

LEBANESE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

The Role of Non-Governmental Organizations in Affecting National
Policies

Limitation, Challenges, and Opportunities in a Transitional Context:

Cases of Egypt and Tunisia

By

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Role of NGOs in Affecting National Policies:
Limitations, Challenges, and Opportunities in a Transitional Context

Nicholas-George Matta

ABSTRACT

At a time when the theory of trans-nationalism has become most relevant, the 2011 “Arab Spring” stands as a turning point in the modern history of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. From Tunisia, to Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Bahrain and Syria, domestic policies can no longer remain the way they used to be in the past four decades. The current transitional period necessitates that Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), which played a major role in revolutions, take a more structured action and carry out a serious planning process to build a viable democracy for their repressed societies.

This study focuses on the role of NGOs in shaping national policies in the MENA transitional context highlighting the various opportunities ahead of these NGOs, all while keeping in mind that the “Arab Spring” is still at its infancy stage. In transitional contexts, national policy decisions can be highly influenced by the role of local civil society organizations despite several limitations and challenges. However, this is not to suggest that these organizations, within the context of this study, have the capacity to be in full control of decision-making processes at the level of the state; whether in terms of domestic or foreign policies. They are rather one of the key players through their participation in the political, social, economic, and cultural causes. NGOs can be at the

heart of any societal or political change, and are very much able to affect national domestic policies as well as foreign policies of a certain nation state. Moreover, the paper discusses in detail the definition of NGOs, types, rights and responsibilities, roles and domestic legislation. Tunisia and Egypt are the two main case studies assessed in this research paper.

A literature review of this topic shows us that there have been several books, reports, articles, studies, lectures, courses and university programs about NGOs: their emergence, role, performance, successes and failures. However, this study will build upon the available literature and will try to introduce a new operational definition for NGOs in the MENA region post “Arab-Spring,” as well as contribute to the increasing knowledge about the impact of NGOs on national policies through discussing the relation between NGOs and state actors.

Challenges, limitations, and opportunities will be discussed regarding the NGOs in the MENA region. Globalization context is the only framework that is common to the study of NGOs in general. Assessing the achievements of NGOs in the region will be based on approaches that have previously been discussed and argued by which qualitative and quantitative tools should be used. Capacity building is the mainly argued solution for these problems on three main levels: organizational, financial, and technological. The study highlights the actual participation of NGOs in good governance, capacity building and institutional effectiveness, conflict resolution and peace building, as well as lobbying capacity and participation in elections.

Given these various challenges and limitations, this thesis will conclude with assessing the efficient tools that will measure the actual effect of NGOs' participation in shaping internal and external regulations, given the differences in their aspirations and expectations.

Keywords: Arab Spring, NGOs, transitional context, Egypt, Tunisia, capacity building for NGOs, role of NGOs, domestic and foreign policies, activists, legislation, revolutions.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Nobel Peace Prize Winner and Seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN) Kofi Annan once stated: “*Business, labor and civil society organizations have skills and resources that are vital in helping to build a more robust global community.*” (Annan, 2000) This statement equates the importance of the role of civil society organizations with that of business and labor, which constitute the two main driving forces of societies. An active and well-structured civil society can thus play an essential role in creating a positive impact just like business and labor. Annan’s words also show that the role of civil society could be as concrete and real as that of business and labor. In this sense, the former UN Secretary General defies the prevailing old perception of civil society as being only conceptual or theoretical. Civil society is thus capable, through its proper usage of its skills and resources, of mobilizing communities toward building better societies. Civil Society organizations have developed into sophisticated advocacy players, recipients of huge funds, implementers of development projects, and influencers on political decisions. Of course all this has become possible through the globalized nature of today’s world.

A historical review reveals that after the fall of the Soviet Union in December 1991, and with the exponential rise of the age of information; globalization became the current modality governing today’s world. With globalization came the concept of international integration where the notion of state sovereignty became less and less important and the ultimate model of government grew into ‘democracy’, along with freedom of

expression, personal initiative, as well as social and economic development. Accordingly, the theory of trans-nationalism became more relevant. (Lamy, 2011, para 6-10)

The end of the Soviet era has not been the only fall of a powerful regime happening in modern history. Smaller scale regime toppling has been on the rise in the MENA region since December 2010, whereby several states started witnessing the fall of their autocratic rulers. Despite the fact that the pioneers of the “Arab Uprisings” did not admit that those were the result of globalization pressure; a wide tendency amongst many scholars nowadays suggests that the “Arab Spring” is a natural consequence of common domestic norms as well as world-wide concepts of new media technologies and a well-educated youth (Pratt, 2011). The “Arab Spring” that started in December 2010 was a turning point in the modern history of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. People in this part of the world have recognized that their voices can now be heard, and that they can bring the long years of silence and repression to an end. Nonetheless, human rights activists in these post-revolution countries have realized that many efforts still need to be put to build a better future and guarantee the non-repetition of past violations. From Tunisia, to Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Bahrain and Syria, domestic policies can no longer remain the way they used to be in the past four decades. (Terill, 2011)

According to Samuel Huntington, “in the new world, cultural identity is the central factor shaping a country’s associations and antagonisms.” (Huntington, 1996) This cultural identity is determined by the different organizations of civil society. In the Arab World, cultural identity was suppressed for many years until the beginning of the “Arab

Spring”. Cultural identity, determined by the civil society was being fed for a decade by the concepts of globalization. (Huntington, 1996) When demonstrations broke out in the streets, and the youth seemed persistent and unwilling to give up on their demands, the existing Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and particularly those concerned with defending human rights, were in fact facing a turning point in history and could not remain idle. Human rights activists affiliated with these organizations had been lobbying for years, secretly or publicly from abroad, for freedom and regime change using the various tools of globalization. It is essential for these same organizations and those that were born on an ad-hoc basis during protests to be well-structured and to carry out serious planning to survive this transitional period and build a viable democracy for their repressed societies. These organizations have a key role in building a future that respects human rights, achieves economic and social development, and values building a culture of peace.

In spite of their firm control of the countries’ security, Arab dictators found themselves incapable of stopping the flow of information in this globalized context. Social media seemed to be stronger than the country’s intelligence forces, and demonstrators used all globalization information tools to gather and demonstrate peacefully against the autocratic rule in their countries. The spillover effect could not be avoided and the strongholds of dictators seemed to collapse, one after the other paving the way for “Arab Spring” societies to take the lead.

At the time when some revolutions have relatively been peaceful in the MENA region, such as in Tunisia or Egypt, with a more or less limited number of casualties, they transformed into violence in Libya, which necessitated the intervention of the NATO

forces, and into an ongoing armed conflict in Syria with millions of internally displaced persons and refugees fleeing to neighboring countries. A political settlement was reached in Yemen, and a Gulf military intervention took place in Bahrain. In many of these cases, there were serious breaches of international law and severe human rights violations- including war crimes and crimes against humanity-in Syria or Libya for example. This research paper is aware of these challenges and differences amongst these countries which were all trying to move from a dictatorship into a democracy, taking into consideration their cultural and social diversities although they belong to the same region.

Based on the above, this research paper aims to examine the following hypothesis:

In transitional contexts, national policy decisions can be highly influenced by the role of local civil society organizations despite several limitations and challenges.

Two cases studies are identified to examine this hypothesis: Tunisia and Egypt. Chapter three explains in details why these two countries were chosen and how developments unfolded in each of them.

A literature review of this topic (to be discussed in detail in chapter 2) shows that there have been several books, reports, articles, studies, lectures, courses, and university programs about NGOs: their emergence, role, performance, successes, and failures. This study will build upon the available literature throughout its various chapters, and will try to introduce a new operational definition for NGOs in the MENA region post the “Arab Spring,” as well as contribute to the increasing knowledge about the impact of NGOs on

domestic and foreign policies through discussing the relation between NGOs and state actors.

Thus, this research paper focuses on the role of NGOs in shaping domestic and foreign policies in the current MENA transitional context highlighting the various opportunities ahead of these organizations , all while keeping in mind that the “Arab Spring” is still at its infancy stage. The limitations and challenges impeding this process will be extensively discussed. Within the scope of this paper, the term “transitional context” or a “country in transition” refers to a country coming out of conflict or armed conflict and/or state repression.

While this study focuses on the important role played by NGOs it does not suggest that these organizations have the capacity to be in full control of the state’s decision making process; be it in terms of domestic or foreign policies. NGOs are rather one of the key players through their participation in the political, social, economic, and cultural issues. In this sense, NGOs can be at the heart of any societal or political change, and are very much able to affect national domestic policies as well as foreign policies of a certain nation state.

After discussing the relevance of this topic in the MENA region and setting NGOs in the transitional context in terms of domestic and foreign policies, it is crucial to discuss in details the definition of NGOs, types, rights and responsibilities, roles, and domestic legislation.

The UN definition of a non-governmental organization is as follows:

“A non-governmental organization (NGO) is a not-for-profit, voluntary citizens’ group, which is organized on a local, national or international level to address issues in support of the public good. Task-oriented and made up of people with common interests, NGOs perform a variety of services and humanitarian functions, bring citizens’ concerns to governments, monitor policy and programme implementation, and encourage participation of civil society stakeholders at the community level. They provide analysis and expertise, serve as early warning mechanisms, and help monitor and implement international agreements. Some are organized around specific issues, such as human rights, the environment, or health. Their relationship with offices and agencies of the United Nations (UN) system differs depending on their location and their mandate.” (United Nations, 2013)

It is worth noting that this study takes into account that in some countries in the MENA region, the concept of civil society is relatively new, and most of the few local organizations that existed were in fact quasi-governmental or even under the government’s full control. Other NGOs, mostly of sectarian nature (belonging to a certain sect), operated secretly in addition to some expat activists lobbied from abroad. The uniqueness of the NGO situation in the MENA region necessitates the adoption of a clear operational definition that will distinguish between the different organizations. This research paper will study the characteristics and types of these organizations and cross-match them with the UN definition of NGOs in order to come up with a scientific mechanism for defining NGOs. (Mackenzie, 2013, pp. 1-7)

A quick overview of this paper’s content shows that Chapter Two presents a detailed overview of the literature review written on this topic.

Chapter Three touches on the issues of globalization, cultural identity in the MENA region, and Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations." This chapter highlights the ongoing discussion about democracy post the "Arab Spring," as well as NGOs' expectations and aspirations. It also offers an operational definition of NGOs and discusses in details the choice of Tunisia and Egypt as cases studies.

Chapter Four addresses the issue of NGOs' participation in the MENA region in good governance; capacity building and institutional effectiveness; conflict resolution and peace building; as well as lobbying capacity and participation in advocacy efforts. It starts by elaborating on the history of such participation, and then points out to the emergence of the role of NGOs post revolutions; and hence, their current status. Of course, the focus is on local and international NGOs equally elaborating their role in domestic and foreign affairs. Particular attention is given to explaining the lobbying capacity of these organizations.

Chapter five examines the opportunities ahead of the NGOs within the transitional context of the "Arab Spring" countries. The successes and failures of national, regional, and international NGOs in affecting domestic legislations on one hand, and foreign policies on the other hand are also other areas of focus. This chapter indulges into the details of the revolutions that took place in Egypt and Tunisia and concentrates on the role of NGOs in lobbying for these uprisings. It investigates the post-revolution context and discusses the levels of success of these NGOs in shaping the domestic and foreign policies. Moreover, this chapter highlights the aspects of domestic and foreign policies, which NGOs failed to, affect or shape.

The chapter also studies in detail the various limitations and challenges faced by NGOs in Egypt and Tunisia which decrease their capacity to shape domestic politics and influence foreign policy. Limitations vary between legislation, divisions among the organizations, non-cooperation of politicians, political repression, difficulties in overcoming the culture of fear and getting acquainted to freedoms, prohibited sources of funding, lack of capacity building, corruption, etc...

Given these various challenges and limitations, this research paper will conclude with assessing the efficient tools that will measure the actual effect of NGOs' participation in shaping internal and external regulations, given the differences in their aspirations and expectations.

Chapter Two

Review of the Literature

A critical analysis of what has been previously written about this allows a deeper insight on what to tackle exactly concerning the role of NGOs. It is important to review previous literature in order to better understand the characteristics, dynamics, opportunities, and threats for these NGOs in general; and specifically in the MENA region.

According to Goel, NGOs are voluntary organizations aiming to support the government in order to improve the quality of life for the people living in a defined nation state, all while dealing with several social aspects. Goel adds that the role of NGOs “has grown substantially over the past century and they operate virtually in every part of the globe”. Also tackled, is the issue of NGO legitimacy, real representation, and public pressures. (Goel, 2004, pp. 1-56)

Vanessa Buth argues, in her book *‘Capacities of Participative Government: The Role of NGOs in EU Politics’*, that NGOs lose their autonomy while dealing with governments and international unions such as the European Union (EU) because of all the rules, regulations, and limitations that are placed. In addition she advocates that small and local NGOs are always left out of the important projects; thus, they lose their capacity to influence or to reflect the aspirations of the community they represent. Therefore, Buth stresses on the fact that new regulations must concentrate on decreasing the conditions

for NGOs' participation, and should take into account the inclusion of a wide range of these organizations. (Buth, 2006, pp. 12-45)

Both previous writings concentrate on the roles of NGOs, but also discuss the limitations and challenges faced. Many of such writings debate these facts, which created an urge to write about the limitations and challenges of NGOs that would later on become decent opportunities if they were efficiently dealt with.

NGO participation is another facet that is discussed in this thesis paper. Simona Florea wrote about the role of NGOs while intervening in post-conflict societies. She reviewed what has been done by these NGOs during the Kosovo post-conflict in specific. As the thesis paper builds on this idea, it targets the MENA region in the context of the post "Arab Spring". Florea states that the cooperation between the UN and NGOs created a very solid status intervention level in a post-war environment. This paper will tackle this idea in details and apply it to the cases of Egypt and Tunisia. (Florea, 2005)

Globalization affected the role of civil society organizations all over the globe. Nowadays, lobbying tools are much more progressive with all the technological advancement. This paper studies the role of NGOs taking into account this global phenomenon. Analysis cannot happen without placing the study in its correct context.

Gupta suggests that today's technology enhances the communication between NGOs that are working for the same cause. Despite the fact that the gap between northern and southern NGOs exist because of Globalization, he still argues that the state transferred its role to non-state actors all while keeping the regulations. Gupta tackles the role of NGOs in terms of environment, climate change, and economic development. (Gupta, 2009)

One should always keep in mind that NGOs face challenges and limitations. According to Tony Hill, NGOs have always been partners of the UN since its inception. They played a vital role in influencing its agenda. However, this role is faced by many challenges including organizational, governmental, legislative, and economic challenges.

Most of the writings in this realm discuss the economic challenges. One of the main difficulties that face NGOs is the ability to incorporate funds from different sources all while maintaining their autonomy. Another challenge discussed by authors is the lack of organization from within the NGO itself. Capacity building is the mainly argued solution for these problems on three main levels: organizational, financial, and technological.

