

Protest in Syria (2010 -2013): A Comparative Analysis of Mass Mobilization, Grievances  
and Opportunities

By

Binneh S. Minteh

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Professor Richard O'meara

and approved by

Professor Yale Ferguson

Professor Carlos Seiglie

Professor Dalia Fahmy

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## **Abstract**

The ongoing crisis in Syria represents the most recent in a series of disruptive conflicts in the Middle East. The region has experienced both violent and nonviolent upheavals. Nonviolent protests have toppled regimes in Tunisia and Egypt, while violent protest toppled the regime in Libya as Syria grapples with a civil war in its third year. Employing the theoretical lens of political process theory, Syria in particular is examined as a unique case in which a multiplicity of uncoordinated non-state actors possessed of a specific agenda and ideological orientation have created a challenging situation that is difficult to resolve and in which violence was and remains inevitable. The dissertation finds answers to why protests erupted in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Syria and why protests in Tunisia and Egypt were nonviolent and Libya and Syria violent. The central theme of the dissertation is to identify theoretical and practical inferences, while using a comparative framework and a case study of the complexity of the crisis in Syria – which serves as the focal point of the study. References to other cases are included as a foundation for a statistical assessment of the unique Syrian case. The dissertation supports the grievance, political opportunities and resource mobilization arguments to explain why citizens protested. Economic grievances in all the cases are rooted in corruption, income inequality, unemployment and the lack of opportunities. Political grievances connect people to exclusion from political power and a desire for democracy. To explain protests in the region, the dissertation draws on the literature of mobilization, revolution, repertoires of contention, social media, youth bulge, and unemployment and regime type to test two grievance based hypothesis and one violence based hypothesis. The dissertation concludes that protests in all cases are associated with socioeconomic and socio-political grievances. There is also evidence that the nature of violence is linked to the function of regime and security force type. Most significantly, the study reveals that in the case of Syria, an authoritarian, exclusivist regime created and maintains the environment in which opposition was inevitable and in which a violent response was predictable.

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## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

Protest movements have toppled and threatened regimes in the Middle East and North Africa from 2010-2013. Prominent among these protests are the non-violent protests that toppled governments in Tunisia and Egypt. In Libya, a violent crackdown of peaceful protests shifted to a rebellion which led to international intervention and collapse of the regime. Similarly protest in Syria was met with the use of brute force and a shift to violence escalated the conflict to cause the deaths of thousands. Syria continues to be in a state of civil war. Traditionally, these four countries are known for either their geo-strategic importance or economics of oil, or cultural tradition of Islam or all. While Islam is the predominant religion, there are also communities of Roman Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Copts, Eastern Orthodox, Druze and others. Yet, two powerful strategies of political change, one driven by non-violent- peaceful protest on one hand , and one by the use of violence emerged in the periods 2010 - 2013.

Meanwhile, as protest in these countries produced different outcomes, several questions about the causes of protests and nature of violence emerged over the years. The dominant narrative is that people protested because of economic and political grievances. Other arguments posit that people protested because of political opportunities and resources available to channel discontent with ruling governments.

This dissertation seeks to find answers to the reasons for the emergence in Syria of both protests and a full-scale civil war, complicated by the emergence of a non-state actor in the form of the Islamic State in Syria/Islamic State in the Levant that declared its



territory to be an autonomous caliphate. The Syrian situation is further complicated by the involvement of external actors (e.g., Iran and Russia in support of the Al-Assad regime, the United States and Turkey among others in support of the Syrian opposition). Discussion of the protests in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya provide for a comparison of cases and shed additional light on the unique case of Syria. The dissertation uses a theoretical framework explicated through a literature review of mass mobilization, strategy and social media, and the concepts of grievance, resource mobilization and political process to answer two main questions: What are the causes of protests Syria? What similarities and differences are observed when Syria is considered in the larger regional context of protest, specifically with respect to Egypt, Tunisia and Libya? Why were protests in Egypt and Tunisia non-violent and Libya and Syria violent between 2010 -2013?

The literature on mass mobilization has developed considerably over the years. Multiple studies are discussed in depth below. However, reference should be made at this juncture to the work of several key theorists and analysis, at least in passing. For example, Moghadam observed social change processes, opportunities and mobilizing structures such as networks, associations, and patterns of recruitment, leadership and resource mobilization. Tarrow looks at six processes of contention: framing, internationalization, diffusion, scale shift, externalization and coalition formation. Mancur Olson's rational choice theory is derived from a calculation of costs and benefits.<sup>1</sup> Kurt Schick analyzed the increasing success of nonviolence and the resilience of protestors in the face of repression and violence by the state. John McCarthy and

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<sup>1</sup> Mancur Olson. *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Group* ( Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), 5 -7.

Mayer Zald distinguished the importance of organizational bases, resource accumulation, and collective coordination of political actors. Susan Olzak's theory of ethnic mobilization focuses on the process by which groups organize around some feature of ethnic identity. Lichbach's combined theories of Synthetic Political Opportunity (SPOT) and Collective Action Research Program (CARP) help understand structure and individual, group and societal aspects of contentious politics. Theda Skocpol draws a large secondary literature in history and sociology on dominant theories about revolution. Charles Tilly's repertoires of contention look at the strategies and techniques of protests.

The grievance based theories by Blattman and Miguel, and Muller and Weede suggest that grievances are the basic cause of discontent and more grievance breeds more protests. Lutterbeck argued that regimes and the function of security force type largely determines violent levels during protests. Castells indicated that social media are spaces of autonomy, largely beyond the control of governments and corporations and transforms communication in all domains of social life.<sup>2</sup> Using Small N Comparative Historical Case Studies, the dissertation investigates, economic grievances, political grievances, political opportunity explanations for protests, and the function of security force type in relations to violence in the cases of Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Syria. These four Arab Spring States are selected because of a common history, geo-strategic importance, and cultural tradition of Islam, economic and social changes, and political system of authoritarianism.

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<sup>2</sup> Manuel Castell, "Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet Age, *Polity*, 1 (August 27, 2012), 200.

The dissertation uses data from Arab Barometer, Center for Systemic Peace (CSP), International Crisis Group, Human Rights Watch, International Labor Organization, International Monetary Fund, World Bank Group, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Brookings Institute to investigate economic and political grievances, political opportunities, violence levels and the function of regime type for protests in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya and Syria.

The dissertation found support for economic grievances linking protests to unemployment, corruption, income inequality and dissatisfaction with the economy. Similarly, there is support for political grievances linking protests to political exclusion, human rights abuses, oppression and decade's long authoritarianism. Further, the dissertation supports the linkages of social media access, the function of regime and security force type to the nature of violence in all four countries. All the arguments are supported by significant explanatory power, suggesting that all the mechanisms discussed therein are at play in the same context. The dissertation concludes protests are caused by grievances, political opportunities and availability of resources.

To investigate, the dissertation provides a review of the literature on mass mobilization strategy and social media in chapter two. In this chapter, the dissertation examines the concepts of mobilization, strategy, repertoires of contention, revolution, regime type, youth bulge, social media, and unemployment that are specifically relevant to the study. Three hypothesis on economic and political grievances, the function of regime and security force type in relations to the nonviolent and violent nature of protests, and levels of social media access to nonviolence and violence, are drawn from

this literature. Chapters Three through Seven provide an analysis of the case of Syria. Similarly, they offer demographic, economic, and political and protest background, analysis of the key players or actors in the Syrian conflict, and the grievances and opportunities that supported protest efforts. A comparative analysis of the cases, showing the differences and similarities is provided in chapter eight. In this chapter, I provide a standard statistical correlation coefficient analysis to show the relationship of the dependent and independent variables in support of my hypothesis. And I provide concluding remarks in chapter nine, with a focus on the analysis of findings, and implications for future research.

**Table I: Dependent and Independent Variables**

<b>Dependent Variables</b>	<b>Independent Variables</b>
A) Mass Mobilization	A1. Youth Bulge and Unemployment ✓ Lack of employment opportunities for youth  A2. Authoritarianism ✓ Multi-party electoral autocracies ✓ Single party regimes
B) Type of Mobilization ✓ Violent Mobilization ✓ Non Violent Mobilization	B1. Social Media ✓ Non-violent Mobilization B2. Security Forces ✓ Patrimonial Security Forces - Violent Mobilization ✓ Institutionalized Security Forces – Non-violent Mobilization

**Chapter Two:**  
**Theory and Literature Review-**  
**Mass Mobilization, Strategy, Social Media and Political Process Theory**

Different theoretical notions about grievances and opportunities, strategy and social media and the impact of external support for mass mobilization emerged as subjects of academic debate. The research findings are contradictory in many ways, with some arguing that grievances and opportunities, strategy and social media facilitates mobilization and others showing that it is overwhelmingly only grievances and opportunities, irrespective of strategy that supports mobilization efforts. The puzzle about what strategy is the most successful during mass mobilization rests, to a large extent, on ‘what counts’ as non-violence or violence. To that effect, the dissertation focuses on concept formation, definitions, context, consequences and approaches, and analyzing the relationships of the dependent and independent variables to generate theoretical and practical questions. While early theories mainly focused on domestic processes and movement characteristics of a social movement in the U.S, the economic, cultural and political dimensions of globalization created opportunities and grievances that changed the fundamental nature of mass mobilization and strategy<sup>3</sup>. As the global economic recession of the late 1970’s and early 1980’s began shaping forms of governance, social activism on a new scale, have been redefined by the birth of a new phenomenon – new social movements or mass mobilization.

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<sup>3</sup> Sidney Tarrow, “Transnational Politics: Contention and Institutions in International Politics,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 4 (2001): 1-20.

## 2.1 Mass Mobilization – Grievances, Demographics and Relative Deprivation

The grievance-based theory suggests that grievances are the basic cause of rebellion so that more grievance breeds more protest.<sup>4</sup> The “grievance-based theory focus on citizens’ discontent, predicting that higher grievances (e.g., high income inequality or bad economic conditions) lead to more protest and hence more repression.”<sup>5</sup> This suggests that the causes of social change are mostly due to social strains and alienation across a broader sector of society. For example economic and political grievances can lead to increased participation largely caused by exclusion, frustration, dissatisfaction and resentment against the ruling elites. Although initial mobilization may carry minimal cost, grievances may well be sufficient to motivate the disaffected to participate in protest activities.<sup>6</sup> Other grievance based explanations are the perceptions of exclusion from political power.<sup>7</sup> For Blattman and Miguel (2010) grievances are largely rooted in patronage benefits and how public goods are distributed.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, Finkel and Muller and Opp argue grievances are rooted in dissatisfaction with provision of public or collective goods.<sup>9</sup> While many social movement theorists have neglected the importance

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<sup>4</sup> Edward Muller and Erich Weede, “Theories of Rebellion: Relative Deprivation and Power Contention,” *Rationality and Society* 6(1994): 40-57.

<sup>5</sup> Erich Weede and Erich. “Some New Evidence on the Correlates of Political Violence: Income Inequality, Regime Repressiveness, and Economic Development,” *European Sociological Review* 3 (1984): 97.

<sup>6</sup> Erich Weede and Erich. “Some New Evidence on the Correlates of Political Violence: Income Inequality, Regime Repressiveness, and Economic Development,” *European Sociological Review* 3 (1984): 97

<sup>7</sup> Jack S. Levy and William M. Thompson, *Causes of War*. (Malden, MA: Wiley- Blackwell, 2010), 10.

<sup>8</sup> Christopher Blattman and Edward Miguel, “Civil War,” *Journal of Economic Literature* 48(2010): 3-50.

<sup>9</sup> Steven Finkel, Edward Muller, and Karl-Dieter Opp, “Personal Influence, Collective Rationality, and Mass Political Action,” *American Political Science Review* 83(1989): 885- 903.

of grievances as a leading cause of protests, a common assumption is that grievances are fundamental driving tools of all social movements – political, economic or social. Others have argued that individual grievances alone may not trigger a massive unrest but it is collective or mobilizing grievances that actuates to what Snow and Soule called Joint, Ameliorate Action.<sup>10</sup> The concept of Joint Ameliorate Action presupposes that people living in acute and desperate conditions, such as the lack of affordable housing, widespread unemployment, inaccessible healthcare, extreme poverty, epidemic health problems and disabling discrimination eventually due to grievances.

Similarly, even though the relative deprivation theory came under scrutiny by numerous scholars, Ted Gurr made compelling arguments that poverty, economic deprivation and other negative living conditions are driving factors of protest activity.<sup>11</sup> For Gurr social factors that can produce discontent and feelings of deprivation include an appalling national economy, inflation rates and growth, rates of gross national product and long-term economic and social deprivation.<sup>12</sup> Further, Gurr noted that the “systematic exclusion of social groups from higher economic value positions and systematic limitation in form, norm, or practice of social groups' provides opportunities in political activities or to attain elite positions,”<sup>13</sup> can lead to protest participation particularly in periods of youth bulges.

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<sup>10</sup> David A. Snow and Sarah A. Soule, *A Primer on Social Movement* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2009): 18-20..

<sup>11</sup> Ted Robert Gurr, “A Causal Model of Civil Strife: A Comparative Analysis Using New Indices”, *American Political Science Review* 62(1968): 1104–1124.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 1109.

A youth bulge is conceptualized as “situation in which the population share of the 15-24 year-olds exceeds 20 per cent and the share of the 0-14 year-olds (often also referred to as the "children bulge" and a good predictor of future youth bulges) is higher than 30 per cent.”<sup>14</sup> The youth bulge theory “predicts that societies characterized by a youth bulge while simultaneously facing limited resources and, in particular, a lack of prestigious positions for "surplus“ youngsters – i.e. the third, fourth, fifth etc. born children – are much more prone to social unrest” .<sup>15</sup> Specifically, youth bulge refers to a situation in which more than 30 per cent of the population is aged between 15 and 30. All countries go through this bulge. As the infant and child mortality rate declines and health improves, more and more children are surviving until they become youth.<sup>16</sup> The demographic trend of the youth bulge concept is interpreted by many to mean that too many young men with not enough to do are a threat to security and stability. As Richard Mbala puts it, “the majority are no longer in school, are unable to get jobs, often live in informal settlements and national efforts to address their issues are confined to a ministry with minimal budget and influence.”<sup>17</sup> Contemporary social movements show that *biographical availability* is an important factor in explaining youth participation in

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<sup>14</sup> Rahel Schomaker, “Youth Bulges, Poor Institutional Quality and Missing Migration Opportunities – Triggers of a Potential Counter-Measure for Terrorism in MENA,” *Topics in Middle Eastern and African Economics* 15(2013): 119.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Rahel Schomaker, “Youth Bulges, Poor Institutional Quality and Missing Migration Opportunities – Triggers of a Potential Counter-Measure for Terrorism in MENA,” *Topics in Middle Eastern and African Economics* 15(2013)

<sup>17</sup> Richard Mbala, “Youth and “the Hood” – Livelihoods and Neighborhoods,” *Environment & Urbanization* 23(2014): 157.



protests.<sup>18</sup> McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly (2001) defines biographical availability as “the absence of personal constraints that may increase the costs and risks of movement participation, such as full-time employment, marriage, and family responsibilities”<sup>19</sup> Similarly, a World Bank study found that, “if young people are left with no alternative but unemployment and poverty, they are likely to join a rebellion as an alternative way of generating an income”.<sup>20</sup> Based on the perception that young men are inherently more violent than either women or older men, these large numbers of young men are seen to be the ones who may turn to violent crime, political violence and even terrorism. As will be seen below, such a perspective leads to measures to “contain or entertain” young people rather than provide them with real opportunities for livelihoods and self-development.

The UN identifies youth as being between the ages of 15 and 24 on the basis that by the age of 24, the physical and emotional transition from childhood to adulthood has been completed. The youth bulge theorists, who are mortally afraid of male youth, have their own definition of youth as being between the ages of 15 and 30; a few countries also define youth as being up to the age of 30.<sup>21</sup> In the same vein, the African Youth Charter, which is currently being ratified by all countries in Africa, defines youth as being

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<sup>18</sup> David Tindall, *Collective Action in the Rainforest: Personal Networks, Collective Identity and Participation in the Vancouver Island Wilderness Preservation Movement* (Ottawa: National Library of Canada, 1994), 5-7.

<sup>19</sup> Doug McAdam, “Recruitment to High-Risk Activism: The Case of Freedom Summer”, *American Journal of Sociology* 92(1986): 70.

<sup>20</sup> The World Bank, *Social Development Papers, Conflict Resolution and Prevention*, Paper No. 1 (2004): 3. [www.worldbank.com](http://www.worldbank.com).

<sup>21</sup> Mbala, 158.

between the ages of 15 and 35.<sup>22</sup> This is based on more social reasons – many children in the Middle East and Africa start school late and, therefore, by the time they are 24 are still in educational institutions and have not yet started to earn a living.<sup>23</sup> Under such situations the growing young population lacks opportunities for growth and advancement, subjected to oppressive regimes compromising political, economic and social freedoms, systems compromising, while simultaneously facing limited resources in some cases and adequate resources in other cases. There is also growing dissatisfaction, frustration and lower opportunity cost relative to the older population and the low standards of living in terms of economic and social fortunes among a large share of young unemployed people supporting mass mobilization.

Unemployment is referred to as “all persons who during a specified reference period (i.e., one week) were: (i) without work, i.e. was not in paid employment or self-employment; (ii) currently available for work, i.e. were available for paid employment or self-employment during the reference period; and (iii) seeking work, i.e. had taken specific steps (registration at a public or private employment exchange; application to employers; checking at worksites, farms, factory gates, market or other assembly places; placing or answering newspaper advertisements; seeking assistance of friends or relatives; looking for land, building machinery or equipment to establish an own enterprise; arranging for financial resources; applying for permits and licenses; etc.) in a specified recent period (e.g. the last four weeks) to seek paid employment or self-

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

employment.”<sup>24</sup> According to Blustein et al , the movement from “employment to unemployment (and vice versa) entails a significant life transition that can evoke substantive aversive outcomes for individuals and communities.”<sup>25</sup> The Standard International Labor Organization (ILO) definition of unemployment is “the proportion of people in the labor force who say they were not working and were looking for work in a given period (usually the past seven days).”<sup>26</sup> This definition suggests that the labor market consists of those who are employed or unemployed and looking for work, and thus leaves out those who were not working or looking for work.”<sup>27</sup> Nonetheless, a focus on the context of the unemployment experience points to the importance of the critical perspective adopted in this dissertation.

There are also spaces between work and nonwork which is best understood as a continuum rather than discrete states. For example, “some unemployed individuals may obtain part-time work, consulting projects, or work in nontraditional venues (black market activities) as a means of reconnecting to the workforce.”<sup>28</sup> A critical analysis of unemployment needs to encompass the broad spectrum of contexts between work and

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<sup>24</sup> David Lam, “Youth Bulges and Youth Unemployment,” *IZA World of Labour* 26(2014): 2.

<sup>25</sup> David L. Blustein, Mary Beth Medvide, and Carol M. Wan, “A Critical Perspective of Contemporary Unemployment Policy and Practices,” *Journal of Career Development* 39(2012): 341-342.

<sup>26</sup> Lam, 2.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> David L. Blustein, Mary Beth Medvide, and Carol M. Wan, “A Critical Perspective of Contemporary Unemployment Policy and Practices,” *Journal of Career Development* 39(2012): 341-342.

nonwork.<sup>29</sup> The dissertation focuses primarily on the nonwork or unemployment which is currently a crisis that is affecting the Middle East and North Africa. Moreover, “unemployment rates tend to fluctuate substantially, none of the countries in the region managed to bring down unemployment to stable and sustainable levels.”<sup>30</sup> The youth unemployment rate is more than four times that for adults, the largest youth-to-adult unemployment ratio in the world. An International Labor Organization (ILO) comment noted “unemployment to be affecting young people at all skill levels and the lack of employment opportunities is so severe that even young high-skilled workers face severe challenges in getting a job at their competence level and are forced into the informal economy, seeking jobs abroad or opting out of the labour market altogether until the “right job” comes along.”<sup>31</sup> As Blustein, Medvide and Wang have noted, “unemployment among young people causes distress and a potential to provide five latent functions, which provide a sense of structure and meaning in life. Such functions include (time structure, social contact, collective purpose, status, and activity).”<sup>32</sup> The rapid increase in the youth population has led to the increase in unemployment and the lack of opportunities for the majority youthful population. Since critically minded literature captures the challenges of youth bulges, it is therefore necessary and sufficient to pay

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<sup>29</sup> David L. Blustein, Mary Beth Medvide, and Carol M. Wan, “A Critical Perspective of Contemporary Unemployment Policy and Practices,” *Journal of Career Development* 39(2012): 341-342

<sup>30</sup> International Labor Office, “Global Unemployment Trends 2013: Recovering from Second Jobs Dips,” (Geneva: ILO, 2013), 81.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Blustein, Medvide, and Wan, 343.

attention to the political and social injustice accompanied by youth opposition voices in overturning authoritarian regimes.

## **2.2 Mass Mobilization: Framing, Resources and Opportunities**

Sidney Tarrow noted that understanding the root causes of such activity requires one to analyze the economic grievances caused by neo-liberal policies. But how does a new form of collective action or a social movement spread? There are six processes of contention: framing, internationalization, diffusion, scale shift, externalization and coalition formation. Tarrow argued that collective action frames are constructed by movement organizers to attract supporters, signal their intentions, and gain media attention. While framing takes place on purely domestic ground, Tarrow defines it as “the use of external symbols to orient local or national claims”. “When it works, it can dignify, generalize, and energize activists whose claims are predominantly local, linking them symbolically to people they have never met and causes related to their own.”<sup>33</sup> Nonetheless, he noted that “social movements do not depend on framing alone; they must bring people together in the field, shape coalitions, confront opponents, and assure their own future after the exhilaration of the peak of mobilization has passed.”<sup>34</sup> Diffusion and scale shift connect domestic contention to international conflicts and institutions and spread contention beyond its domestic origins to the translocal and national levels; externalization and coalition forming occur at the international level and have the greatest

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<sup>33</sup> Sidney Tarrow, “Transnational Politics: Contention and Institutions in International Politics,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 4(2001): 1-2.

