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MISDIRECTED BY THE SUCCESSES OF THE OTHERS: THE CASE OF SYRIA IN THE ARAB SPRING

Muhammad Badr ABU SALIH

Master's Thesis

Supervisor

Asst. Prof. Dr. Akif Bahadır KAYNAK

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The thesis titled "MISDIRECTED BY THE SUCCESSES OF THE OTHERS: THE CASE OF SYRIA IN THE ARAB SPRING" prepared by MUHAMMAD BADR ABU SALIH and submitted on 16.08.2022 has been **accepted unanimously** for the degree of Master of Art in Political Science and International Relations.

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DEDICATION

To My Parents

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ABSTRACT

MISDIRECTED BY THE SUCCESSES OF THE OTHERS: THE CASE OF SYRIA IN THE ARAB SPRING

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The Arab Spring, as a democratic wave, contained democratic movements that succeeded in overthrowing their non-democratic regimes, such as Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya. In addition to other movements that failed to do so, such as Syria. This thesis investigates the impact of those successful movements on the Syrian case. We did that through comparing the events of the Syrian democratic movement with the events of the Tunisian, Egyptian and Libyan movements, to see if there is a relation, or an impact, between them. After that, we assessed the discovered impacts to get an overall evaluation of the impact of those movements on the case of Syria. We found many evidences show that the Syrian movement followed, or emulated, the other movements, in their approach, strategy and tactics. And because essential differences between Syria and those countries, that following, or emulation, did not lead to the same success, rather, it was one of the reasons for its failure. That gave us a conclusion that initiation of a democratic movement amid other movements, in time and space, will expose that movement to misdirecting impact that leads to its failure.

Keywords: Arab Spring, Democratic Wave, Syrian Revolution, Impact, Negative Effect

ÖZET

DİĞERLERİNİN BAŞARISIYLA YANILTILMIŞ BİR VAKA: ARAP BAHARINDA SURİYE

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Arap Baharı, demokratik hareketler içeren bir demokrasi dalgası olarak, Suriye de olduğu gibi başarısızlıkla sona erenler haricinde Tunus, Mısır ve Libya gibi demokratik olmayan rejimleri devirmeyi başarmıştır. Bu tez, başarılı hareketlerin Suriye üstündeki etkisini araştırmaktadır. Bu araştırmayı Suriye demokrasi hareketi olaylarını aralarında bir ilişki ya da etki olup olmadığını görmek için Tunus, Mısır ve Libya demokrasi hareketi olaylarıyla mukayese ederek yaptık. Sonrasında, bu demokrasi hareketlerinin Suriye üzerindeki etkisinin genel bir değerlendirmesini yapmak için bulunan etkileri değerlendirdik. Suriye demokrasi hareketinin yaklaşımlarını, stratejilerini ve taktiklerini takip ettiği, özendiği diğer hareketlerin olduğunu gösteren birçok kanıt bulduk. Bu ülkeler ve Suriye arasında ki temel farklılıklar yüzünden, bu takip ve özenti ayni başarıyı getirmedi, başarısızlığın nedenlerinden biri buydu. Bu bize diğer hareketler sırasında bir hareket başlatmanın, o hareketin başarısızlıkla sonuçlamasına sebep olacak bir yanlış yönlendirici etkiye maruz kalabileceğini gösterdi.

Anahtar kelimeler: Arap Baharı, Demokrasi Dalgası, Suriye Devrimi, Etki, Olumsuz Etki

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ABBREVIATIONS

UN   :   United Nations

UNSC :   United Nations Security Council

R2P   :   Responsibility to Protect

SNC   :   Syrian National Council

FSA   :   Free Syrian Army

SNA   :   Syrian National Army

NTC   :   National Transitional Council of Libya

GCC   :   Gulf Cooperation Council

1. INTRODUCTION

The Arab Spring, the new wave of democracy, started with the demonstrations in Tunisia, in December 2010. And after four weeks of peaceful struggle and protesting against the authoritarian regime demanding political change, Tunisian president stepped down and left the country, paving the way for democratic transition in the country. The same thing happened in Egypt in January 2011, but with more impetus and more hope. With less than three weeks, the Egyptian president also stepped down and paved the way for another transition to democracy. Both quick successes, the Tunisian and the Egyptian played great role in motivating other countries in the region to do the same, and to get the same result of getting rid of authoritarianism and going on toward democratic transition that will improve their country and their lives.

One of those motivated countries was Syria. The middle eastern country that is ruled by an authoritarian regime for decades. Many attempts took place in the modern history of Syria, to get rid of authoritarian but failed. So, in the eve of the Arab Spring, Syrian people were reached a state of hopeless of any political reform, with lack of any political project for change. And the country suffered from deterioration on several levels, on economic situation, human rights, and political freedoms. In that context, the Arab Spring emerged. Syrian people witnessed the events in both Tunisia and Egypt, and later in Libya, through the non-state satellite channels, such as Al Jazeera and social media, from the beginning to the success.

Those democratic movements in both Tunisia and Egypt were popular movement and spontaneous to a large extent, and sometimes called headless movements. Syrians saw with their eyes, a model that achieved two successes consecutively in two Arab countries. Syrians expect that model, pattern, or approach, can be simply applied in their country, and achieve success. Mere popular demonstrations in public spaces demanding overthrowing the regime and after a couple of weeks, the president will be scared and take a plane and leave the country, or just step down, very simple.

People took the initiative and decided to copy the Tunisian/Egyptian model, with a hope of success, by initiating a popular democratic movement in March 2011. Syrian people were fascinated and convinced by the Tunisian/Egyptian model (and later by the Libyan model),

so they stick to those models. They thought that all authoritarian regimes are similar, so they expect similar result. There were opposition elites in Syria, inside the country and abroad, some of them are researchers in political science in prestigious universities. Also, those elites were fascinated by the previous movement that succeeded and expected the same results and expressed the same hope and optimism about those models. And more importantly, the applicability of those models in Syria.

But Syria, the society, the political system, the nature of the ruling regime, the army, the geopolitics, and the demographics, is different from those other countries in the region that succeeded in the transition. That made those models of the prior successful movements simply not work in Syria and failed at the end. And the democratic movement converted to armed conflict and an extensive civil war.

In other words, those successes that happened in both Tunisia and Egypt and later in Libya, made Syrian emulate the models of those movement and expect the same success. But because essential differences between Syria and the other cases in the Arab Spring, those models, approaches, patterns, did not succeeded in Syrian democratic movement and led to its failure and other catastrophic results in Syria, the country, and the people.

According to Dahl (1967), studying democratic transition or Transitology is one of the most complicated research problems (Dahl, 1967) and the democratization as a process is very sophisticated itself. This complexity makes every democratic transition unique and what is applied to one transition is not necessarily can be applied to other transitions. From this angle, the negative effect of the democratic waves emerges through oversimplifying the transition, underestimating differences, and overestimating similarities.

There is no doubt that democratic waves, such as our case the Arab Spring, have a positive effect on democratization because transition usually needs catalyst, and that what the wave can effectively provide. But when that positive effect is less than the negative one, then the wave will be problematic in total.

If the people of a country have the desire to get rid of authoritarianism and make transition to democracy but they don't have a program to apply, and in that moment a democratic wave hit that country. Should they join the wave or not? and if they should join, how do they join

to get benefit from the wave and prevent its disadvantages? In surfing, when a "professional" surfer sees a coming wave and he thinks it meets his needs, he knows when and how to rid it successfully. However, the same wave for a complete "novice" surfer could result in a definite drowning.

Accordingly, in this thesis we will examine the impact of those movement that succeeded in the Arab Spring on the Syrian movement, specifically the Tunisian, Egyptian, and Libyan movements, by answering the research question: *What is the impact of the successful democratic movements in the Arab Spring on the Syrian democratic movement?*

1.1. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

Answering that question will provide the literature with new knowledge in the field of Transitology, which in its turn will help countries seeking democracy to make proper decisions when a democratic wave emerges in their region, or even far from them. To make that wave an added value to the transition, not a cause of failure. Because the failure in transition is not always a mere failed attempt. When protesters come back home failed and trying to think about new ideas. Sometimes those failed strugglers will not even have the chance to come back home. That failure could burn the entire region, and defame democracy as a reason for devastation, and enhances the authoritarianism. That what happened in the Arab Spring, thus, the more details the literature will have in the field of Transitology and democratization, the more information the countries seeking democracy will have, to make transition more likely successful.

Also, we should not avoid the fact that authoritarianism is evolving and developing new strategies, tactics, and methods to protect itself from democratization. We see these days how authoritarianism is using migrants as a political weapon, such as the Belarusian case, which make the duties bigger on the researchers in the field of democracy.

In short, we are studying the impact of the successful movements in the Arab Spring, as a democratic wave, on the other movements, in order to help our readers (1) understand whether clustered/grouped democratic movements, or democratic waves are good or bad for countries seeking democracy; (2) understand how those democratic waves can make

democratization a misery for a country; (3) understand the bigger and more important question of how the success of a transition to democracy in one country can be a cause for a failure of another transition in another country in the same wave of democratization. So, after the findings of this study, those countries seeking democracy "might" get benefit from democratic waves "more efficiently".

1.2. RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

We will start this thesis with an argument that the successful democratic movements in the Arab Spring, the case of Tunisian, Egyptian and Libyan movements, had a negative impact on the subsequent movements, the case of Syrian movement. We will examine that argument through qualitative research using document analysis and historical analysis based on primary and secondary sources written in both Arabic, the language of the Arab region, and English. Those sources including books, scholarly articles, newspapers, and reports, recorded interviews, news coverage, social media posts and public documents, produced by international institutions, political opposition institutions, opposition figures and governments.

This thesis is organized in three chapters before the conclusion. The remainder of this introduction below includes a literature review. The second chapter, entitled "Historical Background" briefly explains the story and events of our four cases, the Tunisian, Egyptian, and Libyan, in addition to the Syrian case. The Third chapter, entitled "How to explore the impact of the successes on Syria" explains the technical details of how this study is conducted, including the methods used to collect and analyze the date. In addition to viewing the collected data. The fourth chapter, entitled "Many affected actions, but negatively not positively", which analyses and assesses the collected data and provide the findings. Finally, the conclusion provides a comprehensive analysis of the entire study with proposed policies and insights.

1.3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Because this thesis focuses on the impact of the successful democratic movements on the other movements in the Arab Spring, so we searched the literature for arguments that talk about the democratization through social movements with more focus on the Arab Spring. More precisely, what scholars talk about the effects of clustered/grouped democratization, in time and space, through social movements, in general, in the Arab Spring, and especially in the Syrian case during the Arab Spring.

For those reasons, we will start presenting the opinions dealing with democratization and social movements in general, like the modernity (modernization) theory in democracy, the role of social movements in democratization, the domestic and external actors of democratization, the role of popular revolutions in democratization. In addition to the opinions about the Arab Spring in the context of those topics. Then we will present four schools of thought that talk about the disadvantages of democratization in a region through a cluster of social movements (or a democratic wave) with focusing on the Arab Spring.

We will start with the school of thought argues that democratization through a wave (or cluster) of social movements, usually generates a counter wave that prevents the diffusion of that democratic wave, and even negatively affects the already successful transitions to democracy. Then we will present the opinions of the school of thought argues that democratization through waves push countries to democratize despite the absence of appropriate conditions for democracy, by ignoring the obstacles for transition and ignoring the differences between them and the countries that preceded them in democratization and succeeded in transition. After that we will talk about the school of thought that deals with the thinking aspect of taking the decision of participation in a wave of transitions. Such as the cognitive shortcuts that ordinary people used to react to that wave of transitions and the successes within it. Finally, we will present the new media school of thought, which talks about how great the role of the new media in forming the events of the Arab Spring, about its diffusion, successes, and failures.

1.3.1. Democratization, Social Movements, and The Arab Spring

Haynes (2009) presents four stages for democratization process which are: (1) Political liberalization; (2) The collapse of the authoritarian regime; (3) Democratic transition; (4) Democracy consolidation (Haynes, 2009, p. 1045). That means if people of a country brought down their authoritarian regime, they actually passed two steps in democratization out of four steps. Despite that, Dahl in his famous book "Polyarchy" (1971) says that no matter how many steps a country has taken on the path to democracy, democracy will stay incomplete and needs continuous maintenance and continuous development (Dahl, 1971, as cited in Donoso, 2016, p. 170).

The theory of collective actions sets four conditions for social movements to succeed: (1) Discontent and dissatisfaction of people: such as difficult living conditions, corruption and lack of freedoms; (2) Values and beliefs (ideology): that encourage masses to oppose the regime and promote a solutions to their issues; (3) The ability to mobilize masses: such as organization, civil works and communications; (4) Political opportunity: such as regime weakness, dissidents, loss of regime legitimacy and international support (Oberschall, 2000, p. 28).

Bishara (2020) sees that what happened in the Arab Spring through raising the slogan "the people want to bring down the regime" and other revolutionary demands means nothing but implementing democracy (Bishara, 2020, p. 474), such as demanding freedom, justice, maintaining of human rights, getting rid of oppression (Brancati, 2014, as cited in Bamert et al., 2015, p. 2; Salamey & Pearson, 2012, p. 944), and demanding the right for participating in making political decisions (Aslanidis, 2017, p. 316). Authoritarianism was able to stay in power in the Arab countries for a long time through using violence against every popular movement tried to bring them down (Gause, 2011, p. 83), so what triggers the revolutions of the Arab Spring was the oppression and the corruption of the regimes of those countries (Dornschneider, 2021, p. 91). However, from the year 1989 to the year 2011, a small number of democratic protests succeeded in bringing down their regimes. Even in the Arab Spring, after the success of Tunisia and Egypt there were no other protests succeeded in getting rid of authoritarianism (Bamert et al., 2015, p. 7).

On the other hand, modernization theory, which is considered the most important theory in the field of democracy, says that democratization in a country requires a minimum level of development to become possible (Rakner et al., 2007, p. 3). For that reason, scholars see that the Arab world does not meet the required conditions for democracy, so they did not join the third wave of democracy in the late twentieth century and then called "Arab Exceptionalism" (Abushouk, 2016, p. 59). For that reason, scholars are uncertain about classifying the Arab Spring as a continuation of the third wave of democracy, fourth wave or a false start as Diamond (2011) says (Abushouk, 2016, p. 52). Despite all arguments of the modernization theory, the democratic transitions in Africa in late nineties of the twentieth century, such as the transition in Benin, refuted the hypothesis of the theory (Gunitsky, 2018a, p. 124).

Despite the success of social movements in democratization in many cases, other scholars see that the belief about a connection between popular mobilization, protests and the democracy is kind of illusion (Davies et al., 2016, p. 6). Social movements are not necessarily seeking democracy but, in most cases, they emerge to demand special interests, or against special sufferings (Tilly & Wood, 2020, pp. 130-131), and even in consolidated democracies many social movements ask for anti-democracy demands such as exclusion of immigrants or minority groups (Tilly & Wood, 2020, p. 131).

For every transition to democracy, there are domestic actors and external actors. However, democratization is mainly driven by the domestic actors (Doorenspleet & Mudde, 2008, p. 819; Börzel, 2015, p. 528) such as domestic political elites, army, and civil society (Doorenspleet & Mudde, 2008, p. 818), except for the cases of Ukraine and Georgia, where the foreign western powers promoted democracy there (Börzel, 2015, p. 528). The importance of the domestic actors over the external ones appears also in the Arab Spring where the movements arose from domestic actors (Sarihan, 2012, p. 69; Bishara, 2019, p. 58), whereas the external actors, in general, have good relations with the authoritarian regimes in the region (Sarihan, 2012, p. 69). During the Arab Spring, the western external power, such as the U.S. and the EU, did not only fail to support democratization process, but also tolerated counter-revolutions such as the military coup d'état in Egypt, the Saudi military intervention in Bahrain and the human rights violations in Syria (Börzel, 2015, p. 529).

1.3.2. The Impact of Democratic Waves:

In this section we will first present the concept of the democratic wave then we will present four schools of thought dealing with the impact of democratization in a region through clustered social movements, or simply democratic waves. Starting with the school that emphasizes on the counteractions created by the challenged authoritarian regimes and triggered by democratic waves. Then we will present the arguments of the school of thought that refer to the fact that democratic wave hides the differences between countries and shows that all of them are the same in term of democratization. Then, we will show the opinions talking about the impact of those democratic waves on the ordinary people, which are the main participants of the social movements, in the affected communities. Finally, we will discuss the opinions that argue how the new media and social networks make a democratic wave has a huge impact on a region.

Wave of democracy, or democratic wave is a concept crafted by Huntington (1991). He defines the wave of democracy as "a group of transitions from nondemocratic to democratic regimes that occur within a specified period of time and that significantly outnumber transitions in the opposite direction during that period of time" (Huntington, 1991, p. 15). Gunitsky (2018b) dig deeper in this phenomenon and studied its occurrences in the past two centuries. He found out 13 waves of democracy in the history, started from the Atlantic wave of democracy (1776-1798) to the democratic wave of the Arab Spring (2011). He found that those waves vary in terms of how they originated, their strength, and their success. He classified those 13 democratic waves according to two factors. First factor is the source of the wave, to classify the waves to vertical and horizontal. In vertical waves, the source of the wave is geopolitical shift, such as the waves that happened after both World Wars and the collapse of the Soviet Union. And in the horizontal waves, the source of the wave is a transition in the neighboring country in the region, such as the Spring of Nations and the Arab Spring. The second factor is the speed of the wave propagation related to the intensity of the source of the wave. Based on this factor, he divided the waves to contagious and emulation. In contagious waves, the wave propagates rapidly and ignore the obstacles and prerequisite of democracy and domestic factors and it lasts from weeks to months. An example of this kind of waves is the Spring of Nations and the Arab Spring. In emulation waves, the wave is slow and keep considering the constraints for the transition and the

domestic factors. It lasts years, not months or weeks like the contagious. An example of those waves is the Color revolutions (Gunitsky, 2018b). As we understand from the study of Gunitsky (2018b), a wave of democracy is an external factor of democratization per se. And next we will present the schools of thought dealing with the impact of the democratic waves.

