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Comparative analysis between the Egyptian 2011
revolution and 1989 Polish revolution

By

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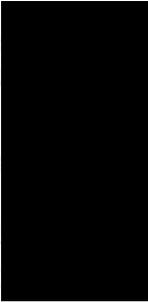
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Comparative analysis of the 2011 Egyptian revolution and 1989 Polish revolution

Khalil Hussein Yassin

Abstract

Starting with the Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia, then moving to Egypt, Libya, Syria, Bahrain and Yemen, different revolutions for similar goals have recently occurred. While some of these countries, such as Tunisia and Egypt, have undergone relatively peaceful transitions, Syria and Libya have been devastated by violent confrontations. Many domestic and geopolitical factors played an important role in these revolutions but to date, it remains unclear how and when different factors are important. This thesis compares the 2011 Egyptian revolution with the 1989 revolution in Poland in order to have a better understanding of the possible future of the Arab Spring. The findings of this thesis highlight the critical role of youth groups and civil society organizations in the breakdown of regimes. These findings shed light on the answers to the research questions: How did civil society and non-governmental groups in Egypt and Poland contribute to regime breakdown? What specific roles did they have with regard to the regime breakdown? Such questions are important to answer, in order to explain how the power for change is actually rooted in the people and society.

Keywords: Democratic transition, civil society organizations, Arab Spring, Solidarity movement

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Background

The French revolution, the Russian revolution and through to the 1952 Egyptian revolution and the Islamic revolution in Iran were all influential events that were the result of internal and geopolitical factors and left behind them huge effects on both domestic and international levels. The causes of revolutions are complex and idiosyncratic, but there are also some commonalities that can be found across them—even when they have occurred at different times and in different regions. It is in search of commonalities that this thesis seeks to better understand the causes leading to the Arab Spring revolutions and their consequences on the political, economic and social levels. Specifically, this thesis examines the cases of Egypt and Poland. To better understand the Egyptian uprising, it will be compared with Poland's uprising in the late 1980s, which led to the collapse of the communist system and the country's break away from Soviet tutelage. A comparative approach will be adopted in order to explain domestic and geopolitical factors that I will identify in the Egyptian and Polish revolutions; therefore I will be focusing on each case independently then subsequently comparing them. Most importantly, the thesis will seek to answer the following central research question: How did civil society and non-governmental groups contribute to regime breakdown? To that end, the thesis will also be studying facts to better understand the effects of each of the two conditions. Secondary

sources of references from books, articles, and presentations will be used towards supporting the findings of this paper. The qualitative research technique is the major instrument throughout the paper, in order to be able to answer the research question.

1.2 Research question

The discussions regarding the revolutions that took place in Egypt and Poland in the literature bring various perspectives on the reasons, catalysts and effective outcomes of these revolutions. Some consider that media played the most important role in these revolutions, while others see the military as the prime factor that impacted the fate of the regime, and some scholars believe that civil society and social movements played the most important role in any regime breaking down. The findings from the variety of academic and peer-reviewed research that studied these revolutions and their consequences show a considerable emphasis on the potentially important role of social and civil movements and actors in the breakdown of authoritarian regimes. In addition to this central question, the thesis will investigate how geopolitical and domestic factors contribute to revolutionary movements.

1.2.1 Importance of the research

The importance of this research lies in the fact that it helps us to understand the expected results of any revolution that possesses similar characteristics to the Egyptian and Polish revolutions. As we can observe that there is no one specific trigger for the Arab Spring in general, and mainly Egypt, thus this paper will examine the main role of the social movements and civil society actors. A natural question arises as to why I chose to compare Egypt, a Middle Eastern country, to Poland, which is in Eastern Europe. What

links the two different countries? As we know, Poland was the first Eastern European country to witness mass revolts against the communist regime, and this revolution was able to succeed after a long series of demonstrations and civil strikes that were mainly represented by the workers under the umbrella of the non-governmental organization Solidarity. A key trigger for the start of the revolution was the visit of Pope John Paul the Second, a Polish national, and the speech that he gave in front of hundreds of thousands, calling for freedoms, civil rights, and opposing violence: this pushed the workers to oppose the government and call for new reforms.

On the other hand, there are many common issues between both the Solidarity movement and Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, and the other civil NGOs that played a very important role in the Egypt's revolution, as they were targeting people to help them achieve their social goals. In addition, both Poland and Egypt went through similar situations that led to a revolution, namely dire social conditions leading to a huge number of people on the ground asking for the removal of the regime. In both countries the revolution succeeded in toppling the regime. Both countries also experienced post-revolution elections but with some small differences.

My goal in choosing Poland and Egypt is to compare how both revolutions were able to succeed, the factors that played major roles in them, and to what extent the two countries were able to reach democracy. The Arab Spring uprisings had many aspects that previous revolutions and protests did not, such as the large influence of social media; therefore it is essential to analyze how civil society impacted the Egyptian revolution by comparing it to the Polish revolution that took place in 1989. In this thesis I select the main civil society actors and social movements that played important roles during the Egyptian

revolution and compare them to the Polish revolution and how social movements there were able to reach their goals.

1.3 Methodology

This thesis adopts the comparative approach to explain the function of each factor as it exists in each case study. In this paper, I also shed light on the framework in which societal change takes place and the reasons that caused dramatic change in the case of the two revolutions. I will consider the role of institutions in shaping behavior and the rationality behind many of the actions and initiatives taken by the activists in both the cases of Egypt and Poland. I focus on each case independently and then compare them to highlight their relationships to the different circumstances, influential factors and socio-political environments. I look at facts which will assist us to understand the effects of each of the conditions: social, political and economic. I rely primarily on secondary sources of references from books, articles, and presentations. The qualitative research technique is the major instrument throughout the paper, in order to be able to answer the research question. In addition I incorporate information from interviews with political activists in both countries that help me to have the facts that were taking place on the ground and that will explore the national track toward democratization in both countries.

During the past few decades, a number of regions around the globe went through critical democratization and transition efforts which had varied levels of success, notably in the ex-Soviet Union States. Yet, an “exception” to these efforts was the Arab World. Politicians and analysts, even the dictators of the Arab world themselves, often highlighted a “zero-sum” equation, which explains that any attempt to overthrow their regimes may result in a degree of pluralism, but would also bring with it a great deal of instability. Any

removal of a dictatorship would simply find a dominant political Islam as the only substitute. However, as a result of a weakening economic reality and an accumulated political oppression, the Arab Spring emerged, and was seen as a kind of awakening and rising up of the hitherto dormant Arab civil societies. What happened resulted in a new system whereby the conventional protagonists were no longer the only actors in the political arena, but rather a wider space opened up for the youth groups in Arab societies (which constitute the majority of the population), accompanied with and supported by civil society organizations which both played a critical role through influential and empowered roles in the various spheres of public life.

Over the decades, Arab rulers created a socio-political environment which included several security apparatuses and restrictive laws that pervaded and monitored every aspect of civic life and that kept all possible opposition forces fragmented and weak; yet, it is these same targeted forces which broke through the rigid political wall and led to the collapse of at least three Arab regimes in less than a year. As a result of the organizational, lobbying, awareness and mobilization efforts of civil society organizations and youth groups in Arab societies such as Egypt, citizens that for years had been passive and disconnected eventually became involved, active and key players in the electoral process.

1.4 Thesis Map

This section describes the four remaining chapters in the thesis. In addition I will be describing the motivation behind the research. The first chapter describes the elements behind the thesis; chapter two represents the existing literature on the different conditions that vary between the roles of civil society organizations tackling the domestic and geopolitical factors behind the two revolutions. This chapter provides a detailed

background about the different theories on the role of civil society organizations and factors behind the two revolutions. It will also summarize work done on these areas to reveal how each theory is interconnected with the other to form an indicator in shaping the final outcome of the transition.

Chapter three provides an overview of the events leading to the radical political changes that took place in Eastern Europe during the 1980s, with a particular emphasis on Poland. It traces specific periods in Poland's political transformation: the workers' strike of 1980, the martial law of 1981 and finally the roundtable talks of the late 1980s which eventually led to Poland's independence from the Soviet Union.

Chapter four introduces the background behind the Egyptian revolution. The background to Egypt's regime is explored, demonstrating many strong similarities with the case of Poland, with the exception of the length of the time required to overthrow the Mubarak regime completely. This chapter shows that, similarly to Poland, both domestic and geopolitical factors combined to fuel the populist movements in Egypt over the years leading to the break-up of the regime. These movements were supported by international players and led by civil society organizations and youth groups that resorted to non-violent, street-based initiatives that put increasing pressure on the ruling class and its forces, leading to the quick break-up. The role of civil society and youth groups will be discussed in detail in this chapter, with a discussion on their evolution over the years in Egyptian society, influence on the youth in Egypt, and the support which these movements received from foreign parties and organizations.

The findings of the thesis highlight the critical role of youth groups and civil society organizations in the breakdown of regimes, with a specific focus on Egypt and Poland.

These findings shed light on the answers to the research questions: How did civil society and non-governmental groups in Egypt and Poland contribute to regime breakdown? What specific roles did they have with regard to the regime breakdown? Such questions are important to answer, in order to explain how the power for change is actually rooted in the people and society. These findings reveal that the role of CSOs and youth groups was not sudden or limited to the 2011 events. In fact, decades before these groups exerted efforts on multiple levels to increase the civic awareness and education of the activists and youth groups, in addition to continuous lobbying of the state towards enacting human rights laws and regulations. The continuous years of suppression and one-man-rule led to an accumulation of public dissent and frustration, which helped to fuel and mobilize the protests in significantly large numbers.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

This chapter begins with an introduction, which will give an overview of the developing events leading to the revolutions in Poland and Egypt. Then the chapter reviews some of the major themes and debates on the role of social movements and civil society actors in regime breakdown. The following part, which is the primary focus of the chapter, emphasizes the literature on the domestic and geopolitical factors that stimulate and seem to lead to regime breakdown. The chapter next examines the theories on democratic transition, and theories on regime breakdown. Lastly, this chapter discusses the democratization process and the main economic, social and civic factors that lead to the democratization of a certain society.

2.1 Introduction

On October 16, 1978 John Paul the Second was elected as Pope of the worldwide Catholic Church. A year later he visited Poland and gave a speech in the presence of hundreds of thousands calling for freedom and preserving human rights and going against violence (Mason, 1989). These calls for change represented a symbol for the Polish public. By 1976 demonstrations by workers took place at Radom and Ursus leading to the emergence of many opposition groups consisting of workers and intellectuals, such as the Workers Defense Committee (KOR). These groups used to clandestinely publish books and publications on their ideas and activities as well as describing how to demonstrate more effectively, and to establish links with the Western press and other Polish intellectuals to spread the news of what was happening in Poland. These publications and groups formed

the beginnings out of which the Solidarity movement arose, which represented the first civil society organization and subsequently the first social movement during the Polish 1989 revolution.

Not long after Pope John Paul the Second's visit, striking workers on the Baltic coast formed a committee to present their demands to the government. They wanted to reflect a united front, so suggested Solidarity as a name and it soon became the symbol of the workers. Solidarity started as a non-governmental trade union in August 1980 led by Lech Walesa who was a factory technician at the Gdansk shipyards. It later spread to other workplaces and constituted the first independent labour union. According to Bartkowski (2009), the rapid growth of the Solidarity movement, which saw it reach around 10 million members in a short space of time, was perceived as such a threat by the government that it imposed martial law in 1981 in order to crush the union. However, in 1984, faced with the reality of the failure of martial law to achieve its goal of destroying the union, the communist government released Solidarity leaders from prison. Throughout the intervening years, the Solidarity movement had been able to survive and had replaced the imprisoned leaders, in many cases assigning leadership roles to women who were able to take the movement beyond the shipyard and other more male-dominated spaces.

However, while the government was not able to crush Solidarity, the movement was still not able to replace the government in power. Between 1982 and 1988 the economic situation in Poland deteriorated significantly, leading to massive demonstrations in the streets. In response, the government found that it had no option but to start directly communicating with Solidarity. The establishment of direct communication resulted in the re-legalization of the trade union movement and the opening of negotiations during which

Solidarity was tasked with ensuring non-violent strikes and the support of the Catholic Church. By the end of the 1980s, these negotiations would lead Solidarity to accept a transition process. Dialogue officially began in the form of the roundtable talks in Warsaw that took place from February 6 to April 4 1989; on April 17 1989 Solidarity was legalized.

During the talks Solidarity and the government agreed to allocate one third of the parliamentary lower house to the Communist Party and one third to Solidarity with the remaining third to be decided upon by voting. It was through this election process that Solidarity took the majority of seats in the house, automatically giving it the right to select its own prime minister, ushering in the first non-communist prime minister for more than 40 years. In December 1989 the Polish parliament voted for amendments to the constitution to liberalize the economy and rename the country as the Republic of Poland. In 1990 Lech Walesa succeeded in reaching the presidency of the state leading to the abolishment of the communist governmental system.

On December 17, 2010, at 11.30 am, Tunisian citizen Mohammad Bouazizi set himself on fire in front of the Sidi Bouzeid Municipality, in protest at the confiscation of his vegetable cart, the income from which used to feed his eight-member family. This event was a turning point in the Tunisian and Arab political scene that led to a break in the pervading fear of political oppression and social injustice. The impact of the Jasmine Revolution, as it went on to be known in Tunisia and across the world, affected the whole region and played a vital role, from Libya to Egypt, and from Yemen to Bahrain and Syria, in igniting bottom-up revolutions that called for a change to the political regimes; all of these shared the common chant of “the people want to bring down the regime”.