Numerous writings discussed success and failures of NGOs in shaping domestic and foreign policies as well as influencing their local governments. Analyzing results on the global level is vital to determine the level of achievements. However, the most important criterion is the tools used to measure the efficiency of NGOs' work. It is critical to study the tools used for evaluation.

Betsill and Corell used empirical results in assessing the successes and failures of NGOs in terms of lobbying and negotiating their cause to influence decision making processes. They used systematic analysis which included triangulation of data sources, statistical analysis, and actual case studies, during which they analyzed and studied evaluation reports of real projects. Their starting point was an actual qualitative measurement or a certain hypothesis that they used to start conducting their quantitative research. They created an analytical framework which suggested a step-by-step approach in analyzing lobbying results. (Betsill & Corell, 2008, pp. 23-71)

Monitoring should be a rigorous tool to scrutinize the effectiveness of NGOs in working towards change. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Journal strengthened the fact that developing monitoring tools is a challenging activity to be set. The journal created a set of indicators, mostly economic and social ones, in order to create a certain standard of measurement and monitoring. A research tool-kit has been developed that can be used by governments, donors, and evaluation agencies. These are vital tools that a researcher can rely on when analyzing the work of NGOs. (OECD, 2008)

The actual implementation of policies that are based on public opinion is just another qualitative approach to this kind of measurement. Many writers suggested reviewing societal claims for a certain policy or law, and then following up on the adoption of these laws and policies, whether domestic or international. The main drawback of such an analysis is the legal approach to it. An observer can never determine to what extent a policy adoption answers the NGOs' claims, since there might be several legal aspects that might put a kind of pressure on these civil society organizations.

This chapter is important to better aim this thesis to its right direction. Reviewing previous literature about NGOs and their role revealed the multiple aspects of which this topic can be covered. However, this thesis places the role of NGOs in a different context, which is the post "Arab Spring."

Challenges, limitations, and opportunities will be discussed regarding the NGOs in the MENA region. Globalization context is the only framework that is common to the study of NGOs in general. Assessing the achievements of NGOs in the region will be based on

approaches that have previously been discussed and argued by which qualitative and quantitative tools should be used.

Chapter Three

The Arab Spring in Context

Cultural Identity in the MENA Region

The cultural identity of the region is central to investigate when studying the role of NGOs in this area; in order to set the correct framework for the analysis. Cultural identity tackles not only the society mindset, but also individuals' backgrounds. Since NGOs and civil society organizations are a combination of individuals working together for a common cause as well as multiple societal organizations cooperating to reach specific targets, it is important to reveal the attributes of these individuals and organizations.

The word "civil" in the term "civil society" is referred to the sector that is not related to the government; thus the terminology "Civil Life" and "Civil Organizations". The term civil does not only refer to the secular part of the society. All religious institutions are part of the civil society, unless these institutions constitute the ruling party/parties, or the government. Thus, any NGO which is religious by nature or has a characteristic of being a constituent of a certain sect is part of the civil society.

The civil societies that fought for their independence are more than restless to maintain their cultural identity all while keeping democracy in the back of their minds. Since globalization started to be the trend that dominates people's daily lives, the Arab World has been observing the changes that took place on the level of other global societies. The Arab people got better access to education, information, and technology. Mobile phones,

satellite TV's, and social media opened up the door for political and structural debates between individuals. This pushed civil societies in this region to be more participative in the decision making processes. They even reached the extent of questioning the patriarchal system that dominates the Arab World. (International Business Times Journal, 2014,)

On the other hand, there are concerns and hindrance for some organizations which claim that the "Arab Spring" is destroying their national identities with its openness towards democracy and Western prototypes. They also claim that despite the previous autocratic regimes, national identities were preserved and the culture of Islam was maintained. These revolutions stimulated the previously marginalized communities into conflict among one another as well as with reconstruction efforts. (Shaaban, 2012,)

Leaders of the Gulf States have been debating the issue of culture and cultural identity and its relation to globalization impacts. Globalization is considered to be a threat to national Arab identities in the MENA region. There is a belief that this phenomenon would lead to the degradation and loss of the Arabic Language as well as several vital beliefs of Islam. However, the Dubai School of Government, in a study released in 2011, suggests that it is not always true that "acquiring new culture would lead to the loss of the original culture". (Dabbagh and Gargani, 2011, pp. 1-22)

"Culture and values are the soul of development. They provide its impetus, facilitate the means needed to further it, and substantially define people's vision of its purposes and end." This statement was the core of the Arab Human Development Report, released by UNDP in 2002. The report, which was written by Arab scholars, argues that culture and

values help shape people's aspirations and views. Being the basic function of NGOs and civil society organizations, reflecting the culture is crucial in their struggle to build their post-revolution countries. New governments, their laws, and their actions have to substantially include culture and values. This will be the first step in the path for development. (UNDP, 2002, PAGE)

In "Clash of Civilizations", Samuel Huntington introduces the concept of "Essentialized Cultural Difference" when talking about the several types of regimes including the Arab World in his analysis of the post-Cold War era. Huntington mentions the phrase "The West and the Rest" as a further emphasis on the idea of cultural difference. (Huntington, 1993, pp. 22-49) Several other authors argue that the Arab culture is incompatible with the concept of democracy due to a main building block in democracy called "Separation of Religion from State". Stuart Hall states the following:

"Cultural identity . . . is a matter of "becoming" as well as "being." . . . Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they [identities] are subject to the continuous "play" of history, culture and power . . . identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past."(Hall, 1994, pp. 394)

Identity in the MENA region is also molded by the concept of Nationalism that has been present since the 20th century. Dictators used national identity as a method to unite citizens under a clear territory-bound community as well as to make their regimes more legitimate. This is another aspect that civil society organizations have to carefully address while defining their new status in post-revolution nation states. (Bhabba, 1994, pp. 145)

Based on the above-mentioned facts, culture and identity in the MENA region prove to be integral facets for the work of NGOs and civil society organizations in a region facing post-revolutionary transitions. It was important to discuss the cultural framework in which these organizations have to work and play a significant role in shaping domestic and foreign policies of their nation states. Highlighting the difference between the Western prototypes and those of the MENA region is the next step in establishing this framework.

Throughout the history of most of the Arab nations, there has always been an unfriendly relationship between culture and national identity. Authoritarian regimes have always built their national identity regardless of the culture of their societies. NGOs in this case have been sidelined and either considered to be enemies of the state or, for a big part of them, state-based NGOs.

Democracy Discussion Post “Arab Spring”

Beginning in December 2010, Tunisia’s revolution against its dictatorship was the inception of the concept: “The Arab Spring”. For the first time since their independence, Arab countries in the MENA region were faced by coalitions of civil society actors aiming to topple their dictators. Their struggle continues until today since building a democratic model in this area of the world appears as a long path strewn with many pitfalls. Questioning the nature of “replacement regimes” is necessary to understand throughout the widespread culture that combines Islam and democracy.

Political Islam highlighted the Islamic Culture that was, and still is in most Arab states, the dominant culture. This culture proved to be a failed social and political system

since it did not deliver on the promises of democratization. Also, several violent outrages took place in the name of Islam, which dominated the image of Islamic Culture. In addition to that, several movements coincided with the presence of authoritarian and totalitarian regimes. These movements, political parties, and organized groups defied the existence of new emerging movements that were coined as “Post-Islamic Culture Movements”. Islamic Culture defined Islamic ideologies, norms, values, and ways of life. These ideologies were guidelines for social and political life. After the Arab Spring, new civil society organizations contradicted these concepts by introducing the culture of democratization, pluralism, westernization, and development away from religious ideologies. These activists introduced a new “brand” of Islamic Culture to be seen by the entire world as a breakthrough towards democratization. (Ramadan, 2012, pp.67-95)

When judging the role of NGOs in the MENA region, it is vital to define the correct context. According to Acemoglu and Robinson, these countries cannot fall into the trap of implementing “Western democracy” as an exportable model or transposing a societal context that is, in its essence, culturally different. “Institutional Transplant” cannot work in the MENA region since the newly created institutions should be compatible or at least complimentary with the work of similar international institutions. With this dilemma, revolutionaries chose the path of religion as an alternative to their dictators. (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012, pp. 1-7 & 368-404)

Many experts, who analyzed this phenomenon, saw it as inevitable to see the rise of Islamism in countries affected by the “democratic winds blowing in the ‘Arab Spring’ countries”. It seemed that this was their best alternative to replace the discontents made by former military regimes and dictatorships. These facts left the Arab population in

these countries with the combination of two aspects: religion and politics. These two areas have proved, throughout the years, to be the main constituents of culture in the MENA region. (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012, pp. 1-7 & 368-404)

One of the main features of democracy is the protection of the rule of law. For civil society organizations in the MENA region, it is vital to elude the despotic version of democracy, which legitimizes the absolute will of the majority (case of Egypt). The problem currently facing the wide spreading of democracy is the dilemma between applying “Sharia” versus the progressive slogans that are shouting for the arrival of individual freedoms. Thus, the radicalization of societal principles presents a contradiction to the issues raised by the civil society. (Haynes, 2009, pp. 5-18)

A major fear that controls the work of civil society organizations is actually moving the authority from the tyranny of the minority to the tyranny of the majority disguised by the mask of democracy. Islamists who governed post-revolution Arab states were brought to power through democratic apparatuses, but ironically contradicted the main concepts of democracy. Scholars suggested that these parties governed their countries in a tyrannical type of government disregarding the rule of law, individual freedoms, and liberal behavior. They were always resorting to “Sharia” in one way or another to camouflage their tyranny. (Haynes, 2009, pp. 5-18, et al)

Compatibility between Islam and democratic forms of government should also be tackled in this case. Social tensions have always been created because of the struggle between democratic politics and religion. However, this tension defers from one religion to another. This tension is fairly high when talking about Islam. There are those who

argue that democracy has intrinsic inconsistencies or mismatches with the ideologies and morals of Islam, and that the certainties of Muslim and Arab politics validate that Islam is at odds with democracy on the cultural and religious levels. Bernard Lewis and Samuel P. Huntington suggest that liberal democracy is very much incompatible with fundamentalist Islam. This discussion has long been formed before the “Arab Spring” started. The idea of incompatibility was further crystalized after the events of September 11, 2001. Despite these facts, it can still be argued whether these theories apply to the current situation after the “Arab Spring”. (Cook & Stathis, 2012, pp. 175-186)

Historically, Islam proved to be capable of dealing with minorities within its communities. Islam liberated the individual from the collectivism of the tribe. Islamists who came to power after the revolutions were confronted by the questions of purpose, convictions, and good governance in the modern world. These leaders will have to make a solid link between the concepts of democracy and faith in order to create a new model of democracy that suits the region (possibly following the Turkish Model). In order for them to succeed, it is a basic requirement to introduce the salient characteristics of modernity, or else they will face the same pressures of globalization as their previously-topped dictators. (Norton, 2001, pp. 17-45)

This pressure will inevitably lead the new regimes to a better cooperation with Western democracies. The Westphalia-State type has been previously criticized by countries in the MENA region, but now, after the revolutions, these states are pressured to create an aligned relationship between the state and the society. Verifying this model as successful, democracy would once again prove that it is the best type of governance amongst all other ideologies. Religious conflicts or conflict between religions did not

give a real measurable answer to whether democratic transitions were successful or not. As an example, the Catholic Church played a very positive role in the transition of Latin-American states to democracy. These facts provided a solid ground for writers to introduce religion as a basic part in the transition of a certain nation to democracy. However, in the MENA region, the religious control over much of the civil society has no comparison in other countries. Thus, the central role of Islam in the “Arab Spring” shows a new model of democratization that creates new concepts that should be highlighted, which is even different than the Turkish model of Ataturk. (Norton, 2001, pp. 17-45, et al)

A root cause of the “Arab Spring” that has been omitted by many observers is the lack of economic freedom and personal initiatives. Given the poverty and underdevelopment of the majority of the populations in the MENA countries, economic pressure grew to become a fundamental reason for seeking change. Democracy must permit these economically free nations to change the enticements for actors on the level of trade, investments, and other forms of economic prosperity. These goals can only be realized if democracy is “functional”. A functional democracy in this case should generate an active parliament fulfilling correct budgetary actions, an administration at the service of citizens in terms of economic development, and an environment that facilitates entrepreneurial climate, transparency at all levels, and most importantly, an active civil society. (Chickering, 2006, pp. 7-52)

The main concern on the economic level, when dealing with the type of democracy in the MENA region, is the level of bureaucracy that is created by Islamist regimes. The questions that are raised on this matter are the following: Can Islamists control economic

corruption? Is there enough transparency? Is there enough separation between the economic and political institutions? Can the Islamists tackle the economic problems that have been a burden on the shoulders of Arab states for decades? (Rajae, 2010, pp. 104-130)

This analysis proves that in order to have a vibrant civil society, NGOs should work in a healthy democratic environment. Defining the required environment to clearly observe the democracy type in the MENA region after the “Arab Spring” revolution is essential to better determine the challenges, opportunities, and threats facing these organizations.

NGOS after the “Arab Spring”: Expectations and Aspirations

The “Arab Spring” created a major push towards the liberation of civil society actors. Many years of tyranny and harsh control over personal and societal freedoms were abolished. Fears of state domination changed into new aspirations and expectations for political and social engagement. This also applied to the countries the dictators of which were not toppled, but managed to loosen up their tight grip over freedoms in their countries, fearing any similar revolutions. Expectations for a wider civil society involvement became high and a hope for the start of a new developmental era was foreseen.

However, despite all these aspirations, many problems appeared to hinder this process. Many countries in the MENA region did not have any type of civil society organizations prior to the revolution. As discussed in the previous section, Islamists replaced dictators, and so, acting under the rule of such parties created a difficult environment for these NGOs to work. It is always the case in countries where change occurs; people tend to

resist change. Thus, expectations should not head towards having or adopting the normal liberal democracy of the West, but rather another form of democracy that suits the culture of the Arab World. (Rand, 2013, pp. 1-20)

The exponential growth of civil society in the MENA region after the “Arab Spring” created high expectations for development on several levels: policies, economics, politics, and society.