1.3.2.1. Counteractions: domestically, regionally, and internationally

When social movements relatively seek democratization, they usually produce counter non-democratic movements (Tilly & Wood, 2020, p. 131). Bishara (2020), for example, argues in his book "Problems of Democratization" that the wave of democratic protests in the Arab Spring did not only create an Arab solidarity front supporting democracy and made up of Arab protesters, but also created another Arab solidarity front countering democracy, made up of Arab authoritarian regimes (Bishara, 2020, p. 291). Main regional authoritarian countries in the Arab region, such as Saudi Arabia, supported directly and indirectly the authoritarian regimes in the region (Freyburg & Richter, 2015, p. 511), through providing economic, political, and military support and even threatening the rulers who have a democratic mentality (Börzel, 2015, p. 528). Examples of those counter movements are the systematic counter democracy movement in Egypt (Hassan, 2015, p. 491), which ended up with a military coup on a democratically elected president in 2013. Also, the Saudi military intervention in Bahrain and Yemen (Jones, 2016, pp. 266, 271), where the democratic movement in Bahrain failed due to Saudi-Khalifa alliance (Khalifa refers to King of Bahrain, Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa), which is not only terminated the democratization attempt, but also deepened the authoritarianism there and decreased the possibility of democratization in the future (Jones, 2016, p. 271). Economically, during the Arab Spring, kings of both Jordan and Morocco relied on financial support from the Gulf states to maintain the satisfaction of their population (Aarts et al., 2012, p. 63). Also, Aarts et al. (2012) mentions the political support that both Russia and China provided to Assad regime in the UN Security Council, which made a disagreement inside the Council. That disagreement made the peace plan of the UN envoy Kofi Annan for Syria failed (Aarts et al., 2012, p. 64). Foreign authoritarian actors who have power and international influence such as Russia, China and Saudi Arabia maybe do not prefer to see the number of democratic countries increases (Rakner et al., 2007, p. 11), but at the same time, they do not promote authoritarianism or preventing democracy,

they simply try to counterbalance the western promotion of democracy to protect the survival of their regimes in power and to maintain their economic and geopolitical interests which are not, in general, different from the interest of the western powers promoting democracy (Börzel, 2015, p. 528).

Scholars see that western promotion of democracy in the Arab Spring was ineffective. At the beginning of the Arab Spring, the U.S. quickly supported the activists, and then also quickly went back to its usual old policy of maintaining security interests at the expense of democracy promotion, the EU in its turn reacted slowly to the event of the Arab Spring with mainly a weak policy based on illusive rhetoric (Freyburg & Richter, 2015, p. 511). Those western countries, who promote democracy, usually face democratization-stability dilemma in the Arab region (Börzel, 2015, p. 528), which, as we mentioned before, made them silent after the military coup d'état against the elected government in Egypt in 2013 and made them tolerate with the Saudi military intervention in Bahrain and the human right violations in Syria (Börzel, 2015, p. 529).

Domestically, Bamert et al. (2015) notice that not only the protesters took advantage of the momentum of the wave of democratic protests in the Arab Spring, but also the authoritarian rulers can get lessons learned from the events that happened in other countries, to use it to counter the wave and stay in power (Bamert et al., 2015, p. 7). Bishara (2020), for example, finds that Assad regime in Syria concluded that both authoritarian rulers of Tunisia and Egypt made a mistake by retreating and not confronting the protesters. And the best strategy to stay in power is the steadfastness and using the ultimate violence against protesters (Bishara, 2020, p. 512).

1.3.2.2. Democracy conditions and obstacles

Bishara (2020) argues that the conditions of popular revolution against despotism to be initiated and even to succeed, which is the case of the Arab Spring, are different from the conditions of democratization (Bishara, 2020, p. 450). About the conditions of revolutions, as social movements seeking removal of tyrannic regimes, Goldstone (2011) mentions four points that every revolution should fulfill in order to achieve its goal are: (1) Unjust

government that cannot be reformed; (2) Unsatisfied Elites, especially in army; (3) Diverse majority support; (4) International support (Goldstone, 2011, as cited in Aarts et al., 2012, p. 51). On the other hand, for democratization, scholars propose its conditions, for example Rakner et al. (2007) mention the most famous theory about democratization, which is modernity (or modernization) theory. As we mentioned before, the theory sees that for a country to be democratized, a certain level of development should be exist. Structural prerequisites should be achieved for democratization, such as the level of economic and social development (Rakner et al., 2007, p. 3), with a high importance of the culture, religion, and historical legacy, such as a previous experience in democracy (Lipset, 1959; Almond & Verba, 1963; Moore, 1966, as cited in Rakner et al., 2007, p. 8). In short, to estimate the potentiality of democratization, the local context is very important (Davies et al., 2016, p. 24). About the Arab region, some scholars argue that the required conditions for democracy are not exist in the Arab region, so they call that case "Arab exceptionalism" (Abushouk, 2016, p. 59). But those conditions mainly are ignored when democratization takes place in a cluster, in time and space, which is what Gunitsky (2018a) argues. In his study, he articulates the democratic movements that take place in clusters (or waves) and are generated by hegemonic shocks caused by changes in equilibrium between powers, regionally or internationally. Such as the democratic movements that toke place after the World War II and after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Those waves start in one country, makes a success, and then spreads to another one (Gunitsky, 2018a). He sees that those waves, which caused by hegemonic shock, create huge pressure on countries ruled by non-democratic regimes in a region, to initiate a democratic transition. Doing that despite the obstacles and restrictions that those countries have, which prevent them from democratization in normal days outside the wave they encounter (Gunitsky, 2018a, p. 118). Those restrictions are such as strained relations between social classes, tension between ethnicities, low economic development, institutional inertia, social divisions, elites fear of country wealth redistribution, and lack of prior democratic experience (Gunitsky, 2018a, p. 130).

He also sees that the wave makes the affected countries ignore also the conditions required to consolidate the democracy, such as the existing of a large middle class, economic stability, ethnic cooperation, in addition to have a prior experience in democracy (Gunitsky, 2018a, p. 130). That pressure, created by the wave, is strong and powerful in catalyzing democratization, but at the same time, it is temporal and volatile. It means that all obstacles

and conditions for democratization that have been ignored, will reappear after the pressing effect of the wave fades. At that time, the non-democratic regimes will be more adapted with the shock, and the pro-democracy alliances will collapse, which leads at the end to the failure of the transition and reestablishing the past equilibrium and interests inside those countries (Gunitsky, 2018a, p. 130).

Even if advancements achieved in democratization in those countries, the transitions cased in response to a pressing democratic wave are generally fragile, short-lived and have less chance to survive, in comparison with a transition takes place in normal times outside waves or clusters, and initiated purely by domestic factors (Gunitsky, 2018a, pp. 130-131; Kurzman, 1998, p. 51).

Waves do not only make countries ignore obstacles to democratization and democracy consolidation prerequisites, but also ignore differences in political situation between the countries that achieved success in democratization and the other countries that encounter a pressure to democratize after that. In the Arab Spring, Anderson (2011) notices that all democratic movements share the same tactics and ideas although those movements are facing different types of political regimes and different political contexts (Anderson, 2011, p. 7).

The democratic movements in the Arab Spring emerged in the form of cluster, and one of the reasons that justifies that nature is the geographic proximity between those Arab countries. That proximity leads to common situations, such as social, economic, political, and cultural background (Hale, 2013, as cited in Brancati & Lucardi, 2018, p. 2362). Also, Gause (2011) notices that the Arabs still have the sense of a common political identity although they live in 20 different states (Gause, 2011, p. 88). In contrary, the rest of the scholars see that when we compare the Arab countries, we will see differences more than similarities, especially when it comes to aspects that affect democratization. Those aspects are mainly related to actors of democratization. For example, Doorenspleet & Mudde (2008) classify actors of democratization as domestic and external ones. Domestic actors are: (1) Political elites; (2) Army; (3) Civil society. And the external actors are: (1) Former colonizer; (2) Regional power; (3) International organizations (Doorenspleet & Mudde, 2008, p. 818). Most scholars see differences among Arab countries in many aspects, such as economic situation (Lynch, Freelon, & Aday, 2014; Bishara, 2019), political situation (Lynch et al.,

2014; Diamond, 2011; Anderson, 2011; Geddes, 2011; Bamert et al., 2015), ethnic and sectarian diversity (Lynch et al., 2014; Anderson, 2011; Gause, 2011; Doorenspleet & Mudde, 2008; Bamert et al., 2015), level of media freedom (Bishara, 2020), the nature of army and security apparatus (Bishara, 2020; Gause, 2011; Allinson, 2015; Aarts et al., 2012), unions and associations (Bishara, 2020; Anderson, 2011; Allinson, 2015), civil society (Bishara, 2020), political parties and political action (Bishara, 2020), culture (Lynch et al., 2014; Bishara, 2020; Haynes, 2009; Allinson, 2015), social conditions (Diamond, 2011; Bamert et al., 2015), education level (Anderson, 2011), strategic weight and international relations (Bishara, 2020; Bishara, 2019; Allinson, 2015; Aarts et al., 2012), geography (Lynch et al., 2014; Bamert et al., 2015), in addition to the relation with Israel (Gause, 2011; Bishara, 2019).

About the differences in economic situation, Arab countries include ones that are rich in oil and natural resources, and others who don't have any resources, which creates huge differences in economic situation and quality of life (Bishara, 2019). And for ethnic and sectarian diversity, for example, in Libya the society and the state institutions were divided according to clans and regions (Anderson, 2011, p. 6). In Tunisia and Egypt, the society has a vast Sunni majority but in Syria, besides the Sunni majority, there are many sects (Gause, 2011, pp. 84-85). Doorenspleet & Mudde (2008) see that the ethnic diversity in a society considered a problem for democratization and democracy (Doorenspleet & Mudde, 2008, p. 818).

Scholars focus also on the role of army and security apparatus in the success of democratization and about their role in the success or failure of the movements of the Arab Spring. Gause (2011) sees that Arab despots stayed in power by using the brutal suppression with every popular movement trying to overthrow them. Also sees that the level of professionality of the army and to what extent that army represent the majority of the population, were a decisive factor in determining the army attitude about the protest in the Arab Spring. In both Tunisia and Egypt, the army was considered professional and not a personal tool for the ruler and represents the majority of the population, for those reasons the army stand with the protesters. On the contrary, the brutal reaction of the Syrian army against the protesters was because members of Assad's family lead important military units, and a significant part of the army officers are members of Assad's sect (the Alawites) and

other minorities (Gause, 2011, pp. 84-85). In addition to the army, security apparatus played an important role in Syria, especially because the ethnic nexus between those apparatus and the despotic regime and that nexus is strong so much that we cannot separate the regime from those apparatus. The relation between the regime and the army in Syria is mainly based on ethnic and sectarian basis, in addition to economic interests, therefore, the army had an incentive to use violence with protesters (Bellin, 2012, p. 133, as cites in Aarts et al., 2012, p. 52). Because of this "blood" relations, the army see that if the regime topped, the majority will get the power and all military leaders – which are mainly from the minorities – will be replaced (Gause, 2011, p. 84). In other words, the fate of the army linked to the fate of the regime (Bishara, 2020). From another angle, Allinson (2015) mentions that in Egypt the army is the core of the state and has economic interests and activities. Therefore, when Mubarak, the toppled Egyptian president, and his close elites have threatened the interests of the army, the army did not defend him (Allinson, 2015, p. 16). Accordingly, the army abandonment of the regime considered a significant part of the success of both Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions and a crucial factor (Aarts et al., 2012, p. 63).

In the Arab world, Tunisia had the best education system, biggest middle class and strongest organized labor movement and those organizations played a significant role in the success of the Tunisian democratic movement (Anderson, 2011, p. 3). In contrary, Syria did not have any independent labor organization. Egypt was a middle case between Tunisia and Syria, with an organized and independent union movement, which played an important role in the Egyptian revolution (Allinson, 2015, p. 16).

Differences between countries in the strategic position and the international relations also played a role in the Arab Spring. Tunisia, for example, maintain normal and one-direction relations with the foreign powers, but in Syria, there was a huge geostrategic competition on its fate by multiple foreign parties (Allinson, 2015, p. 16). The relation between the Egyptian army and the U.S. also forced the Egyptian regime to not use violence against the protesters (Hamid, 2011, p. 27, as cited in Aarts et al., 2012, p. 53). The intentional relations with great powers determine the future of a counties, which means that the relations with Russia or China are not like the relations with western powers (Levitsky & Way, 2006; Levitsky & Way, 2010, as cited in Aarts et al., 2012, pp. 52-53) in this aspect also the Arab countries differs.

Finally, the attitude toward the state of Israel cannot be ignored because any democratic political system in the Arab world should reflect the Arab public opinion toward Israel, which until now is very low (Gause, 2011, p. 89), from this aspect, Syria has a land border with Israel, but Tunisia is very far from it.

1.3.2.3. Ordinary people and cognitive shortcuts

When a democratic social movement succeeded in a country, other countries, that share some similarities with that country in political, economic, social and cultural situation, feel that the likelihood of success of a similar movement in their country is high (McAdam et al., 1996; Bunce & Wolchik, 2006; Beissinger, 2007; Elkins, 2008, as cited in Brancati & Lucardi, 2018, p. 2358; Lynch, 2014, p. 8, as cited in Bamert et al., 2015, p. 2). That high likelihood of success in democratic movements plays an essential role in people's decision to initiate a protest movement seeking democratization (Buenrostro et al., 2007, p. 354, as cited in Bamert et al., 2015, p. 2). And this is what happened after the success of democratic movements in both Tunisia and Egypt in topping their dictators, which has caught people's attention tremendously in Arab countries and has made them feel that the "domino effect" will take place and the rest of the authoritarian regimes in the region will fall sequentially, which at the end triggered other movements similar to those of Tunisia and Egypt (Hale, 2013; Herb, 2014; Lynch, 2013; Saideman, 2012, as cited in Bamert et al., 2015, p. 1; Aarts et al., 2012, p. 50). In the contrary, after the failure of the protest movement against the regime in Iran in 2009 (the Green Revolution), no Arab country initiated any similar movement (Gause, 2011, p. 87). That failure gave a message to the Arabs that popular movements in the region of the middle east cannot works, and the activists cannot initiate a social movement that can occupy the public spaces and express demands (Salvatore, 2011, p. 9). Not only the ordinary people who raised their expectations about the success of the protest movements in making a political change, but also scholars and journalists were convinced that the domino effect will happen in the region of middle east and north Africa (Bamert et al., 2015, p. 1). That made Hale (2013) warn scholars about being drawn into the trap of overestimating the Arab Spring because its high dramatic events (Hale, 2013, p. 334, as cited in Bamert et al., 2015, p. 1)

That made the wave of democratic movements propagate from Tunisia and Egypt to other Arab countries, in various geographic positions, where the activists adopted the same practices of the first movements (Aslanidis, 2017, p. 314). The success in Tunisia triggered the movements in the other countries (Aslanidis, 2017, p. 315; Bamert et al., 2015, p. 1), where the protesters emulated the Tunisians without waiting for a while to see how things will turn out (Bamert et al., 2015, p. 3).

Bishara (2020) sees that the social movements of the Arab Spring were initiated and led spontaneously by the ordinary people (Bishara, 2020, p. 538). Scholars do not see that a new thing, where approximately most popular revolutions were led by ordinary people (Cherribi, 2017, p. 84). Those people lacked prior experience in those activities (Dornschneider, 2021, p. 95), not only experience, but also, they lacked many important elements of social movements such as ideology, ideas, concepts, philosophy, vision, strategy and more importantly a clear political project and guiding leadership (Bayat, 2017).

Also, scholars notice that the movements of the Arab Springs were mainly composed of young people, because those movements relied heavily on social media, and the youth are the majority users of the internet in those countries (Lucarelli, 2014, p. 190). That made those scholars call the Arab Spring "the young people's spring" (Ben Moussa, 2013, pp. 55-56).

Another group of scholars mention the role of the feeling of hope in triggering the social movements in the Arab Spring, where the success of the popular leaderless movements in both Tunisia and Egypt gave a hope to many Arab countries for getting rid of their dictators (Aarts et al., 2012, p. 50). People's decision to participate in the protests were driven by the belief about the hope of achieving a success like Tunisia and Egypt (Bamert et al., 2015, p. 3). For that reason, scholars called those movements "networks of outrage and hope" (Castells, 2012, as cited in Davies et al., 2016, p. 3).

