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*Ancien Régime*: Legacies of Previous Authoritarian Regimes and the Struggle for  
Democratization in the Arab World

By

Baba Adou

Submitted to the graduate degree program in the Center for Global and International Studies and  
the Graduate Faculty of the University of Kansas in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree of Master of Arts.

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## **Abstract**

Arab Spring, or the series of uprisings that swept the Middle East and North Africa in early 2011, has raised hopes that the region is finally catching up with democracy. The fall of four long-established authoritarian regimes in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen, respectively, shook the foundations of the ‘Arab exceptionalism’ thesis which dominated much of the literature on the region. Four years after the Arab Spring, however, the prospects of democratization in the region appear to be dim; out of the four regime changes in Libya, Yemen, Egypt and Tunisia, only the latter seems to be leading a relatively successful democratic transition. This paper attempts to address the variations witnessed in the four cases’ post-Arab Spring experiences. Analyzing the four countries against the backdrop of their institutional contexts, I argue that institutional legacies of previous regime type could account for the success of democracy in Tunisia and its failure in the rest of the cases. This paper also controls for socioeconomic conditions and the role of leadership in each country.

**Key words:** Arab Spring; democracy; authoritarian regimes; previous regime; institutions; Libya; Egypt; Yemen; Tunisia

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## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

Most of the protesters in the Middle East and North Africa who took to the streets from late 2010 onwards were unlikely aware of the fact that chances of democratization in their countries were very dim, despite their overthrowing their autocratic regimes. In fact, as history of authoritarian breakdowns demonstrates, more than fifty percent of regime changes that happened since World War II were a transition from one autocracy to another, and less than half of these autocratic breakdowns led to democracy (Geddes, Wright, and Frantz, 2014). The 2011 Arab Uprisings further support this. Out of the four cases that witnessed a regime breakdown, only one country – Tunisia – deviated from the general trend, as its transition to democracy has stayed on course. The other three countries, Libya, Yemen and Egypt, continue to struggle with the legacies of their previous regimes, with unrests and civil wars rampaging in their post-Arab Spring political spheres.

The Arab Spring, or the series of uprisings that swept the Arab Middle East and North Africa in early 2011, was sparked by the self-immolation of the Tunisian street vendor Mohamed Bouazizi in December 17, 2010 in the Tunisian town of Sidi Bou Zid. Bouazizi set himself on fire in response to the harassment and humiliation he received from a police officer and her aides who seized his fruit-and-vegetables stall, apparently because he did not possess the right municipal license (Gerges, 2014). Following this incident, thousands of Tunisians started protesting in Sidi Bou Zid and later in the capital Tunis. According to Lotan et al (2011), “the demonstrations were an expression of citizens’ frustration over economic issues like food inflation and high unemployment, as well as a lack of political freedoms like rights to free speech” (p.1376). After failing to squash the peaceful protests using both repression and reforms, President Zine El Abidine

Ben Ali has finally, under the pressure of the army, fled to Saudi Arabia, becoming the first president to be ousted by the Arab Spring.

The success of the Tunisian revolution inspired protesters in Egypt, Libya, Yemen, and other Arab countries. In addition to Ben Ali of Tunisia, three other Arab dictators have been toppled by the wave of Arab Spring protests in Egypt, Libya, and Yemen, while Syria has slid into a protracted civil war. In all of these countries, the protesters chanted slogans calling for dignity, freedom, bread and social justice (Gerges, 2014), despite the fact that they were confronting different regimes and operating from different contexts (Anderson, 2011). In Egypt, it took two weeks and three days of popular protests before the military intervened in February 11, 2011 forcing Muhammad Hosni Mubarak to resign. In Yemen and Libya, however, the protests took longer and were more violent. For instance, Muammar al-Qaddafi's intolerance with the popular challenge in Libya led him to use brutal force against protesters in Benghazi and other cities; as a result, a civil war soon erupted between Qadhafi's forces and the armed rebels in Benghazi and other rebel-controlled areas. The escalating violence on the part of Qadhafi's regime prompted the United Nations Security Council to authorize a no-fly zone that was led by the NATO, the United States and other Arab countries. The foreign intervention accelerated the fall of Qadhafi, who was killed on 20 October, 2011, ending his 42-year-old authoritarian regime.

The situation in Yemen was similar to that of Libya. The head of the regime, Ali Abdullah Saleh, was reluctant to respond to the popular protests demanding his resignation. He used his military, security, tribal and personal forces to silence the anti-regime voices. The defections of senior military officers from the regime marked a significant turn of events. As the new defected officers announced their support to the popular revolution, violent clashes between the two camps began to appear. Saleh himself was severely injured in an attack on his presidential mosque, and



was rushed to a hospital in Saudi Arabia to receive medical treatment. The neighboring Gulf countries brokered a deal between Saleh and the opposition parties that granted the president immunity in exchange for ceding power to his vice-president.

Although the Arab Spring may not be over yet, many agree it yielded a modest harvest (Brownlee, Masoud, & Reynolds, 2013). Indeed, the picture in Egypt, Libya, and Yemen looks less bright than the protesters have expected. In Egypt, a slow but promising democratic transition was abruptly ended by a military coup. After the country organized its first democratic elections which brought a civilian president to power, the military intervened in early July 2013 and removed the president; putting him in jail, banning his party, and setting the political clock back to the previous political order. The Arab Spring harvest was even worse in Libya. The country continued to suffer from a vacuum of power which was exploited by tribal militia and terrorist groups. Although it succeeded in organizing parliamentary elections that - for the first time since several decades - brought a democratically-elected legislature, it was soon wracked by a civil war. As of April 2015, the country is ruled by two governments, each claiming to be the legitimate representative of the Libyan people and seek to overthrow the other.

Like in 2011, Yemen's post-Arab Spring political scene exhibits some similarities with Libya. Although it organized a presidential elections in early 2012 in which vice president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi was the only candidate, it continued to experience waves of political unrest during and after that period. In late 2014, the Shia-affiliated group of Huthis managed to control the capital Sanaa and force President Hadi and his government to resign. Hadi, however, was able to escape Sanaa to Aden, where he rescinded his resignation and reclaimed his presidential authority. His appeal to the international community to help him deter the Huthi threat was

answered by Saudi Arabia and its allies who launched an air strikes campaign, dubbed Operation Decisive Storm, against the Huthis on March 25, 2015.

The only Arab Spring case that fared better in the post-Arab Spring era was Tunisia. Although it, too, had some security challenges, which included deadly terrorist attacks and assassinations of two prominent opposition leaders, it nonetheless seems to be staying on the democratic transition course. For instance, the country's new constitution, which guarantees core democratic rights and values, was negotiated and signed by the majority of the Constituent Assembly members. In addition, since the overthrow of Ben Ali, the country has had three elections that were hailed by observers as democratic and fair. In the last elections, Tunisians selected the country's first president to be elected by popular vote.

This paper deals with the variations in post-Arab Spring political outcomes in these four countries. In particular, I discuss why democratic transition failed in Egypt, Libya and Yemen and succeeded in Tunisia. The research question I seek to answer in this paper is the following: does previous authoritarian regime type impact the likelihood of democratization? I will be looking at the types of authoritarian regimes that were in place before the Arab Spring and whether the variations in regime type could account for the success or failure of democratic transition. I will also control for the variables of leadership and socioeconomic development.

### **Relevance of the Study**

As early as in 2011, when the Arab Spring protests were still unfolding, scholars of the region have predicted that regime changes will not produce the same outcomes in every country (Anderson, 2011; Way, 2011; Gause III, 2011; Ross, 2011). Several explanations have been put forward to account for the absence of protests in certain Arab countries (monarchies), the success of such protests in toppling authoritarian regimes in a number of countries and their failure in

others (Bahrain and Syria) and the divergent political trajectories in Tunisia Egypt, Libya, and Yemen. These explanations include oil (Ross, 2011; Brownlee, Masoud & Reynolds, 2013), role of foreign powers (Way, 2011; Hudson, 2013; Uzi Rabi, 2013), institutional legacies and previous regime type (Anderson, 2011; 2014; Stepan & Linz, 2013; Geddes et al, 2014; Brownlee, Masoud & Reynolds, 2013), civil and political societies (Stepan & Linz, 2013; Bellin, 2013), posture of the military (Bellin, 2012; Nassif, 2015), and the nature of regime overthrow (Geddes et al, 2014).

This research builds on the body of scholarship that emphasizes the role of previous regime type in the post-Arab Spring political developments. For example, Geddes et al (2014) predict, based on the nature of the previous regime what the outcome will be; for instance, they argue that military and party-dominant regimes are likely to smoothly transition to democracy than personalist regimes. However, these predictions appear to have limitations. As they indicate, “We do not know if democratization is least likely after personalist dictatorships because of structural factors that gave rise to personalist rule in the first place; or if personalist rule undermines civil society or domestic institutions, which in turn reduces the prospects for democratization; or if personalist regimes are simply less likely to end in a manner conducive to democratization because their leaders resist negotiating.” (p.324) Alisa Anderson (2014) takes a similar institutional approach. Focusing on the legacy of previous Arab Spring regimes in relation to how the state is defined, she argues that “there are good reasons to think that the nature of the authoritarian regime, and particularly how it is related to the project of state formation, will shape how states operate internationally, what the quality of life in the polity is like, how political change takes place” (p.58).

The existing scholarship on previous regimes type, however, overlooks a thorough analysis of the pre-Arab Spring regime institutions and how they influenced the subsequent political

developments in the post-Arab Spring period. Similarly, the literature provides no analysis of post-Arab Spring political developments in light of these institutional legacies. Such analysis is crucial to uncover the mechanisms through which previous regime type affected the trajectory in each Arab Spring country. For example, one can notice that in Egypt, where the authoritarian regime is a combination of military and party, part of the regime – the military - continues to operate as a veto player, even after the fall of the head of the regime. This complexity of the Egyptian regime, on the one hand, reveals how limited is our understanding of authoritarian regimes and, on the other hand, shows some of the tools that falling regimes utilize to seize power again as in Egypt, or at least mess up the political scene as in Yemen. Moreover, the nature of previous regime type can affect how the leadership will proceed with the political process. We saw in Libya how the fall of a personalist regime created a hostile political environment where leaders are less likely to agree on a consensual politics. Analyzing these issues in light of the post-Arab Spring transitional periods in Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen, and Libya is what this paper aims to contribute to the literature.

In addition to analyzing the role of previous regime type, this research also examines whether socioeconomic conditions and the role of opposition leadership during the transitional period could account for the success of Tunisian experience and failure of the other three cases. The paper is organized as follows. After the introduction, which is chapter one, the second chapter will review the main arguments in the literature of democratic transition. Specifically, it will focus on these three camps only: socioeconomic structures argument, institutionalism advocates, and proponents of elite and opposition leadership role in democratic transition. The third chapter lays out the methods used in this research. The fourth and main chapter is the analysis part. It will examine how previous regime institutions, socioeconomic conditions, and opposition leadership

contributed to the success or failure of democracy in the four cases. Finally, discussion of the findings will be presented in chapter four which will be followed by a conclusion.

## **CHAPTER TWO: THEORIES OF DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION**

Much has been written about democratic transition. In fact, some scholars acknowledged that “it is difficult to imagine making a claim about either democratization or consolidation that has not appeared somewhere in some form in the literature.” (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2009, p.75) In fact, Huntington (1991) lists twenty-seven factors that have been presented in the literature on democratization. However, in this chapter I only focus on major three theories that have widely been advanced. These are theories about socioeconomic structures, leadership and elite strategic choices, and authoritarian institutional structures.

### **Socioeconomic Structures**

Although proponents of the socioeconomic approach hold very different assumptions about democracy and democratization, they all emphasize the role of socioeconomic factors in bringing about, consolidating, or hindering democracy. These assumptions include modernization theory, income distribution, and political economy.

### **Modernization Theory**

Modernization Theory was developed from the works of Seymour Martin Lipset, especially his 1959 article: *Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy*. The work of Lipset, which set the stage for a long debate among scholars, focused on the relationship between democracy and economic development. His main thesis is that economic development and high levels of literacy correlate with high chances of democratization (Lipset, 1959). How economic development and literacy lead to democracy has to do with the level of complexity in thinking and behavior that individuals with increased income, greater economic

security, and higher education possess, in addition to the role that the middle class can play in rewarding democratic parties and penalizing extremist groups (Lipset, 1959).

Lipset's argument came under attack from several scholars, especially his emphasis on the inevitability of the modernization path. Socio-economic development, as Moore (1966) argued, does not necessarily lead to democracy. In fact, democracy was only one of 'three routes to the modern world.' The other two were "conservative revolutions from above ending in fascism, and peasant revolutions leading to communism." (Moore, 1966, p.414) He does, nonetheless agree with Lipset on the role of middle class in bringing about democracy. To Moore, democracy emerged as the society moved from an agriculture-based economy and as the middle class replaced the traditional farmer laborer class. The bourgeois play a pivotal role in the emergence of democracy, according to Moore. As he insists, "No bourgeois, no democracy" (p.418).

Following Rustow (1970) who differentiated between the emergence of democracy and democratic consolidation, Przeworski and Limongi (1997) rejected the modernization theory's assertion that democracy emerges in society as it develops - they dub this the endogenous explanation: the idea that democracy - regardless of how it was brought about - is more likely to survive in developed countries. However, their statistical findings confirm the exogenous explanation. They share Lipset's thesis with a slight modification: "Once democracy is established, the more well-to-do a nation, the more likely that it will survive" (Przeworski & Limongi, 1997, p.166). Przeworski (2001) further supports this with empirical data, arguing that "[n]o democracy ever fell in a country with a per capita income higher than that of Argentina in 1975, \$6,055" (p.2). Przeworski and Limongi's argument, however, was challenged on both the theoretical and empirical grounds by Boix and Stokes. Using a larger dataset that covers the period between 1850 and 1990, and employing a different measure of democracy, Boix and Stokes (2003) find that

“economic development predicts both transitions to democracy and the stability of democratic regimes” (p.545). How economic development leads to democracy remains, nonetheless, a contested question. As Geddes (1999) notes, “after 20 years of observation and analysis during the third wave of academic interest in democratization, we can be reasonably certain that a positive relationship between development and democracy exists, though we do not know why” (p.119).

Some scholars argue that the Arab Spring is a product of failure of economic developments in the region (Zurayk & Gough, 2014) According to Zurayk and Gough, the rapid transformation from an agriculture-based economy to a service-, trade-, and real estate-based economy created by the oil rent has pushed the rural society in deep poverty while a small elite of regime-affiliated individuals accumulated land, ecological resources and state facilities. This left rural population with no choice but to revolt against these regimes (Zurayk & Gough, 2014). Campante and Chor (2012) who identify with the modernization theory share a similar viewpoint. They argue that the Arab populations were highly educated but were economically impoverished due to the failure of state economic policies to provide enough opportunities. According to Campante and Chor (2012), this “lack of adequate economic opportunities for an increasingly educated populace can help us understand episodes of regime instability such as the Arab Spring” (p.184).

