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The challenges of regime change and political transition in Egypt and Libya after the Arab Uprisings: critical reviews of factors and implications

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ABSTRACT

This article critically reviews the issues of the failure of democratic and political transition in Egypt and Libya in the post-Arab Spring Revolution. Several factors have been identified as the main contributors to the failed democratic process. The first one is the clash of ideology and political approach, as well as the adaptation of different patterns of administration, and the lack of compromise between the Islamists and the Secularists. The Islamist actors in Egypt that started to become politically dominant after the 2011–2012 election until the middle of 2013 is seen to have been lacking experience in governmental affairs, foreign policy formulation and economic management, owing to the old regimes' restrictions that permitted them to freely involved in politics. There is also an external factor, such as the intervention from foreign and regional state actors on the internal politics of Egypt (against the Freedom and Justice Party's rule under Morsi) and Libya (the effort to thwart Gaddafi's regime by NATO and Western-led coalition). Thirdly, the factor of an internal fragmentation, such as the role of the military institution in Egypt that has always been active in the government's policy-making process. In Libya, the social structure based on the competitive influence of the local tribes over politics also affect the effort for peace-building and democratisation. This study concludes that the Arab Spring Revolution in Egypt and Libya has successfully stymied the old regime's dictatorship, and yet it fails to translate the people's hopes for political reform and economic changes via democratisation.

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Introduction

The Arab world has been ruled autocratically since the Sykes-Picot agreement was signed between the Great Britain and France at the end of the First World War that had formed various nation states in this region—the Middle East and North Africa. The folds of history have proven that the regimes in the Arab countries that were appointed democratically (via the election) are often thwarted or become despotic during their reign. This is easy to comprehend, if we were to see that a great number of leaders in the Arab world had come to rule for too long a time, and they had the absolute power to exert pressure on the parties that had criticized their administration (Karakoç, 2015). That said, the rise of the people had defied the position of the political elite that had long dominated the national political landscape. This led to the loss of power among several leaderships of Arab countries such as Zein al-Abidin Ben Ali in Tunisia and Hosni Mubarak in Egypt (Al Jazeera, 2020; Owen, 2012; Saidin, 2018). Several leaders in Arab

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countries also faced the loss of power driven by a spontaneous movement that kickstarted in Tunisia, and which later spread to the entire Arab World, known as the 'Arab Spring'.

The Arab Spring is the term propagated by the international community since early 2011. The Arab community called this event *al-Tsaurat al-Arabiyyah*, referring to the revolution that will change the political setting as to form a democratic country, after years-long ruling by the autocratic regime (Burdah, 2017). At the same time, the Western community supposed that the Arab Spring was the stepping stone for the process of democracy in the Arab countries. Other than that, this event has also become a catalyst to the change on the political system in the countries that all the while, have been ruled without any check and balance process (Storm, 2014; Volpi 2017). Despite the fact that the movement brought upon by the Arab Spring has succeeded in thwarting dictators like Ben Ali in Tunisia, Hosni Mubarak in Egypt and Muammar Gaddafi in Libya, the repercussion of this does not mean that a democratic regime can be formed and survive, in the countries. The success story of the Arab Spring movement in Tunisia that had cast aside Ben Ali's regime and has become inspirational to the people of Egypt and Libya and many other Arab countries fails to be translated into the context of the formation of a democratic country through the process of democracy (Robinson, 2020).

The citizens of Egypt had enjoyed the process of election that witnessed the triumph of Mohamed Morsi who led *Ḥizb al-Ḥurriyyah wa-l-'Adālah* Party (Freedom and Justice Party—FJP) in the 2012 Presidential Election, but various issues that plagued his administration had become the ticket for the Egyptian Military led by General Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi to thwart the people-chosen government in Egypt (Kirkpatrick, 2012). The ruling by the former President, Mohamed Morsi in Egypt can be regarded as a short-lived democracy as it was in power only for a year (Atawna & Othman, 2015). At the same time, the reality in Libya was more severe as a stable government had not been able to be formed after the fall of Gaddafi. The lives of the people in Egypt and Libya in the post-Arab Spring were thought to be critical although the dictatorship was baffled; in fact, the situations in both countries were conclusively deteriorating, compared to the era when Mubarak's and Gaddafi's regimes were in power (Ali, 2020; Daragahi, 2021; Marcuzzi, 2022).

Scholars studying the democratisation discourses in the region have explained the reasons behind the failures of democratic transition after the Arab Uprisings in different ways. While one group such as Springborg (2011), Rivlin (2011), Malloch-Brown (2011), Abdelrahman (2012), Dalacoura (2012), Hecan (2016) and Murphy (2017) has focused on political economic dynamics, another group i.e. Ahmida (2012), Sawani and Pack (2013) and Mezran and Cizza (2016) offered a more cultural explanations. On the other hand, many scholars such as Sadiki (2012), Storm (2014), Brownlee et al. (2015), Lynch (2018) and Sowers and Rutherford (2016) have also underlined the importance of institutional explanations such as the role of the military or coercive institutions as well as the explanations related to contentious politics of party politics as can be seen through the works of Lynch (2013), Durac (2013), Volpi and Stein (2015), Volpi (2017), Hinnebusch (2015a, 2015b), Al-Anani (2019).