Dornschneider (2021) studied both the Egyptian and Moroccan cases, which toke place after the success of the Tunisian democratic movement. She sees that the people in those countries, after the emergence of the Arab Spring, found themselves in a situation that is both exceptional and not related to their past experiences. In that situation they had to choose whether to participate in the democratic movement or not. She found that the decision to

participate in the democratic movement was directly resulted through generated beliefs related to positive emotions of hope, courage, social solidarity, and national pride. The people in those countries observed prior cases of democratic movements, both successful and failed cases, but what made her surprised that the existing of prior successful movements, along with failed ones, was enough to generate the belief related to hope, which leads directly to make a decision to participate in the protest of the democratic movement in those countries. In other words, for people, just the existing of prior successful movement created a hegemonic effect through generating belief related to hope, which in its turn was sufficient to make the people participate in democratic movement and doing the same things that those successful movements did. Dornschneider (2021) also noticed that this phenomenon exists in both ordinary people and leaders. In one of her interviews that she did with the activists participated in the democratic movement in Egypt, one activist said regarding to the Tunisian success in the Arab Spring: "It is time to take power from this dictator. Tunisians were able to do so. So, we can." (Dornschneider, 2021, p. 60). In another interview with an opposition leader from Morocco, the leader described his feeling of hope after the successes of Tunisian and Egyptian democratic movements, he said: "The context was extremely encouraging, it seemed easy." (Dornschneider, 2021, p. 26).

The democratic movement of Tunisia in the Arab Spring achieved a success through overthrowing their authoritarian ruler and going on in the process of democratization, such as establishing political parties and conducting democratic elections. Weyland (2012) sees that many people in the Arab world, who are politically unorganized, oppressed and lack leadership, made a rash deduction regarding the Tunisian success (Weyland, 2012, p. 923). Those deductions have been made by ordinary people, or grassroots, who lack political experience and the information needed for decision making (Weyland, 2012, p. 920). The deductions include overestimation the importance of the Tunisian success and overestimation the similarities regarding the political situation between Tunisia and the countries of those people (Weyland, 2012, pp. 920-921), also overestimation the similarity in the strength of the regime and the oppression they are suffering (Bamert et al., 2015, p. 3). Those deductions include also over-evaluation the exceptional events that toke place in both Tunisia and Egypt (Bamertet al., 2015, p. 3; Weyland, 2012, p. 921). In addition to the overestimation of the contagion of democratic movements and domino effect on the dictators (Aarts et al., 2012, p. 51). Those deductions made people jump to the conclusion that because

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Tunisian could do it successfully, they can do it too (Weyland, 2012, pp. 25, 28) and because Tunisian and Egyptian security and military forces were relatively neutral, their army will do the same (Bamert et al., 2015, p. 3). These hasty deductions, cognitive shortcuts, or what psychologists call it heuristics, led the people in many Arab countries in the end to decide to initiate Tunisian-like movements (Weyland, 2012, p. 917). Those cognitive shortcuts were behind the fast spreading of the protests in the Arab Spring and behind its low outcomes (Weyland, 2012, as cited in Davies et al., 2016, p. 6). Because the differences in political situation and the inappropriateness of the Tunisian movement tactics in other contexts, the emulating of the Tunisian case in many Arab countries created serious problems and led in the end to failure (Weyland, 2012, p. 917). What gives obvious evidence about the validity of the hypothesis of heuristics (availability and representative heuristics) in justifying the diffusion of the protests, is the rapid decreasing of the effects of the first successes over time (Weyland, 2012, as cited in Bamert et al., 2015, p. 7).

In the same context, Bamert et al. (2015) conducted a quantitative study about the diffusion of the wave of protests seeking democracy in the Arab Spring, and his findings show that the theory of learning is what explains that diffusion. He sees that Arab countries emulated the successful struggles of both Tunisia and Egypt in first two week after those successes, even without considering their domestic context, nor waiting for a while in order to evaluate those successes in a rational way. He sees that the diffusion in the Arab Spring toke place, in particular, through the bounded learning. Learning is two types, rational and bounded. In rational learning, the process of evaluating the information is carried out systematically. That process takes benefit from the information about the events taking place in a country when there is similarity in political, economic, social, and institutional situations. It means that rational learning uses fully rational thinking. On the other hand, bounded learning based on cognitive shortcuts, not on processing information in a fully rational way, which lead to inaccurate evaluations. High impact information that attracts great attention play the most important role in evaluating information and taking decisions in the bounded learning. For example, the protesters in the Arab Spring relied on stories and rumors, not on reliable information, and they used cognitive shortcuts to process it. That led those protesters to see the situation in Tunisia and Egypt similar to their situation, even in the most extreme cases such as the comparison between Tunisia, the republic, and Bahrain, the kingdom in the Gulf region. Anderson (2011), the former rector of the American University in Cairo, notices that

the protesters share the same strategies even though they are facing different enemies (Anderson, 2011, p. 7). Bamert et al. (2015) find that when the bounded leaning is applied, the probability of emulating a successful movement after one week, is ten times more than the probability of emulating it if it was unsuccessful. And after two week the probability of the emulation will be seven times, and after three week the probability will be four times, and after more than three weeks the probability will be two times more than the probability of emulating it if it was unsuccessful (Bamert et al., 2015, p. 7).

What made things worse in the Arab Spring is the development of that spontaneity to a form of populism, between the masses, the ordinary people, and the opposition elites and institutions. Bishara (2020) sees that during the revolutions an atmosphere of praise for spontaneity and its virtues and purity from political interest arose. In addition to vilifying the organized leaderships, which developed to a populist trend, an anti-leadership, anti-union, anti-institutions, and anti-politics trend in general (Bishara, 2020, p. 538). In Syria, for example, protesters inside the country called themselves "revolutionaries of trenches" and called the opposition leaders outside the country, who were seeking political support abroad, they called them ironically "revolutionaries of hotels" (Al-Atrash, 2013). That made the street the focal point, which in its turn made the opposition political parties subject to those populist trends, which led in the end to making mistakes in political calculations and rejecting political concessions (Bishara, 2020, p. 538). Mudde & Kaltwasser (2017) argue that when the sense of democracy combines with anti-institutions trend in a society, populism will be triggered and activated (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017, p. 104).

1.3.2.4. New media and social networks

Scholars in the literature notice that media plays an important role in democratization. Historically, in Europe, Radio Free Europe played a significant role in the transition to democracy (Elkink, 2011, p. 1666). Scholars see that if the media that promotes democracy was convincing and the people follow it in a sufficient frequency, it will increase the level of democracy in a country (Dahl, 1971; Lipset, 1994; Karatnycky, 1995, as cited in Wejnert, 2005, p. 56). For example, the spread of satellite channels receivers in Bulgaria has led to an increase in democracy there. Because those devices received the broadcasting of the

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democratic western European channels, which has brought the details of the life standards in those countries, including political affairs and lifestyles (Bakardjiva, 1992, as cited in Wejnert, 2005, p. 57).

Also, Cherribi (2017) sees that the Internet has created a new space for expression of opinions and political attitude (Cherribi, 2017, p. 76). After the internet, making activities in the public domains became more easier and more accessible by diverse social groups as a result of the increase in general literacy and digital literacy (Bermeo, 2003, p. 253).

The diffusion of a social movement needs two factors: behavioral and ideational. The behavioral factor means the diffusion of the tactics and skills related to collective actions. And the ideational factor means the diffusion of the ideas, goals, issue and aims (Givan et al., 2010, p. 4, as cited in Ben Moussa, 2013, p. 53). In this context, social media, which is an internet product, was an important tool for exchanging democratic ideas between the Arab nations during the Arab Spring (Howard et al., 2011, as cited in Salamey & Pearson, 2012, p. 943), because those nations are suppressed by their tyrannic regimes (McGarty et al., 2014, p. 726, as cited in Dornschneider, 2021, p. 21).

Social movements are consisted of five axes: (1) Collective action; (2) Change driven goals and claims; (3) Non-institutional actions; (4) A degree of organization; and (5) A degree of continuation (Snow et al., 2004, p. 6, as cited in Ben Moussa, 2013, pp. 51-52). In this context, social media played the role of organizing in the Arab Spring movements (Steinert-Threlkeld, 2017; Wolfsfeld et al., 2013; Gerbaudo, 2012; Khondker, 2011; Eltantawy & Wiest, 2011; Stepanova, 2011, as cited in Dornschneider, 2021, p. 21).

Previously, and because of suppression, popular mobilization was impossible in the Arab countries. But after the emergence of the new media, mobilization became possible through using social networks to mobilize, coordinate and organize people (Bellin, 2012, p. 138, as cited in Dornschneider, 2021, p. 21). In addition to using smartphones with camera to make a live broadcasting of those mobilizations on satellite channels. The largest number of protesters were mobilized via social media (Jost et al., 2018; Steinert-Threlkeld, 2017; Howard et al., 2011, as cited in Dornschneider, 2021, p. 25), without any center for coordination or command-and-control, even without leadership, structural organization (Gunning & Baron, 2013, p. 302, as cited in Dornschneider, 2021, p. 36) or hierarchical

structure (Thompson & Tapscott, 2010, p. 4, as cited in Ben Moussa, 2013, p. 53). All that happened in countries with a high proportion of young people (Khondker, 2011; Lotan et al., 2011; Breuer et al., 2014 as cited in Davies et al., 2016, p. 6), who are the largest percentage of users of social networks.

All those factors make scholars see that the new media played an important and big role in the Arab Spring (Lucarelli, 2014; Sarihan, 2012, p. 71; Weyland, 2012, p. 929; Dornschneider, 2021, p. 21). Social media paved the way for the Arab Spring and became the standard for social movements (Melucci, 2008, p. 219, as cited in Ben Moussa, 2013, p. 56), especially in the societies that lack free media and have a high proportion of young people who can use those technologies (Khondker, 2011; Lotan et al., 2011; Breuer et al., 2014 as cited in Davies et al., 2016, p. 6).

The most important feature of the new media was the live coverage of the events in the Arab Spring through satellite channels and social media, which allowed millions of people to watch it with maximum details, in addition to the ability to interact with it (Salamey & Pearson, 2012, p. 938). That makes Ben Moussa (2013) argues that satellite channels, such as Al Jazeera, were instrumental in the success of Tunisia and Egypt through its live coverage of the protests there around the clock (Ben Moussa, 2013, p. 58). That not only provided a media coverage to the events, but also prevent the army in Egypt, for example, from using violence and suppression against the protesters, because they see themselves monitored by the cameras of the new media (Ben Moussa, 2013, p. 58).

Cherribi (2017) in his book "Fridays of Rage" did an analytical study about Al Jazeera channel from its beginning, with a focusing on its role in the event of the Arab Spring. He found that before the Arab Spring Al Jazeera, as a media network and a satellite channel, had a great credit among the Arab people. During the Arab Spring, Al Jazeera Arabic channel did an extraordinary media coverage for the events, which made it a main actor in showing those events to the Arab public opinion. Cherribi (2017) notices that Al Jazeera were putting video clips of the protests, filmed by its correspondents or by activists, in a dramatic frame using a selective narrative over those clips. That doubled the impact of those clips of the protests many folds, with an aim that does not necessarily reflect the aim of those protests themselves, in other words, he sees that the coverage was guided (Cherribi, 2017, pp. 75-103). All that motivated people to repeat what they witnessed of the events in both Tunisia

and Egypt on Al Jazeera screen. During the Arab Spring, Al Jazeera was a major external actor across the entire Arab world by presenting the stories of the events to the Arabs. It was not a mere news network, but a real participant in the revolutions, with the masses who were struggling against the tyrannic regimes (Cherribi, 2017, p. 91). Cherribi (2017) emphasizes that we cannot understand the Arab Spring correctly without studying the role of Al Jazeera channel and its huge impact on the events (Cherribi, 2017, p. 271). Also, Salvatore (2011) has the same opinion, he sees that the launch of Al Jazeera channel in 1996 was a turning point in the Arab world. At that time, Al Jazeera channel started broadcasting news and information that state-owned media usually refrain from broadcasting it. That disclosed the reality of those regimes ruling those countries, which affected the image of those regimes among their peoples (Salvatore, 2011, p. 6).

The diffusion of the democratic movements in the Arab Spring was triggered by the success of the Tunisian movement, and then the Egyptian one, but the Tunisian movement itself was triggered by the suicide of a vegetable peddler called Bouazizi (Salamey & Pearson, 2012, p. 939). The story of Bouazizi was the point of the discussions on social media and on satellite channels, such as Al Jazeera. Despite the controversy over the true details of the story, Al Jazeera presented it in a high-level dramatic frame (Cherribi, 2017, p. 95). When that story succeeded in triggering the masses to protest and those masses succeeded in bringing down their dictator at the end, the Egyptians did the same through recalling an event happened six months before, about a murder of a young man by a police officer. That story presented on social media, on Facebook particularly, and became the core of the Egyptian movement, which also ended up with overthrowing the dictator (Dornschneider, 2021, p. 70).

Cherribi (2017) sees also that the way Al Jazeera presented the events was rich in emotional and psychological influence and was guided to a large extent (Cherribi, 2017, p. 101). It was not a mere news coverage for event happening in a country, but it was a series of emotional episodes happening in the real world with a huge motivational effect (Cherribi, 2017, p. 152). Because those extraordinary events presented to the public opinion of the Arab world in a dramatic, charming, and attractive frame, ordinary people overestimated those events (Bamert et al., 2015, p. 3).

Cherribi (2017) argues that the public awareness during the Arab Spring was formed by the new media (Cherribi, 2017, p. 76). In this context, Ben Moussa (2013) sees that modern communication technologies, especially social media, have a deep social aspect, and scholars should not only look at those technologies as means for communication and news broadcasting, but also, they should focus on the nexus between those technologies and the collective actions, domestically and globally (Ben Moussa, 2013, p. 62). That made Krastev (2014) see that those technologies were the reason behind the disturbance that the Arab Spring has made on the democracy, through giving the ordinary people a great power, that they did not have before (Krastev, 2014, as cited in Aslanidis, 2017, p. 320).

Carothers (2015), in his article tried to answer the question, why technology hasn't delivered more democracy? He proposed that question to many experts and he got their answers. He finally ended up with three main points that answer his question. First, he sees that the new technologies, such as social media and internet services, are still in its beginning and still developing and it is early to assess their effect. Second, the positive effects of those technologies are not pure positive ones, because there are other factors that affect the strength of those technologies. In addition to the fact that the authoritarian regimes are also using those technologies for their benefit. Third, those technologies are not a solution for all the obstacles that facing democratization and they even create some problem for democracy like spreading rumors, xenophobia, and hatred (Carothers, 2015).

Now, let us discuss the school of thoughts presented above, starting with the school talking about the counteractions created by the successes in group, wave, or cluster of democratic movements, the domestic, regional, and international counteractions. In general, we cannot ignore those effects on the democratic movements, especially after successes. And this is a good reason to consider the idea that initiating a democratic movement apart from other movements, in time and space, will most likely not create the same level of counteraction. At the same time, we cannot ignore the significance of the positive effects created by those successful transition to democracy, which mentioned by Bishara (2020). Even if a democratic movement is well prepared and fulfilled all success conditions, catalyst will still be important in social and popular movements, and those successes previously mentioned can be classified in that role. In comparison with the weight of the negative effect related to counteractions, the weight of the positive effect of the successes in catalyzing other

movements is not always equal. In some cases, the weight of the catalyzing effect maybe greater than the amount of the negative effects of the counteractions, which means the net effect will be positive. But that is true if we suppose that the democratic movement will get the benefit of that catalyzing effect alongside fulfilling other conditions of success. In summary, despite the significance of the negative effect of the counteractions, when we compare it with the positive catalyzing effect and also with the other negative effects of those successes, we cannot consider counteractions as an essential factor to estimate and justify the impact of the successes of the democratic movements on other movement in the same wave, group or cluster of movements.

Regarding to the school talking about the pressing effect of the wave of democratic movement in a region, which pushes non-democratic countries to democratize despite obstacles, conditions, and differences. It is obvious that the pressure generated by the wave played a significant role in initiating democratization in many cases, but in our opinion the problem is not weather to initiate a democratic movement or not, but how those countries will initiate the movement in the first place, in reaction to that pressure. Responding to the pressure and initiating a democratic movement does not mean emulating the prior movements that achieved success in the wave or making a full transition to democracy if the situation is not appropriate for that. The problem is not in the pressing effect itself, but in how to react with it and get benefit from it. For a country seeking democracy, joining a wave of democratic movements in its region, in most cases, can be considered as a seizing of an opportunity, but that should be done in a way suitable for the situation in that country. For example, when a non-democratic country encounters a huge pressure to democratize due to democratization happening in its region, that country should wisely get benefit from that pressure through making calculated and selective steps, compatible with its situation. Steps as a part of the long process of democratization that leads to consolidated democracy. That refers to the gradual transition to democracy recommended by scholars (Bishara, 2020, p. 249), which is more guaranteed and more likely to succeed and sustain.

In another way, ignoring the conditions, obstacles and differences are not caused by the pressure generated by the wave in the first place, but caused by the inappropriate response made by the society of a non-democratic country seeking democracy. The great challenge here is to make a wise decision by a society under the rule of non-democratic regime, in

regarding to how to get the best benefit from the wave. The challenge that most societies fail to overcome, which makes the argument of this perspective dominant in most cases. However, this argument does not estimate and justify the impact of the success of democratic movement deeply enough.