Whether socioeconomic conditions were a direct cause of the Arab Spring falls out of the scope of this paper; however, the relationship between socioeconomic factors and the outcome of the Arab Spring is a relevant question. Thus, following Przeworski and Limongi’s argument that economic development matters only after dictatorship falls, this paper tests the following hypothesis:

*H1: High socioeconomic development increases the likelihood of successful democratic transition*



## **Income inequality**

The relationship between income distribution and democracy has been a central argument in democratic transition literature. Economic inequality, according to Dahl (1971), hinders the emergence of democracy. One way inequality inhibits democracy is through the concentration of economic power, which translates into political power, in the hands of few rich elites. These in turn, using coercion and repression, prevent the emergence of a democratic regime which would extend political and economic rights to the poor (Dahl, 1971). The argument that there is a relationship between income inequality and democratic transition was challenged by Bollen and Jackman (1985) who found no linkage between the two. They argued that there is no evidence that democratic countries have equal income distribution. Moreover, the assumption that democracies are equal and dictatorships are unequal contradicts the reality. As Geddes (2007) notes, “there is little evidence that the current set of recalcitrant dictatorships is made up of countries with especially unequal income distributions. In the post-Second World War period, longer-lived dictatorships (excluding monarchies) have more equal income distributions than brief ones” (p.321). Still, Boix et al (2000) and Boix and Stokes (2003) show that income inequality does inhibit the propensity of democratization. According to Boix, income becomes more equal as a country develops. “Income equality means that the redistributive scheme that would win democratic support (the one supported by the median voter) would deprive the rich of less income than the one the median voter would support if income distribution were highly unequal” (p.539).

Other scholars argue for a non-linear relationship between income distribution and democracy. Focusing on the role of the middle class, Zak and Feng’s model (2003) argues that democracy emerges as a sufficient number of middle class becomes either rich or poor. In other words, the middle class’s incentives to challenge the ruling regime are influenced by the changing

economic conditions (Zak & Feng, 2003). Acemoglu and Robinson (2001; 2009), whose approach emphasizes the role of social conflict between different group, take a similar approach towards income inequality. Relying on two variables to measure inequality (Gini coefficient and share of labor income in GDP), they argue that democratic transition often occurs in countries with intermediate inequality levels. Countries with highly unequal or highly equal income levels are less likely to democratize. The logic explanation for this is the following:

In very equal or very unequal societies, democracy does not arise as an equilibrium phenomenon. In very equal societies, there is little incentive for the disenfranchised to contest power and the elites do not have to make concessions, neither do they have to democratize. In very unequal societies, the elites cannot use redistribution to hang onto power; however, because in such a society democracy is very bad for the elites, they use repression rather than having to relinquish power. It therefore tends to be in societies with intermediate levels of inequality that democracy emerges. (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2009, pp.199-200)

Based on the above discussion of income inequality, this research will test the following hypothesis:

*H2: Intermediate levels of inequality facilitates smooth and lasting transitions to democracy*

### **Political Economy**

Although political economy approaches look at divergent issues, they all focus on the interplay between economic performance and policies on the one hand, and political preferences and outcomes on the other. Stephan Haggard and Robert Kaufman (1997), for instances, argue that economic crises impact the bargaining power of authoritarian elites, hence leading to a regime

change. To explain how economic crisis undermines ‘authoritarian bargains,’ Haggard and Kaufman classify the sociopolitical constituents into three segments: private sector groups, middle class and popular sector organizations, and the ruling elites. Economic crisis which leads to deteriorating economic conditions disrupts the bargains forged between the ruling elites and these important sociopolitical segments, which results in the latter defecting from the regime and supporting the opposition. If the economy fares well, however, authoritarian elites are likely to maintain the loyalty of these segments and avoid being overthrown (Haggard & Kaufman, 1997).

In some countries, however, the nature of the economy allows the ruling elites to resist the pressure from - or even buy off the loyalty of – large segments of the society. This often occurs in rentier states. According to the Rentier State theory, which was developed by Iranian economist Hossein Mahdavy, a rentier state is that which derives large amounts of revenue from external rents paid by foreign individuals or governments. These rents include payments for the passage of ships, oil pipelines, oil revenues (Mahdavy, 1970), other natural resources, and foreign aid (Ross, 2001). Unlike other countries in which the state receives taxes from its citizens, in a rentier state it is the other way around: money flows to citizens strengthening authoritarianism and impeding democracy (Ross, 2001; Anderson, 1987a). The claim that dependence on natural resources such as oil impedes democracy has often been applied to Middle Eastern countries, (Huntington, 1991; Anderson, 1987a), and it was subjected to statistical test by Ross (2001) who confirmed that oil does hurt democracy not only in the Middle East but also elsewhere. The suggested causal mechanisms through which oil hinders democracy include rentier effect (the state lowers taxes to buy off the loyalty of the people), as well as repression effect (the state has more resources to strengthen its security apparatus in order to deter any possible pro-democracy protests).

## **Elites/political actors**

Another approach focused on the role of the strategic choices made by human agencies and the interactions between elites. O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), for instance, differentiated between two types of leaders\_ 'hard-liners' and 'soft-liners'\_ in authoritarian regimes. Some Hard-liners behave based on opportunism and short-term political and economic goals. The majority of them, however, see democracy as a 'cancer' that they have a mission to eliminate. The soft-liners, on the other hand see things differently. Their calculations are based on a long-term political goals and a recognition that that one day a political opening will happen and some of them aspire position in the emergent regime. These divisions among the authoritarian leadership have a huge implication for the prospects of democratization (O'Donnell & Schmitter, 1986).

The argument that human actions, rather than structural prerequisites, lead to democratic transition was later joined by Di Palma (1990) who focused on pacts between authoritarian elites and their challengers. Di Palma argues that "[w]hen an agreement on democratic rules is successfully reached, the transition is essentially over. Democracy enters a new phase in which the behavior of the actors is influenced, to an extent not seen before, by the presence of the new rules" (Di Palma, 1990, p.109). Pacts do not only facilitate the democratic transition when struck between authoritarian elites and their challengers, as Di Palma has argued. For example, Stepan and Linz (2013) attribute the success of Tunisian transition to the nature of its progressive Islamists and also to "the highly innovative "pacts" formed between secularists and Islamists before the transition started." (Stepan & Linz, 2013, p.23) Unlike Egypt, whose Islamists and Secularists did not hold any joint meeting to debate democratic governing alternatives, Tunisian opposition leaders began a series of meetings eight years before the ouster of Ben Ali to discuss the possibility of crafting some agreed upon rules for democratic governance. As they were engaging in these dialogue, they

help create what Stepan and Linz call political society\_ one of the conditions for a successful democratic transition (Stepan & Linz, 2013; Linz & Stepan, 1996).

Stepan and Linz's argument that unified leadership (especially opposition) matters will be tested through the following hypothesis:

*H3: The existence of a unified and cohesive opposition leadership positively impacts the likelihood of democratic transition.*

### **Institutional Structures**

The institutional camp's main argument is that political institutions in authoritarian regimes can impact the dynamics of authoritarian rule. These scholars, however, disagree over the significance of specific institutions over others, whether the impact of these authoritarian institutions on democratic transition is positive or negative, and whether institutions serve different purposes depending on the type of authoritarian regime.

### **Regime type**

Linz and Stepan (1996), turning the attention to democratic consolidation, differentiated between four types of nondemocratic regimes: authoritarian, totalitarian, post-totalitarian, and sultanistic. Each of these regimes was distinct in terms of pluralism, ideology, mobilization and leadership (Linz & Stepan, 1996). Not only does the path to democracy is predicted based on the type of regime, but also the nature of leadership - whether it is hierarchical military, non-hierarchical military or civilian - in each of these regimes can tell us a great deal about the transition path (Linz & Stepan, 1996). Of these four types, authoritarianism has perhaps received the greatest scholarly attention.

According to Geddes (1999), distinguishing between various types of authoritarian regimes and treating them separately proved to be of great significance. For instance, by understanding the different incentives that motivate leaders in military, single-party, and personalist regimes, one may predict how the process of transition will look in each regime type. Officers in military regimes for instance, Geddes argues, prefer the unity of the military institution at the expense of holding office, which makes them less likely to cling to power when opposed by a threat of regime change. Similarly, cadres in single-party regimes, unlike elites in personalist regime whose interest are linked to the survival of the regime, are likely to negotiate a transition of power (Geddes, 1999). The variations in regime types also matters after the breakdown of the regime. As Geddes et al (2014), democracy is more likely to follow the breakdown of military regimes and party-dominant and least likely for personalist regimes.

### **Legislature and parties**

With regards to legislature and parties, scholars of authoritarianism have been concerned with two questions: why authoritarian regimes maintain the two institutions (Gandhi & Przeworski, 2007), and whether these institutions have an impact on the prospects of democratization after the fall of the regime (Wright & Escribà-Folch, 2012). According to Gandhi and Przeworski (2007), autocratic regimes create institutions in order to remain in power and protect their tenure in power against possible threats. If this threat is in the form of a military coup, the dictator resort to creating a loyal junta, and if it emanates from the dictator's own family, he may form a family council. But, as Gandhi & Przeworski (2007) further explains, "when the danger germinates from civil society, authoritarian rulers need a second line of trenches: a legislature that encapsulates some opposition, a party that mobilizes popular support for the dictatorship, or even multiple parties. Hence, whenever they need to, autocrats govern with political institutions" (p.15).

The argument that authoritarian legislatures and parties serve exactly the same function they are created for – stabilizing the regime – is also held by Magaloni (2008) who argues that “dictators can minimize the risks of being overthrown when they are able to co-opt potential rivals by offering credible power-sharing deals that guarantee a share of power over the long run” (p.24). However, Wright and Escribà-Folch (2012) - while agreeing that authoritarian legislatures may further consolidate the regime’s rule – argue that parties can have a destabilizing effect on the regime and a positive influence on the likelihood of democratization. Parties, especially in dominant-party regimes, make democratization more likely because they influence the distribution of power and secure the interests of the regime elites in a subsequent democracy (Wright & Escribà-Folch). Wright and Escribà-Folch’s data shows that “when dominant party regimes democratize, former authoritarian parties frequently participate in elections in the subsequent democracy and often do quite well” (p.291).

### **The Military**

Among the institutionalist camp, there are some who focused on the authoritarian regimes’ control over the security apparatus to protect the regime. Citing the resilience of Arab Middle Eastern autocrats, Eva Bellin (2004) urged the region’s specialist to shift attention to the mechanisms through which ‘robust authoritarianism’ in the Middle East endure. The ‘exceptionalism’ of the region lies not in cultural or religious structure, but in the nature complex nature of the Arab authoritarians. Borrowing concepts from social movement literature, she argues that the state’s coercive apparatus, its capacity and will to suppress can explain the absence of democracy in the region.

This coercive apparatus, according to Bellin, is shaped by four factors: maintenance of fiscal health to ensure security agents are paid, international support that prevents financial crises,

the institutionalization of the coercive apparatus, and the level of popular mobilization (Bellin, 2004). The institutionalization of the military (as opposed to patrimonial militaries) proved to be very significant in the context of the Arab Spring. When popular protests broke in 2011, the institutional militaries sided with the people and democracy, while the patrimonial militaries clung to the leader and used force against civilians (Bellin, 2012).

In relation to the discussion on institutional arguments, the following hypotheses will be tested:

*H4: Personalist regimes are less likely to smoothly transition to democracy than party-dominant regimes*

*H5: Post-transition continuance of powerful institutional veto players decreases the likelihood of successful democratic transition.*



## CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

In this paper, I use a comparative case study method to analyze the regime changes in four of the Arab Middle Eastern and North African countries: Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen. Specifically, I examine the transition period in each of these cases, seeking an answer to the following research question: *did the preceding regime type impact the process of democratic transition in these four countries?* I also control for two other variables: leadership and socioeconomic development. To achieve this, I analyze the socioeconomic conditions in these four countries, the nature of their previous regimes, and the process of regime change in each country.

### Case Sample Selection

A common pitfall that some researchers run into when utilizing a case study method is selecting the cases based on the dependent variable. In her analysis of three influential scholarly works that ran into this problem, Geddes (1990) demonstrates how selection bias can yield inaccurate conclusions. As she argues:

The problem with selecting cases for study on the dependent variable stems from the logic of explanation. When one sets out to explain why countries A and B have, say, developed more rapidly than countries C through G, one is implicitly looking for some antecedent factors X through Z that countries A and B possess, but that countries C through G do not. The crux of the difficulty that arises when cases are selected on the dependent variable is that if one studies only countries A and B, one can collect only half the information needed, namely what A and B have in common. Unless one also studies countries C through G (or a sample of them) to make sure they lack factors X through Z, one cannot know whether or not the

factors identified are crucial antecedents of the outcome under investigation.  
(p.132)

To avoid these pitfalls, the present paper selects four cases with different outcomes. In order to understand what causes democratic transition and whether previous regime type influenced the prospects of democratization in the Arab region, four cases have been selected, and only one of them has a democratic outcome.

The Arab Spring has so far led directly to regime changes in at least four countries: Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, and Libya, respectively. In other cases, it had contributed in a way or another to some forms of leadership changes, mainly in the countries of Qatar and Iraq. The Arab Spring has also threatened other regimes in the region, like Bahrain and Morocco who resorted to some partial reforms, not to mention Syria's dictator whose fate is still unknown. The four cases selected in this research cover all the Arab countries who witnessed a regime change as a result of the Arab Spring. Thus, the whole population of the Middle Eastern and North African regimes that were toppled by the wave of protests, is covered in this paper. This allows for making some generalizations about post-Arab Spring regimes.

In addition, these four cases are a sample representative of the population of the authoritarian Arab regimes that are still ruling the region. Each of these four regimes share some similarities with another or various regimes in the Arab world, both in terms of the institutionalization of the regime itself or the structural features that shape its societal incubator. For instance, one could easily notice the similarities between the regimes of Yemen and Libya on the one hand and those of Jordan and Bahrain. The social and sectarian cleavages in these four countries may allow one to predict the future of one case depending on the experiences of the other. Similarly, one could compare Algeria to Egypt based on the institutionalization of their

regimes. In both cases, the military plays a pivotal role in the political and economic life and acted as a veto player on several occasions.