On the level of domestic policies, aspirations included the enhancement of these countries’ constitutions in order to preserve the rights of political parties, labor syndicates, municipalities, and other active civil society organizations. The aim is to develop these policies so that they are compatible with the post “Arab Spring” environment; thus, focusing on the type of governments. (Rand, 2013, pp. 21-45)

At the economic level, the main concern is to enhance the cooperation with international development agencies. Over the previous decades, only national governments have been receiving funds for development. As for now, the civil society organizations aim to develop programs that match the vision of these international agencies. Economic freedom is also another factor in the vision of NGOs. Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have never been a priority or a concern for dictators in this part of the world. After the revolutions and due to globalization, civil societies are looking forward for the implementation of these MDGs within their countries, giving the people a wide space to economically breathe and eliminate poverty. (Feiler, 2012, pp. 108-128)

At the social level, globalization plays the leading role in shaping the view of societies in the MENA region. The effect of education, cosmopolitanism, urbanization, and

human development clarifies these NGOs' vision to guarantee that their societies obtain these rights and adapt to being citizens of the world. They are tired of being excluded because of being considered intruders to the global community. However, in this case and as discussed in previous sections of this paper, Islam plays a vital role in shaping this view. (Joffe, 2013, pp. 197-213)

The relationship between EU organizations and non-EU organizations has long been based on the concepts of respect for human rights. Therefore, the ultimate goals of the Arab Spring forced the EU organizations to support, and was bound to these goals not only strategically, but morally as well. Despite its democratization objective, the EU works by imposing its agenda and strategic plans on the organizations of the post-Arab spring era. Now that the doors are open, international organizations have been easily working on applying their objectives. On the other hand, international organizations have to deal with new ruling regimes in the Arab World, mostly Islamic regimes, and to adapt to the changing situations. International Organizations have to resort to a more flexible approach that deals with the needs and aspirations of people rather than that of ruling parties. Cooperation is being developed on that specific level. INGOs have been working closely with local NGOs in order to study the needs of people in different regions in the post Arab Spring countries. (Fioramonti, 2012, pp.17-32)

Finally, as a summary for the expectations and aspirations, NGOs are working hard toward creating social, political, and economic freedoms in their countries. They are as well trying to build a reliable and efficient relationship with the international community. The next section places the correct definition for the concept of NGOs and civil society organizations. Setting the operational definition will be the last milestone in

creating a useful and logical framework of study for this thesis paper. By that, the paper would have first introduced the hypothesis, reviewed previous literature, defined the MENA region's cultural identity, discussed the form of democracy after the Arab Spring, analyzed the expectations and aspirations of NGOs, and formed a rational operational definition of these NGOs; thus, the completion of the framework.

Operational Definition of NGOs

“A non-governmental organization (NGO) is any non-profit, voluntary citizens' group which is organized on a local, national or international level. Task-oriented and driven by people with a common interest, NGOs perform a variety of service and humanitarian functions, bring citizen concerns to Governments, advocate and monitor policies and encourage political participation through provision of information.”

(ngo.org)

When social groups and individuals come together in order to advocate a set of goals and common interests, they become an important power that shapes the trajectory of states. This movement can be coined as “Social Movement”. On the other hand, even with the growing interest for NGOs and the numerous literatures that have been written about these organizations, there is no clear definition yet. What the term NGO actually encompasses is still a vague concept despite its continuous usage in academic writings. Questions tend to be raised as follows: Are political parties considered to be NGOs? Are religious organizations considered to be NGOs? These questions cannot be answered without studying the types of NGOs and their mode of operations. Only then, a clear conclusion can be constructed. (Moghadam, 2012, pp. 50-200)

Anton Vedder identifies two basic types of NGOs: operational NGOs and advocacy NGOs. Despite the growing sphere of NGO functions in the world today, their roles can be categorized into advocacy actions and operational actions. At the level of operations, a discussion can be made concerning the diversification of the functions played by community-based organizations as being main implementers of developmental projects in their home countries. In other words, such organizations are also expanding their scope to reach transnational boundaries and build cooperation as well as partnerships with international organizations. In this way, they are enhancing their status and developing their local nature. They are expanding their role as main catalysts for popular participation in shaping and implementing development projects. At the level of advocacy, NGOs in this area mainly focus on human rights. However, they embraced themselves to adopt a diverse portfolio ranging from human rights protection to calling for environmental protection, economic prosperity, as well as mobilization for change in domestic and foreign policies of their nation-state. (Vedder, 2007, pp. 23-57)

In the MENA region, several factors played a role in shaping the types and definition of NGOs. Therefore, the factors constructing the type of work for these NGOs are:

1. *Globalization*
2. *Promotion of Culture and Values*
3. *Human Rights & Democratization*
4. *Basics of Transparency and Accountability*
5. *Enhancing Civil Society Participation*
6. *Capacity Building for Local Institutions*
7. *Networking & Economic and Social Reform*

Concluding this section, this research paper provides the following operational definition NGOs working in the MENA region after the “Arab Spring”:

NGOs in the MENA region are civil society organizations and social groups working hand-in-hand towards achieving common interests and goals in order to build post “Arab Spring” countries in a way that matches the expectations and aspirations of their communities, all within a complex, competitive, and conflicting environments. These organizations include political parties, faith-based organizations, unions, social groups, and individuals working in advocacy and development. They face the same challenges, limitations, and opportunities.

Chapter Four

Egypt and Tunisia: The Case Studies

Defining the Case Studies: Egypt and Tunisia

The quick toppling of dictators in the cases of Egypt and Tunisia is the main reason behind choosing these two countries as case studies for this thesis. One can wonder why these two countries were the fastest in removing the tyranny. This paper will try to answer the question by highlighting the role of the civil society and NGOs all while concentrating on the phase of post revolution.

Egypt appeared in January, 2011 to be part of the wave hitting the MENA region especially following the overthrowing of Tunisia's president Zein El-Abedin Ben Ali. The close time interval between both revolutions appeared as if this phenomenon was organized and calculated, creating winds of democratization where citizens of neighboring states were affected by each other. The fact is that Egypt's revolution was not a result of the Tunisian uprising. Of course Tunisia's uprising had a huge effect on the millions of Egyptians who demonstrated against Husni Mubarak back then. The dramatic toppling of Bin Ali is the partial reason behind Egypt's revolt. However, it is important to study each case on its own as well as carefully analyze the developments in both Tunisian and Egyptian politics. (De Leon & Jones, 2012, pp. 1-108)

Summary of the two cases

The "Jasmine Revolution" was the name given to the Tunisian Revolution. It was the initial spark that started the series of revolutions in the Arab World that were later called

the “Arab Spring”. It spread-out into three phases: the first phase was when a street vendor, Mohammed Bouazizi, set himself on fire in order to protest against the government’s treatment of people in Tunisia. Demonstrations in his home-town were the next step that was followed by other protests in different areas across Tunisia. The second phase was when the demonstrations reached the capital and the government responded brutally. The government’s response included internet shut-down, arrests, and the usage of force. The third and last phase of this revolution was when Bin Ali shuffled his government and promised the Tunisian people to provide them with 300,000 jobs; however, the demonstrators wanted the removal of the regime. Bin Ali fled the country with his family seeking refuge in Saudi Arabia. This marked the end of the first spark of the “Arab Spring.” It was the first time in history that an Arab dictator was removed by popular will and demand rather than by just a military coup d’état. (De Leon & Jones, 2012, pp. 1-108)

As for Egypt, partly inspired by the revolution in Tunisia, protesters demonstrated the streets of Cairo on January 25, 2011 demanding an end to poverty, injustice, and corruption. These demonstrations were faced by a very harsh response from the police and supporters of Mubarak and the ruling party, the “National Democratic Party”. However, Egyptians broke the fear and went into street battles with the police, mostly in the Tahrir Square in Cairo. Demonstrations followed in Alexandria and many other major cities of Egypt. Ironically enough, and similar to the procedures that Bin Ali’s regime took in Tunisia, the Egyptian government shut down the internet as well as mobile services. Despite the efforts of Husni Mubarak to concede popular demands, the demonstrations continued. Lastly, on February 11, 2011, “Friday of Departure” was the

breaking point for the Egyptian president who was forced to resign. (De Leon & Jones, 2012, pp. 1-108)

A very important and crucial factor that led to the success of these uprisings in Egypt and Tunisia was the role of the military. The militaries of both Tunisia and Egypt decided not to use violence and stand neutral in face of the changes that were taking place. This decision was based on the existing relationship between the military and the regime and on whether the military viewed the regime to be worth saving or not. Ben Ali ordered the military to shoot at the demonstrators. General Rachid Ammar, the head of the army refused to do that. Similarly, in Egypt, the army stood neutral and did not attack the demonstrators because in Egypt, the army wanted to save their image of being the most legitimate and professional institution in the eyes of the Egyptian people. (De Leon & Jones, 2012, pp. 1-108)

The Case of Tunisia

Three years after the revolution, Tunisia established a new democracy. Approving the country's new constitution through a historic vote came as a major result of the fruitful revolution. If a conflict map was to be created for the Tunisian "Jasmine Revolution" prior to the adoption of the new constitution, the result would show that the youth played a vital role in shaping this revolution. This point of view is mainly adopted by the main advocates of the revolution who took over the control of the country. The youth made use of the technological advancement to the extent that the revolution was at some point called the "Twitter Revolution". Today, these same youth along with many civil society organizations are reflecting on their country's problems in facing the roadmap to democracy.

International donations are the best source of funds for NGOs in Tunisia. After the revolution, economic and political foreign funds are a new aspect for the ruling party. Under Bin Ali, thousands of NGOs received international funds but they were not allowed to act upon any political or human rights issues. They were only able to work within the boundaries of cultural and social activities. Thus, previously, NGOs were very much limited with their scope of work and were under massive pressure from Bin Ali's regime. As an example to these funds, Poland created a Program called "Support for Democracy" in which NGOs received a percentage of 85% during the year 2013. The themes they focused on varied from transformation and democracy to strengthening the rule of law. (Polish Aid, 2013)

During and after the revolution, the number of NGOs doubled and they increased their scope of work to include a diversity of issues including political ones, human rights, transparency, justice, transitional justice, etc... At the same time, there was a growth of political parties that stemmed out of people's needs. Most of these parties were organized by faith-based communities and Islamists. Media outlets, TV stations, and satellites were created and operated widely throughout the entire country. This led the international community to rush into the support of Tunisia in order to help these groups build a democratic country.

This, among others, is a very important factor to be considered while examining NGOs in Tunisia after the revolution. International donors have set a framework that would help local NGOs and civil society in Tunisia make use of these international funds in order to affect the local domestic policies and have a say in the development of their country. In fact, the case of Tunisia is completely the opposite of that of Egypt. Tunisia

opened up the door for foreign assistance, created laws to support international aid, and set a correct framework for its local organizations to work and make use of all the tools that they were receiving. (Aleya-Sghayer, 2013, pp. 30-52)

The Case of Egypt

Egypt has the biggest population within the countries of the MENA region. It is considered to be a regional power and a main ally of the United States. Other countries in the region are affected by the decisions made in Cairo; keeping in mind that the Arab League's headquarter is there. Given its key role in the MENA region, there should be particular interest in the role of its huge civil society. Despite all the problems facing the civil society in Egypt, it still has the biggest and most vivacious one. Civil society in Egypt is governed by two main laws, namely: *Law on Associations and Community Foundations* and *Implementing Regulation for Law 84 of 2002*. These laws opened up the doors for the interference of the government in the work of NGOs before the revolution of January, 2011.

Post the revolution, NGOs in Egypt were hoping for more freedom and less government intervention in their work. They needed more space and a wider scope of operation. However, they faced the opposite.

After the toppling of Mubarak's regime, the new government accused NGOs of receiving a vast amount of international funds which were channeled to fund the revolution and the street demonstrations. NGOs were even banned from monitoring any election process that took place after the revolution. The ruling powers after Mubarak did not change the law of NGOs and obliged these organizations to register with the

government. This process does not ban NGOs from receiving foreign aid, but will put their funds under the government's control.

Accordingly, the entire popular view concerning NGOs in Egypt has been shaped by the government's decisions. The legitimacy of NGOs in Egypt is in question. People are approaching these organizations to ask about the source of funding rather than about development or advocacy efforts. (Shahin, 2013, pp. 53-74)

Conclusion

After introducing both case studies, one can conclude that Egypt and Tunisia present two different environments for the work of NGOs in a post-revolutionary context. Although both countries have toppled their dictators and share a similar cultural identity, and despite going through the same path towards democratization with similar aspirations and expectations from their communities; NGOs in Egypt and Tunisia face different challenges, limitations, and opportunities at the local and international levels.

The next chapter will cover the participation of NGOs in re-building their post-revolutionary countries in terms of good governance, conflict resolution, capacity building, lobbying, and transitional justice. The paper will introduce the norm for this participation and then tackle what happened in Egypt and Tunisia with respect to each of the above-mentioned aspects.

Role of Egyptian and Tunisia NGOs in Good Governance

Early in the 1990's, World Bank experts, researchers, and social scientists carefully studied and examined the question of the contribution of local NGOs in the "good governance" of their states. They argued that NGOs play a positive role in the

implementation of “good governance” initiatives as well as advocacy campaigns, and they observed the role of NGOs in developing countries that help in the democratization of societies. However, this role has been subject to a lot of criticism. In this adversarial notion, NGOs were criticized for being a monolithic bloc acting upon their own will. This concept is actually inaccurate. For instance, is NGO networking within societies is one reason for contradicting this idea. Another reason lies in the fact that NGOs are driven by the dynamics of social movements from within their countries of operation. (Williams, 2008, pp. 67-73)

Good Governance Definition in the Arab World Context

Despite the fact that the notion of “good governance” has been recently introduced to the Arab World, it is argued that this concept has been adopted before the Arab world knew what it meant. UNDP and The Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development introduced “good governance” in a report written in the year 2000 (The Arab Human Development Report). The report, which summarizes the views and visions of Arab writers, thinkers, and researchers, clearly stated that good governance “promotes, supports, and sustains human well-being, based on expanding human capabilities, choices, opportunities, and freedoms (economic, social, and political) especially for the poorest and most marginalized members of society.” (UNDP, 2000) The report determined the following characteristics as the main attributes of good governance: participation/ rule of law/ transparency/ equity and social inclusion/ accountability/ effectiveness and responsiveness/ strategic vision. In Arabic, the concept is known as “*Al Hokem Al Rachid*”. (Majed, 2002)

At the economic level, good governance helps in the integration of local markets into the globalized economic markets, by following international norms, such as those imposed by the World Trade Organization (WTO), World Bank, and International Monetary Fund (IMF) that encompasses political reform. These international norms include privatization, reducing public expenditure, and economic adjustment policies. In summary, “good governance” is a process that should be adopted by institutions in a certain country and supported by civil society in order to help generate a better standard of living for the citizens. Nevertheless, the concept of governance comes with “Prescriptions” and “Norms”, and thus has prescriptive and normative functions. (World Bank, 1994)

For the Arab world, the most important aspect of governance that should be adopted is the breaking-up with the past and introducing important changes. The important part of governance is the fact that civil society can be interdependent with little collaboration with the government. This is the most important notion that NGOs are considering after the revolutions. Internal networking is crucial here in order to reach better levels of private initiatives and to reduce government intervention. These views challenge the concepts of the authoritarian states that have been in place for decades in the Arab World: Social Action is the key term. Definitely, the concept of governance will have to be directly linked with decentralization. (Craisatti, 2004, pp. 181-195)

“Prescriptive Governance” cannot be forced upon Arab states, especially those which survived a revolution. Local and international NGOs cannot engage in projects that are set up by Western donors who are trying to introduce and implement the different elements of governance from their point of view. These countries are still in the phase of

steadily moving in the path of democratization. Going into such actions that are imposed by international organizations might result in questions dealing with the state's sovereignty and its control over its territory. Arab political and institutional systems continue to face issues of weak political participation, constitutional reconstruction (they are not even at the level of introducing decentralization), and high level of bureaucracies introduced by the ruling parties which took over power from the previous dictators. (Craisatti, 2004, pp. 181-195)

NGOs in the Arab world are still delicate and under constant observations of the ruling parties in the post-revolution countries. Civil society still did not grasp the notion of interdependence. NGOs are attached to the state's tools and are concentrating on trying to change state institutions to reach good governance. In addition, NGOs are building their main power and the capital cities. Economically speaking, the private sector, which should theoretically be in charge of almost all the economic institutions in the country, still maintains close ties with the official administration. Even relations between NGOs of one Arab state and another are passing through the governmental apparatuses. These concepts should be altered with more advocacies toward the correct implementation of good governance. (Denoeux, 2005, pp. 69-100)

Good Governance and NGOs in Tunisia

In order to correctly analyze the level of "good governance" in Tunisia, one should look into the political and economic governance after the "Jasmine Revolution." Political governance represents the following aspects: rule of law, public authorities, transparency, and participation. Meanwhile, economic governance represents the following: economic situation, privatization, and international cooperation.