As for the school mentions the ordinary people and their cognitive shortcuts in the Arab Spring. Starting with the perspective about the role of hope in making decision to participate in protests in the Arab Spring, this perspective does not classify the effect of the successes in the Arab Spring whether they are negative or positive. It only explains the role of those successes in taking the decision for participation in the democratic movements by the people of the studied cases, which were Egypt and Morocco. That perspective describes many aspects regarding the reasoning process that led to participation or abstention in the democratic movements. But what is important in our study is the argument mentions the direct relation between the existing of prior successful movements in a region and making the decision to participate in the protests demanding democracy in a country. The findings reveal many facts related to the Arab Spring, which surprised the researchers of the region, and many of its details still unexplained. Considering the fact that despite the existing of prior failed movements, the existing of successful movements was enough to trigger the belief related to hope, there is omission of other factors. In those countries at that time, where the successes triggered the belief related to hope, there was not any project or plan for democratization or change or even reforms. Most Arab societies in the eve of the Arab Spring hit a dead end about the change and felt that there is no solution to their problems, which makes any proposed idea that proven successful, even in other country and other setting, triggers the belief related to hope, and in its turn makes people participate in protests.

Another point worth explaining is the decision about the participation in the democratic movement. The participation was not mere participation in a movement seeking democratic transition. In the Arab Spring, that participation means participating in a Tunisia-like movement, the type that achieved success, a participation in an emulative movement. So, the problem was not that the success of Tunisia triggered other democratic movements in the region, but the problem was that the success triggered emulation. In short, with the absence of any project for democratization, the prior successful democratic movements generate

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belief related to hope, and that belief in its turn makes people participate in a democratic movement similar to those movements that achieved successes.

Then the perspective talks about the cognitive shortcuts of the ordinary people. What makes that argument distinctive is the depth of its analyzing of the impact of the Tunisian success in the Arab Spring on the movements in other countries that came after, including Syria. This perspective focuses on the fact that Arab societies are politically unorganized, which makes the decisions in those movements in the hands of grassroots or ordinary people, who lack political experience and access to information required for making good decisions. In that setting, those ordinary people spontaneously emulated the prior successful movements, despite the differences in social and political situations. And this was the strong side of the argument. On the other hand, the lack of political organization in those societies can be considered a natural outcome of non-democratic governance. It is hard to imagine people in a country ruled by an authoritarian regime to be politically organized against that regime. Therefore, a requirement of politically organized society to initiate a democratic movement is in somehow such proposing a solution based on a circular logic. Considering another side of the argument, in those movements that achieved successes, also it is hard to expect the adopted tactics and methods that led those movement to succeed. For example, let's imagine that the Tunisian society, in their movement, followed methods other than what they did in the Arab Spring, and also achieved a success, and by chance, those methods were compatible with the situation in Syria. After that, if the Syrian people emulates Tunisians and achieves success, in that time, is it correct to say that the Tunisian success has a positive impact on the Syrian democratic movement? So, the argument of this perspective stopped at the role of the ordinary people, but the case requires digging deeper. The fact that those people are politically unorganized does not exempt elites, intellectuals, and public figures from accountability, despite all kind of suppression applied by non-democratic regimes on them. Those elites, despite their weakness, are responsible for warning the society, including grassroots, about the differences between their country and the other ones. More importantly, they are not absolved of adopting a completely identical attitude as the street adopts. So, the main guilty here is not the ordinary people but the extraordinary, who have more political knowledge, experience, and information.

Finally, regarding the school of new media and social networks and their role in motivating people in the Arab Spring, it is obvious how those tools are influencing. Today, most people use those technologies and can feel the huge impact of them, so the arguments presented by the scholars are convincing for everybody, even for those out of the academia. Yes, new media and social networks have filled a huge gap in giving a voice for those people who do not have, which made those technology change the rules of the game. By changing the balance of power inside the societies and even internationally, which led Krastev (2014) to say that those technologies gave the ordinary people a power that they did not have before (Krastev, 2014, as cited in Aslanidis, 2017, p. 320). Yes, we can say that the new media and especially the social networks was a crucial juncture for the entire humanity, which is to some extent redistributed the political power. Even lately, we see how the social networks played a role in the U.S. Capitol attack in January 2021 (Rondeaux et al., 2022). What happened there was unimaginable to take place in a prestigious democracy such as the United States. In other words, all the mentioned arguments are solid, and that aspect is well studied in the literature with comprehensive details about the role of new media and social networks in social movements, making political change, and democratization.

Among all the arguments presented in the literature, the strong and weak ones, discussing the impact of the successful transition to democracy in one country or more on other transitions in other countries, when those transitions take place in a cluster, in time and space. We see that the most convincing and deepest argument is the arguments of both Weyland (2012) and Bamert et al. (2015), that talk about how people in the Arab region overestimated the similarities between them and the countries that succeeded in transition, and how they used the bounded learning during their democratic movements, which lead them to get a negative impact from the democratic wave of the Arab Spring, and failed in the end. So, we will use the arguments of Weyland (2012) and Bamert et al. (2015) as a theoretical framework for our study.

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In this section we will present a historical background about the cases that we will study in our research. Those cases are the successful democratic movement in the Arab Spring, the movements that happened before and during the democratic movement in Syria, which are the Tunisian, the Egyptian and the Libyan movements. And naturally, the case of the Syrian democratic movement. We will present them in chronologically, based on starting date. We present this historical background because our later analysis will be based on the events and the patterns of those movements.

2.1. TUNISIAN MOVEMENT

Tunisian Revolution, Jasmine Revolution or what we will mention it simply as the Tunisian movement, was the first episode in the Arab Spring, its spark, and its most ideal and inspiring case. It resulted in overthrowing of the authoritarian regime of President Bin Ali, which ruled the country for 23 years, and also led to a total democratization in Tunisia to become a "free" country according to Freedom House (Freedom House, 2020). Many exiled opposition figures, human rights activists and banded political groups returned to the country. One of them became a president, such as Moncef Marzouki, also a formerly banned group, Renaissance Party, won the parliamentary election and formed a cabinet. In addition, the alliance that carried out the democratization process in the country won the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize.

The story started with a person called Mohamed Bouazizi (Rifai, 2011; Al Jazeera, 2021), from a town called Sidi Bouzid in Tunisia. That man was a vegetable seller on a cart, and in one day the police confiscated his cart because he didn't have a license to sell vegetables on a cart. He resisted the police, so a police officer beat him. He tried to complain to the local officers, but they refused to hear him. Those circumstances made him decide to set himself on fire in the street on December 17, 2011. That event shocked the Tunisian society and ignited in the same day a demonstration in that town, complaining about life standards, police violence, human right violence, and unemployment. Later, demonstrations spread to other parts of the country. A couple days later, another man did the same thing and killed himself.

The police began responding to the demonstrations with violence and started killing protesters. At that time, the Tunisian president, Bin Ali, addressed the nation in a televised message on the state TV and warned the people that demonstrations will have a negative effect on the economy of the country, and he called the protesters "extremist" and "mercenaries". Also, he threatened the people that the law will be applied firmly to end the protests. At that moment, the Tunisian General Labor Union and the lawyers organized several demonstrations in several cities to express their solidarity with the protesters. Which in their turn also faced police violence, and many of those lawyers arrested and even tortured by the police. At that period, the police tried to end all protests peacefully or violently, and the number of dead and injured protesters kept increasing. Police continue using violence which led protester to use violence too in reaction to police violence, by attacking the ruling party branches and burning cars. After that, Tunisian order of lawyers announced a strike in reaction to the violence of police against peaceful protesters, about 95% of lawyers participated (Rifai, 2011; Al Jazeera, 2021).

On January 5, 2011, Mohamed Bouazizi, who was suffering from severe burns, died in the hospital. The regime then started arresting the bloggers, journalists, activists and even singers, in order to end the movement. Police violence continued clashing with the protesters and many killed and injured from both sides. That led the regime to escalate the situation more by using snipers for mass killing the protesters and making massacres, which shocked the society more across the country and made the movement a nationwide movement. On January 13, and to contain people's anger, President Bin Ali addressed the nation with televised message on the state TV again and announced making many concessions and he pledged not to run for president in the next elections. And also, he pledged to promote more freedom and reforms and to start an investigation for the death of the protesters and to leave the ban on blocked websites. The clashes between security forces and the protesters didn't end and then in the next day, January 14, President Ben Ali announced the state of emergency in the country, dismissed the government, and promised for new legislative election within six months. The state of emergency means that a gathering of three persons or more will be considered out of law, and weapons will be used to impose that law (Rifai, 2011; Al Jazeera, 2021).

At that moment, the army intervened and seized the main airport in the country and close the airspace. Arresting of President Bin Ali's family members started, which led him to flee the country by plane to Saudi Arabia. To fill the power vacuum, the prime minister addressed the nation announcing himself as an interim president for the country after the fleeing of Bin Ali. The arresting of Bin Ali's family members continued, also the former interior minister arrested, and the army tried to maintain the security of the country. In the meanwhile, on January 17, a new coalition government formed and committed wide reforms, promising freedoms of press, releasing political prisoners and allowing human rights groups to work in the country. The cabinet was formed from members of the old regime, in important positions and member from the opposition, in less important positions. The people didn't accept that cabinet and took to the street demonstrating. The demonstrations continued, including strikes, and participating of the labor union. Until January 27, the cabinet became free from the old regime members, and monitored by a committee of politicians to protect the outcomes of the movement (Rifai, 2011; Al Jazeera, 2021).

During that period, Switzerland froze Bin Ali's bank account. Also, the public prosecutor opened an investigation about all assets of Bin Ali and his family. The Army and the Justice ministry made an order to maintain any document that linked to the corruption of the old regime for the investigation. The United Nation Human Rights Committee sent a team to help the investigation about violence during the demonstrations and also to help the new government. Also, the new authorities asked the Interpol to arrest Ben Ali and his relatives to bring them to a trial. In addition to dissolving the political party of the former president Bin Ali, the Democratic Constitutional Rally (RCD) (Rifai, 2011; Al Jazeera, 2021). Reports say that 338 persons were killed during the movement and 2,147 injured (AP, 2012).

2.2. EGYPTIAN MOVEMENT

The success of the Tunisian movement encouraged other countries in the Arab region, because of the similarities between them, especially, sharing an authoritarian regime and all the troubles associated with it. Egyptians were one of those fascinated people, so they initiated a movement called Egyptian Revolution, 25 January Revolution, or what we will call it simply the Egyptian movement. That movement overthrew the authoritarian regime

of Hosni Mubarak, the former Egyptian president who was ruling the country for three decades. The movement led to the first free and fair elections, which resulted in new democratically elected parliament and new democratically elected president. A formerly banned opposition group won about half of the parliament seats and also their candidates won the presidential election. As the Tunisian movement, Egyptian movement also inspired other countries to do the same and initiate a movement for change (Al Jazeera, 2011b; Al Jazeera, 2021).

The story started in January 2011, activists in Egypt called for an uprising in the country, to protest against corruption, unemployment, poverty and against the administration of President Hosni Mubarak, who was ruling the country from 1981. Using social media, protesters called for the "Day of Rage" on January 25. Thousands of people took to the streets, mainly in the capital Cairo, toward the ruling party branches, ministries buildings and state television building, in addition to some demonstrations in other cities and towns across the country, such as Alexandria, Delta region and other southern cities. Police clashed with protesters using tear gas and water cannons. At the end of that day, protests spread to almost all the country with the three casualties from the protesters and one from police. In that time, the ministry of interior affairs made a statement accusing the Muslim Brotherhood group, the biggest opposition group in the country, of provoking riots (Al Jazeera, 2011b; Al Jazeera, 2021).

The protests continue the next day, with more escalated clashes. Protesters started using rocks and Molotov cocktail against police, and police started using sticks and firing bullets in the air, which led to death of one protester and one police officer. The most violent clashes were in the Suez city, where 55 protests and 15 police officers injured. At that day, international and regional reactions started, Barack Obama's spokesman told the journalists that Egyptian government should recognize the "universal rights" of the people. Also, the secretary of the Arab League said that he believes that "the Arab citizen is angry, is frustrated". Mohamed ElBaradei, the former director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), come back to the country to join the protesters, and showed his readiness to help making political transition in the country (Al Jazeera, 2011b; Al Jazeera, 2021).

Despite the arrest of hundreds, protesters committed to continue protesting until their demands are met. So, protests continued and as well as the clashed, and in some areas the clashes between protesters and police were armed. Lawyers also joined the protesters and added a new momentum. Social media was the essential tool for the protesters to organize and mobilize, so the government started to jam those services as an additional way to suppress the movement (Al Jazeera, 2011b; Al Jazeera, 2021).

Then the activists called for a new countrywide protest on the next Friday, January 28, after the Friday praying (the weekly religious gathering in Islam). In reaction to that calling, interior minister warned about decisive measures against protesters and the authorities arrested 20 members of the Muslim Brotherhood group. The army deployed in the streets of Cairo, Alexandria, and Suez, but without intervening between protesters and police forces. Clashes continue and 11 protesters died, and 170 injured in Suez. On January 29, President Mubarak dismissed the government but refused to resign, and the army started shooting in the air to disperse the protests in the Tahrir Square in Cairo, which became the focal point of the Egyptian movement (Al Jazeera, 2011b; Al Jazeera, 2021).

International and regional reaction continued, Germany, France and Britain expressed their concern about the events in Egypt, also Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) said that they wanted a "stable Egypt". ElBaradei visited the thousands of protesters in the sit-in of the Tahrir Square and told them "What we started can never be pushed back". Mubarak continued refusing to step down and the army imposed a curfew, but protester rejected it (Al Jazeera, 2011b; Al Jazeera, 2021).

Internet services stayed jammed, and protesters stayed in Tahrir Square. At that moment, vice president promised for a dialogue with opposition parties for constitutional reforms. Criticism of Mubarak's regime started increasing, Obama spokesman said that "They have to address freedoms that the people of Egypt seek". Also, the EU called for free and fair elections, alongside fleeing of foreign investments out of the country (Al Jazeera, 2011b; Al Jazeera, 2021).

The opposition groups called for a one-million-man protest, in addition to a strike across the country. The army announced that they will not touch the protesters. To contain the protests, President Mubarak formed a new cabinet and gave them orders to keep government

subsidies, reduce prices and focusing on improving the economy and creating jobs. Also, he promised not to run for the next presidential election, which is planned to be held in September 2011. But he again refused to resign, the main demand of the protesters. Opposition didn't accept Mubarak's promises and saw them deception and insufficient. Protests continued, as well as the clashes, but not only between police and protesters, but also between protesters and pro-Mubarak groups. Protests attracted many public figures, including a movie star, son of the famous former president of Egypt, Nasser, and also Egypt Google executive. The Tahrir square became about one-million-man sit-in, demanding the resignation of President Mubarak, in addition to thousands in Alexandria and Suez. At that point, Obama praised Egyptian army for allowing peaceful protests. But Israel was worried and asked the international community not to criticize Mubarak more, in the sake of the stability of the region (Al Jazeera, 2011b; Al Jazeera, 2021).

On February 2, protesters said that the army, which was surrounded the Tahrir square allowed thousands of pro-Mubarak to enter the square armed with sticks and knifes. The next day, many protesters died and injured with bullet fired against them, but they stayed in the square and refused to retreat. Expat Egyptians come back to the country to join the protester, also, the Labor union joined the protester and initiated a new strike. In the meanwhile, and to contain the street anger, the government made a 15% increase in salaries, in addition to a pension. Also 34 political prisoners were released, a security chief dismissed, and a police captain arrested because he gave an order to open fire on protesters. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations at that time said that power transition is crucial. But foreign affair minister in Egypt said that he was upset about the American reactions to the event in his country (Al Jazeera, 2011b; Al Jazeera, 2021).

On February 10, Mubarak addressed the nation with a televised message repeating the same promises and expressing his responsibility for making a peaceful power transition in September, the date of the next presidential election. Protesters in Tahrir square reacted with more anger. They heard everything except what they want, so they threw their shoes in the air and asked the army to join them.

On February 11, Mubarak resigned and moved the power to the army. Celebrations in the Tahrir square and across the country started. The military rulers of the country pledged to give the power to a civil elected government, and that what happened next. In November

2011, Egyptians, with massive numbers, participated in the first parliamentary free election, and the Muslim Brotherhood group took about half of the seats. And in May and June 2012, also Egyptian participated in a presidential election and the candidate of the Muslim Brotherhood, Mohammed Morsi, won that election. In June 2012, an Egyptian court has sentenced the deposed president Mubarak to life imprisonment (Al Jazeera, 2011b; Al Jazeera, 2021). At least 846 persons died, and more than 6,400 injured (BBC News, 2011a).

2.3. LIBYAN MOVEMENT

Before the Arab Spring, Libya was like the other countries in the region, ruled by a non-democratic regime. But the Libyan case was extremely worse than the others, ruled by an absolute controversial man, called Muammar Gaddafi, for more than 42 years. The nature of that regime made it unable to tolerate any kind of protests, demonstrations or even criticism, so protests converted to armed conflict quickly. We will call it simply the Libyan movement, but in general it called the First Libyan Civil War or 17 February Revolution. This movement was more complicated than the Tunisian and Egyptian one, so it last about eight months, and finished with the death of the dictator Gaddafi and power transition by force to the National Transitional Council (NTC) and the interim government (Al Jazeera, 2017).

The story started on February 15 (Al Jazeera, 2017), when many Libyans started protesting in front of the police station, mainly in the city of Benghazi in the east, which included violent clashes that led to number of deaths among protesters. Then there was a call for the "Day of Revolt" on February 17 across the country to protest against the rule of Gaddafi, to be the official beginning of the movement.