### **Definition of key terms**

This paper is concerned with how the legacies of authoritarian regimes may inhibit democratic transition. Defining authoritarianism, regime and the various regime types is, therefore, *a sine qua non* for understanding the topic as a whole. By authoritarianism, I mean what Linz defines as

Political systems with limited, not responsible, political pluralism, without elaborate and guiding ideology, but with distinctive mentalities, without extensive nor intensive political mobilization, except at some points in their development, and in which a leader or occasionally a small group exercises power within formally ill-defined limits but actually quite predictable ones. (Linz & Stepan, 1996, p.38)

I use Lisa Anderson's definition of regime which states that "a *regime* is the set of rules, or cultural or social norms that regulate the relations between the ruled and the rulers, including how laws are made and administered and how the rulers themselves are selected" (Anderson, 2014, p.44). To classify Egypt, Tunisia, Libya and Yemen's regimes, I rely on Geddes et al's (2014) data on autocratic regimes, which codes Yemen and Libya as Personalist regimes, Tunisia as party-dominant and Egypt as party-dominant hybrid.

The definition of a personalist regime goes back to Max Webber who, in his *Economy and Society*, distinguishes between three types of legitimate authority: legal, charismatic, and traditional. According to Webber, *patrimonialism* is a sub-category of traditional authority, which "tend[s] to arise whenever traditional domination develops an administration and a military force which are purely personal instruments of the master" (1968, p.231). Following Webber's

definition, various typologies of regime types referred to the category of authoritarian regimes in which power is concentrated in the hands of one person, albeit using different terms: neopatrimonial (Bratton & Van de Walle, 1994), Sultanistic (Linz & Stepan, 1996; Chehabi & Linz, 1998) and personalist (Geddes, 2003; Geddes et al, 2014). According to Geddes (2003), “Personalist regimes differ from both military and single-party in that access to office and the fruits of office depend much more on the discretion of an individual leader” (p.51). This does not mean that personalist regimes are characterized by the absence of institutions. In fact, as Slater (2003) notes, authoritarian regimes have institutions just as democracies do. The difference is that in democracies they serve to curb the chief executive’s “despotic power”, while in the authoritarian context, the *raison d’etre* of these institutions is to foster the regime’s domination (Slater, 2003).

Party-dominant regimes, according to Geddes (2003) are those regimes in which “a party organization exercises some power over the leader at least part of the time, controls the selection of officials, organizes the distribution of benefits to supporters, and mobilizes citizens to vote and show support for party leaders in other ways” (p.52). A military regime, on the other hand, is defined by Geddes (2003) as “one in which a group of officers determines who will lead the country and has some influence on policy (pp.51-52). With regards to personalist regimes, they “differ from both military and single-party in that access to office and the fruits of office depend much more on the discretion of an individual leader” (Geddes, 2003, p.51). Finally, hybrid regimes refers to those situations in which the regime combines elements of all three types (Geddes, 2003).

## **Data and Analysis**

To test whether socioeconomic development has a positive impact on democratization, I utilize data from the World Bank, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Global Peace Index, and the United Nations Human Development Index. From the World Bank, I utilize data on per

capita GDP as well as natural resources rents' contribution to the GDP. Per capita GDP allows me to measure the socioeconomic status of the country and the performance of its workforce. The second indicator allows me to control for oil and other natural resources. I use the Central Intelligence Agency's World Factbook data to gather information on my cases regarding literacy rate, population growth, and percentage of population under poverty line. The CIA's data provides more information than the other data. The Human development index is also used because it measures other socioeconomic indicators that are not found in the other data, such as life expectancy and standards of living. Finally, I utilize the Global Peace Index to measure the GINI coefficient in each of my cases. GINI coefficient provides information on the level of income inequality, which will further make the socioeconomic picture much clearer. I use these indicators from the World Bank, the World Factbook and Global Peace Index in a descriptive way. That is, I compare these indicators in each country to see if there is a relationship between the levels of socioeconomic developments and the existence of democracy.

To classify the regimes of the four cases, I use Geddes et al's data on autocratic breakdown. This typology classifies the regimes in Libya and Yemen as Personalists, Tunisia as party-dominant, and Egypt as party-dominant hybrid. I choose this data because it is the newest data on authoritarian regimes (2014), and it takes into consideration the complexity of the Egyptian case while typologies overlook this. For both variables, previous regime type and leadership, I use scholarly literature that describe the social and political lives in all of these four countries. I also use media reports about the events of the Arab Spring and the subsequent period to analyze how the previous regime and/or political elites may have impacted the trajectory of these events.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section examines the nature of previous regimes and their institutions. In each country, I analyze the type of regime that it had and how its institutional legacies influenced the transition period. The second section discusses the socioeconomic conditions that were in place before the Arab Spring hit the region. It seeks to find answers for the variations in the Arab Spring outcomes in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen, against the backdrop of these countries' socioeconomic realities. The third section of this chapter focuses on the role of leadership in the post-Arab Spring period. I specifically focus on the opposition forces and whether their unity or disunity mattered for the success or failure of transition.

### **Section I: Previous regime type and institutions**

An emphasis is placed in this section on institutions, such as the executive, the legislature, the judiciary, and the military, due to the significance of these institutions for understanding how previous regime type operated. In some of these regimes, especially personalists, these institutions are nothing more than tools in the hands of the leaders. They are discussed in this paper to show how the whole regime was like, and how its institutions were weak and undermined. In party-dominant or party-dominant hybrid regimes, however, some of these institutions exhibited a relatively influential role after the fall of the regime; they are discussed to show the link between the past and the present: how previous regime is influencing the current political order.

#### **Personalist Regimes and Democracy**

This paper utilizes Geddes et al.'s dataset on autocratic regime type which classifies Yemen and Libya's pre-Arab Spring regimes as personalists. In what follows I delineate the process and

mechanisms through which the nature of these previous regimes influenced the transitional period. Specifically, I focus on those authoritarian institutions that were in place before the regimes were ousted in Libya and Yemen and their implications for the current path that each country follows. Before that, however, I discuss how personalist regimes are dubbed unfriendly to democracy.

One reason personalist regimes are less likely to democratize has to do with the nature of political institutions under such regimes. As mentioned above, under personalist regimes, power is concentrated in the hands of the leader and “the fruits of office depend[s] much more on the discretion of an individual leader” (Geddes, 2003, p.51). When the regime falls, the state is left with no institutions that could support the process of democratic building. This is especially true for our two cases discussed below, when state institutions’ attachment to the leader contributed to the fragmentation of key institutions such as the military which opened the door for chaos and political instability. In addition, as Geddes et al (2014) argue, personalist regimes undermine the role of civil society which is believed to be a crucial element of the process of democratic building. Finally, personalist regimes often end in a violent way which may decrease the likelihood of democratic transition (Geddes et al, 2014).

Table 1: country regime type: coding and start and end dates of regimes

<i>Country</i>	<i>Coding</i>	<i>Start year</i>	<i>End year</i>
<i>Tunisia</i>	Party-dominant	03/20/1956	01/2011
<i>Egypt</i>	Party-dominant-hybrid	07/23/1952	02/2011
<i>Libya</i>	Personalist	09/01/1969	09/2011
<i>Yemen</i>	Personalist	07/17/1978	11/2011

## **Libya**

Qadhafi's regime started September 1969 and ended by an insurgency in September 2011 (Geddes et al, 2014). During this 42 years, Qadhafi has envisioned Libya as a stateless entity, with power in theory exercised by all people, but in practice concentrated in hands of Qadhafi (Van de Walle, 2013). Through reliance on the tribe and kinship and emasculation of inherited state institutions, Qadhafi was able to rule Libya according to his Third International Theory; the *Jamahiriya* was put forward as a solution for the problems, Qadhafi believed, intrinsic to the modern state (Anderson, 1987b). Qadhafi's utopian ideas about how the state should look were codified in his famous *Green Book* which emphasized the statelessness of Libya as a *Jamahiriya* in which "direct democracy" allows people to run themselves without bureaucratic or administrative institutions (Van de Walle, 2012). To achieve this, however, new institutions were put in place. These included: The General People's Congress, the General People's Committee, Basic People's Congress, and the Revolutionary Committees (Djaziri, 1995).

### **General People's Congress: The legislative branch**

The General People's Congress, along with other institutions discussed below, replaced the Arab Socialist Union (ASU) in January 1976, when the latter failed to serve the purpose it was created for: to mobilize the Libyan population to show more support to Qadhafi's policies (Van de Walle, 2012). In principle, the GPC's main function was to be a platform through which Libyan people could exert their power, in accordance with Qadhafi's ideology of direct participation. To this end, it was assigned a number of tasks. First, it was in charge of finalizing the decisions made by the Basic People's Congress (BPC) and the Municipal People's Congress (MPC). In addition, it selected members of General People's Committee (GPCO) - equivalent to the government - and



monitored their activities. Finally the GPC was, also in principle, responsible for accepting and shuffling secretary generals of the GPCO (Djaziri, 1995).

In practice, however, the GPC was a ‘toothless legislative’ body (Sadiki, 2012) that had limited competence. For example, there were several areas that were off-limits to the authority of the GPC. These included discussions concerning the oil sector, the budget, the army, the police and foreign policy (Van de Walle, 2012). Moreover, as will be discussed later, the growing influence of the Revolutionary Committees put the various state institutions, including the GPC, under their control (Mattes, 1995). Even the subjects that in theory fell under the jurisdiction of the General People’s Congress, were in practice controlled by Gadhafi himself. According to Van de Walle,

In principle, the GPC appointed its own Secretariat – equivalent to a Cabinet in Western parliamentary systems. In practice, the Secretariat determined the agenda of GPC proceedings and, together with the technical committees determined much of the day-to-day business of the country. Although Secretaries (ministers) were in principle elected by the GPC, they were actually appointed by the regime (Van de Walle, 2012, p.104).

### **General People’s Committees**

To make a complete rupture with Libya’s previous monarchy, Qadhafi had to replace the already existing administrators that run the day-to-day business of the county and the society with new loyal agents. The creation of the popular committees on 2 March, 1977 marked the beginning of what Qadhafi called the “popular” and “cultural” revolution, a campaign against the bourgeois and the bureaucrats (Anderson, 1987b). The Green Book delineates the role and function of

popular committees. It states that Libyan people should be divided into basic popular congresses, and each congress is responsible for choosing popular committees in its district. These committees will, in turn, be in charge of running the government and the administration (Van de Walle, 2012). Thus, Qadhafi claims, “the outdated definition of democracy – ‘democracy is the supervision of the government by the people’- comes to an end. It will be replaced by the correct definition: democracy is the supervision of the people by the people” (Van de Walle, 2012, p.103).

The popular committees were more than just a form of executive branch. In addition to the day-to-day administrative work which included issuance of marriage licenses and certificates of ‘proper moral behavior,’ they were also responsible for security and public order, as well as serving the role of mediator in the civil and commercial disagreements between the citizens (Djaziri, 1995). Besides the confusion that the far-reaching authority of the popular committees created between the judicial and executive branches (Djaziri, 1995), they had several other problems. For instance, the popular disinterest and lack of mobilization, because of which Qadhafi announced the failure of the ASU, also accompanied the popular committees (Mattes, 1995). Another reason that made Qadhafi unhappy with the performance of the popular committees was that most of them were pursuing their own local interest without commitment to the values of the Jamahiriya in general. Even worse, popular committees and congresses brought new tribal elites and business leaders that Qadhafi feared would threaten his regime (Djaziri, 1995; Mattes, 1995). To redress these loopholes in the popular committees and congresses, Qadhafi created a new informal authority that ensured his tight control of the country: the revolutionary committees (Van de Walle, 2012).

### **Revolutionary Committees**

To further personalize his regime and place a tight control over the newly created legislative and executive bodies, Qadhafi announced the formation of revolutionary committees

that, according to him, “shall aid the leadership committees of the Basic People’s Congress in ‘motivating the mass of the people’ before the Basic People’s Congresses are convened (Mattes, 1995, p.90). This was, however, just one of the functions that the revolutionary committees were responsible for. Other tasks, as summarized by Fathaly and Palmer (1995), included intelligence-gathering, protecting the revolution and assassinating its ‘enemies,’ examining and reviewing the backgrounds and credentials of potential members of popular congress, as well as destabilizing the Libyan society by blocking channels of communication between individuals and groups (Fathaly & Palmer, 1995).

If the GPC represented the legislative branch in Libya and the popular committees were considered an executive arm for the regime, the revolutionary committees were a specific authority that had control over all segments of the Libyan society including the judiciary, the legislative and the executive (Djaziri, 1995). This was made clear, for instance by the Secretary General of the General People’s Congress (prime minister) Abd al-Ati al-‘Ubaydi when he concluded at the end of the GPC’s fifth session that “all People’s Congresses, no matter what their level, as well as the Secretariat of the General People’s Congress and the secretaries of the Basic People’s Congresses are under the permanent control of the revolution and the revolutionary committees” (Mattes, 1995, p.97).

There was a clear separation between the people in power and those who were guiding the revolution; between what was considered the formal authority – which was run by the popular congresses and committees – and the revolutionary authority, headed by Qadhafi and the revolutionary committees (Mattes, 1995; Van de Walle, 2012; Djaziri, 1995). Qadhafi’s control was further consolidated by this separation between formal and revolutionary authorities, and he soon resigned his position as Secretary General of People’s Congress in 1978 in order to devote

himself to helping the revolutionary committees (Van de Walle, 1995; Mattes, 1995). While putting the authority of the revolutionary committees over those of the GPC and the People's Congresses, Qadhafi filled these committees by his closest allies (Boduszynski & Mieczyslaw, 2013) who were selected in a very careful way (Djaziri, 1995) and were responsible directly to Qadhafi through a special Central Coordinating Committee (Van de Walle, 2012).

### **The army**

As with any other authoritarian regime, the Libyan military represented a serious threat to Qadhafi's regime. In fact, between 1969 and 2011, there were at least four military attempts that were initiated by Qadhafi's fellow officers to remove him from power (Barany, 2011). This existential threat marked Qadhafi's relationship with the military and his attempts to abolish it. The dilemma that Qadhafi faced was that he needed a strong military for his foreign policy objectives and regional adventure, but at the same time he feared this strong military might threaten his regime. (Fathaly & Palmer, 1995). To neutralize this threat, he first called for militarizing the people and the creation of popular militias. Although it had never been mobilized, a people's army was created in 1977 and 1978 as a counter balance to the regular army (Van de Walle, 1995). Part of this popular army strategy was turning schools and universities into military-like barracks for training students. This was already mentioned in the Green Book, but it was also brought to the GPC and agreed on (Monastiri, 1995).