Egypt's transition from a monarchy to a republic took place when General Muhammad Najib assumed power in Egypt in 1953. In 1981, Hosni Mubarak assumed power and until today he is considered to have ruled Egypt for the longest time since Muhammad Ali's rule during the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, the thirty-year rule of Mubarak was ended after large mass movements in Tahrir Square, Cairo, organized open protests lasting around eighteen days. The social upheavals that occurred in Egypt became "grass-roots movements that could not be contained, negotiated with, or controlled through a few leaders" and that is why Mubarak's regime was toppled (Murphy 2011). Forced to resign after making many promises of reform, Mubarak left the presidential palace on the 11th of February 2011.

There are a couple of points worth noting concerning the uprisings in the Middle East. The process of the uprising itself witnessed a leaderless movement whereby different factions from society such as civilians, military personnel, political, un-political, religious, and un-religious parties came together. Nevertheless, when the primary objective of the uprising, ousting the dictator, was accomplished, the case shifted towards domestic disputes, driven along sectarian, ethnic, ideological, military divisions in society. Since the outbreak of the popular uprising in Egypt, many scholars have tried to answer several questions in an attempt to understand this unique Middle Eastern phenomenon. What are the main reasons that led to the massive popular uprising in Egypt? And most importantly, how were the demonstrations that toppled Mubarak's regime carried out for the period of eighteen consecutive days?

The causes that ignited and shaped the outbreak of social movements in Egypt are various. The protests led by exasperated demonstrators began as a reaction to poverty,

unemployment, corruption, and repression and were thus considered to be protests against Mubarak's regime. Nevertheless, Amin (2003) believes that one of the pivotal reasons behind the massive uprising in Egypt lies in societal development. Moreover, later political gains made by religious movements indicate the well-organized structure of these movements' preparations and mass legitimacy. These Islamic movements championed the revival of Islamic rule but with moderation. This attitude led the American Administration to accept and consider the political reality in a similar fashion to Turkish 'moderated Islamic' rule. In addition, a number of civil society actors played a very important role at the center of Egypt's revolution. As the Jasmine Revolution began to take shape in Tunisia, these Egyptian movements sought to mobilize their followers through new methods. This mobilization was based on two main demands, asking for economic and political rights, which led to new campaigns that called for an end to corruption.

The *Kefaya* movement was among the first to be launched as an opposition movement against Mubarak's regime. Its roots date back to fall 2004, and focused on dissatisfaction with the Egyptian regime's grip on political power. The 2005 presidential elections in Egypt, at which point the idea of inheritance of presidential power from Hosni Mubarak to his son Gamal was introduced, provided a major impetus to the movement. Eventually Kefaya evolved into a movement that sought to tackle all of the corruption issues in the Egyptian government. The April 6 youth movement was the first to originate as a Facebook group, with its goal being to mobilize civilians for a nationwide protest in support of the workers of El-Mahalla El-Kobba in 2008. After this event the April 6 movement enlarged its scope to fight for human and civil rights for Egyptians, calling for freedom of speech, an end to corruption, and many other social demands. The formation of the We Are All Khaled Said movement proved to be a turning point for Egypt's civil

society. The movement stems from when 27 year-old Khaled Said was beaten to death, allegedly by security forces, in Alexandria in June 2010. The group reflects Egyptian solidarity over Khaled's fate, whereby Khaled is seen as a symbolic son of any Egyptian family, thus inspiring the need to revolt against the status quo in Egypt.

One of the biggest questions today regarding the Egyptian revolution relates to the role of the Muslim Brotherhood. The Muslim Brotherhood has a long history, dating back to the early 1900s, with its origins rooted in opposition and including episodes of violence. It came to be seen as the de facto opposition of the political status quo, but was unable to reach any position of legitimate power until the 2012 presidential elections when its candidate Mohammad Morsi was elected president. In the revolution that ousted President Mubarak, the Muslim Brotherhood reinforced its centrist position by encouraging young people to organize mass protests, and calling for all groups to unite against Mubarak's regime. The historical background of the Muslim Brotherhood shows the extent to which the group has evolved over time. The Muslim Brotherhood is aware that it was not the instigator of, nor the main actor in, the January uprisings, yet it was the most organized group and recognized the valuable role of youth in enforcing the balance of power and organizing the protests. With its new generation of young leaders, the Muslim Brotherhood reached a point where it recognized the need to cooperate with other opposition groups. The silent majority in Egypt (which consists mainly of movements drawn from middle-class citizens as students, activists and professionals) was not as institutionalized as the Muslim Brotherhood, thus enabling the Muslim Brotherhood to attain political power more easily.

When considering the Muslim Brotherhood's actions during the January revolution from a historical perspective, it becomes clear that its careful approach to the protests formed an extension of the group's strategy of the past decades. This strategy exhibits a preference for incremental rather than revolutionary change; it is cautious and pragmatic, built on close cooperation with other Egyptian political actors. The role played by the Muslim Brotherhood in demonstrations was limited, and included an official abstention from participation in the so-called day of rage, based on the possibility of it constituting a failed revolution.

However, on Friday January 28, the Muslim Brotherhood did participate, albeit remaining in the background. In the words of one of its leaders: "We are not pushing this movement, but we are moving with it. We don't wish to lead it but we want to be part of it" (CITE). As the revolution continued to spread, especially outside Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood went out of its way to make assurances that its aim was not to dominate Egypt's post-Mubarak political scene. When viewed from the historical context of the Muslim Brotherhood, this assurance reflects a persistent fear of being part of a failed revolution which could result in its leaders being imprisoned. Likewise, the Muslim Brotherhood was equally afraid to be the leaders of a successful revolution that could be perceived as a continuation of its historical eagerness to take power.

Civil society and social movements have existed for many years, but have also changed to reflect the era or circumstances in which they spring to life. This section will explore various definitions of theories for social movements and civil society, by referring to a number of scholars such as Huricihan Islamoglu (2001) who is a specialist in civil

society movements, and Anthony Giddens (1991) who has published research on social movements.

Defining a social movement can be a hard task. It is not a well-organized, official political party or interest group that has a formal admission to political power, but at the same time it is not a group of political elites, nor is it an unorganized group without goals. Instead the answer is it is somewhere in between (Freeman & Johnson, 1999). The characteristics of social movements are that they are “involved in conflictual relations with clearly identified opponents; are linked by dense informal networks; [and they] share a distinct collective identity” (De la Porta & Diana, 2006, p.20). Social movements are involved in institutional struggles that oppose their goals. These goals can be narrow on a policy level or broad on a national level seeking cultural changes. Throughout history many social movements emerged to be the pretext to transform societies from the initial basis on which were established, but not succeeding every time. The movements embraced different ideologies: some aimed for revolutions and some for reforms, others were more conservative refusing any changes in society. The global changes and effects social movements were able to achieve led scholars to spend a lot of time analyzing the origin of these movements, their participants, and their methods to reach their goals or to lead them to failure. Eventually they reached the conclusion that in order to exist they must have resources and that they go through many stages in order to be able to develop.

Herbert Blumer, one of the important scholars to study social movements, recognized four stages of a social movement’s lifecycle. The titles he gave to the four stages were “social ferment”, “popular excitement”, “formalization,” and “institutionalization” (De la Porta & Diani 2006, p.150). Throughout time scholars gave

these stages new names but the meanings remained relatively the same. These stages are emergence, coalescence, bureaucratization and decline. As mentioned previously, social movements may experience declines and do not necessarily succeed every time. There are different causes that can lead to the decline stage, and these include repression, co-optation, success, failure and mainstream.

Huricihan Islamoglu argues in *Civil Society, Concept and History Of* (2001) that civil society is coterminous with the state as its power relations are ordered through law and institutions with the goal of ensuring social harmony. Additionally, civil society is a self-regulating, self-governing body outside and often in opposition to the state representing both the nexus of societal associations expected to generate civility, social cohesion and morality, and the site of reciprocal economic relations among individuals engaged in market exchange activity (Islamoglu, 2001:1891). The point that Islamoglu wants to make is that civil society is a self-entity responsible for political issues, but at the same time it is a phenomenon that exists independently of the state. For Robin Cohen and Paul Kennedy, civil society “are engaged in expressing their members’ interests and trying to shape national political culture” (Cohen and Kennedy, 2007:71).

Civil society components such as the middle-lower class, and more institutionalized social movements such as labour unions, played a very important role during the Polish and Egyptian revolutions. On April 6, 2008 the protests in the Egyptian city of Mahallah that called for a general strike had economic roots with rising food prices and the low wages of workers within the state textile industry causing a revolt. This labour movement of April 2008 represented the progenitor of the later January revolution that played out in Tahrir

Square according to labour activist Kamal Fayoumi in an article on the labour movement and the future of democracy in Egypt (2012).

In the January revolution of 2011 the activists were united by the phrase “everyone was in Tahrir”; this was different to the opposition movements of the 1990s that were the preserve of the Islamic groups. In 2011 Egypt witnessed a huge change when its educated youth united on the basis of common and shared interests from all civil societies and social movements. The We Are All Khaled Said movement provided a catalyst for everyone to take to the streets in Alexandria, for example. Throughout history many countries witnessed historical changes as a result of a revolution. Some of these cases of upheaval were able to culminate in a peaceful process of democratization, while some experienced violent struggles to reach democracy, and others failed and were repressed by regimes, unable to reach any democratic solutions. In order for these revolutions to succeed and reach their goals, certain actors within each society must play vital roles. Social movements and civil society actors are the major catalysts for the successful mobilization to lobby for certain ideologies. At the same time, two crucial factors can play a role in the failure or success of any revolution, namely domestic and geopolitical factors. To this end, social movements and civil society actors are supported (or weakened) by any number of variables on the domestic and geopolitical levels.

2.2 Role of social movements and civil society

2.2.1 Social movements

Building on previous discussion, social movements are involved in institutional struggles with agents that oppose their goals. These goals can be narrow, such as on a policy level, or

broad, such as on a national level seeking cultural changes. A number of early scholars tried to explain why people unite in a collective body in order to form a social movement. Throughout history many social movements emerged to form the pretext for a transformation of societies from the initial basis on which they were established, with varying degrees of success and failure. Ideologies varied: some aimed for revolutions and others for reforms, while some were conservative and refused any changes in society.

However, the global achievements of social movements have led scholars to dedicate a large amount of time to analysing the origin of these movements, their participants, and methods used. The general conclusion is that social movements do not arise out of a vacuum: in order to exist they must have resources and they go through many stages to be able to develop.

2.2.1.1 Four stages of social movements

Herbert Blumer describes the first stage of social movement as the “social ferment” stage (De la Porta & Diani, 2006). Social movements at this level are in their intermediate starting phase and lack organization. The common point between the participants is that they are dissatisfied with the social conditions, and looking for a means to take action on this issue. These actions take place on an individual rather than collective level. The second stage represents the level where social movements start to overcome some of the problems they faced during the first stage. This stage is known as the popular stage, as it reflects the move from individual unrest to a collective society feeling distressed by a certain issue and the root cause of it. Rex D. Hopper (1950) argued that at this stage “unrest is no longer covert, endemic, and esoteric; it becomes overt, epidemic and exoteric. Discontent is no longer uncoordinated and individual; it tends to become focalized and collective” (p. 273).

At this stage, participants become aware of one another, general policies and strategies are drafted and the means to implement them in order for their movement to succeed.

Blumer defines the third stage as formalization (De la Porta & Diani, 2006), or bureaucratization. At this stage, organization occurs at higher levels and strategic coalitions take place, whereby the movements succeed in reaching public awareness, requiring coordination between all the other movements in order to better address their common goals. This is set and reached through a professional staff that organizes daily operations and activities. At this stage their political power is stronger than previous stages, giving them access to the political elite, and the opportunity to run for political posts. The last stage is the institutionalization phase during which social movements, as Miller (1999) discussed, decline due to one of four reasons, namely repression, co-optation, success or failure.

When a social movement reaches institutionalization, the point at which it is most developed, it may face state repression, during which authorities will try to destroy it. Miller (1999) mentioned that “repressive actions may be defined as legitimate by the state, but they are never legitimate from the perspective of the movement”. When a social movement faces such actions, it is hard for it to mobilize and attract new members. Cooptation is also one of the stages that may hit a social movement when institutionalized. When a movement becomes centralized, and revolves around a charismatic leadership, co-optation occurs, and its leaders end up collaborating with the legal authorities.

In addition, when movements succeed in their goals, this can affect their status. According to Miller, some social movements re-orient to new goals once they achieve their old goals. Also once the called-for goals and rights are adopted within the political system, there would be no need for the social movement itself. Miller (1999) argues that sometimes

social movements would not be able to co-opt with their rapid development, thus they may collapse into different factions.

2.2.1.2 General social movement literature

With the emergence of the middle class in the 1960s, states started witnessing so-called post-industrial social movements. There was a general sense of awareness, with each citizen seeking to have an independent opinion within the decision-making apparatus. The background of social movement lies in anti-materialism and giving the power back to the people (Cohen and Kennedy, 2007).

Anthony Giddens (1938) provided the inspiration for social movements during the period of modernity that he called “emancipatory politics”, when people struggle to reach their goals of freedom because of the inequalities they face. Giddens argued that “it is a politics of choice, while emancipatory politics is a politics of life chances, life politics is a politics of lifestyle.” (Giddens, 1991) For Giddens life politics is when social movements know what to do with the “emancipatory rights” once they are achieved. Hence we find different definitions of social movements: some see them as organized, structured groups, while others see them as disorganized and unpredictable. It is fair to conclude that both definitions are correct, but that it depends on the case in question and the period of time. Hence in some places social movements are effective and in others they are spontaneous and reactionary.

John Wilson argues in his 1973 book *Introduction to Social Movements* that “a social movement is a conscious, collective, organized attempt to bring about or resist large-scale change in the social order by non-institutionalized means” (Wilson, 1973). Other theorists define social movements as unpredictable, chaotic, and disorganized (Byrne, 1997). According to Wiktorowicz (2003), if social movements are effective in a certain

state, it is not necessary to be effective in another one. While in some states there is a wide scope for social movements to be active, such as in Western nations, in other states social movements may be repressed by the authorities and unable to mobilize for their goals or to recruit members.