As in the case of Egypt and Libya, our review points out that the challenge for political change and democratic transition after the Arab Uprisings (2011–2021) can be attributed to a combination of complex factors, and understanding these failures is crucial for various reasons—its impact on regional stability, human rights, citizen trust, security, and the lessons it provides for future transitions. Firstly, the failure of democratic transitions in Egypt and Libya has implications for stability in the wider region of the Middle East and North Africa and the Arab world as political instability in one state can have spillover effects, contributing to broader regional tensions and conflicts. Secondly, democratic transitions are often associated with improved human rights and the establishment of the rule of law. The failure in Egypt and Libya raises concerns about the protection of human rights and the prevalence of authoritarian practices. Thirdly, failed transitions can erode citizens' trust in the political process. Disillusionment with the democratic experiment may lead to increased cynicism and skepticism about the feasibility of democratic governance. Fourthly, political instability and conflict in the aftermath of failed transitions can create security challenges, including the rise of extremist groups and the potential for spillover effects in neighboring countries. Fifthly, understanding the reasons behind the failures in Egypt and Libya provides valuable lessons for countries undergoing or considering democratic transitions and regime change in the future. It helps identify pitfalls and challenges that need to be addressed for a more successful political transition. Understanding the dynamics of regime changes and political failures in Egypt and Libya after the Arab Uprisings and its

implications for global geopolitics undoubtedly essential for policymakers, analysts and researchers dealing with internal politics and international relations in the region—hence the prime objective of this review article.

Stemming from the issues raised, the goal of this article is to analyse several factors that have contributed to the challenges of political transition in Egypt and Libya in the context of the post-Arab Uprisings. The clash of the Islamist-secularist, the elements of foreign intervention and the nature of internal fragmentation are the three main reasons why Egypt and Libya have had some difficulties to progress towards better democratic continuum and economic transformation. Examining the cases of Egypt and Libya allows for an exploration of institutional and cultural dynamics that played a role in shaping political outcomes. This includes the role of the military, the effectiveness of political institutions, and the influence of cultural factors on the trajectory of democratisation. The study of the cases of Egypt and Libya in the post-Arab Uprisings also provides insights into the role of external actors, including regional and global powers, in determining political, economic and social developments. Understanding how external influences affected democratic transitions can inform discussions on the impact of international interventions on local political processes.

This article is divided into three main sections. The first section reviews selected relevant literature regarding the Arab Uprisings phenomenon, especially in Egypt and Libya. The second section debates about the clash of Islamist-secularists in the Egyptian politics and the emergence of several Islamist groups after the decline of Gaddafi in Libya. This section also contains the analysis concerning the lack of experience in the governance among the Islamists in Egypt and the economic burden that they have to bear after assuming power between 2012 and 2013. The third section pays attention to the external elements, which is the foreign intervention on the politics of Egypt and Libya other than the factor of fierce internal fragmentation, such as the military influence in the government policy in Egypt and the coordination of the social structure in Libya based on tribes, or '*kabilah*'. All the above-mentioned factors are analysed as a response to the question as to why political change or democratisation does not successfully transpire in Egypt and Libya after the Arab Uprisings. Studying the failures of political changes and democratic transition in Egypt and Libya after the Arab Uprisings offers a comprehensive understanding of the complexities involved in democratisation processes, thus offering valuable lessons for academics, policymakers, and practitioners involved in promoting democratic governance in the region and beyond.

Background of the Arab Uprisings phenomenon

The Arab Spring event took place, amid the time when the socio-economy in Arab countries was spiraling downward, forcing the people to take to the streets to rebel against the ruling regime. The trigger to the Arab Spring was an incident involving a young man named Mohammed Bouazizi who had protested against the government officials by setting himself on fire, altogether shocking the entire country of Tunisia (Dalacoura, 2012; Mansfield & Synder, 2012; Saidin, 2018). On 17 December 2010, Bouazizi, a vegetable seller in Sidi Bouzid had become the target of the enforcers who had confiscated his business, claiming that Bouazizi had operated without a license. At the time, the officer doing his rounds named Faïda Hamdi with her two colleagues told Bouazizi that he did not have any license and his products would be confiscated and he needed to pay a fine. Normally, sellers in Sidi Bouzid will bribe the city council officers to avoid their items from being taken away and confiscated. However, Bouazizi refused to do so, and a fight between him and Faïda Hamdi broke out afterward. The bickering ended with Bouazizi being slapped and his business items seized (Hoag, 2019; Perry, 2014). This extreme action taken by the authority led Bouazizi to file a complaint to the Governor in Sidi Bouzid but his complaint was dismissed and his request to see the Governor was rejected. Following this incident, the forlorn man, too disappointed to move on with his life, had reacted by setting himself on fire in front of the Governor's office (Dalacoura, 2012).

He managed to be rescued and was rushed to the Ben Arous hospital in Tunis to get treatment. However, Bouazizi had succumbed to his injury on the 4 January 2011 with five thousand Tunisians, who had attended his funeral in Sidi Bouzid, weeping for him (Abouzeid, 2011; Aleya-Sghaier, 2012). His spontaneous action in burning himself had received a wide coverage from the local and the international media. His bold move had become inspirational to the youth in Tunisia to rebel and demand for the

drastic change in the economy, politics, and social in the country. Concerned with the increasing number of protesters, President Ben Ali had pledged for economic and political reformation in Tunisia immediately after Bouazizi's death (Abouzeid, 2011). Despite this, he failed to ease the anger of thousands of people who had protested all over Tunisia, demanding for urgent resolutions for unemployment issues and the rising cost of living.

The media like Al-Jazeera had successfully played its role in spreading information about the demonstration that had taken place all over Tunisia. Not only that, the social media sites like Facebook, Youtube and Twitter were manipulated by the protesters to share the videos of the brutality of Ben Ali's regime who imposed violence and hostility towards civilians (Howard & Hussain, 2013). It is clear that early 2011 was the unprecedented time of the civilians' uprising against the ruling regime era—this was not even in the picture after Tunisia gained its independence in 1956. The strength projected by the mass in Tunisia had forced Ben Ali to deliver a rally of talks that vowed on several agendas, such as reducing the cost of products, assuring the freedom to embark into politics and his planning to withdraw in 2014 (Abouzeid, 2011). The sweet promises he gave was akin to the final move of chess, as a way to protect his position as the President of Tunisia. Protest after protest, the daily operations of the government and private agencies in main cities had paralyzed and Ben Ali was finally forced to relinquish his power on 14 January 2011 by leaving Tunisia and obtaining a political asylum in Saudi Arabia (Chrisafis & Black, 2011).