<sup>34</sup> Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 8.

potential to create transnational social movements vertically and horizontally.<sup>35</sup> The wide variety of organizational patterns provides one with the understanding of organizational change in contemporary social movements, such as their evolution from “grass roots to large mass organizations and hardened institutionalized unions and parties.”<sup>36</sup> These changes are largely driven by new organizational innovations of external resources, largely on the expansion and access of mass media, increase amount of financial and administrative resources and the internal innovations of movement organizations taking advantage of advances in communication; fund raising and drawing on the appeal of celebrities. Tunisia and Egypt present very good cases of the externalization and diffusion of domestic contention leading to coalition formation between the diaspora and home base organizations. In both Tunisia and Egypt, online diaspora youth organizations quickly linked with national groups as formidable coalitions.

For Tarrow (1998), there are three important lessons to remember: first, the repertoire of contention emerges from the structural development of societies based on the cultural understandings of what constitutes a legitimate form of contention; Second, new forms of collective action diffuse to places in which they are not native via global communication processes; third, these processes will vary in their effects depending upon their own particular driving mechanisms; thus, success cannot be predicted.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, social movements do not emerge like “Venus on her seashell;” they are rather built up through processes such as the horizontal diffusion of a form or contention or through a

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 135.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 9-10.

shift in scale from the local or national level to the international level and back again.<sup>38</sup>

Tarrow concluded that there is “no single model of movement organization, since heterogeneity and interdependence are greater spurs to collective action than homogeneity and discipline”<sup>39</sup>

Resource mobilization theories further highlights the importance of securing certain resources for mobilizing power resources.<sup>40</sup> For instance, John McCarthy and Mayer Zald (1977) draws on “Concepts and propositions drawn from a resource mobilization perspective, and emphasizes the relationship of social movements to the media, authorities, and other parties; and the interaction among movement organizations.”<sup>41</sup> Tilly focuses on land, labor, capital and technical expertise.<sup>42</sup> Freeman distinguishes between tangible assets (money and facilities) and intangible assets (organizing and legal skills and unspecialized labor).<sup>43</sup> Resource mobilization emphasizes societal approach and constraint to social movements, examines the variety of resources to be mobilized, the linkages of social movements to other groups and the dependence of movements on external support for success and tactics used by the authorities to contain movements.<sup>44</sup> Resource mobilization emphasizes social movement’s deliverance of

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<sup>38</sup> <sup>38</sup> Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 137.

<sup>40</sup> J. Craig Jenkins, "Resource Mobilization Theory and the Study of Social Movements," *Annual Review of Sociology* 9(1983): 532-533.

<sup>41</sup> John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, “Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory,” *The American Journal of Sociology* 82(1977): 1212.

<sup>42</sup> Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (Reading, MA: Addison Wesley, 1978), 5 -8.

<sup>43</sup> McCarthy and Zald, 1222.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

collective goods, where few individuals bear the costs of obtaining them. Resource aggregation in this context requires minimal forms of organization while importance is giving to individuals and organization outside the collective representation of the social movement; the application of the supply and demand model to the flow of resources; and the sensitivity to the importance of costs and rewards in understanding the involvement of individuals and organizations in mass mobilization.<sup>45</sup> In comparison to traditional mobilization theories resource mobilization may or may not be based upon grievances, since individuals' conscience constituents and organizations may provide major sources of support.<sup>46</sup>

In the same vein resource mobilization provides a number of strategic tasks including mobilizing supporters, neutralizing and/or transforming mass and elite publics into sympathizers whereas in traditional strategies and tactics includes bargaining, persuasion or violence with a choice of tactics depending upon prior history of relations with authorities.<sup>47</sup> Similarly the broader society may also benefit from the infrastructure utilized by social movements through media and expenses, levels of affluence and access to institutional centers. In retrospect, traditional theories emphasized effects of the

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<sup>45</sup> McCarthy and Zald, 1221.

<sup>46</sup> Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (Reading, MA: Addison Wesley, 1978), 5 -8.

<sup>46</sup> McCarthy and Zald, 1222

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.



environment on social movements, especially with respect to goal change, whilst ignoring the ways movements can utilize the environment for their own purposes.<sup>48</sup>

For Lichbach, understanding resistance against authority requires looking at it from the lenses of structure and action. Lichbach combined the single theory of Synthetic Political opportunity (SPOT) and Collective Action Research Program (CARP) to better understand structure and action.<sup>49</sup> SPOT is concerned more with the individual, group and societal aspects of contentious politics. The individual aspect focuses more on aggregation through the lenses of un-intending, un-wanting, and un-expecting while inevitable collective outcomes results from a set of more or less purposeful individual actions.<sup>50</sup> The group aspect is more of an institutionalization problem focusing on how emerging properties solidify structure overtime, whereas the societal is more of a contextual problem, focusing on solidifying social order to constrain and enable individual consciousness and action.<sup>51</sup> For Lichbach, understanding resistance against authority is perhaps the central structure-action in all social inquiries while the structure-agent problem remains at the root of all questions around political protest and social order.<sup>52</sup> The simple reason is largely driven by the reciprocal constitution of state

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Mark .Lichbach, "Contending Theories of Contentious Politics and the Structure-Action Problem of Social Order," *Annual Review of Political Science* 1( 1998): 401-24.

<sup>50</sup> Mark .Lichbach, "Contending Theories of Contentious Politics and the Structure-Action Problem of Social Order," *Annual Review of Political Science* 1( 1998): 401-24

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 410-411.

structures and social movements, and since authority prompts the resistance that transforms it, structure and change must therefore be understood as agencies of protests. “Order and re-legitimation, state and crisis, stability and violence, regime and movement, and reform and revolution are therefore central to problems of the social sciences.”<sup>53</sup>

### **2.3 Strategy: Nonviolent and Violent Resistance**

Resistance is the refusal to accept, recognize or comply with government authority during protests. Kurt Schock and Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan define resistance as activities that are directed at political change outside the limits of political institutions.<sup>54</sup>

Resistance can either be non-violent or violent during mass mobilization. Non-violent resistance are “acts of omission, acts of commission or a combination of both and other nonviolent methods identified by scholars including symbolic protests, economic boycotts, labor strikes, political and social noncooperation, and nonviolent intervention by groups to mobilize opposition or support for different policies, to delegitimize and to remove or restrict government power.”<sup>55</sup> Violent resistance on the other hand are the “acts of aggression, brawls (street fights, small scale battles at social events), opportunism (looting, gang rape, piracy) scattered attacks (sabotage, assault of government agents, arson), broken negotiations (demonstrations, government repression, military coups), coordinated destruction (terrorism, genocide and politicize) and violent

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 403.

<sup>54</sup> Maria Stephan and Erica Chenoweth, *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011): 29.

<sup>55</sup> Stephan and Chenoweth, 14.

rituals (lynching, public executions and gang rivalries)”.<sup>56</sup> By far nonviolent resistance has been observed more in democracies but not in non-democracies. The grievances that produce protests movements are common in both democracies and non-democracies. However, the political rights and institutional framework that permits citizens to channel grievances exists in democracies than non-democracies. Therefore, democracies allow citizens to channel grievances through, peaceful protests, courts and effect political change through elections when dissatisfied with a government. Whereas in non-democracies, not only are the institutional framework to channel grievances not available, they are often prone to protests and therefore use violence to crack down protests efforts.

Arguably, most of the literature on mass mobilization promoted the effectiveness of nonviolent resistance over violent resistance. Gene Sharp argues that, because the authority of government is derived from the consent of the ruled, withdrawal of that consent can eliminate regime power.<sup>57</sup> Sharp identifies four mechanisms of non-violent methods that can usher in political change: conversion, coercion, disintegration and accommodation.<sup>58</sup> Conversion is the internalization of demands of protestors and the willingness to meet those demands. In coercion, sources of regime power are severely undermined and the regime is forced to concede. Disintegration occurs when the regimes power is undermined and rendered nonexistent. Accommodation is the conceding or compromise of a government in recognition of the costs involved. Nonviolent resistance can achieve its objective by threatening or imposing costs on the regime, converting

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<sup>56</sup> Charles Tilly, *The Politics of Collective Violence*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 15.

<sup>57</sup> Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* ( Boston, MA: Porter Sargent. 1973), 33.

<sup>58</sup> Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* ( Boston, MA: Porter Sargent. 1973), 33.

regime elements to its cause, or achieving a combination of the two. Arguably, these mechanisms play out through regime defections, particularly the security forces, and economic disruptions as a result of a complete shutdown of the markets and all business activities.

For Stephan and Chenoweth, nonviolent resistance can either coerce or convert a regime.<sup>59</sup> One fundamental advantage, is broad participation.<sup>60</sup> Nonviolent tactics have a potential to recruit a greater number of people than violent ones and, greater numbers increases the chances of success. Nonviolent movements succeed when they recruit broadly, and they “fail to achieve their objectives when they are unable to overcome the challenge of participation, when they fail to recruit a robust, diverse, and broad-based membership that can erode the power base of the adversary and maintain resilience in the face of adversary”.<sup>61</sup> Broad participation provides nonviolent movements with increased legitimacy, increased international support and growing popular backlash against, repressive actions by the government.

Kurt Schock further expounds on the “increasing recognition of the power of campaigns of nonviolent resistance”<sup>62</sup>. For Kurt Schock. “nonviolent resistance has become recognized as a powerful method of struggle that can be dismissed as naive by only those with a fetish for violence and military power”.<sup>63</sup> Stephen Zunes noted an

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<sup>59</sup> Stephan and Chenoweth, 112.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 129.

<sup>61</sup> Stephan and Chenoweth, 11.

<sup>62</sup> Kurt Schock, “The Practice and Study of Civil Resistance,” *Journal of Peace Research* 50(2013): 287.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 285.

increasing trend toward the use of nonviolent tactics or resistance in the place of violent rebellion.<sup>64</sup> Karatnycky and Akerman argue that the world is moving toward greater respect for political rights and civil liberties, while authoritarian rule, political despotism, rampant state criminality and corruption, and the systematic abuse of minorities are under challenge.<sup>65</sup>

Similarly, Veronique Dudouet presents strategy in two main categories of “nonviolent/unarmed and violent/armed, which are rooted in alternative methods of popular mobilization for collective, organized, non-institutionalized, contentious and coercive action”.<sup>66</sup> Both share a number similarities as well differences. The three main similarities that stand out are: First, they “belong to the arena of collective political action, as opposed to individual acts of political dissent”.<sup>67</sup> Second, they are driven by “organized opposition movements, representing an oppressed minority or disempowered majority, engaged in a struggle against the structural violence of the state – characterized for instance by an exclusionary regime or a foreign occupation army or administration”.<sup>68</sup> Third, they are both non-institutional, since they operate outside the bounds of

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<sup>64</sup> Stephen Zunes, “Unarmed Insurrections against Authoritarian Governments in the Third World: A New Kind of Revolution” *Third World Quarterly* 15(1994): 404.

<sup>65</sup> P. Akerman, A. Karatnyck, and M. Rosenberg, “How Freedom Is Won: From Civil Resistance to Durable Democracy” 2015. <http://www.nonviolent-conflict.org/index.php/learning-and-resources/educational-initiatives/academic-webinar-series/4266-gradualist-democratization-using-civil-resistance, 1>.

<sup>66</sup> Veronique Dudouet, “Dynamics and Factors of Transition from Armed Struggle to Nonviolent Resistance,” *Journal of Peace Research* 50(2013): 402.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Veronique Dudouet, “Dynamics and Factors of Transition from Armed Struggle to Nonviolent Resistance,” *Journal of Peace Research* 50(2013): 402.

conventional political channels.<sup>69</sup> The main difference between the two strategies lies predominantly in the use or absence of violence. In that context, violence primarily relies on physical force, while nonviolent tactics include protests, strikes, and boycotts, among a host of other possible techniques.<sup>70</sup>

Strategy is the collective and organized effort which can be violent and/or non-violent, to promote or to resist a particular social change that occurs partially or entirely outside of institutional (conventional) political channels.<sup>71</sup> Stephan and Chenoweth defined nonviolent resistance as “a civilian based method used to wage conflict through social, psychological, economic, and political means without the threat or use of violence”.<sup>72</sup> According to Stephan and Chenoweth many people who were committed to principled nonviolence have engaged in nonviolent resistance (Gandhi and Martin Luther King) whereas a vast majority of participants in nonviolent struggles have not been devoted to principled nonviolence.<sup>73</sup> Most often, “the conflation of violent struggle with principled nonviolence, pacifism, passivity, weakness, or isolated street protests has contributed to misconceptions about the phenomenon.”<sup>74</sup> Nonviolence resistance

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<sup>69</sup> Veronique Dudouet, 402.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 403.

<sup>71</sup> For the purposes of coherency, I define a social movement as a collective and organized effort which can be violent and/or non-violent, to promote or to resist a particular social change that occurs partially or entirely outside of institutional (conventional) political channels. A social movement requires mobilized groups to be engaged in “contentious interaction” with power-holders in which at least one state is either a target or a participant.

<sup>72</sup> Stephan and Chenoweth, 14.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Maria Stephan and Erica Chenoweth, *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011): 29

achieves demands and goes against the will of the opponent whereas violent coercion threatens physical violence against the opponent.<sup>75</sup>

Despite the diverging views among social science scholars, nonviolent methods including boycotts, strikes, protests, and organized noncooperation to challenge entrenched power have been quite successful. Using statistical and historical comparisons to better understand the outcome of violent and non-violent civil resistance, Stephan and Chenoweth gave two reasons for the success of strategic nonviolence over violent civil resistance. First, they concluded that a campaigns commitment to non-violence enhances its domestic and international legitimacy and encourages a broad-based participation in the resistance, which translates into increased pressure.<sup>76</sup> With legitimacy, grievances can translate into greater internal and external support of a movement and the alienation of the regime has a potential of undermining a regimes main sources of political, economic and even military power.<sup>77</sup> Second, government's use of violence against non-violent movements generally backfires and a potential sympathetic public perceives violent resistant movements as having extremist agendas whereas non-violent groups are largely seen as non-extremists. Using clearly defined empirical evidence, Stephan and Chenoweth were dismissive of the conventional wisdom that the use of violence against

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 11-13.

<sup>77</sup> Maria Stephan and Erica Chenoweth, *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011)

conventionally superior adversaries is the most effective way for resistance groups to achieve policy goals.<sup>78</sup>

With such an implication, the internal and external cost of repressing nonviolent campaigns are thus higher than the cost of repressing violent campaigns, since the repression of a nonviolent campaign can lead to power shifts, increases the internal solidarity of the resistance campaign, create dissent and increases external support for the campaign.<sup>79</sup> In the same vein, the internal impact can be traced from members of a regime, including civil servants, security forces and members of the judiciary shifting loyalty toward the nonviolent opposition groups as happened in Tunisia and Egypt. Externally, the regime is more likely to be denounced and be subjected to international sanctions. External aid and support from nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) can advance the cause of the mobilization. For Stephan and Chenoweth, the external cost of repressing nonviolent campaigns can be high, especially when the media captures repressive acts of the regime as happened in Libya and Syria (2011-2013). External actors may organize sanctions against repressive regimes that repeatedly crack down on unarmed protestors.<sup>80</sup>

When the Libyan and Syrian regimes used violence against peaceful protestors, an international outrage ushered in intervention in Libya and sanctions against the repressive Syrian. Nonviolent resistance campaigns are more open to negotiations and

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>80</sup> <sup>80</sup> Maria Stephan and Erica Chenoweth, *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).



bargaining, since they do not threaten the lives or well-being of regime members, unlike violent resistance movements threatening the lives of members of a regime.<sup>81</sup> Regime supporters are therefore likely to bargain with resistance groups that do not pose a threat to its members. Perhaps understanding the nature of nonviolence in the protest movements. To understand the efficacy of strategy in the protest movements of Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Syria, it is important to look at it in the framework of nonviolence and violence resistance. The success of protestors in Tunisia and Egypt have justified claims that nonviolent resistance methods are more likely to be successful than violent methods in achieving strategic objectives in our interconnected world of internet social networks and social media.

In his seminal work, Robert Wolf defines violence as “an illegitimate or unauthorized use of force to effect decisions against the will or desires of others.”<sup>82</sup> Similarly, violence has also been defined as the “unjustified or unwarranted exercise of force, usually with the accompaniment of vehemence, outrage or fury.”<sup>83</sup> Daniel Rose draws on the concept of violence as “action forceful enough to produce something physical, something that affects things in the world”.<sup>84</sup> Smith defines violence as “physical action – occupying buildings, beating opponents, burning property in ways

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<sup>81</sup> Maria Stephan and Erica Chenoweth, *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011):

<sup>82</sup> Robert Paul Wolff, “On Violence,” *Journal of Philosophy* 66 (1969): 606.

<sup>83</sup> Gerald Runkle, “Is Violence Always Wrong?” *The Journal of Politics* 38(1976): 367.

<sup>84</sup> Daniel Ross, *Violence and Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 88.

which involves a constraint on the person, and ultimately the rights of another.”<sup>85</sup> It is also defined as “any uninvited but intentional or half intentional act of physical violating the body of a person who previously had lived in peace.”<sup>86</sup> A comprehensive attempt at defining violence was made by Charles Tilly, who identified seven types of violence as:

“Individual aggression (single –perpetrators rapes, assaults etc.), brawls (street fights, small scale battles at social events), opportunism (looting, gang rape, piracy) scattered attacks (sabotage, assault of government agents, arson), broken negotiations (demonstrations, government repression, military coups), coordinated destruction (terrorism, genocide and politicize) and violent rituals (lynching, public executions and gang rivalries).”<sup>87</sup>

These definitions are linked by equations of violence to use of force. In the same vein, the definitions are also linked to human behavior in the context of aggression. Nonetheless, although violence and aggression are concepts that are rather similar, their backgrounds and outcomes are quite different.

Further, Charles Tilly’s “repertoires of contention” argument strengthens our understanding of the logic of social change. The concept of ‘repertoires of contention’ which was based on the study of contentious politics and protest across different societies during long historical spans, observed that the ways in which people protest varies across time and place.<sup>88</sup> Each society, seemingly, has a different ‘repertoire’ of techniques of protest (a different ‘repertoire of contention’) that its members draw upon

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<sup>85</sup> John E. Smith, “The Inescapable Ambiguity of Non-Violence,” *Philosophy East and West* 19(1969): 157.

<sup>86</sup> Ross, 37.

<sup>87</sup> Tilly, 14-15.

<sup>88</sup> Charles Tilly, *Regimes and Repertoires* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 240.

in a struggle. In contemporary societies, these repertoires tend to be national and are even shared across nations, capturing recurring and historically embedded character of contentious politics by means of two related theatrical metaphors: performances and repertoires.<sup>89</sup> These repertoires vary from nonexistent to weak, to strong to rigid; with each position identifying a different relationship between the familiarity of a previous performance and the likelihood that it will again appear in a similar situation, ranging from no relationship to perfect repetition.<sup>90</sup> The effects of incremental changes in repertoires identify intertwined strands of change in contentious repertoires, attributable to the internal history of struggle, transformations of regimes, alterations of social structure and culture outside the government, and their interaction. Tracing causal connections between regimes and repertoires requires a serious historical and comparative effort. For Tilly, social movements differ from other forms of contentious politics in their combination of sustained campaigns of claim-making, an exceptional array of claim making performances, and concerted displays of supporters' worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment<sup>91</sup>. From their eighteenth-century origins onward, social movements have proceeded not as solo acts and interactive campaigns targeting power holders, political actors and the general public, but they combine three kinds of claims: claims to identity, standing, and specific programs.<sup>92</sup> Tilly demonstrates that “the relative salience of these claims varies significantly among social movements, among

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<sup>89</sup> Charles Tilly, *Regimes and Repertoires* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006)

<sup>90</sup> Charles Tilly, *Regimes and Repertoires* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 240.

<sup>91</sup> Tilly, 240.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid. 16.

claimants within movements, and among phases of movements”.<sup>93</sup> For Tilly regimes necessarily shape both social movements and repertoires while demonstrations best show the nature of campaigns, performances and legitimacy, unity and commitment.<sup>94</sup> Tilly argues that frames in social movements are constructed locally, regionally and at national levels.

## **2.4 Strategy Shift: Nonviolent to Violent Resistance**

Despite the common views on resistance type, strategy shift, which is the shift from a non-violent to violent resistance or vice versa emerged as an important theme in contemporary social movements. Veronique Dudouet noted that, “armed and unarmed resistance might be introduced as alternative methods of popular mobilization for collective, organized, non-institutionalized, contentious and coercive action”.<sup>95</sup> Since various forms of struggle are very fluid, protest movements are not always exclusively and explicitly armed or unarmed – many involve a combination of both”.<sup>96</sup> This means that protest movements can shift from non-violent to violent or vice versa. The shift from non-violence to violence is largely as a result of both internal and external factors.<sup>97</sup> The internal factors include strategic re-evaluation, demand for new strategies and expansion

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<sup>93</sup> Charles Tilly, *Regimes and Repertoires* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006)

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>95</sup> Veronique Dudouet, “Dynamics and Factors of Transition from Armed Struggle to Nonviolent Resistance,” *Journal of Peace Research* 50(2013): 402.