Starting with political governance, and especially tackling the rule of law and the public authorities including the judicial system in Tunisia, it is crucial to observe to which level the new constitutional efforts respected the concept of rule of law. This concept guarantees that arbitrary works of governments are stopped. Notions include the separation of powers, civil society empowerments, and fortification of the judicial system along with external authorities monitoring governmental work. Despite the ratification of a new constitution in Tunisia, the past three years witnessed a direct intervention of the executive branch in the acts of the judicial system and straight forward attacks on monitoring authorities. Application of transitional justice rules would have directly stopped such actions. Learning from the past is the key term in this case. (OECD, 2013, pp. 1-112)

However, NGOs are working hard toward reaching a situation in Tunisia where the judiciary system is completely independent and thus able to monitor the government's actions and promote the society's needs. An example of Tunisian NGOs supporting the judicial system shows that in October 2013, the "Observation Network of Tunisian Justice" called for improvements of the judicial structure and amendment of its practices in order to promise fair trials. This NGO operates along with the "Tunisian League for Human Rights" as well as the "National Order of Tunisian Lawyers". (Touchent, 2013)

Another factor to observe when talking about political governance is the concept of participation. It directly implies the inclusion of all societal actors in the decision making process in a direct way, or through representation. The basis of this act is "freedom". It is always preferred to have the concept of "participatory democracy" applied rather than the concept of "representative democracy". The Tunisian constitution

concentrates in its essence on the participation of the people in the political decision making process. However, with time, the participation of Tunisians declined. The main reason is the ruling party's control of the transitional period following the revolution. One basic fact to be highlighted is that constitutional experts and civil society representatives were not part of drafting the new constitution; which constituted a major blow to the participation of Tunisians in the political process. "Ennahda Party", the political majority that took over after the revolution, had a major influence on appointing the members of the council tasked with drafting the constitution. (Perkins, 2014, pp. 188-251)

As for economic governance currently in Tunisia, the country is suffering from decades of economic shortcomings. International recommendations to enhance the economic situations were disregarded during the days of Bin Ali; specifically recommendations targeting financial safety. The direct involvement of the political organizations in financial matters and the high corruption level worsened the situation. Moreover, it is vital to note that good governance on the level of politics is directly intertwined with economic performance. Thus, there are no specific rules of good governance in economics (except direct technical norms for banks and private corporations), but rather, enhancing the political governance will directly lead to economic prosperity. (OECD, 2012)

Transparency for example will help improve the quality of banking and will ensure efficiency of the financial market. Separating the private sector from the public sector and creating privatization will lead to the existence of compliance with international standards. The rule of law will remove corruption, favoritism, and nepotism, which in

turn will increase the efficiency of private and public financial organizations. NGOs in Tunisia have been trying to reach economic prosperity. Organizations are opening up incubators and centers of social innovation to create more jobs. In partnership with MEPI, Education for Employment-Tunisia (EFE) helped graduate 58 young Tunisians who received hands-on training on multiple jobs for two consecutive years. Similar efforts, projects, and cooperation are being established as part of the economic revival of Tunisia. In addition, “I Watch”, a program that started with Tunisian youth, uses SMS technology to conduct polls and gather opinion throughout the entire country as well as to allow citizens to report corruption using this tool. (OECD, 2012)

Based on the above-mentioned facts, Tunisia cannot be considered to have a decent level of “good governance” despite the participation of NGOs and civil society in promoting governance values. Of course, a government in transition cannot reach a high level of good governance within the first three years. However, NGOs should maintain their efforts and concentrate on applying the rule of law as a first step to enhance governance levels.

Good Governance and NGOs in Egypt

In Egypt, civil society organizations continue to face significant pressure from the government; which is putting their advocacy role at stake. The government interferes in every single act. This is placing difficulties on implementing good governance efforts in Egypt. Furthermore, Law Number 84/2002 is the major reason behind the lack of enhancement in terms of good governance. Tension is rising between NGOs and the government. This law allows the government to directly intervene in any organization’s

activities including issues related to its internal governance. NGOs have to be accountable to the government in all aspects. (El Nawawy & Khamis, 2013, pp. 59-195)

Going back to the UNDP development report of 2002, it criticized several shortcomings of NGOs in the MENA region. The main shortcoming that this report tackled is the lack of efficient organization in terms of governance as well as the lack of transparency. Despite the fact that this shortcoming is not only related to NGOs in the MENA region, the latter do not even have the basics of good governance, including the private sector. (UNDP, 2002)

Another important factor in Egypt is the perception of the society towards foreign aid, which constitutes the main pillar for good governance. There is a huge misconception that international funding makes NGOs dependent and thus obedient to foreign pressure. Critics are not aware that good governance will have a positive impact on the lives of beneficiaries and will improve domestic policies. The adjustment that has been placed on Law Number 84/2002 restricts participation and transparency. Despite the fact that NGOs lobbied to place their rules in action, corruption ruined their reputation and they were obliged to let go of their demands. (Mayfield, 2012, pp. 371-450)

The absence of good governance amongst civil society organizations originates from their internal organizational structure as well as from the legislative environment that they work in. The main problem is obliging every NGO to have a legal permission from the Ministry of Social Affairs to start operating. It should wait for the ministry to provide it with its consent rather than notifying, preparing, and implementing. This is

why good governance in Egypt is deteriorated by all these regulations. Few enhancements can be done in this regard:

- Lobbying for an improved law that allows NGOs to enhance the level of governance
- Change the view toward foreign aid; a factor that would be a great positive push for applying good governance norms
- Organize internal procedures so that government intervention is minimized
- Enhance the role of the judiciary system (similar to the case of Tunisia)
- Set clear standards for accountability and transparency (Hertog, Luciani, & Valeri, 2013, pp. 189-207)

All these standards should be enough to initiate efforts toward reaching a decent level of governance in both the public and private sectors. As mentioned in the section about Tunisia, the role of the judiciary is crucial. It should play the role of an arbitrator between the government and the civil society organizations. Maintaining good governance is one of the important ways in which NGOs create an efficient apparatus for shaping domestic and foreign policies in their countries as well as increasing their participation.

Role of Egyptian and Tunisia NGOs in Capacity Building

The concept of Capacity Building was introduced when donors and international organizations realized that the issue of project sustainability is crucial while dealing with local organizations. Their main concern is that their direct technical intervention was successful, up until the end of the project. Upon project expiry, performance indicators decreased and situation went back to its initial condition. Thus, the concept of capacity

building was introduced to help local NGOs establish a decent-structured institution that would be able to manage developmental projects, even after the international partner's intervention comes to an end. (Ng'ethe, 1990, pp. 3-20)

Capacity Building refers not only to developing the capacities of local NGOs, but also discusses the notion of "systems". This is to show that creating logical systems in managing inter-organizational issues will pull the NGO apart from historic norms of management. International donors developed this notion as a type of classification system on which they rely in order to categorize their beneficiaries. It also allows them to make efficient strategic decisions regarding their intervention. These donors also tried to promote another related concept called "Network Systems", which stresses on the importance of networking between multiple local NGOs having the same inter-organizational system. (UN Habitat, 2011, pp. 1-57)

Capacity building entails several types that can be combined into three main aspects: organizational, financial, and technological. Better organizational efficiency, financial effectiveness and transparency, in addition to technological advancement will lead an NGO to become more legitimate and professional in the eyes of the civil society, government, and international donors. In the Arab World, capacity building is an important procedure that helps NGOs better organize themselves and be efficient/active members of civil society. (James, 2001, pp. 1-30)

Capacity Building in Tunisia

After the revolution, the international community played a very powerful role in Tunisia. Foreign aid spread into the country in order to support the re-building efforts in that

specific transitional context. International donors concentrated on developing the capacity of local Tunisian NGOs to better enhance their sustainability. Goals were not only concentrating on sustainability, but also on providing the healthy environment for private businesses to operate. NGOs were supposed to be the main catalyst behind social and economic reform in Tunisia, and thus the capacity building efforts. In such a framework, institutional effectiveness and capacity building programs attain tactical importance in moving through with the public sector to reconstruct itself. (Baylis, Smith, & Owens, 2013, pp. 347-528)

The intervention is mostly based on the frequent requests made by Tunisian local organizations to implement and manage programs that will serve in upgrading their capacity. Many international organizations including the UN (specifically the ECOSOC) and other European-based organizations have helped the Tunisian NGOs and local authorities to provide sustainability to their work and strengthen the capacity of their staff and volunteers. Projects of capacity building targeted many levels: Internal organization, networking, social media, environment, etc... (Baylis, Smith, & Owens, 2013, pp. 347-528)

An example related to environmental governance shows the level of interaction between NGOs (whether local or international) with the issues of the environment, in addition to how these organizations participate and cooperate to achieve a decent sustainable level of environmental development. This includes actions taken by civil society organizations to advocate such an important aspect of society. In other words, the people concerned with the environmental case should have a loud voice and an effective role in shaping environmental policies in a state like Tunisia. However, they should first know how to

achieve such an action. Also, US NGOs such as NDI and IRI helped groups from the Tunisian civil society activists in TOT (Training of Trainers approach) in order for them to monitor the election process. (DiMento & Hickman, 2012, pp.85-128)

An EU funded program called “Strengthening Environmental Governance by Building the Capacity of Non-Governmental Organizations” is being implemented by UNDP and divided into small grants distributed to local Tunisian NGOs. The project aims to develop the capacities of local NGOs in order to maintain sustainable development and provide an enhanced level of environmental governance. The project will help organizations “develop their internal and external skills through an informed and skilled manner in environmental policy formulation and natural resource management, collaborate in decision -making on key issues, and represent the interests of citizens and communities in environment and sustainable development discussions and debates.” (DiMento & Hickman, 2012, pp.85-128)

Such activities have been leading to the involvement of local NGOs and their participation in every social aspect that would lead to the development of their country in Tunisia. They are aware of the fact that in order for them to operate in an efficient way, they should be internally organized and they should maintain a high level of projects’ sustainability. These can be achieved when they engage in capacity building activities similar to that of the Environmental Governance Project.

Capacity Building in Egypt

Following the January 2011 revolution, Egypt witnessed a huge increase in the number of NGOs. More than 16,000 NGOs are currently registered in Egypt. Their scope, goals,

and objectives vary to a large extent, adding to the fact that all operate under constant monitoring from the government. Most of them being new organizations face many setbacks in terms of their internal organization, project management, financial capabilities, networking, etc... They also tend to focus on serving immediate needs rather than thinking on a long-term basis. Besides, the major drawback Egyptian NGOs face is the society's perception of international support. (Praussello, 2011, pp. 259-360)

The American University in Cairo conducted a detailed needs assessment of the society in Egypt after the revolution. The study revealed a critical need for capacity building training programs for local NGOs. It focused on the best approaches that should be considered during these trainings and to which specific pain-points the program should be tailored. The major constraint that was deduced from the study is the lack of staff and volunteers' skills who are working within these NGOs.

Another study was based on the role of NGOs in shaping media policies in Egypt. This stems from the notion that such NGOs are present in Egypt but need a deep capacity building policy to enhance their capabilities in this field. The study showed that NGOs working in this field are being monitored by the government and by the laws that have been amended to some extent, but still place control. (UNESCO, 2012, pp. 71-86)

Effective NGO participation in the active life of civil society depends a lot on their capabilities. In most Arab countries, NGOs have been oppressed under the tyranny of dictators who have been in power for the past decades. It is natural to see that NGOs in Egypt and Tunisia have a very low level of skill, organization, and management. International donors realized this fact and are operating to fix the situation and change

the status quo. They are aiming to create project sustainability and to minimize local NGOs dependency on international donations.

Role of Egyptian and Tunisia NGOs in Conflict Resolution

Conflict Resolution is not a new notion to the political and social environments of the Arab World. Historically, the region has been devastated by wars, religious battles, and tribal conflicts. These conflicts, especially the tribal ones, have been solved through mediators and peace builders. Recently, thousands of NGOs acting within the Arab region have been formed all while aiming to affect internal policies and to be part of the decision making processes. Advocacy NGOs found themselves boxed within an arena of internal and international conflict. They found themselves obliged to switch to conflict resolution acts. (Mcqueen, 2009, pp. 132-158)

After the revolutions, civil society became more and more engaged in conflict resolution efforts. This goes back to the fact that they are being supported by the international community in terms of building their technical capabilities and specialization. Most of the Arab countries are currently able to view this international support as a positive change toward a better situation rather than just a foreign intervention in their internal conflicts. A main challenge that remains ahead of these NGOs in the region is that they need to adapt with the cultural way of mediating conflict as well as solidify their relation with the political body and the government.

Another challenge NGOs face in the Arab World is the current situation of conflicts in the region. Social movements tend to view conflict resolution efforts as useless and consider them as waste of time and money. The current situation in countries like Egypt,

Syria, Yemen, exposes the credibility and legitimacy of the organizations that have been involved in conflict resolution efforts. In addition, it is really important to mention that these NGOs cannot solely play the role of mediators in conflicts that mostly exceed their national borders and are part of a possible second cold war that is being operated in the proxies of the Middle East. Government and international intervention must be of huge support to allow these conflict resolution efforts to succeed. (Wallenstein, 2011, pp. 1-13)

In addition to conflict resolution efforts, national dialogue committees were formed in order to enhance the consensus and compromise among the emerging parties after the Arab Spring. In December 2013, “around 57 representatives of youth political movements and members of the constituent assembly, which drafted amendments to the 2012 constitution, attended a national dialogue session called for by interim President Adly Mansour.” The main concentration of the discussion was whether presidential elections should be before the parliamentary elections or not. Similarly, in Tunisia, “Tunisians elected a National Constituent Assembly in the country’s first democratic elections since the January 2011 overthrow of President Zine El Abadine Ben Ali.” National Dialogue led to the emergence of several active ruling parties. (Carnegie Europe, 2014)

Conflict Resolution in Tunisia

On every occasion where there is chaos, conflict, or revolutions, it is crucial to meet with the people who witnessed the events and ask about the details of these events. An excellent example in the case of conflict is the Tunisian “Jasmine Revolution.” Tunisia has been faced with historic transition during which conflict and tensions increased.