A second line of defense that Qadhafi used was the introduction of his loyal revolutionary committees into the military. This ensured that armed forces were under Qadhafi's control because as with the GPC and the popular committees, member of the revolutionary committees were technically above the military (Mattes, 1995). This infiltration of the armed forces could probably explain the failure of the four military attempts to move Qadhafi from power, since the regime had

some loyal insiders that informed him. Finally, Qadhafi took advantage of the divisions between what Fathaly and Palmer (1995) called the ‘professionals’ and the ‘loyalists’ in the military. While the professionals were nonpolitical, the loyal officers manifested their support for the regime, which gained them dominance and control of high military positions at the expense of professional officers who were excluded (Fathaly & Palmer, 1995). During the last days of the regime, Qadhafi’s son, Al-Mu’tasim Billah, - killed in 2011- was the National Security Advisor and the one in charge of the military and security apparatus (Sadiki, 2012). By placing loyalty above competence, Qadhafi weakened the Libyan military which became fragmented and lacking of coordination (Fathaly & Palmer, 1995).

### **Legacy of Qadhafi**

Four years have passed since the Libyans finally jettisoned the 42-year-old regime of Muammar al-Qadhafi, with the help of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). However, the country was racked by a protracted civil war that pitted its Islamist, Nationalist, tribalist, and federalist factions against each other. The country now has two governments and two parliaments, each claiming to be the representative of the Libyan people. The country’s failure to transition to democratic governance could be attributed to the type of regime that ruled it for more than four decades. As the above discussion demonstrates, the type of polity that Qadhafi built was more personalist than any other regime in the region. The Institutions that Qadhafi created to replace the state institutions inherited from the Sanusi era were designed specifically to serve the regime, instead of the people. As Van de Walle (2013) argues, “Qadhafi had pursued a policy of statelessness that, at least in theory, put all power in the hands of the people. But ironically, as statelessness was pursued, virtually all political and economic power came under state control” (p.190).

General People's Congress, the Popular Committees, the Revolutionary Committees, and other institutions were so tied to Qadhafi to the extent that they remained loyal to him until his regime was violently overthrown. Unlike the case in other countries, these institutions fell with the regime, and the country – lacking anything to build on – had to start from scratch. This made the mission of the Transitional National Council almost impossible as it involved exercising a monopoly of the legitimate use of force and embarking on the tasks of state-building and nation-building (Van de Walle, 2013). Although the TNC succeeded in organizing the country's first parliamentary elections, it failed to claim monopoly of force, as the building of the newly-formed legislature was soon stormed by two armed factions: one demanding the legislature to pass the "isolation law" which would ban former Qadhafi's officials from holding office, and the other demanding the dissolution of the legislature as it failed to meet the deadline of passing the country's institution (Gartenstein-Ross & Barr, 2015). It was not surprising that the country that was ruled for forty-two years without a constitution had difficulty drafting a new one after the revolution. Similarly, the failure of the new regime to claim monopoly of force is also a product of Qadhafi's regime which, for fear of military coups, weakened the Libyan military and placed his loyal revolutionary committees as well as his own son in charge of the security apparatus.

## **Yemen**

Like Libya, Yemen was ruled by a Personalist regime that had been in power since 1978, when Lt-Col Ali Abdullah Saleh was selected by the Presidential Council as a president and commander-in-chief of the armed forces (Geddes et al, 2014a). In 2011, Saleh was forced to resign his office by popular protests and pressure from neighboring Gulf countries, and his vice-president Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi replaced him. Like Qadhafi, Saleh's regime, even though it had some formal institutions such as parliament and government, relied on tribal links, informal rules

(Phillips, 2011a) and patronage (Alley, 2010). In what follows I shed light on the formal as well as informal institutions that defined Saleh's regime and the influence these may have had on Yemen's post-Arab Spring era.

### **The tribe**

Before proceeding in any discussion about Saleh's regime, one must first understand the pivotal role that tribalism played and continues to play not only in the Saleh regime but in Yemeni political life in general. In fact, as a classified U.S. cable reported, the creation of Saleh regime in the first place was brought about as a result of a tribal pact known as *al-ahd*, or the covenant (Knights, 2013). According to this covenant, Sheikh Abd'allah al-Ahmar (most important sheikh of the Hashid confederation), Ali Mohsen al-Qadhi al-Ahmar and Ali Abd'allah Saleh (who both belong to Sanhan tribe) agreed that Hashid tribal confederation and Sanhan would protect the regime of Saleh. In exchange for this protection, as Knight reports "Saleh 'has given both men a wide berth to run their affairs with informal armies, courts, and economic empires. Saleh often bows to their demands on issues such as anti-corruption and gun control, and makes direct payments from the treasury to the two men's tribal and military constituencies" (2013, p.265).

In addition to Hashid, there are two other main tribal confederations: Bakil and Madhaj (Alley, 2010). Although with differing degrees, these tribes enjoy a great influence in Yemen and are more powerful than the state. For instance, according to Philips (2011a), "the tribes – and specifically their potential to engage in armed rebellion – are a significant factor in the regime's political calculations, and there is an element of mutual reliance between the regime and some tribal groups (particularly the Hashid and Bakil)" (pp.51-52). Nevertheless, the regime was successful in co-opting tribal leaders and balancing the tribal confederations through the distribution of patronage between major tribes (Alley, 2010). This was done through both formal

and informal mechanisms. For instance, the state has a Department of Tribal Affairs, linked to the Ministry of Local Affairs, which distributed financial stipends to the tribal leaders. However, the decisions about which tribal leaders get this aid and the amount of money they receive remained informal, depending on the leaders' loyalty to the regime and their will and capacity to suppress the anti-regime voices among their tribes (Philips, 2011a).

### **Executive Authority**

Yemen's 1994 constitution states that the executive authority includes the presidency, the government and local governance (Saif, 2001). The president, who is selected through popular elections, appoints a vice-president and a prime minister, and the latter, in turn, appoints his cabinet members (Federal Research Division, 2008). Both in theory and practice, the president has overarching authorities. According to the constitution, the president is entitled to design state policies, while only the government will be accountable for the consequences of these policies. Besides having the right to choose the prime minister, the president's approval also restricts the prime minister who cannot select or dismiss the ministers without this approval (Saif, 2001). In addition, as Saif points out, "The president also has the power to suspend the prime minister or other ministers or place them under investigation for crimes or offences committed by them in discharging their duties (Saif, 2001, p.81). Such overarching constitutional authority, however, was unlikely what facilitated the regime's control over the country's institutions. In fact, as will be briefly discussed later, the president opted out for informal, non-traditional rules to enforce his grip on power.

Like all personalist regimes, power in Yemen was concentrated in the hands of Saleh who controlled not only the executive, but also the legislature, the judiciary, the security apparatus, the military, as well as other state institutions. Although the aim of this paper is not to explain how the



regime managed to control these institutions, it would be helpful to refer briefly to few examples of the tools the regime utilized. One tool was buying off the loyalty of tribal leaders (Phillips, 2011a). In a traditional society in which most people pledge allegiance to their tribes at the expense of loyalty to the state, controlling the tribe elites could mean controlling their followers. Another tool was the inclusive nature of Saleh's patronage system (Alley, 2010). This meant that a large number of elites from various regional, tribal and sectarian backgrounds could benefit from the system and, hence, support the regime. Finally, as Philips notes, Salih played on sensitive anxieties in the Yemeni populace. For instance, he introduced himself as a guarantee for stability and security for the Yemeni people. Without him, he warned, terrorist organizations or foreign intervention would plague the country (Philips, 2011a)

### **The Legislative**

According to Wright and Escribà-Folch (2012), "in personalist regimes, the dictator does not create a legislature to share power with strong, organized parties or to constrain himself, but to manage elites who challenge him" (p.290). To some extent, Saleh's parliament was of this type. The Yemeni bicameral parliament was divided into two branches: the Consultative Council and the House of Representatives (al majlis). The former, as its name implies, was just a consultative body to the president who appointed all of its members (Saif, 2001). The latter, however was granted strong constitutional authorities. It served many purposes, but none of which involved the duties outlined in the constitution: approving and proposing legislation, questioning the executive authority, withdrawing confidence of the government and reviewing and approving the budget (Phillips, 2008). In fact, some Yemenis viewed the parliament or the *majlis* "merely as an extension of executive authority rather than a separate or co-equal branch of the government" (Sharif, 2002, p.88).

As an extension of the executive authority, (a.k.a. Saleh), the parliament served various authoritarian functions. For instance, according to Philips (2008) the *majlis* served “as a way of extending patronage to prominent member of society and the oppositions. Giving a larger section of local elites a stake in the political system by offering them a participatory role in government grants legitimacy to the system without ceding genuine control” (p.81). Another role the parliament played was giving false impression to international donors, especially Western, that the country had democratic institutions. According to Philips (2008), one MP from the Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP) gave the following judgment:

The parliament is just a place for passing decisions that are made elsewhere ... [It] is used as a means of propaganda in front of the international community to say that we have democracy and freedom of opinion, a constitution, multi-party pluralism, and this helps in obtaining loans and grants. Most donors don't grant funds without some democracy and political freedoms. (pp. 80-81)

### **The Judiciary**

Similar to other institutions in Yemen, the judiciary was granted some outstanding democratic powers in the constitution, such as being independent judicially, financially and administratively (Saif, 2001). However, the reality contradicts what the constitution stipulates. For instance, the Judicature Law of 1991, which was allegedly meant to organize the judiciary, clearly put the latter under the control of the executive branch. It gave Saleh the authority to appoint judges for the Supreme Court, establish courts, select the Attorney General and appoint members of the Supreme Judicial Council (Saif, 2001). The president, having been granted the right by this new law to further control the judiciary, appointed the judges that were loyal to him and dismissed or relocated those who opposed him (Sharif, 2002).

Even with the remaining laws that in theory gave the judiciary some independence, it remained under the control of Saleh and his loyalists. Describing the status of the Yemen judiciary system in 2008, the Federal Research Division at the Library of Congress concluded that “[t]he judicial system itself is considered weak; corruption is widespread; the government is often reluctant to enforce judgments; and judges are subject to harassment from tribal leaders, who themselves exercise significant discretion in the interpretation and application of the law” (Federal Research Division, 2008, p.19).

### **The Military**

As mentioned in the previous pages, the creation of Saleh regime involved a secret pact between Saleh and two other prominent military tribal figures. In exchange for protecting the Saleh regime, the two men were given the freedom to form their own military units (Knights, 2013). Saleh’s tribe, Sanhan which represented less than 1 percent of the Yemeni population, made up about 70 percent of all military leadership (al-Shorgabi, 2013). However, Saleh started to fear the military especially after two military coup attempts were made to remove him from power in the first year of his rule (Knight, 2013). Because of this, Saleh started relying on his family and tribal loyalists placing them at the top of several military and paramilitary units, most of them were created specifically for this purpose. These included the Republican Guard (headed by his son Ahmed Ali), Artillery Brigades (headed by officers from Saleh clan), United Yemeni Air Force (controlled by Saleh’s half-brother), and Central Security Organization (placed under the control of the president’s nephew) (Knights, 2013). While surrounding himself with family military leaders, the president also sought to weaken the traditional military units that were led mostly by Sanhan tribe (al-Shorgabi, 2013).

This personalization of the military institution caused further cleavages between the military which was already divided across tribal and sectarian lines. According to al-Shorgabi (2013), it resulted in the Yemeni military being divided between two militaries. One was loyal to President Saleh and his son Ahmed. This military was made up of the Republican Guard, Yemeni Special Operations Forces, the United Yemeni Air Force and other brigades. The other military was loyal to Ali Mohsen Al-Ahmar and it was made up of the 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division, Northwestern Military District, and other divisions (al-Shorgabi, 2013).

### **Legacies of personalist rule in Yemen**

Like Libya and Egypt, Yemen's previous regime type can be blamed for the country's post-Arab Spring political instability. The influence of previous regime type in Yemen has even been worse for a number of reasons. First, like Libya, Yemen had a personalist regime. One of the inherent characteristics of personalist rule is that power is concentrated in the hands of the ruler who turns state institutions into tools that serve his personal regime. Second, unlike Libya, the state institutions did not leave or disappear as the regime was overthrown. On the contrary, they remained and, due the nature of Saleh regime, most of them remained tools that he could manipulate. Third, the way the transition of power occurred in Yemen is different from all other Arab Spring cases. In Yemen the president was granted immunity as part of the GCC-brokered agreement. This meant that Saleh who was forced to leave a personal kingdom he had been building for three decades was free to take revenge on those who were responsible for this, using his influence, personal connections, and the state institutions that he still had control over.

One of these institutions was the military. As discussed above, Saleh's personalization of the Yemeni military resulted in the institution being divided it into two armies. One army, which was loyal to the president, included the Republican Guard and other military and paramilitary

forces that were led by Saleh's family members. The second army was led by General Ali Muhsin Saleh al-Ahmar. The divisions in the military institution were brought to the surface in the early days of the Yemeni uprising of 2011, when the second army defected from Saleh regime and declared their support for the revolution (al-Shorgabi, 2013). The GCC Initiative that was signed by the parties to the conflict included a specific article concerning the unification and restructuring of the Yemeni Army; however, attempts to apply this article by President Hadi proved to be challenging. According to al-Shorgabi (2013), when President Hadi – in an attempt to implement the restructuring of the army - issued a decree ordering the removal of several military leaders known to be loyal to Saleh and his rival al-Ahmar, most of them refused to obey the commands. The failure of restructuring and the existing tribal and sectarian divisions inside the military institution is, according to Jumei (2014), what facilitated the Huthi takeover of Sana.

In addition to the nature of the military divisions, the ruling party, the General People's Congress, was also one of the previous regime major remnants that may have hindered Yemen's democratic transition. Unlike Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt in which the ruling parties were dissolved right after the overthrow of the regime, Yemen's ruling party not only managed to remain intact after the resignation of Saleh, but it also shared power with the new regime, in accordance with the GCC Initiative agreement which split the unity government between the GMP and the GPC. The GPC and former president has been accused of cooperating with the Huthis. In fact, the United Nations Security Council imposed sanctions on former president Saleh whom the council accused of hindering the political process in Yemen ("U.N. Security Council condemns", 2015). However, regardless of whether the GPC worked with the Huthis or not, its role in the period following the resignation of former president Saleh did not appear to be conducive to a democratic transition.

This supports the argument that parties in a personalist regimes have little effect on the transition to democracy (Wright & Escribà-Folch, 2012).