<sup>96</sup> Veronique Dudouet, “Dynamics and Factors of Transition from Armed Struggle to Nonviolent Resistance,” *Journal of Peace Research* 50(2013): 402.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

of the support base.<sup>98</sup> The external factors includes as political opportunities, assessment of power asymmetries, and the influence of external patrons.<sup>99</sup> To better put it into perspective, Dudouet used labels such as “conflict escalation” to describe increase in the intensity and frequency of coercive and violent behavior directed to the other party and “conflict intensification” to refer to the transition from latent to overt(nonviolent).<sup>100</sup> Conflict escalation, as she puts it better explains the “shift from peaceful to violent expressions of conflict behavior on the part of the state challengers (usually in mutual interaction with the reciprocal behavioral patterns of the authorities”<sup>101</sup> Similarly , the term radicalization has been used to describe such transitions from “conventional to unconventional politics; a shift to direct action techniques; a turn to illegal, but nonviolent acts; and finally, the adoption of violent activities”.<sup>102</sup> Radicalization in this context is defined as “changes in beliefs, feelings and behaviors in directions that increasingly justify intergroup violence and challenge to state authority”.<sup>103</sup>

Nonetheless, in the wake of protest movements in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Syria from 2010-2013, a strategy shift from nonviolent to violent resistance is a function of security force type. Institutionalized security forces tend to use less violence towards

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Veronique Dudouet, “ Dynamics and Factors of Transition from Armed Struggle to Nonviolent Resistance,” *Journal of Peace Research* 50(2013)

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 404.

<sup>101</sup> Reinoud Leenders, “Social Movement Theory and the Onset of the Popular Uprising in Syria,” *Arab Studies Quarterly* 35( 2013):. 404.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

protestors and protests generally tends to be nonviolent under such conditions. In retrospect, patrimonial security forces tend to use violence against any form of protest, therefore causing protestors to use violent means in response. The hypothesis examined below provides explanations.

## 2.5 Social Media

Social media is an “electronic repertoire of action” that facilitates mass mobilizations by digitally calling for action through email or a website. Social media connects people with common interests and resources to act for the common good. Social media has created “spaces of autonomy, largely beyond the control of governments and corporations that had monopolized the channels of communication as the foundation of their power, throughout history.”<sup>104</sup> These spaces of autonomy are platforms for sharing sorrow and hope, connecting to each other, and by envisioning projects from multiple sources of being, individuals formed networks, regardless of their personal views and organizational attachments.<sup>105</sup> Social movements therefore spread by “contagion in a world networked by the wireless Internet and marked by fast, viral diffusion of images and ideas, parking fire in a diverse social landscape devastated by economic and political contention.”<sup>106</sup> These internet networks are operated by a process of sharing meaning through the exchange of information in the public realm beyond interpersonal

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<sup>104</sup> Manuel Castell (2012), *Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in The Internet Age*, Polity; 1 edition (August 27, 2012) 2.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

interaction.<sup>107</sup> Castells opined that these networks are continually “transforming communication media to all domains of social life in a network that is at the same time global and local, generic and customized in an ever-changing pattern.”<sup>108</sup> These changing patterns construct meaning characterized by diversity and “dependent on the messages and frames created, formatted and diffused in a multimedia communication network that affects forms of meaning construction and power relationships.”<sup>109</sup> In that vein, Castells conceptualizes mass media as communication power; with the premises that power relationships are constitutive of society and construct institutions of society.

For Castells, even though power relations are embedded in such institutions of society, particularly the state, the contradictory and conflictive nature of power produces a counter power understood as the capacity of social actors challenging power embedded in the institutions of society for purposes of representation and protecting values and interests.<sup>110</sup> Since institutional systems reflect power relationships negotiated by a process of conflict and bargaining, the configuration of the state and other institutions regulating the lives of people is dependent upon a constant interaction between power and counter power, with the construction of meaning in people’s minds as a more decisive and stable source of power.<sup>111</sup> In that regards, Castells noted that humans create meaning by interacting and networking with their natural and social environment through

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Manuel Castell (2012), *Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in The Internet Age* Polity; 1 edition (August 27, 2012) 6

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

the act of communication, which is a process of sharing meaning through exchange of information.<sup>112</sup>

In addition, Castells states that the key source of the social production of meaning is the process of socialized communication, which exists in the public realm beyond interpersonal communication.<sup>113</sup> Transformations of communications technology in the digital age has extended the reach of mass media to all domains of social life in a network that is both global and local, generic and customized in a changing pattern characterized by diversity. A common feature of the interactive process is the dependence on messages and frames created, formatted and diffused in multimedia communication networks, conditioned by the communications environment that affects the forms of meaning construction, and facilitated by mass self-communication – the use of the internet and wireless networks as platforms of digital communications.<sup>114</sup> Castells argues that it is mass communication because messages are processed from many sources with a potential of reaching a multiplicity of receivers and connects to several networks transmitting digitized information to multiple communities and networks. Taking it further, he also calls it process self-communication, since production of the message is decided by the sender and designation of the receiver is self-directed.

Likewise, Nisbet, et al. analyzed internet use and democratic demands from a multinational and multilevel model and how the impact of internet penetration and

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Manuel Castell (2012), *Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in The Internet Age* Polity; 1 edition (August 27, 2012)

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.



individual frequency of internet use is associated with mass mobilization and collective action for change. Although no extensive research on the relationships between internet penetration, or internet use, and citizen attitudes about democracy exists, the enhancement of journalism and robustness of civil society confirms the positive role ICTs are playing in promoting and supporting mass mobilization.<sup>115</sup> The internet nonetheless has a democratic potential that encourages the development of participant and sophisticated citizens engaged with political information provided to them. In other words, internet penetration allows citizens to access more pluralistic content that increases citizen demand for democracy.<sup>116</sup> In addition, increased demand promotes bottom-up democratization by increasing the likelihood of democratic transitions in nondemocratic states or strengthening democratic institutions in young democracies.<sup>117</sup> Further, the “overall rates of national Internet penetration does not correlate with more demand for democracy from citizens.”<sup>118</sup> Nisbet, et al maintain that “states with a moderate to high level of Internet penetration, in which the population on average expresses a high demand for democracy, and enjoy at least a partly democratic political regimes are contexts where increasing Internet use is more likely to promote democratic change.”<sup>119</sup> Increased Internet adoption holds the promise of fostering greater democracy

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<sup>115</sup> Erik C. Nisbet, Elizabeth Stoycheff, and Katy E. Pearce, “Internet Use and Democratic Demands: A Multinational, Multilevel Model of Internet Use, and Citizen Attitudes About Democracy,” *Journal of Communication* 62(2012): 249-265.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 251.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 250.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 255.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

in countries with certain preconditions; however, those that remain highly authoritarian, or not free, are likely to limit the democratic potential of the internet regardless of the degree of internet penetration.<sup>120</sup> Despite limitations and observations, social media has proven that the Internet may foster political change by socializing citizens into the political beliefs required for the democratic citizenship, and in turn promote successful and sustainable democracies.

Similarly, Art Silverblatt defines social media as a social institution, which has assumed many of the functions formerly served by traditional social institutions such as the church, school, government, and family.<sup>121</sup> Within that context, Silverblatt conceptualized social institutions as organizations that are critical to the socialization process; provides a support system for individuals as they struggle to become members of a larger social network; maintained formalized practices and procedures; determine rules that apply to governance, including leadership and government.<sup>122</sup> Social institutions therefore provide access to groups and people, establish a sense of order educates people to contend with change, affirm values and provides a sense of direction for people.<sup>123</sup> In that context, mass media emerged as a social institution fulfilling many functions and most importantly as a platform for citizens to be critical of the socialization process and provides support systems for individuals struggling to become a part of mainstream larger

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 260.

<sup>121</sup> Art Silverblatt, "Media as Social Institution," *American Behavioral Scientist* 48(2004): 1-8.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

societal networks.<sup>124</sup> Social media therefore emerged as a social justice institution that uses Internet technologies to mobilize globally.

Understanding mobilization by social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, the framing approach and notions of schemas “attributes the role of social media to defining issues through selection, exclusion, emphasis and collaboration.”<sup>125</sup> Social media facilitates both traditional activism (Face to Face), and enhances existing communication abilities of organizations through email campaigns, online petitions, and virtual sit-ins to existing tools of activists and organizations.<sup>126</sup> In Egypt, “social media provided space and tools for the formation and expansion of networks, broker connections between previously connected groups and facilitated the sharing of grievances beyond the small community of activist leaders to globalize the reach and appeal of the domestic movement for democratic change.”<sup>127</sup> Social media is a technological space that mobilize networks of contentious political groups and organizations to make collective claims with a common goal of effecting change. While the debate between Evgeny Morozov and Clay Shirky contributed to our understanding of the role of social media in protests movements, it is imperative to note that both strengthened the literature on mechanisms of citizen action in the new world of internet connectivity.

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Summer Harlow, “Social Media and Social Movements: Facebook and Online Guatemalan Justice Movement That Moved Offline,” *New Media and Society* 6(2012): 29.

<sup>127</sup> Merlyna Lim, “Clicks, Cabs, and Coffee Houses: Social Media and Oppositional Movements in Egypt, 2004-2011,” *Journal of Communication* 19(2012): 234.

Perhaps Clay Shirky's imbalance for understudying the potential of governments to use the same technology against protestors makes Morozov cautioning against technological determinism glossing over the importance of face-to-face interaction as the most realistic of contemporary mass mobilization. For Morozov, the role of the internet in building what he calls a digital civic infrastructure does not necessarily create sustainable digital public spheres capable of promoting democracy.<sup>128</sup> He argues that "repressive governments and security services can turn technology against the logistics of protest as blogging and social networking can easily make a state to plant and promote its own messages, spinning and neutralizing online discussions before they translate into offline action."<sup>129</sup>

Similarly Aday, Farrel, Lynch, Sides and Freelon argued that amid "evidence of new media being used to organize sustained protests during the Arab uprisings, it remained difficult to demonstrate a unique casual role of the new media."<sup>130</sup> In that regards, social media does not fully explain why protests happen when it happened and why many ordinary citizens were willing to join.<sup>131</sup> Aday, Farrel, Lynch, Sides and Freelon noted that "claims about the casual role of new media, no matter how intuitively plausible, need to be supported with compelling empirical data."<sup>132</sup> This is

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<sup>128</sup> Evgeny Morozov, "How Dictators Watch Us on the Web," *Prospect* 18(2009): 1.

<sup>129</sup> Evgeny Morozov, "How Dictators Watch Us on the Web," *Prospect* 18(2009)

<sup>130</sup> S. Aday, H. Farrel, M. Lynch, J. Sides, and D. Freelon, "New Media and Conflict After Arab Spring," *United States Institute of Peace* July (2012): 6.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

largely driven by the argument that collective action in the face of repression may be easily enabled under anonymity of online communication. In that regards, Aday, et al noted that the majority of people in Egypt joined the protest movements after government large scale shut down of internet access across the country.

Furthermore, Democratic Media Activism (DMA), Resource Mobilization Theory (RMT) and the New Social Movement Theory (NSM) provide some compelling explanations on the impact of social media on mass mobilization. Democratic Media Activism “comprises of efforts to change media messages, practices, institutions and contexts (including state communication policies) in a direction that enhances democratic values and subjectivity, as well as equal participation in public discourse and societal decision making.”<sup>133</sup> Carroll and Hackett identify the emergence of Democratic Media Activism (DMA) from three concentric circles. The first group is within and around the media industries, groups with the ability to stimulate awareness of alienation, exploitation and /or constraints on creativity; a second comprises of subordinate social groups lacking social, cultural, economic and political capital, and a final group comprising of diffuse sectors with less concern for the communication policy and practices.<sup>134</sup> Democratic Media Activism (DMA) further posits the media landscape to differ in the three broad categories of (1) institutional architecture, including technology, funding production and distribution, (2) the production process within media organizations and outlets, and (3) the content, texts, frames, messages and programs disseminated from the production

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<sup>133</sup> William K. Carrol and Robert A. Hackett, “ Democratic Media Activism through the Lens of Social Movement Theory,” *Media Culture Society* 28(2006): 84.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 83.

process.<sup>135</sup> Whereas Resource Mobilization Theory (RMT) focuses on the evolution of movements in the formation of collective action; it makes specific emphasis on social media in instrumental terms for the dissemination of information and capturing of audience. The New Social Movement Theory (NSM) on the other hand focuses on specific forms of collective identity, supporting mainstream media and frames of incorporation into new coverage.<sup>136</sup> Additionally, “growing demands for personalized relations makes digital technologies increasingly central to the organization and conduct of collective action.”<sup>137</sup> Therefore communication technologies that personalize engagement with causes and facilitate organizational communication and the greater individuals control over terms of action, has a potential for personalized identifications and the collective framing commonly associated with the protests based on organization—centered and leader driven collective action.<sup>138</sup> Furthermore collective action draws specific attention to changing repertoires of mass mobilizations from perspectives of the Resource Mobilization Theory (RMT) to tactical innovations of activists, strikes, demonstrations and media events from the New Social Movement Theory perspective.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> W. Lance Bennett and Alexandra Segerberg, “Digital Media and the Personalization of Collective Action,” *Information Communication & Society* June (2011): 771.

<sup>138</sup> William K. Carroll and Robert A. Hackett, “Democratic Media Activism through the Lens of Social Movement Theory,” *Media Culture Society* 28(2006) 83.

<sup>139</sup> Tilly, 2003, 89.

Arguably, these theories provide “an addition to the repertoire of collective action that has transformed the strategy of mass mobilization in general.”<sup>140</sup> The diffusion of the World Wide Web and the introduction of satellite news channels have altered the nature of mass media in many ways. “Through blogs, Twitter and Facebook, the Web has become a haven for a young, educated class yearning to express its worries and anxieties.”<sup>141</sup> Despite the challenges of state sovereignty and authoritarianism, social media remains to be a place relatively free of geographic limitations, since online communities and groups continue to demand for political and economic reforms across transnational boundaries. For example the “We Are All Khaled Said” Facebook page of Egypt and Twitter accounts of Arabs around the region offer testimony to the attention and inspirational effects of mass mobilization across the region, serving as conduits for information, and the support provided by disaffected youth in a region predominantly characterized by a youth bulge.<sup>142</sup>

## **2.6. Political Process Theory**

Political process theory centers much of its rhetoric on analyzing the interactions between culture and political structure. Culture is understood as subjective, malleable, enabling of protest and mobilized by the powerless to challenge existing structures. Political structure in contrast is understood as objective, durable, likely to constrain protest, and monopolized by the powerful in a concerted effort in order to achieve

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<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Jose Antonia Vargas, “Spring Awakening: How an Egyptian Revolution Began on Facebook,” *The New York Times*, February 17, 2012, A1.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

hegemonic control over the public.<sup>143</sup> As a theory, political process theory or PPT distinguishes the objective or structural opportunities that are available in society from the subjective and cultural framing of these opportunities. It argues that culture mediates between objective political opportunities and objective mobilization but does not specifically create those opportunities. Much sociological analysis of recent years tends to restrict culture to insurgents' framing efforts, reflecting a perceived opposition between structure and culture that informs much sociological analysis.

In social movement theory as discussed above, the opposition takes the form of identifying political opportunities as structural rather than cultural whereas the capacity of activists to take advantage of such opportunities is itself cultural. The theory, therefore, presents a somewhat complex view of the specific ways in which culture and structure combine to bring about both opportunities for protest and the determination to protest a particular government or a set of government activities.

In discussing physical and social structures and their impact on conflict, Dean Pruitt and S.H. Kim make note of the fact that opposition groups within any society find themselves challenged by a lack of opportunity for meaningful participation in government decisionmaking and it is this lack of opportunity which may initially foster social mobilization.<sup>144</sup> Contentious tactics often adopted by opposition groups or by organs of an authoritarian government include ingratiation, promises, threats, persuasive

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<sup>143</sup> Francesca Polletta, "Snarls, Quacks, and Quarrels: Culture and Structure in Political Process Theory," *Sociological Forum* 14(1999): 65.

<sup>144</sup> Dean G. Pruitt and S.H. Kim, *Social Conflict: Escalation, Stalemate and Settlement* (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2004), 44-47.



argumentation, shaming, coercive commitments, and either violent or nonviolent resistance.

Contentious tactics with the exception of violence can be useful not only to defeat one's opponents but also to foster collaboration. For example, ingratiation is a contentious tactic in which one party tries to make itself more attractive to the other to prepare the other for subsequent exploitation.<sup>145</sup> Promises are useful in that they can head off a direct conflict and can even create opportunities for compliance without much resistance and resentment. However, promises are only effective in those instances in which the promiser has a preexisting reputation for reliability. When this does not exist, promises are generally unlikely to eliminate or overcome opposition and take on new meaning as a form of discouragement that can foster increased opposition.

Threats and coercion are equally common political process mechanisms that a government perhaps more than an opposition group is likely to use to bring about an end to dissent.<sup>146</sup> Coercive commitments are meant to force the opposition to do the work of achieving agreement seeking to force the opposition to make concessions in order to achieve small victories rather than grand goals and objectives. At the same time, coercive commitments and threats cannot work indefinitely. Used too frequently or too harshly and accompanied by regime violence against opponents these contentious tactics for resolving problems usually backfire.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 76.

<sup>147</sup> Dean G. Pruitt and S.H. Kim, *Social Conflict: Escalation, Stalemate and Settlement* (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2004), 75-76.

Polletta, in discussing political process theory, also suggests that culture plays an important role in creating political opportunities for both insurgents and hegemons. State policies function not only as “technical solutions to material problems of control or resource extraction” .... “They are rooted in changing conceptions of what the state is, what it can and should do.”<sup>148</sup> In other words, state policies in most societies tend to be modified over time or to evolve, often generating seismic shifts in structures as well as culture itself. A classic example of this is the transformation of U.S. government policy in the post-World War II era with respect to the structures impacting upon members of racial and ethnic minority groups. Structural opportunities for activists in this instance was the superpower Cold War competition for influence in the developing nations, countered domestically by demands for improved civil and human rights for American minorities.<sup>149</sup>

One might argue that the initial efforts undertaken by Bashar Al Assad with respect to freeing political prisoners represented the possibility of a meaningful structural reform designed to garner support for the new president and to differentiate him from his father.<sup>150</sup> The relative brevity of this form of outreach which would come under the general heading of ingratiation as well as persuasive argumentation did not eliminate opposition particularly because it was swiftly followed by further repression of dissent. Here one finds that from the perspective of political process theory any effort to

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<sup>148</sup> Polletta, 67.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Fred H. Lawson, “Syria’s Mutating Civil War and Its Impact on Turkey, Iraq, and Iran,” *International Affairs* 90(2014): 1351-1352.

restructure the relationship between Syria's government and its people was temporary at best and doomed to failure.

Jeff Goodwin and James M. Jasper note that political process theory as an approach to sociological analysis possesses a strong bias in favor of metaphors of structure and is somewhat conceptually muddled in that the theorists have been unable to reach agreement about some of the definitions of some of its most basic concepts.<sup>151</sup> These researchers believe that its best this theoretical approach in its current form provides "a helpful albeit limited set of sensitizing concepts for social movement research. It does not provide what it frequently and often implicitly promises: a causally adequate universal theory or model of social movements."<sup>152</sup>

The problem is that structural factors which are generally relatively stable over time and outside the control of movement actors and opposition groups are seen and emphasized more readily than others. The limits thus imposed on political process theory are cognizant of the fact that social movements do not emerge solely or perhaps even primarily as a result of expanding political opportunities. Goodwin and Jasper state that contra Sidney Tarrow, political opportunities do not always occur in tandem with the rise of social movements.<sup>153</sup> These analysts argue that the political opportunity thesis approaches tautology or triviality because opportunities that are lacking may be more encouraging of opposition than opportunities that are available.

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<sup>151</sup> Jeff Goodwin and James M. Jasper, "Caught in a Winding, Snarling Vine: The Structural Bias of Political Process Theory," *Sociological Forum* 14(1999): 28.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 31.

As subsequent chapters of this study will demonstrate, however, process tracing is an effective analytic strategy for examining the dynamics of contention. Jean-Pierre Reed states that what this theory offers is a more relational or interactive mechanism focused and context/ event/episodic specific sociology of political contention.<sup>154</sup> The political process theory is said to converge “on three general mechanisms: the environmental, cognitive, and relational ones. Environmental mechanisms are externally generated influences on conditions affecting social life... Cognitive mechanisms refer to the ways in which collective perception and political commitment assume a transformative character.... Relational mechanisms focus on the coalitional, organizational, and network ways that make possible alliances across difference, whether these be political, social, economic, or cultural ones.”<sup>155</sup> Together, these mechanisms often coalesce to create both opportunities for oppositional activism or efforts by the government to inhibit such activism.

The theory is nevertheless useful in highlighting the changes that have occurred in the Syrian opposition over what is a relatively short period of time. These groups will be discussed in greater depth below along with an examination of the roles played by external state and non-state actors in a crisis that is now entering into its sixth year.