Social movements have a number of core characteristics. First they try to put pressure on power holders in order to reach their goals. Second they try to promote and mobilize their goals among the public in order to achieve their support, and recruit them to their organization. One of the most important contemporary theories is the 'resource mobilization' theory, whereby social movements are evaluated as organized. This theory introduces the organized process through which individual or collective initiatives turn into social movements. The theory concentrates on the cause of mass mobilization, where psychological discomfort leads to a change in the situation through collective action. (Wiktorowicz, 2003) This theory studies actions that social movements take and the leadership process, arguing that this process plays a vital role in social mobilization, and that well organized demonstrations need a successful leadership in order to reflect and attain the relevant goals.

Through the examination of both civil society and social movements, an analysis of the link between them can be made. The relationship between both of them is positive, whereby civil society secures the networks that social movements need in order to advance. Cohen and Kennedy (2007) argue that social movements are key agents for social change. Social movements are, as previously stated, a group of actions taken to reach a state of social transformation, while civil society encompasses actions taken before this, and, being separate from the state, attract people with common goals, who will lead the social

movements of the future. According to *The Sociology Guide* (2011), “civil society initiatives and social movements are social processes which undergo several stages of progression from mobilization to intensive collective action.”

2.3 Domestic and geopolitical variables

For any revolution to start, many factors must be in place to provide the impetus for demonstrations to continue. Domestic and geopolitical factors both have an impact on the political situation of any state, and can shape whether a revolution or any kind of demonstrations will occur.

2.3.1 Domestic variables

2.3.1.1 The Military's Role in Democratic Transition

According to Justin Clardie (2010), the role of the military in the transition to democracy has reached the point that any new democratic government must give priority to its civilians to control the role of the army. Thus we can clearly see that the military has a strong effect on any democratic transition that may take place. According to Clardie (2010), there are two schools of thought: one places a large importance on increasing resources and support for the army during any transition, while the second favors decreasing support for the military under any kind of transition.

Clardie (2010) gives two reasons to justify an increase in support to the military, with “placate the military” being one of them. During any transition, there will be people for the transition and others against, and this makes it essential for the new government to have the military on its side (Clardie, 2010). Military leaders may perceive the democratic

transition as a negative scenario in which the army loses power, thus the new government has to pre-empt this and avoid any potential coup to regain military power. Increasing government support for the army is one tactic to circumvent this scenario.

Huntington (1991) argues that it is in the government's interest to support the army by providing better basic needs, such as housing and allowances, and increasing its budget. Ensuring "domestic stability in the post-transition democratic environment" is the second reason for increasing military resources (Clardie, 2010). This is because the state could face chaos during the phase of transition, due to tribal or ethnic conflicts, leading the whole country to political instability. Therefore, governments need to have a unified military power to ensure stability, and promote the legitimacy of the government taking control (Makara, 2012).

The second school of thought that Clardie mentions tends to decrease the resources of the army in order to achieve a democratic transition. This school of thought is also based on two reasons for justification. The first is that the new government might fear military intervention in the country's internal politics, if it has sufficient resources to enable it to play such a role (Clardie, 2010). This implies it is in the new government's interest to decrease and limit the resources of the army to render it incapable of playing a big role within domestic politics (Cawthra & Luckham, 2003). At the same time, economic concerns could push the new government to decrease military resources (Clardie, 2010). The saved resources could then be reallocated to improve education and social welfare, which would help to consolidate the new democratic regime in the country (Haggard & Kaufman, 1995).

For Clardie (2010), these factors would ensure the legitimacy of the government. However, any new government must be careful to ensure that increasing resources does not lead to social injustice as this would be an obstacle on the road toward democratization. Thus it is imperative that the military and new government have a good relationship for democracy to flourish. The reaction of the military is a determining factor in whether the transition of the country toward democracy will be peaceful. With the military on the government's side, it is free to focus on stability and economic reforms. If the military sees the democratic transition as a bad process for the country, this will lead to a clash between all society components, resulting in violent acts and struggles among all players.

2.3.1.2 Civil society role in democratic transition

The origin of civil society for Aristotle, as defined in his *Politike Koinonia* is as follows:

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

According to Aristotle's definition, we can argue that civil society has played a vital role in political life for a long time. However, the World Bank offers a definition of civil society that is more helpful for investigating the current topic: To the wide array of non-governmental and not-for-profit organizations that have a presence in public life, expressing the interests and values of their members or others, based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) therefore refer to a wide array of organizations: community groups, non-

governmental organizations (NGOs), labor unions, indigenous groups, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, and foundation (2010).

According to Gideon Baker (2002), there is a clear relationship between civil society and democratic regimes. In addition, from the definitions above, we can analyze that civil society plays a role between both the public and private sector (Sean Yom, 2005). Yom (2005) argues that civil society is an essential tool for a democratic transition, and can be related to this transition in many different ways, both internally and externally. Booker Magure (2008) considered that “internally civil society engenders cooperation, solidarity, public spiritedness and trust (develops social capital) while externally it calls for a limited government that is responsive and accountable to its citizenry”. Even though the goals of civil society actors are for the common good, there are different interpretations of what constitutes common good (Kocka, 2004). Civil society has the ability to impact governmental decisions, thus the public uses civil society as a means to ask for demands and be heard by the government. This implies that civil society is essential for any democratic process, as it organizes and prepares the environment for such a process (Kocka, 2004).

As previously mentioned, civil society actors play the role of mediator between the public and private spheres, and subsequently have a very important role in setting scenarios under any kind of transition. In addition, civil society can play a role whereby it pushes citizens to ask for its demands and ensures good relations between the state and its civilians, in an attempt to avoid a violent transition and preserve a peaceful transition. Also civil society plays a role in supervising corrupt officials, and ensures accountability, thus it is important in any state to have civil society, as its absence would lead governments to

suppress calls for reform, and would lead to a violent transition amid the call for democratization. In conclusion, the world “civil” means acceptance of others and promoting diversity, thus civil society represents a third sector, which exists and plays a role between the public and private sectors that calls for human and civil rights through peaceful means.

2.3.1.3 Social media’s role in democratic transition

Authoritarian regimes have long used media as a tool to spread their ideologies and control information. However, innovations in technology have made it harder, and nigh on impossible, for authoritarian regimes to control the flow of information. Kaplan and Heinlein (2010) argue that developments in media have had huge effects on the democratic transition process. They identified six types of new media:

1. Blogs (Twitter, celebrity blogs)
2. Collaborative projects (Wikipedia)
3. Content communities (YouTube)
4. Virtual game worlds (EverQuest)
5. Social networking sites (Facebook, Instagram)
6. Virtual social worlds (Second Life)

Social media theory is the most important that shows the effect of social media on political change in any country. Hank Johnston (2011) defines social movements as:

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

Thus, social media is an action carried out by citizens as a collective collaboration, trying to promote certain ideologies and pushing for governments to make changes. The social movement theory puts the public's interests before those of the elite, and is always referred to as popular politics rather than elite politics (Johnston, 2011)

A successful social movement needs an impactful campaign to promote its objectives and rally the public around them. Social media is ideal and necessary for a social movement, where people are mobilized through the role social media plays (Hackett & Adam, 1999). It is very hard for an authoritarian regime to control citizens, because social media users are no longer attached to government utilities, or affected by government propaganda. Indeed, social media opens up new ways for social communication that enable people to control information instead of it being controlled by the government.

Robin Thompson (2011) argues that social media is different from the traditional media that we know, as “anyone with a cellphone can become a reporter and take a cellphone video of news while it's happening” (p.171). Improvement in technology has spurred the development of media, and enabled people to organize discussions on different issues that states can no longer control. “Facebook and Twitter actually welcome and encourage users to support causes for political and/or social change” (Thompson, 2011, p.168).

Today, people do not need to be physically in the location where the revolution is taking place; they can revolt from anywhere, and expose regime corruption through social media, in many ways that traditional media cannot be used. As Manuel Castells (2009) writes:

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

Thus, social media nowadays challenges authoritarian regimes, via the actions of the masses that are able to mobilize information beyond the control of the regime. This kind of collective action created a new atmosphere in which the people pushed for reforms, and for their human and civil rights, in order to move to a democratic regime (Van Ham, 2010). Transition today is influenced greatly by social media, to the extent it determines if it is going to be peaceful or violent. People benefit from the easy access to information in order to organize themselves and stand against any authoritarian regime with the aim of overthrowing it.

All in all, the new improvements in media and technological advancements have resulted in authoritarian regimes no longer being able to suppress citizens or to control any flow of information; in contrast, the absence of social media enhances authoritarianism, and impedes any requests for democratization, thus leading to violent acts.

2.3.1.4 Economic disparity

Seymour Martin Lipset (1959) argues that there is a strong relation between economic development and a nation's transition towards democracy. As the economic situation improves, people ask for democratization. Such economic enhancements can spread democratic desires and ambitions over a wide range of people (Dahl, 1989; Huntington,

1991). Two schools of thought argue that economic inequality leads to democratic transition or repression of the people that are seeking democracy. Edward Muller (1995) and Robert Dahl (1971) are among the prominent scholars that represent the first school of thought. This school of thought argues that authoritarian regimes do not move to democratization if there is extreme economic inequality, as they would not be willing to have an equal distribution of resources and wealth. For these regimes, the process of democratization would cost them more than that of preserving the economic imbalance in society.

When economic disparity is particularly extreme, the cost of redistribution of wealth exceeds the cost for the regime to repress the revolts (Houle, 2010). Lipset (1959) and Acemoglu and Robinson (2006) are among the scholars that represent the second school of thought, in which it is argued that when regimes find the costs of redistribution to be low, they will tend to move toward democratization. When economic inequality is still at an intermediate level, people are more likely to revolt, and the ruling party will move toward democratization, due to the low cost of redistribution of resources. Therefore, regime is forced to democratize in order not to face any uprisings (Houle, 2010). Economic disparity therefore is an indicator that can determine if the democratization process will be peaceful or violent. When there is economic equality, people will start seeking political freedoms, and life satisfaction. Likewise, the greater the level of economic equality, the better the educational system, and greater likelihood that people will seek peaceful ways toward democratization (Lipset, 1959)

In contrast, when the gap between rich and poor is wider, this will lead to more violent processes in the quest for social justice. Thus economic inequality impacts the

democratic transition greatly and the level of disparity determines to what extent the transition will be peaceful or violent.

2.3.2 Geopolitics

Geopolitics is defined as “the elements of discourse or social practice” which has the most important role in building international politics (Reuber, 2009; Agnew, 1998). “Classical geopolitics” represented the beginning of geopolitics in the late 19th century, whereby the focus was on how the geographical threat and opportunities affect international relations (Sparke, 2009). By the start of the 1970s geo-politicians became more concerned with “critical geopolitics” (Power & Campbell, 2010) in which they wanted to have a new concept and new construction of geopolitics as a “complex set of discourse, representation, and practice” (Power & Campbell, 2010). On the other hand there is a concentration by the post-structuralism that tend to show that geography is closely related to certain patterns of power and privilege in its imagining of the world (Scott, 2009). Moreover critical geographers, such as Hyndman (2009), argue that the greater powers are in a state of trust vis a vis the whole world, where they are accepted and can have influence on others. O’Tuathail (1996) defines critical geopolitics as “a small part of a much larger rainbow struggle to decolonize our inherited geographical imagination so that other geo-graphing and other worlds might be possible.” In addition critical geopolitics considers that in order to reach better understanding, there must be a clear view and identification as to the nature of each map (O’Tuathail & Dalby 1998).

Dodds (2008) argues that even states that are not from the greatest powers can be geopolitical and influence others. Also O’Tuathail and Dalby (1998) segment geopolitics into three parts: popular, practical and formal. Formal and practical geopolitics are bound to

states, policy-makers and politicians while popular geopolitics is mainly attached to the influence of media, cinema, and art (O'Tuathail & Dalby, 1998). Many scholars specialized in geopolitics have analyzed how popular geopolitics influences the public. They did so by analyzing films and magazines, in order to prove how this form of media and other forms can fully reflect the ideologies of world politics, and how they can empower, sustain or weaken these ideologies (Dittmer & Dodds, 2008).

2.4 The Democratization Process

Now that we have discussed the various general factors affecting the political realities in states, it is important to discuss what would make a certain state or society democratic. First of all it is important to provide a general definition of democratization, and then examine the causes that eventually lead to democratization, and which, without them, a certain country, whether it was Egypt or Poland, cannot be considered truly democratic.

First of all, according to Adam et al (2000), democratization is the process where a country or a regime transitions into a regime that is more democratic. It can be a radical transition from a regime that is authoritarian to one that is fully democratic, or to one that is semi-democratic, or a semi-authoritarian system to one that is fully democratic. The outcome may not always be uniform. It may sometimes face several reversals, like the case in Argentina or it can be consolidated as was the case in the United Kingdom. Ideally, the result of democratization should be to ensure that the citizens have full civil rights and human rights, primarily the right to have a voice in the political system and the right to vote that system into power or out of power. Yet, what are the factors that limit or allow democratization to prosper? The factors range from history to culture, economics, historical

and social factors. Among the most prominent factors are the following: education, wealth, social equality, middle class, civic society, civic culture.

First of all, wealth has a strong correlation with democracy, because a country with a high GDP/capita has higher chances for democratization, which is why countries that have a wealthy society have rarely fallen into authoritarian rule after World War II (Adam, 2000). Moreover, Frederico (2014) explains that empirical research leads many to consider that an economically developed society either helps democracies that are newly established to consolidate, or improves the chances for a transition to a democracy (Adam, 2000). Secondly, there is also a correlation between wealth and education, as Frederico (2014) explains that a population that is illiterate and poorly educated may elect politicians that could be too populist and may abandon democracy very soon after their elections, and may even become dictators even if free elections are found (Adam, 2000). Then there is the “resource curse theory”, which suggests that democratization often fails in countries with significant natural resources like oil, because such resources become sources of support for the elite ruling class who depend on these sources to grow in power, as is the case in Nigeria, instead of depending on support from tax revenues, such is the case in countries like Norway.