Many cities responded to that call, Benghazi, Ajdabiya. Darnah, Zintan, and other cities and areas. Gaddafi regime also responded, but through opening fire on the protesters, to kill many of them that day. Also, he released many prisoners and recruited them to fight with him, in addition to hiring mercenaries to help him suppress the protests. Because the high level of violence of the regime, protests mainly converted to armed clashes, and protesters converted to rebel fighters, fighting against Gaddafi forces. Days later, with this pattern of development, rebels took control of the second largest city in the country, Benghazi, and

became the capital of the rebels. In addition to other eastern cities, such as Tobruk and Bayda, which made almost all the east of the country under rebel control (Al Jazeera, 2017).

Despite the loss of the city of Benghazi, Gaddafi forces continued attacking the city, targeting the rebels and the civilians as well, mainly by air force. After that, many battles took place between rebels and Gaddafi forces for taking control of the cites of Ajdabiya, Brega and Ras Lanuf, which were located on the road between Benghazi and the capital Tripoli. In the meanwhile, Gaddafi addressed the nation many times through the state TV, not to give any promises, but to threaten the protesters. At that point, and under attacks of Gaddafi forces, rebels retreat in many areas, which made them demand a no-fly zone from the international community. United Nations Security Council reacted, after many debates among the members, with the resolution 1973 on March 17, and under chapter VII of the UN charter. That resolution called for imposing of a no-fly zone over Libya, under the justification of the responsibility to protect the civilian of Libya, and to be enforced by NATO and other Arab countries such as Qatar and United Arab Emirates. After hours of passing the resolution bombing Gaddafi forces started. Then, the intervention of NATO started giving fruits, with Misratah, the major coastal city between Benghazi and the capital Tripoli, declared under the rebel control on May 15 (Al Jazeera, 2017).

The rebel started in June and July heading toward the west, in order to take control over the capital Tripoli, the center of the power in Libya, to seized in late July a critical road connecting to the capital Tripoli with Tunisia. On August 15, rebels took control the city of Gharyan, 80 km far from the capital Tripoli. Those victories made the rebel besieged the capital Tripoli and made the fighting start in the streets inside the capital. Those fighting developed later to an operation on August 20 codenamed "Operation Mermaid Dawn", between anti-Gaddafi secret cells in Tripoli and Gaddafi forces. Those cells were armed with weapons provided by NATO secretly through tugboats. That operation paved the way for the rebels to reach the center of the capital on August 21. After that significant victory of the rebels, and through televised messages, the threatening narrative of Gaddafi continue, describing the rebels as rats (Al Jazeera, 2017).

Only one area in the capital remained under Gaddafi forces control, which is the Gaddafi compound (or Bab al-Azizia), which is located in the suburb of the capital Tripoli. Armed with captured weapons from Gaddafi forces in Tripoli and with the help of NATO airstrikes,

rebels launched a massive offensive and took control of the entire capital Tripoli on August 23. In September, backed with the victories on the ground, Libyan opposition leaders started contacting with the international community in the sake of the future of Libya and to get political support. Also in September, the interim government started working in the capital, where David Cameron, the prime minister of the UK and Nicolas Sarkozy, the president of France, made a visit and welcomed as heroes for their help liberating the country from the dictator Gaddafi. Also, Hillary Clinton, the US secretary of the state, visited Libya later in October, and the US ambassador to Libya return to the embassy in Tripoli. In the meanwhile, National Transitional Council (NTC) forces took control of the rest of the cities that were still under Gaddafi forces control, such as Sabha, Beni Walid, and Sirte, except one neighborhood in Serte. On October 20, the entire city of Sirte, Gaddafi's hometown, became under control of the NTC forces, and the NTC military chief confirmed that day the death of Muammar Gaddafi, to be buried later in an unrevealed site (Al Jazeera, 2017).

On October 23, NTC declared that Libya is fully liberated from Gaddafi regime, after eight months of struggling and the celebrations started. All sons of Gaddafi were either dead, arrested or fled the country. The casualties were about 21,490 persons died and 19,701 persons injured (Daw et al, 2015).

2.4. SYRIAN MOVEMENT

In the eve of the Arab Spring, Syria was ruled by the authoritarian regime of Assad family for more than five decades and suffering, like the other countries in the region, from all the consequences of authoritarianism, such as the lack of freedom, corruption, repression and oppression, in addition to sectarianism. Assad the son, Bashar, when he took the power after the death of his father, Hafez, he promised many political reforms, but it later turned out a deception to gain time and secure his authority (Kaileh, 2016).

In March 2011, and after the successes of the previous movements in making change in both Tunisia and Egypt. In addition to the huge advances in Libya, the Arab country where the situation was even harder than of Syria many folds for an uprising to emerge. Syrian people got a hope and inspired to initiate a popular uprising demanding freedom and democratic

reforms (Al Jazeera, 2018). That uprising called the Syrian Revolution, or what lately called the Syrian civil war, but we will call it simply the Syrian movement. Started in March 2011 and is still ongoing to this day, for more than 11 years. And of course, with neither total victory nor total defeat, but with "the worst man-made disaster since World War II" (UN News, 2017) and more 5.5 million refugees, mainly in the neighboring countries, most of them hosted in Türkiye (3.7 million), and 6 million internally displaced, and more than five hundred thousand people died (Chughtai, 2021).

The movement started officially as a call by activists in social media for protests across the country on March 15 against Assad regime demanding freedom, dignity and democratic reforms. But what triggered the uprising more is the shock that happened that month after arresting and torturing of a group of boys in the city of Deraa. Those boys wrote on a wall in the city some words criticizing the president Assad, the son (Chughtai, 2021).

The government reacted to the protests with violence, killing and arresting the protesters. And in late March that year, Assad addressed the nation from the parliament calling the protesters "terrorists" and showing his readiness to confront them (Al Jazeera, 2014). That made Syrians lose hope of any reform and started demanding in the protests for bringing down the regime. Protests continued and the regime violence continued as well with hundreds of deaths among the protesters. In May 2011, and to make the regime stop using violence with the protesters, the United States started imposing sanctions on the regime.

For the violent crackdown, regime used mainly police forces, security forces, paramilitary groups, militias, and armed civilians, in addition to the army units which first deployed one month after the first protest (Al Jazeera, 2021). After months of protesting, with increasing death toll and prisons full of protesters being tortured, all that without achieving any goals, in July that year, Syrian soldiers started defecting from the army and formed the Free Syrian Army (FSA) as an armed group backing the uprising (Al Jazeera, 2018). That group then started clashing with the regime forces alongside they continued protests.

In August 2011, and after a bloody crackdown of peaceful protests in the city of Hama, with death of hundreds of protesters, the United States and the European Union demanded President Assad to resign (Al Jazeera, 2014). Also, in the political path, several opposition figures and groups formed the Syrian National Council (SNC), as a representative umbrella

of the movement. In October that year, western countries, who were standing with the movement, started through the United Nations Security Council to put pressure on the regime to stop the violence against the protesters (Al Jazeera, 2014). China and Russia, the permanent members of the council, were felt that they were cheated in the case of Libya. Because the resolution about Libya was about protecting the civilians without aiming to regime change. For that reason, a series of debates and veto exercises took place over the Syrian case, without reaching any agreement that could stop the violence (Al Jazeera, 2018). China and Russia were fearing that a resolution for Syria under the pretext of protecting civilians could lead to regime change, just like the Libyan case.

The violence continues, but the protests did not stop, and in November that year, the western countries started withdrawing their ambassadors from the capital, Damascus. And the Arab League organization suspended Syrian membership (Al Jazeera, 2014). Another way to get pressure on the regime to stop the violent crackdown against protesters.

In December 2011, the Arab League tried another way to make the regime stop the violent crackdown by creating a mission to observe the situation on the ground in Syria. But the professional evasion of the regime made the mission end after just one month from its beginning without achieving any result (Al Jazeera, 2014). In January, the next year, 2012, protests continued facing the same pattern of crackdown, killing, arresting, and torturing, and without any political change achieved or expected in the foreseeable future. In addition to the failure of all the countries and organizations who tried to support the protesters. In that atmosphere of dead end, al-Qaeda entered the scene by creating an armed group called "Jabhat al-Nusra" (the front of the supporters of the people of Syria) (Al Jazeera, 2014). Its affiliation with al-Qaeda made it automatically considered a terrorist organization by many countries, but more importantly, they became the "one of the most effective rebel forces in Syria" (BBC News, 2013) with al-Qaeda ideology and program in a movement seeking democratic reforms. That group continued acting until now but with different name and more advanced capabilities.

With hundreds of protesters still dying, the Arab League called Assad to resign. Assad didn't care and made a referendum for a new constitution (Al Jazeera, 2014), as a way to show his readiness for reforms. In April 2012, the regime accepted a UN-backed ceasefire but by keeping a back door for breach of the agreement, which is the right to defend itself against

any attack from the terrorists. That made the UN observers to end that mission in June, after two months of failed mission and escalated violence (Al Jazeera, 2014). Two months later, in August, Kofi Annan, the UN-Arab League envoy for Syria resigned after accumulated failures, one of them was in May 2012, when Assad made a massacre in a village near the city of Homs, where hundreds of people killed, mostly children (Al Jazeera, 2014).

At that time, protesters failed to bring down Assad, but also Assad failed to end the movement. So, Assad started in July talking about using his chemical weapons arsenal in the conflict. That made Obama say that Assad's using of chemical weapons is a "red line" that will make United States rethinking military intervention in Syrian conflict (Al Jazeera, 2014). In November 2012, and as a response to a demand of the countries supporting the anti-Assad movement to create a more representative political body, Syrian National Council developed and extended to be Syrian National Coalition (Al Jazeera, 2014), adding more opposition groups and figures. In April 2013, the self-declared state so-called "Islamic State in Iraq" extended by merging al-Qaeda groups in Syria to it, to be the Islamic State in Iraq and Levant/Syria, or what became known lately as ISIS or ISIL (Al Jazeera, 2014).

When all ways to support the movement didn't work. In May 2013, the United States and the European Union started supporting the rebels fighting Assad forces with weapons (Al Jazeera, 2014; Al Jazeera, 2018). The biggest escalation happened in August 2013, when Assad shocked the world by using chemical weapons on civilians in Damascus suburb and killed hundreds (Al Jazeera, 2014). But diplomatic efforts, backed by the Russian, Assad's ally, lead to dismantle of the chemical arsenal of the regime and avoiding a United States military intervention (Al Jazeera, 2014). In January and February 2014, peace talks took place in Geneva between the regime and the opposition (Al Jazeera, 2014), but without achieving any tangible result, which led Lakhdar Brahimi, the UN-Arab League envoy and the famous diplomat in peacekeeping, to resign and even apologized to the people of Syria. In June 2014 Assad continued his cosmetic reforms by holding a pluralistic presidential election (Al Jazeera, 2014), to be the winner and gain a more seven years in power. The same month, by taking benefit of the power vacuum in many areas in Syria. What was so called "ISIS" announced a new "caliphate" and change its name to simply "Islamic State" (Al Jazeera, 2014).

Iranian armed group and Iranian-backed armed group from Lebanon and Iraq were supporting Assad forces from the beginning of the clashes with rebels (Chughtai, 2021), but that was not enough to defeat them and take back control of the entire country. So, in September 2015, Assad regime asked Russia for direct military help (Al Jazeera, 2018), mainly by air force attacks which later allowed Assad to gain huge advances on the ground.

The movement is continuing, with the same pattern of "shifting allies and rapid change" (Chughtai, 2021), driven by multiple domestic actors, with infighting, and multiple regional actors, with conflicting interests, in addition to the people's suffering. That made the movement convert from a popular uprising seeking democratic reforms to a conflict needs a resolution.

3. HOW TO EXPLORE THE IMPACT OF THE SUCCESSES ON SYRIA

As we mentioned before, this thesis will investigate the impact of the successful movements in the Arab Spring, which are the Tunisian, Egyptian and Libyan movements, on the Syrian movement, in its first two years, with some mentions on the later years. And our argument is that the successful movements had a negative impact on the Syrian Movement in the Arab Spring. That means the successful movements in the Arab Spring that preceded the Syrian movement, made an impact on it, and that impact was mainly negative. So, we will first examine whether the Syrian movement was affected by the other mentioned movements or not, then we will assess that impact, weather it was negative or positive.

We mean by the term "success", the collapse of the non-democratic regime, which is the second stage of the democratization process as we mentioned in the literature review (Haynes, 2009, p. 1045). And we mean by the term "the Arab Spring", the group of democratic movements, or the democratic wave that started form 17 December 2010 in Tunisia and then moved to other Arab countries during the year 2011. The studied period, as we mentioned before, focuses mainly on the first two years of the Syrian movement, from February/March 2011 to March 2013. We chose that period because we want to examine the impact of the Tunisian, Egyptian and Libyan movements on the Syrian case, and the Libyan movement succeeded in the late 2011, therefore, we studied about one year after the last succeeded movement. This is because the impact is time bound and fades over time, and the more the event is close in time, the more effect will produce. Also, the Syrian movement from its beginning to these days has suffered many changes and studying the entire history of the movement (11 years) will make us lose the focus, away from the impact of the successful movements, the successes that happened in the year 2011. This study focuses on the domestic actors and their perspective and responsibilities, and domestic factors, more that the external actors and factors. Because we see that democratization is in the first place the responsibility of the people of the country seeking democracy and should be tailored specifically for that country. And even if external actors support a transition to democracy in a country, that does not mean for the people of that country to rely primarily on those external actors. And as the modernity theory emphasizes that the local context is very

important. In other words, we see that the main actors in the democratization are the domestic, and the domestic factors are the most important.

We will rely mainly on primary sources dealing with the four movements, the Syrian, our case, and the Tunisian, Egyptian and Libyan movements. Those sources are mainly news articles published by major news networks with focusing on the network that working more on the issues of the Arab region, such as Al Jazeera media network. In addition to reports, speeches, quotes, statements of public figures, opposition leaders, armed groups leaders, opposition institutions in the Syrian and the other movements, and also sources mentioning the regional and international actors involved in those movements.

The research that we are intending to conduct consists of three phases. The first phase is identifying the pattern of the successful movement in the Arab Spring that took place before Syrian movement, the Tunisian, Egyptian and Libyan movements. The second phase is passing through the events, or milestones, of the Syrian movement, and comparing them with the patterns and events of the prior movements, trying to identify any event that looks affected by the prior successful movements, and put it in a list. The third phase, we will choose the most important events from the list created in the second phase to analyze them, based on the importance of the type of the impact. The analyzing also have three parts. The first part is introducing that event, which took place in the Syrian movement. Then, in the second part, we will examine whether that event was affected by the prior movements or not. And in the final part, we will assess that impact, if exists, whether it was positive or negative impact. Passing through those phases will give us at the end an adequate examination of our argument, as an answer to our research question about the impact of the Arab Spring on the Syrian movement.

3.1. THE PATTERN OF THE SUCCESSFUL MOVEMENTS

3.1.1. Tunisian Movement

Tunisian movement was popular mass demonstrations against the government, across the country, with focusing on the capital, Tunis, the center of the power. With taking advantages of social media and web blogs for organizing, sharing information, and exposing regime's

violent practices. In addition to benefiting from the satellite channels news coverage. With heavy participation of labor union and lawyers. At the end, the army stood with the protesters, which made the president flee the country and the regime overthrow. It took only four weeks of protesting and clashing with police forces, with 338 persons died and 2,147 injured (AP, 2012).

3.1.2. Egyptian Movement

It was a popular mass continuous protests, including "one million" gatherings, against the ruling regime, across the country, with focusing on the capital, Cairo and especially in Tahrir Square, as a place, and on Fridays as major days for protesting. With taking advantages of social media and satellite channels coverage, mainly Al Jazeera, for organizing, encouraging participants, sharing information, and exposing regime's violent practices. With heavy participation of labor union, lawyers, opposition groups and public figures. Protesters clashed with police forces and pro-regime armed civilians. Protests got international reactions, mainly from the U.S. and the EU, supporting the protesters, in addition to warries from regional countries and organizations. Army was mainly monitoring during the movement, and stood with the protesters at the end, which made the president Mubarak resign, and transfer the power to the army. It took two weeks and three days, with 846 persons died and more than 6,400 injured (BBC News, 2011a).

3.1.3. Libyan Movement

A popular protest against Gaddafi regime in the east of the country, far from the capital, Tripoli. Those protests converted quickly to fighting between the protesters and, who became armed rebels, and Gaddafi forces, to take control of the second largest city in the country, Benghazi, and almost all the east of the country, after only about five days. And to have then, political support of the UN Security Council, and military support of the NATO, after only one month from the beginning of the movement. To take control of the capital, Tripoli, after five months of fighting. With international recognition of movement political

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institutions. Two months later, Gaddafi died, and his regime overthrown. It took totally about eight months with 21,490 persons died and 19,701 injured (Daw et al, 2015).

3.2. QUICK REFLECTIONS FOR SYRIA

The Syrian movement started on March 15, 2011. At that time, two movements in the region succeeded consecutively, in Tunisia on Jan 14 and in Egypt on Feb 11, that year, 2011. And the Libyan movement in mid-March made a huge achievement by taking control of the entire eastern areas of the country, including the second largest city, Benghazi and having the political support of the UN Security Council and the military support of the NATO, so it was in its way to victory and success.

