it. In the case of Egypt and Tunisia, these two countries have a vast amount of internet connectivity, with high internet penetration in the society. The advancement of social media gave the youth in Tunisia and Egypt the power to share the regime brutality and expose public official corruptions. For example, a YouTube video in Tunisia showed Tunisia's presidential aircraft on the runways of exclusive European shopping destinations, with a split screen showing the dates and the places asking who was using this jet. The suggestion was that Ben Ali's high living wife was the one using the jet (Howard& Hussain, 2011). Once this video circulated among the citizens in Tunisia, the regime tried to crack down YouTube and all social media such as Facebook. But with no luck such videos and pictures grouped the Tunisian citizen to act against the regime corruption. Moreover, the availability to upload videos and pictures made it difficult for the Tunisian regime to hide its brutality from its own citizens. On the other hand, countries like Yemen and to a lesser extent Syria have restrictions on social media sites by banning them. By doing so, the regime is able to control to some degree the flow of information to its citizens. Therefore, citizens tend to express their resentments towards the regime by violent actions that destabilize the democratic process.

The final condition is economic disparity. For many scholars<sup>17</sup> the main trigger for the uprisings was the socio-economic conditions of the country that lead to the increase of economic disparity between the rich and the poor. Yet, all the Arab Spring countries shared this commonalty between them. For instance, Egypt, Syria, Yemen, Tunisia, and

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<sup>17</sup> Such as Georges Corm

to a lesser extent Bahrain they all faced the same economic problems ranging from poverty to economic disparity . The only difference is the relative economic disparity among these countries. This condition relies on the intensity of the disparity in each country. In the case of Syria and Yemen, only few people were entitled for economic advantages, while others suffered the severe economic conditions. Although Egypt, Tunisia, and Bahrain suffered from economic disparity, they still managed to open their economy for foreign investments and tourism.

## **2.8 Conclusion**

The literature review in this chapter has covered major themes and debates on transition toward democracy. In addition, this section highlights some key theoretical issues in the literature on violent vs. nonviolent transition and correlate it to the democratic revolutions. Furthermore, this chapter examines the theories on social media tools (blog, Social networking sites), civil society (NGO's mainly), military army (the two school of thoughts), and finally economic disparity (the three school of thoughts) in the context of their ability to affect the transitional outcome.

However, before testing and analyzing the variables that affects the transition to democracy in chapter four, the next chapter will discuss the methodology that was selected to undertake this study. The focus will be on the different relative levels of each condition to understand the outcomes of each transition, whether it would lead to a peaceful transition towards democracy or towards a violent one. By studying the commonalities of each condition with different countries in the Arab Spring, this paper will propose a theoretical index table which will help understand the effects of each of the four condition's major role in shaping the final outcome of the transition.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

“Not everything that can be counted counts and not everything that counts can be counted” Albert Einstein

#### 3.1 Introduction

Given the literature, a comparative approach will be adopted in order to reveal the role of each condition (civil society, social media, economic disparity, and military loyalty) in the transitional phase, whether it is peaceful or violent. By focusing on each transitional condition independently during a crucial time and location within the Arab Spring countries (Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, Yemen, and Bahrain the outcome will be then compared among these countries to demonstrate the relationship for these different conditions. Moreover, this section focuses on already available data which will help understand the effects of each of the four condition’s major role in shaping the final outcome of the transition. Therefore, this study relies on specific secondary sources of information which range from books, journals, seminars, statistical data, presentations and arguments concerning the interpretations of the Arab Spring. As such, this study serves as a framework of the preconditions of any peaceful (or violent) transition towards democracy.

The qualitative research technique is the main tool employed throughout this paper. The significance of choosing this method is to identify how the research question will be answered. The focus of this study is on understanding and investigating how the four

conditions (civil society, social media, economic disparity, and military loyalty) influence the democratic transitional outcome? The aim here is to uncover what attributes a peaceful or violent transition in the case of the Arab Spring. This section will present the different methods and instruments used in the study. This will elucidate the different advantages and disadvantages of these methods used in this research. Thus, it will be able to validate and justify the use and the purpose of the overall methodology used in this paper.

### **3.2 Research design**

This thesis utilizes the qualitative research techniques as its research methodology. The process of utilizing qualitative methods allows different traditions and views to be accepted, therefore, creating valid and reliable measurement tools that can create generalization, with clear understanding of cause and effect (Lang, 2010) In general, the study is descriptive in nature, with this in mind; this allows examining the current issues by focusing on previous written sources of data such as case studies, journals, books, and annual reports. According to John Creswell (1994), descriptive study is an effective tool to present and demonstrate the facts about the position and nature of a given situation as it exists. This will enable the study to examine the different connections, along with the procedures and events, as the phenomenon happens. This method would provide a plan to describe, discover, and analyze the different issues and procedures. Furthermore, this will help in examining the factors that are related with the issues, by studying the event in a specified time frame, with the use of a cross-sectional study (Rubin & Babbie, 2012).

Cross-sectional research has great advantages and benefits to this study. One of the advantages is that it enables the examiner or the researcher to carry out the study in a relative short period of time (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). As mentioned earlier, the qualitative research method is utilized in this dissertation in order to study the dilemma or the situation as it exists (i.e. Arab uprisings). Thus, the use of the cross-sectional approach of different written sources of data will be useful to come up with the results and findings based on the Arab Spring situations. In fact, the aim of this study is first to compare (cross- section method) the four conditions in the Arab countries that witnessed the uprisings with each other and; second, to give a theoretical index for each variable and to conclude with a simple index number for each country. Further elaboration will be provided in the section on data collection and analysis.

### **3.3 Research method**

This paper employs the usage of qualitative methodology, which means that non-numerical data (while some sources used contain some numerical data) will be used throughout the paper. According to Norman Kent Denzin and Yvonna Sessions Lincoln (2005), qualitative method is described as:

a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices which make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field noted, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researches study thing in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of meanings people bring to them. (p. 3)

Thus, using qualitative methods makes it possible for the researcher to gather information by reviewing the literature about the Arab Spring. This enables the process of designing the data gathering instruments to be used. Moreover, qualitative research has a wide variety of instruments such as case studies, personal experiences, and introspection. These qualitative tools apply to a “wide range of interconnected interpretive practices, hoping always to get a better understanding of the subject matter at hand” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.4).

As such, this study can take advantage of the different benefits that qualitative research has to offer. First, using qualitative analysis can help the researcher understand the current situation better in ways the numerical data cannot achieve. Second, the flexibility of qualitative data allows for a comprehensive method for collecting data, along with the interpretations of these data given. Third, using the qualitative method allows for a complete overview of the issue being investigated. Fourth and final point is its ability to drive conclusions from primary and secondary data used in the research (Fryer, 1991).

In addition, this paper will follow an inductive research process. In which this study will explore the written data ranging from annual reports to case studies to generate theory on what determines a peaceful democratic transition. For that, the process of triangulation (the process of gathering information from different sources) will be needed to create validity and reliability in this study.

### 3.4 Data collection and analysis

Secondary data will be used in this study. As such, three types of sources will be utilized. First, the use of scholarly journals<sup>18</sup> on the field of Arab Spring, these reports will generally explain the process in which each country experienced with the democratization process. This will allow for a clearer overview of the Arab Spring democratization process. Second, the use of periodic publications from various organizations such as the UN annual report, these reports will provide numerical data for this study to come up with a conclusion on the four conditions affected the transitional outcome. The third and final type of data collection is the use of trade journals on issues related to the Arab Spring. Such issues include the military behavior during the uprisings and the usage of social media during the uprisings, along with the existence of civil society in each country in the Arab Spring. Moreover, a theoretical index table for promoting peaceful transitions will be created for each variable/ condition<sup>19</sup> in each country; as such, a simple scale from 1 to 7 in which 7 corresponds to “very high” in promoting peaceful transition, 3.5 is “passive” in promoting peaceful transition, and 1 corresponds to “very low” in promoting peaceful transition will be used. Moreover, a total score will be given for each country and will be indicate whether the process of democratic transition is peaceful, passive or violent. The index for the total score is (1-9) is considered to be an undetermined transitions, and (9.5 -18) as violent transition, while (18.5 -28) is considered as peaceful transition.