On the other hand, the natural resource factor can work in the favor of democratization, as Frederico (2014) explains that the elites who used the funds from the oil resources to build their own physical capital and fortune would fear that their investment can be damaged as a result of a revolution, and so they would make concessions towards democratizing their system instead of facing a violent clash with their people (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2003). Moreover, a country having a market economy can be intrinsically linked to a market economy. This belief by Mousseau (2000) is centered on the notion that a

market economy and a democracy are two elements of freedom in a society. This is because a market economy with such a culture encourages norms like compromise, negotiations, equality before the law, respect before the law and all are considered supportive for a democratization process (Mousseau, 2000, Faria 2014). In addition, according to Acemoglu & Robinson (2006), democracy is more prevalent in egalitarian societies, and when the society is socially imbalanced and the distribution of power and wealth in the society is unequal, the masses have more incentives to revolt after years of accumulated inequality and social frustration.

Then, there is the middle class factor. Acemoglu & Robinson (2006) argue that some models indicate that democracy flourishes when there is a substantial number of citizens that are in the range of intermediate wealth, as they are able to exert a stabilizing impact in the society. This can be explained by saying that when the upper class may wish to preserve its position through political power and the lower class may desire to lift itself up from the lower levels, the middle class comes in to balance the two extreme positions. Finally, the civil society factor is a critical indication of a democratized society. A civil society that is healthy includes academia, NGOs, unions and human rights organizations, among others, which are considered very critical for the democratization process because it gives a common purpose and unity to people, while providing them with a social network through which they challenge and organize movements towards the hierarchy of the state. What civic associations do is that they also prepare citizens for political participation in the future when a democratic system comes to light (Faria, 2014). Finally, social networks that are horizontally organized help in building trust among members of the public which is important for the function of democratic institutions (Faria, 2014)

To conclude, this chapter outlined the various events that culminated in the revolutions in Egypt and Poland, with the specific influential role played by civil society actors toward both regimes, fueled by geopolitical and domestic factors, such as the role of the military, that allowed to garner international support and backing for these movements, ultimately leading to the regime change in both countries. At the end we have discussed the main factors that lead to the democratization of a certain society from an economic, social, civic and educational perspective. The next chapter will go into detail on the specific developments leading to the regime breakdown in Poland, in addition to the role of the church and Pope John Paul the Second.

Chapter Three

The Case of Poland

From the Latin word ‘revolution’, which means ‘a turnaround’, a revolution is considered to be a radical type of change in the organizational structures or power which happens in a relatively brief period of time. In Aristotle’s view, two types of political revolution exist: either a complete change from one constitutional state to another, or a major modification of an existing one. Human history has witnessed a variety of revolutions in terms of duration, methods and the ideologies that fueled them. The main results of these revolutions have included significant changes in socio-political institutions, economy, culture and even geopolitical borders. As far as the topic of this thesis is concerned, the Arab Spring was a revolutionary wave of protests and demonstrations, both violent and non-violent, with events ranging from riots all the way to civil wars, as in the case of Syria. Taking Poland as a case study, this chapter first provides an overview of the events leading to the radical political changes that took place in Eastern Europe during the 1980s, with a particular emphasis on Poland. It traces specific periods in Poland’s political transformation, such as the workers’ strike of 1980, the martial law of 1981 and finally the roundtable talks of the late 1980s which eventually led to Poland’s independence from the Soviet Union.

3.1 Introduction

The late 1980s were a turning point for Eastern Europe, ushering in the start of the journey toward democracy. After the fall of communism in Poland, other communist states witnessed the fall of their own regimes in a domino effect. Country after country, people took to the streets to demand an end to communism and to begin a new era of democracy,

especially that people no longer considered one-party rule as legitimate. The events that took place after 1989 surprised the whole world; no one would ever have imagined that Poland, the Czech Republic, or Hungary, would cast off communism, or that the Berlin Wall would fall; all these events were the result of non-violent revolutions that swept Eastern Europe (Cipkowski, 1991). By 1989 Eastern and Central Europe witnessed non-violent movements that ended the rule of the one-party system. The following year in 1990, these countries held free elections. When these communist governments faced the revolutions alone, without the support of the Soviet Union under the presidency of Mikael Gorbachev, the huge political pressures they faced domestically and geopolitically pushed them to surrender. This chapter will focus on the case of Poland during the revolution of 1989, being the first country to revolt against communist rule.

After the parliamentary elections in 1946, which were stolen by the communists, non-violent actions started to take place against the one-party rule. However it took more than 30 years for Polish society to unite and create social coalitions in order to better organize their strategies against the communist rule. The lack of unity among the social groups played a role in their failure; it took until the second half of the 1970s for the different groups opposing communism to unite and start organizing their activities for their common goal. Workers went onto the streets in 1956 asking for political and economic changes and were met with crushing brutality from the communist authorities. Students and intellectuals also organized demonstrations asking for the same goals, but these were silenced by the legal authorities who used their power against them. The start of the 1970s also witnessed demonstrations in which thousands of workers took to the streets in the coastal cities, asking for an improvement in living standards. After constitutional amendments in 1975 gave the Communist Party the leading role in Polish society, and high

inflation in 1976, workers, students, and intellectuals took to the streets, resulting in the arrest of hundreds of them. The Committee for the Defense of Polish Workers was established after the arrest of the workers, and acted as a fundraiser to pay for lawyers to defend the workers in court and support their families financially. The Movement for the Defense of Human and Civil Rights was initiated in order to supervise the communist government's violation of the international law of human rights, to which it was a signatory. In 1977, the security services killed a 23 year-old anti-communist activist, which prompted the rise of student organizations independent of the Communist Party. By 1978 and 1979, a clandestine form of education arose, which saw history and other subjects related to Polish society taught in church buildings, and an underground press for opposition groups, which published more than 400 publications.

One key event that improved the opposition's plans was the election of the Polish Cardinal Karol Wojtyla as Pope John Paul the Second in 1978. In 1979 he visited his native country where he gave a speech broadcast on TV and radio that focused on human rights and freedom of expression. This incident represented a turning point in the history of Poland that managed to mobilize society in its entirety, and bolstered participation in the demonstrations. All of the actions, demonstrations, committees and associations that were established by workers, intellectuals, students, and members of the Catholic Church represented a huge force that had the ability to bring change to Poland.

While these events were taking place, the economic situation in Poland was deteriorating day by day, prompting massive demonstrations to take place. The Gdansk shipyard proved to be a galvanizing force, when the leader of the strikes there, a former factory worker with a highly charismatic personality, was able to establish the "free trade

union” called Solidarity. The Solidarity movement, which attracted almost 10 million members, was legalized in September 1980 and represented the first trade union in Eastern and Central Europe to be independent of communism. This trade union represented almost all workers in Poland, which was seen as a threat to the Soviet-backed government, and thus responded by implementing martial law in December 1981. Many of the Solidarity leaders along with other opposition activists were imprisoned as a result.

However, this did not deter the movement, but rather forced it underground to be led by other opposition activists who were not detained. In particular, women played a major role in leading Solidarity’s underground press activities and organizing other departments within the movement. When the communist government realized it was not able to crush Solidarity, it released its leaders and canceled martial law. However, Solidarity was not yet strong enough to bring about a radical change in power; for this it had to wait until 1988 when Poland found itself in a position of deadlock between the opposition and the government and an increasingly dire economic situation. This situation caused massive strikes to take place, which prompted the government to ask Solidarity for negotiations. Solidarity accepted the offer with the support of the Catholic Church, and moved toward a pacted transition, that would preserve the economic and social status of the ruling elite. As a result, roundtable discussions began, resulting in an agreement in June 1989 to have a pacted parliament, which brought a huge victory for Solidarity. So it was that in August 1989, Eastern and Central Europe witnessed the first non-communist prime minister for many decades.

3.2 Poland's road toward democracy

Political unrest began in Poland after the end of World War II. The Soviet forces stayed on in Polish territory, bringing Poland into the Soviet sphere of influence. The death of Stalin represented for some liberalization from communism. Three years after his death, for example, in June 1956, a huge protest took place in Poznan, one of Poland's largest cities. The protests constituted a revolt on the part of Poznan workers, after an agreement they signed with the Minister of Machine Industry was broken. This was a brutal confrontation in which workers defended their rights aggressively against the police, chanting the slogan "freedom and bread"; the regime faced this revolt by suppressing it harshly, killing hundreds and arresting and imprisoning others. Yet the workers did not surrender to this reality, and over the years they used their jobs to paralyze the country: trains were stopped, official headquarters were set on fire, and huge industries were brought to a halt as well. Authorities faced these uprisings with brutality, killing hundreds. Although the state adopted some price decreases to ease the economic situation, workers who paralyzed the factories found themselves fired or imprisoned.

3.2.1 The strike of the 1980s

By April 1980, and after the calling for various reforms from opposition parties, the government announced a number of reforms regarding the economy and the state's management in general. The government's belief that an increase in food prices was necessary for growth was set out in a policy whose existence, it was hoped, would go unnoticed by the population at large. In July 1980, workers took to the streets once again in massive numbers when the price of meat was doubled. The government tried to solve the problem by implementing certain temporary solutions that were designed to appease only the strikers and not all the citizens.

The demonstrators stuck to their demands calling for a decrease in prices and additional allowances for families as the benefits that the policemen and the military receive. At this time KOR tried to raise awareness among the strikers that increasing salaries would lead to more inflation, thus people should also recognize the need to ask for new trade union elections, and their constitutional rights. The July strikes were a turning point for politics in Poland. These strikes showed that the authorities were willing to negotiate with representatives from the demonstrators, neglecting the trade unions controlled by them. In addition these strikes reflected a high level of savviness among the workers, who were able to organize their activities in line with when it was advantageous to demonstrate and when it was more beneficial to give time for political negotiations to take place. During the July strikes KOR played an important role in organizing an information network, to gather news about the political situation on the ground, and send this information to Western media through Western journalists in Warsaw. It was crucial for Polish people to know what was going on, and equally for the West to know about the uprisings, especially that the official media did not report on the events at all. Workers at the Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk started striking on August 14, 1980, calling for the rehiring of two workers whose employment had been terminated, Anna Walentynowicz and Lech Walesa, and at the same time asking for a wage increase. This was a critical point especially that the shipyard workers represent a very high respect to other workers due to the sacrifice they gave during the 1970 strikes. The strikers saw that they must negotiate, in order not to lose everything, and they saw that it was critical to unite to be stronger; a strategy of continuing the strikes worked in their favor to mobilize more people and call for democracy at the same time (National Defense University Press, Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, DC, 1985).

An Inter-factory Strike Committee (MKS) was initiated and tasked with addressing the demands of the workers, resulting in a paper of 21 demands being presented to the Communist Party, including a call to accept trade unions independent to the Communist Party, freedom of speech and the press, the rehiring of the workers that had been dismissed in 1970 and 1976, the reinstatement of students who had been expelled from their schools and colleges, and wage increases. The MKS was able to reach an agreement with the government on August 31, 1980, in which the government addressed some of the demands but not all of them. The government did not, for example, accept the right to demonstrations and free trade unions, but did implement some economic changes and allow some media freedoms. The MKS had to make certain sacrifices in the process, such as accepting the rule of the Communist Party.

The events that took place in 1980 gave a lot of signs to the observers. The MSK represented the first alliance between workers seeking common goals, and the first union between workers and intellectuals that were mobilizing on the same level and seeking the same objectives, thus the MSK represented a real alternative to Solidarity. The MSK was able to prove that the party was not the only organization to represent the workers; in addition it was able to release the trade unions from the control of the Communist Party, forcing the party to compete for the workers to join it. The workers were universally convinced that violence would not lead them anywhere, especially considering the bloody history they had been through. Thus the 'Gdansk agreement' represented a reference for them as the first peaceful accomplishment in a communist country (St. Martin's Press, New York, 1983).

3.2.2 The 1981 imposition of martial law

3.2.2.1 Polish Solidarity

Between 1982 and 1988 the economic situation in Poland deteriorated greatly, which led to massive demonstrations in the streets, and forced the government to contact Solidarity. This resulted in the re-legalization of the trade union movement and opening of negotiations in which Solidarity had to ensure non-violent strikes and the support of the Catholic Church. These negotiations led Solidarity to accept the pacted transition.

By the end of 1981, the situation in Poland was difficult, with Solidarity and the party unable to reach any type of agreement. Many strikes took place in different areas in Poland, One of these strikes in December 1981 at the Warsaw Firefighters Academy was crushed massively by the police, leading to the issuing of a paper to the party threatening a general strike if the government did not cease its violent acts (Andrews, 1985),

The Council of State issued martial law in Poland on the night of December 12, 1981. Solidarity leaders were arrested along with other student and farmer opposition activists. In addition, travel between cities was banned, meetings were forbidden, and many unions were outlawed. Moreover, the law closed many schools and universities, as well as the Solidarity offices, and militarized the radio and television channels. Prime Minister General Jaruzelski explained that martial law had been introduced as Solidarity's political nature was destroying Polish society, and threatening the economy. Therefore, he reasoned, martial law would save the economy from devastation and preserve Poland's position in the international community. Rather, martial law preserved the communist power in Poland, and was able to stifle the voice of Solidarity and its views.