In Tunisia, the main conflict that showed up after the revolution is the one between extreme Islam and the notions of liberal democracy. Historically, Tunisia is known for being moderate. This image of Tunisia changed after the revolution given the ruling majority who came as a result of the revolution; Islamists. Conflict grew between these Islamists and liberal civil society organizations that were trying to build a democratic and liberal Tunisia. It is true that the revolution, and after the ratification of a new constitution, took Tunisia to a whole new status through what is considered: a peaceful transition. (Nhema & Zeleza, 2008, pp. 152-207)

On the other hand, this transition came with a certain level of conflict. Having been without a clear ideology, the “Jasmine Revolution” had to reach a place where after the departure of Bin Ali, questions were raised about the nature of Post-Revolution Tunisia. Questions also tackled the issue of elections, governance, representatives, and the next majority. All these issues were the essence of the internal conflict that Tunisia faced since 2011. Also, as mentioned above, the most disputable topic was the role of religion in the new Tunisia. (OECD, 2013, pp. 23-63)

Taking all this into account, Tunisian NGOs had been playing, since 2011, a decisive role in advocating for unity between the Tunisian actors. Being liberal and following the Turkish model of Islam¹, most of the liberals in Tunisia, including women, feared the introduction of the role of religion within their constitution. The main advocate of integrating religion in the constitution the Ennahda Party, which has future, plans to

¹ Turkish Model of Islam: This model of Islam is a friend of democracy that calls for free capitalism, open to the world market, and has achieved economic prosperity. This model is at peace with its neighbors and a source of stability in the Middle East region. It is way far from the Jihadist model of militants.

grow and become a main component in the political life of Tunisia. For the near future, Ennahda Party does not have a majority in the Tunisian parliament and thus cannot introduce, unless through consensus, anything related to the role of religion in the constitution. In addition, conflicting concerns tend to rotate around the remaining of the “Bin Ali” regime after the revolution. Despite the fact that Bin Ali and his family fled Tunisia, a sizeable number of his supporters still remain on Tunisian soil and want to be part of the decision making process, especially when setting the new constitution. (Bradley, 2012, pp. 1-247)

Civil Society, being mostly liberated, educated, and thriving for freedom, played and is still playing a vital role in shaping the internal policies in Tunisia. However, they were very well aware of the fact that if they really need to make a change, they should first try to resolve the conflicts between the three main conflicting elements and gather them over one negotiation table to set a unifying constitution acceptable to all Tunisians. An interesting element that helps the civil society achieve its goals is that even though Tunisians are debating across the line of democracy and although they have socio-economic based disagreements; they all have pride in their nationality and they all have a very high level of patriotism. It is important to note that there are no ethnic or secular divisions in Tunisia; a point in favor of the civil society in its reconciliation and mediation processes. (Halverson, 2012, pp. 191-195)

Civil society representatives, attempted to show their success and present their influence. What they did was that they gathered more than 170 civil society activist in order to monitor and provide checks on every official body in order to reduce conflict between the society and the government as well as to reduce conflict between ruling parties

among each other. The government announced that this is an excellent effort that shows the support of the civil society to maintain stability and peace in the country.

In summary, the Tunisian civil society and organizations along with the help and support of the international community were able to fill the gaps between the conflicting sides and forced all the parties to unify their visions in one constitution.

Conflict Resolution in Egypt

Since the early 90's, civil society in Egypt has been involved in conflict resolution and mediation efforts through a lot of training programs that were sponsored by the international community. The Cairo Center for Training and Conflict Resolution and Peacekeeping in Africa is an excellent example of the efforts of the Egyptian society to solve conflicts in a peaceful way. Egypt's society faced and is still facing different types of conflict. Concentrating on after the revolution time period, the conflicts transformed into power-seeking conflicts, and more indirectly, religious conflicts. (Abdelrahman, 2004, pp. 76-120)

Based on the simple observation of Egypt's political timeline after the January 2011 Revolution, the conflicts that can be highlighted mostly relate to the ruling parties. After Mubarak's rule, conflict escalated between the Islamist party and the parties supporting the former president into street violence. The civil society organizations tried to work on filling the gaps between the two parties. This required concentrating on completing a constitution that matches the expectations of all Egyptians. Civil society organizations also cooperated with the Egyptian Army leaders to reconcile the differences. After the Islamist Party took over, the presidency of Muhammad Mursi was very controversial.

This created another conflict that led millions of Egyptians to demonstrate against the rule of Mursi calling for stopping the corruption as well as the use of power for party interests. Mursi as well was offering enormous aid to the Gaza strip all while taking away the resources from the Egyptian people. The Rafah crossing was open to illegal immigration from the Palestinian Territories to Egypt. This created further frustration for the Egyptian population until the entire situation exploded. In July 2013, clashes in Cairo broke out between supporters of Mursi and other parties who wanted him to leave. In all these cases, civil society organizations in Egypt did not play a mediating role; they rather supported one party over the other. (El Nawawy & Khamis, 2013, pp. 1-87)

Another very important conflict to look into in Egypt is the conflict between the Sunnis and Copts. This is not a conflict that is highly studied, discussed, and commented on; however, it is a major conflict that civil society organizations in Egypt try to work on. The ADIC (International Union for Intercultural and Interfaith Dialogue and Peace Education) conducted a gathering between the Coptic Pope and Grand Imam of Al Azhar as an approach for reconciliation and peace. Both issued statements against sectarian strife. (ADIC, 2012) Copts were being attacked since the beginning of the Egyptian Revolution in 2011. Their churches were being burnt and their towns were being destroyed. The ruling party says that they have nothing to do with these attacks; however, the wing they represent seems favorable of such actions in a country already boiling with tension.

On the Coptic – Sunni aspect, many conferences were organized by civil society actors to reconcile both conflicting parties and to create a better sense of understanding. Taking into account that most of the people are illiterate, working on conflict resolution is an

extremely difficult task. NGOs have been doing this for the past decade or two, even since the days of Mubarak. International efforts were deployed in order to train NGOs on conflict resolution skills and mediation. (El Mahdi, 2011, pp.97-125)

Conflict resolution efforts are being rooted in the actions of the civil societies in the MENA region. Some have been successful while others were a complete failure due to complicated political reasons. The international community and many international organizations have played an important role in transferring their knowledge in conflict resolution and mediation to those organizations in the Arab World. On the other hand, local NGOs in MENA have had a remarkable effect on legislation and policies as a result of their mediation efforts and conflict resolution skills. This is to prove one more time that the participation of NGOs in the multiple arenas of political interaction is an important factor in determining the policies of the nation state based on all the initiatives, programs, conferences, and meetings that are organized.

Role of Egyptian and Tunisia NGOs in Lobbying and Advocacy

Lobbying is a main tool that NGOs use in promoting their causes and attaining their objectives. These NGOs, as mentioned earlier, are called advocacy NGOs. Mostly, NGOs combine efforts with social movements and political parties in collaboration with media outlets that play a crucial role in shaping policies. Correct lobbying happens based on specific measures that should be acted upon. A framework for lobbying is always built (by professional NGOs) and multiple platforms are set within the main decision making arenas (parliament, cabinet, etc...). These NGOs also have access to the agendas of the decision making bodies. They will know before-hand what to target,

when, and how. Civil society representatives should also be well-rounded individuals with excellent capabilities to negotiate, speak publicly, communicate, and strategize the actions. Lobbying efforts are well placed in political campaigns for elections. It takes the form of a business model where agents lobby political campaigns to suit the needs and requirements of the clients (voters). (Lang, 2013, pp. 60-74)

In the Arab World, lobbying is a relatively new concept. Before the “Arab Spring,” lobbying was only restricted to religious institutions. Only the Islamic institutions were able to lobby for or against a certain cause, even political ones. However, with the rise of democratization in the MENA region, and with the increase in the number of NGOs and their scope of work, lobbying became a major tool that is being used by these organizations. NGOs in the Arab World are cooperating with masses and the media in order to advocate for political change and reform. Thus, the international community is recently very interested in the lobbying efforts of these NGOs. Furthermore, international NGOs are providing the necessary training for local NGOs on how to lobby correctly for a cause. Nevertheless, the religious institutions still have the legitimacy and the credibility and their lobbying efforts tend to be the most efficient in the political arena. Lobbying also happens at the economic and social levels. (Miller, Martini, Larrabee, Rabasa, & Pezard, 2012, pp. 55-342)

Lobbying and Advocacy in Tunisia

Public debate on human rights issues started in Tunisia since the 1980's. However, in an authoritarian context, civil society organizations could not change any domestic or foreign policy law only through internal pressure. Such a change required the support of international organizations. Since two decades ago, networks of human rights were

created in Tunisia with international organizations working at the same level. Local efforts combined with international support, led to a political change in Tunisia in the year 1987. Even though the government was still authoritarian with the command of a dictator, but the efforts of the local civil society was able to make a change. “The Islamic Tendency Movement” took a major step of becoming the void filler created by the repressive acts of Bourgiba. It became the social force with legitimacy in the country. It was an independent entity formed by the civil society in Tunisia, and which opened no doors for external manipulation. Thus, the vitality of civil society organizations in Tunisia was a product of pragmatic political choices. “Bourguiba’s strategy for consolidating and holding power created new opportunities for protest, and workers, students, Islamists and others tried to use them to their own advantage.” (Ottaway, 2012, pp.1-30)

After the “Jasmine Revolution,” and due to the increase in the number of think tanks and academic writers who were not scared anymore to write about change, lobbying efforts increased. NGOs, civil society organizations, think tanks, media outlets, and all other kinds of social mobilizers combined efforts to create a changing political environment. Because of all these actors being involved in the lobbying efforts, advocacy became unorganized and unregulated. Despite this, the local government tried to open up the way for stakeholders (i.e. corporations, civil society organizations, etc...) to participate in the decision making process.

Having in mind the idea of regulating lobbying efforts, the Tunisian government conducted advocacy campaigns to identify the best individuals with excellent lobbying skills (from multiple organizations of all types); to provide more information for policy

makers on what the public wants; to identify the risks of lobbying pressure; and to highlight main decision makers who can actually have a say in domestic and foreign policy decisions. This is known as a regulatory framework for lobbying and advocacy efforts. (Ottaway, 2012, pp.35-58)

Lobbying and Advocacy in Egypt

It is remarkable to see that in Egypt, a Code of Ethics for NGOs is being currently discussed. This shows a high level of change in the internal organization of local Egyptian NGOs. It is a good move toward democratization, but it is not enough. Human rights organizations are supposed to act as whistle-blowers when dealing with human rights violations. They are also supposed to lobby and advocate for justice. This did not happen in Egypt since the Abdul Nasser era.

After the revolution, these organizations started renewing their scope of work and rebuilding themselves, similar to the entire political structure. At first, after toppling Mubarak's rule, civil society organizations were dragged by religious forces. The Muslim Brotherhood played the leading role in the change and silenced all lobbying efforts for real democratization. The new rule kept the old Law "84/2002", which regulated the work of NGOs in Egypt. This law allowed the new Islamist government to interfere in all actions related to civil society organizations. Even though NGOs were using online tools to advocate, their actions were not as efficient as they should have been. Advocacy and lobbying projects were not allowed. Even when they were, they were always under the direct monitoring of the "Mursi Rule". (Fouad, Ref'at & Murcos, 2005, pp. 101-123)

Bordering the Palestinian territories, Egypt still faces the risk of organizations advocating for causes against the Israelis. It has always been the case where the government tried to control and put an end to actions against the Israeli government, not wanting to risk the Camp David Accord; another reason why registration with the ministry is obligatory. This is a major reason behind the direct control of the government over the actions of civil society organizations. Thus, NGOs in Egypt found an alternative to program work and resorted to lobbying through the internet; a tool that has a high popular reach in Egypt.

Adding to online advocacy, Egyptian NGOs resorted as well to transnational advocacy. Despite the pressure on international organizations, local NGOs managed to create human rights networks as an alternative to programs on the local level. Law 84/2002 cannot manage the work of international organizations on Egyptian premises. Therefore, this gap was used by Egyptian civil society organizations in order to lobby, advocate, and campaign for good governance and rule of law. On the other hand, and in addition to government pressure on international organizations, public opinions were not very supportive to the work of these organizations in Egypt. They were considered as an international intervention in Egyptian affairs. This idea was promoted and supported by the governments of Mubarak and Mursi. The next chapter will examine the pressure on local and international NGOs in Egypt. (Pratt, 2005, pp. 123-150)

NGOs in Egypt and Tunisia played an important role with youth and civil movements in order to raise awareness on correct system procedures, manage expectations, and highlight the best ways of lobbying and advocating for the right causes. They made sure

that the voices of the people were heard during elections, constitution establishment, and law-writing. All of these were necessary in order to ensure effective policy reforms.