## **2.7 Research Questions and Hypotheses**

Following an in-depth theoretical and literature review, five major questions emerge. First, what are the causes (origins) of the mass mobilization in Syria? Second,

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<sup>154</sup> Jean-Pierre Reed, “Dynamics of Contention,” *Acta Sociologica*, 45(2002): 327.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

why is the mass mobilization violent in and Syria? Third, what is the impact of social media on mass mobilization in Syria? To effectively respond to these questions, I adopt a unique case study research methodology to understand grievances and opportunities, nonviolent and violent strategy, the impact of social media on strategy and the degree of regime change. My focus is on Syria; however, in order to access viable data for testing the following hypotheses, it proved necessary to include reference to other states in the region experiencing similar if not identical crises (e.g., Egypt, Tunisia, and Libya). I develop the following three hypotheses examined in the study:

*Hypothesis 1: States with little or no employment opportunities for youths are more likely to be confronted with mass mobilization than are states with opportunities for the youth.*

*Hypothesis 2: Citizens with higher access to social media are more likely to use non-violent means of protests than citizens in states with little or no access to social media.*

*Hypothesis 3: States with institutionalized security forces use less violence than states with patrimonial security forces during mass mobilization.*

## **Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology – Small N Comparative Historical Research**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Small N comparative research is “an inquiry investigating a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, when the boundaries between phenomenon and

context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used.”<sup>156</sup>

Small N comparative methodology uses a relatively small sample of cases rather than either a single case or a larger sample of cases. Within this context, small N comparative methodology is not driven by generalization or prediction, but rather, “emphasizes a specific interest and wishes to understand it completely by observing all of the variables and their interacting relationships.”<sup>157</sup> This approach allows for the use of both primary and secondary source material. Lange conceives small N comparative-historical methods as expanding insight into diverse social phenomena and notes that this particular approach allows social scientists to analyze and offer important insight into often perplexing social issues that emerge in a climate that is increasingly characterized by change and volatility.<sup>158</sup> In this study, small N comparative historic research strategies are employed.

Comparative-historical small N strategies do facilitate the generation of conclusions derived from comparisons of cases that share some similar characteristics.<sup>159</sup> Typically, said Ragin, “interpretive work attempts to account for specific historical outcomes or sets of comparable outcomes or processes chosen for study because of their

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<sup>156</sup> Larry M. Dooley, Case Study Research and Theory Building, *Advances in Developing Human Resources* 4(2002): 338.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 336.

<sup>158</sup> Matthew Lange, *Comparative Historical Methods* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2013), 40-44.

<sup>159</sup> Stanley Lieberson, “Small N’s and Big Comparisons: An Examination of the reasoning in Comparative Studies Based on a Small Number of Cases, *Social Forces* 70(1991): 307.

significance for current institutional arrangements or for social life in general.<sup>160</sup> Small N studies employ systematic analysis of similarities and differences. When causal arguments are combinational, Ragin noted that it is not the number of cases but their limited variety that imposes constraints on vigor.<sup>161</sup> Similarly, small N case studies employ some of the characteristics and techniques associated with quantitative analysis, but the emphasis is on descriptive rather than inferential statistical analysis.<sup>162</sup>

As significantly, Lieberman noted that small N studies assume a deterministic rather than a probabilistic approach.<sup>163</sup> Further, such studies assume that no errors in measurement occur and that there is not only a single cause operating in the case or cases. They assume the absence of interaction effects. Such assumptions follow from Mill's causal analysis based on small Ns.<sup>164</sup> Since Small N studies are more deterministic than probabilistic, the concepts and theories are well explored to effectively answer the "why" and "how" and "when" questions.<sup>165</sup> Yin found that "multiple case studies can be used to

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<sup>160</sup> Charles C. Ragin, *The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989), 3.

<sup>161</sup> Charles C. Ragin, *The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989).

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Lieberman, 318.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

<sup>165</sup> Sheryl L. Boblin, Sandra Ireland, Helen Kirkpatrick and Kim Robertson, "Using Stakes Qualitative Study Approach to Explore Implementation of Evidence- Based Practice," *Qualitative Health Reserch* 23 (203): 1267-1268.

either, “(a) predicts similar results (a literal replication) or (b) predicts contrasting results but for predictable reasons (a theoretical replication)”.<sup>166</sup>

Pamela Baxter and Susan Jack (2008) found that case study design should be considered when: (a) the focus of the study is to answer “how” and “why” questions; (b) you cannot manipulate the behavior of those involved in the study; (c) you want to cover contextual conditions because you believe they are relevant to the phenomenon under study; or (d) the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and context.”<sup>167</sup> The methodology therefore facilitates understanding causes (why) and (how) the strategies were violent in some cases and non-violent in other cases and specifically determine the factors that influenced the decision making.

Additionally, Small N comparative studies have often been viewed as a useful tool for the explanatory stages of research topics and as a basis for the development of more structured tools required for a better understanding of the topic. It facilitates the explanation of the complex relationships of the dependent and independent variables. In comparison to other methodologies, Small N comparative studies have often been distorted by critiques on the basis of statistical assumptions. Nonetheless, as Alexander George and Andrew Bennett put it, “while case studies share similar epistemological logic with statistical methods and with formal modeling that is coupled with empirical research, they offer a different methodological logic.”<sup>168</sup> Similarly in epistemological

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<sup>166</sup> R.K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2003). 47.

<sup>167</sup> Pamela Baxter and Suzan Jack. “Qualitative Case Study Methodology: Study Design and Implementation for Novice Researchers”, *The Qualitative Report* 13(2008): 544-545.

<sup>168</sup> Alexander George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 6.



terms, “all the approaches attempt to develop logically consistent models, deriving observable implications while testing the implications against empirical observations.”<sup>169</sup> From methodological lenses, the explanatory approach uses reasoning in case selection, determination of variables and the use of inductive and deductive logic. Furthermore, case studies in research provides a vehicle to examine relationships, while refining the concept of middle-range or typological theories.<sup>170</sup> It also offers an example of how to use multiple methods, since a combination of methods is vital to the optimization of insights and effectively dealing with social science challenges of balancing the particular with the general.<sup>171</sup>

Since there is a potential to confuse the terms “case study methods”, “qualitative methods” and “comparative methods” it is important to understand that the Small N study for this dissertation includes both within case analysis and comparisons to draw a combination of within case analysis and cross –case analysis.<sup>172</sup> Small N comparative case study in this context uses an explanatory approach in a comparative framework. An explanatory case study seeks to answer a question that sought to explain the presumed casual links of the real life phenomena of mass mobilization and strategy that are too complex for survey and experimental strategies.<sup>173</sup> The comparative approach explores

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> Alexander George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005).

<sup>171</sup> Matthew Lange. 2012. *Comparative Historical Methods*. Los Angeles :Sage 2013, 34.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

the differences within and between cases to draw comparisons between selected cases and facilitate the replication of findings. Since the dissertation answers questions, explore similarities and differences in an effort to highlight casual determinants in the contexts of within-case methods, my primary approach is the explanatory approach. As Matthew Lange rightfully put it, “within case methods pursues insights into the determinants of a particular phenomenon with the most common of the within-case method as causal narrative, describing processes and explores causal determinants; and the form of process tracing, a more focused type of causal narrative investigating mechanisms linking two related phenomena.”<sup>174</sup>

The purpose of using small N comparative historical research is in line with Alexander George and Andrew Bennett’s reasoning on: “(1) growth in interest of theory oriented case studies, arousing new interest in the methods of historical research and the logic of historical explanation; (2) developments in strengthening case study methods, rooted in the “scientific realist” school emphasizing causal mechanisms as independent stable factors linking causes to effects; and (3) engaging contemporary debates among rational choice theorists, structuralists, historical institutionalists, social constructivists, cognitive theorists, postmodernists and others”. The cases are designed to enhance quality and trustworthiness based on the details and data provided for readers to assess the validity and credibility of the work. Similarly small N comparative case studies have traditionally been known to take a structural view and explore the meso and macro-level processes involving multiple individuals and producing patterns of social relations. The

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<sup>174</sup> Matthew Lange. 2012. *Comparative Historical Methods*. Los Angeles :Sage 2013, 4.

study of mass mobilization and strategy, class structure and economies, religions, and other macro-sociological concepts have therefore been the focus of comparative case studies<sup>175</sup> Evidently, both “meso- and macro-level analysis explores causal processes involving a number of people, it analyzes common structural and institutional factors shaping how large numbers of people act.”<sup>176</sup> Small N comparative studies help to provide such mechanism of study.

Small N comparative historical research has been used in a number of different research studies. Skocpol explained the causes of revolution through a structural functionalist sociological paradigm in a comparative historical analysis of the French Revolution of 1789 through the early nineteenth century, the Russian Revolution of 1917 through the 1930s, and the Chinese Revolution of 1911 through the 1960s Cultural Revolution. In this particular study, Skocpol analyzed relationships and tensions between producing classes and the dominant classes and the states using the theory of state-centered structuralism. She employed Millian logic in her analysis.<sup>177</sup>

Boudreau employed a small N strategy to examine dictatorships in South East Asia, using the political process model that builds on the resource mobilization approach, exploring how particular modes of state attack encourage specific patterns of political contention. Three cases studies were employed. Boudreau used process tracing to compare strategies of repression and protest in post-war Burma, Indonesia and the

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<sup>175</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 32-39.

Philippines, and understand how the social bases and opposition cultures available to dissidents were shaped by alternative strategies. Process-tracing in social science is a method for studying causal mechanisms linking causes with outcomes. This enables the researcher to make strong inferences about how a cause (or set of causes) contributes to producing an outcome.<sup>178</sup>

Process within a case (causal-process observations, CPOs) to adjudicate between alternative possible explanations) tracing is a case-based approach to causal inference which focuses on the use of clues. It can be seen to some extent as a methodology linked to PPT, described above. Process tracing involves four types of causal tests:

- 'straw in the wind', which lends support for an explanation without definitively ruling it in or out,
- 'hoop' failed when examination of a case shows the presence of a necessary causal condition, when the outcome of interest is not present. Common hoop conditions are more persuasive than uncommon ones
- 'smoking gun', passed when examination of a case shows the presence of a sufficient causal condition. Uncommon smoking gun conditions are more persuasive than common ones
- 'doubly definitive' passed when examination of a case shows that a condition is both necessary and sufficient support for the explanation. These tend to be rare.<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> Vincent Boudreau, *Resisting Dictatorship: Repression and Protest in Southeast Asia*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 20-26.

<sup>179</sup> George and Bennett, 90-98.

Process tracing can be used both to see if results are consistent with a specific theory and to see if alternative explanations can be ruled out.

In this context, of course, the goal is to identify causal inferences. Hall identified the type of causal inference as follows:

Type of Causality	Example
1. Many causes for the same effect	We find instances in which an increase in $x$ (level of economic development) causes an increase in $y$ (movement toward democracy) in some cases but does not have this effect in others, where $y$ is caused by an entirely different set of causes.
2. Cause dependency on time	We find cases in which an increase in $x$ (social democratic governance) is associated with an increase in $y$ (social spending) at one point in time (postwar period for example) but not in another (1990s).
3. Same cause different outcomes	We find instances in which an increase in $x$ (social protest) causes an outcome $y$ (government turn over) in some cases but an entirely different outcome (repression) in other cases.
4. Outcomes are the effects of various causes that depend on each other	We find instances in which an outcome $y$ (successful wage coordination) depends on the value of many other variables – $v$ (union density), $w$ (social democratic governance), and $x$ (social policy regime) – whose values are in turn jointly dependent on each other
5. Circular causality	We find cases in which increases in $x$ (support for democracy) increase $y$ (the

stability of democracy) and in which increases in  $y$  also tend to increase  $x$ .

James Mahoney commented that researchers are not as yet in agreement as to the issue of which procedures and underlying logic are in fact used in small N causal assessment. Nominal comparison, ordinal comparison, and within-case analysis are most commonly employed. Nominal comparison involves use of categories that are mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive. Ordinal comparison involves rank ordering of cases into three or more categories based on the degree to which a given phenomenon is present. Finally, within-case analysis focuses on identifying categories specific to a case and then determining if similar categories exist elsewhere.<sup>180</sup>

### 3.2 Data

Broadly, primary data are “new” data obtained from a research effort that enable a researcher to formulate generalizations about a set of respondents in a survey or the particulars of a case. Its advantages include facilitating predictions and revealing information that may not be obtained from secondary data. The primary data includes television and documentaries and secondary data includes selected academic journals, reports from international organizations and government, newspaper articles and books. The collection and comparison of this data enhances data quality based on the principles

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<sup>180</sup> Alexander George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005).

of idea convergence and the confirmation of findings.<sup>181</sup> The dissertation uses both primary and secondary data to provide an understanding of the cases from multiple perspectives. The cases in this dissertation are relevant to testing hypothesis, theory development, potential for achieving conceptual validity, strong procedure for fostering new hypothesis, examining hypothesis role in casual mechanism and the capacity to address casual complexity.

Gathering primary data is expensive and costly in terms of time and resources; such data gathering may be subject to errors linked to reliability and validity. Babbie pointed out that secondary data are based on information gleaned from studies previously performed by any other actor – government agencies, research institutions or scholars, trade associations, and so on. Though less costly and more accessible than primary data, secondary data rarely fits the framework of a research study perfectly; it may require additional manipulation. It is also not necessarily reliable.<sup>182</sup>

The goals of this research are fourfold: first to determine the grievances and opportunities causing mass mobilization; second to determine non-violent and violent nature of the mobilization, third to discern whether social media influence the non-violent and violent nature; fourth, to explore which variables matters in determining outcome of the mobilization. In line with Matthew Lange’s methodological formulation of comparative studies, “it involves six steps: formulating a problem, conceptualizing variables, making a hypotheses, gathering data, analyzing data to test hypotheses, and

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<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> Earl K. Babbie, *The Practice of Social Research*. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2004), 104-108.

making a conclusion.”<sup>183</sup> To this end, I construct a literature review of mass mobilization, strategy and social media. I define both the dependent and independent variables as outlined below in Table I:

**Table I: Dependent and Independent Variables**

Dependent Variables	Independent Variables
A) Mass Mobilization	A1. Youth Bulge and Unemployment ✓ Lack of employment opportunities for youth  A2. Authoritarianism ✓ Multi-party electoral autocracies ✓ Single party regimes
B) Type of Mobilization ✓ Violent Mobilization ✓ Non Violent Mobilization	B1. Social Media ✓ Non-violent Mobilization B2. Security Forces ✓ Patrimonial Security Forces - Violent Mobilization ✓ Institutionalized Security Forces – Non-violent Mobilization

### 3.3 Dependent Variables

The dependent variables which include the concepts of mass mobilization, strategy or repertoire of contention (strategic violence and nonviolence) and regime change are defined as follows:

**3.3a Mass Mobilization:** An overall process of interactive performances or protest events in which collective actors mobilize and make claims against elites, authorities or some other group. My approach grew out of the work of Tilly and his collaborators (McAdam; McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly; Tarrow; Tilly and Tarrow; and Moghadam).

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<sup>183</sup> Lange, 4.



Mass mobilization is also defined in the context of social movements as the collective and organized effort which can be violent and/or non-violent, to promote or to resist a particular social change that occurs partially or entirely outside of institutional (conventional) political channels. Tilly uses metaphors of repertoires to understand social movements and political contention. Mass mobilization can further be understood in the context of political process and contentious politics, claim making, performances such as strikes, demonstrations, public meetings and petitions.

**3.3b Strategy (*Repertoire of Contention*):** Societies seemingly use different techniques of protest (a different ‘repertoire of contention’) that its members draw upon in a struggle. In contemporary societies, these repertoires tend to be national and are even shared across nations, capturing some of the recurrent contentious politics by means of nonviolence and violent strategy.

- **Nonviolent Resistance:** A “civilian based method used to wage conflict through social, psychological, economic, and political means without the threat or use of violence.”<sup>184</sup> Nonviolent actions are “acts of omission, acts of commission or a combination of both and other nonviolent methods identified by scholars including symbolic protests, economic boycotts, labor strikes, political and social noncooperation, and nonviolent intervention used by groups to mobilize opposition or support for different policies, to delegitimize adversaries and to remove or restrict adversaries sources of power.”<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> Chenoweth and Stephan, 14.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

- **Violent Resistance:** This includes “individual aggression (single –perpetrators rapes, assaults etc.), brawls (street fights, small scale battles at social events), opportunism (looting, gang rape, piracy) scattered attacks (sabotage, assault of government agents, arson), broken negotiations (government repression, military coups), coordinated destruction (terrorism, genocide and politicide) and violent rituals (lynching, public executions and gang rivalries.”<sup>186</sup>

**3.4 Independent Variables:** The independent variables which include youth bulge and unemployment, authoritarianism, social media, security forces (institutionalize and patrimonial security forces) are defined as follows:

**3.4a Youth Bulge:** For the purpose of this dissertation, I define youth bulge as a situation where the overall percentage of the population between 15-24 years old exceeds 20 percent and the percentage over 15 years old is higher than 30 percent.<sup>187</sup> The youth bulge contends that states characterized by a growing youth population lacking opportunities for growth and advancement under oppressive regimes compromising political, economic and social freedoms, systems compromising, while simultaneously facing limited resources in some cases and adequate resources in other cases, are prone to mass mobilization. Further, it suggests that the growing dissatisfaction, frustration and the “lower opportunity cost relative to the older population,”<sup>188</sup> and the “low standards

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<sup>186</sup> Tilly, 2003, 15.

<sup>187</sup> Rahel Schomaker, “ Youth Bulges, Poor Institutional Quality and Missing Migration Opportunities – Triggers of and Potential Counter-Measures for Terrorism in MENA,” *Topics in Middle Eastern and African Economics* 15(2013): 117.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid., 118.

of living in terms of economic and social fortunes,”<sup>189</sup> among a large share of young people translates to support for mass mobilization.

- **Youth:** I define “Youth” as “a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood’s independence and awareness of our interdependence as members of a community. Youth is a more fluid category than a fixed age-group.”<sup>190</sup>

**3.4b Unemployment:** In accord with the United Nations, I define unemployment as “all persons who during a specified reference period (e.g. one week) were: (i) without work, i.e., were not in paid employment or self-employment; (ii) currently available for work, i.e. were available for paid employment or self-employment during the reference period; and (iii) seeking work, i.e., had taken specific steps (registration at a public or private employment exchange; application to employers; checking at worksites, farms, factory gates, market or other assembly places; placing or answering newspaper advertisements; seeking assistance of friends or relatives; looking for land, building machinery or equipment to establish an own enterprise; arranging for financial resources; applying for permits and licenses; etc.) in a specified recent period (e.g. the last four weeks) to seek paid employment or self-employment.”<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

<sup>190</sup> United Nations Economic Social and Cultural Organization, “What Do You Mean by Youth?” *Social and Human Sciences* <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/youth/youth-definition/> 1.

<sup>191</sup> United Nations, “United Nations Unemployment Code 147” [www.un.org](http://www.un.org).

**3.4c Authoritarian Regime:** I define an authoritarian regime as a regime that imposes its will on citizens with a total disregard for the rule of law and fundamental tenets of a national constitution. It is a regime that silences dissent and uses its battery of security institutions to use force in exerting control and holding on to power by all means. For the purpose of this dissertation, the three types of authoritarian regimes that are broadly examined include (1) hereditary succession based on lineage, (2) military authoritarianism, and (3) electoral autocracies.

- **Hereditary Succession Based on Lineage:** These are regimes largely driven by traditional family rule and succession is based on lineage.
- **Military Authoritarianism:** Regimes with a military leader or a leader with the traditional support of the military.
- **Electoral Autocracy:** Regimes that allow multiparty competition with a control outcome or prohibit all parties from running with only the government party taking part in an election.

**3.4d Social Media:** Spaces of autonomy, largely beyond the control of governments and corporations that had monopolized the channels of communication as the foundation of their power, throughout history. It is also a networked social institution of the information age, which is based on justice, predominantly relying on internet technologies to internationalize its agenda as a locally based movement.

**3.4e Security Force:** I define security forces as bodies of person empowered by a state to enforce the rule of law, protect citizens and property and prevent disorder with a power that includes the legitimate use of force. A security force in this context includes the

police and the armed forces. And for purposes of this study, I give two main categories of security forces:

- ***Institutionalized Security Force:*** Institutionalized security forces are those that relate to the general aspirations and concerns of the ordinary citizens, have an established link with society either through economic interest or conscription style.
- ***Patrimonial Security Force:*** This is a security force that has “commanders and senior officers link to the regime either through bonds of blood, ethnicity and tribe where career advancement is governed by cronyism and political loyalty rather than merit, or where relationship with the public is blurred, causing pervasive predation and economic corruption, the military mostly likely represses all forms of protests and mass mobilization.”<sup>192</sup>

For the purpose of this study, I contend that both nonviolent and violent resistance movements are observable, continuous tactics with a political objective that can last from days to years. They both have discernible leadership are distinguished from random riots or spontaneous mass acts.

### 3.5 Case Selection

My selection of the case is based on realities of the mass mobilization efforts in North Africa and the Middle East. Alternatively, some movements use both nonviolent (Tunisia and Egypt) and violent resistance (Libya as a direct comparison to the central

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<sup>192</sup> Ellen Lust, *Institutions and Governance : The Middle East* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication, 2013), 155.

case of Syria) strategies, and characterizing a campaign as nonviolent or violent simplifies a complex constellation of resistance. To address these difficulties, I carried out an extensive review of the literature on nonviolent and violent resistance. Then, I corroborated these data using multiple sources from prominent scholars as Kurt Schock, Erica Chenoweth and Maria Stephan, Valentine Moghadam, Charles Tilly, Sidney Tarrow, Weber, John McCarthy and Mayer Zald, Mark Lichbach, Suzan Olzak and Theda Skocpol and Jeff Goodwin. Resistance movements that used primarily or entirely nonviolent strategies are considered the nonviolent cases whereas the resistance movements that used entirely or primarily violent strategies are considered violent resistance movements. I then identified a comparative case of two nonviolent resistance movements (Tunisia and Egypt) and another comparative case of violent resistance (Libya) ; these three cases are then considered against that of Syria described in greater depth in subsequent chapters of this study.