Domestically, for Syrian people thinking of initiation of a movement for political change, probably, they will see those cases very encouraging. The cases seemed easy, just two to four weeks of protesting and the regime will overthrow. Even in the hardest case, the case of Libya, it seems also encouraging, in one month, about half of the country became under the control of the movement and the UN and the NATO are standing with them. Assad regime is more accepted and more integrated in the international community than Gaddafi regime, who was isolated with bad international relations and many enemies (Garwood-Gowers, 2013), and Assad regime is less expected to use the same level of violence used by Gaddafi. So, it supposed that the Syrian movement will have less difficulties than the Libyan movement. Also, regional countries who prefer to see a new administration in Damascus, such as Saudi Arabia, because the Assad regime alliance with Iran, and other disputes. Those regional countries probably will see the previous experiences in the Arab Spring also doable in Syria and they will support the movement. And especially the U.S. and the EU, which have a long history of promoting democracy, will also see the scenarios of Tunisia and Egypt and Libya are applicable in Syria. So, Syrians will expect support from them.

In conclusion, a quick look at the patterns of the three movements can give hints, for domestic, regional, and international actors who want to make a political change in Syria, that initiation a movement for change in Syria is more likely to be succeeded.

3.3. EVENTS HAPPENED IN SYRIA AND SEEM TO BE AFFECTED BY THE OTHER MOVEMENTS

After passing through the events that happened during the first two years of the Syrian movement, from March 2011 to March 2013, and identifying the events that seem to be affected by the other movements, based on the historical study we did before, we found 13 points. We will list those point chronologically, with mentioning which movement produced the impact.

a. <u>February and March 2011</u>, the initiation of a popular movement for political change, in Syria, in March 2011. (Tunisian, Egyptian, and Libyan movements).

b. <u>From March 2011 to the end of the year 2012</u>, Assad regime response with violent crackdown from the beginning, using all forces and all means, without any toleration (Bishara, 2020). (Tunisian and Egyptian movements)

c. <u>March 30, 2011</u>, Assad expressing his readiness for war (al-Assad, 2011). (Libyan movement).

d. <u>April 2011</u>, protesters in Syria escalated their demand from reforms to overthrowing the regime. (Tunisian, Egyptian, and Libyan movements).

e. <u>From June 2011 onwards</u>, gradually the movement started converting to armed revolt. (Libyan movement).

f. <u>July 2011</u>, mass protests and sit-in with great numbers in a central square of the city of Hama. (Tunisian and Egyptian movements).

g. <u>August 2011</u>, the U.S., Britain, Germany, and the EU demanded Assad to resign (Egyptian movement).

h. <u>August 2011</u>, the forming of the Syrian National Council (SNC) as a political representative of the Syrian movement. (Libyan movement).

i. <u>August 2011</u>, Syrian National Council founding statement contained many elements, aims and goals from the prior movements. (Syrian Nation Council, 2011) (Tunisian, Egyptian and Libyan movements).

j. <u>October 2011 onwards</u>, dispute in the UN Security Council over adapting a resolution to protect civilians in Syria from the violent crackdown of the regime. (Libyan movement).

k. <u>July 2012</u>, the battle of Aleppo, a battle by the movement to take control of the second largest city in Syria, Aleppo. (Libyan movement).

l. <u>November 2012</u>, expanding the SNC by including the armed groups to become the Syrian National Coalition, which formed later in March 2013, an interim government (Libyan movement).

m. <u>2012 onward</u>, The U.S. fluctuating attitude. (Libyan movement).

n. <u>March 2011 to February 2012</u>, the names (and demands) of the Fridays protests, the major protests in the movements. (Tunisian, Egyptian, and Libyan movements).

4. MANY AFFECTED ACTIONS, BUT NEGATIVELY NOT POSITIVELY

Now, we will analyze and assess the most important events that we find them in the previous chapter, based on the importance of the type of the impact. Those events are: (1) the initiation of a popular movement for change in March 2011; (2) escalating the demands; (3) arming the movement; (4) the un security council dispute; (5) the fluctuating attitude of the United States (6) Friday protests names.

4.1. THE INITIATION OF THE MOVEMENT IN MARCH 2011

We will start with the initiation of a popular democratic movement in Syria in March 2011. Syrian people took to the streets on March 15, 2011, in peaceful protests in the capital, Damascus and other places, demanding democratic reforms, releasing political prisoners, freedom, and ending the state of emergency in the country, without demanding the president, Bashar al-Assad, to step down (BBC News, 2011b; BBC News, 2012).

We will try to examine whether that event was affected by the previous successful movements in the Arab Spring or not. Here we will focus on only the act of initiation of the movement, not its entire behavior during the Arab Spring. Having a political project such as popular democratic movement after years of absence of any political program for change at that time makes us more convinced that the initiation of the Syrian movement was affected by the other movements that created before. As Kaileh (2016) discussed in his book, after Bashar al-Assad took the power after the death of his father, Hafez, he tried to make an illusion of political reforms through promoting some political freedoms. Such as allowing the activities of the political forums that created after he took the office. Years later, Assad, the son, came back to the same policy of tyranny and repression. And many of those activists putted in jails and the chance for political change died. It was a strategy of Assad to stabilize his ruling and make people accept him in the beginning of his term. So, there was neither political project for change, nor planned project to implement in Syria before the Arab Spring, that means the Syrian movement in the Arab Spring was neither a continuation of a previous project, nor an implementation of a previously planned project.

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As we mentioned earlier, the timing of the Syrian movement is very informative. The main protests started in March 15 and beyond, when both Tunisian and Egyptian movements succeeded, and the Libyan movement made a significant achievement. To examine that point let us see what was happening on Facebook, the place where the movement was created. Before the protests of March 15, 2011, many calls for protesting took place on Facebook mainly in February 2011, especially on February 5th, but those protests failed to happen. The call for protesting on February 5th was called the "Day of Rage" (or "Day of Anger"), the same name of an Egyptian famous day of protesting during the Arab Spring. That call was planned to demand reforms, ending the state of emergency, corruption, and authoritarianism (Al Jazeera, 2011a; NBC Universal, 2011; France 24, 2011b).

Also, let us take some quotes from opposition figures during the call of the "Day of Rage" on February 5th, 2011. Both the opposition figure Michel Kilo and the filmmaker Omar Amiralay said that "Tunisia's revolution and the uprising in Egypt were an example to all Arabs" and Syrian people is "also aspire to justice and freedom", they also added: "The Arab people have found their route to freedom, namely peaceful, non-violent social resistance uniting the population against those who repress it and steal its wealth," (France 24, 2011b). Burhan Ghalioun, the political opposition figure and the director of the Center for Contemporary Oriental Studies at the Sorbonne in Paris, said that Tunisian and Egyptian movements were a herald for a broad effect and Syria is not an exception. (France 24, 2011b).

Then the protests failed to happen, thus another call for protests took place on Facebook to mobilize people for another "Day of Rage" in March 15, 2011, about almost the same demands, political change, ending state of emergency, releasing political prisoners, constitutional reforms, free forming of political parties and free press, ending monocracy, corruption and tyranny, where the activists on Facebook called for a revolution like Tunisia and Egypt literally (Al Jazeera, 2011a; ArabNet5.com, 2011; Nashwan News, 2011).

So, it is obvious from the words of the activist and political figures, before the protests, that they were inspired by the Tunisian and Egyptian movements, but without any mention to the Libyan movement. Maybe because the Libyan movement was unfinished and converted to armed revolution, and most importantly it wasn't succeeded yet. And as we mentioned before in the literature review, the scholars see that the Arab nations did not emulate the Iran Green

Revolution in 2009 mainly because it wasn't succeeded (Gause, 2011, p. 87). Logically, Syrians should try the Tunisian/Egyptian model first because it is peaceful, easier, and less risky. But if they failed, they would move to the model of the Libyan movement, the armed struggle.

Now, and after we saw many evidences indicate that the initiation of the Syrian movement was affected by the previous successful movements in the Arab Spring, we will try to assess that impact, whether it was negative or positive for Syrian movement. Here we mean only the act of initiation of the movement, not its program and developments. As we mentioned in the literature review, for a social movement to succeed, there is a need for a political opportunity, and of course, when many countries in a region made transition to democracy, that create a positive atmosphere in that region for democratization. And that is the case in almost every wave of democracy, the wave is an opportunity, an encouraging agent and proposed plan, in other words, a proved plan for change. Even the people of Syria were not expecting themselves to do it and to take to the streets challenging the oppressing apparatus of the regime. One of Syrian analysts said before the outbreak of the movement in March 2011: "We didn't think it was possible here but maybe it could happen after all." (Williams, 2011). And also, the political opposition figure, Suhair Atassi, was surprised and said on Al Jazeera news channel that "It's the first time a demonstration calling for freedom has taken place in Syria" (Ahram Online, 2011). That means, maybe without the atmosphere created by the Arab Spring, the people of Syria will find initiation of a popular movement for political change very difficult.

So, we see that the Arab Spring, which considered a democratic wave (Gunitsky, 2018b), was a real political opportunity for change in the countries that suffering from authoritarian regimes in the Arab region. And had an encouraging effect that allow people to take to streets challenging their tyrannic regime. Accordingly, we can say that this point was a positive impact of the Arab Spring on Syrian movement.

4.2. ESCALATING THE DEMANDS

Another event that happened in the Syrian movement and seems affected by the prior movement in the Arab Spring is the change in the demands of the protesters from the initial demands, mentioned earlier, to the demand of overthrowing the regime, which is happened in April 2011 (Al Jazeera, 2014), about one month after the outbreak of the movement.

Now let us examine whether that event was affected by the other movements or not. We know that the slogan of "the people want to bring down the regime" is the slogan used in both Tunisian and Egyptian movements (Khalidi, 2011). In addition to that, the overthrowing of the regime was the goal of the ongoing movement in Libyan movement in that time, April 2011, when about half of the Libyan territories were under rebels' control and they were seeking control of the entire country. Of course, they were aiming to overthrow the Gaddafi regime and replace him. All those signs make us believe more that the Syrian protesters later changed their initial demands and adopted the demand (goal) of the prior successful movements.

And now let us assess that impact on Syrian movement. Every social movement have a program, and that program has goals, those goals are set to be achievable and attainable, and that is the case of Syrian movement. The initial goals discussed early which were set by the activist behind the campaign on Facebook, were to a good extent achievable and attainable. Those activists, who set those goals, seem that they have good knowledge and experience of the politics and the situation of Syria. Yes, they made hints about Tunisia and Egypt, but it is obvious from the goals they set that they meant, by those hints, the strategy and the type of movement, which is peaceful protest. Actually, that change in slogan were translated to change in demand and change in goals, made by ordinary people who suffering from the escalating violent of the regime in the protests. Because after the activists and political figures initiated and triggered the movement and the people took to the streets, the leader of the movement became the people in the streets and those activists and political figures became subject to the street, following it (Al-Abdallah, 2011).

Also, the regime did not express any kind of concessions or compromise and used the ultimate force, and what made things worse is the disappointing speech of Assad in March 30 (al-Assad, 2011; France 24, 2011a). In that speech, Assad said that the movement is a

conspiracy against the nation and did not give any tangible reform. (France 24, 2011a). And that is the case of the oppressing regimes in the Arab region, who are used to explain mass events as foreign conspiracies to evade their responsibilities and ignore people' demands (Kaynak, 2020).

That shift in the demand, which is made by protesters as a furious spontaneous reaction to Assad regime escalated violence and his ignoring of their initial demands, which is obvious it was a spontaneous but crucial step for a social movement to escalate its goal. That change was a turning point in the path of the movement, with the capacity of people of Syria and the situation there, that new goal of overthrowing the regime was neither practical nor achievable, and that was proved later. Bishara (2019a) in a conference said that a popular revolution cannot overthrow the regime if the army did not stand with the people, or at least stay neutral.

Even the countries that supported the Syrian movement was also affected by the previous successes and expected the same success in Syria. Mohamed Hassanein Heikal, the prominent journalist in the Arab world, in an interview said that when he met one of the Arab leaders who were supporting the movement in Syria, after the success of both Tunisian and Egyptian movements. The Arab leader said to him that "It's a matter of two weeks and the Syrian movement will succeed", Heikal replied "That's wrong [deduction], you don't have any idea about Syria". Then Heikal said to the interviewer: "those countries expected that the Syrian movement will succeed fast and easily like the previous ones" (Heikal, 2014).

The new goal of the movement made the Assad regime see the crackdown a matter of life and death, which in its turn escalated more the violence against the protesters. So, in general, Tunisian, and Egyptian movements affected the Syrian protesters negatively and made them impatient by changing their goals from adequate ones and adapting the goal of overthrowing of the regime, which was a turning point in the Syrian movement and played a significant role in its failure because it was simply unachievable goal in the Syrian case in that time.

4.3. ARMING THE MOVEMENT

Next, we will discuss another event that took place in the Syrian movement and seems to be affected by the previous movements, particularly the Libyan movement. That event (turning point, change in the nature of the conflict or strategy) is the gradual transformation of the movement from peaceful protests to armed conflict. That transformation happened in two phases; the first phase started from July 2011 to April 2012. In that period the peaceful protests continued alongside with some small armed group, mainly consisted of defected soldiers. The duties of those armed group were to protect the protests from the violence of the regime, in addition to some small-scale battles, security operations and guerrilla warfare with regime forces. The second phase was from June 2012 to these days, which was characterized by large scale military operations and taking control of territories, it became a real civil war.

To examine whether that transformation was affected by the Libyan movement or not, we will try to find evidence linked with the Libyan movement. The first phase was not look like the Libyan approach, it was mainly caused by Assad regime deploying of the army to oppress the protests and to revenge from the revolting area. The military service in Syria is compulsory, for that reason, most of the soldiers, which are the infantry, reflect all ethnic, religious, sectarian groups of the population, where the majority are not belong to regime group as we mentioned in the literature review (Gause, 2011, pp. 84-85). Those defectors were mainly soldiers in the army refused to open fire on protesters and civilians in the revolting areas, so they left the service and either left the country or joined an armed group and they adopted the name of "Free Syrian Army". In that period, nobody said that the duty of those armed rebels was to defeat Assad army or taking control of cities, town or provinces. Riyadh al-Assad, the leader of the Free Syrian Army (FSA), in an interview with Al Jazeera said that the mission of Free Syrian Army was to defend the protesters in addition to some small battles with the regime forces (al-Asaad, 2011). Even the opposition council, the Syrian National Council, didn't want to adopt the Libyan approach. Burhan Ghalion, the first president of the Syrian National Council, in an interview with Al Jazeera, said "We still have a hope that the Syrian Army will align to the protesters, like what happened in both Tunisia and Egypt, and we are not planning to create military training camps for the revolution."

(Ghalion, 2011). So, for the first phase there is no sign for any impact of the Libyan movement, which was an armed struggle, on the Syrian movement.

In the second phase, the movement converted to a complete armed conflict like the Libyan movement and the obvious sign of that emulation was the Battle of Aleppo in 2012. Aleppo, the second largest city in Syria and its economic and industrial capital, where half of the city and most of its countryside fell under control of the opposition forces. Which reminds us of the case of Benghazi, the second largest city in Libya, where the rebel took control of the entire city and the area around it from the first month of the movement (Al Jazeera, 2017). After the battle of Aleppo, the strategy of taking control of country lands from the regime continued to include many other regions in the country, mainly in the north and around the capital Damascus. Even though the second phase looks similar to the Libyan approach, we did not find primary sources that emphasize that link.

The second phase of the armament, which is the gradual shift of the movement from a peaceful movement to an armed struggle was not a decision or a spontaneous transformation by the movement. It happened as a result of gradual fade/failure of the peaceful model, the Tunisian/Egyptian model, and after that model proved inapplicable in Syria, because the brutal nature of the crackdown of Assad regime. At that moment, there was no option for the movement to stop, stopping the movement means death in a setting like Syria, because Assad will not tolerate with anyone stood against him. Therefore, the natural result was the gradual moving to the next remaining option, the harder one, the armed struggle option. And if the Tunisian/Egyptian model failed in Syria, the Libyan model will most likely succeed, as it succeeded in Libya. Yes, it is the hard way, but there are no other options for the movement.

In a nutshell, the shift of the Syrian movement from a peaceful to an armed movement was a natural development of the movement that had two successful models/strategies on its table, one is peaceful and relatively easy, like the Tunisian/Egyptian model. And the other is non-peaceful, and certainly harder, like the Libyan model. So, Syrian movement started with the easier one, and after about one year of adopting that model, without achieving any result, they moved to the harder one, hoping at the end to succeed as the Libyans did. We can say that the impact of the Libyan movement on the Syrian case in its strategy shift was an implicit impact and a natural development. However, we still have some good signs of Libyan impact on the Syrian movement relating to this point.

Despite the fact that we don't have solid evidence that the Libyan movement make an impact on the Syrian movement, and we have only signs of that, we will assess shortly that expected impact. Converting the movement to armed struggle shifted the focal point of the movement from the peaceful protesters, activist, public figures, opposition figures and intellectuals, who were mainly believe in democracy as the initial demands reflect, to the armed group, who in the case of Syria in the Arab Spring were mainly opposing the democracy or have a non-national agenda (or even supra-national agenda). As we mentioned in the historical background, one of the most effective armed group was Jabhat al-Nusra (Al Jazeera, 2014; BBC News, 2013), which is an al-Qaeda affiliate, and all of us know the ideology of al-Qaeda, where they see democracy disbelieving. In addition to the Kurdish armed groups, such as YPG (The People's Defense Units) who has a separatist agenda. Approximately, the scene of the Syrian movement after the armament became dominated by the extremist groups (Alkahtani, 2017; Dekel & Perlov, 2013). We can add that those armed groups were not directed by the political leadership, the Syrian National Council, or later the Coalition (Sayigh, 2013), but those groups see that they have an equal right in leadership alongside with the political opposition council, and that was obvious in the expansion of the Syrian National Council to include the armed groups, to be later the Syrian National Coalition (Al Jazeera, 2014).