### **Hybrid regimes and democracy**

The word ‘hybrid’ is used by Geddes et al (2014) to mean that the regime shares characteristics of three regime types – personalist, party, and military. Geddes et al, however, do not specify which regime characteristic is more visible in in the Egyptian case. Identifying this characteristic, or to use Geddes et al’s language, “the leadership group”, would be quite helpful for analyzing the Egyptian regime. One of the contributions of this paper is delineating which “leadership group” dominated the Egyptian regime as well as how the military, the party, and the president coexisted. Knowing which “leadership group” dominated the regime makes it possible to predict the propensity of democracy in the subsequent political order. In the Egyptian case, it was the military institution that dominated the regime. In contrast to what Geddes et al predict, the military was unfriendly to democracy as the post-Arab Spring political developments demonstrated. This, as discussed later, has to do with the nature of military institution in Egypt, which invested in political and economic life in the country.

### **Egypt**

The Egyptian pre- 2011 regime was coded as party-dominant hybrid, starting from 1952 and ending in 2011. Although three presidents – Nasser, Sadat, and Mubarak – led the regime in this long period, they were all drawn from the same leadership and followed the same rules (Geddes et al, 2014). In what follows, I discuss how the pre-2011 regime institutions influenced the post-Arab Spring period.

## **The executive**

President Hosni Mubarak came to power after the assassination of President Sadat in 1981. During his tenure in office, the president not only managed to control the executive branch, but he also maintained control over other state institutions (Stacher, 2012). Mubarak inherited the power of the executive branch from the previous presidents, especially after the split between the Free Officers in 1954, when Nasser excluded General Nagib and acquired new overarching constitutional authorities (Blaydes, 2010). Similarly, Sadat took the same path. As Blaydes explains, although Sadat

[A]llowed the formation and limited participation of political parties in Egypt, the net effect of his rule was to increase the constitutional authority of the executive branch. During his years in power, Sadat enjoyed numerous titles, including president of the republic, the chief of state, the head of government, and the supreme commander of the armed forces (2010, p.195).

However, even with this legacy of personalist rule, one scholar argues that “Mubarak was initially constrained when he inherited Sadat’s liberalizing doctrine with commitments to the rule of law” (Stacher, 2012, p.83). To free himself from these restrictions, however, he did not subdue the Supreme Court rulings à la traditional authoritarianism. Instead, he resorted to informal mechanisms that, while avoiding making a direct attack on the Supreme Court, showed he was a president who respected the judicial independence (Stacher, 2012).

Coming from the ranks of the army, Mubarak relied heavily on coopting the military officers and their affiliates. For instance, the majority of Mubarak appointees in government positions were either military men or affiliated to the military. According to Miller et al (2012),

“In 2008, when Mubarak presided over his last major round of governor appointments, “20 of the 28 governors (71 percent) had military, internal security, or intelligence backgrounds. Former military leaders could also be found in parliament and, in particular, in the defense and national security committee that oversaw military” (p.82). Coopting the military, which was the only institution that could pose a real threat to Mubarak, was very critical in assuring the safety of the regime.

### **The legislature**

Egypt had a bicameral legislature. It consists of two branches: the People’s Assembly (Majlis al-Sah’b) and the Advisory Council (Majlis al-Shura). The People’s Assembly had 454 seats, ten of which were appointed by the president who also appointed one third of the Advisory Council which had limited authority. The rest were elected by popular vote (Blaydes, 2010). The elections to choose parliament members, however, were marked by fraud and manipulation, and the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) always won the majority of votes. It even won 93.3 percent of the seats in the latest parliamentary elections to be held by the Mubarak regime, in December 2010 (El-Gobashy, 2012).

Through his NDP, Mubarak turned the parliament into a tool for manipulating the constitution and making laws that legitimized his authoritarian rule. Renewing the emergency law during the Mubarak days is a good example. For instance, according to Rutherford (2013), “[o]n April 30, 2006, the Egyptian Parliament voted by a large majority to renew the emergency law. This law grants the president extraordinary powers to detain citizens, prevent public gatherings, and issue decrees with little accountability to Parliament or the people” (p.1). It was not the first time the parliament renewed the emergency law. The emergency law entered into force since 1981 and remained active until was revoked after the overthrow of Mubarak in 2011.



Despite the fact that the Egyptian parliament had so little *de facto* power to influence the political system and exercise the *de jure* authority it is entitled to the constitution, the opposition forces continued to run for the parliamentary seats and participate in the rigid elections that the regime organize. The opposition boycotted only one elections in 1990, out of eight elections that were organized in the period between 1976 and 2010 (El-Gobashy, 2012). The question of why the opposition MPs, who were described by one of their fellows as *masakin*, or downtrodden (Shehata & Stacher, 2006), participated in the Mubarak parliament remains a debatable area of research. Some argue that the material gains from holding the office was the main motivation to politicians seeking to participate (Blaydes, 2010), while others, like El-Gobashy, argue that the elections for parliament were significant “arenas of intense struggle for greater representation” (2012, p.148).

### **The judiciary**

The Egyptian judicial branch is made up of two main court systems: the ordinary courts and the administrative courts of the State Council. The first type of courts deal with personal, criminal, civil, commercial, and criminal cases. The second handles issues involving the state. In addition, the country also has specialized courts and a military court system that can try civilians (Rutherford, 2013). The most important court, however, is the Supreme Constitutional Court (SCC), which “holds exclusive authority to rule on the constitutionality of laws, resolve conflicts of jurisdiction among courts, and provide definitive interpretations of the law” (Rutherford, 2013), p.51).

The SCC has been widely cited as the only court in the Arab world that enjoyed some relative independence from the executive (for example, Rutherford, 2013; Choudhry et al, 2014). Indeed, there were several occasions in which the SCC challenged the Mubarak regime. One

example was the SCC's ruling in 2000 that the Political Participation Law discriminated against independents, and it further ruled that the sitting parliament was unconstitutional because the elections that brought it was carried out under that law (Choudhry et al, 2014; Rutherford, 2013). Whether this decision manifested a level of judicial independence or it was merely a political maneuvering by the regime is valid question. However, the reality was that the SCC was constrained, if not controlled, by the executive, as various instances confirmed.

For instance, after this ruling, and following the retirement of the SCC Chief Justice in 2001, Mubarak appointed one of his loyalists, Fathi Naguib, as the new SCC Chief Justice (Choudhry et al, 2014). The appointment of one the most trusted members of the regime led to excluding the judicial voices inside the SCC that were not loyal to the regime and resulted in a new judicial-executive relationship that placed the former and control of the latter (Choudhry et al, 2014). According to Choudhry et al (2014),

The impact that Mubarak's assertion of control over the SCC had on its independence can be clearly seen in its subsequent rulings. After the appointment of Chief Justice Naguib and the new judges, the Court modified its earlier ruling on the question of authority over election monitoring changed the regime's ... [it also] issued another ruling on elections that similarly favoured the regime (p.62).

### **The military**

The Egyptian military has been the de facto ruler, *but not the governor*, of Egypt since the 1952 Free Officers Coup. (Cook, 2007). Like their Algerian and Turkish counterparts, the Egyptian officers have “derived significant measure of legitimacy from nationalist narratives that place the officers at the center of struggles against colonialism, external aggression, and the realization of

the ‘national will’” (Cook, 2007, p.28). The Egyptian narrative stressed the role of the military in overthrowing the corrupt monarchy in 1952, defending the country against the tripartite aggression in 1956, recapturing Sinai from the Israelis in 1973, and guarantying stability and security for Egypt and the region (Cook, 2007). This account resonated with many Egyptians who hold their military in high regard. In addition, the institutional character of the Egyptian military – as opposed to patrimonial and tribal armies – (Bellin, 2012) may have increased the level of support and respect of the military institution among Egyptians populace.

As the de facto ruler, the military’ relationship with Mubarak, or any other president for that matter, could be described as symbiotic, with the two parties benefiting from each other. On the part of the military, it ensures the continuity of the regime by protecting the president, extending him their trust and loyalty and leaving the day-to-day governance in his hands (Cook, 2007). On the part of the president, he keeps his end of the deal by assuring that the interests of the military remain intact. These include economic interests (Barany, 2011), security and foreign policies, state and political apparatus, and nationalism (Cook, 2007).

To understand the pivotal role of the military in Egypt, it is necessary to understand the complexity of the military involvement in the economic life. For instance, according to Barany (2011),

Field Marshal Mohamed Hussein Tantawi, who chairs the SCAF and heads the Defense Ministry, also runs the Ministry of Military Production. Military officers directly profit from the army’s business endeavors through relatively high salaries plus preferential treatment in medical care, housing, and transport. And, of course, the armed forces also reap US\$1.3 billion every year in military aid from the United States” (32).

The military economic ventures, according to Cook (2007), include “manufacture of weapons, electronics, and consumer goods; infrastructure development; various agribusinesses; as well as services in the aviation, tourism, and security sectors” (p.19).

### **Legacies of Mubarak regime**

By looking at the post-Mubarak political developments in Egypt against the backdrop of the institutional legacies provided in the discussion above, one could begin to make sense of why events unfolded the way they did since Mubarak was overthrown in 2011. However, by focusing only on Mubarak and overlooking the pivotal role that the military institution plays in Egyptian politics, one would undoubtedly miss the whole picture. As demonstrated above, the military has been the de facto ruler, though not always the governor, of Egypt since the Free Officers coup in 1952. With this in the background, a discussion of Egyptian post-Arab Spring experience would make a lot more sense.

When Mubarak was forced to resign his office on February 11, 2011, after 2 weeks and three days of popular protests, it was the military that engineered this coup. By refusing to shoot peaceful demonstrators, the military was reneging on their promise to protect the president, thus breaking the long-held deal between the military institution and the officer-turned-civilian president. As discussed above, this deal required the military to watch over the president as long as the latter ensured the safety of the military economic and political interests. The military, however, unlike that of Tunisia, did not return to its barracks and hand the power over to a civilian government. On the contrary, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) stepped in to govern the transitional period, lest any other civilian force could take the place of Mubarak and pose a threat to the military institution.

During the period between February 11, 2011, and the election of Egypt's first democratically-elected civilian president in June 30, 2012, the SCAF was in charge of running the country. SCAF was aware of the rising popularity of the Muslim Brotherhood whose ascendance to power may threaten the position of the military institution. The parliamentary elections of November 2011 confirmed the SCAF's concerns of the growing Brotherhood's threat, for the majority of votes went to the Brotherhood' Freedom and Justice Party followed by the Ultra-religious Salafist Nur party. Unhappy with the Islamist-dominated parliament, the SCAF finally intervened supporting the Supreme Constitutional Court's ruling to dissolve the newly-elected parliament based on accusations of electoral fraud on the part of the Brotherhood and the Salafists (Cole, 2014).

With the parliament dissolved, the SCAF acted as the de facto legislative branch (Cole, 2014) while backing a presidential candidate who was competing with the Brotherhood's candidate, Mohamed Morsi, in the second round of the presidential elections. Although Ahmed Shafiq, a former senior commander in the Egyptian Air Force and a prominent figure in the Mubarak era, was backed by the military, he lost the competition to Morsi. The military now had to deal with the new civilian president who seemed to be determined to keep the SCAF subordinate to the president. Indeed, during the one year he was in power, President Morsi unsuccessfully attempted to undermine the power of the military institution. First, soon after he was elected, he issued a decree calling on the People's Assembly, the lower house of the parliament, to reconvene, in a direct challenge to SCAF's earlier declaration that ordered the dissolution of the assembly ("Egypt: Who holds", 2013). Second, the president tried to restructure the military institution by retiring Field Marshal Mohamed Hussein Tantawi and Lieutenant General Sami Hafez Anan, while promoting other officers (Cole, 2014).

The military felt threatened by Morsi's challenging policies and, according to Cole (2014), they put him "under electronic surveillance, recording his conversations, and began building a case against him of running interference for Muslim extremists. If Morsi thought a decree and a couple of retirements had put him in charge of the Egyptian military, he was mistaken." (p.211). Indeed, in July 3, 2013 the military used the popular dissatisfaction among many Egyptians towards the Brotherhood as a pretext to intervene and topple the newly elected president. After the coup, President Morsi and many of the Brotherhood leaders were put under arrest. General Sis, who was Morsi's minister of defense, led the coup, declaring that the constitution was suspended. The Muslim Brotherhood was banned, and the government violently cracked down on the protesters.

The post-Arab Spring experience in Egypt helps us understand, not only the significant role of the military, but also how the nature of the relationship between the executive and the military during Mubarak's era influenced the behavior of the military in the subsequent regime. That symbiotic relationship was based on the subordination of the executive branch to the power of the military institution. The military intervened to remove Mubarak from office when it felt that protecting him may threaten the military interests - which included maintaining its image as a defender of the popular will. It also intervened when Morsi directly challenged not only these interests but also the integration of the military institution.

Another institution that played a role in the post-Mubarak era was the judiciary. As discussed above, the Egyptian judiciary was arguably the only judiciary in the Arab World that enjoyed some level of independence. This was due to the fact that the Supreme Constitutional Court had issued rulings that apparently challenged the Mubarak regime. But as I argued, this judicial independence was short-lived as Mubarak soon appointed a loyal SCC chief justice and excluded the independent voices inside the SCC. When Mubarak fell, however, the SCC remained

largely dominated by the same Mubarak-affiliated judges who would later play politically-motivated roles. For example, the convergence between the SCAF and the SCC, especially with regard to the People Assembly dissolution ruling, could indicate that two of Mubarak regime's main pillars, the army and the judiciary, were conspiring against the new political order. It appears that this is what president Morsi had in mind as he issued his controversial decree that put the president's decrees above the judicial oversight.

### **Party-dominant regimes and democracy**

Parties, especially in dominant-party regimes, make democratization more likely because they influence the distribution of power and secure the interests of the regime elites in a subsequent democracy. (Wright & Escribà-Folch, 2012). Because power is distributed, institutions are less linked to the leader, and, hence, can play a positive role when the regime is overthrown. In addition, the previous ruling party, thanks to its electoral experience and voter mobilization repertoire, positively contribute to democratic competition. This perhaps explains why previous authoritarian parties often participate in post-regime elections and do quite well (Wright & Escribà-Folch, 2012).

### **Tunisia**

The Tunisian regime is coded as party-dominant. It started in 1956 when the Neo-Destour party of Bourguiba came to power after the independence, and it was ended in February 2011 following the resignation of President Ben Ali and the cabinet members associated with his ruling party (Geddes et al, 2014). Between the period of 1956 and 2011 only two presidents ruled the country: Habib Bourguiba (1956-1987) and Zine El Abidine Ben Ali (1987-2011).