The unit of analysis is the country of conflict in which mass mobilization took place. The observations are based on the years of the mobilization's peak. On the one hand some of the mobilization lasted less than a year, while others about a year and more. The outcome of the mobilization is identified by either regime change, reforms or no regime change. To test the three hypotheses, I analyzed primary and secondary data on multiple independent variables. I argue that growing grievances and lack of opportunities in a state has a tendency to see increased youth support of mobilization efforts for change. Therefore, regimes failure to address grievances and provide opportunities for the youth should have a positive effect on the probability of success of mass mobilization and nonviolent campaigns.

The next independent variable is the impact of social media on strategy (nonviolent and violent strategy). With the divergent views on the linkages of social media to supporting incumbent regimes and protestors, I look at social to determine whether a movement's use of mass media has supported its behavior towards more of a nonviolent strategy or a violent one. Additionally, I looked at security forces as another independent variable, focusing on the function of security force type and relationship to the nature of violence. The nature of security forces on violence levels can be captured by two separate variables: patrimonial security forces - violent Mobilization; institutionalized security forces –nonviolent mobilization. I therefore argue that states with institutionalized security forces use limited or less violence on citizens than states with patrimonial security forces during mass mobilization.

### **3.6 Comparative Cases**

To determine the causal relationship between resistance type and level of effectiveness, I examine two cases of nonviolent mobilization – Tunisia and Egypt; and two cases of violent mobilization: Libya and Syria. These cases were selected for several reasons. First, I choose two mobilizations that are nonviolent and two violent mobilizations to maximize their variations on campaign strategy. Second, the case selection is largely driven by similar case study design to compare movements in the same region during the same period. On the one hand, Tunisia and Egypt exemplify the concept of nonviolent strategy, since the mass mobilization that led to the collapse of authoritarian regimes in the two nations largely started as non-violent protest. On the

other, Libya represents a case of violent protest movement, since protest movements shifted into a violent mass mobilization. Libya was therefore included to provide a more direct comparison to Syria.

The strengths of Small N Comparative case study methodology lies on its provision of a cross case analysis to understand the differences and similarities of the cases. The methodology helps provide an in-depth analysis of the relationships of the dependent and independent variables and the outcome of their interactions. It “explored either what happened in a particular case or what the characteristics of a particular case were through in-depth analysis of the case.”<sup>193</sup> Unlike statistical and other methods that lack any clear means of actually identifying new hypothesis, the Small N comparative case study identifies new variables and hypothesis around theories that are tested for validation purposes. Small N Comparative research offers insights that might not be achieved with other approaches and viewed as a useful tool for the explanatory stages of research projects.<sup>194</sup> It uses different methods with the purpose of analyzing naturally occurring circumstances dependent on qualitative data and interpretive-historical research. The strength of the data lies on the multiple sources, allowing for an understanding of the variables from various perspectives. The data is collected by internationally recognized institutions such as the Arab Barometer, Center for Systemic Peace, The World Bank, The International Monetary Fund, The International Crisis Group, Human Rights Watch, and The African Development Bank. The weaknesses of

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<sup>193</sup> Lange, 9.

<sup>194</sup> Jennifer Rowley, “Using Case Studies in Research,” *Management Research News* 6(2002): 2.



the data lies on a collection of samples, which may or may not be accurate in some instances.

### 3.7 Testing the Theories

Stephan and Chenoweth argued that with legitimacy, grievances can translate into greater internal and external support of a movement and the alienation of the regime has a potential of undermining a regimes main sources of political, economic and even military power.<sup>195</sup> Arguably mobilizations in both the nonviolent cases of Egypt and Tunisia and the violent cases of Libya and Syria manifested that grievances have translated into opportunities that gave both internal and external legitimacy for protesters against ruling governments. These assertions are tested in hypothesis 1 below:

*Hypothesis 1: States with little or no employment opportunities for youths are more likely to be confronted with mass mobilization than are states with opportunities for the youth.*

The long term grievances against corrupt and oppressive regimes, growing inequalities and unemployment and rising cost of living predominantly among the youth population posits that states with limited opportunities for the youth are likely to be confronted by mobilization . Evidence from both the nonviolent and violent movements suggests that the youth population's consistency in supporting mass mobilization is driven by regime failures to deliver the public goods in terms of providing opportunities to meet the challenges of the century. I used the demographic information in Table II and Chart I to support the hypothesis linking unemployment and lack of opportunities to

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<sup>195</sup> Stephan and Chenoweth, 211.

youth participation in nonviolent mobilization in Tunisia and Egypt and Violent Mobilization in Libya and Syria.

In the cases of Egypt and Tunisia, youth unemployment was very high when protest erupted and young unemployed working age citizens supported protest efforts in large numbers as a result of grievances rooted in unemployment and the lack of opportunities. Unemployment was high relative to the youth bulge in the region. According to the World Bank Group data as shown in Table II, Egypt has a youth population of 22 percent and the youth constitutes 49 percent of the overall working age population. Looking at unemployment trends in Chart I, the International Labor Organization (ILO) noted that 26 per cent of Egyptian youth are unemployed, meaning 23 percent of the overall 49 percent working age youth population lack unemployment and opportunities. In Tunisia, youth constitute about 22 percent of the population and 33 percent of the overall working age population as shown in Table II. With a youth unemployment rate of about 30.3 percent as noted by the ILO in Chart I, Tunisia's working age youth population was confronted with a severe problem of unemployment. It is therefore evident that youth support and participation in the protest movements is largely due to unemployment the opportunity gap that still exists for almost half of the country's overall working age population.

Similarly, the violent cases of Libya and Syria show high youth unemployment rates at the time of protests. The World Bank Data in Table II shows Libya with a youth population of 18 percent and the youth constituting 45 percent of the overall working age population. With a youth unemployment of 22 percent as noted by the ILO in Chart I,

almost 23 percent of the overall 45 percent youth working age group lack employment. In the same vein, Syria has a youth population of 20.2 percent and the youth constituting 58 percent of the overall working age group, according to the World Bank data in Chart II. Since youth unemployment in Syria is 15 percent as noted in Chart I, almost 43 percent of the overall youth working age percentage of 58 remained unemployed; a number that is considerably high for a country confronted with popular protest that is rooted in economic and political grievances.

The International Labor Organization (ILO) noted that more than a quarter of the youth population in the Middle East and North Africa are unemployed and youth unemployment rates have been at very high levels for decades in these regions. Under such circumstances, the regime can be alienated and depending on how it responds to the resistance, the outcome can be either nonviolent or violent. In the case of mobilization in Tunisia and Egypt and Libya and Syria, social media usage and the nature of the security forces largely determine the nonviolent and violent strategy employed. Hypothesis 2 and 3 encapsulates that assertion.

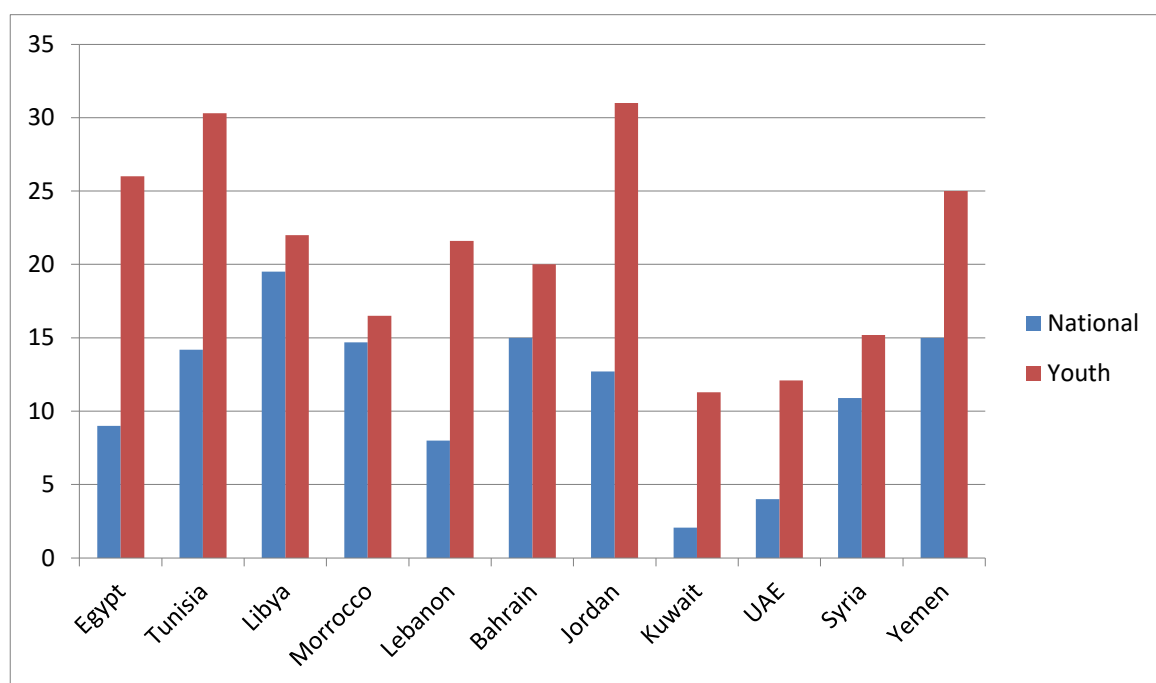
**Table II: Demographic information**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Youth as percent-age of Population</b>	<b>Youth as percentage of working age population</b>	<b>Gross Domestic Product Per Capita</b>	<b>Gross National Income Per Capita</b>	<b>Poverty Head Count Ration at % population</b>

<b>Algeria</b>	35,980,193	22	41	\$188.7 billion	\$4,470	22.6%
<b>Egypt</b>	82,536,770	22	49	\$229.5 billion	\$2,600	22.0%
<b>Libya</b>	6,422,772	18	45	\$62.36 billion	\$12,320	0.3%
<b>Morocco</b>	32,272,974	41	30	\$100.2 billion	\$2,970	9.0%
<b>Syria</b>	22,850,000	20.2	58	\$40.41 billion	\$1,850	35.2%
<b>Tunisia</b>	10,67,800	20	33	\$45.86 billion	\$4,070	3.8%

**Source: World Bank Group 2010 - 2015**

**Chart I - Youth Unemployment Trends in the Middle East and North Africa**



Source: The International Labor Organization (ILO), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP)

In 2012, the International Labor Organization (ILO) found youth unemployment rate for the Middle East and North Africa to be at 28.1 per cent and is expected to increase further as regional economic growth was slowing down. Unemployment for young workers under the age of 20 has even reached rates above 50 per cent in certain countries. The youth unemployment rate is more than four times that for adults, the largest youth-to-adult unemployment ratio in the world. Unemployment is affecting young people at all skill levels. The lack of employment opportunities is so severe that even young high-skilled workers face severe challenges in getting a job at their competence level and are forced into the informal economy, seeking jobs abroad or opting out of the labor market altogether until the “right job” comes along.

More specifically in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya and Syria and most countries of the region, the high youth unemployment is primarily a reflection of inadequate decent work opportunities for the labor force at large, in combination with an education system that still does not put sufficient emphasis on technical, market-relevant skills.

*Hypothesis 2: States with institutionalized security forces use less violence than states with patrimonial security forces during mass mobilization.*

The violent and non-violent nature of protests in the cases of Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Syria is a function of security force type, meaning the institutionalized and patrimonial nature of security forces largely determined how they responded to protests. The violence levels shown in Table III are directly linked to the function of security force type and civil military relations shown in Table VI. From 2011 to 2013, Egypt's protest death toll of 880 and total injured of a 1000, and Tunisia's death toll of 270 and total injured of 1000 as shown in Table III are directly linked to the function of security force type. Although the ruling government at the time of protests was autocratic and deployed security forces to crack down protest efforts, Egypt and Tunisia present cases of institutionalized security forces that have established strong link with society as shown in Table VI. As a result the initial violent crackdown shifted to nonviolent respond by the security forces and finally upholding the legitimate aspirations of citizens.

In retrospect, high violence levels in Libya with a death toll of 60,000 and total injured of a 20,000, and Syria with a death toll of 156, 783 and total injured of 400, 000 as shown in Table III are directly linked to the function of security force type as patrimonial security forces. In both Libya and Syria, the regimes at the time were autocratic and had weak linkages to society as shown in Table VI. Under such situations

security forces are oppressive and use violence to crack down protestors. Similarly, military and security commanders and conscripts are bonded to the regime either through blood, ethnic or family line and their relationship to the masses blurred, with pervasive predation and corruption defining its role in society. In sum whereas low violence levels in Tunisia and Egypt was largely due to the strong linkages of security institutions to the broader society in general, high violence levels in Libya and Syria are rooted in the patrimonial nature of the security forces.

**Table III: Statistics of Violence Levels**

<b>Country</b>	<b>No of Death - Men</b>	<b>No of Death - Women</b>	<b>Total Death</b>	<b>Total Injured</b>	<b>Total Damages in Dollar</b>
<b>Egypt</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>880</b>	<b>1000</b>	<b>\$7 billion</b>
<b>Tunisia</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>1000</b>	<b>\$5-8billion</b>
<b>Libya</b>	<b>55,000</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>60,000</b>	<b>20, 000</b>	<b>\$10billion</b>
<b>Syria</b>	<b>150, 000</b>	<b>6,783</b>	<b>156,783</b>	<b>400, 000</b>	<b>\$84.4billion</b>

**Source**

1. African Development Bank, Economic Brief, 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2011
2. Amnesty International: Egypt Rises Killings, Detentions and Torture in The 25<sup>th</sup> January Revolution , May 19, 2011

3. Centre for American Progress : Issue Brief : Civilian Protection and Harm Response in Post Conflict Libya, *Center for Civilians in Conflict* January 2013
4. Syrian Observatory for Human Rights ( SOHR) : Death Toll in Syria Rises to Over 210,000 in Four years, February 8, 2015
5. Congressional Research Services (CRS): Political Transition in Tunisia, Congressional Research Services CRS *Report for Congress* 7-5700 [www.crs.gov](http://www.crs.gov) RS21666 February 2, 2011

**Table IV: Regime Type and Polity Score in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya and Syria (2010)**

Country	Regime Type	Polity Score	Relation to Society
Egypt	Autocratic	4	Weak Relation
Tunisia	Autocratic	4	Weak Relation Oppressive
Libya	Autocratic Family Oriented	7	Weak Relation Oppressive
Syria	Autocratic Family Oriented	9	Weak Relation Oppressive



Source of Polity Score: Center for Systemic Peace (CSP), Polity IV Data Set available at <http://www.systemicpeace.org/polityproject.html> , 2014

#### Notes

The polity score examines the system of government in a state. It captures regime authority spectrum on a 21-point scale ranging from -10 to +10. The Polity scores can also be converted into regime categories of "autocracies" , "anocracies" , and "democracies"

*Hypothesis 3: Citizens in states with higher access to social media are more likely to use non-violent means of protests than citizens in states with little or no access to social media.*

High access to social media created opportunities for protestors to communicate and strategize to avoid confrontation with regime forces. While there are diverging views on the impact of social media on mass mobilization, the conventional wisdom suggests that social media has helped protestors to use nonviolent resistance, since it provided opportunities for protestors to use the internet and mobile phones to communicate and change meeting venues. High access rates to the Internet and social media in Egypt and Tunisia supported protest efforts to mobilize and change meeting venues or routes to mobilization hot spots to avoid confrontation with security forces. The Statistics of Internet users in Table V shows that 3,500,000 people have access to the Internet, meaning 43.8 people per every 100 persons have access to the Internet, with a Facebook users of 1,820, 880 from the national population of 10, 373,957 as shown in Table VI. Protestors in Tunisia used internet and social media platforms to mobilize peacefully in all major cities, particularly when clashes with security forces intensified during the initial stages of the protests. The Arab Barometer recorded that over 20% of the youth

population in Tunisia use Facebook.<sup>196</sup> Youth group's circumvented state censorship through the distribution and use of finger-length memory sticks to permit users to log on anonymously.<sup>197</sup> Through social media youth groups created secret cyber communities away from the eyes of the authorities, facilitating the spread of nonviolent resistance across major towns as Sidi Bouzid to neighboring towns of Gafsa, Kasserine, and Sfax, Meknasi, Menzel Bouzaïene and Regueb all in solidarity to Mohamed Bouazizi.

Similarly, high internet access and social media usage in Egypt contributed to avoiding repression and using nonviolent resistance in the periods of 2010-2013. A World Bank Statistics of Internet Usage in Table V shows that 16,635,753 people have access to the internet, meaning 49.6 people per every 100 persons have access to the Internet. Facebook usage is up to 12,173,540 out of a national population of 86,895,099, which accounts for the highest internet penetration rate in the region as shown in Table VI. In Egypt, the group "We are all Khaled Said", a prominent group formed in memory of 28 year-old Said who was arrested in an Internet Café and beaten to death by the police, effectively used social media in mobilizing tens of thousands to the streets in protest against state brutality. The April 6<sup>th</sup> Movement was another vibrant group that successfully used social media to mobilize protests. When the group made its first calls for the January 25<sup>th</sup> protest, social media was used to distribute online posters, banners, and viral videos through Facebook, e-mails, and blogs. Tens of thousands of people demonstrated nonviolently across Cairo, braving tear gas, water cannons, and police

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<sup>196</sup> Michael Hoffman and Jamal Amaney, "The Youth and the Arab Spring: Cohort Differences and Similarities," *Middle East Law and Governance*, 4(2012): 168–188.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

batons for an ultimate convergence into Tahrir Square, the symbolic headquarters for the protesters. Social media facilitated the spread of nonviolent protests in other cities and towns as Alexandria, Aswan, Nile Delta, Mansura and Sinai. The effectiveness of social media came to light when plans for a much bigger demonstration on 28 January, which were called “Friday of Anger” brought together tens of thousands of protestors to clash with security forces nonviolently with some of the fiercest in Cairo, Suez and the Nile Delta.

In Libya, low access to internet and the regimes ability to crack down on social media made it difficult for protestors to effectively strategize through the use of nonviolent means. The Statistics of Internet Usage in Table V shows that 353,900 people have access to the internet, meaning 5.65 people per every 100 persons have access to the Internet. Facebook usage was 260, 400 users out of a national population of 6, 545,619, which accounts for some of the lowest Facebook penetration rates in the region as shown in Table VI. The regimes ability to use violence, shutdown the internet and the inability of protestors to use social media platforms effectively left them with no option but to respond violently against security forces.

Similarly in Syria, low social media access rates and the regimes ability to crackdown protests and social media led to increase violence. In Syria, about 3,935,000 had access to the internet, meaning 26.2 people per every 100 persons as shown in Table V, with Facebook users of 241, 859 citizens out of a national population of 22, 505, 091, amounting to the second 1.07% in the region as shown in Table VI. The Syrian regimes ability to control social media and use the internet and all social media outlets to brutally crackdown on protestors made it difficult for protestors to access social media. There

were accounts of regime elements making calls on Facebook for rallies and meetings, and to the surprise of citizens responding to the calls, they end up getting arrested and imprisoned. With the regime's control of the available access, protestors were very limited in terms of internet and social media usage to mobilize. The regimes violent crackdown on social media and protests led to a strategy shift from the use of non-violent to violent resistance.

Social media provide democratic potential that encourages the development of participant and sophisticated citizen engagement through the use of non-violence. It allowed citizen access to more pluralistic content that increased demand for democracy.<sup>198</sup> In addition, increased demand promotes bottom-up democratization by increasing the likelihood of democratic transitions in nondemocratic states or strengthening democratic institutions in young democracies.<sup>199</sup> Increased Internet adoption holds the promise of fostering greater democracy in countries with certain preconditions; however, those that remain highly authoritarian, or not free, are likely to limit the democratic potential of the internet regardless of the degree of internet penetration.<sup>200</sup> As Lim puts it, "Social media provided space and tools for the formation and expansion of networks, broker connections between previously connected groups and facilitated the sharing of grievances beyond the small community of activist leaders to globalize the reach and appeal of the domestic movement for democratic change".<sup>201</sup> In

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<sup>198</sup> Lim, 245.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid., 244.

sum social media can foster political change by mobilizing citizens and promoting the use of non-violence to usher political, economic and social change.

**Table V: Statistics of Internet Subscribers and Usage in the Middle East and North Africa**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Broad Band Internet Subscribers</b>	<b>Broad Band Internet Subscribers per 100 Persons</b>	<b>Internet Users</b>	<b>Internet Users Per 100 Persons</b>
Algeria	818,000	2.34	4,7000,000	13.45
Bahrain	165,000	14.11	649,300	55.52
Egypt	1,077,489	1.35	16.635,753	49.6
Iran	400,000	0.55	27,914,700	38.17
Iraq	121	0.00	325,000	1.05
Jordan	203,472	3.44	1,741,866	29.45
Kuwait	45,000	1.70	1,100,000	41.57
Libya	10,000	0.16	353,900	5.65
Morocco	475,767	1.50	10,300,000	32.56
Oman	41,114	1.52	1,236,658	45.60
Qatar	129,907	8.13	399,000	24.97
Saudi Arabia	1,437,718	5.36	9,800,000	36.55
Syria	34,657	0.17	3,935,000	26.2
Tunisia	372,818	3.57	3,500,000	43.8
UAE	690,424	9.95	3,777,900	54.45
Yemen	162,800	1.05	5,210,593	20.0

Source: World Development Indicators – The World Bank (2011-2012)

**Table VI: Facebook Users and Country Population in the Middle East and North Africa**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>No of Facebook Users</b>	<b>Facebook Penetration %</b>
<b>Algeria</b>	<b>35, 422, 589</b>	<b>1,413, 280</b>	<b>3.99</b>
<b>Bahrain</b>	<b>807, 131</b>	<b>276, 580</b>	<b>34.27</b>
<b>Egypt</b>	<b>86,895,099</b>	<b>12,173,540</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Iraq</b>	<b>31, 466, 698</b>	<b>397,140</b>	<b>1.26</b>
<b>Jordan</b>	<b>6, 472, 392</b>	<b>1,104, 340</b>	<b>17.06</b>
<b>Kuwait</b>	<b>3,050, 744</b>	<b>629,700</b>	<b>20.64</b>
<b>Lebanon</b>	<b>4, 254, 583</b>	<b>983, 380</b>	<b>23.11</b>
<b>Libya</b>	<b>6, 545,619</b>	<b>260, 400</b>	<b>3.98</b>
<b>Morocco</b>	<b>32, 381, 283</b>	<b>2, 446,300</b>	<b>7.55</b>
<b>Oman</b>	<b>2, 905, 114</b>	<b>219, 320</b>	<b>7.55</b>
<b>Saudi Arabia</b>	<b>26, 245, 969</b>	<b>3, 213, 420</b>	<b>12.24</b>
<b>Syria</b>	<b>22, 505, 091</b>	<b>241, 859</b>	<b>1.07</b>
<b>Tunisia</b>	<b>10, 373, 957</b>	<b>1, 820, 880</b>	<b>17.55</b>
<b>Yemen</b>	<b>24, 255, 928</b>	<b>179, 400</b>	<b>0.74</b>

Source: Arab Social Media Report – Dubai School of Government, January 2011, 1.