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<sup>18</sup> Using some of the literature described in chapter two as background will be helpful approach for this dissertation

<sup>19</sup> Each condition weighs the same as the other, since each condition affects the other and may lead to different results.

To summarize the data techniques that will be utilized in this paper, a table of the four conditions, alongside with their technique and examples of the source that will be used is presented below.

**Table 3.4**

<u>Conditions</u>	<u>Source of data</u>	<u>Examples of source of data</u>
Military loyalty to the regime	trade/scholarly journals	Makara, M. (2012). Effects of Coup-Proofing: Explaining Military Behavior During the Arab Spring. In <i>APSA 2012 Annual Meeting Paper</i>
Civil society presences	periodic publications/ scholarly journals	Tenth Annual Report of Arab NGOs
Social media utilizations	scholarly journals	Howard, P. N., & Hussain, M. M. (2011). The role of digital media. <i>Journal of Democracy</i> , 22(3), 35-48.
Economic disparity	Periodic publications/ scholarly journals	Corm, G. (2012). The socio-economic factors behind the Arab revolutions. <i>Contemporary Arab Affairs</i> , 5(3), 355-371.

### **3.5 Research limitations**

This paper identifies the four main prerequisites for a peaceful transition towards democracy. Nevertheless, this paper still has its own limitations and shortcomings. The main limitation of this thesis lies in the lack of time for conducting a comprehensive research; another limitation is the lack of resources (mainly money) to conduct a research survey where the researcher can collect primary data from key informants in the Arab Spring. Therefore, the researcher relies only and heavily on secondary data as the main source of information. Admittedly, a quantitative study with a large data set allows for more rigorous examination of the Arab Spring democratization process. However, this issue is overcome with a rigorous process of triangulation that will create validity and reliability in this study. In addition to these limitations, the focus of this thesis does not allow the researcher to examine or elaborate further on other factors such as the internal conflicts and the different political parties within each country.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## ANALYSIS

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter will put into the test four major conditions that this paper has identified. The four conditions are: presences of civil society (mainly NGO's), economic disparity, military loyalty to the regime, and social media utilization discussed in chapter one. In each of the Arab Spring countries (Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, Yemen, Libya, and Bahrain) the role of the four conditions will be tested and examined to demonstrate the relationship of these conditions on the transitional outcome. As such, a useful way to consider the four conditions is to examine each condition from a comparative perspective based on its relative existence or absence and then link the outcomes to the Arab countries that witnessed the uprisings, such as Tunisia and Yemen. Chapter four fully utilizes the framework explained in chapter three that is based on the different secondary sources of information which range from books, journals, seminars, statistical data, presentations and arguments concerning the interpretations of what triggered the Arab Spring (i.e. different theories), and assess the findings of this study through the lens of the proposed framework.

First, a case study for each Arab Spring country will be described and examined in the context of the four conditions; a simple numerical index<sup>20</sup> will be given for each condition on how it contributed in making the transition more peaceful rather than violent, then an overall numerical index will be given for the country. Second, the

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<sup>20</sup> See chapter three for the measures used by the researcher.

analysis of these different numerical indexes will be provided in this chapter. The third and final step in this chapter is to define how these four conditions are interrelated to each other and how these conditions could be generalized to other countries that might go into the process of democratization.

## **4.2 Tunisia**

Tunisia was the first country to witness what later become known as the Arab Spring. This movement came suddenly for Tunisian officials; including, the outcast former president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. Despite the huge attempts to halt the protests; Ben Ali's regime could not withstand the massive yet coordinated protests against the regime and had to submit to the popular demands. The four conditions that this paper identifies played a major role in determining the process in which the democratic transition had gone through in Tunisia.

### **4.2.1 Military Loyalty to the regime**

As was mentioned earlier, the importance of the military position in the democratic transition is vital to the process of democratic transition. In Tunisia's case, the military has defected to the opposition's demands after the regime's violent escalation towards the protesters. As a professional institution, the Tunisian military army was unlikely to crack down the protest demands, as in doing so the Tunisian army will defy its responsibilities to defend the democratic values, the society, and jeopardize the civilian/military relationship (Makara, 2012). Despite, the relationship that Ben Ali's regime established with the military personnel based on economic and political privileges, the military personnel were not threatened by the protest movements.

According to Michael A. Makara (2012) the Tunisian military's top personnel had no reason to protect Ben Ali's regime, for the fact that they did not perceive the rise of protest as harmful to their military privileges. On the contrary, standing beside the regime could harm the military leaders. Thus, the military position towards the regime resulted in a relatively peaceful transition that ended Ben Ali's regime. Therefore, the military homogeneity structure with the Tunisian population played an important role in the democratization scenario, thus giving it 6 out of 7 in the index table created for peaceful transition towards democracy.

#### **4.2.2 Civil society presences**

In Tunisia, civil society groups were under heavy regulations, restrictions and often banned from operating on the Tunisian soil. Although, the Tunisian regime tolerated some civil society groups, in other cases the regime had to contain, manage and even co-opt the remaining civil society organizations (CSOs) for their own goals and needs (Deane, 2013). Despite that the Tunisian regime restrained and controlled the role of Tunisia's civil society groups, they still managed to exist in large numbers with a relatively high level of cohesive, integration and coordination in the Tunisian society. There is no exact number of NGO's operating in Tunisia, however, some estimate that there are over 9000 NGO's with around 500 registered after the Tunisian revolution (Tenth Annual Report of Arab NGOs, 2011).<sup>21</sup> Thus, the relative huge number of NGO's operating in Tunisia (even if the scope of the civil society activities was under a tight leash from the regime) established the tools and procedure in which Tunisian citizens broke the barriers of fear, along with the process of gathering and organizing during the

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<sup>21</sup> To view the report: <http://www.shabakaegypt.org/report.php?id=11>

uprisings. In the words of Shelley Deane (2013) "Tunisia's civic activists succeeded in bonding similar groups, while simultaneously bridging the gap between diverse groups around their opposition to the regime, and their demands for the free exercise of their rights as citizen"(p.15). As such, the mere existence of civil societies in Tunisia gave hand for the revolts to organize and understand their role during (even after) the uprising, which created a relative peaceful transition towards democracy in Tunisia. Therefore, the role of civil society in Tunisia was important for shifting the democratic transition into a peaceful one; thus, achieving 5 out of 7 in the index created for promoting peaceful transition towards democracy.

#### **4.2.3 Social media utilization**

Without a doubt the Tunisians were the pioneers in the Arab region in utilizing social media tools to share and expose the regime's brutality against the revolts in the Arab world. According to Hussain and Howard (2011), social media played a vital role in the Tunisian revolution. For example, YouTube videos in Tunisia showing Tunisia's police brutality against unarmed civilians protesting against Ben Ali's regime. Such vides had sparked nationwide outrage and resentment against former president Ben Ali (Howard& Hussain, 2011). Once this video circulated among the citizens in Tunisia, the regime tried to crack down YouTube and all social media such as Facebook. Nevertheless, the activists and protestors pushed on, producing other gates for the servers and alternative online news broadcasts and spreading the news among fellow citizens about state persecution (Howard& Hussain, 2011). Thus, the utilization of social media in Tunisian's revolution was an important tool for mobilizing the protest and sharing information and plans against the regime's oppression. Moreover, the high level

of penetration of internet among the Tunisian society created a safe haven for bloggers and activists<sup>22</sup> to create pressure (locally and globally) on the regime officials and security apparatus to meet the demands of the protesters. In one of the researches conducted on the role that social media plays in the Arab Spring, found that almost 25 percent of the Tunisian population uses the internet at least once per day, with an internet penetration level of 66 percent of the Tunisian population that is under the age of 34 (Howard, Duffy, Freelon, Hussain, Mari, & Mazaid, 2011). With this in mind, the usage of social media tools such as Facebook and twitter was very high among the Tunisian citizens; therefore, achieved 6 out of 7 in the index table created.