However, there was huge resistance to martial law, with major strikes taking place in a number of large factories, although these were broken up by the military forces, resulting in many protestors being killed or wounded. Martial law faced a high level of resistance from Solidarity. Although the regimes tried to rebuild the system to attain economic growth, it failed to reach its goals. The economy and living standards remained stagnant. This situation lasted for eight years until the spring and summer of 1988, when continual strikes and confrontations between the party and Solidarity, ended with the party offering to negotiate with Solidarity represented by Lech Walesa.

Dialogue began in the form of roundtable talks in Warsaw from February 6 to April 4, 1989; on April 17 Solidarity was legalized. The talks resulted in Solidarity and the government agreeing to have one third of the parliamentary lower house allocated to the Communist Party and one third for Solidarity with the remaining open to voting. Following the voting, Solidarity took the majority and was able to designate a prime minister, the country's first non-communist prime minister for more than 40 years. In December 1989 the parliament voted for amendments to be made to the constitution to open the economy and rename the country as the Republic of Poland. In 1990 Lech Walesa succeeded in reaching the presidency of the state leading to the abolishment of the communist governmental system.

In 1991 Marian Krzaklewski was elected to replace Walesa as the leader of Solidarity. Due to internal problems and the new vision of the Solidarity leadership, a collapse took place inside the movement and it decided to have its own political party to run for the parliamentary elections. In 1991 the first full free elections were held representing the entire Polish political spectrum, and showing a high fragmentation affected

by the problems that were taking place inside Solidarity. This resulted in no clear majority for any party. After the elections President Walesa named Jan Olszewski as prime minister but in 1992 he was replaced by Hanna Suchocka, a female prime minister. Elections were held in 1993 after the president dissolved the parliament. These elections demonstrated how much support for Solidarity had decreased, especially due to the government's so-called "Balcerowicz plan", named after the minister of finance, which had failed to increase the standard of living and caused varying social problems, such as higher unemployment and poverty, and also failed to ensure the transformation from a communist to a capitalist system (Maragnos, 2003). In the first half of 1992 a form of constitution took shape. The document was inspired by a 1991 draft that had defined the relationship between powers and explained the division between the president and prime minister; this was considered a temporary solution before formulating a complete constitution.

In 1997 parliamentary elections again took place, and the Solidarity movement was split into two parties, the Solidarity Electoral Action and the Freedom Union, which formed a coalition to make a government. In April 1997 the constitution was finalized as the first post-communist constitution and became effective from June 2000 (Wiatr, 1997). Representatives from all the independent unions that had represented all the participants in the strikes of July and August met in Gdansk, where they knew that over three million had joined a self-governing trade union called Solidarity. Lech Walesa, the elected chairman, traveled to Warsaw in order to register Solidarity. Solidarity was registered lately with some adjustments setting the role of it. This gave a general description of the difficult relations between the Communist Party and Solidarity from its inception. Authorities resisted all the attempts from the leaders of Solidarity to organize themselves and initiate new trade unions. The Solidarity policy was to carry out strikes in order to receive

concessions from the Communist Party while trying to stay away from politics, placing the entire focus on workers' issues. Solidarity's call was for a democratic society rather than democratic country, but this kind of policy was seen as an inevitable failure. Solidarity felt that there must be a new agreement as its non-political tactics were not working, and so began to call for political changes that would eventually lead to regime change (Timothy Garton Ash, 2002). Despite having the ability to mobilize millions of workers, Solidarity was not able to have a tangible influence on the decisions, both political and economic, targeting the workers. Polish society did not witness many changes on the political or economic levels after the Gdansk agreement: the regime was able to retain power without giving in to most of the workers' demands. From its beginning, Solidarity's attitude was vague and unclear. Neither its members nor outside observers were able to recognize Solidarity's political strategy. Some felt that its goal was to oppose the communists and its rule directly, while others argued that Solidarity was simply aiming to empower the Gdansk agreement. However when Solidarity began to target political issues, the Communist Party soon saw Solidarity as a threat. When the government was unable to hold its promises, the Solidarity strikes started to increase and the idea took shape that this road would be the best to achieve changes in the country. At this point, violent acts increased against Solidarity leaders, especially after the Soviet Union gave the green light to polish leaders to solve the problem using any means. March 19, 1981 was a turning point for the confrontation between Solidarity and the Communist Party, when private farmers along with regional Solidarity leaders demonstrated and occupied the office of the party in Bydgoszcz, assuming that it would recognize the Rural Solidarity. When the negotiations between Solidarity and the party failed to make progress, police attacked the office, and threw the leaders from the building. At this point, relations between Solidarity and the party

descended into ever worsening hostility. More price increases and food shortages led to huge strikes that saw millions of people take the streets under Solidarity's organization (Lawrence Goodwyn, 1991).

3.3 The roundtable talks and the end of the communist regime

A 40% increase in food prices in 1988 provided the spark that ultimately brought about the end of the communist regime in Poland. Due to this increase, huge strikes took place across the country. With these strikes, Solidarity was not the only organizer, as a young generation, featuring independent representatives of society also felt the need to address the Communist Party with their demands for change. At this point Poland was undergoing a pluralist transformation, and even Solidarity was fragmented, unable to attract young activists, yet still remaining the symbol of free society under the leadership of Lech Walesa (Devlin, Porter, & de Weydenthal, 1983). By the time that the massive strikes of August 1988 took place, the communist regime knew that it faced a strong opposition that could not be ignored. Subsequently it began to consider negotiating to find a solution.

At the end of August the roundtable talks began between all groups, without conditions. Twenty-nine representatives of the regime met with 26 representatives of the opposition, in the presence of three observers from the Catholic Church. These roundtable meetings were the culmination of many earlier informal meetings. Gale Stokes (1993) argues that "the symbolism of a roundtable was that it minimized the confrontational aspects of the negotiations and suggested the community of interests of all Poles". The major subjects discussed were the pluralism of the state and legalization of Solidarity, with demands for political reforms, and the participation of Solidarity in the elections. Other

demands were related to areas such as media, healthcare, environment, and education (Viktor Osiatynski, 1996).

Solidarity and the party were able to reach an agreement whereby they offered a new social contract: Solidarity would be legalized and have a minority representation in the parliament, thus the responsibility for implementing a new economic plan to attain growth would fall on all parties. In addition, Poland would witness partial free elections and a constitutional presidency. Two months after the official negotiations, Solidarity met again with the government, and accepted the agreement. Solidarity was subsequently legalized and set June 4, 1989, as the date for two-house parliamentary elections. The roundtable negotiations in Poland and strikes prior to them represented a breakthrough for Eastern Europe as a whole. Solidarity emerged victorious on June 4, 1989, winning 160 seats in the lower house and 99 out of 100 seats in the upper house (Gale Stokes, 1993). This election proved that the Communist Party lacked strong support from the people. Two months later, Solidarity was able to present a government, in a coalition with two communist parties. Lech Walesa was elected as president at the end of 1990 and the Communist Party was dissolved. The free parliamentary elections that followed in the New Year gave rise to democracy and saw the end of a totalitarian regime.

Poland was the first country in Eastern Europe to witness free parliamentary elections that saw the engagement of activists in politics. These elections reflected the peaceful rejection of the dominance of the communist regime for more than fifty years. The roundtable discussions played the most important role for this whole process to be launched (Peter Cipkowski, 1991).

3.4 Geopolitical situation

As previously mentioned the Polish revolution represented an ongoing conflict in the country that took place at high levels, especially since 1980, when conflicts took place between the Communist party supported by Moscow and the opposition groups. As a Catholic state Poland traditionally opposed Moscow and considered it as its enemy due to historical events. There are many causes that led to the uprisings in Poland including domestic but also external, geopolitical factors that played a vital role. Throughout the 1980s the whole of Eastern Europe experienced dire economic situations that led to economic crises such as in Poland. These economic disasters led to massive demonstrations that prompted governments to apply more suppressive rules in order to put pressure on opposition groups. This inflexible strategy ultimately led to the downfall of communism. The initial refusal to negotiate, the instinct to suppress opposition groups, but then to ask for negotiations once they found themselves weakened, left the regimes vulnerable. This was compounded by the inability of communist regimes across the entire region to satisfy citizens and secure their basic needs as their economies stagnated. Meanwhile, the political tactics of Gorbachev, the president of the Soviet Union, tended to decrease support for states that were unlikely to survive without the USSR's backing.

The Soviet leader, Mikail Gorbachev, was also reluctant to use force against opposition groups. According to the Eurasian expert Paul Goble, "had Gorbachev or any other Soviet leader tried to use force, it would have come to a bloody end rather than a relatively peaceful one, while one certainly is pleased that Moscow did not behave in the thuggish fashion it had often used before, I think we should recognize that Moscow did not use force

not out of some moral judgment but more likely out of a practical calculation that it simply did not have enough forces available to crack down everywhere” (year, p.?)

3.4.1 The Church’s role and Pope John Paul the Second

The vast majority of Poland’s population is Roman Catholic. The Catholic Church played a very important role on the social, political and cultural levels, whereby crowds of people used to attend Sunday church meetings and stay outside to listen to the priests’ speeches over loudspeakers. It was very different for the whole political track of the communism, before the election of Cardinal Karol Wojtyla as Pope John Paul the Second, and after him, especially for the role he played in mobilizing the masses and spreading the values of freedom among them. The Catholic Church in Poland suffered a lot of oppression at the hands of the communist regime under the leadership of Stalin. After his death, this repression decreased thanks to some reformers within the Communist Party, who placed conditions on the church that it must not interfere in politics and be loyal to the Communist Party. With the start of demonstrations and opposition against the Communist Party, the church found itself on the same track as the opposition groups, thus opposition members started to organize their meetings in church basements, and the church started to spread the values of freedom and democracy among the people. The relation between dissidence and the church was empowered further after Pope John Paul the Second delivered his speech in Poland in 1979.

Adam Michnik, a non-Catholic Polish citizen, described his experience saying,

“In June 1979, I lived through one of those moments in my life that gave me a sense that I was alive for a reason...I felt absolutely no sense of separation. Alongside me

kneeled a Catholic priest, and no one on that square had any intention to divide people. It was natural that we were together”.

The origin of Solidarity was mainly initiated from the values presented by Pope John Paul the Second. The church tried its best not to be politicized, urging priests not to speak out loud and oppose the regime, but this cannot detract from the truth that most priests supported the opposition and were actively helping them. Following the assassination of Father Jerzy Popieluszko, who was killed by regime intelligence, the relation between the church and Solidarity grew stronger, moving toward cooperation on different levels. At this time, the church represented a symbol against communism, which saw activists not only attend church for praying, but also to express their opinions against communism.

To conclude, the case of Poland demonstrates that regime change does not happen overnight or as a result of an immediate military coup or reactive movements, and it does not depend on one isolated, trivial factor. Rather, it involves a number of social, political and community factors and is fueled by the needs and frustrations of the mainstream community which eventually organizes itself, resorts to non-violent, civic methods of protest, gathering nationwide support in the process, especially from influential groups such as unions, political parties and religious figures. International support also played a role in strengthening the internal activism against the communist regime, eventually leading to diplomatic rounds of talks that ended its rule. In the next chapter, the case of Egypt will be the focus. The upcoming chapter will discuss the general environment and movements of the populist movements across the Arab world, starting from Tunisia’s initial developments, and then moving towards a discussion on the factors behind the revolution and the role of the civil society groups in Egypt’s case.

Chapter 4

The Case of Egypt

Beginning in December 2010, the wave of mass protests spread throughout several Arab countries, culminating in rulers being forced out of power, and at least two Arab countries undergoing significant changes within their systems in response to public protests. As far as this thesis is concerned, regime change in Egypt occurred twice, first forcing President Hosni Mubarak out of power, then sending the Muslim Brotherhood President Mohammad Morsi to prison, also as a result of public pressure. In this chapter, the background to Egypt's regime is explored, demonstrating many strong similarities with the case of Poland, with the exception of the length of the time required to overthrow the Mubarak regime completely. This chapter shows that, similarly to Poland, both domestic and geopolitical factors combined to fuel the populist movements in Egypt over the years leading to the break-up of the regime. These movements were supported by international players and led by civil society organizations and youth groups that resorted to non-violent, street-based initiatives that put increasing pressure on the ruling class and its forces, leading to the quick break-up. The role of civil society and youth groups will be discussed in detail in this chapter, with a discussion on their evolution over the years in Egyptian society, influence on the youth in Egypt, and the support which these movements received from foreign parties and organizations.

4.1 Introduction

The Arab Spring represented an unprecedented turn of events for the entire Middle East region, which had never witnessed such interconnected populist movements relating to

politics, security, and economics. What happened? What are the common issues shared by Middle Eastern countries? Were these movements a response to economic issues? Or did they stem from the lack of legitimacy and trust between the ruled and the ruling? Each country differs in its historical, political, economic, and social environment. Nevertheless, when the social uprisings in the Middle East occurred, many observers optimistically discussed the possibility of witnessing a new phenomenon in the region, whereby power could finally be placed in the hands of the people and used for the people. Sovereignty and self-determination were notions enacted to become reality through street protests that spread gradually from Tunisia on December 18, 2010, to Egypt, Libya, Syria, Bahrain, and Yemen. The Middle East region has traditionally been receptive towards various ideologies, including Pan Arabism, nationalism, Islamism, and others.

The popular uprisings that started on December 18, 2010, in Tunisia inspired many Middle Eastern countries to experience a similar outbreak of popular waves calling for freedom. Once dictators had been overthrown, the international community realized that Arab awareness of holding officials accountable and responsible for their actions was actually possible in Arab politics. A lot has been written in an attempt to explain the persistence of authoritarianism in Arab societies, however yet no one predicted the occurrence of the Arab Spring revolts. Security, geopolitical, political, and economic issues, gender inequality, and Islamic culture are all factors cited by Middle East experts as impediments for demanding and practicing freedom and democracy. The unpredictable uprising in Egypt that was led by educated youth demanding a more liberal, civil, and democratic type of governance in the place of Mubarak's regime will be the focus of this chapter. Who were the main revolutionary actors from among the social movements and

civil society? What are the main domestic and geopolitical factors that played an important role in the revolution? These questions will be explored in this chapter.