Algeria	818,000	2.34	4,7000,000	13.45
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**Source: World Development Indicators – The World Bank (2011-2012)**

**Table VI: Facebook Users and Country Population in the Middle East and North Africa**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>No of Facebook Users</b>	<b>Facebook Penetration %</b>
<b>Algeria</b>	<b>35, 422, 589</b>	<b>1,413, 280</b>	<b>3.99</b>
<b>Bahrain</b>	<b>807, 131</b>	<b>276, 580</b>	<b>34.27</b>

<b>Egypt</b>	<b>86,895,099</b>	<b>12,173,540</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Iraq</b>	<b>31, 466, 698</b>	<b>397,140</b>	<b>1.26</b>
<b>Jordan</b>	<b>6, 472, 392</b>	<b>1,104, 340</b>	<b>17.06</b>
<b>Kuwait</b>	<b>3,050, 744</b>	<b>629,700</b>	<b>20.64</b>
<b>Lebanon</b>	<b>4, 254, 583</b>	<b>983, 380</b>	<b>23.11</b>
<b>Libya</b>	<b>6, 545,619</b>	<b>260, 400</b>	<b>3.98</b>
<b>Morocco</b>	<b>32, 381, 283</b>	<b>2, 446,300</b>	<b>7.55</b>
<b>Oman</b>	<b>2, 905, 114</b>	<b>219, 320</b>	<b>7.55</b>
<b>Saudi Arabia</b>	<b>26, 245, 969</b>	<b>3, 213, 420</b>	<b>12.24</b>
<b>Syria</b>	<b>22, 505, 091</b>	<b>241, 859</b>	<b>1.07</b>
<b>Tunisia</b>	<b>10, 373, 957</b>	<b>1, 820, 880</b>	<b>17.55</b>
<b>Yemen</b>	<b>24, 255, 928</b>	<b>179, 400</b>	<b>0.74</b>

**Source: Arab Social Media Report – Dubai School of Government, January 2011, (1) 1.**

## **Chapter Four**

### **The Case of Syria**

#### **4.1 Background**

##### ***4.1a Demographic Background***

Syria border's Lebanon and Turkey in the Middle East. It has a total area of 185, 180 sq. km (Land 183, 630 sq km, water, and 1,550sq km). Islam is the predominant religion (Muslim 87% (official; includes Sunni 74% and Alawi, Ismaili, and Shia 13%), Christian (includes Orthodox, Uniate, and Nestorian) 10% (includes Orthodox, Uniate, and



Nestorian), Druze 3%, Jewish (few remaining in Damascus and Aleppo).<sup>202</sup> The population size of Syria increased from approximately 9.0 million in 1980 to 21.5 million in 2010.<sup>203</sup> It is projected that the population will keep on increasing to reach 36.7 million in 2050.<sup>204</sup> Out of the 357 million population of Arab countries in 2010, Syria has a national population of 22, 850, 000.<sup>205</sup> Syria has an annual population growth rate of 2.8percent growth rate.<sup>206</sup> Between 1980 and 2013, the Syrian Arab Republic 's life expectancy at birth Increased by 8.8 years, mean years of schooling increased by 4.0 years and expected years of schooling increased by 2.7 years.<sup>207</sup>

Young people represent 20 percent of the population in Syria. When compared to other parts of the world, “a disproportionate percentage of the population both in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) is under 25 years of age, with 55.2 percent in Syria”<sup>208</sup> Syria's working - age population group (15 - 64) has been increasing since 1980, where it rose from 48.3 percent to reach 60.5 percent in 2010. It is projected to

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<sup>202</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, “Syria: Country Profile,” The World Factbook (2015) <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sy.html>

<sup>203</sup> United Nations ESCWA, “Demographic Profile of Syria,” UN ESCWA (2011) <http://www.escwa.un.org/popin/members/syria.pdf>

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

<sup>205</sup> Barry Mirkin, “Arab Spring: Demographics in a Region in Transition,” *Arab Human Development Report Research Paper Series* (2013) <http://hdr.undp.org....>

<sup>206</sup> Ibid.

<sup>207</sup> United Nations Development Programme: “Sustaining Human Progress: Reducing Vulnerabilities and Building Resilience,” (2014) [http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr\\_theme/country-notes/SYR.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/SYR.pdf).

<sup>208</sup>The International Monetary Fund, “Regional Economic Outlook: The Middle East and Central Asia,” (April 2011) at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/r/2010-2019/WashingtonPost/2011/05/07/Foreign/Graphics/economicoutlook.pdf>.

continue this upward trend to reach 67.3 percent of the population in 2040, and will remain at this level in 2045.<sup>209</sup> A narrative of the popular protests focuses on the changing demographics such as the “youth bulge,” an increase in the population of the youth aged 15-24 years. With such a rapid population growth Syria have experienced such unprecedented youth bulges. Under such a situation the majority youth population entering the labor markets are confronted with persistent unemployment.

Syria has a Gender Inequality Index (GII) value of 0.556, ranking it 124 out of 149 countries in the 2013 index.<sup>210</sup> In the Syrian Arab Republic, 12.0 percent of parliamentary seats are held by women, and 29.0 percent of adult women have reached at least a secondary level of education compared to 38.9 percent of their male counterparts.<sup>211</sup>

Poverty is a persistent problem in Syria. A 2014 United Nations Human Development Report estimated that 6.4 percent of the population are multidimensionally poor while an additional 7.7 percent are near multidimensional poverty.<sup>212</sup> The conflict has pushed millions of Syrians into poverty, with four in five Syrians estimated to be living in poverty in 2014. The World Bank projected poverty rates to be 82.5 percent in 2014, a significant increase compared to the estimated 64.8 percent rate in 2013. Overall

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<sup>209</sup> United Nations ESCWA, 1-2.

<sup>210</sup> United Nations Development Programme, 1.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid., 4-8.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid., pp. 9-10.

it is estimated that 64.7 percent of Syrians were living in extreme poverty in 2014, unable to meet basic food and non-food needs, according to the World Bank.<sup>213</sup>

#### ***4.1b Economic Background***

Syria is a middle-income developing country with a diversified economy based on agriculture, industry, and an expanding energy sector. Comparing the years 2006-2009 and 2010-2014, Syrian economy grew from 5.7 percent to -12.9 percent.<sup>214</sup> These figures do not reflect the deteriorating economic conditions of rural communities, poverty, unemployment, external domestic shocks particularly the impact of the global financial crisis and prolonged droughts. The Syrian Arab Republic's HDI value for 2013 is 0.658 — which is in the medium human development category — positioning the country at 118 out of 187 countries and territories. Between 1980 and 2013, the Syrian Arab Republic's HDI value increased from 0.528 to 0.658, an increase of 24.6 percent or an average annual increase of about 0.67 percent.<sup>215</sup>

Despite the positive growth rates of the past few years, this legacy of state intervention and price, trade, and foreign exchange controls still hampers economic growth.<sup>216</sup> The economy is also slowed by large numbers of poorly performing public

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<sup>213</sup> The World Bank, "Syria Overview – Strategy," *The World Bank Group* available at <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/syria/overview> accessed August 10, 2015, p. 1.

<sup>214</sup> World Bank Data (2014), *Countries and Economies*, The World Bank, 2014, available at <http://data.worldbank.org/country>, accessed June 25, 2014, pp. 1-2.

<sup>215</sup> United Nations Development Programme, 1-9.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, 1-4.

sector firms, low investment levels, and relatively low industrial and agricultural productivity. Before the crisis, Syria began liberalizing economic policies, including cutting lending interest rates, opening private banks, consolidating multiple exchange rates, raising prices on some subsidized items, and establishing the Damascus Stock Exchange, but the economy remains highly regulated.<sup>217</sup> Long-run economic constraints include foreign trade barriers, declining oil production, high unemployment, rising budget deficits, increasing pressure on water supplies caused by heavy use in agriculture, rapid population growth, industrial expansion, water pollution, and widespread infrastructure damage.<sup>218</sup> Commerce has always been important to the Syrian economy, and the bulk of Syrian imports have been raw materials essential for industry and agriculture, advanced oil-field equipment, and heavy machinery for the infrastructure construction. Major exports include crude oil, refined products, raw cotton, cotton knits, fruits and vegetables. Aside from commitments of foreign aid, earnings from oil exports are one of the government's most important sources of foreign exchange.

Syria has produced heavy-grade oil since the 1960s. Light-grade, low-sulphur oil was also discovered in eastern Syria in the late 1980s.<sup>219</sup> Recent Syrian oil production has been about 580,000 barrels/day, and reserves are estimated at 1.7 billion barrels.<sup>220</sup> Syria exports about 300,000 b/d, which brings in approximately \$3 billion annually and makes

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<sup>217</sup> The Central Intelligence Agency, 1-4.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

<sup>219</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Country Profile: Syria," (2014)  
<http://www.state.gov/outofdate/bgn/syria/25610.htm> accessed August 10.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid.

up 80 percent of total foreign exchange earnings.<sup>221</sup> The poor development of its own capital markets and lack of access to international money and capital markets, limits Syrian monetary policy to cover only the fiscal deficit. The law imposes fix interest rates, basic foodstuffs were heavily subsidized, and social services provided for nominal charges.<sup>222</sup>

Prior to the crisis Syria's economy experienced several challenges, despite moderate growth rates. "With almost 60% of its population under the age of 20, and a growth rate of 3.8percent, higher unemployment rates seem inevitable".<sup>223</sup> Youth unemployment reached a record high of 15.2 percent. These high levels of youth unemployment and overall low employment increased political tensions and social instability. Economic policies of both the First and Second Assad regimes perpetuated stagnant economic conditions, and dilapidating standards of living, thus fermenting increasing economic alienation and growing political opposition.

#### ***4.1c Political Background***

Syria has the official framework of a republican semi-presidential system, but it is a unicameral republic under an authoritarian presidential system where Bashar-al-Assad came to power in 2000 after the death of his father Hafez al-Assad who took power in

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<sup>221</sup> Ibid.,1-2.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid., 1.

1970. The government comprise of an executive branch and a Unicameral People's Assembly. The President is elected for a seven-year term and he appoints the vice-president, the prime minister and the Council of Ministers.<sup>224</sup> The president, is also the commander-in-chief of the armed forces and the secretary-general of the Baath party. The legislature is a 250-member Majlis al-Shaab (People's Assembly) directly elected for a four-year and hold little independent legislative power.<sup>225</sup> Almost all power rests in the executive branch. Regardless of the formal electoral laws and processes the regime monitors, intimidates, and represses political dissidents, making it all but impossible for a genuine opposition to contest elections.

The 2010 Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) democracy index ranked Syria (152).<sup>226</sup> Freedom House classified Syria as “not free” in its 2011 report.<sup>227</sup> This classification was based on the measurement of two main areas: political representation and civil liberties. In the report, Freedom house indicated that “violent crackdowns on antigovernment protesters by the regimes in both Libya and Syria since February 2011 have resulted in hundreds of deaths and an even more dangerous environment for journalists attempting to cover the crises”.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> Economist Intelligence Unit, “Syria: Political Structure,” *The Economist* ( 2015) <http://country.eiu.com/article.aspx?articleid=1073422091&Country=Syria&topic=Summary&subtopic=Political+structure>

<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

<sup>226</sup> Economist Intelligence Unit, “Democracy Index 2010”, (2010) [http://www.eiu.com/public/thankyou\\_download.aspx?activity=download&campaignid=demo2010](http://www.eiu.com/public/thankyou_download.aspx?activity=download&campaignid=demo2010)

<sup>227</sup> Freedom House, “Freedom in The World 2009,” *Country Report* ( 2009) [www.freedomhouse.org](http://www.freedomhouse.org).

<sup>228</sup> The Central Intelligence Agency, 1-4.

Since March 2011, antigovernment protest that demanded the resignation of President Assad extended to governments ongoing violence and widespread armed opposition, extending clashes between government forces and various opposition groups.

<sup>229</sup> International pressure on the Assad regime has intensified since late 2011, as the Arab League, EU, Turkey, and the US expanded economic sanctions against the regime. In December 2012, the Syrian National Coalition, was recognized by more than 130 countries as the sole legitimate representative of the Syrian people.<sup>230</sup> Peace talks between the Coalition and Syrian regime at the UN-sponsored Geneva II conference in 2014 failed to produce a resolution of the conflict. Unrest continues in Syria, and according to a January 2015 UN estimate, the death toll among Syrian Government forces, opposition forces, and civilians had reached 220,000.<sup>231</sup> So far, the conflict has displaced 11.6 million people, including 7.6 million people internally, making the situation in Syria the largest humanitarian crisis worldwide.<sup>232</sup>

#### ***4.1d Protest Background***

Anti-government protests began in March 2011 in the “small southern town of Dara’a following the arrest and detention of 15 youth’s ages 10 through 15 who had put up anti-government graffiti and either beaten, burned or had finger nails pulled by Syrian secret police”.<sup>233</sup> Protestors called for the repeal of Emergency laws, the legalization of

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<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid.

<sup>233</sup> Chad Spindel, “The People Want to Topple the Regime: Exploring the Arab Spring in Egypt, Syria and Jordan,” *Sage Open* 1( 2011): 1.

political parties, and the removal of corrupt local officials. They demanded reforms and equal rights for Kurds. Protest spread to other parts of the country. A rally of family members at the local governor's house to demand the release of children arrested was met by a brutal response of the security forces through the use of lethal weapons. In the following days, "with protest growing in size and frequency, the response of the security forces became more violent culminating with a raid on a mosque where five people were killed, including a doctor who had been treating the injured".<sup>234</sup> Similarly, "at the funeral for those killed, security forces again opened fired resulting in more deaths".<sup>235</sup> These brutal crackdowns were in response to mass mobilizations and protests spreading across major Syrian cities and towns.

Efforts to halt these protest movements led to an escalation of violence with security forces across Syria. The increase in the killing of peaceful demonstrators poised more and more citizens to join opposition forces in demanding the downfall of the regime. Many are persuaded that the regime has lost legitimacy with the many crimes committed against the people.<sup>236</sup> On 18 March 2011, people in the Mediterranean city of Banyas took to the streets to compliment protest efforts of the capital, Damascus and other conservative sectors of Syrian society, such as the city of Duma. Such efforts emerged as a "transformation of desperate disjointed and localized flashpoints into national protest

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<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

<sup>236</sup> Omar S Dahi and Yasser Munif, " Revolts in Syria: Tracking the Convergence Between Authoritarianism and Neoliberalism," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 47(2012): 323.



movements”.<sup>237</sup> Protestors also transformed Friday prayers into rallying points for pools of protestors across the country.<sup>238</sup> With the intensification of government repression, the various opposition groups that came together to form the Syrian National Council in October 2011 fled the country to seek refuge in Paris, London, Turkey and neighboring Persian Gulf nations.

The government responded to the protests with a mix of concessions - including the repeal of the Emergency Law, new laws permitting new political parties, and liberalizing local and national elections - and military force. However, the government's response has failed to meet opposition demands for ASAD's resignation, and the government's ongoing violence to quell unrest and widespread armed opposition activity has led to extended clashes between government forces and oppositionists. The repressive action of security forces “has been interpreted as a consequence of their makeup; the praetorian military units (the Republican Guard) and the branches of the secret police (Amn al-Dawla, Amn Siyasi, Amn Dakhili, Istikhbarat, known under the generic name of Mukhabarat, are disproportionately composed of Alawite with no mercy in the efforts of containing the protest movements”.<sup>239</sup> Violence in Syria marks the culmination of existential threats that has led to burned family houses, charred remains of human bodies, the catastrophic

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<sup>237</sup> International Crisis Group, “Popular Protest in the Middle East and North Africa: The Syrian People’s Slow Motion to Revolution,” *Middle East/North Africa Report N° 108*, July 6 2 011

<sup>238</sup> Ibid.

<sup>239</sup> International Crisis Group, “Popular Protest in the Middle East and North Africa: The Syrian People’s Slow Motion to Revolution,” *Middle East/North Africa Report N° 108*, July 6 2 011

destruction of national institutional infrastructure housing the police, military and other state institutions including ministries and businesses of the ruling elite.

## **7.2 Grievance and Opportunities**

In the case of Syria, grievances and opportunities are caused by decade's long socio-economic and socio-political factors. Politically, authoritarianism and the erosion of civil and political liberties characterized Syrian politics since independence in 1946. Syrian politics has been rocked by an era of coups, counter-coups and intermittent civilian rule, during which the military kept a watchful eye in the background. Three major phases define Syria's complex political process: the period of military dictatorship between 1949-1957, the emergence of the Baath Party as a decisive force in Syrian politics (1956-57), and the Baathist Military Coup of March 1963.<sup>240</sup> Therefore authoritarianism dates back to the Ba'athist 1963 military coup that brought Hafiz – Al-Assad from the minority Alawite tribe to power. “Most of the military officers who led the coup came from the Alawi Clans, a historically underprivileged and oppressed rural community from a minority Shi 's sect, dominating positions of power in Syrian politics, including the offices of the president and vice-president, key military posts and units, and various agencies of the (Mukhabarat) security apparatus.”<sup>241</sup> Such a centrality of the military and other key institutions as important components of Alawite power translated

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<sup>240</sup> John Galvani, “Syria and The Baath Party,” *MERIP Reports* 25 (February 1974): 3-16.

<sup>241</sup> Frank O. Mora and Quintan Wiktorowicz, “Economic Reform and the Military; China, Cuba and Syria in Comparative Perspectives,” *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 44(April 2003): 108/

into considerable patronage, resource s, business and economic interest, whilst continuing to influence national political affairs.<sup>242</sup>

The ability of the regime to fund military and direct patronage was threatened by a series of intermittent political and economic crisis from the 1980's throughout the reign of Hafiz- Al- Assad. Throughout this period, members of the military presented themselves as protectors of the nation's business and therefore emerged as the most prominent players in Syrian economic circles. "To consolidate his power, Hafiz- Al- Assad increasingly relied on the military and the secret police, in addition to creating a praetorian guard that his brother Rifat led, and which operated in paralegal spaces, living Syrian society in a constant state of fear, social alienations of political opposition and a stagnation of living standards for most Syrians."<sup>243</sup>

Following the death of Hafiz- Al-Assad, the rise of his son Bashar Al-Assad in 2000 came with the promises of economic reforms that are best characterized by the words of Dahi and Munif as "Authoritarian Neo-Liberalism". Under Bashar Al- Assad, not much changed, except for the new policy of economic liberalization and calls for political freedom, which could largely be described as tainted political maneuvers geared towards consolidating the powers of a young Assad. An emergency law was introduced in 1962 by President Hafez al- Assad, suspending most constitutional protections for

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<sup>242</sup> Frank O. Mora and Quintan Wiktorowicz, "Economic Reform and the Military; China, Cuba and Syria in Comparative Perspectives," *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 44(April 2003)

<sup>243</sup> Dahi and Munif, 325.

citizens, and banning opposition political candidates.<sup>244</sup> The military and all other security apparatus continued to be dominated by kinsmen from the Alawite minority.

Presented below is a brief summary chronology of key events in Syria from 2000 (the ascent of Bashar Al Assad to the leadership) to the present time.

**2000 June** - Assad dies and is succeeded by his second son, Bashar.

**2000 November** - The new President Assad orders the release of 600 political prisoners.

**2001 April** - Outlawed Muslim Brotherhood says it will resume political activity, 20 years after its leaders were forced to flee.

**2001 5 May** - Pope John Paul II pays historic visit.

**2001 June** - Syrian troops evacuate Beirut, redeploy in other parts of Lebanon, following pressure from Lebanese critics of Syria's presence.

**2001 September** - Detention of MPs and other pro-reform activists, crushing hopes of a break with the authoritarian past of Hafez al-Assad. Arrest continue, punctuated by occasional amnesties, over the following decade.

**2001 November** - British PM Tony Blair visits to try shore up support for the campaign against terror. He and President Assad fail to agree on a definition of terrorism.

**2002 May** - Senior US official includes Syria in a list of states that make-up an "axis of evil", first listed by President Bush in January. Undersecretary for State John Bolton says Damascus is acquiring weapons of mass destruction.

**2003 April** - US threatens sanctions if Damascus fails to take what Washington calls the "right decisions". Syria denies US allegations that it is developing chemical weapons and helping fugitive Iraqis.