The Arab Spring revolution in Egypt

The news about the fall of Ben Ali's ruling had proliferated to the entire Arab world and the success of overthrowing the dictatorial regime of Ben Ali had become an inspiration to the communities in the Arab countries to build their own mass movements to fight against dictatorial regimes. Egypt is one of the countries affected by the decline of Ben Ali's regime in Tunisia. The people of Egypt had begun to demand that President Hosni Mubarak step down as he failed to develop the country after three decades of governance. The people's support on Mubarak regime began to wane, amid his failure to control the increasing rate of poverty and employment. This is proven by the statistics that 69.41% of Egyptians had lived under the line of poverty in 2010 (Khatib, 2012).

The people's movement in Egypt shared some similarities with the movement in Tunisia as it was fueled by the social media like Facebook and Twitter. The trigger for the people's movement in Egypt was through the death of a man named Khaled Said who was tortured by the Egyptian authority (Alaimo, 2015; Saidin, 2018). Worried about the people's reaction, Mubarak's regime had shut down the Internet and telephone connections nationwide, and instructed that the army guard the streets as to curb any demonstrations from breaking out on 28 January 2011. Even so, the regime's effort to quieten the people's voices continued to falter when the President's representative, Omar Suleiman announced that the President will resign and hand over power to the military on the night of 11 February 2011 (McGreal & Shenker, 2011). The news definitely excited the Egyptians, who had been parading on the streets around Cairo and other main cities since 25 January 2011, demanding for Hosni Mubarak to step down.

The Arab Spring revolution in Libya

The news of the fall of Ben Ali's regime in Tunisia and that of Mubarak in Egypt had swept a wind of change to Libya, a country in North Africa led by Muammar Gaddafi since he thwarted the monarchy ruling of King Idriss al-Senussi in 1969 (Brahimi, 2011; Sadiki, 2012). Since then, Gaddafi had retained his power in Libya through the Divide and Rule policy by manipulating the social fabrics in Libya that contains approximately two thousand tribes or '*kabilah*' (Perroux, 2019). He ruled the country by dividing territories occupied by several tribes to prevent his political status quo from being challenged collectively (Sawani & Jason 2013). During his time, the Libyans had been able to live comfortably from the petroleum trade expended to broaden the access of education and medical services. However, the people in Libya had to confront the power of the tribes who had tremendous influence in their territories (Perroux, 2019; Toaldo, 2016). In other words, economically speaking, the people in Libya lived in modernity but in terms of the political and social aspects, it appeared that they had lived in the medieval era (Brahimi, 2011; Costantini, 2016; Sadiki, 2012).

The wind of change that started in Benghazi had swept throughout the whole of Libya. The people's movement on the streets had gained support from several chiefs of tribes in Libya and the former Law Minister of Libya, Mustafa Abdul Jalil had established a council, namely Libyan National Council (LNC) to unite the opposition groups in Libya on 27 February 2011 (Siddique, 2011; Toaldo, 2016). The people's movement in Libya had a striking difference when it did not involve any civil-oriented opposition movement, and instead become an armed resistance. The report in *Wall Street Journal* on 17 March 2011 exposed how the borders of Egypt were exploited to channel weapons assistance with the approval of the United States of America (Levinson & Rosenberg, 2011). Not only that, the French government was also involved in sending weapon supplies such as rocket launchers and machine guns to Gaddafi's opponents. There were reports from the international media about the massacre of civilians by Gaddafi's opponents in Tawergha, Gusi and Al-Kavalis. Ruth Sherlock, a reporter with The Telegraph had visited the burial area located in Kavalis and stated that reporters were prohibited by the opponents to visit Kavalis area filled with bodies of Gaddafi's soldiers (Sherlock, 2011).

Afterward, the United Nation Security Council (UNSC) had approved a resolution permitting soldiers from foreign countries to be sent to Tripoli and Benghazi and introduced various restrictions such as the closing of access to the air space and the commercial flights obstruction all over Libya (Nahlawi, 2018; Toaldo, 2016; Zambakari, 2016). NATO military treaty had launched an air strike on Libya on 19 March based on the resolution endorsed by the UNSC on 17 March 2011 (Costantini, 2016; Tierney, 2016). The air strike was launched to show support toward the advances of the opponents, who were working to oust Gaddafi's regime. After Tripoli was conquered by the opponents, their advances continued by targeting the last fort of Gaddafi's regime based on Sirte city. NATO's air strike on the city on 20 October 2011 had injured Gaddafi to the point that it gave an opportunity to the opponents to arrest him before he was assassinated on the same day (Gaynor & Zargoun, 2011; Owen, 2012). His body was paraded and displayed to the public in a shopping mall located in Misratah and buried on 25 October 2011 in Sahara Desert (Gaynor & Zargoun, 2011). After Gaddafi's demise, all the restrictions on Libya were withdrawn and an organisation, the Libyan National Transitional Council (NTC), was set up to rebuild the country. This institution functions as an interim mediator for the democratisation process in Libya. NTC played a part in executing the first election in Libya to choose a new government. After the election in Libya, Ali Zeidan was elected as the Prime Minister of Libya while Mohamed Yousef el-Magariaf was elected as the President for the General National Congress (Sadiki, 2012).