A look at Egyptian political history up to the present day will enable us to ascertain the main reasons behind the 2011 popular uprising and the factors that led to the January 25 revolution. A lot has been written in an attempt to explain why the Middle East never before witnessed this bid for change and call for democracy. Explanations on the exceptionality of the Middle East range from issues of culture/Islam to economic and security reasons. According to Kamrava (2002), Middle Eastern countries, as with all developing nations, face the problem of semi-formality where there is little will or ability to act towards solving this issue. Moreover, Kamrava explains the relation between the state and the informal sector as a mutually beneficial one. The state benefits from the informal sector and does not act to regulate it. This case leads us to the famous causal formula, no taxation equals any representation.

Other scholarly works, such as that of Luciani (2009), argue that oil has had a huge impact in the Middle East whereby the rentier system was created. In the rentier system, the state is independent of society and thus does not seek legitimacy through representation; meanwhile, society is satisfied with its share of the distribution of economic benefits from renting oil. According to Luciani (2009), the impact of oil is not only on the domestic politics of the state; rather it exhibits an impact on the relation among countries in the Middle East as well as among the Middle Eastern countries with the major international actors. An important reason for the exceptionality of the Middle East is given by Eva Belin (2004). She blames it not on socio-economic or cultural factors, but rather on the robustness of state institutions in strengthening the coerciveness of the state in repressing any democratic initiatives. Nevertheless, it is interesting that Belin links the strength of the

coercive institutions to four important characteristics such as international support, the rentier system, the limited degree of mobilization, and the patrimonial characteristic of the state. On the other hand, none of the scholarly works, whether cited in this paper or not, has succeeded in offering an insightful explanation of the exceptionality of the Middle East given the fact that the Arab Spring shattered all barriers of fear built up by authoritarian regimes. For the first time in the history of the Middle East, there has been a mass movement that led to the ousting of a ruler

4.2 Immediate Causes Leading to Regime Breakdown:

The immediate causes leading to the regime breakdown in Egypt began with the impact of the Tunisian revolution's outcome. Days after the regime fell in Tunisia, people took to the streets in Egypt inspired by the outcome of the Tunisian demonstrators who were able to topple down Bin Ali's regime. Yet, Egyptians are not unfamiliar to demonstrations: in the previous year's Egyptian workers often demonstrated in the industrial city in Cairo in demand for better working conditions and wages, and were eventually supported by youth groups, leading to several arrests and an increasing pressure on the regime's economic policies (Andersen, 2011).

4.2.1 The Mahalla uprisings in 2008

Back in 2006, the industrial city North of Cairo, known as Mahalla, was the epicenter for frequent labor unrest. The protests grew in 2008, leading to demonstrations that included youth groups that wanted to express their discontentment with the regime's economic policies. No demonstrations of such size and scale were witnessed in Egypt ever since 1952

(Gopal, 2011). The main demands were both job insecurity and wages, as more sections of the economy were getting privatized. As Andersen (2011) describes: “For the first time in Egypt, the picture of the president was publicly stepped on, and the crowds shouted “down with Mubarak” (p.17). Although arrests were made on a mass scale, the events sparked new, more organized movements which were critical to the events of the 2011 uprising.

4.2.2 April 6th movement

The April 6th youth movement was a consequence of the Mahalla uprisings in Cairo. It all started as a Facebook group with up to 70,000 members back in 2009, gradually growing to become more than just a group, but rather an important logistical role for the 2011 uprisings (Andersen, 2011), which highlights the catalyst role of social media platforms in the uprisings.

4.2.3 The day of rage

Although demonstrations in the areas of Cairo grew in size and number, the first significantly large demonstration took place on the day of January 25, 2011, and at that time it coincided with the national holiday to recognize police forces (Flanagan, 2011). Also, although many other demonstrations took place in other Egyptian cities, the biggest one by far was the one in Tahrir Square in central Cairo. Here, social networks had a critical role: they provided constant updated information on what is happening in closed areas, in addition to the daily clashes with police (Flanagan, 2011). The government was well aware of the influence of social media platforms, and learning from the experience in Tunisia, it closed down social networking sites on January 27th, then blaming the events of

the uprisings on the Muslim brotherhood group, leading to multiple arrests of its members. Then, text and mobile services were closed down on the 28th, making it extremely challenging for the protestors to communicate among each other (Flanegan, 2011). Also, Al Jazeera network, which was immensely popular, got its offices closed in Cairo and was cut off air. Moreover, Mubarak-supporting individuals were sent to the demonstrations in Tahrir square to cause chaos and hurt the protestors, leading protestors there to set up their own security checkpoints to prevent such troublesome people from embedding themselves into their demonstrations (Flanegan, 2011). Two weeks of continuous protests eventually led to the Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak announcing his resignation from his position, and a military council took charge of the country.

4.2.4 Role of the Army

In Egypt, the role of the army was critical in shaping the events that led to the uprooting of the Mubarak regime. According to Ghannoushi (2011) “had the Egyptian army not pulled the rug from under Mubarak's feet, siding with protestors in Tahrir Square, the story of its revolution may have more closely resembled the uprisings of Syria, Yemen, and perhaps even Libya” (p.1). The events most likely would have been described as a bitter and bloody confrontation that would have cost thousands of lives and definitely prolonged the conflict that would have delayed the fall of Mubarak (Ghannoushi, 2011). Yet, what the Egyptian army truly did is that it supported the people with their demands and stood by them as a catalyst for change and a source of security and protection for the protestors camping at Al Tahrir square, leading to the popular chant among the masses “The people and the army are one hand”, as the army was perceived as a partner in the people’s revolution in Egypt, in

addition to being the guardian and representative of the revolution's legitimacy (Ghannoushi, 2011).

4.3 General Factors behind the revolution

Egypt's transition from a monarchic kingdom to a republic began when General Muhammad Najib assumed power in 1953. In 1981, Hosni Mubarak assumed power and remains, to date, the longest serving ruler of Egypt since Muhammad Ali's rule under the Ottoman Empire. The 30-year rule of Mubarak was brought to an end after large-scale protest demonstrations took place for around 18 days in Cairo's Tahrir Square in January 2011. The social upheaval that occurred in Egypt gave birth to "grass-roots movements that could not be contained, negotiated with, or controlled through a few leaders", resulting in the toppling of Mubarak's regime (Murphy 2011) and giving rise to the phrase 'January revolution'. Forced to resign despite making promises of reform, Mubarak left the presidential palace on February 11, 2011.

There are a number of points worth noting concerning the uprisings in the Middle East. Generally, the process of uprising was leaderless and composed of different factions of society, such as civilians, military personnel, political, non-political, religious, and non-religious parties. Nevertheless, once the primary objective of the uprising, namely ousting the dictator, had been accomplished, the focus shifted towards internal clashes, driven along sectarian, ethnic, ideological, and military divisions in society. Since the outbreak of Egypt's popular uprising, many scholars have tried to understand this unique Middle Eastern phenomenon. What are the main reasons that led to the wide-scale popular uprisings in Egypt? And most importantly, how were the demonstrations that toppled Mubarak's regime carried out for the period of 18 consecutive days? This chapter will note

the factors that pushed the prominent social movement and civil society actors to start the revolution.

4.3.1 Domestic factors

The main reasons that led to the outbreak of social movements in Egypt are various. The protests began in exasperation against poverty, unemployment, corruption, and repression and were thus considered to be protests against Mubarak's regime. Nevertheless, Amin (2003) believes that one of the pivotal reasons behind the massive uprising in Egypt could be attributed to societal development. In terms of societal development, it is important to note that the culture, including elements such as journalism, television, and fashion, has changed in Egypt over the past 50 years due to the growth of the population and the effects of globalization. Nevertheless, development is a movement towards establishing democracy since, as Munck (2002) argues, the higher the development in a society, the higher the levels of democracy, which in turn leads to the establishment of a higher global democracy.

It is important to note that students, workers, and professors were the main protagonists in the spontaneous movements that occurred in Egypt and there was no distinct leadership. Even the opposition parties in Egypt, like the Muslim Brotherhood, were trying to integrate themselves as part of these movements but not as their leaders. "Mubarak must go now" proved to be a major slogan in Tahrir Square, with no alternative leader or ideology emerging from the crowds of the protesters. As a result, the spontaneous and leaderless social movement in Egypt was divided on whether it would be sufficient to topple Mubarak and to trust the promises of reform, or to rebuild Egypt anew by bringing a regime change. Another popular slogan that accompanied all of the cries for freedom in the Middle East was "the people want the regime to fall".. Based on interviews conducted with Egyptian youth activists in fall 2011, there was a consensus among the 12 interviewees on

the reasons that led people to overcome their fears and demonstrate against Mubarak's regime. The brutal regime acts and corruption accumulated against Egyptian society over time proved to be the regime's undoing.

Arab countries unanimously lack sufficient data on the exact number of civil society organizations that are active on the ground. Regarding Egypt, the number of civil society organizations varies from one reference to another. Khalaf (2010) estimates the number to be over 21,000, while the Arab Network for NGOs estimates them at around 31,000. According to Khalaf (2010), the history of social movements begins in 1821 with the Hellenic Philanthropic Association in Alexandria. Even if there is not an accurate number for the number of civil society actors operating in Egypt, there is clear agreement that civil society actors played the main role in organizing Egyptian youth to push them to demonstrate on the streets against Mubarak's regime. The most important civil society actors are the Kefaya movement, April 6 movement and We Are All Khaled Said movement. The Kefaya movement was among the first to be launched as an opposition movement against Mubarak's regime. Its roots date back to fall 2004, and focused on dissatisfaction with the Egyptian regime's grip on political power. The 2005 presidential elections in Egypt, at which point the idea of inheritance of presidential power from Hosni Mubarak to his son Gamal was introduced, provided a major impetus to the movement. Eventually Kefaya evolved into a movement that sought to tackle all of the corruption issues in the Egyptian government.

The April 6 youth movement was the first to originate as a Facebook group, with its goal being to mobilize civilians for a nationwide protest in support of the workers of El-Mahalla El-Kobba in 2008. After this event the April 6 movement enlarged its scope to fight for human and civil rights for Egyptians, calling for freedom of speech, an end to

corruption, and many other social demands. The formation of the We Are All Khaled Said movement proved to be a turning point for Egypt's civil society. The movement stems from when 27 year-old Khaled Said was beaten to death, allegedly by security forces, in Alexandria in June 2010. The group reflects Egyptian solidarity over Khaled's fate, whereby Khaled is seen as a symbolic son of any Egyptian family, thus inspiring the need to revolt against the status quo in Egypt.

Any discussion of Egyptian opposition cannot take place without directly referring to the Muslim Brotherhood. The Muslim Brotherhood has a long history, dating back to the early 1900s, with its origins rooted in opposition and including episodes of violence. It came to be seen as the de facto opposition of the political status quo, but was unable to reach any position of legitimate power until the 2012 presidential elections when its candidate Mohammad Morsi was elected president. In the revolution that ousted President Mubarak, the Muslim Brotherhood reinforced its centrist position by encouraging young people to organize mass protests, and calling for all groups to unite against Mubarak's regime. The historical background of the Muslim Brotherhood shows the extent to which the group has evolved over time. The Muslim Brotherhood is aware that it was not the instigator of, nor the main actor in, the January uprisings, yet it was the most organized group and recognized the valuable role of youth in enforcing the balance of power and organizing the protests. With its new generation of young leaders, the Muslim Brotherhood reached a point where it recognized the need to cooperate with other opposition groups. The silent majority in Egypt (which consists mainly of movements drawn from middle-class citizens as students, activists and professionals) was not as institutionalized as the Muslim Brotherhood, thus enabling the Muslim Brotherhood to attain political power more easily.

When considering the Muslim Brotherhood's actions during the January revolution from a historical perspective, it becomes clear that its careful approach to the protests formed an extension of the group's strategy of the past decades. This strategy exhibits a preference for incremental rather than revolutionary change; it is cautious and pragmatic, built on close cooperation with other Egyptian political actors. The role played by the Muslim Brotherhood in demonstrations was limited, and included an official abstention from participation in the so-called day of rage, based on the possibility of it constituting a failed revolution. However, on Friday January 28, the Muslim Brotherhood did participate, albeit remaining in the background. In the words of one of its leaders: "We are not pushing this movement, but we are moving with it. We don't wish to lead it but we want to be part of it". As the revolution continued to spread, especially outside Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood went out of its way to make assurances that its aim was not to dominate Egypt's post-Mubarak political scene.

When viewed from the historical context of the Muslim Brotherhood, this assurance reflects a persistent fear of being part of a failed revolution which could result in its leaders being imprisoned. Likewise, the Muslim Brotherhood was equally afraid to be the leaders of a successful revolution that could be perceived as a continuation of its historical eagerness to take power. Moreover, later political gains made by religious movements indicate the well-organized structure of these movements' preparations and mass legitimacy. These Islamic movements championed the revival of Islamic rule but with moderation. This attitude led the American Administration to accept and consider the political reality in a similar fashion to Turkish 'moderated Islamic' rule.

With the major question facing Egypt today of how the country would emerge after Mubarak, the Supreme Council of Armed Forces headed by Defense Minister Muhammad

Hussein Tantawi assumed control of power after the resignation of President Hosni Mubarak. While Mubarak was facing trial and after the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces dissolved the Egyptian parliament, early elections for the National Assembly representatives were held in November 2011. Egypt has a bicameral legislature with two chambers, the lower chamber known as the People’s Assembly, and the upper chamber known as Majlis Al Shura. Egyptians demonstrated their eagerness to express their right to choose their leaders, and for power to be by the people and for the people.