#### **4.2.4 Economic disparity**

It is widely accepted that the revolution initially started in Tunisia from the economic woes that spreads all over Tunisian soil. The social economic tensions that Tunisia faces created a great resentment between the upper class and the lower class that eventually lead to the uprisings against economic inequality. Though, the official numbers provided by Tunisian officials during Ben Ali's period suggests an increase in the overall economic condition in the country, this was not the true. According to Georges Corm (2011) the overall growth model used by the Arab leaders is ineffective and represents what he calls it a bad growth model. For instance, in Tunisia's case the rate of unemployment for fresh graduates jumped from 3.8 percent in year 1994 to 17.5 percent in year 2006 (Corm, 2011). In addition, the Tunisian regime's concentration on specific sectors such as tourism created inequality and economic grievances in the

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<sup>22</sup> Though the Tunisian regime managed to arrest some blogger and activists in Tunisia, they failed to stop the flow of information, since many Tunisian activist were living outside Tunisian soil.

country. Such economical acts accrued the gap between Tunisian classes and created a clash between the upper (who naturally would not support the regime change) and the middle-lower classes that demand reforms. Therefore, the Tunisian economic disparity lead to relative violent clashes between the supporters of the regime and the protesters, thus achieving 4 out of 7 in the index created for peaceful transitions.

**4.2.5 Summary of the four conditions in Tunisia**

<u>Four conditions</u>	<u>Index number out of 7</u>
Military loyalty to the regime	6
Civil society existence	5
Social media utilize	6
Economic disparity	4
<u>Total</u>	21/28
Transition Scenario	Peaceful Transition

**4.2.6 Conclusion**

In this case study, Tunisia proved to be a peaceful transition towards democracy. By analyzing each of the four conditions that this paper indentified, one can understand why Tunisia unlike other countries witnessed a relatively peaceful transition. First, the Tunisian military is considered to be a professional institution with core values for protecting the civilians. Moreover, as has been mentioned before the Tunisian military’s

top personnel had no reason to fear the raise of protesters due to many factors such as the country's homogeneity. Second, the mere existence of civil society groups in Tunisia played a major role in mobilizing the protest. This had a positive effect in educating the protesters who were eager for changing the regime. Third, social media platforms had a major effect in speeding up the wave of protests and in mobilizing it. The fourth and final condition, the economic disparity among different social groups in Tunisia was the main trigger for the protest, though it may have helped in escalating the conflict. In the index table created for peaceful transitions, Tunisia scored a total 21 out of 28, therefore, the total score for Tunisia lays in the margin of peaceful transitions.

### **4.3 Egypt**

Following the footsteps of its neighbor (i.e. Tunisia) the Egyptian people were inspired to form their own revolution against the long standing regime of Hussine Mubarak. The first demonstration erupted in Liberation Square in the heart of Cairo.<sup>23</sup> Egyptians went to the streets in massive numbers, calling it a "day of rage". Thousands marched to downtown Cairo, calling for Hussine Mubarak to step down from the office. In just eighteen days, the former president Hussine Mubarak resigned from the presidency. Therefore, the four conditions that this paper identifies played a major role in determining the process in which the democratic transition went through in Egypt.

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<sup>23</sup> The massive gatherings took place in Tahrir Square (liberation square) as it was seen as symbolic heart of the Egyptian revolution. These events took place over the course of eighteen days, from January 25 2011, through February 11 2011. It is widely accepted that the main catalyst of the revolution was the Face book page, set up by Google executive Wael Ghonim, entitled "We Are All Khaled Said."

### **4.3.1 Military loyalty to the regime**

Similar to the Tunisian army, the Egyptian army forces defected to the protesters side, effectively ending Hussine Mubarak's 20 plus year rule in the country. The military's refusal to open fire and to repress the demonstrations marked the end of one of the most authoritarian regimes in the Middle East region. Mubarak's military coup-proofing strategy, according to Makara (2012) was centered on two tactics: building parallel security organizations and allocating material incentives to Mubarak's patronage and close military leaders. The main aim for creating the parallel security institutions is to oversee and defend Mubarak's ruling party and to make each security institution monitor the other for any attempt for military coup. Moreover, Mubarak's regime gave extensive economic and political benefits for his security services. Such benefits include "best salaries, housing, and health care in the country, and it controlled a variety of profitable private sector industries allowed it to ensure its economic fortunes even further" ( Makara, 2012. p.16). However, these strategies proved to be useless when the military had to choose between maintaining Mubarak's regime or in assisting the demonstrators. As a professional institution and as being perceived as "part of the people", the Egyptian top army leaders had to side with the protesters or face internal army defection from military personal who share the same socioeconomic conditions the protester suffer . Moreover, Egypt relative social homogenate gave the military top leaders a sense of relief knowing that their positions will not be threatened by other groups from the opposition. Therefore, as the protest demands escalated and Mubarak's regime hanging on its last line of hope for the military intervention. The later sealed the

regime fate by announcing that the president transferred the power to the military council (Howard& Hussain, 2011). Thus, the military played a huge role in the transition process in Egypt, therefore, achieving 6.5 out of 7 in the index table created.

#### **4.3.2 Civil society presences**

The history of civil society organizations (CSOs) in Egypt could be traced back to 1821 with the established of Hellenic Philanthropic Association in Alexandria (Khallaf, 2010). Like many Arab countries, Egypt lacks the exact figures and numbers on how many civil society organizations operate. However, some estimate that there are over 21,000 CSOs are registered within the ministry of Social Solidarity (Khallaf, 2010). While other organizations such as the Arab Network for NGOs estimated that there are over 31,000 NGOs working in Egypt in 2011 with 2,500 new NGOs established after the revolution (Tenth Annual Report of Arab NGOs, 2011). Despite the lack of exact numbers of NGOs operating in Egypt it is clear that such organizations are the wheel that drove the youth to organize and demonstrate against Mubarak's regime. The most prominent organization was the Kefya movement (Enough movement) that was one of the first movements that called for the removal of Hussine Mubarak's regime in 2004. Such groups and organizations that work under the influence and control of the civil societies in Egypt created synergy among the Egyptian people to gather and organize themselves to overthrow the former president Mubarak. Moreover, the activities and events during the uprising organized by the Egyptian civil society ranging from coming up with the protesters slogans to direct action in the protest movements

gave a major push towards relative peaceful demonstration across Egypt. Therefore, scoring 6 out of 7 in the index table created.

### **4.3.3 Social media utilization**

For many scholars and researches, such as Philip Howard the Egyptian uprising could be accountable to the extensive use of modern day technology. Social media is a major part of modern day technology that assisted the youth to express and share ideas in ways the regime can no longer control. For the Egyptian people the inspiration of the Tunisian success traveled fast in the virtual world, and gave a breeze of hope for democratic change. In a study conducted to understand the role of social media in the Arab Spring, it was estimated that at least 10 percent of the Egyptian population uses the internet in a daily bases and an astonishingly 70 percent who are under 34 are considered internet savvy (Howard, Duffy, Freelon, Hussain, Mari, & Mazaid, 2011). Therefore, it is not unusual that the first spark in the Egyptian revolution came from the social media platforms. Many young educated people started tweeting and posting videos calling for gatherings and demonstrations against the regime. The well-known Facebook page “We Are All Khaled Saeed” that was created after the death of the 28year old Khaled Saeed, who was tortured by the secret police, attracted over 400,000 Facebook users in a relative short period of time (Dewey, Kaden, Marks, Matsushima, & Zhu, 2012). The link that social media provided between the social activists and the people who were working on the ground proved to be the best combination in which the regime did not anticipate. Thus, creating an unbreakable bridge between the social activists who where posting and tweeting for the outside world and with the people who were organizing peaceful protests. For that reason, the utilization of social media in the

Egyptian uprisings helped in shaping the final outcome of the revolution in a relative peaceful transition, thus scoring 5.5 out of 7 in the index table created.