Contentious politics between the Islamists and Secularists in Egypt and Libya

The lack of mutual trust between the political actors in the country was always evident during the old regime's ruling in the Arab world. This is also the reason for the lack of stability of the country in the post-Arab Spring involving two national political actors, namely the Secularists and Islamists (Volpi & Stein, 2015). Both these groups have the experience competing in national politics and they often dominate one another. The Islamists were wary of the secularists as they were concerned that they would be cast aside in the political arena (Fraihat & Yaseen, 2020). At the same time, the secularists resented any agenda or ambitions of the Islamists who wished to form an 'Islamic state', and carry out Sharia laws. Thus, both these groups were seen to have always been suspicious of one another and they were worried for possible oppression if one of them succeeded in dominating the state administration. Nonetheless, during the 2011 uprisings, the unification of the two groups was successfully formed temporarily as they shared the same goals and interests which is to overthrow the autocratic leaders in their respective country.

As Mubarak's regime in Egypt and Gaddafi's in Libya were autocratic in nature, the sense of contention among the opponents was a norm. Mubarak's regime in Egypt adopted the emergency laws to pressurise his opponents that had opened doors to the torturing of political detainees. Mubarak's regime through Al-Ḥizb al-Waṭani ad-Dimūqrāṭī Party (National Democratic Party—NDP) had collaborated with the military forces and became dominant in every field such as in politics and economy. The situation in Libya was slightly different because Muammar Gaddafi had plotted to hand over the power to his son after his demise. This is because the patrimonial politics occurred in every layer of the society in Libya.

Not only that, the loyalty of the tribes toward Gaddafi had become a significant characteristic in government and private entities or companies' appointments. Thus, the experience on the Islamists and Secularists gained during the autocratic ruling era had influenced the political setting in the post-Arab Spring.

The rise of Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt

Furthermore, the post Mubarak era shows that the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) was endorsed and similar to what happened to Ennahda Party in Tunisia where the movement had become a political party known as Freedom and Justice Party (FJP). Although this party obtained the majority of support due to its victory in the election, MB's doubts and suspicions toward non-Islamist parties had risen, as the transitional government consisted of the military was seen to be too cautious to support the Parliament which members were mostly Islamists. In the election campaign in 2011, MB had exploited a soft discourse to fight against the manifesto brought by the Salafi who demanded for the implementation of the Sharia law and the Caliph system (Al-Anani, 2015). Despite the fact that MB made the effort to use a more moderate approach, the Secularists continued to be skeptical toward Morsi's leadership, as the 'party cleansing' agenda was carried out by eliminating the liberal wing in FJP. Indirectly, it reflects that the MB had more interest in dominating the government with the power of the majority, instead of respecting the liberal democracy principle.

The Secularists' doubts on MB also worsened, after seeing Morsi's reaction, as the presidential candidate from FJP, during the election campaign with the Muslim scholars, specifically the Al-Azhar. At the time, conservative scholars used their preaching platform and declared that Morsi would revive the Caliph system and put into practice the Sharia laws (Al-Anani, 2015). Not only that, MB also decided to use the faces of Salafi scholars in their electoral campaign's posters. Morsi told the media that Al-Quran was a constitution to him and a priority for MB. To add, he also stated that the Sharia laws needed to be implemented although not in the near future. With that, the Secularists saw that it was as if MB had accepted and agreed to build Egypt post Mubarak era, with the molds of Sharia laws.

The election held on 24 June 2012 after the decline of Mubarak's regime had witnessed Morsi and FJP winning the election by obtaining 51% of votes (Kirkpatrick, 2012). The victory marked the fact that the Islamists had managed to defeat the Secularists and cleared the path for Islamism process to be carried out top down in Egypt. Right after Mohamed Morsi was appointed as the President, he made the initiative to curb the influence of the military in the politics of the country. He had announced the resignation of several consul members and cancelled the formulation of the constitution done by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) during the transition process. In his effort to tighten the political grip, President Morsi had issued a Presidential Decree, dictating that he was not to be placed under the supervision of the Judiciary Body in Egypt and he also dissolved the jurisdiction of the court to abolish the Legislative Assembly (Hecan, 2016; Mecham, 2019; Saidin, 2018).

The attempt to cement the power of the President was seen as a tendency, on Morsi's part, to be autocratic in the eyes of the Secularists. This group was also seditious toward the civil community by urging them to take to the streets and demand for Morsi to step down. Not only that, the people of Egypt were also influenced when they used Morsi and FJP leadership as the 'scapegoat' regarding the failure to resolve issues like higher rate of unemployment and inflation. The instability evident in Morsi's administration was taken advantage by the Secularists to make protests on the streets and to demand that he resign. At the same time, the Islamist groups also went to the streets to show support for President Morsi. The clash between the two parties was then used as an excuse by the Chief of Defence Forces, General Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi to intervene, as Morsi was claimed to have failed to maintain peace in Egypt. As the effect of this, Al-Sisi had taken the action of toppling President Morsi and appointed Adly Mansour as the Interim President of Egypt on 3 July 2013. A year after that, Al-Sisi was appointed as the new President of Egypt after obtaining the biggest majority of votes, of 97% following his victory in the election that was regarded as controversial and laden with injustice, manipulation and deception, other than the fact that the percentage of the people going out to vote was very low, which is around 47% (Davison & Tolba, 2018).

The emergence of Islamist factions in Libya

At the same time, the political actors dominated by the Islamist group also emerged, after Gaddafi's regimes came to its fall in Libya. The Islamist groups had declared their desire to form an Islamic state. The MB affiliation group in Libya appeared to be more in order, compared to other Islamist groups in the country. The group believed that the democratic system was an approach that can be used to gain power. However, the MB group confirmed that they had opposed any effort to establish a secular state in Libya (Sadiki, 2012). This is because MB wanted to evaluate the Islamism held by the community in Libya and used it to gather support. From this MB's aspiration, the liberal group in Libya had come forward to defend the establishment of a secular country and believed that the Islamists were not serious about inculcating the values of the democracy and further becoming democratic (Aghayev, 2013). This is because the liberals and the secularists believed that the Islamists will diminish the democratic system after they have obtained power in the future. That said, the absence of an effective organisation among the liberal groups in Libya had caused the Islamists to have more advantage to move forward more actively in Libyan politics.