Nevertheless, there remain a couple of important questions to be addressed concerning the unpredicted social upheaval that occurred in Egypt on January 25th 2011, especially after examining the results of the parliamentary elections. The Muslim Brotherhood controlled both houses of parliament where the elected speakers of the People’s Assembly and Majlis Al Shura are members of the party. The Muslim Brotherhood dominated with 58 percent of the Majlis Al Shura and 47 percent (refer to Table 1.1) of the People’s Assembly.

Table 1: Election Results in People’s Assembly

Party	Seats	Percentage (%)
Freedom and Justice	235	47
Nour	121	24
New Wafd	38	7.6
Egyptian Bloc	34	6.8
Al Wasat Party	10	2
Reform and Development	9	1.8

Revolution Continues Bloc	7	1.4
Other parties	18	3.6
Independents	26	5.2
Appointed by Military Council	10	2



Figure 1: Counting the ballots at an open- air election center

There are three competing groups in Egypt today in the post-uprising, the Salafists, Muslim Brotherhood, and the army. Despite the fact that the protestors against Mubarak’s regime were mainly liberals and leftists, the voting results (refer to Figure 1.1) for the People’s Assembly were dominated by the supporters of the Noor Party (Salafists) and the Muslim Brotherhood, with the latter holding the highest percentage . During Mubarak’s rule, and since 1990, the parliamentary elections shad always resulted in an unprecedented majority for the ruling party, the National Democratic Party.

However, with the ousting of Mubarak and the dissolution of his party, a new political party law was initiated on March 28, 2011. The new law requires each new party to have at least 5,000 members from at least ten of Egypt's provinces. Although many believed that this new law would ease the restrictions on civil and political rights that had been limited under Mubarak, this new law could also be an impediment to the emergence of new political parties in the political arena due to the eligibility criteria. Moreover, with the Muslim Brotherhood's recent dominance, the party has been endorsing civil democratic principles along with the endorsement of Al Azhar documents. Yet, the question persists as to what extent can we say that Egypt is moving towards a post-Islamist rule? Bayat (2011) argues that the post-Islamism is a movement that paves the way for democratic change in a manner that gives Islam a significant role to play.

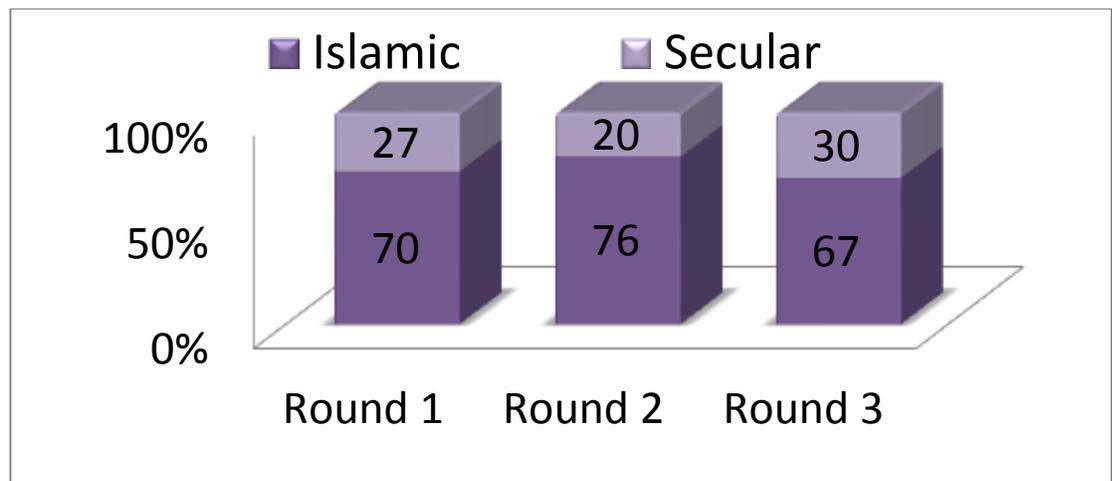


Figure 2: Voting percentages Islamic vs. Secular

Despite the fact that almost half of the Egyptian interviewees called for a separation between religion and politics, there was a consensus among them concerning their preference for a future state based on a mixture of Sharia law and civil laws. Yet another contradiction is shown in the responses of the interviewees concerning their attitude towards foreign powers, such as the United States and Israel, with some indicating hostility

and others hospitability. Some interviewees predicted a worsening of relations with such powers while others believed that the relations would remain the same. Even though Egypt's Peace Treaty with Israel and alliance with Washington may upset some of the Egyptian public, the focus during the Tahrir Square revolution remained on domestic issues such as Egypt's corrupted government, unemployment problem, poor educational system, and lack of government services. The uprising's goal was internal reforms toward a democratic regime. However, after the resignation of Mubarak there were positive signs and efforts taking place between Tehran and Cairo, reflecting a strong will to cooperate. Furthermore, hostility expressed against the Israeli Embassy in September revealed a desire by some to break ties with Israel, which gave rise to concern in the corridors of power in Tel Aviv and Washington. Nevertheless, the events that occurred in this year present another form of Arab permeability, permeability against oppression. This permeability is creating a new Arab identity, and a new face of pan-Arabism. Salem (2011) argues that today there are three worlds: the Arab, Turkish, and Iranian. The idea of a single Arab united world emerging once again is quite interesting. Many international and regional players will start reconsidering their agendas in the Middle East, especially Israel. But the question remains, will there be a single Arab united world?

With the presidential elections set to launch in late May (taking place on May 23 and 24 and June 16 and 17), the situation in Egypt is still unstable especially after Salafi protests against the exclusion of their candidate Hazim Abo Ismail from the presidential list based on his mother's foreign nationality were met with brutal military force in the A'basiyeh area. Nevertheless, among the presidential candidates that were running for elections, none of them exhibits charismatic leadership qualities that could galvanize the support of all Egyptian factions. The presidential chair remains a struggle of power between

the Salafi, Muslim Brotherhood, and other candidates ranging from independents to Amr Moussa to the Nasser's Party represented by Hamdeen Sabahi.

Nevertheless, the social movements that the Middle East witnessed were powerful ingredients against autocratic regimes. The network power was a weapon that could not be constrained once it was launched. The undemocratic regimes in the Middle East were not prepared for such scenarios. *Al Jazeera*, *Al Arabiyeh*, *BBC*, *France 24*, *Al Hiwar*, and other media channels were vicious tools allowing people from the entire world to stay updated concerning the movements in the region. When Mubarak's regime blocked all Internet connections for around five days, the Al Jazeera channel collected information from Internet pages, such as those of Facebook and Twitter, and sent them as updates and news on mobile phones. Thus, it can be seen that Internet and communication innovations had a major impact on the social movements that occurred in the Middle East. People from all around the region could watch what was happening through 'Tweeting', 'Facebooking', and 'Skyping' the latest updates and videos. However, these technological innovations were only a stepping stone towards the achievement of toppling Mubarak's regime. Even with the absence of social media, the uprisings would have been possible.

According to Chick and Murphy (2011), "though many factors contributed to the social revolution that swept Mubarak away – the spread of communication technologies like the Internet, a youth bulge that had never known any ruler but him, the stunning evidence from Tunisia that a popular uprising could succeed – his economic failures were a crucial component." Moreover, the uprisings in Egypt illustrated ideological cohesiveness among the various ethnic identities for the call for freedom and dignity. Salami & Pearson (2011) believe that in order to explain how and why the uprisings happened, one must observe the perspective of historical grievances, advancement in technology, and economic

globalization. These three factors were crucial in undermining the authoritarianism of Mubarak.

Philip Howard is one of the most prominent scholars who argues that the Egyptian revolution is an excellent example of the modern use of technology. Via social media, Egyptian citizens were able express their beliefs and points of view in a space beyond the control of the regime. Through social media youth were able to transfer and share ideas and day-by-day events easily, outside the regime atmosphere. It is widely accepted that the stimulus for the Egyptian revolution came from social media, where the educated youth demographic started posting videos and writing statuses that called for demonstrating against the regime. The Facebook page We Are All Khaled Said attracted more than 400,000 followers and represented one of the most important movements that led the Egyptian revolution (Dewey, Kaden & Zhu 2012). The Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia gave the Egyptians hope for a change after a long period of dictatorship and authoritarianism. According to a study conducted by Howard, Duffy, Freelon, Hussain, Mari, & Maziad (2011), at least 10% of Egyptians use the Internet on a daily basis and 70% of the population are under the age of 34 and very knowledgeable with regard to Internet use. Social media represented the link between the social activists and the people on the ground outside of the government's control, and managed to forge a direct connection between the online bloggers online from inside and outside Egypt and across the world, thus encouraging more peaceful demonstrations.

As is the case with all Arab states, Egypt has witnessed a widening gap between the lower and the upper classes, with a gradually diminishing middle class to almost the point of extinction. The bad economic situation fueled anger among Egyptian citizens toward the regime's economic policies, and meant that the relevant governments were perceived as the

cause of the dire economic misery. Corn (2011) argues that the World Bank and other Egyptian officials stated that there had been positive economic growth, but that this was only reflected in certain sectors such as tourism, and this bad growth model increased the economic disparity instead of improving living standards. According to Corn (2011), 80% represent the lower class that holds secondary degree, where by other people which used to benefit from the Egyptian got into conflicts with the protesters.

The Egyptian army represented the trigger that ended Mubarak's rule after 20 years. The military refused to open fire against the protesters or to repress the demonstrations, thus weakening the regime. According to Makara (2012), Mubarak used two tactics to sustain his regime. The first was to build parallel security organizations and allocate incentives to military leaders to play a role in preserving the regime. The security institutions used to defend Mubarak's rule, by enhancing the rule of his party, and to monitor one another, limiting the chances of a coup against the regime. On the other hand, for these security institutions to be established and work extensively, economic and political benefits were given to the security leaders, such as generous salaries, housing, health care and the monopolization of certain profitable economic sectors (Makara, 2012). This strategy of creating a security power to maintain the regime ultimately proved to be a failure, neatly illustrated by the army's decision to stand with the demonstrators against the regime. Moreover the army's position protected it from any internal split, as it represented the majority of the Egyptians that were on the ground calling for the toppling of the regime. In addition, the position taken by the military gave it a top position between the masses where they will not be threatened in the future by other opposition groups.

4.4 Geopolitical factors

When first considering the geopolitical factors that had a direct effect on the continuation of the Egyptian revolution, and the will of millions of Egyptians to finally take to the streets to demand the toppling of the regime, the self-immolation of Mohamad Buazizi on December 17 2010 takes precedence. The Tunisian citizen from the city of Sidi Bouzid became a symbol for the start of the uprisings and represented a turning point for the entire Arab public opinion, including the Egyptian masses who went to the streets calling for an end to Mubarak's regime. Spontaneous popular demonstrations saw the participation of every strata of society, irrespective of gender, age, or class, congregating in Tahrir Square for one cause, for a demand for freedom and democracy.

Widespread socio-economic issues form yet another of the major geopolitical factors in the entire region, whose roots lie in the ruling regimes' abuses of financial privileges (Dalacoura, 2011). The Arab regimes used to paint a picture of a healthy economy witnessing growth, although this distorted the reality of poverty and high unemployment among the educated youth. This situation encouraged Arab public opinion to turn against the ruling regimes, especially when compounded by the high levels of inequality, corruption, the global 2008 financial crisis, and food price increases.

While examining the contagious spread of social uprisings in the Arab world, and in order to assess the case of Egypt, it is necessary to regard Huntington's theories on the third wave of democratization and the clash of civilization. Assessing the components of these theories in relation to the events occurring in Egypt will enable us to determine whether Egypt is in the phase of a wave or a clash. After examining the first two waves in history along with the reverse waves that followed respectively, Huntington (2003) categorized the transition to democracy in the world as taking place in three waves. According to

Huntington (2003), the world is in the phase of a third democratic wave. The current era, since the year 1974, is in the phase of a “modern global democratic revolution.” However, Huntington does not neglect the fact that a third reverse wave might occur. In case a reverse wave occurs, then the world would await a fourth democratic wave; however, this wave would require two pre-requisites: political leadership and economic development. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning and examining Huntington’s five important factors that contributed to the emergence of the third democratic wave:

- Legitimacy problems facing authoritarian regimes
- The global economic growth that the world witnessed in the 1960s
- The withdrawal of the role of religion, the role of the Catholic Church
- The change of the international actors’ policies
- A snowball effect

Nevertheless, Huntington (1993) stated that world politics are in a latest phase, in which conflicts are not fought based on ideological or economic differences, but rather on cultural differences. Despite the fact that nation states will remain the most powerful players, the principle conflict will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. Assessing the case of Egypt in relation to Huntington’s theories, we find that Mubarak’s regime faced exasperated protestors for 18 consecutive days. Many Egyptians believe that after the ousting of Mubarak’s regime, their country is on the right track and headed in a better direction (refer to Table 1.2). Mubarak’s regime faced a legitimacy problem whereby corruption, repression, and coercion were methods used to instill barriers of fear in society. Poverty is striking in Egypt and unemployment was and is on the rise. The Egyptian youth, in a survey conducted in 2010 by the Population Council, place poverty, corruption, and

education as the top social issues that need to be addressed urgently. (Refer to Table 1.3 and Table 1.4).