But that is not the case now after the establishment of four safe zones in Syria by Türkiye, where the majority of the armed groups in Syria are working under the umbrella of Syrian National Army (SNA), a part of Syrian Interim Government, which is responsible to the Syrian National Coalition.

Another point is that the shift to armed conflict make things easier for the regime to end the movement, because the regime is more superior than the armed group in the battlefield, especially by having an air superiority. In addition to that, it gave him a justification to use all means to destroy the movement, including the using of the chemical weapons. And more importantly, when it comes to the extremist armed groups, where their existing in Syria gave Assad an empathy of the west (Dekel & Perlov, 2013; Spyer, 2011).

In summary, the shift to armed struggle is also made a shift in the point of strength from the protesters to the regime. And also shifted the main aim of the movement away from democracy. And after the failure of the peaceful protests to overthrow Assad regime, also

the armed group failed to achieve that, with a huge distraction in the country and high death toll that forced the population to flee the country.

4.4. THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL DISPUTE

From the beginning of the Syrian movement to the year 2018, 12 draft resolutions vetoed by Russia alone or with China (see the Appendix A). Those 12 draft resolutions were mainly to protect the civilians of Syria from the violent crackdown of the regime, and also to push for political process for the conflict. Those drafts included condemnations of the Syrian authorities for the violation of the human rights and forced them to do real steps toward political solution for the conflict, which should lead to an end of the violence targeting the protesters and a step toward a political solution. A solution that should lead to the change Syrians demand. Those drafts were vetoed by Russia and China, mainly because the dispute that resulted by the resolution 1973, in March 2011 (UNSC, 2011), the resolution related to the Libyan crisis. That resolution adopted based on the R2P principle in the United Nations Security Council, which is stand for the responsibility to protect and allows using force to protect civilian in conflicts. Libyan civilians in the rebels held area were severely suffering from Gaddafi force attacks, so UNSC respond to those threats by that resolution. During and after the adoption of the resolution, there was a dispute between the western and the non-western members of the council, because they did not share the same ideas about how to response to the case. There were concerns by Russia and China about the using of the principle of R2P for regime change or involving in the civil war. Despite of that, the resolution adopted under the chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.

After adopting the resolution, the intervention started by NATO, to be finished on October 23, 2011, with NATO and rebels' victory and Gaddafi death and his regime overthrown. It was obvious that the resolution was not only to protect civilians, but also to change the regime, it was a pretext. Those circumstances created a mistrust inside the council. The Russians and Chinese considered what happened as a trick and they decided not to be fooled again (Buckley, 2012; Garwood-Gowers, 2013). Not only mistrust but also a damage in relations between those countries, and more importantly, the deadlock that created inside the council about doing any effort to protect the civilians in Syria, who were suffering from the

violent crackdown of Assad regime during the Syrian movement. That deadlock translated through a long list of vetoes by Russia and China (see the Appendix A). Because Syrian movement happened amid other movements and conflicts, it lost the opportunity of taking advantages of the international community institutions support, not only for political support, but also the right for getting international protection. Accordingly, Syrian people were the victim of the trick and dispute that happened in the Libyan case that preceded the Syrian movement. Which makes us more convinced that the Libyan movement gave a negative impact on the Syrian one.

4.5. THE FLUCTUATING ATTITUDE OF THE UNITED STATES

During the studied period, President Obama was in the office in the United States. His strategy for Syria mainly focused on non-participation in the conflict (Alkahtani, 2017). As we mentioned in the literature review, The U.S. quickly supported the movement in Syria, then quickly retreated and came back to their usual old policy (Freyburg & Richter, 2015). And later, reached a point of accepting Assad in power, and more importantly, being silent about the Iranian support for Assad and leaving Syria to the Russians (Alkahtani, 2017). With the exception of drone attacks on ISIS (Alkahtani, 2017) and providing weapons to Syrian armed groups enough only to keep struggling, but not enough to victory (HERAS, 2016). That retreat of attitude toward the movement in Syria weakened the movement in general, and especially the moderate armed group. Which created a situation that later used by the extremist groups to dominate the scene as we mentioned before (Alkahtani, 2017; Dekel & Perlov, 2013). Even the red line that Obama drew about the using of chemical weapons seemed later to be a red line drawn on sand (Alkahtani, 2017). But what is the link between the United States fluctuating attitude toward the Syrian movement and the successful movements in the Arab Spring? It is related to the wrong calculations of the United States and the consequences of the Libyan movement.

Ambassador Robert Stephen Ford, the United States ambassador to Syria (2011-2014), and after the shift in the movement to an armed struggle, he was thinking that the war in Syria will be harsh on Assad regime and its army will become weak. Which will lead the regime to seek negotiation for a deal for a political coalition with the opposition (Hamidi, 2017). He

said, "that was the biggest political mistake I have ever made" (Hamidi, 2017). He added, "I didn't expect Iran and Hizbullah sending thousands of fighters to Syria, and I didn't expect Hizbullah sacrificing his reputation in the Arab world for Assad" (Hamidi, 2017). It seems that they did not expect that at all. Also, Ambassador Ford sees that Geneva talks did not achieve any advancement and was doomed to fail, especially after the Iranian support. So, he expected Assad to stay in power. For that reason, he resigned (Hamidi, 2017). Yes, why will Assad seek negotiation with the opposition for a political solution if he gets an ultimate military support from the Iranians and later from the Russians?

Ambassador Ford also mentions that "In the beginning, the United States, unintentionally, encouraged the people of Syria, especially after our visit to the mass protest that happened in Hama July 2011, and after Obama calling Assad to resign". He adds, "We gave the Syrians a hope then we abandoned them". Ambassador Ford told the officials in Washington that time if they are not willing to impose the calling for resignation. of Assad by force they should be silent. (Hamidi, 2017). In summary, the Americans expected that Assad regime will became weak, and they will negotiate for a deal to survive. And they did not expect the huge support of the Iranians and the Iranian-backed groups like Hizbullah and the Iraqi Shia groups. That made the Americans lose the moment and the opportunity to support the movement.

We talked about the miscalculation of the United States, but what is more important for our study is the link between the consequences of the Libyan movement and that fluctuation in the United States attitude toward the Syrian movement. What happened after overthrowing of Gaddafi regime in October 2011 and all the consequences that happened later give a negative image about supporting armed movements and what the situation will be after that, where Libya until now suffers chaotic situation. That made Kofi Annan, the UN-Arab League special envoy to Syria, to reject any intervention to the Syrian conflict by foreign actors, fearing that any additional intervention will made the situation worse, like what happened in Libya. He said, "We have to be careful that we don't introduce a medicine that is worse than the disease, we don't have to go very far in the region to find an example of what I'm talking about." (Buckley, 2012). It seems that any military support for armed group in the region would lead to emergence of the extremist groups and chaos, which made Blume (2014) to say that Obama dealt with the Syrian case and the cases of Afghanistan, Iraq and

more importantly Libya on his mind. Blume (2014) mentioned 2012 Benghazi attack by Ansar al-Sharia group on the United States compound in Benghazi, which was the building that contained the diplomatic mission of the United States in Libya that time. That attack resulted in the killing of the United States Ambassador to Libya and other diplomats.

Kamal Allabwani, the Syrian opposition figure, said that when the United States compound in Benghazi attacked in 2012 and the ambassador killed, Ambassador Robert Ford, the U.S. ambassador to Syria, was angry and told him, "Don't expect any help from us from now on. We helped you [the Arabs] in Libya and look at the result, they killed my friend there. My neighbor knocked my door and ask me to stop helping the Arabs. He said to me, look at what they did to your colleague.". Allabwani replied to Ambassador Ford, "Don't be angry. If you looked for who supports that group [Ansar al-Sharia] that did this work, you would find one of your friends provides them with money". Allabwani added, "This was later proven, and the Ambassador Ford no longer touched on the subject" (Allabwani, 2017).

Ansar al-Sharia is an armed group that shared the same ideology of al-Nusra Front in Syria, which is mainly the ideology of al-Qaeda. That means after the great support of the United States to the Libyans, they simply attacked their diplomatic mission and killed their ambassador. That happened in 2012, when the Syrians moved to armament. As we mentioned before, Obama was not willing to participate in any more wars, and as we know, he was trying to end the military operations in both Iraq and Afghanistan. So, he from the beginning, tried not to participate in the Syrian conflict militarily. And after the intervention in Libya, the U.S. became more cautious about any further military support or intervention, which left the ground for the Iranian and the Russians, and made the political process failed. And more importantly, weakened the moderate armed groups and increased the participation of the extremists in the movement, which in its turn decreased the foreign support for the Syrian movement (Martini et al, 2013).

In the beginning of the Syrian movement, many major countries in the international community seemed standing with it, including the U.S. That gave signs that the situation is in its way to succeed, and the stability will come back soon. But after the fluctuation of the attitude of the U.S. and the other major foreign actors, Türkiye took the initiative and did many steps on several fields. Militarily, Türkiye launched many military operations in Syria to neutralize ISIS and PKK/PYD groups, and to establish safe zones that helped the Syrians

who fled their homes saving their lives from the attacks of Assad regime. And politically, Türkiye, with Russia and Iran, the countries that actively involving in the Syrian conflict, made several rounds of talks to de-escalate the conflict, such as Astana and Sochi talks.

Finally, we found that the experience of the U.S. in Libya played an important role in their retreat in the Syrian case, which also could consider another negative impact of the Libyan case on the Syrian one.

4.6. FRIDAY PROTESTS NAMES

In the beginning of the Syrian movement, protests adopted the same strategy of the Egyptian movement, through organizing major protests on Fridays and minor ones on other days of the week. Friday in the Muslim world is the weekend, like Sunday in other cultures, so people are not busy on Fridays. In addition to take the advantage of Friday praying, the weekly religious gathering in Islam, where the people already gathered. That means the protests will require less efforts to organize. In Egyptian movement, in addition to the daily protests, Friday protests were the biggest and have a name that represent the main demand and attitude of protesters. As we mentioned in the historical background, Egyptian movement took two weeks and three days, so they only organized three Friday protests. But the Syrian movement organized about 47 Friday protests in the first year of the movement. The names of the major protests, the Friday protests in our case, represent the demands and the political attitude, which are in their turn represent the strategy and the program of the movement in general, and more importantly, the tactic of the movement in that moment of time.

In Syrian movement, those names of Friday protests were dubbed on Facebook, after polls and voting, so they represent to a large extent the public opinion of the protesters and activists participating in the movement and give us adequate evidence about the program, the strategy, the tactics of the movement and all changes and shifting that happened during the life of the movement.

We got the names of Friday protesters, from the beginning of the movement to February 2012 (al-Mustafa, 2012). (See the Appendix B). We passed through those names and their

implications and reasons behind them to find out if any of those names (demands or attitudes) were affected by the prior movements. So, next we will discuss the names that were more descriptive about the strategy, tactics and demands, with mentioning why we see them affected by the other movements and with assessment of the effect of each of those names, which represent demands and tactics, on the Syrian movement.

4.6.1. Friday of Anger

This Friday protest happened on April 29, 2011. That name was adopted by the Egyptian movement before, on January 28, 2011, which was the first Friday protest in the Egyptian movement. In assessment of that obvious similarity, we do not see any negative or positive impact. The name represents general feeling of anger, which is the normal case for any nation suffering from tyranny and despotism. Also, we can see that name as a part of the act of initiation of a Tunisian/Egyptian-like movement, and its implication is very general.

4.6.2. Friday of Home Protectors

Friday of Home Protectors took place on May 27, 2011, where "Home protectors" is a metaphor of the Syrian Army. The name represents a call from the protesters to the army to stand with them. We mentioned in the historical background that the Tunisian army was neutral during the movement and at the end it intervened and stood with people. That alignment made President Ben Ali flee the country (Rifai, 2011). The same thing happened in Egypt, the army was approximately neutral during the movement and at the end it stood with the protesters, then President Mubarak resigned and transferred the power to the army, which later transferred to a civil administration. In addition to that, Egyptian protesters during the protests were chanting the slogan "The army and the people are one hand" (Ketchley, 2013), as a hint to the army to stand with them.

In Syrian movement, that name of major protest, Home Protectors, was a call to the army and a kind of praising. It reflects an illusion in the mind of the protesters that the Syrian army could stand with their movement against the regime, but that was so unrealistic. As we

mentioned in the literature review, Syrian army is very different from the Tunisian and Egyptian armies. Syrian Army is part of the regime, and its fate is linked to the fate of the regime (Gause, 2011, p. 84). Its leadership mainly belong to the regime demographic group. Which means that the Syrian Army and the Assad regime is one thing. And any bet on the Syrian army by any movement challenging the regime reflects a lack of knowledge such as Wayland mentioned (Weyland, 2012). Also, as we mentioned before, Burhan Ghalion, the first president of the Syrian National Council was also hoping that the army will finally stand with the people (Ghalion, 2011).

Accordingly, that impact was negative. People were protesting and suffering from the oppression machine of Assad regime with the hope that the army will stand with them at the end, but it was a mere false expectation, a mirage, a disturbing tactic and lose of time. It is true that many soldiers defected from the army and even leaders, but the army as an institution still acting, standing, and defending the regime, to these days.

4.6.3. Friday of No-Dialogue

This Friday protest happened on July 8, 2011. Many domestic, regional, and international actors pushed for a dialogue between the opposition and the regime (Al-Abdallah, 2011). Even the regime claimed that he wants to make a dialogue with the opposition by holding a conference for that (BBC News, 2011c), but later Syrians found that the regime was not serious. Refusing to make any dialogue with the regime is related to the demand of bringing down the regime. Dialogue means that the regime will stay, but with some reforms and changes, and that opposes the goal of the protesters, overthrowing the regime, which was affected by the previous successful movement as we discussed previously. The street said: "No Dialogue", that means the opposition leadership after that will have no option to make any dialogue with the regime. Because as the political activist Mohammad Al-Abdallah said: "Who go to the dialogue will lose the street" (Al-Abdallah, 2011). No dialogue is an insisting on the goal of overthrowing the regime and that what we assessed earlier and found that it has a negative impact on the Syrian movement and that goal was not an applicable goal for Syrian movement. That was obvious in the name of the Friday protest on September 16,

2011, which was "Friday of Continuing Until We Bring Down the Regime" (see the Appendix B).

4.6.4. Fridays of International Protection, No-fly Zone, and Buffer Zone

We notice three Friday protests names mainly indicate the same idea, which is seeking the international intervention to get protection from the regime violent crackdown. Those Fridays protests were: (1) Friday of International Protection, September 9, 2011; (2) Friday of No-fly Zone, October 28, 2011; (3) And Friday of Buffer Zone, December 2, 2011 (see the Appendix B). They want to continue protesting and have an opportunity to express their political attitude freely and safely, without suffering from the violent crackdown. And maybe they had in their mind the idea that any efforts to protect them would help them overthrow the regime faster and easier. All those ideas make the Libyan scenario come to mind. It was approximately happened in the same year and give huge support to the movement in Libya, so, Syrians simply asked the same demands and expected the same response. We discussed the debates that happened in the UN Security Council previously, and we saw how that dispute made even the goal of protecting civilian is not available. Now we will revisit this issue with more details, from another angle.

The UNSC was disable for the case of Syria because of what happened in Libyan movement when the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) used as a pretext to not only protect civilians, but also to overthrow Gaddafi regime. International protection come through the international community institutions, such as the United Nations Security Council, which is disabled due to the mistrust caused by the Libyan case. So, having Libyan movement before the Syrian movement made a negative impact on the Syrian movement. It did not only prevent the Syrian from getting a political support for their cause, but also prevent them from getting protection from the international community.

In addition, the Libyan case made Syrians think that they could get the same international intervention from the international community to protect their lives and have a safe setting to express their political attitude freely and even get help making political change. Without the Libyan movement happened before the Syrian movement, protesters in Syria maybe will not think about getting this kind of help from the international community.

Naím (2011), in his article mentions five points for the western countries who are supporting the Syrian movement not to intervene in Syria, like in Libya, even if the UN Security Council passed a resolution for that. (1) the Syrian army is more powerful than the Libyan; (2) the western countries are already exhausted from previous wars, such as in Iraq, Afghanistan and lately in Libya, so no room left for a new operation; (3) Syria geopolitical position; (4) Assad's regional and international allies; (5) No reliable alternative to Assad. (Naím, 2011). Accordingly, the international intervention in Libya not only made Syrians lose the chance to get international protection, but also gave them an illusion that they can get international intervention to help them topping the regime. Another negative impact of the Libyan movement on the Syrian case.