Additionally, the rise of the people in rebelling against Gaddafi's regime in Libya had laid bare the issues of extreme 'asabiyah' or tribalism. These issues had become more alarming after the demise of Gaddafi, causing the efforts to rebuild Libya hindered (Sadiki, 2012; Toaldo, 2016). The fall of Gaddafi's regime led to a conference between the tribes in Libya, held to discuss the matter of forming a new governmental system. However, the outcome of the conference focused on the rejection of the effort of power centralisation in Libya's political system. Another problem surfaced, when the Islamists assassinated Abd al-Fattah Yunis from al-Abidat tribe, an influential tribe based in the east of Libya. The assassination had not only slowed down the effort to rebuild Libya, but even worse, had led to more assassinations among the political actors in the country.

The dispute in Misratah had further intensified the conflict in Libya and this caused an increased polarisation among the political actors especially between the Secularists and Islamists. The local people in Misratah and the Islamists had shielded the position of the liberal leaders in the National Transitional Council (NTC) formed on 2 March 2011 to carry out the political transition process in Libya. At the same time, Misratah's residents had demanded that the Tawergah tribe was banished and punished for their crimes of murder, rape and robbery on Misratah's locals (Sadiki, 2012). This had caused tension among the tribes in Libyan politics, at the same time delaying the efforts for democratisation. Meanwhile, there was also a dispute between an Arab citizen and the Berber community in the mountainous area in Libya which was then exploited by Gaddafi's regime during the Arab Spring to foil the attempt to overthrow him (Sadiki, 2012; Sawani & Jason 2013). However, the dispute did not strike out as a conflict but the Arab groups in Libya had doubled the effort to obtain weapons, an action followed by the Berber group soon afterward. Not only that, the security of several tribes living in areas around the Arab-Berber conflict was also impacted, as their safety was threatened to the point that they had to evacuate their residences. This was because they were accused as Gaddafi's regime's supporters and thus, they had to flee for fear of being killed. In other words, the situation in Libya had given a negative impact to the people's safety- those who had contributed to the increased sense of suspicion among the political actors in Libya (Ntaka & Csicsmann, 2021).

The failure of the NTC to carry out an effective political transition opened the opportunity for the Islamists to become more powerful and to ask that their demands were to be accepted. This was because the NTC was not able to follow the date that had been set during the power transition process and their failure to carry out a fair election (Pack et al., 2017). The absence of a legitimate government had caused the situation of 'power vacuum' which further created security issues in Libya (Costantini, 2016; Ntaka & Csicsmann, 2021; Toaldo, 2016). The former opponents of Gaddafi had collected weapons to solidify their position and this pointed to the fact that an organisation which had an authority in the security field, failed to be formed in Libya. At the same time, foreign intervention that assisted the opponents added 'salt to the injury' or worsen the critical political situation in Libya. The intervention came in the form of air strikes on Gaddafi's military forces to aid the opponents in defeating the regime (Toaldo, 2016). After Gaddafi's fall, opponents from various groups, unified by a common goal of toppling Gaddafi's regime, no longer shared the same objective (Ntaka & Csicsmann, 2021). This group had driven Libya to the

point of chaos, as they had deployed the weapons they obtained during the civil war for their criminal activities, such as obstructing oil export and shooting a deputy minister, Hassan al-Droui on January 2014.

Such chaos was worsened by the fragility of the governing institutions when the period of power allocated to the General National Congress (GNC) meant to be temporary, was prolonged. This spurred the protests among Libyans, as they demanded that the Parliament was to be dissolved urgently (Markey & Shennib, 2014). The GNC disclosed that they needed time for the completion and revision of the new Libya's constitution's final draft and promised that the election would be done soon. The political crisis that was worsening in Libya had led the GNC to be divided into two parties that defended their respective positions. The Islamist groups called for more religious influence in the country, while the Secularist groups wished to defend the status quo and reduce the influence of MB in Libyan politics. The dispute between the two groups was proof as to how it eroded the political stability and the social structure in Libya. The impact had leaned more toward the failure of the Arab Spring revolution as a whole in bringing political change and introducing democratisation in Libya.

Inexperienced Islamists and the legacy of economic burden from the old regime in Egypt and Libya

Post-Arab Spring in Egypt had witnessed certain inexperienced leaders holding the political power and governing the country. The experience in governing is crucial, given that Egypt was still in the transition process towards consolidating its democracy. The lack of experience had led to the inability of the leaders in power to lay out their political strategy that was necessary to the state reconstruction. The experience in politics is the prerequisite to avoid the power struggle, especially during the time when the power transition process was underway. The political trajectory of the majority of MB leaders in Egypt was seen from being behind bars, straight to the top leadership without them having any wide experience in running the state. All the while, their political activities were done secretly as they were pressured by the regime's dictatorship since the era of President Gamal Abdel Nasser (Al-Anani, 2019). The lack of experience in the governance had caused Morsi's regime to have failed to preserve the consensus built between the Islamists and the Secularists. The sole reason was closely connected to the competition between the two groups to control the national institutions that they could not find a common understanding, in the effort to carry out the institutional reformation against Mubarak's corrupted era (Fraihat & Yaseen, 2020). In effect, this factor had led to the fall of the Morsi' government in 2013.