#### **4.3.4 Economic disparity**

As the Tunisian bad model of economic growth, Egypt suffered from a severe clash of classes between the lower and the upper class, along with the deterioration of the middle class. The economic woes that the Egyptian citizens suffered lead to the resentment that many middle-lower citizens felt towards the regime's economic policies. Although, Egyptian officials and some organizations such as the World Bank stated that Egypt is going through a positive growth, this was only benefiting some sectors in the Egyptian economy such as the tourism sector (Corm, 2011). Thus, according to Corm (2011), the bad growth model that Egypt like all Arab countries adopted had increased in the social and economic disparity in these countries. For instance, the lower class citizens who generally hold a secondary level degree make up 80 percent of the total number of unemployment in Egypt (Corm, 2011). Such figures correspond to some incidents that occurred during the Egyptian revolutions were some people who benefit from Hussine Mubarak's economic policies had got in direct or in an indirect conflict with the protesters that were demanding for his removal. As a result, conflict escalated between different groups of people who have different economic needs. Therefore, this condition scored 3 out of 7 in promoting peaceful transitions.

#### 4.3.5 Summary of the four conditions in Egypt

<u>Four conditions</u>	<u>Index number out of 7</u>
Military loyalty to the regime	6.5
Civil society existence	6
Social media utilize	5.5
Economic disparity	4
<u>Total</u>	22/28
Transition Scenario	Peaceful Transition

#### 4.3.6 Conclusion

As the Tunisian case, Egypt succeeded in maintaining its revolution against Hussine Mubarak's regime a peaceful one. The role of the four conditions explains how the democratic transition in Egypt was relatively peaceful compared to other countries. The first condition is the military's loyalty to the regime, this was crucial during the uprising in which the military defected entirely to the protesters side. As a professional institution and as being perceived as "part of the people", the Egyptian top army leaders had to side with the protesters or face internal army defecation from military personnel who share the same socioeconomic conditions the protesters suffer. Second, Egypt's strong civil society groups enabled the protesters to gather and organize in an effective way. Moreover, the action and activities organized by civil groups such as Kefya (Enough movement) during the revolution assisted the protesters in understanding their

demands in a peaceful way. Moreover, social media was an important tool in mobilizing the protest in Egypt. The Mubarak regime could not control the inflow of information in the country and had to fulfill the protesters' demands. The final condition, how the economic disparity among the Egyptian society increased the social tension. Such tension created violent conflict between pro-Mubarak regime and anti-Mubarak regime. Despite that, the economic conditions unified a large sector that was suffering economic inequality by the regime and led to the mass protests in the country. Therefore, in the index table created for peaceful transitions, Egypt scored a total of 22 out of 28 making it on the right margin of peaceful democratization process.

## **4.4 Libya**

Following the events in Tunisia and Egypt, Libya witnessed another uprising and followed its Middle Eastern neighbor's steps in the removal of its authoritarian regime. However, the Libyan case proved to be more complicated than the two its former cases (i.e. Tunisia and Egypt); NATO had to intervene in order to stop the former president Muammar Gaddafi's brutality against the protesters (especially in Benghazi). This marked the first violent transition of what is now known as the Arab Spring. Therefore, the four conditions that this paper identifies played a major role in determining the process in which the democratic transition witnessed through in Libya.

### **4.4.1 Military loyalty to the regime**

The former president Muammar Gaddafi's military strategy did not differ from his neighboring countries. As such, the Libyan regime established a sophisticated system of security institutions including the Revolutionary Committees (Al-Lijan Al-

Thawriyah), mercenary forces, and tribal militias. These security apparatus under Qaddafi's regimes were well financed and armed; in order to buy their loyalty. For instance, these armed personnel had the privilege to access expensive consumer goods that the Libyan citizens could not offer (Makara, 2012). However, what characterize Libya's security and military forces that these groups were grafted in a divided society between the "West" and the "East". The socio-geographic division of the Libyan's helped the military and the security to defect during the uprisings. For Qaddafi's regime the Western region was his political and military base, which he relied heavily on kinship ties and tribal ties (Makara, 2012).<sup>24</sup> Therefore, it is not surprising that most of the bass leaders in Qaddafi's security apparatus were from tribal clans and kinships that supported his regime. However, tribal conflict between the West and the East (in other words tribes that are allied with Qaddafi and tribes that oppose him) created a rift between these two regions that had unequal distribution of wealth and power. Thus, during the Libyan revolution the military personnel's that have anti-regime sentiments in the Eastern side of the region defected and allied with the tribes within that region to establish military forces against Qaddafi's regime. This marked the historical, political, and social rivalries between the West and the East that was embedded in the Libyan society. Such deterioration in the military structure escalated the violent clash between the military forces that cling to the regime with the military rebels that demanded the removal of the regime. This resulted in a lethal conflict that ended with the regime change, with the help from outside players. This condition promoted violent transitional conflict in the Libyan case, thus acquiring 2 out of 7 in the index table created for peaceful transitions.

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<sup>24</sup> Margariha and Werfella tribes are the main two tribes to side with the Qaddafi regime

#### **4.4.2 Civil society presences**

The Libyan government allowed for the some civil societies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to operate in its province. However, these organizations had to modify their visions and goals to suite the regime's needs and goals (Rishmawi & Morris, 2007). For instance, the civil society groups could not issue goals or statements that contradict the revolution in Libya (this is the Qaddafi's revolution in the Jamahiriya state). However, the number of civil societies operating in Libya during Gaddafi's regime were very small when compared to Tunisia and Egypt, thus the role the civil societies played in the Libyan revolution was minimal. While there are no official numbers on NGO's operating in Libya during the Qaddafi rule, some estimate as few as 1000 NGO's were under the direct supervision of Qaddafi's regime (Tenth Annual Report of Arab NGOs, 2011). As such, the Libyan people had no independent organization to help and assist them in understanding democracy. Moreover, the lack of independent NGO's during Gaddafi's regime resulted in a gap between Libyan officials and its citizens. Thus, the lack of independent civil societies in Libya created conflict during the uprising were the revolts found themselves lacking the proper tools for conducting peaceful demonstration. Rather, they quickly escalated to the use of military force for change. Therefore, the lack of civil society achieves 2 out of 7 in the index table created for peaceful transitions.

#### **4.4.3 Social media utilization**

Again, the Libyan revolution proves to be different from the Egyptian and Tunisian case. Where, in the latter countries the utilization of social media was clear-cut

in assisting the revolts in their demonstration. But, in the Libyan case social media appears to have a minor role in these activities. According to Rasha Mourtada and Salem Fadi (2011) during the Libyan revolution only 4 percent of the total Libyan population had a Facebook account. This is not to underestimate the role of social media in the Libyan revolution. In fact, the prominent news station Al-Jazeera and many others relied initially on the videos and images that were circulated on the social media platform about Qaddafi's brutality against the demonstrators. Moreover, the use of these social media platforms enabled the revolts to create an international concession about the Libyan case. However, among the many things Libya lacks is the poor internet infrastructure that hindered the proper utilization of the social media. Such utilization could be in maintaining a proper communication procedure between the protesters in different regions and creating unified demands. Still, the social media platform did assist in making the democratization process more peaceful, thus achieving 4 out of 7 in the index table created for peaceful transitions.