Chapter Five

Limitations, Challenges, and Opportunities

Local Legislations

In 1997, one of the important committees in the Arab League discussed and analyzed the role of NGOs in the region, and how these NGOs are negatively affecting the security and stability of Arab countries. In an article published in the Lebanese newspaper *Annahar* on January 8, 1997, former interior minister Michel El Murr reported on the meetings' discussions. El Murr said: "Ministers were complaining about the human rights organizations in their countries and that their work and movement do not aim to protect human rights but to paralyze security operations and the countries' security policies." This meeting reveals clearly the relation between the state and civil society organizations in the MENA region. A critical weapon that is used against these organizations in this region is the Law. (*Annahar Newspaper, 1997*)

Dictatorships in the MENA region have worked on diminishing all potential threats to their rule, one of which is NGOs. These types of regimes have used diverse toolkits to fight NGOs and to limit their scope of work. It has taken different forms across countries. For example, in Tunisia, the government during Ben Ali's term ironically created a new form of NGOs called 'Governmental NGOs'. In Egypt, the government passed (previously mentioned) Law Number 84/2002. The concern of these regimes was not only to regulate and control the scope of work of these NGOs within their borders, but to also manage their relationships with international organizations and international donors. Such laws have also affected the local perception regarding the foreign funds

that are channeled into the countries. The mere nature of political systems in the MENA region constitutes by itself a challenge for NGOs. Regimes tend to set their own internal laws and regulations without having the civil society included in the decision making process. In line with all these fears and potential threats, laws were created to monitor the work of NGOs. This section will cover the NGO law in Tunisia and the NGO law in Egypt before and after the revolutions. (Roeder & Simard, 2013, pp. 153-210)

Legislation Limitations and Challenges for NGOs Operating in Tunisia

In Tunisia, the Tunisian Constitution of June 1, 1959, guarantees ‘freedom of association and assembly, freedom of expression and opinion, and freedom of the press, under conditions that are defined by law’ (Art. 8). The “Associations Law” allow individuals to group themselves into organizations on condition that they have to submit an application and this application must be approved by the government so that it gives a license to this organization. If within 90 days the government does not reject the application, then the organization will be considered as a legally registered NGO. Given this law, the government has set multiple categories in which these organizations must belong to: “women; sports; science; culture and the arts; charity, aid and other social aims; development; friendship; and general (Art. 1).” (Carnegie, 2013)

One of the main challenges that face the NGOs working in Tunisia is that of the NGO law. These NGOs face key obstacles in their daily activities which include the government’s policies of monitoring and surveying all their actions. Also, the government tends to harass activists and civil society organizations whenever the latter try to increase their scope of work. Based on the law, the government has direct control over communication and media outlets, closing the door for freedom of expression,

lobbying, and advocacy efforts. Another challenge these NGOs were facing because of the legislation in Tunisia is the constant struggle that the government is creating with Islamist organizations. The society became divided between secularists and Islamists; another fear factor the government was weary of; creating another challenge for NGOs to operate and receive foreign funds. (Deane, 2013)

New NGO Law in Tunisia

After the “Jasmine Revolution,” there have been several lobbying efforts by activists in Tunisia in order to push for constitutional and legal reform concerning NGOs. The Tunisian interim government started working on reforming a group of state laws, all while opening up the way for a better engagement from the civil society. One of the laws that were targeted was the Associations Law. On February 18, 2011 a committee was formed by the interim government called “Higher Authority for Realization of Revolutionary Objectives, Political Reform and the Democratic Transitions”. This committee carefully studied the Association Law and inducted several positive changes to it. (Deane, 2013)

According to the new law, civil society organizations have the write to assess and criticize the work of the government in terms of policies and legislation. These organizations were freed from the legalities, forms, and procedures they had to undertake in order to complete their registration. The concept of ‘registration’ was abolished. Foreign funding is also freed now from government intervention. Local NGOs have the right to access information, monitor the work of the government, and

organize working groups to take correctional measures whenever necessary. The only constraint that still exists is the fact that these local organizations are prohibited to receive funds from countries that do not have diplomatic ties with Tunisia. (Deane, 2013)

Thus, as observed, Tunisia has made a decent leap towards freeing its local organizations from governmental pressure. However, the question that is raised now is: will this new NGO law be applied in daily practice? On paper, the local legislation is helpful and guarantees the freedom of act for civil society organizations. A country in transition will need time to recover even with the support of the international community. Such country will not efficiently implement new laws and regulations even those in progressive forms.

Legislation Limitations and Challenges for NGOs Operating in Egypt

It is very odd to see a numerous number of civil society organizations and NGOs operating in a country like Egypt with such a coercive NGO law, despite the population size. Law 84/2002 is the law currently organizing the work of NGOs in Egypt. Examining this law gives a clear idea about its restrictive nature. Law 84/2002 provides the “Ministry of Social Solidarity and Justice” the ultimate power to control NGOs in Egypt. It is also clear that the law is set to pressure and stop NGOs calling for social or political reform. Organizations that operate under well-defined government work areas, such as the environment, education, health care, etc...are most likely to operate without government interference. (ICNL, 2013)

The restriction starts with the NGO registration process. A committee is formed with four members from the Egyptian government and four members from the civil society. This committee will decide whether to grant a license to the applicant NGO or not. Even before registration, the law places problematic requirements for the formation of NGOs. Another highlighted restriction is the role of foreign organizations and their relation with local NGOs. Foreign funding is placed under direct supervision of the local authorities. The scope of work in which NGOs are allowed to operate is defined by the government. Only for these reasons, NGOs are allowed to operate and receive foreign funds. Similar to the Tunisian case, the government had the fear of Islamists taking over. Thus, NGOs faced the same challenges in Tunisia and Egypt. (Abdou, Atia, Hussein, Kharas, & Maaty, 2011)

New NGO Law in Egypt

After the revolution and the toppling of Mubarak, the Shoura Council, a part of the Egyptian Parliament, worked on reconsidering Law Number 84/2002 which manages the work of local and international NGOs in Egypt. In early spring 2013, the new law under study was considering the issue of international funding of NGOs. It was clearly considered as a threat. The outcome of this new law came as follows:

- Nationalization of civil society organizations by giving their funds a status called “Public Funds”
- Creating a new committee which will study the issue of foreign aid and then decide whether to accept or reject the funds
- Raising the barriers to NGO registration by increasing the costs of registration
- Prohibiting NGOs that receive foreign aid to work in Egypt

Navi Pillay, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, highly criticized the law stating that “it highly ignores input of local and international NGOs”. Pillay also added that this law “blows the hopes and aspirations of the Egyptian Revolution”. (Stachursky, 2013, pp. 81-218)

Opportunities for NGOs working in Egypt and Tunisia in terms of Local Legislation

The sections above highlighted the limitations and challenges facing local NGOs working in Tunisia and Egypt. It revealed the unhealthy relationship between the state and the civil society in both countries. Despite the fact that the results in Tunisia are much more encouraging than those in Egypt; it is clear that Egypt will be following suit of Tunisia. As far as NGOs are concerned, there are several opportunities that they need to work on to enhance their situation and elevate the level of social and political policies.

NGOs in Tunisia face an excellent opportunity of correctly applying their new law. From the very beginning, NGOs must cooperate in an efficient way with the Tunisian government and make sure that they preserve the legal framework under which they operate. Also, they should limit corruption within this sector. Being under minimal observation by the government, NGOs must present a good example of independent organizations that implement efficient developmental projects and advocate for good causes within the society. (Golan & Salem, 2013, pp. 13-70)

The situation is more difficult for NGOs in Egypt. The Egyptian NGOs currently have the opportunity to create a similar law to that of the Tunisians with the upcoming election of their new president and the creation of a new government. They should make use of this structural change in order to advocate for a new decent law that would

support their work in Egypt. NGOs should lobby for a committee of professionals, having representatives from the newly elected state representatives, representatives from the local civil society, and observers from the international community (possibly from the UN). This committee will have the role of coming up with a new law that caters for the needs and requirements of the civil society in Egypt. This committee should also remove all kinds of restrictions on international funding and donor support. (Golan & Salem, 2013, pp. 13-70)

By these actions, and on the level of local legislation, NGOs in Tunisia and Egypt have the opportunity to creating a decent, relatively new environment, in which they can operate without any state intervention. Preserving such a legal framework will allow both countries to develop, enhance their domestic and foreign policies, and fulfill the goals of the revolutions.

Funding Limitations

NGOs' effectiveness is measured by their scope of work, impact, and sustainability of their projects. In order to have successful projects, NGOs must have access to a decent amount of resources, whether human resources or capital. Funding for NGOs is a crucial aspect for their daily survival and for the effectiveness of their work. Funding sources are from two entities: internal and external. For the internal part, funding might come from internal donor organizations, from governmental bodies, or from the private sector. As for external funding, donations come from international governments and international organizations. (Sundstrom, 2006, pp. 1-25)

Measuring the level of effectiveness of these NGOs is determined by their status in terms of achieving the previously mentioned Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). NGOs tend to supply their financial needs by applying for calls for proposals or establishing well-maintained connections with international organizations. Another aspect NGOs work on is to satisfy basic criteria within their own states in order to have the right for funding opportunities. The main problems that face NGOs in terms of funding tend to be related mostly to the role of the government, the NGOs' efficiency, and their agendas. (Lewis & Kanji, 2009, pp.164-185)

Governments, in the southern part of the world, tend to pressure local NGOs when it comes to receiving foreign funding. It is all related to the concept of dependency. In the Arab World, pressure on local NGOs is related to a combination of factors. In reference to the ruling systems, foreign aid is considered as a threat to their tyranny. In addition, local perspective considers that "Western money" leads the NGOs to become implementers of the agendas of international donors. Thus, NGOs in the MENA region tend to have a very limited access to international funding because of all the constraints. Their effectiveness, productivity, and scope of work are all affected by this constraint. (Picard, Groelsema, Buss, & Sharpe, 2007, pp. 25-38)

This is not to suggest that the thesis has the accurate view on the financial corruption during the authoritarian regimes. Due to media constraints, people get a truncated image on what was really going on in terms of financial policies, corruption, deals, or money laundering activities during the past decades. The results after the revolution revealed a huge amount of corruption in both Egypt and Tunisia. However, and from a different perspective, post-revolution activities also witnessed a certain level of financial

corruption. Thousands of complaints against corruption have been filed in Tunisia, where it is becoming a space for money laundering and fraud. (Al Monitor, 2013). The thesis cannot generalize this specific challenge to all countries. Interestingly enough, Tunisia managed to sustain a growth since the 1960's and also was able to satisfy the minimum requirements of a service and manufacturing economy while moving away from an agricultural one. (Hollingshead, 2012)

Funding Limitations in Tunisia

Historically, Tunisia had a very limited experience dealing with international funds to support the local civil society in order to carry out political change. Tunisian NGOs were always suffering from governmental constraints in terms of funding. Laws and regulations affected their freedom of work and access to resources, thus limiting their capability to shape domestic policies. Tunisia, under Bin Ali, was placed in very low ranks in terms of international donor aid. (Cardwell, 2013, pp. 90-113)

After the revolution, and under the tight control of the Islamic-led government, NGOs were still trying to re-structure themselves and define their scope of work. The common perception in Tunisia, unlike in Egypt, was that foreign funding was acceptable but only for human-rights NGOs and not for political parties. The new government placed a lot of reservations on funding for newly established political parties. In specific, Gulf funds were banned, fearing the support of Ennahda and other Islamist parties. Foreign funding was suspected of being used to: first manipulate the elections and transition processes; second to remove the legitimacy of real international aid; and third to buy media access as a way to control the public opinion.

According to Tunisian civil society actors, the freedom in the laws regarding foreign funding stipulated after the revolution is a double-edged sword. This freedom paved the way for political corruption and especially for the Islamist parties. It also created a controversy over the equality in access to resources. Thus, several entities are calling for more control of foreign funding to preserve equal opportunities for all parties to have equal access to resources, so that the political processes are more transparent. Analyzing why the government is not putting any kind of restrictions on foreign funding, takes us back to the fact that this government wishes to comply with the spirit of the “Jasmine Revolution” and the common civil society perception of freedom. On the other hand, NGOs argue that these limitations are not being established because the government-led political parties are receiving a huge amount of foreign aid that is not transparent or accountable for. (Dasgupta & Bangham, 2012, pp. 23-64)

Due to the lack of local available funds for all NGOs in Tunisia, the civil society’s efficiency and continuity depend on international aid. There is currently a wide interest in Tunisia because of its transitional context. Technical and financial support is flowing into Tunisia. This support was welcomed by the Tunisian government with open arms and without having any restrictions. However, the low number and the low capacity of newly-established NGOs are not entirely matching with the agenda of international donors. Finally, controversy over setting more restricted regulations on international funds is growing within the political arena in Tunisia.

Funding Limitations in Egypt

Foreign funding is the most important funding for NGOs in Egypt. Local funding is very rare and selective. The debate concerning foreign funding leads to the conclusion that

this type of funding is illegal according to the law and under specific conditions. Basically, the Egyptian government, since the ruling days of Mubarak, views foreign funding as a threat since some NGOs might use this money to form a certain political organization that might act against the government. Not only the government perceives NGOs as such, the public opinion in Egypt has been altered to consider NGOs as homogenous group acting towards achieving the interests of the “West”. Law number 84/2002 distinguishes the incidents when NGOs can receive foreign funding and determines the specific areas in which these NGOs can operate. (Malka & Alterman, 2006, pp. 23-27)

On the other hand, civil society actors try to advocate in favor of receiving foreign funds under the following argument: the “West” does not have a common agenda; thus receiving foreign aid from the EU or the US does not mean that NGOs will try to implement a common agenda set by these two donors. Another argument stresses on the fact that NGOs in Egypt are not homogeneous either; hence, civil society actors argue that organizations do not have the same agenda. Each NGO in Egypt has its interests and goals that are completely different from another NGO. There might be NGOs working within the same scope, but that does not mean that they are unified. As a matter of fact, the networking problem between NGOs is another issue that will be later discussed. Finally, NGO defenders talk about the MDGs as the guiding rules for funding by international donors. Globalization made funding have specific boundaries and clear conditions; not every NGO can receive foreign aid by just asking for it. NGOs have to be compliant with the rules and procedures of the funding bodies. (Abdelrahman, 2004, pp. 76-119)

For example, part of USAID's support for democracy in the world goes to civil society organizations working within this field. The Mubarak government rejected this type of support for Egyptian organizations. After the revolution, the Obama administration has been accused that it is not fully supporting the promotion of democracy in Egypt within the rule of the Islamists. However, studying the numbers reveals that the Obama administration budgeted \$165 Million for Egypt's economy and political transition. Only \$100 million were truly activated to develop Egypt's economy, and the remaining \$65 million were controlled by the new Islamist government and did not go to the civil society organizations to help activate political transition. The current situation remains the same with the unchanged law that governs foreign funding. (U.S Department of State, 2011, Fact Sheet)

Opportunities for NGOs in Tunisia and Egypt in Terms of Funding

Both governments in Tunisia and Egypt should provide equal opportunities for all NGOs operating within their countries to receive access to foreign funding based on competency. This act should be transparent and should not be related to control mechanisms that are set by the governing authorities. NGOs should ask for replacing the current committees responsible for determining whether these NGOs can accept or reject foreign funding. These committees should be replaced by defined principles and standards if they are to exist in the first place. In addition, and due to the fact that the control of foreign funding is based on the fear from political parties, NGOs should advocate for setting a clearly defined law that governs political campaigns. As such, there would be a limit to funding opportunities and this will prevent political parties from abusing the funds received. (Dietz & Houtkamp, 1998, pp. 89-102)

As a matter of fact, setting constraints on the work of NGOs will keep them always exposed and dependent on foreign funding. In order to decrease the level of foreign aid, NGOs should make use of the transitional context and ask for fewer constraints on the level of activities that would allow them to generate their own income and make sure that all their activities are sustainable. Whenever the community is participating in large, the income for NGOs will increase and the dependency on foreign aid will decrease. (Megally, 2008, pp. 107-113)

Another alternative for these NGOs is to activate, advocate, and push for the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility. This way, NGOs will increase the level of internal funding by private institutions that will be willing to donate part of their income to NGOs in order to avoid tax. This is an important opportunity for NGOs to work on along with setting a tax law that will encourage such activities. These opportunities will guarantee a better financial support for the NGOs working in Tunisia and Egypt.