**2003 September** - President Assad appoints Mohammed Naji al-Otari prime minister.

**2003 October** - Israeli air strike against Palestinian militant camp near Damascus. Syria says action is "military aggression".

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<sup>244</sup> Rachel Branson, "Syria: Hanging Together or Hanging Separately," *The Washington Quarterly* (Autumn 2000): 91-105.

**2004 January** - President Assad visits Turkey, the first Syrian leader to do so. The trip marks the end of decades of frosty relations, although ties sour again after the popular uprising in 2011.

**2004 March** - At least 25 killed in clashes between members of the Kurdish minority, police and Arabs in the north-east.

**2004 May** - US imposes economic sanctions on Syria over what it calls its support for terrorism and failure to stop militants entering Iraq.

**2005 February-April** - Tensions with the US escalate after the killing of former Lebanese PM Hariri in Beirut. Washington cites Syrian influence in Lebanon. Damascus is urged to withdraw its forces from Lebanon, which it does by April.

**2005 October** - Interior minister and Syria's former head of intelligence in Lebanon, Ghazi Kanaan, dies in what officials say is suicide. UN inquiry into assassination of former Lebanese PM Rafik Hariri implicates senior Syrian officials.

**2005 December** - Exiled former vice-president Abdul Halim Khaddam alleges that Syrian leaders threatened former Lebanese PM Hariri before his assassination.

**2006 February** - Danish and Norwegian embassies in Damascus are set on fire during a demonstration against cartoons in a Danish newspaper portraying the Muslim Prophet Muhammad.

**2006 September** - Attack on the US embassy in Damascus. Four gunmen open fire and throw grenades but fail to detonate a car bomb. Three of them are killed, one is captured.

**2006 November** - Iraq and Syria restore diplomatic relations after nearly a quarter century.

**2007 March** - European Union relaunches dialogue with Syria.

**2007 April** - US House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi meets President Assad in Damascus. She is the highest-placed US politician to visit Syria in recent years. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice meets Foreign Minister Walid Muallem the following month in the first contact at this level for two years.

**2007 May** - Leading dissident Kamal Labwani and prominent political writer Michel Kilo are sentenced to a long jail terms, only weeks after human rights lawyer Anwar al-Bunni is jailed.

**2007 September** - Israel carries out an aerial strike against a site in northern Syria that it said was a nuclear facility under construction. In 2011 the UN's IAEA nuclear watchdog

decides to report Syria to the UN Security Council over its alleged covert nuclear programme reactor programme at the site.

**2008 March** - Syria hosts Arab League summit. Many pro-Western states send lower-level delegations in protest at Syria's stance on Lebanon.

**2008 April** - The US accuses North Korea of having helped Syria to build a secret nuclear reactor at the site bombed by Israel in 2007.

**2008 July** - President Assad meets French President Nicolas Sarkozy in Paris. The visit signals the end of the diplomatic isolation by the West that followed the assassination of former Lebanese PM Rafik Hariri in 2005. While in Paris, President Assad also meets the recently-elected Lebanese president, Michel Suleiman. The two men agree to work towards the establishing of full diplomatic relations between their countries.

**2008 September** - Damascus hosts four-way summit between Syria, France, Turkey and Qatar, in a bid to boost efforts towards Middle East peace. Explosion kills 17 on the outskirts of Damascus, the most deadly attack in Syria in several years. Government blames Islamist militants.

**2008 October** - Syria establishes diplomatic relations with Lebanon for first time since both countries established independence in 1940s.

**2009 March** - Jeffrey Feltman, acting assistant US secretary of state for the Near East, visits Damascus with White House national security aide Daniel Shapiro in first high-level US diplomatic mission for nearly four years. Meets Foreign Minister Walid Muallem.

Trading launches on Syria's stock exchange in a gesture towards liberalising the state-controlled economy.

**2009 May** - Syrian writer and pro-democracy campaigner Michel Kilo is released from prison after serving three-year sentence.

**2009 June** - The UN nuclear watchdog, the IAEA, says traces of undeclared man-made uranium have been found at second site in Syria - a reactor in Damascus. The IAEA was investigating US claims that the site destroyed in the 2007 Israeli raid was a nuclear reactor.

**2009 July** - US special envoy George Mitchell visits for talks with President Assad on Middle East peace.

**2009 August** - Iraq and Syria recall their envoys in a deepening rift over charges of responsibility for a string of deadly bomb attacks in Baghdad. They restore ties later in 2010.

**2010** February - US posts first ambassador to Syria after a five-year break.

**2010** May - US renews sanctions against Syria, saying that it supports terrorist groups, seeks weapons of mass destruction and has provided Lebanon's Hezbollah with Scud missiles in violation of UN resolutions.

**2011** March - Security forces shoot dead protestors in southern city of Deraa demanding release of political prisoners, triggering violent unrest that steadily spread nationwide over the following months.

**2011** May - Army tanks enter Deraa, Banyas, Homs and suburbs of Damascus in an effort to crush anti-regime protests. US and European Union tighten sanctions. President Assad announces amnesty for political prisoners.

**2011** June - The government says that 120 members of the security forces have been killed by "armed gangs" in the northwestern town of Jisr al-Shughour. Troops besiege the town and more than 10,000 people flee to Turkey. President Assad pledges to start a "national dialogue" on reform.

**2011** June - The IAEA nuclear watchdog decides to report Syria to the UN Security Council over its alleged covert nuclear programme reactor programme. The structure housing the alleged reactor was destroyed in an Israeli air raid in 2007.

**2011** July - President Assad sacks the governor of the northern province of Hama after mass demonstration there, eventually sending in troops to restore order at the cost of scores of lives.

**2011** October - New Syrian National Council says it has forged a common front of internal and exiled opposition activists.

**2011** November - Arab League votes to suspend Syria, accusing it of failing to implement an Arab peace plan, and imposes sanctions.

**2011** December - Twin suicide bombs outside security buildings in Damascus kill 44, the first in a series of large blasts in the capital that continue into the following summer.

**2012** February - Government steps up the bombardment of Homs and other cities.

### **International pressure**

**2012** March - UN Security Council endorses non-binding peace plan drafted by UN envoy Kofi Annan. China and Russia agree to support the plan after an earlier, tougher draft is modified.

**2012 May** - France, UK, Germany, Italy, Spain, Canada and Australia expel senior Syrian diplomats in protest at killing of more than a hundred civilians in Houla, near Homs.

**2012 June** - Turkey changes rules of engagement after Syria shoots down a Turkish plane, declaring that if Syrian troops approach Turkey's borders they will be seen as a military threat.

**2012 July** - Free Syria Army blows up three security chiefs in Damascus and seizes Aleppo in the north.

**2012 August** - Prime Minister Riad Hijab defects, US President Obama warns that use of chemical weapons would tilt the US towards intervention.

**2012 October** - Syria-Turkish tension rises when Syrian mortar fire on a Turkish border town kills five civilians. Turkey returns fire and intercepts a Syrian plane allegedly carrying arms from Russia.

Fire in Aleppo destroys much of the historic market as fighting and bomb attacks continue in various cities.

**2012 November** - National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces formed in Qatar, excludes Islamist militias. Arab League stops short of full recognition.

Israeli military fire on Syrian artillery units after several months of occasional shelling from Syrian positions across the Golan Heights, the first such return of fire since the Yom Kippur War of 1973.

**2013 January** - Syria accuses Israeli jets of attacking a military research centre near Damascus, but denies reports that lorries carrying weapons bound for Lebanon were hit. Unverified reports say Israel had targeted an Iranian commander charged with moving weapons of mass destruction to Lebanon.

International donors pledge more than \$1.5bn (£950m) to help civilians affected by the conflict in Syria.

**2013 March** - Syrian warplanes bomb the northern city of Raqqa after rebels seize control. US and Britain pledge non-military aid to rebels.

**2013 April** - Government forces have faced - and denied - repeated allegations of chemical weapons use

**2013 June** - Government and allied Lebanese Hezbollah forces recapture strategically-important town of Qusair between Homs and Lebanese border.



**2013 July** - Saudi-backed Ahmed Jarba becomes leader of opposition National Coalition, defeating Qatar-backed rival.

**2013 September** - UN weapons inspectors conclude that chemical weapons were used in an attack on the Ghouta area of Damascus in August that killed about 300 people, but do not explicitly allocate responsibility.

**2013 October** - President Assad allows international inspectors to begin destroying Syria's chemical weapons on the basis of a US-Russian agreement.

**2013 December** - US and Britain suspend "non-lethal" support for rebels in northern Syria after reports that Islamist rebels seized bases of Western-backed Free Syrian Army.

**2014 January-February** - UN-brokered peace talks in Geneva fail, largely because Syrian authorities refuse to discuss a transitional government.

**2014 March** - Syrian Army and Hezbollah forces recapture Yabroud, the last rebel stronghold near the Lebanese border.

**2014 May** - Hundreds of rebels are evacuated from their last stronghold in the central city of Homs. The withdrawal marks the end of three years of resistance in the city.

**2014 June** - UN announces removal of Syria's chemical weapons material complete.

Islamic State of Iraq and Syria militants declare "caliphate" in territory from Aleppo to eastern Iraqi province of Diyala.

**2014 August** - Tabqa airbase, near the northern city of Raqqa, falls to Islamic State militants, who now control all of Raqqa province.

**2014 September** - US and five Arab countries launch air strikes against Islamic State around Aleppo and Raqqa.

**2015 January** - Kurdish forces push Islamic State out of Kobane on Turkish border after four months of fighting.

**2015 March** - Opposition offensives push back government forces. New Jaish al-Fatah (Army of Conquest) Islamist rebel alliance, backed by Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, captures provincial capital of Idlib.

**2015 May** - Islamic State fighters seize the ancient city of Palmyra in central Syria and proceed to destroy many monuments at pre-Islamic World Heritage site.

Jaish al-Fatah takes control of Idlib Province, putting pressure on government's coastal stronghold of Latakia.

**2015 June** - Kurds take Ain Issa and border town of Tal Abyad, Islamic State attacks Kobane and seizes part of Hassakeh, the main city in north-eastern Syria.

**2015 September** - Russia carries out its first air strikes in Syria, saying they target the Islamic State group, but the West and Syrian opposition say it overwhelmingly targets anti-Assad rebels.

**2015 December** - Britain joins US-led bombing raids against Islamic State in wake of Paris suicide bombing attacks.

Syrian Army allows rebels to evacuate remaining area of Homs, returning Syria's third-largest city to government control after four years.

**2016 February** - A US-Russian-brokered partial ceasefire between government and major rebel forces comes into effect, after a major pro-government drive to capture Aleppo. Islamic State is not included.

**2016 March** - Syrian government forces retake Palmyra from Islamic State, with Russian air assistance.

**2016 May** - The US-Russian-brokered ceasefire is extended to Aleppo after an upsurge in fighting there.<sup>245</sup>

This chronological summary of the key events in Syria between 2000 and the present demonstrates that while the Bashar Al Assad regime gave early indications of reaching out to its opponents, this effort was limited and soon ended. Additionally, the national posture of Syria as an actor in the Middle East was that of a quasi-provocateur intent on playing a significant role in shaping religion political interactions. The goal of the regime with respect to obtaining chemical and even nuclear weapons to strengthen its position shaped many of the activities of the government and fostered conflict with its neighbors and with the international community. Further, Al Assad's early outreach to the international community and the West was not permanent; ties to both Iran and

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<sup>245</sup> BBC News, "Syrian Timeline," (2016) [www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-14703995](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-14703995)

Russia came to predominate, and this only increased after the conflict with domestic opponents turned violent.

Specifically, Bashar Assad's political reforms that led to the proliferation of independent newspapers, intellectual forums, and civil society organizations culminating in the demands for more political freedoms were met with by shifting government policy, yet another sign of continued authoritarian tendencies in the decade's long traditional family-centered government. The ruling Ba'ath Party not only banned criticism of the president and his family; it also exercised strict internet censorship and blocked most of the global websites such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.<sup>246</sup> With the mass mobilizations triggering collapse of authoritarian regimes in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya, iron fist rule has perhaps been tested, since Syrians have emerged in numbers with similar slogans as those used in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen, asking for the downfall of the authoritarian regime.

Economically, grievances are rooted in the failed policies of both the First and Second Assad regimes. Suzanne Saleeby suggests that "a deeper look into resource inequity as opposed to mere resource scarcity illuminates the ongoing social and economic stratification that have helped push to Syria's foreground specific political grievances".<sup>247</sup> Protestors have demanded economic liberalization, equal opportunities and an end to oppression, control and dominance of the economy by the president and his

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<sup>246</sup> BBC News, "Syrian Timeline," (2016) [www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-14703995](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-14703995)

<sup>247</sup> Suzanne Saleeby, "Sowing the Seeds of Dissent: Economic Grievances and the Syrian Social Contract's Unraveling," *Jadaliyya*, (February 16, 2012) [http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/4383/sowing-the-seeds-of-dissent\\_economic-grievances-an](http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/4383/sowing-the-seeds-of-dissent_economic-grievances-an),

selected few. As Dahi and Munif (2012) noted that “when the invisible hand of the market did not suit him, he used coercion to achieve his goals”.<sup>248</sup> This was evident with the arrest and detention of a political dissident and parliament member for questioning a cell phone company deal involving Rami Makhlouf.<sup>249</sup> The international crisis group noted that:

“The wide spread perception that the state had been hijacked by a small circle of individuals chiefly focused on self-enrichment; the arrogant and unaccountable exercise of power; the absence of any clear sense of collective purpose or direction; growing everyday hardships; suffered by a majority of citizens; the unpredictability of an over-educated, underemployed and bulging youth population.”<sup>250</sup>

Authoritarian neo-liberalism paved way for the concentration of wealth in the hands of a selected few. With an uneven concentration of wealth (with 5 percent of the population owning 50 percent of national wealth), the transition from a planned economy to a neoliberal one left more than 30 percent unemployed and between 11 percent and 30 percent under the poverty line.<sup>251</sup> Indeed, Syria as whole shared grievances due to this new economic direction. This is in line with Blattman and Miguel (2010) grievance theory of patronage benefits and distribution of public goods, and Finkel and Muller and Opp (1989) theories of dissatisfaction with provision of public or collective good. While farmers and other agricultural workers lost their subsidies from the government in the

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<sup>248</sup> Ibid.

<sup>249</sup> Dahi and Munif, 298-299.

<sup>250</sup> International Crisis Group, 4.

<sup>251</sup> Bassam Haddad, “Syria, the Arab Uprisings, and the Political Economy of Authoritarian Resilience,” *Interface: a Journal for and about Social Movements* 4(May 2012): 113-130.

rural areas, economic liberalization gave opportunities for real estate investment in the cities, which ultimately benefited many of the Syrian bourgeoisie, as well as affluent foreigners.<sup>252</sup> However, many Syrians, who had lived on state-owned properties for decades, were now homeless as their properties were sold to investors.<sup>253</sup> This has forced an increasing number of Syrians to emerge as a formidable opposition challenging the regime in a crisis that escalated to a full blown civil war.

The growth of Syria's young population and the failure by government to adopt policies addressing socio-economic needs further contributed to dissent across Syria, with young people taking the lead in fomenting violent mass mobilization in most of the country. Perhaps the relatively young Syrian population is a gift and not a curse, since Syria's younger people are able to shape the mass mobilization in ways enabling it to gain international support and legitimacy in the midst of violent crack downs by the oppressive security apparatus of the regime.

Since Syria, however, is more of a close than open society, the regime will not tolerate demonstrations. Security services did not seem to relax its pressure. Rather, security services were highly active at the time of protests. It is estimated that the overall security services itself consists of 50,000-70,000 officers, with one intelligence officer for roughly 240 people.<sup>254</sup> Following the protest against the arrest of school children in

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<sup>252</sup> Ibid., 113-114.

<sup>253</sup> Raymond Hinnebusch, "Syria: from 'Authoritarian Upgrading' to Revolution?," *International Affairs* 88(2012): 95-113.

<sup>254</sup> David W. Lesch, *The Fall of the House of Assad* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2012), 5-9.

Deraa, the Mukhabarat opened fire and killed four of the protestors. Fifteen more were killed and hundreds wounded when security forces attacked over 20, 000 supporters.<sup>255</sup>

Further in the case of Syria social networks are rooted in mobilizing structures. These networks proved that human relations or networks between people has given people the perception that threats posed by regimes are smaller, and that the opposition are stronger than they really are. These social networks give individuals more incentives to join a movement. Social movement theorists Doug McAdam and Ronelle Poulson note that the ultimate decision to participate in a movement would depend on four limiting conditions: (1) the occurrence of a specific recruiting attempt, (2) the successful linkage of movement and identity, (3) support of that linkage from persons who normally serve to sustain the identity in question, and (4) the absence of strong opposition from others on whom other salient identities depend.<sup>256</sup>

On social networks in Syria, Reinoud Leenders provided the most compelling explanation for why Syrians mobilized irrespective of the regimes repressive nature.<sup>257</sup> A prominent social network that supported mobilization efforts in Syria is the strong family or clan ties and their economic linkages. Despite the closeness of the regime, “activists resorted to copying and then amending slogans and acts of protests by their Egyptian and Tunisian counterparts with the effect of underscoring the opportunity coming from abroad and importing revolutionary energy to their own environment”.<sup>258</sup> Social networks

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<sup>255</sup> Ibid., 8-10.

<sup>256</sup> McAdam and Poulsen, 640-641.

<sup>257</sup> Reinoud Leenders, “Social Movement Theory and the Onset of the Popular Uprising in Syria” *Arab Studies Quarterly* 35, no. 3 (2013), 273-274.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid., 280.

were primarily able to spread the “demonstration effects” from Tunisia and Egypt, to the people of Deera in Syria.<sup>259</sup> For example in the Syrian city of Deera, there is a family clan structure, where seven major clans of the city provide citizens with “solidarity, identity and socio-economic coping or survival”.<sup>260</sup> In other words, the aforementioned socio-economic grievances were largely dealt with by the family clans, which again gave more incentives to resist the Assad regime. As Leenders puts it, “the clans provide a major source of solidarity, identity and socio-economic coping or survival, and its strict Sunni Muslim values provide social locus of local conflict management and dispute settlement based on notions of justice and dignity”.<sup>261</sup>

Another critical social network consists of the cross border linkages between Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. These linkages provide a labor migration network, where workers travel both within Syria and to neighboring countries of Lebanon and Jordan. The proximity of the city of Deera to the border has directed much of the economic and social life of citizens to Jordan, which has strengthened strong family, clan and economic ties.<sup>262</sup> To explain why these networks spurred mobilization, Leenders suggested that regime repression and the way protestors of Deera framed their grievances, through slogans and cries, initially encouraged many to join the protests.<sup>263</sup> Such slogans and cries, as Leenders put it, had lasting effects on the way protestors expressed and their public display of contention against the regime for the first time.<sup>264</sup> Perhaps the case of

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<sup>259</sup> Ibid.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid., 278.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid.

<sup>262</sup> Reinoud Leenders, “Social Movement Theory and the Onset of the Popular Uprising in Syria” *Arab Studies Quarterly* 35, no. 3 (2013).

<sup>263</sup> Ibid.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid., 280.

Syria brings us to a conclusion that the diffusion of grievances alone are not sufficient enough to support mobilization efforts but the opportunities from similar threat levels in the region and the social networks are important factors to explain citizen's protest efforts for change. To be more specific, the case of Syria supports theoretical frameworks of the resource mobilization theories, framing and political process theories presented in an earlier section.

### 4.3 Strategy in Syria

In the case of Syria, protest that started peacefully shifted to violence, largely as a result of the regime's brutal response. Protest began with the emergence of anti-regime slogans, often emulated catchphrases that first appeared in Tunisia and Egypt, becoming almost ubiquitous in small towns and the outskirts of the capital. In late January 2011, the self-immolation of Hasan Ali Akhleh in protest of the oppressive Assad regime mimicked the Tunisian case of Mohamed Bouazizi. With protests well underway in Egypt, coupled with the successful revolutions in Tunisia, the "slogans of spray paintings on a wall in the rural town of Dara, led to the arrest and detention of 15 youth's ages 10 through 15 with most either beaten, burned or had finger nails pulled by Syrian secret police".<sup>265</sup> Amid growing uncertainty, a rallying of family members at the local governor's house to demand the release of children arrested was met by a brutal response of the security forces through the use of lethal weapons. In the following days, "with protest growing in size and frequency, the response of the security forces became more violent culminating with a raid on a mosque where five people were killed, including a doctor who had been

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<sup>265</sup> Reinoud Leenders, "Social Movement Theory and the Onset of the Popular Uprising in Syria" *Arab Studies Quarterly* 35, no. 3 (2013)



treating the injured”.<sup>266</sup> Similarly, “at the funeral for those killed, security forces again opened fired resulting in more deaths”.<sup>267</sup> The shift in strategy shows that both non-violence and violent methods are alternative methods of popular mobilization for collective, organized, non-institutionalized, contentious and coercive action in response to the actions of government forces.

The brutal use of force by security forces shifted strategy from non-violence to violence. Several protestors were either killed, injured or arrested by state security forces. The killings rapidly shifted the political alignment of many Syrians, since more and more have joined opposition forces in demanding the downfall of the regime. Many are persuaded that the regime has lost legitimacy with the many crimes committed against the people.<sup>268</sup> With government intimidation efforts failing to diminish popular discontent levels, a turning point occurred on 18 March 2011, when people in the Mediterranean city of Banyas took to the streets to compliment protest efforts of the capital, Damascus and other conservative sectors of Syrian society, such as the city of Duma. Such efforts emerged as a “transformation of desperate disjointed and localized flashpoints into national protest movements”.<sup>269</sup> Similarly, as a predominantly Muslim society, Friday prayers were transformed into rallying points for pools of protestors across the country.<sup>270</sup>

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<sup>266</sup> <sup>266</sup> Chad Spindel, “The People Want to Topple the Regime: Exploring the Arab Spring in Egypt, Syria and Jordan” *Sage Open* 2011:1).