#### **4.4.4 Economic disparity**

Libya shares with its neighbors the same socio-economic conditions that created tension among the Libyan society. High unemployment, rising food prices, and large income inequality all helped in increasing the tension level during the Libyan revolution (Corm, 2011). With an economy depending almost entirely on oil production, the Libyan government did little to create proper economic development in the country. Rather, the former president Mummer Qaddafi wasted the oil money on unimportant projects and wild schemes rather than allocating these resources to useful ones just in order to protect his regime (Cause, 2011). Moreover, the poor distribution of wealth

among the Western vs. the Eastern regions (more accurately between Pro-Gaddafi vs. Anti-Gaddafi regime) increased the speed of the military conflict during the revolution process. Thus, the poor economic conditions and the large disparity among different groups (or in Libya’s case different clans) resulted in a great resentment among the different groups in the conflict and lead to a more violent process of transition. Therefore, this condition receives 3 out of 7 in the index table created for peaceful transitions.

**4.4.5 Summary of the four conditions in Libya**

<u>Four conditions</u>	<u>Index number out of 7</u>
Military loyalty to the regime	2
Civil society existence	2
Social media utilize	4
Economic disparity	3
<u>Total</u>	11
Transition Scenario	Violent Transition

**4.4.6 Conclusion**

Libya’s case proved to be a very violent transition towards democracy, against the former president Mummer Qaddafi. The four conditions explained in this case, provided a clear understanding on why did this peaceful revolution turned ugly in a short period of time. The first condition, the military’s loyalty to the regime, was split into two campuses. This deterioration in the military’s structure escalated the violent clash

between the military forces that clung to the regime with the military rebels that demanded the removal of the regime. Moreover, the lack of any real civil society groups operating in Libya created a lack of proper tools for the Libyan citizens to demonstrate in a peaceful way. Rather, they found themselves quickly escalating into violent means to change the regime. Furthermore, the third condition concerning the utilization of social media had little desired effects on the Libyan revolution. As was mentioned, the poor Internet infrastructure hindered the proper utilization of the social media in the Libyan revolution. In the final condition, economic disparity between the Western vs. the Eastern regions (more accurately between Pro-Gaddafi vs. Anti-Gaddafi regime) divided the country into two sections. This created the resentment many Eastern clans had against the Western people. Unlike the Egyptian case in which economic disparity was between different social classes, in Libya the unequal distribution of wealth in different regions helped in escalating the violence during the transition. Therefore, Libya total score is 11 out of 28 which places it in the lower half of the index table created for peaceful transition.

## **4.5 Syria**

Syria is another case of how the democratic transition that swiped the Arab nations is undergoing a violent demarcation process. The only difference between Syria and Libya is that the latter succeeded in overthrowing the authoritarian regime, while still the military conflict is dominating the transitional phase in Syria. The complexity of the Syrian case can be understood by studying the four conditions that play a role in the ongoing democratic transition. This will shed light on the Syrian conflict that is one of the bloodiest democratic changes in the new century.

#### 4.5.1 Military loyalty to the regime

The Syrian government was not safe from the Arab Uprisings, neither was the Syrian military army. In the early days of the Syrian revolution, the government like the military personnel was sure of their ability to repress the popular protest. However, this wasn't the case. Although historically the Syrian army was considered to be the main guardian of the Syrian people against the outsiders, the Baath party lead by former president Hafiz Al-Assad created an elaborate security institution that include the Republican Guard and most importantly the secret Intelligence ( Mukhabarat ) branches to overweigh the military power (Makara, 2011) . Although, according to Makara (2011), the security personal did not benefit from the economic benefits as in neighboring countries such as Egypt; however, they did benefit from generous military expenditures and the opportunities for exploiting their positions for financial gains.<sup>25</sup> Despite these measures, this was not the main coup-proofing strategy adopted by the Assad regime. Instead, the Assad regime relied heavily on communal ties by recruiting most of the security personnel from the Alawite Muslims<sup>26</sup> who are consider a minority group encompassing roughly ten percent of Syria's population and accounting for over 90 percent of Syria's officer body (Zisser, 2002). Such strategy, created in the Sunni military personnel (who are considered to be the majority sect in Syria) resentment for not achieving higher military positions as their counterparts in minority groups including the Muslim Alawite, thus creating the base for defection during the Syrian Uprisings. Moreover, the ability for the regime's to take the minority groups as hostages; by linking

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<sup>25</sup> For example, some Syrian officers in the Syrian-Lebanese borders exploited their positions to smuggle drugs and consumer goods into or out of Syria.

<sup>26</sup> Obviously from the same sect as Hafiz Al-Assad

their fate to the regime survival enabled the Assad regime to maintain power (Makara, 2012). However, such an act created military struggle between the official Syrian army with the defectives from the army along with civilians that refuse the Assad dictatorship (these groups to be later called the Free Syrian Army). This defection of military personnel into two campuses one favoring the Assad's regime survival and the other favoring the removal of the regime created undertone sectarian rifts in Syria that resulted in thousands of civilian casualties. Thus, the defection in military loyalty to the regime rather than the loyalty to the people had resulted in a violent transition process, thus getting a score of 2 out of 7 in the index tabulated for peaceful transition.

#### **4.5.2 Civil society presence**

Again, Syria proves to be a unique and challenging case when it comes to civil society's existence. During 1963 when the emergency law was enforced the Syrian officials saw this law as a tool for crushing any civil society organization in the country (Zahler, 2009). Though, after the death of Hafiz Al- Assad, his son Bashar Al-Assad took over the presidency and gave hope for democratic transitions. Initially, President Bashar Al-Assad started implementing new reforms, including the release of political prisoners, economic reforms, and human rights. This came to be known as the "Damascus Spring" (Lesch, 2011, p.421). However, the process of democratization did not last long, in just a few months President Basher Al-Assad fell under the influence of the old guard and started to adapt to his father authoritarian style (Lesch, 2011). As such, the hope for having any real civil society operating in Syria was lost. Since then, Syrian officials cracked down on any attempt to create civil society in the country. Therefore, Syria lacks any independent civil society organization; one can say that Syria

has no truly civil society working on its soil. Having said that, the lack of independent civil society organizations in Syria that act as a mediator between the government and its citizens increased the level of conflict in the Syrian revolution, thus getting 1 out of 7 in the index table created for peaceful transition.

#### **4.5.3 Social media utilization**

Social media platforms were an important tool from the early beginning of the Syrian revolution. Due to the media blockage<sup>27</sup> that the Syrian regime adopted, the protesters had to organize and plan their protest through the Facebook pages on the Internet. Despite that in some rural parts of the country lacking proper Internet infrastructure; it seems that most public demonstration had been organized with the help of social media tools such as the Facebook (Dewey, Kaden, Marks, Matsushima, & Zhu, 2012). Moreover, with the current events in the Syrian revolution and with the regime's increasing brutality against the Syrian people. The latter are utilizing the social media platforms such as YouTube to fuel the public's outrage against the brutality of the regime. However, still the main methods of mobilization are held through traditional means such as prayer time or during funerals. This could account for the mistrust that people face when organizing protests in areas are not familiar with or simply due to the lack of Internet in these regions (Dewey, Kaden, Marks, Matsushima, & Zhu, 2012). However, such as cell phones that the regime is tracking down. Therefore, the utilization of social media in Syria had played a relatively major role in moving the democratic

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<sup>27</sup> See more in Syria: 'A Kingdom of Silence.'" Al Jazeera English  
<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2011/02/20112910312-1562395>

transition a bit further towards a peaceful transition thus getting 5 out of 7 in the index table created.

#### **4.5.4 Economic disparity**

In the last decade Syria has shown an overall improvement in economic conditions, according to the World Bank and IMF annual reports (Corm, 2011). However, as its neighbors, Syria lacks the proper economic development needed for achieving real economic productivity and diversification. Moreover, the economy in Syria suffers from a severe economic stagnation, along with high level of unemployment (Zahler, 2009). For instance, people who work in the public sector have an extremely low salary starting at 164 US dollars when compared to other countries in the region, along with high unemployment reaching 20 percent of the total population (Corm, 2011; Zahler, 2009). Moreover, the levels of poverty in Syria are shocking, especially when one knows that Syria is not only rich in energy and phosphate resources, but also rich in fertile land and water resources (Corm, 2011). Furthermore, the gap between the rich and the poor increased the clash between social classes in Syria. To elaborate, in Damascus a rich person can go for shopping in brand new malls and sit in the sidewalk cafés reading the newspapers. Meanwhile, on the other side of the country one can find workers working for 15 hours a day to make ends meet. Such a gap created the tension between people who are economically satisfied with Basher Al-Assad's economic policies and with people who suffer from the economic grievances. Thus, during the revolution one can see a clear social clash in Syria that resulted in escalating the conflict in the ongoing transitional phase in Syria; therefore, achieving 3 out of 7 in the index table created for peaceful democratic transitions.