Internal Organization Problems

As mentioned earlier in this research paper, governance is a very important aspect of civil society participation in decision making within a certain country. A major section of NGO governance deals with the relationship between the NGO staff and the board members. Good governance for NGOs works almost the same way as that of the government. Good governance means that there should be a transparent relationship and a decent internal checks and balances system in order to ensure that this NGO is efficiently serving the public interest. In this case, a clear distinction of roles between its staff members is necessary. A clear internal law should be set and followed. This would

help collective decision making within an organization rather than having a person of a certain group controlling the mission and scope of work of a certain NGO. (Morehead, 2007, pp. 44-53)

Good governance is the essence of internal accountability. In fact, it is not only internal but rather external as well. Transparency and accountability are key elements within this entire dynamic. Having transparency in an NGO increases its credibility and legitimacy and exposes it to more and more donations. NGOs follow as well the national law that regulates the work of NGOs in their countries. Their structure, organization, and activities depend a lot on this factor. Several NGOs in the EU and the US have what is called “Dual Bodies”. These NGOs tend to create a management board in order to manage the day-to-day activities, and another supervisory board that enhances transparency, especially at the financial level. When establishing clear rules, NGOs enhance the level of governance within their organizations. Despite the fact that some rules are vague and the national laws are not clear, NGOs can create their own internal management law that would bind their staff to a certain behavior which coincides with the NGO’s policies. (Christie, 2013, pp. 51-65)

In order to reach good governance, NGOs must be exposed to capacity building trainings. Capacity building tackles three main aspects: human resources, financials, and technological capacity building. Tackling the issue of organizational governance, capacity building highlights the fact that only through well-established organizational governance the public is served to their best interest by an NGO. This process helps organizations to write a “governing document” specifying standards for internal leadership, accountability, and transparency. This document should define the

organizations mission and vision along with its board of trustees and financial accounts management. (Eade, 1997, pp. 23-49)

In the Arab World, civil society has been dormant for the past two or three decades. Most of the NGOs in this region were labeled by experts as “GONGO”: Governmental Non-Governmental Organization. Governance has been the least of concerns for NGOs. Since these NGOs were focusing on freedom and liberation from government control, the focus was not on enhancing their internal organizational structure or the relation between their staff. After the revolution, it was time for enhancing the internal structure of these NGOs through capacity building programs. International organizations are working to help establish criteria that NGOs should meet to become eligible for funding and project management. The international community is fully aware that this is not an easy task and cannot be done overnight. This task requires years of support and follow up from international experts. It also requires the full support of the internal laws within any Arab country in order for these NGOs to operate freely. This does not mean that developmental projects and advocacy work will stop. Reconstruction of the civil society is necessary in parallel with enhancing the capacity of these NGOs in their nation states. (Abood, 2013, Chapter 10)

In a transitional context such as in Egypt and Tunisia, the countries are still in political turmoil. Enhancing the concept of local NGO governance requires time and effort. Awareness campaigns are needed to introduce the importance of governance at first, before starting with any developmental efforts. Not only that, but also the concept of governance should be introduced in the lexical terms used by the transitional government. The development of the internal structure of an NGO will lead to a more

efficient outcome its work and will enhance its role in participation in decision making processes. NGOs with a well-established internal structure will better shape domestic and foreign policies in a certain country.

NGO Internal Governance in Tunisia

In a transitional context characterized by uncertainty, Tunisia is leading efforts to develop economic, political, and social policies. In order to help the government reach a stable level, civil society organizations must be internally organized and prepared. There is widespread need from the Tunisian public for transparency in the work of both the government and civil society organizations. Fighting for their survival, several NGOs lack the capacity and freedom to work on establishing the needed reform. Within the legislative framework that was set in Tunisia, NGOs were forbidden to participate in political activities. Consequently, it is very difficult to view how these NGOs would be able to help with reconstruction and reform. (US Congress Hearing, 2006, pp. 33-50)

The “Jasmine Revolution” motivated international donors to support Tunisian NGOs that became active in working in advocacy and development. Donors tend to favor NGOs with a clear national agenda for development over those still trying to establish themselves. The international community is trying to create a wide network of these NGOs within Tunisia. The main goal is to have a well-established network of NGOs able to advocate a certain cause and affect the decisions of the government. This would render them an influential lobby in Tunisia. To reach this goal, the international community is aware of the fact that it should start operating with capacity building projects.

NGO Internal Governance in Egypt

Going back to the Associations Law in Egypt Number 84/2002, it regulates the internal governance of an NGO. There is a direct link between the concepts of accountability and transparency with government control and interference. Ironically enough, this law also coincides with international characteristics of good governance within an organization. At the same time this law uses this transparency for government control. The main problem in Egypt is that the government, according to Law Number 84/2002, has the right to attend the meetings of this NGO and has a say in selecting its board members. There is no room for these NGOs to operate freely and create their own internal proceedings and system. (Cook, 2011, pp. 210- 271)

Egyptian NGOs are aware that they lack technical and organizational capacity to become active organizations in society and answer the needs of the public. The bigger problem is that most of the time, they lack the will or resources to pay for this capacity. As discussed before, there is a lack of capacity in fundraising as well as governance. The lack of organizational capabilities is leading to a decrease in the number of volunteers willing to participate in projects. The only exception in this case is Islamic organizations, which do not face the problem of staffing or volunteers. However, these organizations faced the same constraints as other organizations during Mubarak days, but got their complete freedom when the Islamist government came to power. Their credibility and legitimacy come from their scope of work, mostly concentrated on benevolence. Their main focus is to help the poor. (Sullivan & Abed-Kotob, 1999, pp. 97-120)

Internal Governance Opportunities for NGOs in Egypt and Tunisia

The best internal governance for NGOs in Egypt and Tunisia is governed by the level of capacity building they will be exposed to, internal organization actions, and the external networking they will create. Most of the capacity building efforts that were placed previously in the Arab region are related to program outcome rather than internal governance. The focus was loose on organizational structure; a factor that would attract more foreign aid. In addition, problems with internal organization hinder the effectiveness of programs delivered by these NGOs. Currently, NGOs in Egypt and Tunisia must be aware of the opportunity they have to regulate their internal performance and define what exactly they want to do through a clear mission and vision. They have to develop their capability to complete a detailed needs assessment and analyze the requirements of their societies. Besides, they have the opportunity to create strategic plans for the scope of work for the coming years, beyond the transitional context. (Jazouli, 2006, "Good Governance and North Africa Complexities")

NGOs are now open to multiple development options in which they should focus on internal documentation skills. It will be absurd to resort to external consultants every time they need to write a proposal or concept note. This is a main part of internal governance. They have to be able to attract more staff and volunteers when they clearly define their mission statement, vision, and strategy. By these steps, they will gain more legitimacy and credibility from their societies. One of the major opportunities facing NGOs in Tunisia and Egypt is to think "out-of-the-box" when it comes to creating projects and decreasing dependency.

Enhancing internal governance of NGOs will help increase their transparency and accountability. It will help them establish a solid ground for their projects and programs in order to better participate in decision making and policy setting. Here legitimacy is important whereby NGOs will have a larger influx of volunteers as well as donors. These steps cannot be achieved without having an umbrella of laws that provide freedom of operation for these NGOs. In the transitional contexts of Egypt and Tunisia, NGOs are playing a vital role in assisting the government to reach better economic and social policies based on its people's needs and requirements. Opportunities are vast for these NGOs to enhance their structure for better cooperation and networking with the government.

Corruption Limitations

Civil Society corruption comes from government corruption in the relevant area and NGO internal corruption. Before tackling the issue of corruption, it is important to define this term. According to Transparency International, corruption is defined as 'the abuse of power or position for private gain'. (Transparency International, 2006) The issue of corruption is very sensitive in the world of NGOs and civil society. Corruption hinders the achievements of NGOs' policies and the impact of their projects. Financial and human resources are being used to satisfy specific group and individual needs. Civil society actors need to understand the tools used to fight this process. The issue of corruption is also linked to 'good governance' and funding discussed in the sections above. Transparency and accountability are important concepts for stakeholders in a certain NGO. One of the major resources of an NGO is its reputation. Corruption can

destroy this reputation, decrease legitimacy, and abolish good governance. (Vogl, 2012, pp. 269-278)

Unfortunately, activists agree that corruption continues to grow all around the globe and is currently considered a very serious problem and a major limitation to NGOs. Corruption is being institutionalized and governed by political figures networking with NGOs even in neo-liberal countries. Moreover, corruption works completely in contrast with development. If development tends to enhance the standard of living of societies, corruption directly harms people, especially the underprivileged. With the increase in the numbers of local and international organizations on one hand, and governmental or private donor agencies on the other; NGOs are moving into the corruption tunnel while striking deals with donor agencies, setting high overhead costs, and conducting corrupt procurement. (Zaum & Cheng, 2011, pp. 199-256)

On the other hand, corruption is not only internal for NGOs. The civil society in general tends to face corruptive measures while dealing with their government. For many NGOs, corruption is viewed as a social disease that needs long years to be healed. They tend to have an emotional view of the corruption issue. Even those NGOs that try to fight corruption face several limitations. Most of them enter such a fight with a small level of legitimacy, even though they are convinced that what they are doing is socially acceptable. However, they have to get more and more citizen support by advocating their cause. Another major limitation is that these NGOs tend to use foreign aid to fight corruption within their countries. There are three main problems with foreign funding. The first is that these funds usually come in a project form, so it would be difficult to create an anti-corruption activity that would receive the support of citizens. Second,

local funds are always a better way to show that the NGO is more legitimate and has internal support. Third, this concept is still new and there are no historical success stories of anti-corruption activities. (Johnston, 2005, pp. 3-22)

In the Arab World, political parties, NGOs, and many civil society actors have “fighting corruption” on their main agenda and state it as a critical priority for their actions. Corruption has long been a cause for underdevelopment in the MENA region. Despite the vast amounts of resources, NGOs only received a minor portion of it. They always resorted to external funding, which was even controlled by their governments. Even though Arab governments, especially in the Gulf region, are investing a lot of money in education and development projects, economic mis-management, corruption, favoritism, nepotism, and other types of bad governance measures are very well spread among the administration of these governments. These countries are still considered underdeveloped; even those oil monarchies that do not have a problem with financial resources. Their main problem is human resources. (Haynes, 2013)

Corruption Limitation in Tunisia

The saying “Absolute Power Corrupts Absolutely” is true. Since 1987, Tunisia had been facing corruption with the rule of Bin Ali until the “Jasmine Revolution” of 2011. Bin Ali’s rule was characterized by corruptive measures, repression, and tyranny. The people of Tunisia never experienced the true meaning of transparency and accountability. After the revolution, political campaigns were established on the basis of anti-corruption, a rich material which motivated the people to vote for these candidates. A new

government was formed in an attempt to overcome the residue of the previous authoritarian regime. The main problem for the new government as well as the civil society is to campaign for the idea that politics is not only about corruption and “dirty work.” (King, 2009, pp. 31-48)

Recently formed NGOs faced daunting challenges when dealing with people’s patience and public opinion. They had to work towards establishing a new constitution, new institutions to fight corruption in the government and in the judicial system, new rules for secularism and modernity, and finally decreasing police corruption. The new government, with the support of civil society organizations established committees that addressed constitutional reform and issues of good governance to end corruption, which was considered to be the major reason behind the “Jasmine Revolution.” An electoral commission was created to overview the election process and to monitor these events since their inception, making sure to abolish all types of corruption. They have been following, to an extent, the correct measures of transitional justice by addressing the previous social injustices of Bin Ali’s regime and all the inequalities it created. (Perkins, 2014, pp. 214-260)

Civil society in this case played a major role in uniting the Islamist movements, the left-wing labor unions, and the liberals to create a unified call for economic and social change post Bin Ali. Institutional and judicial reform was necessary after the corruption they witnessed during Bin Ali’s term. The Tunisian government and civil society organizations seem to be ready to fight corruption.

Corruption Limitations in Egypt

USAID developed an audit report to rank countries based on specific criteria. The evaluators were a group of independent NGOs which ranked Egypt as unfavorable in terms of operating for civil liberties, democratic notions, and corruption. This rank did not get any better after the revolution. Ironically, it got worse. Only 8 percent of the GDP is spent by the government on social reform. Corruption is at its best in Egypt, and NGOs are resorting only to external funds to operate. Their main mission is to abolish internal corruption as well as work on achieving good governance measures within the government. Unlike in Tunisia, this phase has not yet started. Based on Transparency International's ranking system on corruption, Egypt dropped from being country number 70 to becoming country number 105 after the control of the Muslim Brotherhood (the scale is out of 180 countries). (The Guardian, 2012) Despite all these numbers, Mubarak's government maintained a continuous economic growth throughout the year; a fact that drew the attention of international donors and thus sustained the development of the civil society sector in Egypt. After the revolution, the growth turned into a recession, all while maintaining the same low level on the corruption index.

The NGO Law in Egypt does not allow Egyptian civil society organizations to become more flexible, active, and effective in terms of meeting the needs of the poor. They do not have an efficient role to play in terms of eroding corruption and creating decent institutional reforms. They are currently under the control of governmental institutions, especially the ministries of Interior and Social Affairs. Corruption remains a burden on the shoulders of civil society activists in Egypt. (Fahmi, 2012, pp. 1-29)

With the current toppling of Mursi's government, high hopes for reform are increasing in terms of changing Law Number 84/2002 and opening the space for NGOs to freely

operate in terms of fighting corruption and enhancing governance level. However, the question that poses itself is the following: Will the military regime be exactly the same as its predecessors?