4.6.5. Friday(s) of Arming

Another set of Friday protests that emphasize the same main idea. They refer to the armed division of the movement, mainly the Free Syrian Army (FSA). Those Fridays protests are: (1) Friday of the Free Army, Oct 14, 2011; (2) Friday of Free Army Protects Me, Nov 25, 2011; (3) Friday of Supporting the Free Army, Jan 13, 2012; (4) Friday of the Right of Self-defense, Jan 27, 2012 (see the Appendix B). All those Friday protests names reflect protesters' support for the armed division of the movement and the armament in general. That means event the street, the peaceful protestors, believed in the armament and were psychologically ready for the shift from nonviolent peaceful strategy to the armed struggle. Which in its turn means that the arming trend of the Syrian movement was genuine in the main domestic actors of the movement, the protestors, the street, the masses who were seeking change. And the armament was not imposed on the movement from the outside, from the external actors. That means the responsibility of the negative effect of the armament was completely up on the participants of the movement and the armed groups were supported, recognized, and backed by the rest divisions of the movement. And any military support that the movement get later, such as the U.S. and EU military support mentioned in the historical background, was support for an already existed arming division of the movement, and not imposing armament on a peaceful movement.

We discussed earlier the idea of arming the movement and all its consequences, and how it was a mix of protecting protesters and then became like the Libyan case, an armed conflict. And we also assessed that impact and found out that there were many signs about an impact of the Libyan model on the Syrian movement and how that impact was a negative one.

4.6.6. Friday of the Syrian National Council is our Representative

In that Friday, on Oct 7, 2011, protesters expressed their recognition of the Syrian National Council (SNC) as a representative body of them. Forming the Syrian National Council and then its expansion to be the Syrian National Coalition, in addition to the interim government that formed later. All those steps, when we compare it to the Libyan case, we see many similarities. But in Libyan case those representative bodies were emerged after advancements on the ground. About half of the country was under rebel control from the first month of the movement, to have complete control over the entire country after eight months. In Libya, after forming those bodies, the next step was getting the recognition from the international community. That was not the case in Syria, where those bodies formed when the people of Syria were barely had the ability to protest against the "recognized" administration by the international community, the Assad regime, and had no considerable area of the country under their control.

A political body cannot get recognition from the international community without having a real control in the territories of a country, a considerable portion of the territory which is very logical, and that was not the case in Syria. The area that out of Assad control was not most of the territories of the country. And more importantly, it was under the control of the armed groups, not the Syrian National Council (SNC), or even the National Coalition later, as we mentioned before (Sayigh, 2013). We can look at the case of Afghanistan after the U.S. withdrawal in August 2021, where the Taliban took control of almost the entire country. But despite the attitude of the international community about Taliban, many countries after that started diplomatic talks with them.

Those bodies in the Syrian movement were mainly for representing and giving an idea to the international community that there is an alternative to Assad. But Syrian movement at that

time lacked leadership (Bayat, 2017) and it was better for the movement to have a directive body not a representative one. The Syrian movement did that step very early and without any basis. It was not only an emulation of the Libyan movement, but also a poor emulation. Therefore, it did not give any fruits, and that recognition of protesters was useless and another mirage and another loss in time.

4.6.7. Friday of Departure

This Friday protest took place on July 1, 2011. In the Egyptian movement, as we mentioned before, there were three Friday protests. The first was the "Friday of Anger", the second and the third were the "Friday of Departure". They named the second one the "Friday of Departure" to put pressure on president Mubarak to leave the country (or simply to resign), as the Tunisian president Ben Ali did (all movements follow the previous ones). But Mubarak did not step down in the second Friday protest, so they named third Friday protest the same name again, as a retry and they succeeded in the second time and the president Mubarak resign on February 11, after the second Friday of Departure.

With that historical information in our hand, we can see the similarity between those information and the Friday of Departure in the Syrian movement, and what the protesters in Syria meant with that name. Syrians named that Friday protest "Friday of Departure" expecting that calling will force Assad to departure and leave the country, or at least resign like what happened in Egypt. Mubarak resigned after the Egyptian army aligned itself to the protesters, but we mentioned before that the Syrian army is part of the regime and cannot align to anti-regime movement. Accordingly, that call seems to be a mere emulation of the Egyptian approach, a call that was not applicable in the Syrian case, and simply it did not work, another negative impact.

4.6.8. Friday of Beginning of Victory

Another Friday protest that was affected by the previous successful movements was the Friday of Beginning of Victory on Aug 19, 2011. The story began during the Egyptian movement, when many countries such as the Denmark and Türkiye called for Mubarak to

resign, and more importantly President Obama, the president of the United States, the ally of Egypt, indirectly called him for that. In his briefing to the reporters, he commented on President Mubarak's promise to leave power after the presidential election planned in September 2011, Obama said to the reporters. That "the only thing that will work is moving (an) orderly transition process that begins right now, that engages all the parties, that leads to democratic practices, fair and free elections, a representative government that is responsive to the grievances of the Egyptian people" (France 24, 2011c).

Those direct and indirect calls for resignation were before a short time of Mubarak resignation, which was on Feb 11, 2011, so any shallow inference could lead to the idea that when significant and high-profile countries call a leader to resign, he will resign. In fact, opposition figures in the United States asked Hillary Clinton, the secretary of the state, that they want "President Obama to address the Syrian people and ask President Bashar al-Assad to step down immediately." (Ahram, 2011), and that what happened next, President Obama said. "We have consistently said that President Assad must lead a democratic transition or get out of the way. He has not led. For the sake of the Syrian people, the time has come for President Assad to step aside." (Chulov & McGreal, 2011). And as we mentioned in the historical background, many other countries other than the United States, including Britain, France and Germany, European Union called Assad to resign in August 2011 (CNN, 2011).

Based on the inference mentioned above, Syrians saw all those calls for resignation, a beginning of the victory for the movement and they named the Friday protest of August 19, 2011, the Friday of Beginning of Victory. Of course, it was another illusion that happened in the Syrian movement, and caused by the circumstances happened in previous movement, which give the protesters in Syria a fake encouragement that led to more losses in time and efforts in their way to democracy.

4.6.9. Friday of the March to Freedom Squares

That name was dubbed for the Friday protest on Dec 13, 2011. After about nine months of the beginning of the movement, Syrian protesters were still trying to repeat the case of Tahrir Square in Egypt movement. Protesting in masses and making sit-in in main square in the capital or in major cities. Yes, they succeeded in Hama in July 2011, but Hama is not like

the most important cities of the in the country, the capital, Damascus, and the second largest city and its industrial and economic capital, Aleppo. Even after the date of that Friday protest, Syrians failed to do that. It was obvious that with a regime using all means and forces to oppress a peaceful uprising, it is very hard for them to occupy any important or sensitive areas in the major cities. So, again we can see the similarities between that goal and the Egyptian case, and because that was not applicable in Syria that goal was another unachievable tactic and losing of time.

5. CONCLUSION

We started the research by proposing an argument that the Arab Spring had negative impact on the Syrian movement. To examine that argument, we relied on the theory of the bounded learning and the cognitive shortcuts by studying the three successful movement that happened before the Syrian case, the Tunisian, Egyptian and Libyan, by identifying their pattern, strategy, tactics, dynamics, and interactions, then compared them with all the details of the Syrian case. We find many similarities and signs of emulations by the Syrian movement, then we investigate those similar events and signs in order to find evidence that proved the emulation. Then we assessed those emulated event, when existed, to see whether that impact was positive or negative. We found much evidence that show an impact of those previous movement on the Syrian case, and those evidences show mainly negative impact with some positive and neutral ones. So, we found our initial argument correct to an adequate extent, in addition to having findings that refer to positive impact.

Bashara (2019a) mentioned that the modernity theory considers that for a country to make a transition to democracy, its population should have a democratic culture. He criticized that point and said that the democratic culture of the population is a result of democratization, not a prerequisite of it. He refers to the circular logic of the modernity theory. He sees that the prerequisite of democratization is not the democratic culture of the population, but the democratic culture of the political elites. He says that based on the Egyptian case after the coup d'état in 2013, when part of the political elites made alliance with the army to beat their rivals, when the democracy was not the only game in town, but there were other games to play. We can add on Bishara's argument that even if the political elites have a democratic culture, it is not enough. Those elite should be heard by the masses, the ordinary people, and that what was missing in the Syrian movement. The ordinary people did not obey to the opposition elites, but the opposite was the case, the opposition elites were subject to the street. In addition to the fact that the armed group was believed that because they have the "physical" power, the soldiers and weapons and they are risking their lives more than the political elite, who spend most of their time conferencing in five-star hotels, those military leaders see themselves have the right to lead the movement, not the political opposition elites. In other words, the more risks you take and the more power you have, the more right

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in taking decisions you should get, which is considered a political culture, and led to many coups in history.

Democratic movement is a political action, and political actions, like any social action, when they happened in a group, they produce inter-effects. Every action will make an impact on the other actions, and the stronger and more successful the action is, the more impact will make on the others. That means the impact in grouped/clustered actions is something inevitable. But what we can control is the response to that impact, and that control needs political knowledge, experience, and wisdom, not spontaneity, cognitive shortcuts, and hasty inference. This is what happened in the Syrian movement after its beginning, when the ordinary people, armed with social media, took the lead, and changed the goals to unachievable ones. Those unachievable goals putted the movement in a deadlock situation and chaos that allowed many actors from outside the movement, such as al-Qaeda, ISIL and PKK/PYD to enter the scene and implement their own agenda.

Another point to be considered is the ethnic diversity that ignored by the Syrian movement, maybe because the prior successful movements did not consider it. In addition to religious and sectarian diversity, Syria has also ethnic diversity. When it comes to ethnic groups in Syria, the majority of the population are Arabs, between 80 and 85% and around 10% of the population are Kurds, in addition to other small minorities (Khalifa, 2013). This 10% of the population from the Kurdish ethnicity are not a large proportion of the population, but the problem is that this group has a separatist project. As we mentioned in the literature review, Doorenspleet & Mudde (2008) see that the ethnic diversity in a society is a problem for democracy, therefore, Syrian people, and before initiating any movement for democratization, should first solve the problem of the separatist project of the Kurds of Syria and make an agreement by all the groups on the state of Syria. Then they could go ahead and think about the proper way for the transition to democracy. Because any separatist project will threaten the territorial integrity of the country. Even if the Syrians initiated a movement for democratization without neutralizing the ethnic diversity problem and the separatist project first, then they should make more calculation in order to prevent any kind of chaos, power vacuum or weakness of the central state in Damascus, the state not the regime. Because those cases will activate the separatist project and make an existential threat to the integrity of the state, the country, the nation, and that what actually happened in Syria. But

surprisingly, it was not a new phenomenon, it was a simple repetition of what happened in Iraq in late twentieth century. As Kaynak (2021) mentioned in his article, PKK, the Kurdish separatist group in Iraq, took advantages of the weakness of Baghdad government two times. First, after the First Gulf War (1980-1988), and second, after the Second Iraq War (2003). Those events made Baghdad lose control in the north of the country, where the Kurds and PKK, which in its turn gave a negative impact on Türkiye (Kaynak, 2021). So, it is a main strategy of taking advantages of weakened central state and making a step in their separatist project. That means the PKK, or their group in Syria, the PYD, was waiting for any chaos, power vacuum or weakness in the central state in Damascus to do their step, and that is what happened. Syrians did not do any significant step to deal with that obstacle, the obstacle that did not exist in the prior successful movements in the Arab Spring. Thus, the impact of the Arab Spring did not only make Syrian apply unsuitable steps, but also made them miss critical and crucial steps. Those missing steps not only threatened the territorial integrity of Syria to these days, but also created a problem to the neighboring country Türkiye.

Any movement for political change in a country will not only affect that country, if it succeeded or failed, but also it will affect the neighboring countries, and even the region. Because countries in general are not islands in an ocean, they are connected and affect each other. Therefore, even for a nation seeking democracy and thinking about initiation a movement for that, they should not only make calculations about the domestic situation, but also should make other calculations about their neighbors and their region in general. In order to create a movement that give an added value to that country, not create problems for their country and for their surroundings.

All in all, initiating a popular democratic movement amid other movements is a risky action. People that ruled by authoritarianism are more likely to be politically unorganized and more likely lack political culture. Which makes them more likely affected negatively by other movements, especially in the age of social media that magnifies that effect. And more likely to act spontaneously without any professional political leadership, also especially in the age of social media that give them an organizing tool. So, to avoid that risky action, a popular movement for democratization, in general, is better to be initiated singly not in group, to avoid any kind of impact that could lead to failure.

If we had the chance to perform this research again, we will do extensive interviews with Syrian activists, opposition figures and armed groups leaders. In addition to interviews with the regional and international political leader who were holding positions in that period, to understand their vision and point of view on the Syrian case. Also, maybe those external actors in the Syrian case will declassify documents in the future, related to their decisions in that period. With all those additional methods and data, we will get a clearer picture about the research problem and the research will give more solid findings.

Finally, if we continue this research trajectory, we will study the populism in democratization. Such as the attitude of a population, that born and grew under authoritarianism and does not have a prior democratic experience, about the political leadership when they are seeking democratization. Who will take the decisions, the masses, the ordinary people, or the professional political leader? Because democratization in a country ruled by authoritarian regime is a very risky operation, not like protesting against abortion law.

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APPENDIX A

The UN Security Council Veto List Related to the Syrian Movement, From 2011 to 2018.

	Date	Draft	Written Record	Agenda Item	Permanent Member Casting Negative Vote
1	10 April 2018	S/2018/321	S/PV.8228	Middle East	Russian Federation
2	17 November 2017	S/2017/970	S/PV.8107	Middle East	Russian Federation
3	16 November 2017	S/2017/962	S/PV.8105	Middle East	Russian Federation
4	24 October 2017	S/2017/884	S/PV.8073	Middle East	Russian Federation
5	12 April 2017	S/2017/315	S/PV.7922	Middle East	Russian Federation
6	28 February 2017	S/2017/172	S/PV.7893	Middle East	China Russian Federation
7	5 December 2016	S/2016/1026	S/PV.7825	Middle East	China Russian Federation
8	8 October 2016	S/2016/846	S/PV.7785	Middle East	Russian Federation
9	22 May 2014	S/2014/348	S/PV.7180	Middle East - Syria	China Russian Federation
10	19 July 2012	S/2012/538	S/PV.6810	Middle East - Syria	China Russian Federation
11	4 February 2012	S/2012/77	S/PV.6711	Middle East - Syria	China Russian Federation
12	4 October 2011	S/2011/612	S/PV.6627	Middle East - Syria	China Russian Federation

Source: UN (2022).

APPENDIX B

List of Friday Protest Names from March 2011 to February 2012.

	Date	Friday Protest Name
1	Mar 18, 2011	Friday of Dignity
2	Mar 25, 2011	Friday of Glory
3	Apr 1, 2011	Friday of Martyrs
4	Apr 8, 2011	Friday of Resistance
5	Apr 15, 2011	Friday of Determination
6	Apr 22, 2011	The Great Friday
7	Apr 29, 2011	Friday of Rage (Friday of Anger)
8	May 6, 2011	Friday of Challenge
9	May 13, 2011	Friday of Free Women
10	May 20, 2011	Friday of "Azady" (Freedom)
11	May 27, 2011	Friday of Home Protectors
12	Jun 3, 2011	Friday of Freedom Children
13	Jun 10, 2011	Friday of Tribes
14	Jun 17, 2011	Friday of "Salih al-Ali" (a historical national hero)
15	Jun 24, 2011	Friday of Lost Legitimacy (mentioning Assad's legitimacy)
16	Jul 1, 2011	Friday of Departure
17	Jul 8, 2011	Friday of No Dialogue
18	Jul 15, 2011	Friday of Freedom for the Hostages
19	Jul 22, 2011	Friday of "Khalid ibn al-Walid" grandsons (a historical hero)
20	Jul 29, 2011	Friday of 'Your Silence Is Killing Us' (mentioning passive actors)
21	Aug 5, 2011	Friday of 'God is With Us'
22	Aug 12, 2011	Friday of 'We Won't Kneel Except to God'

23	Aug 19, 2011	Friday of Beginnings of Victory
24	Aug 26, 2011	Friday of Patience and Steadfastness
25	Sep 2, 2011	Friday of Death Better Than Humiliation
26	Sep 9, 2011	Friday of International Protection
27	Sep 16, 2011	Friday of Continuing Until We Bring Down the Regime
28	Sep 23, 2011	Friday of Opposition Unification
29	Sep 30, 2011	Friday of Victory for the Levant and Yemen
30	Oct 7, 2011	Friday of the Syrian National Council is our Representative
31	Oct 14, 2011	Friday of the Free Army
32	Oct 21, 2011	Friday of the Martyrs of the Arab Deadline (mentioning the Arab League deadline for Assad)
33	Oct 28, 2011	Friday of No-Fly Zone
34	Nov 4, 2011	Friday of 'God is Greatest'
35	Nov 11, 2011	Friday of Freezing Syria's Arab League Membership
36	Nov 18, 2011	Friday of the Expulsion of the Ambassadors
37	Nov 25, 2011	Friday of Free Army protects Me
38	Dec 2, 2011	Friday of the Syrian Buffer Zone
39	Dec 9, 2011	Friday of the Dignity Strike
40	Dec 16, 2011	Friday of the Arab League Is Killing Us
41	Dec 23, 2011	Friday of the Protocol of Death (mentioning the Arab League political protocol with Assad)
42	Dec 30, 2011	Friday of the March to the Freedom Squares
43	Jan 6, 2012	Friday of the God' Support
44	Jan 13, 2012	Friday of Supporting the Free Army
45	Jan 20, 2012	Friday of Revolution Prisoners
46	Jan 27, 2012	Friday of the Right of Self-defense
47	Feb 3, 2012	Friday of Sorry Hama (mentioning Hama city)

Source: Al-Mustafa (2012)