#### 4.5.5 Summary of the four conditions in Syria

<u>Four conditions</u>	<u>Index number out of 7</u>
Military loyalty to the regime	2
Civil society existence	1
Social media utilize	5
Economic disparity	3
<u>Total</u>	11
Transition Scenario	Violent Transition

#### 4.5.6 Conclusion

Why's Syria democratic transition is considered to be one of the bloodiest revolutions in the new century is difficult to understand. Despite all the external factors that played a role in the democratic transition in Syria, the four conditions that this paper identifies explains why Syria, unlike Tunisia and Egypt is undergoing a violent transition. In the first condition concerning the military loyalty, the Syrian government adopted a strategy relaying heavily on communal ties by recruiting most of the security personnel from the Alawite Muslims. Thus, creating resentment in a big portion of the Syrian community, that created the base for military defection. Hence, increasing armed conflict between two campuses one favoring the Assad's regime's survival and the other favoring the removal of the regime created undertone sectarian rifts in Syria. The second condition discusses the lack of civil societies in Syria, with this in mind Syria lacks any real presence of civil groups on its soil. Having said that, the lack of independent civil

society organizations in Syria that act as mediator between the government and its citizens increased the level of conflict in the Syrian revolution. Third, social media utilization played a significant role in fueling the public's outrage against the regime's brutality, along with creating global consensus for the Syrian revolution. The fourth and final condition is economic disparity, in which the social gap is very high in Syria. Such a gap created the tension between people who are economically satisfied with Basher Al-Assad's economic policies and with people who suffer from the economic grievances. Hence, in the index table created for peaceful transitions, Syria scored a total of 11 out of 28; therefore, Syria lies in the lower margin of peaceful transitions.

#### **4.6 Yemen**

Yemen was no different from other Arab states that witnessed the awakening of the revolutions. Marking the end of more than 32 years of dictatorship lead by the former president Ali Abdullah Saleh, the latter resigned after huge popular demands. The protests were lead by the severe socio-economic conditions that paralyzed the whole country and created rivalry between different districts. After the direct intervention from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), President Saleh finally signed an agreement drafted by the GCC in November 2011, to give up the presidency in exchange for his personal and family's safety. Though, the intervention of the GCC succeeded in the removal of Saleh's regime, the Yemeni's revolution underwent a relatively violent demonstration to reach to this agreement. Therefore, the four conditions that this paper identifies played a major role in determining the process in which the democratic transition that was experienced in Yemen.

#### **4.6.1 Military loyalty to the regime**

During the one year in which Yemen's revolution took place, many military officials and security officers defected to the protests side, while some maintained their loyalty to former president Salah. This partial defection divided the security institutions in the country into two sides. One side between the autonomous tribes who are against Salah's regime and the other, with President Salah's close patronage who are in charge of the security apparatus in the country (Makara, 2012). As in the case of Libya, Yemen's military rift is accounted by the inappropriate distribution of wealth and position among different tribes in the country. As such, when the protesters demands began to include the president's resignation, some of the key member in the military force saw this as an opportunity to gain some influence (and probably for financial gains) started defecting to the opposition side (Makara, 2012) . This resulted in a military conflict between the military defectors (along with some tribal armed groups) and with the official army with the presidency's Special Forces who had great stakes in maintain the regime's survival. Thus increasing in the level of violent democratic transition that Yemen had undergone during the revolution, therefore, gaining 2 out of 7 in the index table created for promoting peaceful transition.

#### **4.6.2 Civil society presences**

Under the Yemenis civil law all non-governmental organizations cannot be involved in any political activity, thus limiting its scope for development and humanitarian activities (Rishmawi & Morris, 2007). However, Yemen has one of the best diverse civil societies in the Gulf region. Though they are no exact numbers of civil

societies operating on Yemen's soil, but there are a variety of "labour unions, self-help projects, development cooperatives, clubs, private schools, welfare associations and discussion groups" that assist the Yemeni citizens in improving their social welfare (Rishmawi & Morris, 2007.p.23). During the revolution, the official civil societies groups in Yemen did have a minor impact on organizing the demonstrations and getting plans for action against the regime's brutality. However, these civil society groups had little impact on the overall demonstrations in Yemen. In the case of Yemen, Mosques, family meetings, and private meetings among many others were considered to be the main venues for setting plans and establishing actions Saleh's regime. Therefore, despite the extensive presence of civil society in Yemen the utilization of these civil societies were minimal when compared to the role that Mosques (or other form of gathering) had on the revolution. Having said that, the lacking role of civil societies in Yemen and the great number of influential groups with different agendas and interests that mobilized protesters, led to an increase in violence during the democratic transition. Thus, civil societies in Yemen achieve 3 out of 7 in the index table created for peaceful transitions.

#### **4.6.3 Social media utilization**

The revolution in Tunisia, Egypt and Syria relied heavily on social media tools like Twitter, Facebook and YouTube in the early phases to speed up the social protest. However, the evidence shows that social media did not play a strong role in Yemen's revolution against Saleh's regime. According to "socialbakers" a website that monitors social media activities around the world, Yemen falls in the lower list of countries that

uses the Internet.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, the level of internet penetration does not exceed 3 percent of the total population with only 512,000 Facebook users in Yemen.<sup>29</sup> These numbers show that Yemenis people did not rely (though at first they did share the news of the former president Hussine Mubarak resignation) on social media tool to gather and plan for actions against the regime. Rather, the protester used the traditional methods such as announcing through Mosque speakers for gatherings and calling for demonstrations. The lack of social media utilization led to huge gap between protesters in different regions in the country, along with different course of actions against the regime. Therefore, it is clear that social media was not an active tool during the Yemen's revolution, thus achieving only 4 out of 7 in the index table created for peaceful transition.

#### **4.6.4 Economic disparity**

Yemen is considered to be the poorest country in the gulf region with a 27% inflation rate, 40% unemployment rate, and high level of government corruption (Hill, 2010). Moreover, Yemen's dependency on oil exports makes it vulnerable to oil prices around the world. The oil industry accounts for over 90 percent of the exports and over 70 percent of the government revenues (Hill, 2010). However, the rise of food prices, high level of unemployment, and high level of illiteracy contributed to increasing the armed conflict in the country during the revolution. Such a huge disparity of wealth between Selah's patronage, along with business elites and with the Yemeni citizens, along with big tribal clans such as Al Mukalla, Ma'rib, Radfan and the Ad-Dali created

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<sup>28</sup> See more: <http://www.socialbakers.com/facebook-statistics/yemen>

<sup>29</sup> The largest group of Facebook in Yemen age 18-24, followed by users in the age of 25-34. See more : <http://www.socialbakers.com/facebook-statistics/yemen>

armed conflict for economic privileges in the country. It is estimated that over 45 percent of the Yemenis population is under the poverty line (Hill, 2011). Having said that, the gap created by Saleh’s regime between the upper and the lower classes in Yemen established the resentment towards the people who benefited from the close relation with Saleh’s family with people who suffered from his economic policies. These economic conditions in Yemen established the base for violence between pro-Saleh’s regime and anti-Saleh’s regime. Therefore, this condition gets 3 out of 7 in the index table created.