## **The party and the president**

Unlike Egypt where the military was the de facto ruler or Libya and Yemen where all powers were concentrated in the hands of the presidents, the party-based system of Tunisia meant that the party, rather than the president, assumed more power. This difference between Tunisia and the rest of the Arab countries could be traced back to the early years of state formation when colonial powers withdrew from the Arab world. In most of the Arab countries, military officers, or ‘officers-turned-presidents,’ took control and depended on the military institution to assure their survival (Nassif, 2015). In Tunisia, however, a civilian president who – according to Nassif was antimilitary - succeeded the colonial administration. As Nassif argues, “[t]hroughout his long tenure as president, stretching from 1957 to 1987, [Bourguiba] leaned on his ruling Parti Socialiste Destourien (PSD; Constitutional Socialist Party), to maintain a firm grip on power” (Nassif, 2015, p.67).

When Ben Ali came to power after engineering a constitutional bloodless coup that removed Bourguiba from office based on health grounds, he did not deviate from Bourguibism or turned away from the party. In fact, according to Zartman (1991), from the first moment he came to power, “ben Ali was most careful to preserve all that was positive in the reputation of Bourguiba and to pay his deepest respects to Bourguiba’s primary role in building the state” (p.15). Similarly, Ben Ali’s position towards the party was characterized by attempts to subdue the party but at the same time fear of the consequences. For instance, according to Murphy (1999), Ben Ali “attempted to reassure both the population as a whole and the PSD in particular, that he represented a force for continuity through his appointment almost immediately of a government with virtually the same composition as the last cabinet of his predecessor” (p.166)



Although Ben Ali had attempted to make new changes in the party-based system that would strengthen the president's position, he was not completely successful. These attempts included appointing himself as the chairman of PSD political bureau, reducing the membership of the bureau from 20 to 12, and changing the name of the party to become *Rassemblement Constitutionnel Démocratique* (Murphy, 1999). These changes, however, were neither a rupture with the past nor were they meant to weaken the role of the party. In fact, according to one Tunisian opposition leader who was interviewed in 2005, "The Constitutional Democratic Rally has held power since independence. With two million members, its power is beyond doubt" (Hachicha, 2005, p.1). With these two million members, Ben Ali was unable to tame the party. As Zartman argues, unlike Mikhail Gorbachev, Ben Ali "has never felt strong enough to take on the party directly and never had any sure counterparties to balance the Destourian machine" (Zartman, 1991, p.14).

## **Legislature**

Despite his overt commitment to the Bourguibian path, Ben Ali introduced new political and economic reforms that had been considered a taboo in the preceding political order. One of these was partially allowing members of legal opposition parties to run for elections and hold seats in the parliament (Angrist, 1999). The parliament thus became the only state institution that included actors from outside the ruling party (Miller et al, 2012). Nevertheless, this opposition representation in the parliament was marginal and insignificant. The regime had a fixed quota that identified the exact number of seats to be held by the opposition. Therefore, as Angrist argue, it was "mathematically impossible for opposition deputies to alter or vote down legislation which they do not support" (1999, p.98). This is in addition to fraud and votes manipulations by the regime in order to ensure the RCD had full control over the legislative branch (Miller et al, 2012).

Parliaments in the Arab world, even in those countries with significant opposition representation in parliament, had limited authority. In the Tunisian case, the National Assembly was even weaker. To serve its rhetoric of commitment to democracy, the regime allowed the opposition parties to participate in the National Assembly in order to give it some legitimacy as a democratic institution (Murphy, 1999). In reality, however, the National Assembly was dominated by the ruling party and it did not serve as a democratic institution, even with a marginal opposition representation. On the contrary, As Angrist (1999) argues, “allowing a tiny minority of MPs to hail from the opposition does not change the political game dramatically. Indeed, and ironically, bringing opposition deputies into parliament may be making the exercise of power more authoritarian” (p.99).

## **Judiciary**

Tunisia is known in the Arab world for its secular constitution which incorporated most of the French traditions of *laïcité* and a similar Personal Status Code which was adopted shortly after the independence. The Personal Status Code granted women full legal status, outlawing polygamy and granting women the rights to ownership and education (U.S. Department of State, 2008). The 1959 constitution states that all Tunisian citizens are equal before law and that they should possess the same rights (Tunisia Const., 1959, art. 6). Furthermore, the constitution provides that “The judicial authority is independent. In exercising their functions, judges are subject only to the authority of the law” (Tunisia Const., 1959, art. 65). Judicial independence, though enshrined in the constitution, was nevertheless non-existent in pre-2011 Tunisia.

According to Samir Ghamroun, a researcher in the sociology of law, Tunisia judges under Ben Ali’s regime were subdued to the power of the executive. The small minority of judges who refused to be submissive to the regime were harassed and even tortured (“The Judiciary in”, 2013).

For instance, when in 2005 the Association of Tunisian Judges disapproved the state policy of targeting lawyers on the grounds of their political affiliations, “the board of the Association was dissolved and the judges who had protested were silenced, removed from their posts, and transferred to remote provinces” Al-Zubaidi, 2011, p.226).

## **Military**

As mentioned earlier, Tunisia represented an exception to the rest of the Arab non-monarchical regimes with regards to the role of the military in the political scene. When the country became independent from the French Protectorate in 1956, the nationalist movement which was headed by the civilian president Bourguiba, relied not on military officers, but on its party apparatchiks (Nassif, 2015). According Barany (2011), “Unlike most other North African armies, Tunisia’s had never even attempted a coup, had never taken part in making political decisions, had never been a “nation-building” instrument, and had never joined in economic-development schemes” (p.27). Interviews with Tunisian military officers after the Arab Spring show that they are proud of this *specificite tunisienne* and that the institutional culture of the Tunisian military rejected coups and political involvement (Nassif, 2015).

Despite the fact that President Ben Ali was a military officer, the process through which he climbed the ladder to presidency was institutional and purely civilian in nature. He entered politics as a director of National Security, an interior minister, and finally a prime minister in 1987 (Zartman, 1991; Nassif, 2015). However, as Nassif argues, without the party, Ben Ali would not have risen through the ranks of the political hierarchy. Although during his early years in office, Ben Ali appointed General Habib Ammar and General Abd al-Aziz al-Shaykh as ministers, as well as other military-affiliated members (Murphy, 1999), these appointments were not as much a gesture of favoring the military institution as they were rewards for Ben Ali’s life-long friends in

the military (Nassif, 2015). In fact, the president would later continue the Bourguibian tradition of marginalizing the military and excluding it from politics. The reason for this marginalization was, according to Nassif, due to the rivalry between the military institution on the one hand and the ruling party and the police on the other, a competition that was won by the second rival leading to the alienation and exclusion of the military (Nassif, 2015).

### **Legacy of Party-dominant regimes**

As many have observed, the behavior of the military institutions in Tunisia and Egypt was decisive in ending the two authoritarian regimes. Although the two institutions behaved the same way towards their presidents, the motivations for each one were different. While in Egypt the military had huge economic interests and a political role to play after the overthrow of Mubarak, the Tunisian military had no interests in the local politics, as the subsequent years demonstrated. The reason Tunisian army returned to its barracks without playing politics has to do with the nature of Tunisia's previous regime type which, unlike many countries in the region, relied on a strong party to enforce its authoritarian rule. As the above discussion reveals, even President Ben Ali, who came from the officer corps, had to go through the party on his way to the presidency. This "Tunisian exception" can be attributed to a combination of regime policies aimed at excluding the military from politics, and the military's institutional character – meaning that it sees itself as an institution that is independent from the regime and political or economic involvement.

The nature of the military undoubtedly helped Tunisians avoid the fate of Egypt and, even worse, the fate of other countries where the military is divided along tribal and sectarian lines. However, this, alone, does not explain why Tunisia fared well in its political transition. The party-based system perhaps contributed to the success of the Tunisian transition, for a number of reasons. First, unlike in Egypt where there was a strong previous regime veto player – the military – who

was expected to intervene to back up one political faction over the other, this was absent in Tunisia. The competition was between political parties, alone, and each group was playing by the democratic rules. That is, elections were the only mechanisms through which political factions can gain representation in parliament. Commitment to democratic rules would have looked different if Tunisia had non-democratic tools similar to those found in Egypt (military backing one political faction by soft or hard power), Libya (the power of the gun) or Yemen (the existence of tribal and sectarian groups using coercive mean).

Second, as Wright and Escribà-Folch (2012) argue, “an important feature of dominant party regimes is their extensive patronage networks, which help the party mobilize votes” (p.291). This voter mobilization helps the party gain more votes even after the authoritarian regime falls (Wright & Escribà-Folch, 2012). In the Tunisian case, this was largely true of Ben Ali’s ruling party, the Constitutional Democratic Rally. Although the party was banned after the revolution, it began to appear through different names and its apparatchiks entered the new Constituent Assembly as independents. According to Khashana (2011), the total number of seats held by the RCD (under the umbrella of independents and new parties) was 27, making it the third largest bloc in the new parliament. In the following parliamentary and presidential elections which were held in October and November 2014, respectively, the previous ruling party did even better. This time under the umbrella of Nida Tunis, the party won the majority of parliamentary seats and its candidate Mohamed Beji Caid Essebsi became the president of the Republic. The experience of the ruling party-affiliated politicians in post-Arab Spring Tunisia demonstrates that parties, especially strong parties, have a positive impact on the democratic development. This is due to the fact that they possess a long-established experience in voter mobilization which they can employ to operate in a new democratic environment and win according to democratic rules. The return of

Tunisia's previous ruling party under new names and umbrellas should not be confused with the return of previous regime, as some might argue. According to Linz and Stepan (1996), democratic transition and consolidation are processes that are present and future oriented, and they are not necessarily a rejection of the past. Similar to the findings of Wright and Escibà-Folch (2012) which show that when democratization occurs, previous authoritarian parties usually participate and do well, Linz and Stepan argue:

Empirically, we reject such arguments because for recent transitions we have conclusive documentation showing that it is possible for democracy to become consolidated while only a minority of the public completely rejects the past. Proof of this is that, in 1985 in Portugal and Spain, when according to our criteria, democracy had already been consolidated in both countries, less than 30 percent of those polled said that the Franco of Salazar regimes were 'only bad'." (p.144)

### **Concluding reflections on institutional legacies**

The task of Section I was twofold. First, it explored in detail the institutional profile of previous regime in each country, outlining the function, role, and power base of each institution. Second, it examined how previous regime type influenced the political trajectory in all four cases after the fall their regimes. The discussion of institutional legacies in Section I, however, was carried out on an individual basis, treating each country separately. These concluding reflections fill in this lacuna by putting the pieces together and providing a discussion of the four cases as a whole.

The results of this chapter show that there is a strong relationship between the previous regime type and the post-Arab Spring political developments in all four cases. The results strongly

support the hypotheses related to previous regime type. As a whole, the four cases demonstrate that previous regime institutions may influence the political outcome in the given country. Similarly, discussion of the pre-2011 regimes of Yemen and Libya, which are coded as personalist, revealed that the overthrow of personalist regimes is less likely to lead to democracy (H4). As explained earlier, the reason why personalist regimes are unfavorable to democracy has to do with the concentration of power in the hands of leaders, which undermines the role of institutions and decreases the likelihood of them playing a role in the subsequent political order. As H4 expects, party-dominant regimes are very likely to result in democracy. This is demonstrated through the experience of Tunisia which had a pre-Arab Spring party-dominant regime and, when this was ousted, it led a successful democratic transition in the following years.

Finally, the experience of Egypt further indicates that the institutional legacy of previous regimes shaped the post-Arab Spring political developments in the four cases. Egypt's experience, in particular, clearly shows that the expectations of H5 hold true. The existence of a powerful military that is invested in local political and economic life hindered the process of democratic transition in the country. Although the Egyptian military intervened few years earlier siding with the people against Mubarak, their intervention was less about favoring democracy than it was about confirming their position as an institutional veto player. As the following years further made clear, the military soon intervened to topple a civilian president who exhibited reluctance to the traditional power distribution network in the country. As Table 2 shows, the military was the most powerful institution in the country during and after the Mubarak regime.

Table 2: Institutional distribution of power in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, and Yemen (pre- and post-Arab Spring).

	<b>Egypt</b>		<b>Tunisia</b>		<b>Libya</b>		<b>Yemen</b>	
	Pre-2011	Post-2011	Pre-2011	Post-2-11	Pre-2011	Post-2011	Pre-2011	Post-2011
<b>Legislature</b>	weak	weak	weak	Weak	weak	weak	weak	weak
<b>Judiciary</b>	strong	strong	weak	Weak	weak	weak	weak	weak
<b>Military</b>	strong	strong	weak	Weak	weak	weak	weak	weak
<b>Leader/president</b>	Partially strong	Partially strong	Partially strong	Partially strong	strong	weak	strong	strong
<b>The party</b>	weak	weak	strong	Strong	n/a	weak	weak	weak

## Section II: Opposition leadership

In Section I, I argued that while inherited institutions in Tunisia were favorable to democracy, the institutional legacies constrained the process of democratic transition in Egypt, Libya and Yemen. In this section, I turn to the role of opposition leadership in all four cases. Although the nature of opposition could be treated as a legacy of previous regime type, given that the fragmentation and cohesion of opposition leadership is likely shaped by the regime's policies, I nonetheless treat this variable separately. I measure the role of opposition leadership by looking at their position in the previous regime (whether the regime allowed them to operate, and how unified or fragmented they were) as well as their role in the transition period.

### Tunisia

Tunisia had a long history of single-party rule. When the country became independent in 1956, the Neo-Destour party, headed by the popular nationalist leader Habib Bourguiba, became



the only party responsible for rule and order in the country (Murphy, 1999). Although in the early years of Bin Ali’s rule, other parties were allowed to operate and enter the National Assembly, this was more of a rhetoric than a reality (Angrist, 1999). Only few of the small parties were allowed to exist and the regime continued to ban the Islamist, leftist and Ba’athist parties. Most of these party leaders were forced into exile, and it was there that they managed to meet and negotiate the future of Tunisia after Bin Ali.

Table 3: Opposition Leadership before and after the Arab Spring

Country	Unified in pre-Arab Spring period	Legal in previous regime	Consensus in the post-Arab Spring period
<b>Tunisia</b>	Yes	No	Yes
<b>Egypt</b>	No	Yes	No
<b>Yemen</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Libya</b>	No	No	No

Despite the Secular-Islamic cleavages that existed between Tunisia’s opposition elites, the latter were able to form what Linz and Stepan call the *political society* (1996). According to Stepan and Linz (2013), “secular liberals and Islamists began meeting regularly eight years before Ben Ali’s fall to see whether they could reduce mutual fears and agree upon rules for democratic governance” (p.23). Indeed, the post-Ben Ali’s political life in Tunisia was characterized by the existence of consensus between its major political actors. This consensus was translated into the creation of a coalition known as “troika”, which led the country during a critical period and overseeing elections and the process of drafting the constitution.