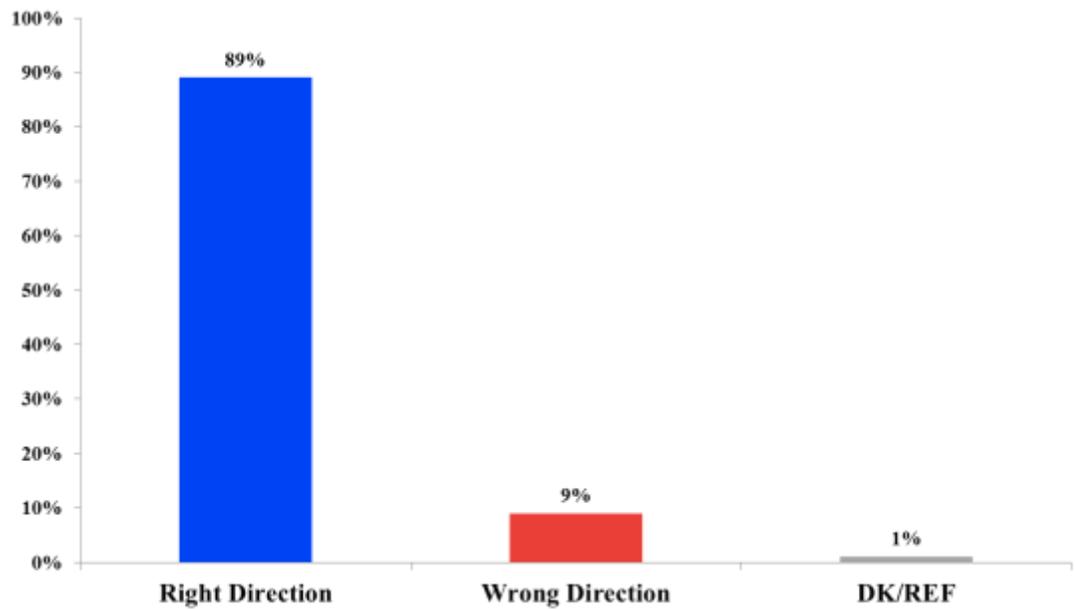


Figure 3: Egyptian opinions concerning whether Egypt is heading in the right or wrong direction

Table 2: Important social issues in the eyes of youth

Social Issues Reported as 'Very Important'	Percent (Aged 15-29)
Poverty reduction	92
Fighting rising prices	90
Fighting corruption	88
Reforming the education system	86
Strong defense forces	86
Reforming the health care system	85

A high level of economic growth	78
Protecting freedom of speech	75
Protection of political rights	64
People have a larger role in government	63
Political leaders with stronger religious beliefs	53

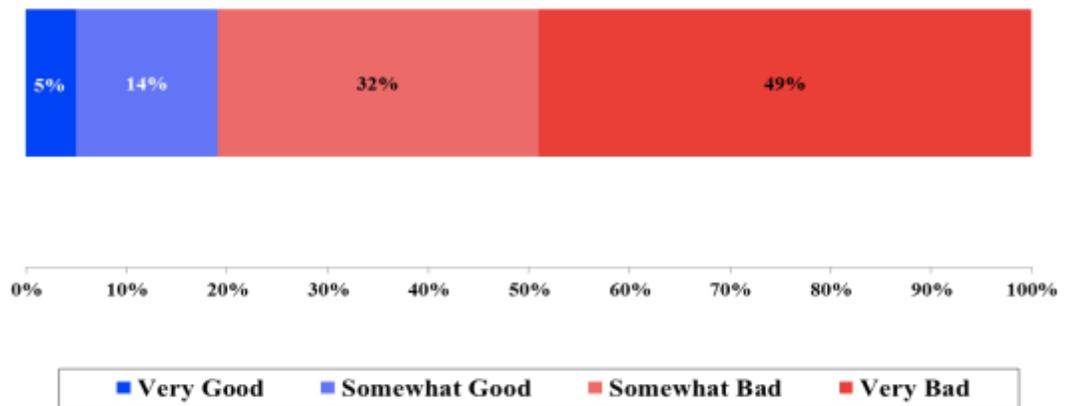


Figure 4: How Egyptians perceive the economic situation (April 2011)

When the spokesman of Al Azhar, the world’s oldest Islamic university, Mohamed Refaa al-Tahtawy, resigned in February 2011 in order to join the anti-Mubarak protests, these protests appeared to also receive religious support. With regard to the army, during the 18 days of protests, it remained neutral thus giving itself the role of protecting civilians and ensuring stability. Egypt was the first country to follow suit in the wake of the Tunisian uprising. Despite the historical grievances that had accumulated against Mubarak’s regime, the Egyptians were inspired by the Tunisian uprising, which led to President Ben Ali’s

exile. They were encouraged to break the barrier of fear, to repeat the 2004 and 2008 demonstrations, but this time with a fully-fledged demonstration in Tahrir Square in which all Egyptians joined. In terms of international support, it is worth looking at the reactions of the USA, UK, and France.

The United States of America and other international actors such as France and the United Kingdom expressed their change in policy towards Mubarak through demanding that he step down, listen to the demands of citizens, and allow for the realization of a civil and democratic type of governance.

On the other hand, we cannot ignore the fact that the differences among civilizations are real. Civilizations are differentiated throughout history by factors such as tradition, culture, and religion. Cultural characteristics and differences are less easy to resolve than political and economic differences. Nevertheless, people are becoming separated from their local identities in order to attach themselves to social characteristics that unite them with others in the world and thus weakening the concept of the nation state. This occurs due to economic modernization and globalization. Taking into consideration the case of Egypt, we see that throughout the uprisings against Mubarak, society was able to avoid division between Muslim and Copts. Throughout the 18 days of protest in Tahrir Square, media coverage transmitted images of Muslims praying on Friday while being protected by a human chain of Copts. However, after the election results brought the Muslim Brotherhood to power, many Copts remained skeptical with regards to future policies. The first difference arose over the issue of amending the constitution. The Muslim Brotherhood called for amending a couple of articles in the constitution while the Copts called for an entirely newly formed constitution. Looking at the factors that constitute a wave versus those that constitute a clash, we can see that Egypt fulfills the factors of a democratic wave;

however, the issue of Muslims versus Copts remains on hold for now until a further analysis of events can be made, especially after the Presidential elections take place, and also in relation to the position of regional countries.

4.5 The role of civil society organizations and youth groups in Egypt's regime breakdown

When discussing the role of non-governmental organizations and civil society groups, it is important to first define them and their function. According to Abdel Samad (2011), civil society organizations (CSOs) are institutionalized and organized non-governmental groups which work for common public interests. That being said, their role in the early years even before the regime breakdown in Egypt is undeniable.

First of all, it should be noted that practitioners and analysts alike have often referred to the civil society organizations' role in the Arab world as having been sidelined before 2011. Even when the uprisings took place, many believed that the ability of CSOs to organize and mobilize was insignificant to the overall magnitude and impact of the uprisings and the final outcomes that were achieved. However, a broader understanding of the reality of the events during and before the uprisings presents another conclusion. First of all, it is true that civil society organizations may not have acted as perfectly and ideally as they should, but the reason for that is not their lack of competence or will, but rather the fact that they had been facing multiple challenges ranging from lack of sufficient funding to political pressure and frequent crackdowns by regime intelligence groups which crippled their ability to operate as their constituency's legitimate representatives. According to Goldstone (2011), the main importance of the role of CSOs in the uprising was first in the popular mobilization of citizens and the organization of mass protests with a common

objective of seeking fundamental regime change. According to Ziad Abdel Samad (2011), the role of the CSOs in the regime change in Egypt did not begin in 2011: “The achievements were an accumulation of the efforts and struggles of various societal factions and civil society groups” (p. 3). Nevertheless, there are other views that consider that there are individual young leaders who actually drove the momentum towards change. According to Goldstone (2011), “CSOs cannot take the credit for the achieved successes of the revolution in Egypt. Young Egyptians were the driving engine; political parties and organizations rode the current – quite late” (p.2). Yet despite this opposing view, it cannot be denied that the CSOs assisted in boosting the magnitude of the citizen outreach and the protests throughout the country (Goldstone, 2011).

What the literature also pays attention to is the level to which human rights organizations specifically have contributed to building a generation that is well-educated when it comes to human rights at all levels. This is especially true for women’s organizations which placed gender equality as their top priority through mainstream efforts which continuously pressured the Egyptian regime to ratify international conventions and treaties regarding women’s rights such as ICCPR, CEDAW and ICSECR (Goldstone, 2011). In addition, Abdel Samad (2011) explains that civil society organizations have lobbied for achieving better access to and quality education, leading to an increase in school enrollments in certain regions where they have been active the most during the past 20 years. In addition to this, organizations which promote international democracy have intensified their efforts in recent years to promote and expand the role of CSOs in political life, policy-development and decision-making. There have been many initiatives led by local CSOs in Egypt which introduced democratic concepts such as local elections observation, civic advocacy and parliamentary monitoring over the years (Abdel Samad,

2011). This eventually increased the awareness and know-how of activists in holding governments accountable and lobbying to amend policies through popular movements. As a result, this also gave rise to independent groups of young, well-educated Arabs which took action to express their demands, despite being marginalized by the state's regime for many years. The momentum and the level of awareness and advocacy which was created by the CSO groups over the years helped to encourage independent self-help groups. According to Samir Amin, there were three main components which gave rise to the revolution in Egypt. The first is a re-politicized youth, who expressed and prepared themselves according to their own will, benefiting from and encouraged and inspired by the efforts of CSOs over the years (Halaseh, 2011). Secondly, there was a radical left, which was considered part of the opposition groups, and finally, a democratic middle class, which includes those who support the democratic objective without specifically objecting to the resource allocation, market forces or the foreign alignment (Goldstone, 2011).

This chapter has provided a thorough discussion of the case of Egypt which demonstrated the importance of time, internal and external environmental factors in fueling and shaping the regime change in that country. The role of CSOs was of particular importance and received ample discussion in this chapter, which emphasized their role as catalysts and organizers of popular protests, in addition to being primary advocates of human rights. However, the chapter also shed light on the challenges facing the upcoming ruling governments in Egypt: poverty, rising prices, poor education levels and corruption within the system are all top priorities in the process of re-building a democratic Egyptian regime.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of this thesis highlighted the critical role of youth groups and civil society organizations in the breakdown of regimes, with a specific focus on Egypt and Poland. These findings shed light on the answers to the research questions: How did civil society and non-governmental groups in Egypt and Poland contribute to regime breakdown? What specific roles did they have with regard to the regime breakdown? Such questions are important to answer, in order to explain how the power for change is actually rooted in the people and society. The answers also help in affirming whether the work, structure and resources of CSOs do actually pay off when the opportunity of regime change arises. After all, many years of hard work and millions of dollars were spent on funding these CSOs, with the overall purpose of empowering social and political change. Did they succeed when they were put to test? If so, how? If not, why not? Also, when and why did Poland and Egypt experience regime breakdown? These are important questions to answer in order to evaluate a society's potential to create sustainable change where it matters the most.

To answer these questions, the thesis first investigated how geopolitical and domestic factors impacted the regime breakdowns in both countries over the years. The thesis attempted to answer these questions by examining first the case of Poland and Egypt, with a brief historical overview of the socio-political reality of both countries prior to their regime breakdowns. To provide relevant background information which was also used to answer the research questions, the thesis reviewed some of the major themes and literature reviews on the domestic and geopolitical factors that appear to lead to regime breakdown.

The findings of the thesis revealed that first of all, the main factors leading to the regime breakdown in both Poland and Egypt were similar in the sense that they accumulated over the years, and that they were primarily socio-economic triggers. Whether it was poor labor conditions, rise in food and commodity prices or lack of sufficient job opportunities for a growing labor force, the regime breakdowns in Egypt and Poland occurred when the various factions of the two country's society joined their efforts, organized their movements and exerted constant, targeted pressures on the regimes, as a result of a deepening economic and social crisis that has led a deterioration in the quality of life of citizens, consequently leading to political instability and the breakdown of both regimes.

In the case of Egypt, the role of CSOs and youth groups was not sudden or limited to the 2011 events. In fact, decades before these groups exerted efforts on multiple levels to increase the civic awareness and education of the activists and youth groups, in addition to continuous lobbying of the state towards enacting human rights laws and regulations. The continuous years of suppression and one-man-rule led to an accumulation of public dissent and frustration, which helped to fuel and mobilize the protests in significantly large numbers. Moreover, the so-called internet revolution, the Egyptian youth bulge, the economic failures of Mubarak's regime, and the autocratic 30-year rule of Mubarak, are the main factors that led to an 18-day open protest in Tahrir Square. January 25, 1952 marked a heroic incident in Egypt. It is no coincidence that the mass movements in Egypt were started on January 25th, which is a celebrated national holiday. Salamey & Pearson (2011) argue that revolutionary outbreaks cannot erupt suddenly without any prior reasons; rather they are the accumulation of past experiences and grievances by the people over a lapse of time. For future research, the following question remains: What are the success factors that

affect the role of CSOs and youth groups in achieving regime breakdown? How do they vary across cultures and geopolitical contexts? Answering such questions is expected to provide interesting answers and revelations.

In the larger framework of comparative studies of regime breakdown, it is worth noting what Geddes (1999) said: “Authoritarian regimes...break down in systematically different ways, and they also affect post-transition outcomes”. Accordingly, the popular protests that led to regime breakdowns in Egypt and Poland highlight the success of civil society movements in being catalysts for regime change and how an authoritarian regime can result in a destructive backlash from its own society leading to its breakdown. Yet it can also be argued that post-transitional societies are often characterized by a higher, or at least high, level of unrest than the circumstances of the previous regime. However, a large body of research emphasizes interactions of repression-mobilization which take place during periods of initial unrest among the various civic actors.

Yet, the transitional environment which was produced in the wake of regime change can result in political conditions that are equally unstable for the citizenry, shaping the conflict dynamic of the future. The course of political violence is not determined only by the response of the leader to the direct bottom-up challenge which he faces, but rather a complex combination of socio-political settings that existed in pre- and post-regime breakdown that have the most influence on the transition of a regime to a new government, democracy or system. This necessitates further research in the case of Egypt, specifically on how the current new system will manage the tensions, conflicts and potential periods of unrest that are destined to shape the country’s post-Mubarak future.

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