The post-Arab Spring situation that had pressured the economy of Egypt had been the cause for concern among Egyptians at the time, with regard to their socio-economic circumstances. Back then, Egypt was suffering from inflation, high unemployment and a big gap between its social classes (Saidin, 2018). The economic reality in Egypt witnessed the widening gap between the rich and the poor when 45 million of Egyptians only obtained an income around two to four USD per day (Henderson & Ganguly, 2015). It was during the ruling of President Mubarak that the economy of Egypt experienced less stimulating growth but stopped due to the Arab Spring revolution. At the same time, the tourism industry in Egypt was also affected because of the political and economic instability in Egypt since the January 2011 revolution (Guenaien, 2014). Additionally, the economy of Egypt really depended on the influx of foreigners to boost the local economy through the foreign currency exchange. The income generation from the tourism industry is indeed crucial to cater for the trading deficit agonised by Egypt. Since President Morsi took over the position of the President, the income contributed by the tourism industry experienced a reduction until 16% following the government's failure to stabilise the state security.

Apart from that, Morsi's government had shouldered a very heavy task which is to control the fiscal deficit, to the point that it had to introduce a less-popular, new fiscal policy to rescue Egypt from an ongoing inflation and mounting debts (El Dahshan, 2015; Hecan, 2016). Morsi's government chose to be in debt with the local financial institutions that imposed interest rates up to 14%, as he refused to be indebted to the IMF. This is because IMF had offered a lower rate of interest which is around 3%, but it placed a condition for the Egyptian government to increase the rate of sales tax, to reduce the subsidies of raw materials, and to downsize the public sector. The government realised that the decision to accept the financial aid from the IMF will spark the anger of the civilians as the conditions set will leave an

impact to the people's support (Guenaien, 2014; Snider, 2023). Thus, the government of Egypt chose to be in debt with the local financial institutions as one of the efforts to revive the economy in the post-2011 revolution.

The decision made by the Egyptian regime to fund the expenditure of the government by way of loaning from the local institutions had exacerbated the economic situations in Egypt. This is because the Central Bank of Egypt had set a higher interest rate by boosting back the capacity of the local banks to issue loans. Nevertheless, the increased interest rate had caused the foreign investors to lose interest in investing locally, and this led to the failure to create new jobs as an alternative to resolve the issue of unemployment (Rivlin, 2011). On top of that, the government's deficit had increased when Morsi's government decided to increase the minimum rate of salary and open thousands of contractual job opportunities in the public sector (Minto, 2013). This added to the burden of the economy that was already affected following the Arab Spring revolution.

Other than that, the military involvement in state policies had indirectly influenced the growth of economy in Egypt. The military's influence in the government was strong, as it managed to obtain the right to supervise the budget for the defense sector. At the same time, a number of top military leaders also owned a number of private companies in several defense and security industries in Egypt (Salamey, 2015). The profit made by those companies was not ever disclosed, seeing that the Egyptian laws had made discreet in terms of the spending of their military's financial activities (Abul-Magd, 2012). President Morsi's inability to carry out institutional reform in Egypt such as to reduce the influence of Egypt's military had posed a greater challenge for him to be dominant as the state's chief of executive, especially when the military had taken advantage of the political instability in Egypt to broaden their political influence, to the point that it thwarted Morsi's regime that was regarded as trying to restrict the military's influence on the state's strategic sectors and crucial institutions.

In Libya, the movement to topple Gaddafi was seen to be more extreme, compared to Tunisia and Egypt that it led to civil conflict and armed war. The failure of Gaddafi's regime to regulate the financial outcome obtained from the oil and gas industry transparently, and to boost the local economy fairly and equally had become the main motives for anti-Gaddafi's movement and the regime's defeat (Ahmida, 2012; Costantini, 2016; Perroux, 2019). However, Gaddafi realised that there was a big economic gap in Libya and he attempted to restore it by issuing an updated version of the popular 'Green Book'. His solution was revised based on the socialism principle as to resolve the long-term economic issues in Libya (Sadiki, 2012). He acted by eliminating some of the individual property ownerships and revising the salary system as he thought that the income had to be shared collectively within the Libyan society. Thus, Gaddafi's regime confiscated the second homes owned by Libyans, and yet, the rule was not applicable to his own family members. The economy of Libya was rife with various issues, due to the policies contained in the Green Book. The increase in the number of workers in the public sector, the frail education system and the unimproved health sector, also the lack of infrastructural development, had all brought in serious issues to the growth of the economy and social conditions in Libya (Costantini, 2016; Perroux, 2019). Not only that, the heavy dependence of Libyan economy to the oil and gas sector had led the youth to concentrate more on working in this industry, and to neglect other significant sectors like healthcare, education, security and business. This explains the rate of unemployment among the youth population in Libya that had reached around 50%, although the majority of them were highly educated and possessed at least tertiary education level (Sadiki, 2012).

Military intervention against the Islamists in Egypt

Other than in Tunisia, the Arab Spring revolution in Egypt was also deemed unique when various political factions and communal groups worked together in Tahrir square, demanding for Hosni Mubarak's resignation. However, the post-Arab Spring events had exposed several conflicts that had derailed the transition process due to the clash of political interests among the Islamists and the Secularists. They had agreed to topple Mubarak's regime and yet, they failed to agree on the formation of the country in the post-Arab Spring. During the transition process carried out by SCAF, the Egyptian High Court had abolished the NDP that had been long led by Hosni Mubarak. This had caused the former leaders of NDP to be banned from any active participation in the political process in Egypt in the post-Arab Spring, and

left a huge political blow as the former political elites of NDP were still very influential in several parliamentary constituencies all over Egypt. The MB group had rejected the idea to retain the secular constitution despite the advice from the President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to not rush into driving their Islamism agenda (Goren, 2013). This was why the other Secularist groups felt that the MB had neglected them and they were suspicious that the Islamists appeared to have conspired with the military without negotiating with other political parties to vanquish significant institutions in Egypt.