Opportunities for NGOs in Egypt and Tunisia to fight Corruption

Combating corruption with no effective law in place is an impossible mission to complete. Also, having a decent law to combat corruption should have a national consensus over it. The current situation in Egypt and Tunisia is different. In Tunisia, national consensus over reform has been reached when signing the new constitution. However, in Egypt, power struggle still controls the political arena. The time for reform dialogue has not yet come. Therefore, the post-revolutionary governments have faced huge difficulties in setting laws for good governance. (Auby, Breen, & Perroude, 2014, pp. 39-52)

The basic for good governance and fighting corruption is having the ‘rule of law’ set in stone within the new constitutions. NGOs in Egypt and Tunisia are well aware of the importance of this notion. Fighting corruption, setting the rule of law, reforming institutions, and initiating democratic processes are very complex processes that NGOs along with new governments are facing. Even though people are demanding these reforms; NGOs and governments need further understanding of concepts of economic, social, and political reform. Abolishing corruption needs the intervention of international support to educate the civil society about the importance of reform and good governance. This is a great opportunity for NGOs in Tunisia and Egypt to make use of the international support to create projects and programs aiming at educating the public about the importance of governance. These NGOs should attend capacity building

trainings to ensure sustainability and stability of these programs until they reach their objectives. (Kaldor, Moore, & Selchow, 2012, pp. 41-86)

Heterogeneous Societies – Political Instability

Civil society organizations do not operate in vacuum. They are always confronted with societal dynamics. These dynamics are the result of economic, cultural, and religious diversities. A situation as such will result in a lack of cooperation and networking between the operating NGOs even in the same field. Each NGO will work to satisfy the needs of its surrounding milieu rather than concentrate on national domestic and foreign policies. This cultural competition will become a road block toward efficient results. Funds for a similar cause will have to be distributed equally amongst the opposing NGOs; and thus will not have the desired effect in terms of program design and project implementation. (Hanley, 1997, pp. 157-178)

International donors are aware of the fact that civil society organizations in the Arab World depend a lot on their surrounding environment. Similarly, their strategies as donors should also take into account the cultural differences between these NGOs and should differentiate between beneficiaries even if the purpose of funding is the same. With such heterogeneous societies, NGOs are playing the role of the government in their own areas, turning their beneficiaries into clientele. Such an action, paired with political instability and government inability to serve the needs of its people, will result in a complete halt of participation of these NGOs in public decision making. (Merlini & Roy, 2012, pp. 215-237)

Political instability is a key factor for civil society's inefficiency in a certain country. In the Arab World, politicians tend to fund NGOs as a means of increasing their legitimacy and authority. They consider these NGOs as part of their corporate social responsibility as politicians. Also, several civil society organizations are state funded. The power struggle in the Arab World shows that the democratization path is still not stable and is facing various burdens; an important example is the civil war in Syria. The "Arab Spring" revealed some internal polarization between civil society organizations, mostly on the basis of Islamic and secular. Another reason for political instability is the fight over economic resources of these countries. Not only that the decrease in the size of the middle class population in post-revolution countries is another obstacle for the stability in these countries. Any economic failure will definitely result in a political struggle. (Stephanous, 2012, pp. 193-215)

Anthropologists state that in any society with political instability, the social mass will tend to rely on their surroundings that have homogeneous characteristics. These types of relations created in the Arab World because of the political instability will become an obstacle toward the healthy formation of civil society organizations. Examples of these formations are tribes, clans, ethnic groups, and religious organizations. In several Arab states, these formations will become stronger than the state itself. This is another obstacle that NGOs face when trying to complete any democratization process. (Stephanous, 2012, pp. 193-215)

Heterogeneity and Political Instability in Tunisia

Cultural differences in Tunisia focus mainly on the concept of incompatibility between Islam as a religion and the democratic civil society. The gap is wide between both types of organizations, where culture and religion are playing a negative role in the democratization of post-revolution countries. Edward Said further clarified what can be called as political culture in the Arab states such as the one in Tunisia as “Orientalist”, which describes the authoritarian nature of the political structure. Many organizations in Tunisia have been able to place efficient tools to preserve their sustainability amidst the Islamist control. However, other NGOs failed to continue and were automatically blended within the culture of Islam and its organizations. In an effort to adapt to the new transitional phase, such NGOs resorted to capacity building for their staff to help them move from their cultural prejudices into the concepts of democratization within a society struggling from cultural heterogeneity as Tunisia. (Ennaji, 2014, pp. 275-300)

The civil society in Tunisia played a very positive role in constructing the new constitution which took into account the desires of several communities to have religious freedom, all while preserving the right of other Islamist groups and pacifying their fears. What also distinguishes the Tunisian civil society is the large youth participation in the decision-making processes. The youth organizations are trying to reduce the cultural differences and reach a certain type of consensus among the constituencies of Tunisia. (Ennaji, 2014, pp. 275-300)

Tunisia suffered from political instability during Bin Ali’s regime as well as during the transitional phase. Many scholars argue that an increased involvement of civil society in

reconstruction can lead to political instability during the democratization process in Tunisia. After the revolution, several assessments of the societal structure have been completed in Tunisia, and the civil society was fully aware that it will face cultural and political challenges especially from Islamists. Consensus should be reached in terms of the role of religion in the context. There is definitely a connection between social exclusion (especially for Islamic groups) and political instability in a country like Tunisia. (Guo & Stradiotto, 2014, pp. 78-118)

Post-revolution assassinations of opposition leaders have been the major source for political unrest in the country. Demonstrations were coerced by state police in an attempt to avoid another Egypt-like post-revolutionary situation. These assassinations led the secular opposition to call on the Islamist ruling party to leave power and resort to early elections. There were fears of administrative deterioration and ruling capacity from Ennahda Party. The latter was already under pressure of a deteriorating economy with lack of investments. However, unlike in Egypt, the Tunisian military did not merge into the political and cultural differences in Tunisia. Here it is important to mention that Ennahda Party showed interest in cooperating with the secular flow in Tunisia; an issue that led to the signature of a new constitution suitable for all parties. (Hamid, 2014, pp. 190-205)

Heterogeneity and Political Instability in Egypt

Unlike the case of Tunisia, the cultural diversity in Egypt is not between seculars and Islamic movements. The cultural difference is mainly religious: Islam and Copts. Although both sects converged their views during the revolution to topple Mubarak's

regime, this short-term coalition broke right after the Muslim Brotherhood came to power. Despite the fact that the freedom of belief and religious practice is maintained under Article 46 of the Egyptian Constitution, repression and discrimination against Christians are continuous on social, economic, and political levels. Christian NGOs are marginalized and mostly placed under governmental control, just like Islamic NGOs were treated during the days of Mubarak. In addition, after Morsi was toppled, the Copts paid the highest price as pro-Islamist movements attacked their churches, neighborhoods, and activists. (Ottaway & Carothers, 2000, pp. 25-28)

The transition from tyranny to democracy conceded for the rise of Islamic groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood. This incident also happened in Tunisia with Ennahda Party. This is to reveal the importance of the role Islam plays in civil society and how deeply rooted it is within the Arab societies. Thus, can Islamic parties be labeled as agents for democracy and liberation? Most scholars consider this choice of Islamism as the only best alternative for societies in the Arab World since these parties have long considered revolution as their main objective, and they survived along this line. When people in Egypt elected the Muslim Brotherhood to power, political instability increased as they realized that their situation was deteriorating economically, politically, and socially. At the beginning, it seemed unusual for many observers to see another revolution against an elected regime in Egypt. (Zahid, 2012, pp. 153-174)

Both cultural and political instability rendered the civil society organizations in a state of paralysis for more than two years. Despite the fact that these organizations were receiving international funds, their scope of work was limited by the situation in Egypt.

Opportunities for NGOs to enhance cultural and political situations in Egypt and Tunisia

For civil society organizations in Tunisia and Egypt, opportunities to have cultural homogeneity and political stability are different due to the difference in population, post-revolutionary context, and previous experiences. The most interesting is to see both populations place their differences aside and work together in elections to bring on new figures to rule their countries. It is true that the dominating culture after the revolution is the Islamic culture, which was established with the electoral processes that occurred in both Tunisia and Egypt. However, this is not to say that secular groups and other religious organizations have no say in the decision making process, or else Islamic movements would be acting the same as the one-party systems that they revolted against. (Ennaji, 2014, pp. 201-274)

The international community is well aware of this fact and is working hard to establish a democratic rule in Tunisia and Egypt that recognizes the cultural differences among the people. As such, they would be reducing the likeliness of problems and working toward political stability. NGOs, with their projects and programs, are working hand-in-hand with the international community to establish consensus among all the constituencies of society. This created a wide opportunity for the civil society to enlighten the social mass about what culture truly means. Societies in the MENA region, within the turmoil of transition, must have the characteristics of what constitutes a culture, just like they should know what is needed to establish good governance. Civil society organizations must spread the concepts of personal responsibility, participation, accountability, and transparency. This is what should create the culture in the Arab region. NGOs have the

best tool now to separate religion from political participation in the decision-making process. Organizations must be formed based on common vision, value, and strategies rather than being formed based on common religious or ethnic beliefs. This chance might never occur again for these NGOs. (Peters, 2012, pp. 33-64)

Chapter Six

Conclusion

Since the Treaty of Westphalia, the study of international relations has focused mostly on nation states. Scholars concentrated less on the issue of non-state actors. Historic events proved that states are not autonomous in terms of decision making. They share the privilege of decision making with non-state actors and societal groups. This issue led to the decrease in the role of states and increase in the powers of the private sector. The private sector created non-governmental organizations which came together for common interests and started lobbying for various causes. NGOs became more powerful than they used to be during the Cold War. Globalization was a major factor to create an unbreakable network of NGOs unified to reach a specific goal. If this process continues throughout the years, the international system will have to bare so many changes, and internal relations will have to further study in details the role of these NGOs in shaping their country's policies.

This research paper focused on NGOs and their role in shaping policies within their countries. The transitional context of Arab countries post the "Arab Spring" makes the perfect example of the emerging role of NGOs and their impact on internal dynamics. From authoritarianism to transnationalism and global governance, Arab states are moving slowly toward democratization. This process cannot be handled solely by interim or replacement governments. This task requires the intervention of internal NGOs as well as the support of international NGOs. Transnational networking among

organizations will become more complex and efficient with the rise of global technological trends.

As a comparison between the Arab Spring and other revolutions that reached the “third wave of democratization”, based on the classification of Samuel Huntington, this thesis recognizes two areas: Asia and Latin America. According to George Katsiaficas in his book “Asia’s Unknown Uprisings: People power in the Phillipines, Burma, Tibet...” people were organizing themselves throughout the years in Asia, and were able to bring down President Estrada of the Phillipines in three days, for example. NGOs in the Phillipines were considered to be part of the process of democratic governance which was drafted in the constitution of 1986. (Katsiaficas, 2013, pp.51-79)

In Latin America, reality shows a different perspective. According to Hank Johnston and Paul Almeida in their book “Latin American Social Movements: Globalization, Democratization, and Transnational Networks”, the role of international organizations was a crucial aspect in the development of these areas. On a yearly basis, International NGOs (especially US NGOs) organize huge conference in which local NGOs from Latin American countries attend to exchange information and get exposed to the recent developments on the social level. These meetings also tend to reduce the level of anti-liberalism aspect that tends to grow with the people in Latin America. With the growth of these ideas, came the growth of NGOs in Latin America. (Johnston & Almeida, 2006, pp.3-18)

The difference in the case of Asia and Latin America as opposing that of the Arab World is the already existing presence of NGO’s and the better mobility of people to organize

themselves without added pressure. This right has been preserved for them in the previously drafted constitutions, despite the presence of dictators in these countries. People were ready to take over the government and rule their countries, and thus were able to move in a smoother way from the first phase of a revolution to the next phase. In the Arab World, people are stuck on the first phase. They were able to topple down their dictators, but were not able to take over because of the lack of expertise and organization; thus, the turmoil and the chaos.

NGOs' participation and role occupied a vast space of the political and social dynamics in post-revolution countries. This research paper tackled the fields in which NGOs played a major role in terms of governance, advocacy, capacity building and institutional effectiveness, conflict resolution, in addition to elections and lobbying efforts. In addressing these issues, two case studies were examined: Egypt and Tunisia. These major issues formed the corner stone for the countries' reconstruction efforts. Civil society was supported by the international community to implement the goals and objectives of every point mentioned above. Organizations grouped themselves and worked toward a certain objective, all while taking into account the basics behind the "Arab Spring". NGOs created internal and external networks, especially in Tunisia, in order to build the basic building blocks of democracy and establish a transparent and accountable process of governance.

Several writings criticized the nature of NGOs in the Arab world, mentioning that these are not actually NGOs but more of government organizations with an aim to control and organize civil society actions. NGO corruption is another aspect of criticism of NGOs. Several NGOs are alleged to work their agendas, manipulate their mission and vision, and change their strategies in

order to suit the requirements of international donors without taking into account the needs assessment results. Overhead costs are also linked to the financial corruption aspect. In addition, many NGOs that work for democratization are not democratic by nature. They tend to impose a certain administration without the consent of their general assembly. All these aspects render the work of such NGOs inefficient and create a roadblock for development and democratization. (Carapico, 2014, pp. 150-198)

The “Arab Spring” brought forward the concepts of democratization and transnationalism. However, these two paradigms faced several challenges in terms of acceptance and implementation in Arab societies. Due to the long history of tyranny and dictatorship, the Arab society in the MENA region was not active or participatory in their work. Government control formed a major obstacle against the development and efficiency of civil society organizations. The only active organizations were the Islamic ones. Despite the firm control of previous regimes using repressive internal laws on NGOs, Islamic organizations were the only organizations active within those contexts due to the mere fact of their religious characteristic. Funding was also another hurdle for NGOs to develop. Money that came for the support of non-state work was channeled directly to monitoring committees pre-defined by the authoritarian regimes. In addition, these NGOs did not have any type of internal governance; a fact that rendered their action, though minimal, an inefficient and unproductive work. Despite capacity building efforts by the international community, the internal organization of NGOs was poor and lacked a clear structural approach as well as managerial, advisory, or administrative boards. Another challenge that faced the application of the democratization process was the issue of corruption which was deeply rooted into the culture of the Arab societies and within their political arenas. Fighting corruption cannot happen overnight in these

countries as discussed in this research paper. Despite the intervention of international organizations to build capacities in order to fight corruption, the case of Egypt proved completely the opposite. Corruption is entrenched into the perception of the Arab population; that politics and governmental issues are all related to corruption, nepotism, and favoritism. Finally, another major challenge for moving forward with a healthy democratization process is the issue of cultural and political instability in these countries. It is true that the revolutions' intention was to liberate and stabilize the Arab states, but the complexity of the societies proved otherwise. Few years after the ignition of the revolutions, countries, such as Egypt, are still struggling in a turmoil of events trying to reach a certain level of political stability in the country. The truth is that religion, unlike in any other region, plays a crucial role in determining the culture, interaction, and behavior of societies. There is a deeply intertwined link between Islam and political stability. The fight will always continue between the secular stream of thought and the Islamic one. Even though Tunisia has reached a constitution that satisfies the needs of almost all citizens, the struggle over power between Ennahda Party, (as an Islamic organization), will always continue. All these challenges are faced by NGOs when trying to support the government in reconstruction post-revolution.

It is important to highlight two of the main reasons for the success of these revolutions in Egypt and Tunisia, in addition to the role of NGOs. A very important factor is that the demonstrations in both Egypt and Tunisia were able to preserve their main characteristic of being peaceful. Despite the brutal intervention of police forces at a certain point during the uprisings, the demonstrations maintained the level of peacefulness and were

able to make a better effect on the outcome of the uprising. Another very important factor is the army neutrality which was mentioned earlier in this thesis.

Nonetheless, focusing on challenges does not mean that these countries do not have opportunities. When people in Egypt were not satisfied with the rule of Muslim Brothers who came to power after the first revolution and through elections; they revolted for the second time and toppled the new regime. Certainly one cannot downplay the role of the military in achieving this second revolution; but it remains a fact that people broke their fears, protested, and stayed in the streets until the change happened. People in countries like Egypt and Tunisia, have started learning how to practice their freedoms; starting with a basic one freedom of expression. The learning process continues and the populations of these countries will certainly need time to establish the rule of law, modern legislation, and prosperous economies. One could at least say that the journey has started. Unfortunately, revolutions in other contexts turned into violent wars such as in Libya-for some time- and Syria-to present. It is not within the scope of this paper to address the reasons behind such a transformation; however, the starting point remains the same: people demonstrated to topple their regimes and the latter coerced them by force. While international and regional factors certainly played a role in these revolutions; one fact remains invariable: civilians protested because they needed change and the youth raised their voices because they could not take injustice anymore. These same youth started in groups, without even knowing that these groups could be the nucleus for an active civil society that can affect domestic policies. These same youth who are now members of various NGOs, still seem enthusiastic to improve their organizations, expand their internal and external networks, suggest development

projects, and most importantly improve socio-economic conditions. Meanwhile, foreign countries' interests cross-cut with domestic aspirations and this will always keep the door open for more funding and capacity building of these NGOS.

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