This “troika” was formed by three parties: Ennahda (Renaissance), represented by Hamadi Jabali as Prime Minister, the Congress for the Republic (CPR), represented by Moncef Marzouki as president of the republic, and the Democratic Forum for Labor and Liberties which was

represented by Mustapha Ben Jafar as president of the National Assembly. Although Ennahda's government was forced to resign in mid-2013 and a new caretaker government of autocrats replaced it, the consensus continued to distinguish politics in Tunisia even after Ennahda's rival, Nida Tunis, won parliamentary and presidential elections. This party, which contains some political players from Ben Ali's era, brought Ennahda into his coalition government.

## **Egypt**

Unlike Tunisia, Egypt had a multiparty system, although only one party, the ruling party, was the dominant. The opposition parties in Egypt, as Table 2 shows, were not unified when they were struggling against Mubarak or in the period following the regime's overthrow. In fact, one could argue that the Egyptian military took advantage of the leadership cleavages and played on the opposition leadership's Islamist-secular divisions, ousting the first democratically elected president and bringing the military back to power. The divisions between Islamists and Secularists in Egypt are different from those found in Tunisia for a number of reasons. One is the existence of a Christian Coptic minority in Egypt that always feared the Brotherhood rule. Second, the type of political Islam that exists in Tunisia is far more moderate than the Muslim Brotherhood. For instance, while Ennahda was expressing its commitment to democratic values and principles, "the Brotherhood's website was still displaying its 2007 draft party platform, complete with nondemocratic features such as a rejection of the idea that a woman or a non-Muslim (two groups comprising more than half the populace) could ever be president of Egypt" (Stepan & Linz, 2013, p.23).

The opposition parties, however, were united against the Brotherhood rule, especially after President Morsi's constitutional declaration that was issued in November 22, 2012. The decree, which was perceived as giving the president far-reaching powers, was met with resistance from

liberal, leftist and nationalist opposition parties (Cole, 2014). On 24 November, these parties formed a coalition called the National Salvation Front that was directed against the president and the Brotherhood-led government. The opposition parties soon joined the popular protests that were calling on the President Morsi to resign, a call that was answered by the military in July 3, 2013.

## **Yemen**

Yemen represented an interesting case of unified opposition leadership. In the years preceding the Arab Spring, the opposition parties in Yemen were unified under the umbrella of the Joint Meeting Parties. As Philips explains, “[t]he JMP is a diverse coalition of six opposition parties: Islah and the Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP) – the larger and more experienced, the Nasserite Party, the Union of Popular Forces (UPF), the al-Haqq Party and the Ba’ath National Party” (Philips, 2011b ,p.105). During the 2011 anti-Saleh protests, the Joint parties remained united and participated in the protests along with the young revolutionaries while at the same time negotiating with the regime. The international community and the regional players counted on the JMP for ensuring a smooth transition of power.

Indeed, the Gulf Cooperation Council Transition (GCC) Initiative, which was responsible for forcing President Saleh to resign, invited the JMP parties - not the youth - to the negotiation table, because both the JMP and GCC wanted to keep power in the hands of the elites (Philips, chapter, 2011c). When President Saleh has finally agreed to leave office, after signing a GCC-brokered agreement whereby he relinquished his power to his vice president Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi in exchange for immunity (Bruck, Alwazir, & Wiacek, 2014), the JMP parties were offered half of the unity government seats that was formed shortly after – the other half went to Saleh’s ruling party (Cole, 2014). The opposition leadership, as represented by the JMP, remained united even after the Huthis took over the country. Their integrating, though played a significant role in

power transition from Saleh to Hadi, could not protect the country against the sociocultural veto player, represented by the Huthis, as well as the legacies of personalist regime.

## **Libya**

There was no political opposition under Qadhafi's regime. Political parties were banned under the Jamahiriya system, and the regime used the revolutionary committees to haunt and assassinate any opposition to Qadhafi even outside of the country. Perhaps this was why no official opposition formed in exile. When the 2011 anti-Qadhafi armed rebellion started, a group of academics, lawyers, defected military leaders, and long-exiled politicians who returned home formed a political leadership of thirty-three members that was called the National Transitional Council (Kamat & Shokr, 2013). These leaders, however, had only one thing in common: to get rid of Qadhafi. When this was achieved in late 2011, differences in the NTC leadership began to surface between moderate Islamists, radical Islamists, nationalists, federalism advocates, tribalists, and other voices. However, it is unlikely that a united political leadership would have saved Libya. Like in Yemen, the power of the armed groups that are divided along tribal, sectarian, and ideological lines, would have posed a bigger challenge than that of divided political elites.

### **Concluding reflections on the role of opposition leadership**

The examination of the role of opposition leadership in the post-Arab Spring political developments in the four cases yielded ambivalent results. Although this ambivalence does not completely support hypothesis 3, which expects a positive relationship between a unified and cohesive opposition and the success of democratic transition, it is clear that some of the cases do exhibit the existence of such relationship. This is especially true for the Tunisian case where the opposition forces were relatively unified both before and after the fall of Ben Ali's regime. During

the transition period, a coalition of three political parties was in charge of running the country, organizing parliamentary and presidential elections and drafting the constitution.

The success of this coalition in drafting the constitution and organizing elections points out to the importance of opposition leadership in leading successful democratic transition. However, Tunisia's opposition leadership were not all unified. The "troika" coalition was made up of three parties only, and the rest remained opposed to the coalition government. In fact, massive popular protests, led by the opposition parties outside of the "troika" camp, forced the Annahda-led government to step down in early 2014 and cede power to a caretaker government made up of technocrats. This shows that cleavages did exist between Tunisia's opposition leadership despite the politics of consensus that marked the political life in the country after the overthrow of the regime.

Although less clear, the situations in Egypt and Libya also demonstrate that the absence of a unified opposition leadership maybe partially responsible for the failure of the two countries' experiences. In Egypt, the military has arguably taken advantage of the strong Islamist-secularist division between the Brotherhood and the liberal and nationalist opposition forces to topple the president, and in Libya the absence of opposition parties, which were banned under Qadhafi's regime, exacerbated the already-existing tribal, regional, and ideological cleavages in Libya, making the process of democratic transition more difficult. The case of Yemen also exhibits strong opposition leadership unity, even though the country's outcome was not democratic. Yemen had a unified opposition that operated during Saleh's regime under the umbrella of Joint Meeting Parties (JMP). This coalition, although remained unified after the fall of Saleh, was not strong enough to balance the power of the sociocultural veto player of Huthis and the legacies of Saleh.

### **Section III: Socio economic development**

In this section, I analyze the socioeconomic status of each of my four cases in the time period preceding the Arab Spring (2005-2011). I focus on these five indicators as a proxy for the level of socioeconomic development: population number, percentage of population under poverty line, literacy rate, GDP per capita, and the GINI coefficient. In addition, I control for oil and other natural resources rents, measuring the contribution of these rents to the total gross domestic product. An analysis of the relationship, if any, between a country's level of socioeconomic development and the nature of its post-Arab Spring democratic performance will be included.

#### **Egypt**

As Table 4 shows, 2008 estimates indicate that 22 percent of Egyptian population live under poverty line (defined by the World Bank as living on less \$1.25 a day). Egypt ranks sixteen on the list of the world's most populated countries, with 86,895,099 (CIA Factbook). This puts the total number of Egyptian poor at about 19 million people. Added to that, the country had around 27 percent illiteracy, ranking below Libya and Tunisia. Education, according to some advocates of the socioeconomic development theories, increases the complexity of the people and, therefore, the likelihood of democracy (Lipset, 1959).

Table 4: socioeconomic development indicators in Tunisia Egypt, Libya, and Yemen (2005 – 2011)

Country	Total number of population <sup>1</sup>	% population Under poverty <sup>2</sup>	Literacy rate <sup>3</sup>	GDP per capita (2010) <sup>4</sup>	GINI Coefficient (2011) <sup>5</sup>	Human Development Index (HDI) Value (2010)	Natural resources rents (% of GDP) - 2009 <sup>6</sup>
<b>Tunisia</b>	10,937,521	3.8 (2005 est.)	79.1 % of pop.	\$ 4,211.4	40.8 %	0.683	5.6
<b>Egypt</b>	86,895,099	22 (2008 est.)	73.9 % of pop.	\$ 2,803.5	32.1 %	0.620	12.0
<b>Libya</b>	6,244,174	33 (estimated)	89.5 % of pop.	\$ 12,375.4	36%	0.755	46.3
<b>Yemen</b>	26,052,966	45.2	65.3 % of pop.	\$ 1,394.5	37.7 %	0.439	18.2

In 2010, Egypt's GDP per capita was registered at \$ 2,803.5. A look at Table 4 reveals that Egypt's GDP per capita was low compared to its neighboring Libya and Tunisia. This further indicated that economic realities of Egypt were not conducive to democratic transition. With regards to the GINI coefficient indicators, however, Egypt fares a bit better compared to the other three countries. GINI index "measures the extent to which the distribution of income or consumption expenditure among individuals or households within an economy deviates from a perfectly equal distribution" (World Bank). This means that a country with 0 GINI coefficient has a perfect income distribution. (CIA Factbook) In 2011, Egypt's GINI coefficient index was registered at 32.1 as Table 4 shows. According to the CIA World Factbook's data on family income

<sup>1</sup> Source: CIA World Fact Book

<sup>2</sup> Source: CIA World Fact Book

<sup>3</sup> Source: CIA World Fact Book

<sup>4</sup> Source: World Bank data

<sup>5</sup> Source: Global Peace Index

<sup>6</sup> Source: World Bank data

distribution, Egypt achieved a ranking of 116 on a list of 141 countries, with 1 being the most unequal.

With regards to oil and other natural resources, Egypt, as shown in Table 4, derives 12 percent of its gross domestic product from natural resources rents. The World Bank data from which this figure is borrowed defines natural resources rents as oil rents, natural gas rents, coal rents, mineral rents, and forest rents (World Bank data) According to this data, Egypt's GDP share of natural resources rents is small compared to Libya and Yemen for instance. However, according to the rentier state theory, Egypt is a perfect example of a rentier state because of its dependence on two other sources of external rent: foreign aid that flows from the United States and the payments for passage through the Suez Canal (Ross, 2001).

### **Tunisia**

Just by looking at Table 4, Tunisia appears to be an outlier in almost all the indicators. Unlike Egypt which has a population of over 80 million, the total number of Tunisian society is less than 11 million. Of these, only 3.8 percent live under poverty, and the country boasts 79.1 percent literacy rate, making it second to Libya. In addition, Tunisian society is different from the rest of the Arab world with regards to its homogeneous peculiarity. It is 98 percent Arab, 98 percent Muslim (Koplow, 2009), and has no Sunni-Shia or Berber-Arab divisions (Murphy, 1999) as is the case with its North African and Middle East neighbors. The presence of national unity, which is a precondition for democracy, according to Rustow (1970), may have been responsible for avoiding Tunisia the scenarios of ethnic tensions and civil wars that have plagued some other Arab countries.



Tunisia also boasts a higher GDP per capita, compared to its Arab non-oil counterparts. In 2010, as Table 4 shows, the country's GDP per capita was registered at \$ 4,211.4, second to its oil-rich neighboring Libya. Unlike Libya, however, this high GDP was not due to the country's abundant natural resources. In fact, as Table 4 indicates, Tunisian natural resources contributed a portion of only 5.6 percent to its gross domestic product in 2009. Unlike Egypt, Libya and Yemen, Tunisia enjoys a diversified economy that encompasses sectors as diverse as agriculture, tourism, textiles, as well as other sectors (Koplow, 2009). Despite this relatively high economic performance, Tunisia has the highest GINI coefficient index, as Table 4 reveals. Tunisia is ranked number 59 in the CIA data on family income distribution, with a GINI coefficient index of 40 according to estimates of 2005.

### **Libya**

Data on the socioeconomic conditions in Libya are somewhat confusing. Of the four cases, according to the CIA data, Libya has the smallest population: slightly above 6 million. 89.5 percent of this population are literate, which gives Libya the highest literacy rate in comparison with Tunisia, Egypt, and Yemen. However, accurate data on poverty in Libya is non-existent. The CIA World Factbook, after noting that there is no available data on poverty in the country, gives an estimate that about one-third of Libyans live at or below the national poverty line. If this estimates are accurate, they further complicate the Libyan case, making the country - who possesses the highest percentage of literate citizenry - second only to Yemen with regards to poverty levels.

In 2010, Libya's GDP per capita was registered at \$ 12,375.4, as Table 4 shows. As the same table shows, natural resources rents comprised a percentage of 46.3 of the total GDP in 2009. Interestingly enough, the Libyan GDP remains higher than the other countries', even when this 46 percentage, which is contributed by the natural resources rents, is disregarded. Nevertheless, oil

apparently played a role in the Libyan political trajectory before and after the Arab Spring. Oil rents were used by Qadhafi to secure loyalty and acquiescence of Libyan people. Besides, the post-Qadhafi political instability that plagued the country seems to involve fighting over oil shares (Gartenstein-Ross & Barr, 2015). It is, however, unclear how the existence of oil per se in Libya is responsible for hindering its democratic transition.

## **Yemen**

According to modernization theory advocates, the socioeconomic conditions in Yemen are not favorable to democracy. As Table 4 shows, Yemen comes second after Egypt with a population totaling more than 26 million, 35 percent of them are illiterate, and more than 45 percent live under poverty line. In addition to high rates of illiteracy and poverty, the Yemeni society is also divided along sectarian and tribal lines which makes it a bad candidate for democratization, according to Rustow's prerequisite of national unity (Rustow, 1970). Shia Muslims represent 35% of the population in the Yemen (CIA Factbook). The loyalty to tribes, rather than to modern and civil organization, makes Yemen an even less suitable candidate for democratization, according to modernization theory.

On the economic level, Table 4 shows that the GDP per capita of Yemen was registered at \$ 1,394.5 in 2010. This is 50 percent less than that of Egypt, which has the smallest GDP per capita. Inequality is also high in Yemen, at 37.7 percent in 2011. In 2009, a percentage of 18.2 of Yemen's GDP was derived from its natural resources rents, as shown in Table 4. This, however, does not include the huge amounts of foreign aid that the country receives from its international and regional allies, such as the United States and Saudi Arabia. It is not clear, however, how these socioeconomic factors, which are considered 'unfavorable' to democracy, contributed to the

deteriorating conditions in the post-Arab Spring political life in Yemen. As will be discussed later, it is the nature of Yemen's previous political order that is responsible for its current situation.

### **Concluding Reflections of Socioeconomic structures**

While section I of this chapter has dealt with the role of previous regime type and institutions and how they impacted the subsequent political regimes, sections II and III have, respectively, analyzed the role of opposition leadership and socioeconomic conditions in the post-Arab Spring political developments in all four cases. In this concluding reflections, the aim is to link the discussion in section III to hypotheses 1 and 2 and the overall discussion of socioeconomic structures.