#### **4.6.5 Summary of the four conditions in Yemen**

<u>Four conditions</u>	<u>Index number out of 7</u>
Military loyalty to the regime	2
Civil society existence	3
Social media utilize	2
Economic disparity	3
<u>Total</u>	10
Transition Scenario	Violent Transition

#### **4.6.6 Conclusion**

The revolution in Yemen succeeded in removing the authoritarian regime, but process in which the revolution took place was a violent transition towards democracy. In the four conditions the paper indentifies, the role of each contributed in creating the scenario of the transition in Yemen. First the military rift accounted by the inappropriate distribution

of wealth and position among different tribes in the country resulted in an armed conflict between the defectors and the official military personnel. This led to an increase in the level of violence during the democratic transition that Yemen had undergone. Moreover, the role of civil society groups in the Yemeni revolution is weak when compared to the role of tribal leaders and religious figures. Having said that, the weak role of civil societies in Yemen and the great number of powerful groups with different agendas, led to an increase in violence during the democratic transition. The third condition addresses the social media utilization in the Yemenis revolution. The failure of the protesters to properly utilize the social media platforms in the Yemenis revolution had led to weak mobilization of protest all over Yemen. The fourth and final condition is economic disparity, in which the social gap is very high in Yemen. The breach created by Saleh's regime between the upper and the lower classes in Yemen established the resentment towards the people who benefited from the close relation with Saleh's family with people who suffered from his economic policies. Hence, in the index table created for peaceful transitions, Yemen scored a total of 10 out of 28; therefore, Yemen is in the lower half margin of peaceful transitions.

## **4.7 Bahrain**

After the serious of demonstrations in the Arab world, a big portion of Bahraini citizens<sup>30</sup> marched on 14 February 2011 to Manama, the capital of Bahrain where they camped for days at the Pearl Roundabout, which became later the symbol for freedom in the eyes of the protesters. In just few weeks the demonstrations became more violent

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<sup>30</sup> According to the Daily Telegraph the majority of the protesters come from a Shia religious affiliation. See more: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/wikileaks-files/bahrain-wikileaks-cables/8334600/BAHRAINS-SHIA-POLITICAL-LEADERS-VISIT-IRAQ.html>

and the Bahraini government requested assistants from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to regain stability in the country. The latter replied on March 14 by sending troops that took charge of clearing the demonstrations in Pearl Roundabout and restoring order in the country. Despite these measures, the Bahraini opposition is still demanding for more political reform and greater economic privileges for the Shia population. Still the process of any democratic transition in Bahrain is in the stagnation stage. Thus the four conditions that the paper identifies, explain why Bahrain revolution is going into a passive stage.

#### **4.7.1 Military loyalty to the regime**

Bahrain's monarchy established the same communal strategies as the Syrian Baath party did. The monarchy consists from Sunni leaders who only represent about 25 percent of the Bahraini population, while the rest 75 percent are Shia (Makara, 2011). Having said that, the Bahriani rules had to adopt communal strategies where as the most of the security apparatus are controlled and operated by the Sunni minorities. Such an act fueled Shia grievances for not achieving top official ranks in the government. This was shown clearly during the protest movement where there was no military defection from the Bahraini government.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, the relative lack of any real military opposition created relatively peaceful protests in the Bahrain revolution. However, with no tangible political change in Bahrain, one can deduce that the process in which the military loyalty played role in the democratization process was passive, thus achieving 4 out of 7 in the index table created for peaceful transitions.

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<sup>31</sup> Although they had to ask help from the GCC to send additional troops to control the protests

#### **4.7.2 Civil society presences**

After Sheikh Isaa's successor, Sheikh Hamad, launched reforms in the country, which included new laws for establishing new civil society organizations (CSO). In 1999, Sheikh Hamad had asked the government to establish the first Human Right Committee, along with granting workers (local and foreign workers) the right to create and join unions (Rishmawi & Morris, 2007). By the end of 2004 over 350 civil society organization were established in the country (Rishmawi & Morris, 2007). However, the scope of these CSO's was limited only for developmental projects. According to the Bahraini law of civil society groups, the government can refuse to register any organization that have political agendas or that have the same tasks and roles that an existing CSO is already providing (Mahmoud, 2012). Nevertheless, despite these measures, Bahrain has a good standing civil society groups that assisted in halting the conflict between the government and the protesters (though it had a little impact). Thus, one can deduce that civil societies did play a role in making the process of transition towards democracy a relatively peaceful one, therefore, achieving 5 out of 7 in the index table created.

#### **4.7.3 Social media utilization**

Being a wealthy Gulf state, Bahrain has good internet infrastructure, along with extensive mobile phone utilization in the region (Dewey, Kaden, Marks, Matsushima, & Zhu, 2012). According to "socialbakers" a website that monitors social media activist around the world, Bahrain has over 400,000 Facebook users. This number when

compared with the small number of Bahraini population<sup>32</sup>, one can find that social media is largely utilized by the Bahrain's. Therefore, the social media had played a great role in mobilizing the protesters. With the help of social media platforms such as the Facebook and twitter, the internet was bombarded with pictures and videos footage of civilians being arrested or beaten up by the police during the revolution. However, Bahrain differs from the other Arab countries in which the government was successful in utilizing the social media for its own favor. The Bahraini government quickly acted and started to monitor all the social media activates and launched a campaign to find and arrest them (Dewey, Kaden, Marks, Matsushima, & Zhu, 2012). Therefore, the Bahraini government adeptness of social media utilization had proved that social media could be a double edged sword. Thus, achieving only 2 out of 7 in the index table created for peaceful transitions.

#### **4.7.4 Economic disparity**

Bahrain shares the same socio-economic conditions as its Arab neighbors. Unemployment and poverty, along with the lack of proper political representation, is the prime driver of the Bahraini revolution. What is more important is the disproportionately unemployment in the Shia' community that had led to social and economical grievances (Bahri, 2000). According to the Central Bank of Bahrain, in 2008, the average monthly salary, including allowances for Bahraini citizens working in the private sector, was just below US\$1400.<sup>33</sup> This, when compared to the gulf average monthly salary, one can find a huge disproportional between the two. Moreover, Bahrain dependence on oil money,

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<sup>32</sup> According to the CIA Factbook the Bahrain population consists of 1,234,571 people, including 666,172 non nationals.

<sup>33</sup> According to Central Bank of Bahrain, *Economic Indicators* (Manama, 2008)

whereas, 77 percent of total government revenues are from the oil sector, had led to lack in economic diversification. With the dependency on oil production for revenue, Bahrain faces major obstacles in creating real economy that will halt down the economic grievances and inflation levels in the poorer sections of the society. Thus, Bahrain economic disparity between the Sunni and the Shia' has created resentment that helped in escalating the conflict between both. Therefore, achieving 2 out of 7 in the index table created for peaceful transitions.

**4.7.5 Summary of the four conditions in Bahrain**

<u>Four conditions</u>	<u>Index number out of 7</u>
Military loyalty to the regime	2
Civil society existence	1
Social media utilize	2
Economic disparity	1
<u>Total</u>	6/28
Transition Scenario	Undetermined Transition

**4.7.6 Conclusion**

Bahrain's revolutions towards democracy, has yet to achieve its goals for change. Thus, one can say that the Bahraini revolution that ended with a passive transition towards democracy. The four conditions that this paper identifies explains why Bahrain, unlike other countries in the Arab Spring underwent a passive transition toward democratic change. In the first condition, the military loyalty to Bahrain's

regime was extremely high with no defection at all in the military structure. This enabled the Bahraini regime to maintain its status-quo, and to bring to an end the demonstrations that swept the country. With the lack of an armed opposition (i.e. the lack of military defectors to the opposition side) led to a passive movement that had little effect in achieving the protest demands. Moreover, the lack of independent civil societies to organize and activate the protesters led to weak protest movement. Having said that, civil society groups in Bahrain did not assist the protesters, rather they maintained their loyalty to the regime. This resulted in a lack of support from the NGO's that the protesters could have benefited from. The third condition social media platform played a passive role in the Bahraini revolution. As was mentioned, the government relatively succeeded in tracking social activists through the Internet and cracking down on any attempt to create demonstration events on social media platforms. The fourth and final condition, economic disparity in the Bahraini community created a rift between different religious sects. Thus, the disproportionate unemployment in the Shia' community that led to social and economical grievances increased the level of violence during the demonstrations. Therefore, Bahrain total score is 6 out of 28 which places it in the lower bottom of the index table created for peaceful transition.