Moreover, MB through JFP had placed candidates for the parliamentary and presidential elections, although initially it vowed to not take part in the presidential election. The landslide victory of FJP in both the elections was due to the fragmentation among the Secularists who carried various agendas among variety of political parties. The victory indicates that FJP will have to face bureaucracy and economic burden single-handedly in the new government as the Secularists refused to cooperate (Housden, 2013; Volpi & Stein, 2015). Even worse, the Islamists in Egypt were seen to be reluctant to emulate the approach taken by the Ennahda Party in Tunisia who was open in sharing power via political coalition with the non-Islamist groups, in the effort to build the political stability in the post-Arab Spring (Guenaien, 2014).

Unexpectedly, the results of the Parliamentary and the Presidential elections in 2011–2012 were in favor of FJP and Morsi, and consequently, it had rekindled the dispute between the Islamist groups and the military in Egypt. This age-old enmity had actually begun since the era of President Nasser when several MB members were accused of conspiring to assassinate him in 1954 (Al-Anani, 2019; Zollner, 2007). This had led to the abolishment of Islamist establishment and its ideology, and witnessed approximately 18 thousand members of MB were detained, which eventually allowing the military to intervene in the economic and political sectors more directly in Egypt. The existence of the military in every layer of the economy, social and political sectors in Egypt for years had made the effort to reduce their influence difficult and even close to impossible (Housden, 2013; Mecham, 2019). Thus, the old conflict between the two groups re-emerged after the candidate from the MB, Mohamed Morsi was elected as the President of Egypt.

MB's failure in emulating how Ennahda Party in Tunisia governed the country had caused Morsi's regime to flounder in building an efficient governing model in managing crises in the post-Arab Spring. Egypt also faced security crisis and democracy deficit due to a series of terrorist attacks in the country, leading to the deaths of many civilians. This was seen as an opportunity not to be missed by the civil communities and political parties to collaborate with the military, who saw Morsi's regime as unable to understand the socio-economic realities within the Egyptian communities. Thus, some of the people backed by the Secularist groups had gone back to the street and had successfully toppled Morsi's regime on 3 July 2013, as the result of the military intervention with its declaration of the state of emergency (Fayed & Saleh, 2013).

Internal fragmentation, political loyalty and the nature of tribal society in Libya

The Libyan political structure is distinctive in its 42 years of being under the ruling of Gaddafi, in terms of the establishment of the tribal system that is formed without any active political participation as well as 'check and balance' mechanism by the people (Ahmida, 2012; Costantini, 2016; Perroux, 2019). This is why it is almost impossible to rebuild Libya in the post-Arab Spring through the unification, negotiation and collaboration among the different political elites. The lack of political awareness among Libyans had placed a great challenge to execute the democratisation agenda starting from the grass root level. The very minimal involvement of the Libyans in the political process was due to the dominance of Gaddafi's regime since 1969, and Gaddafi himself often took advantage of his own supremacy by constructing his own political concept of 'Gaddafisme' (Ahmida, 2012; Perroux, 2019). This ideology has formed a system known as Jamahiriya or 'the state of the masses' in the Green Book manifesto (Gaub, 2013; Sadiki, 2012). Jamahiriya prohibits the people from forming independent political parties, leading to the absence of an efficient civil society under Gaddafi, other than the lack of media freedom and the inefficiency of the opposition parties roles. Thus, Libya in the post-Arab Spring, is neglected and prevailed to be in the state of anarchy and instability (Toaldo, 2016).

The Libyan society in general is considered as tribal and conservative, and they reside in desert areas in a very (geographically) large country. The conservative elements in the Libyan society will challenge

the formation of a civilised state, that led to the country's separation into two political blocks- the Secular-Nationalists and the Islamists (Fraihat & Yaseen, 2020; Perroux, 2019). Both these groups have differences in establishing the Libyan national identity and consequently, this brought upon a civil war in Libya. To date, Libya is in conflict between two coalitions that have triggered the civil war, namely the Dignity Operation group (joined by tribes from Eastern Libya, former officers of Gaddafi and the Zintani militia led by the former Libyan General, Khalifa Haftar) against the Dawn Operation group (which members are militia from the Misratah territory, the Islamist group from Tripoli, and the Berber tribe) (Sadiki, 2012; Toaldo, 2016).

The transition council carrying out the administrative duties in the post-Gaddafi era has banned former officers who used to serve under Gaddafi's regime to take any part in the process of reconstructing Libya. Such an action causes more problems to occur as hundreds of them have close connections with various tribes in Libya. This law has led to a chronic political issues in Libya and further brought upon a civil war, since they fail to resolve the conflict peacefully as it did in Tunisia. Undoubtedly, the social structure of the Libyan society that is very much tribal-oriented, also contributes to the failed democratisation process in post-Arab Spring Revolution.

The involvement of foreign actors in Egypt and Libya

Other than the clash between the Islamists-Secularists, the military intervention and the nature of internal fragmentation in the post-Arab Spring Revolution, the 'barrier' to the successful democratisation process in Egypt and Libya was also contributed by the presence engagement of foreign actors in the local politics. The direct political involvement of certain external actors sometimes ended in tragedy when it led to the failure of the democratisation and peace-building process (Zambakari, 2016). Besides, the general perspective of the Muslim societies in the Arab world was paradoxical as it held two contradictory viewpoints. The view refers to how Muslims hated the Western countries and they even made the effort to destroy them through violence and hostility. There were the Islamist radicals who saw the Western block as a pact that tried to bring chaos to the Muslim world in a systematic way, by 'sneaking' into selected Muslim majority countries to disrupt their political stability. This view was nurtured, due to the complex history of the Muslim and Western relations (as argued by Huntington in his 'clash of civilisation' notion) that had a significant influence in the democratisation process after the Arab Spring revolution (Mecham, 2019).