Hypothesis 1 expects that high socioeconomic development increases the likelihood of successful democratic transition. This paper used the following indicators as a proxy to measure the level of socioeconomic development: population number, percentage of population under poverty line, literacy rate, GDP per capita, and the GINI coefficient. When comparing the four cases against these indicators, however, the results were ambivalent. On the one hand, Tunisia initially exhibited a relationship between high socioeconomic development and the positive democratic outcome. The country had a small population, high literacy rate, a small number of its population under the poverty line, and a high per capita GDP. Hypothesis 2 expects that intermediate levels of inequality positively contribute to democratic transition. The Gini coefficient measure inequality on a scale of zero to 1 or zero to 100 percent, with zero indicating perfect equality. As Table 4 shows, the difference between the four cases in term of inequality is not unusually high. In fact, the four cases appear to have intermediate or near-intermediate inequality levels. A thorough analysis of the socioeconomic conditions is provided in the following chapter.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION**

To return to the research question that was introduced at the beginning of this paper, it is safe to claim - based on the evidences discussed in chapter four- that previous regime type matters. This conclusion supports the institutional perspective that contends that authoritarian institutions, such as the party, the military, and the legislature, can influence both the breakdown of the regime and the likelihood of democratization or return to authoritarianism in a subsequent political order. This research also found that, in contrast to what students of socioeconomic theory claim, high socioeconomic development can occur without any transition to democracy. For instance, In Libya, strong economic and human development performances did not lead to democracy. Finally, the findings of this research provide ambivalent conclusions regarding the role of leadership. On the one hand, opposition leadership cohesion seems to have been one of the critical factors that led to the success of Tunisian transition. However, an even stronger leadership cohesion in Yemen, where a unified opposition leadership signed a pact with the ruling party, did not yield positive results.

### **Previous regime type and Institutions**

According to Geddes et al (2014), when a leader of an authoritarian regime falls, there are three possible scenarios: 1) another leader from the same regime replaces him and the regime persists 2) the regime is replaced by another authoritarian regime 3) or a democratically-elected regime replaces the authoritarian one. The nature of the authoritarian regime, according to Geddes et al, can allow us to predict which of these scenarios is more likely. If the regime is coded as military, chances are high that it will be replaced by a democratic regime. If it is party-based it has less chances but it is still more likely to democratize than a personalist regime (Geddes et al, 2014). This research has used Geddes et al's regime type data and sought to determine whether the nature

of the previous regime can influence the likelihood of democratization. Using four cases of the Arab Spring regime changes, Egypt (party-dominant hybrid), Tunisia (party-dominant), Libya (personalist) and Yemen (personalist), this paper analyzed the previous regimes in these countries and their post-Arab Spring political developments. To better understand the previous regime type the paper went further than just relying on regime coding to thoroughly analyze the nature of regime institutions, the functions they served under the previous regime, and the influence they had on the subsequent period.

As referred to above, one of the major findings of this paper is that previous regime type does matter. Countries that had a party-based authoritarian regime are more likely to democratize than those with personalist regimes. The experiences of our four cases support this. Post-Arab Spring political developments in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, and Yemen were shaped by the type of regime these countries had. For instance, in Libya and Yemen, where Qadhafi and Saleh regimes were coded as personalists, regime change led to political instability and civil wars. This is because power was concentrated in the hands of the regime leaders, Saleh and Qadhafi. When Qadhafi fell, the institutions he built during his forty-two years in power were so connected to him that they fell with him. In Yemen, the institutions were also weak and linked to Saleh. Some of them like, the military were fragmented and divided. Others, like the ruling party, remained loyal to the president which made them unlikely to assist in the process of democratic transition. The experiences of Yemen and Libya support the claim that democratization is least likely after the fall of personalist authoritarian regimes. This paper goes further and attempts to provide an explanation for the puzzle of personalist regimes with regard to democratization. According to Geddes et al (2014),

We do not know if democratization is least likely after personalist dictatorships because of structural factors that gave rise to personalist rule in the first place; or if

personalist rule undermines civil society or domestic institutions, which in turn reduces the prospects for democratization; or if personalist regimes are simply less likely to end in a manner conducive to democratization because their leaders resist negotiating. (p.324)

As this paper argued, it has to do with undermining the domestic institutions which, under personalist rule, become a part of the regime; when it falls they will either fall with it, complicating the process of state-building, or become a legacy that hinders democratization in the new political order.

The experience of Egypt also supports the institutionalist argument, though it shows a different picture. Egypt was coded as party-dominant (meaning that the party, the military, and the personal ruler all play an important role). The discussion of the Egyptian case, both before and after the Arab Spring, was very useful for it allows us to determine which of these three players, the military, the party, and Mubarak, was the most important - something missing from Geddes et al's data. As the analysis chapter demonstrates, it was the military that was the de facto ruler of Egypt before the overthrow of Mubarak, and it continued to play the same rule after Mubarak. This, however, does not support the argument put forward by Geddes (1999) and Geddes et al (2014) which expects a high probability of democratization after the fall of military regime. According to Geddes (1999), the incentives facing officers in military regimes are different from those facing leaders of personalist and single-party regimes. This, according to Geddes makes democratization more likely in military regimes. This paper, however, shows that in some cases, such as Egypt, the military have more incentives to cling to power than to negotiate a democratic transition.

Analysis of Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen also shows that party-dominant regimes are likely to democratize. This is demonstrated through the Tunisian case, which is the only country that had a pure dominant-party regime and the only one that did quite well after the Arab Spring. The discussion of the four cases also supports the argument put forward by Wright and Escibà-Folch (2012) which contends that parties play different roles in different regimes. Only in dominant-party regimes do parties make democratization more likely. The Tunisian case confirms this. Although parties existed in Yemen and Egypt, coded as personalist and party-dominant hybrid respectively, they did not have a positive impact on the transition period.

### **Socioeconomic Developments**

Advocates of socioeconomic approach emphasize the role of socioeconomic factors in bringing about, consolidating, or hindering democracy. The experiences of Egypt, Libya, Yemen and Tunisia, as the analysis chapter shows, do not reveal a strong correlation between the level of socioeconomic development and the four countries' political outcomes. Taking Libya as an example, the country stands out as a challenge for the assumptions held by modernization theory advocates. Unlike what Przeworski and Limongi (1997) expected, democratization did not survive in Libya, despite the fact that it is more developed compared to the other cases. Moreover, the country's per capita GDP was registered at \$11,964.7 in 2013 (World Bank Data), few months before the outbreak of the civil war. At the time, the country has already organized elections that brought the first democratically elected parliament. The Libyan case may challenge Przeworski's assertion that "[n]o democracy ever fell in a country with a per capita income higher than that of Argentina in 1975, \$6,055" (2001, p.2). By all measures of socioeconomic development that this paper utilizes, Libya stands as an outlier. For instance, it has a small population of about 6 million and a literacy rate close to 90 percent. In addition, in 2010, the country's GDP per capita was

registered at \$12,375.4. Admittedly, Libya derives a large portion (46.3% in 2009) of its GDP from oil, but even when the latter is controlled for, the country's GDP remains above the GDP rates of Tunisia, Egypt and Yemen.

The experience of Libya also runs counter to the argument that "oil hinders democracy". (Ross, 2001) According to Ross, there are three causal mechanisms that explain the relationship between oil and the absence of democracy:

a rentier effect, through which governments use low tax rates and high spending to dampen pressures for democracy; a repression effect, by which governments build up their internal security forces to ward off democratic pressures; and a modernization effect, in which the failure of the population to move into industrial and service sector jobs renders them less likely to push for democracy. (pp. 356-57)

The experience of Libya with the Arab Spring challenges these three assumptions. When Libyans protested against Qadhafi in early 2011, neither the security apparatus nor 'the low tax rates' prevented them from ousting the Qadhafi regime. In addition, Libyan people pushed for democracy in 2011 despite the absence of sophisticated industrialization which, as modernization theorists suggested, is required. The failure of the Libyan experience after the fall of Qadhafi has more to do with the institutional legacies than with socioeconomic development.

In Egypt and Yemen, the socioeconomic conditions were less developed than in Libya and Tunisia. As the previous chapter demonstrated, the two countries have high population numbers, low GDP per capita, and greater illiteracy rates. In addition, the two countries rely on natural resources and foreign aid to provide their people with basic services. In short, advocates of



modernization theory would argue that the socioeconomic conditions in Egypt and Yemen make them outstanding examples of how underdevelopment can hinder democracy. However, it is not clear how the socioeconomic status hindered democracy in Egypt and Yemen.

Tunisia presents an interesting case. Out of the four cases, it is the only country that seems to be leading a steady transition to democracy. Similar to Libya, Tunisia also possess a relatively high socioeconomic performance. It has a small population and a high literacy rate. Its 2010 per capita GDP was registered at \$4,211.4, and only 5.6 percent of its total GDP was derived from natural resources. With this outstanding socioeconomic profile, it is tempting to conclude that Tunisia's case supports the modernization theory assumption. However, a close analysis of of Tunisia - that compare the country to the other three cases - would make the modernization explanation look less appealing.

As Table 4 in the previous chapter demonstrates, Tunisia had a per capita GDP of \$ 4,211.4 in 2010. Although higher than Egypt and Yemen, it is less than that of Libya, even when oil rents are controlled for. Moreover, Tunisia's per capita GDP of \$ 4,211.4 is less than the per capita GDP rate that Przeworski found to be correlated with democracy: \$6,055. As for its high GINI coefficient index, it is not unusually different from the other three cases, especially Yemen and Libya. Tunisia's Gini coefficient puts it closer to the intermediate inequality levels that Acemoglu and Robinson associated with democracy. The other cases, especially Yemen which is only 3 points lower than Tunisia on the Gini coefficient index, also fall closer to this rate.

## **Opposition Leadership**

This study shows contradicting results for the role of opposition leadership in democratization. On the one hand, the cohesion of opposition leadership in Tunisia has undoubtedly played a significant role in the country's successful experience. The "troika" coalition that led the transitional period helped Tunisia overcome the ideological divisions between its opposition leadership. Even after the end of the transitional period, the political elites continued to embrace the politics of consensus and inclusion. For instance, after the parliamentary and presidential elections of late 2014, the winning party, Nida Tunis, which is associated with the previous regime, brought the Islamist party of Ennahda into its governing coalition. However, as referred to earlier, not all opposition leadership factions were unified during the transitional period. The "troika" coalition was made up of three parties only, and the rest remained opposed to the coalition government. In fact, massive popular protests, led by the opposition parties outside of the "troika" camp, forced the Ennahda-led government to step down in early 2014 and cede power to a caretaker government made up of technocrats.

The Egyptian and Libyan experiences also demonstrate that the absence of leadership cohesion can negatively influence the democratic transition. In Libya, there were no political parties during the Qadhafi regime. The leaders of the National Transitional Council, who were running the country after the fall of Qadhafi, were divided along tribal, regional, and ideological lines; their divisions were brought to the surface soon as they finished Qadhafi and announced the liberation of the country. As for Egypt, it had a long history of political pluralism although the parties had limited role. The political parties that were opposing Mubarak were not as unified as their counterparts in Tunisia or Yemen. For instance, during the anti-Mubarak protests, some of these parties negotiated with the regime for a political concession (Murphy, 2011). After the fall

of Mubarak and the MB's ascendance to power, liberal, leftist, and nationalist parties, feeling excluded from the new political order, led popular protests demanding the fall of the newly elected president, a division that was exploited by the military which intervened to turn the clock back to the pre-2011 status quo.

The case of Yemen demonstrates that unified leadership could play a relatively successful role in the political process. Yemen had a very well unified and organized opposition, which has been working as a coalition (Joint Meeting Parties) since 2003. Yemen is the only Arab Spring state in which transition of power was negotiated through a pact between the regime and the opposition. However, this pact has collapsed, not as a result of opposition leadership cleavages, but due to the legacies of Saleh regime and the sociocultural veto player that came from outside of the traditional opposition parties: the Huthis.

It appears, through the discussion of these cases, that the capacity of opposition leadership to contribute to the success or failure of democratic transition is shaped by the institutional legacy of previous regime. When there is a veto player, such as the military in Egypt and the tribal militias in Libya and Yemen, the opposition, even if unified like in Yemen, plays no insignificant role. If the veto player happened to be integrated in the previous political order, such as the case in Egypt, it could even take advantage of the opposition divisions and put an end to the democratic transition. The case of Tunisia further supports this. The absence of a veto player, such as a highly politicized military, decreases the importance of the divisions among opposition leadership. When such divisions surfaced in mid-2013, for instance, there was no veto player that could intervene to force the government out. In fact, the resignation of the Ennahda-led government came after several months, and it was achieved through negotiation and peaceful means.

## CONCLUSION

In this research, I argued that the pre-2011 authoritarian regimes in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, and Yemen have impacted these countries' political trajectories in the post-Arab Spring period. Using Geddes et al's data on autocratic regime breakdown which codes Tunisia as party-dominant, Egypt as party-dominant hybrid, and Libya and Yemen as personalist, I analyzed how institutional legacies of these previous regimes prompted a successful democratic transition in Tunisia and hindered democracy in Libya, Egypt, and Yemen. I also controlled for two of the major variables that have been advanced as possible causes of democracy: socioeconomic structures and elite role. The findings of this paper supports the institutional argument which claims that characteristics of the preexisting political order can explain the success or failure of democratic transition. The paper also finds little to no support to the arguments of socioeconomic conditions and leadership cohesion.

To analyze the nature of previous regime, I compared the institutional characteristics of each country against the backdrop of power relations inside the regime. That is, for each country I analyzed where institutions, such as the military, the party, and the legislature, are situated in the regime structure and what influence they possess over decision making and regime policies. I then examined how these same institutions influenced the direction of events, and more specifically, the democratic process after the Arab Spring.

My analysis demonstrated that these institutions operated differently depending on the regime type. For instance, in personalist regimes, where power is concentrated in the hands of the leader, institutions were weak under the previous regime and played no role in constructing democracy in the new political order. In the party-dominant regimes, on the other hand, the party exercise some power over the leader and operate as a relatively independent institution. When the

regime falls, as happened in Tunisia, the party maintained its power even after it was banned in the early days following the overthrow of the regime. With its extensive patronage networks and voter mobilization skills that were developed through the course of decades, it managed to operate under new umbrellas and work as an impetus for democracy. This, however, could happen only with the absence of a powerful institutional veto player. I argued that the existence of such veto player in Egypt – the military – was responsible for hindering the democratic process in the country. The veto player existed in Egypt as a result of its previous regime type in which the military institution had greater influence.

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