#### 4.8 Table summary for each country transition scenario

Country	Military loyalty Role	Civil society Role	Social media Role	Economic Disparity Role	Transition Scenario
Tunisia	Peaceful	Peaceful	Peaceful	Violent	Peaceful transition
Egypt	Peaceful	Peaceful	Peaceful	Violent	Peaceful transition
Libya	Violent	Violent	Passive	Violent	Violent transition
Syria	Violent	Violent	Peaceful	Violent	Violent transition
Yemen	Violent	Passive	Passive	Violent	Violent transition
Bahrain	Passive	Passive	Passive	Violent	Undetermined transition

In the following chapter, recommendations will be giving on for each condition identified in this paper in order to enhance the chances of experiencing an overall peaceful transition in a country. Moreover, this paper will reveal the significance of the study's conclusions on understanding possible outcomes for countries that posse the same conditions the paper identified, along with the limitations that the researcher encountered throughout the research process.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## CONCLUSION

### 5.1 Introduction

This study represents an initial attempt to understand the relationship between the four conditions that are : the presences of civil society (mainly NGO's), economic disparity, military loyalty to the regime,<sup>34</sup> and social media utilization<sup>35</sup> ,along with the possible scenarios for democratic transitions in the Arab Spring, Though the general topics discussed in this paper (i.e. the presences of civil society, economic disparity, military loyalty to the regime, social media utilization, and transitions theory) are broad, the contribution to the field of international Affairs is both specific and narrowly tailored to the Arab Spring events. The focus on the Arab countries that witnessed the Uprisings highlights some concrete problems in the transition towards democracy in countries such as Syria and Yemen, along with contributing to the understanding of how others such as Egypt and Tunisia were relatively successful in witnessing a peaceful transition towards democracy.

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<sup>34</sup> This paper uses the term military loyalty to describe a country's regular army, while other terms such as security services include, but are not limited to Special Forces, police, and intelligence personnel. In order to use simple terms I will refer to these different branches as "armed forces", while I will adopt the term "military forces" to describe the country's regular army.

<sup>35</sup> Social media in this context refers to blogs, social networking sites such as twitter and Face book, and content communities such as YouTube. In some cases I might refer to traditional media such as Al-Jazeera in the context of the effect of social media in the Arab revolution

## **5.2 Recommendations for enhancing peaceful transitions**

This section will offer detailed recommendations provided by the researcher on the four conditions (military loyalty to the regime, the existence of civil society, the utilization of social media, and economic disparity) on how to enhance the chances of experiencing an overall peaceful transition in a country that possesses the same conditions and attributes as some countries in the Arab Uprisings. Moreover, these recommendations will assist future researchers in this important field of study to better comprehend the complexity of the democratic transitions that the Arab countries experienced or still going through.

### **5.2.1 Military loyalty to the regime**

As has been mentioned before, the military role during any uprising is crucial in determining the possible scenario of the democratic transition.<sup>36</sup> Thus, one can see the importance of having a professional military with core values such as democratic values, protecting the society, and preserving the civilian/military relationship. With these core values, one can deduce that a country that has a professional military institution, along with an emphasis on professional military conduct will always side with the people's demands, rather than protecting the regime. Moreover, in order to achieve professional military conduct, it is important for the citizens to work in order to halt the coup-proofing measure such as distributing material incentives, and exploiting communal ties that regimes create in order to protect themselves. Finally, it is crucial that the protesters

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<sup>36</sup> Whether peaceful, violent, or passive

placate the military personnel by assuring that they are part of the people and this revolution will not harm the top military personnel after the change of the regime.

### **5.2.2 Civil society presences**

The role of the civil society is vital for educating the protesters and promoting peaceful methods that can be conducted by the protesters during a revolution. Civil societies are very flexible and resilient to pressure app by the regime. The ability of civil society groups and activists to work in secrecy is a very common thing in countries that do not tolerate independent civil groups. Though, the scope of their activities may be low, civil society groups can still educate the protester on peaceful tools<sup>37</sup> for conducting protests and empowering young activists in the political arena. Therefore, even if the government is rejecting civil society groups to operate on its soil, the civil society organization can still manage to operate underground and in secrecy. However, the chances of a more effective protest lies in the ability for civil society to operate in a relatively free environment, this is not uncommon even in some authoritarian regimes to tolerate some civil society organizations in the country. Thus, people should refer to such groups and organizations for advice on how to promote peaceful demonstrations during any revolution.

### **5.2.3 Social media utilization**

The importance of having well-educated citizens who are considered Internet savvy in promoting peaceful actions and methods to achieve democratic transition is

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<sup>37</sup> Such tools could be by increasing the level of military personnel awareness for achieving a democratic change

essential. In some way, globalization has affected the role of the media in which it is no longer can be controlled by any regime. One can admit that social media is not the cause or the reason behind the Arab revolution; however, it was the median in which all the protests came to be. Countries that had good communication infrastructure such as Egypt, were able to exploit the benefits of social media platforms to great successes, while in other countries such success achieved due to lack of proper knowledge of social media platforms. Thus, a key factor is that citizens with the help of civil society groups should modernize their Internet infrastructure and educate its citizens on how important it is for them to communicate and use the new social media platforms.

#### **5.2.4 Economic disparity**

The severe economic clash between different social classes in the Arab countries (though some were based on unequal distribution of wealth among tribal groups) led to a violent clash in some of the Arab Spring countries. To halt the economic and social grievances, civil society groups with help of the citizens using social media platforms need to pressure the government to adapt a new economic growth model for achieving equality and diversity among all citizens. As has been mentioned before, with high level of economic growth, people start to demand in peaceful ways more political and economic liberty. This will result in a more educated population that will ask for reforms that will end with a peaceful democratic transition. Thus, citizens should pressure the government to implement more liberal economical reforms (though it may hurt some local business in the short run, this new growth model will be beneficial for the society in the long run) so that different social classes do not clash with each other during any revolution.

### **5.3 Summary of study and its implications**

The citation of key literature in chapter two reviews some of the major themes and debates on transition toward democracy. In addition, it highlights some key theoretical issues found in the literature on transitions to democracy, along with studying violent vs. nonviolent transition and correlates it to the democratic revolutions. Furthermore, chapter two examined the theories on social media, civil society, military army, and finally economic disparity in the context of their ability to affect the transitional outcome. The methodology, described in chapter three, utilizes the advantages of the qualitative research techniques. A framework through which the study utilized is a theoretical index table where each variable/condition in the Arab Spring countries is examined. Chapter four essentially puts into test the hypothesis that this paper identified (i.e. the four conditions role in transition towards democracy) and examined each country in the Arab Spring in the context of the four conditions.

### **5.4 Limitations**

This paper identifies the four main conditions for a peaceful transition towards democracy. Nevertheless, this paper still has its own limitations and shortcomings. The main limitation of this thesis lies in the lack of time for conducting a comprehensive research in further understanding the deeply rooted grievances in the Arab Spring. Another limitation is the lack of resources (mainly monetary) to conduct a research survey where the researcher can collect primary data from key informants in the Arab Spring. Therefore, the researcher relies heavily and only on secondary data as the main

resource of information. In addition to these limitations, the focus of this thesis does not allow the researcher to examine or elaborate further on other factors such as the internal conflicts and the different political parties. Finally, the extent to which global players and the foreign interventions , such as the United States may have played a role in mobilizing the protests during the Arab Uprisings, by educating protest leaders to organize and implement action against the government through social media tools, civil society groups , and public appearances, while relevant, is outside the scope of the framework of this thesis.

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