The efforts of certain Western countries led by the US in propagating the democratic ideology in the Arab world have long been acknowledged. The proposal to broaden the democratisation agenda through political funding, democracy assistance and civil society organisations in the Middle East and North Africa was even seen as an 'open secret' among the international communities. Thus, the democratisation initiatives present among the Western countries like the US were often challenged by the Islamist-fundamentalist groups from Arab countries (Fraihat & Yaseen, 2020). Democratisation in the Arab world pioneered by the US was offered with the assurance that the people's lives will be improved, although this was also seen as a two-pronged agenda at the expense of safeguarding the national interests and the foreign policy of the US and the West. This is because the US and the West were noticeably only interested in spreading their democratic ideology in selected MENA states categorised as a threat to their supreme ally in the region, which is Israel (Byman, 2013; Housden, 2013).

At the same time, the US had a close connection with other autocratic regimes in the Arab world such as with Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and UAE (Eck, 2019). This partiality or the practise of 'double standard' done by the US was very obvious during the Arab Spring events when the White House in Washington had given full attention by ensuring that the democratisation could be carried out in several choices of Arab countries such as Tunisia, Libya and Egypt (Fraihat & Yaseen, 2020). At the same time, the US would tend to thwart the efforts of democratisation in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Yemen and even the UAE if its national interests and political hegemony in the MENA region were threatened. The first election in Egypt after the fall of Mubarak's regime shows that the Islamists had won the highest votes. The victory of President Morsi had opened doors for MB to consolidate their position in the national political sphere. The concern over the emergence of dominant Islamists in Egypt's politics had led the US to view that the democratisation efforts they exerted will likely to affect their national interests and ally, on the basis

of Morsi and FJP's attitude that was accommodating Gaza and Palestinian territories, and at the same time critical towards the Tel Aviv regime (Hamid, 2011; Mecham, 2019).

Meanwhile, the influence of regional politics also played a role in debilitating the democratisation process in Egypt and Libya. The two main rivals in the Arab region—Saudi Arabia and Iran who were worried about the Arab Spring elements and the process of democratisation spreading to their territories, had taken the steps to fund the 'counter-revolution' movements in Egypt and Libya (Sadiki, 2012). The rivalry to expand power and hegemony in the MENA region by certain states like Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar and Turkey had also affected the democratisation process in the post-Arab Spring revolution in Egypt and Libya. For instance, Saudi Arabia and UAE had supported the overthrowing of President Morsi by offering huge funding amounting to eight billion USD to the newly established military government in Egypt while Turkey and Qatar had given full support towards the JFP leadership (Al-Anani, 2015).

The same dynamic had taken place in Libya when Saudi Arabia and majority members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) offered full support to the Islamists by delaying the process of establishing a democratic government post-Gaddafi's regime. The intervention that happened had foiled the political transition toward a democratisation causing the political status quo and the 'old style of governance' pre-Arab Spring to remain (Sadiki, 2015). This was evident, based on the role of the West who supported Gaddafi's opponents and the military in Egypt for the sake of retaining their interests in the Middle East, as was done by the US when it delivered an annual allocation amounting 1.3 billion USD to Al-Sisi's government in Egypt after Morsi's era (Stepan, 2016, Nahlawi, 2018).

Finally, the action made by the great powers in the West in the post-Arab Spring had unveiled the reality that they cared more about their interests in the Arab region, than about nurturing the democratisation and economic transformation agenda more effectively. The Western Block was seen as only advocating a regime change conditionally, which is to protect the national interests and their strategic foreign policy plan. This is because the great nations of the West had the tendency to fund a democratic movement in an autocratic country but they did not have the determination to ensure that the democratisation process would run smoothly if it coincided with their interests in the Middle East and North Africa. Thus, the foreign intervention in the Egyptian and Libyan politics in the post-Arab Spring events had indirectly left an impact toward democratisation that had failed to be established in these countries to this very day.

Conclusion

The Arab Spring revolution was a new beacon of hope to the democratisation process in Arab countries that have been ruled by an autocratic regime for so long. These momentous events were the very reason for the fall of previous dictators such as Ben Ali in Tunisia, Mubarak in Egypt and Gaddafi in Libya due to the people's uprisings. The implication of this, is that several states in the Middle East and North Africa like Egypt and Libya have started to take the steps in rebuilding their nations through the political and economic transformation. Despite the unyielding efforts to render success to the democratisation agenda in Egypt and Libya, they still have to face several major obstacles and challenges, internally and externally. The internal obstacles focus more on the social and political structures in the Arab world that do not encourage open political participation among the people.

Apart from that, foreign intervention has also restricted the efforts towards the democratisation process in Egypt and Libya. This is evident, where the US has pioneered the selective practice in propagating democracy assistance in the Middle East and North Africa. The US administration is not seen to have the tendency to support any rulers, albeit through a legitimate election, if the leaders fail to protect the interests of the US and its allies, such as Israel. It is feared that the US administration will lose its influence in the Arab world territory if these democratically chosen leaders do not have the pro-Western and Israel attitude, as it was with the case of President Morsi. The failed democratisation in Egypt and Libya is also undeniably contributed by the reluctance in the part of the Islamists and the Secularists to dismiss their contentious political agenda and the old grudges among them. In Egypt, the chance for any Islamist groups in the post-Morsi era to reclaim their power seems to have been diminished after Al-Sisi through his military position has taken an absolute control of the government. Libya, on the other hand, is still continuously embroiled in the civil war and seems to have a long journey to go, towards building a stable civil state based on the democratic principles and the sovereignty of law.

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