<sup>267</sup> Ibid.

<sup>268</sup> Omar S Dahi and Yasser Munif, “Revolts in Syria: “Tracking the Convergence between Authoritarianism and Neoliberalism,” *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, August 2012; vol. 47, 323.

<sup>269</sup> International Crisis Group, 35.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid.

However, the various opposition groups (described in greater depth in the next chapter of this study) that came together to form the Syrian National Council in October 2011 fled the country to seek refuge in Paris, London, Turkey and neighboring Persian Gulf nations. Defections of military units boosted opposition elements, since most of the rank and file hail from the impoverished regions of the country. These military units have also added value to opposition elements in terms of advancing capabilities through the provision of training in the use of weapons and tactical maneuvering in responding to government forces.

The shift in strategy from nonviolence to violence is attributed to both internal and external factors. Internally, the shift largely a strategic evaluation and expansion of the support base of protestors across Syria. Externally, the shift provided opportunities, changing power asymmetries, and influence action on Syria. The escalation and intensification of violence in Syria, changed the dynamics of the Syrian conflict in many ways. Firstly, hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees in camps across the Turkish – Syrian Border, with thousands more in Lebanon and Jordan. The United Nations reported that “a total of 119,618 Syrian refugees, of whom 75 per cent are women and children, were receiving assistance in neighboring countries at 19 July 2012 (42, 682 in Turkey, and 36,450 in Jordan, 32, 486 in Lebanon and 8, 000 in Iraq)”.<sup>271</sup> Secondly, the repressive action of security forces “has been interpreted as a consequence of their makeup; the praetorian military units (the Republican Guard) and the branches of the

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<sup>271</sup> Report of the Secretary-General, “ Situation of Human Rights in the Syrian Arab Republic: Implementation of Human Rights Council Resolution 19/22,” (2012) <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G12/172/59/PDF/G1217259.pdf?OpenElement>.

secret police (Amn al-Dawla, Amn Siyasi, Amn Dakhili, Istikhbarat, known under the generic name of Mukhabarat, are disproportionately composed of Alawite with no mercy in the efforts of containing the protest movements”.<sup>272</sup> Violence in Syria led to burned family houses, charred remains of human bodies, the catastrophic destruction of national institutional infrastructure housing the police, military and other state institutions including ministries and businesses of the ruling elite (particularly the Assad cabal).

In an October 12, 2012 report titled “Syrian Government Attacking Breadlines,” Human Rights Watch noted that “Syrian government forces have dropped bombs and fired artillery at or near at least 10 bakeries in Aleppo province over the past three weeks, killing and maiming scores of civilians who were waiting for bread”.<sup>273</sup> Furthermore, there is documented evidence of Syrian government forces using cluster bombs. In another report, Human Rights Watch cited “mounting evidence showing Syria's air force continuing to drop cluster bombs on towns across five governorates despite the Syrian army's denial that it is using them”.<sup>274</sup> The United Nations estimated that more than 80,000 people, mostly civilians, have been killed and up to 1.5 million people displaced since the uprising against President Bashar al-Assad began in March 2011 and about a

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<sup>272</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>273</sup> Human Rights Watch, “Syrian Government Attacking Breadlines,” (October 12, 2012) <http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/08/30/syria-government-attacking-bread-lines>,

<sup>274</sup> Human Rights Watch, “Syria: More Cluster Bomb Attacks,” (November 28, 2012) <http://www.hrw.org/video/2012/11/28/syria-more-cluster-bomb-attacks>,

million people have fled to neighboring countries.<sup>275</sup> Aljazeera Television Network reported that among those killed include American Journalist Marie Colvin and French photographer Remi Ochlik, who were all, killed on February 22, 2012, in a shelling by the Syrian army on an unofficial media center in Homs.<sup>276</sup> There were also fears that violence levels may escalate with Syria's possession of chemical and biological weapons. Those fears led to American and western allies express concern. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) authorized the deployment of Anti-Ballistic Missile Batteries on the Turkish- Syrian Border, while United States warned of a sharp and appropriate response in the event of any biological and chemical weapons usage by the Assad forces.

In a speech at the National Defense University, President Obama emphasized that “he want to make it absolutely clear to Assad and those under his command; the world is watching. The use of chemical weapons is and would be totally unacceptable”.<sup>277</sup> He warned that would cross the red line. At the time of writing this dissertation some 150 U.S. military personnel were already in Jordan to advise the military on how to prepare for a chemical weapons emergency, including a potential incursion against Syrian installations.

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<sup>275</sup> Human Rights Council, “Report of the Independent International Commission on the Syrian Arab Republic,” United Nations, A/HRC/22/59 (2013)  
[http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/CoISyria/A.HRC.22.59\\_en.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/CoISyria/A.HRC.22.59_en.pdf),

<sup>276</sup> Al-Jazeera, “Foreign Journalist Killed Amid Homs Shelling”, *Al-Jazeera Doha*, Qatar (February 22, 2012) Television.

<sup>277</sup> Peter Baker and Michael R. Gordon, “U.S. Warns Syria on Chemical Weapons,” *The New York Times* (December 4, 2012) <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/04/world/middleeast/nato-prepares-missile-defenses-for-turkey.html>,

Furthermore, the United States also sent two batteries of Patriot missiles and 400 troops to Turkey as part of a NATO force meant to protect Turkish territory from potential Syrian missile attack, said the Pentagon.<sup>278</sup> As the U.S and allies continued monitoring the situation, allegations of the use of chemical weapons emerged with both the Assad regime and the rebel forces coming under suspicion. However, preliminary reports of the United Nations was quick to allege rebel forces use of chemical weapons, which was shortly dismissed as inconclusive, after the U.S and Israeli intelligence reported a degree of chemical weapons usage by the Assad regime. Following release of the French laboratory test results confirming the use of the Sarin nerve agent, “the US and the UK have said there is emerging evidence of Syrian government forces having used Sarin, with Washington saying it had “varying degrees of confidence” that chemical weapons had been deployed”.<sup>279</sup> The use of chemical weapons in Syria constitutes yet another dimension of violence in the state. These tensions may be intensified by divisions among United Nations Security Council members with China and Russia vetoing all United Nations Security Council Resolutions either condemning or imposing sanctions on Syria. With the intensification of the civil unrest and the emergence of various groups such as the Islamic State for Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and its propaganda of international public beheadings, strategy in Syria shifted to one of the highest levels of brutality in the history of popular uprisings.

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<sup>278</sup> Peter Baker and Michael R. Gordon, “U.S. Warns Syria on Chemical Weapons,” *The New York Times* (December 4, 2012) <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/04/world/middleeast/nato-prepares-missile-defenses-for-turkey.html>.

<sup>279</sup> BBC News Middle East, “Syria Crisis: France's Fabius 'Confirms Sarin Use’ (2013) <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-22773268#%22>

***Hypothesis 2: States with institutionalized security forces experience less violence than states with patrimonial security forces.***

The security force type and their response to protests confirms the thesis that institutional security forces use less violence, whereas a patrimonial security force uses more violence during protests movements. An institutionalized security apparatus in this context is one that is apolitical; rule bound, meritocratic with a recruitment process based on universal suffrage. It has established paths of career advancement, recruitment and promotion based on performance and not politics, therefore establishing an understanding of predatory behavior while upholding discipline and the national interest as the yoke of its operational procedure.<sup>280</sup> The cases of Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Syria demonstrated that states with institutionalized security forces experienced low levels of violence, since they are more tolerant to reform and can relate to concerns of protestors with reason. In Tunisia and Egypt the institutionalized nature of security forces ensured support of the people in the initial stages of protest efforts and therefore low violence levels. In Libya and Syria, the patrimonial nature of the security forces led to a violent crackdown of protest efforts, the killing of Colonel Qaddafi and the protracted Syrian violence which has so far left over 100, 000 deaths.

Some common concepts used to understand the role played by the armed and security forces include the “Praetorian State,” and “Military Arbitrator Regime,” and

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<sup>280</sup> Bellin, 139-157.

“autocratic officer politician regimes”.<sup>281</sup> The praetorian state is one “in which the military tends to intervene in the government with a potential of dominating the executive”.<sup>282</sup> The political leadership of a praetorian state predominantly comes from the military or groups close to the military. Lutterbeck noted that the “armed forces in most Middle Eastern and North African states are either directly and openly involved in politics on a day-to-day basis or continues to play an important part in overseeing the political process from the background”.<sup>283</sup>

Jack Goldstone described these types of regimes as the “Modern Sultans”. For Goldstone, “to keep the masses depoliticized and unorganized, these sultans control the political parties and pay off the population with subsidies”<sup>284</sup>. Some of the modern sultans that triggered the mass mobilization include President Zine el -Abidine Ben Ali, Tunisia, Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, Mohammad Qaddafi of Libya, and Bashar of Syria. Arguably, low levels of violence in Tunisia and Egypt from 2010-2013 was attributed to the military institutions display of professionalism and its strong relationship with society. As Ellen Lust has noted, “the willingness and ability of the military to repress unrest may depend

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<sup>281</sup> Derek Lutterbeck, “Arab Uprisings, Armed Forces, and Civil-Military Relations,” *Armed Forces and Society* 39(January, 2013): 28.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>283</sup> <sup>283</sup> Derek Lutterbeck, “Arab Uprisings, Armed Forces, and Civil-Military Relations,” *Armed Forces and Society* 39(January, 2013): 28

<sup>284</sup> Jack Goldstone, “Understanding the Revolutions of 2011: Weakness and Resilience in the Middle Eastern Autocracies,” *Foreign Affairs* 90(May-June 2011):  
<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/67694/jack-a-goldstone/understanding-the-revolutions-of-2011>,

on the level of institutionalization of the military”.<sup>285</sup> In Tunisia, Lutterbeck, observed that

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“from the central town of Sidi Bouzid, where the incident had taken place, the protests quickly spread to other cities, including the capital Tunis, growing in size and increasingly calling not only for economic and political reforms, and an end to corruption but also the departure of Ben Ali. In January 2011, the armed forces were called out to confront the rapidly swelling demonstrations. However, when the army was deployed in different parts of Tunis, the soldiers according to media reports immediately fraternized with demonstrators – in sharp contrast to the police”<sup>286</sup>.

Similarly, in Egypt, the larger role of the armed forces in terms of economic activity made it possible to establish a strong link with society, since an established military business empire was a vanguard of bonding with society at –large. It is estimated that the military business empire constitutes between 10-40 percent of overall national GDP, making it the most important economic actor of the nation.<sup>287</sup> Even though the army supported the regime from the beginning, it declared the demands of the people legitimate and ruled out the use of force against the demonstrators, just as happened in Tunisia. In both Tunisia and Egypt, the scenes of solidarity between protesters and the military were attributed to the policy or system of conscription, since majority of the soldiers come from working class families calling for political, social and economic reforms. Such institutional bond between the army and the people ensured its support for popular calls that forced both Ben Ali of Tunisia and Egypt’s Hosni Mubarak out of

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<sup>285</sup> Ellen Lust, 154.

<sup>286</sup> Lutterbeck, 8.

<sup>287</sup> Derek Lutterbeck, “Arab Uprisings, Armed Forces, and Civil-Military Relations,” *Armed Forces and Society* 39(January, 2013)



power. Violence levels in both countries subsided only when demands of the people, calling for the Presidents of both Tunisia and Egypt to step down were upheld.

However, when a military is organized along patrimonial lines, “linking military leaders to the regime either through bonds of blood, ethnicity and tribe where carrier advancement is governed by cronyism and political loyalty rather than merit, or where relationship with the public is blurred, causing pervasive predation and economic corruption, the military mostly likely represses all forms of protests and mass mobilization”.<sup>288</sup> In the case of Libya and Syria, high levels of violence are largely attributed to the patrimonial nature of the military institution. The military and security forces in both countries present cases of weak link with society and strong opposition to dissent and protests. The military and security apparatus in these countries comprised of regular army with elite units commanded by relatives of the leader, or in the case of “tribally dependent monarchy’s,” military forces dominated by the tribe or ethnicity of the ruling monarch or foreigners.

Under such abysmal conditions security forces are resistant to pro-reform movements, politicized and corrupt, and therefore uses all necessary means to crack down on mass mobilizations. Libyan society has been fractured, and every national institution, including the military, was divided by cleavages of kinship and region. Unlike Tunisia and Egypt, “Libya has no system of political alliances, network of economic associations, or national organizations of any kind, and what seemed to begin as nonviolent protests similar to those staged in Tunisia and Egypt soon became an all-out

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<sup>288</sup> Lust, 155.

secession--or multiple separate secessions--from a failed state".<sup>289</sup> For example, in Libya, the revolutionary guards were largely drawn from the leaders close confidants, mostly tribesmen and foreigners, and an elite unit of the regular army such as Khamis Brigade was named after Qaddafi's own son.

Reports from human rights organizations and regional groups attributed the high violence levels in Libya to the brutal crackdown by elite units such as the Khamis Brigade and those of the Revolutionary Guards. The case of Syria is similar in that the Republican Guards and other elite units of the army and air force are largely drawn from President Bashar Al Assad's minority Alawite tribe. The patrimonial nature of the military along ethnic and tribal lines is largely responsible for the high violence levels resulting to over 90, 000 deaths. Syria therefore presents a case supporting arguments that the function of security force largely determines violence levels during popular protests.

**Table XI: Broad Categories of Governments in the Middle East and North Africa**

Country	Government Type	Head of Gov	Background	Response of Security Forces

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<sup>289</sup> Lisa Anderson, "Demystifying The Arab Spring: Parsing the Differences Between Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya," *Foreign Affairs* (May–June 2011) <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/67693/lisa-anderson/demystifying-the-arab-spring>,

Egypt	Military Oriented Autocratic	Hosni Mubarak	Military	Moderate
Tunisia	Military Oriented Autocratic	Ben Ali	Military	Moderate
Libya	Military Oriented Autocratic	Mohamar Qaddafi	Military	Violent
Yemen	Traditional Family Oriented	Ali Abdullah Saleh	Family Lineage	Violent
Syria	Traditional Family Oriented	Bashar Al- Assad	Family Lineage	Violent
Bahrain	Monarchy	Hamad Al- khalifa	Family Lineage	Violent

**The table above shows the two broad categories of regime types in contemporary Middle East and North Africa, while the table below provides the characteristics of civil-military relations based on the regime type and the institutional nature of the security and armed forces.**

**Map I: Monarchies and Republics of the Middle East and North Africa (2010-2012)**



**The map above shows some of the monarchies and republics characterize by authoritarian rule in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). It distinctively shows Morrocco, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and UAE as the oldest ruling Monrarchies of the region.**

Following an in-depth analysis of the competing arguments of strategy, Schock, Dudouet, and Chenoweth and Stephan among other scholars of social movement stand out in their positive general assessment of the potentials of nonviolent resistance. These scholars offer the most succinct and lucid comparison of the efficacy of nonviolence over violence resistance. Their theoretical and empirical exposition shows the strengths of non-violent resistance supported. As Schock has put it “the strategic advantage of civil resistance campaigns relative to violent campaigns is the lower barriers to participation that may contribute to higher levels of mobilization”.<sup>290</sup> The only exception to these

<sup>290</sup> Schock, “The Practice and Study of Civil Resistance,” (May 2013), 287.

claims is the movement of a separatist nature, which are violent with a history of higher rates of success in the achievement of their objectives.<sup>291</sup> As uprisings in the cases of Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Syria produced different outcomes it is evident that nonviolent resistance once again emerged as the most formidable strategy of popular protest movements.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Analyzing the Syrian Opposition, Its Tactics and Shifts**

As of 2013, analysts argued that the opposition in Syria to the regime of Bashar Al Assad was fractious and deeply divided, consisting of a wide variety of “political groups, exiled dissidents, grassroots activists and armed militants unable to agree on how to overthrow President Bashar Al Assad.”<sup>292</sup> From the Free Syrian Army (defectors from the Syrian Arab Army or SSA which emerged in June 2011) to the Southern Front of the Free Syrian Army, independent groups friendly to the FSA, the Syrian Democratic Forces, various coalitions, and transnational jihadi co-belligerents the “opposition” is a diverse assortment of individuals with often varied agendas. A key feature of the opposition is the formation of coalitions that are designed to strengthen dissent and to provide not only for a coordinated assault on the regime but also to serve as conduits for financial, military, and humanitarian aid.

The National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces is headquartered in Doha, Qatar and maintains a Facebook page on which it has declared

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<sup>291</sup> Ibid.

<sup>292</sup> BBC News, “Guide to the Syrian Opposition,” (October 17, 2013) ([www.bbc.com/news/world-middleeast-5798218](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middleeast-5798218)).

that its goal is “to aid and support the revolutionary forces struggling to overthrow the Assad regime and to transition Syria towards a democratic and pluralistic civil state.”<sup>293</sup> The National Coalition includes members in Syria and abroad and has sought to position itself as the country’s sole legitimate representative; it calls for overthrowing the Assad regime, dismantling state security forces, refusing to engage in negotiations with the Assad regime, and upholding a commitment to the creation of a civil, democratic Syria.<sup>294</sup>

The National Coalition includes members of Local Coordination Committees (LCC) which are part of a network of grassroots opposition activists. It also includes representatives of local revolutionary councils and enjoys the support of the Supreme Military Council (SMC) of the Free Syrian Army. It is a new alliance that was designed to supersede the Syrian National Council but it does not include the National Coordination Committee which “represents the internal political opposition groups that reject violence and want to negotiate with the government, and several militant Islamist groups fighting alongside the rebels, including the Nusra Front.”<sup>295</sup>

The National Coalition is recognized as the legitimate representative of the Syrian people by the six member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) as well as France, the United Kingdom, the European Union, and the United States. However, Russia, China, and Iran which have backed President Assad or blocked action by the

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<sup>293</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid.

<sup>295</sup> Ibid.

United Nations Security Council did not join the 100 countries at the December 2012 Friends of the Syrian People conference in Marrakesh. Though extensively supported, this coalition has been unable to assert overall control over Syria's rebel forces and is particularly unable to control jihadist groups. A lack of funding has made it difficult for the organization to address the humanitarian crisis to administer liberated areas. Multiple efforts to overhaul the National Council's leadership have not as yet succeeded in ensuring that this coalition will be better situated to fully control the inherently violent tactics that its affiliates are using in the struggle against the regime.<sup>296</sup>

The Syrian National Council (SNC) was established six months after the uprising began in March of 2011. It was the largest and most significant opposition group until November of 2012 when it joined the National Coalition. This group is committed however, to a nonviolent assault on the regime as well as a post-conflict effort to establish a parliamentary republic representative of a democratic, pluralistic and civil state.<sup>297</sup>

BBC News described this opposition group as follows:

“The SNC, which is dominated by Syria's majority Sunni Muslim community, has struggled to win over Christians and members of President Assad's Alawite sect, who each make up about 10% of the population and have so far stayed loyal to the government. The council's primacy has also been challenged by the National Coordination Committee (NCC), an opposition bloc that still functions within Syria and is led by longstanding dissidents, some of whom are wary of the Islamists within the

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<sup>296</sup> BBC News, “Guide to the Syrian Opposition,” (October 17, 2013) ([www.bbc.com/news/world-middleeast-5798218](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middleeast-5798218)), 6.

<sup>297</sup> Ibid., 8.

SNC. Several members of the SNC have also complained about its ineffectual leadership”.<sup>298</sup>

The SNC has also found it difficult to work with the Free Syrian Army. However, the two groups have agreed to co-ordinate their operations and the SNC has urged the international community to support the rebels.”<sup>299</sup>

The SNC, despite its participation in the National Coalition, eschews violence and has refused to participate in any talks in Geneva. Over time, it has changed relatively little – maintaining its insistence on nonviolence.

The National Coordination Committee (NCC) for Democratic Change is an alliance of some 16 or so leftist political parties, three Kurdish parties and independent political and youth activists. It is described as follows:

“Unlike the Syrian National Council and the National Coalition, the NCC is open to the idea of a political settlement with the government. Its call for dialogue is conditional on a ceasefire, the withdrawal of the army from towns and cities, and the release of all political detainees.

The NCC believes the Free Syrian Army is an essential part of the revolution and plays an important role in protecting society, but rejects calls to arm it or for foreign military intervention.

NCC leaders accused the SNC and the National Coalition of being beholden to Turkey and Gulf Arab states that provide shelter, financial support and weapons to rebel groups. It also objects to what it calls the Muslim Brotherhood's domination of the exiled opposition. In turn, the SNC and National Coalition have portrayed NCC leaders as isolated and lacking support among Syrians.”<sup>300</sup>

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<sup>298</sup> BBC News, “Guide to the Syrian Opposition,” (October 17, 2013) ([www.bbc.com/news/world-middleeast-5798218](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middleeast-5798218))

<sup>299</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>300</sup> Ibid., 11



While members of this group have been engaged in violent action against the government, it remains committed to a brokered solution to the crisis and a peaceful transition of power.

The Kurdish Supreme Committee was formed with the goal of administering the de facto autonomous Kurdish zone created in north-eastern Syria after government troop withdrawal in 2012. Unfortunately, one of its main sponsors, the Democratic Union Party or PYD has not shared power; its armed wing, the Popular Protection Units (YPG), maintain local security with

The assistance of the fighting forces of the Kurdish National Council (KNC).<sup>301</sup> Violence is a tool used by KNC and has been since its formation.

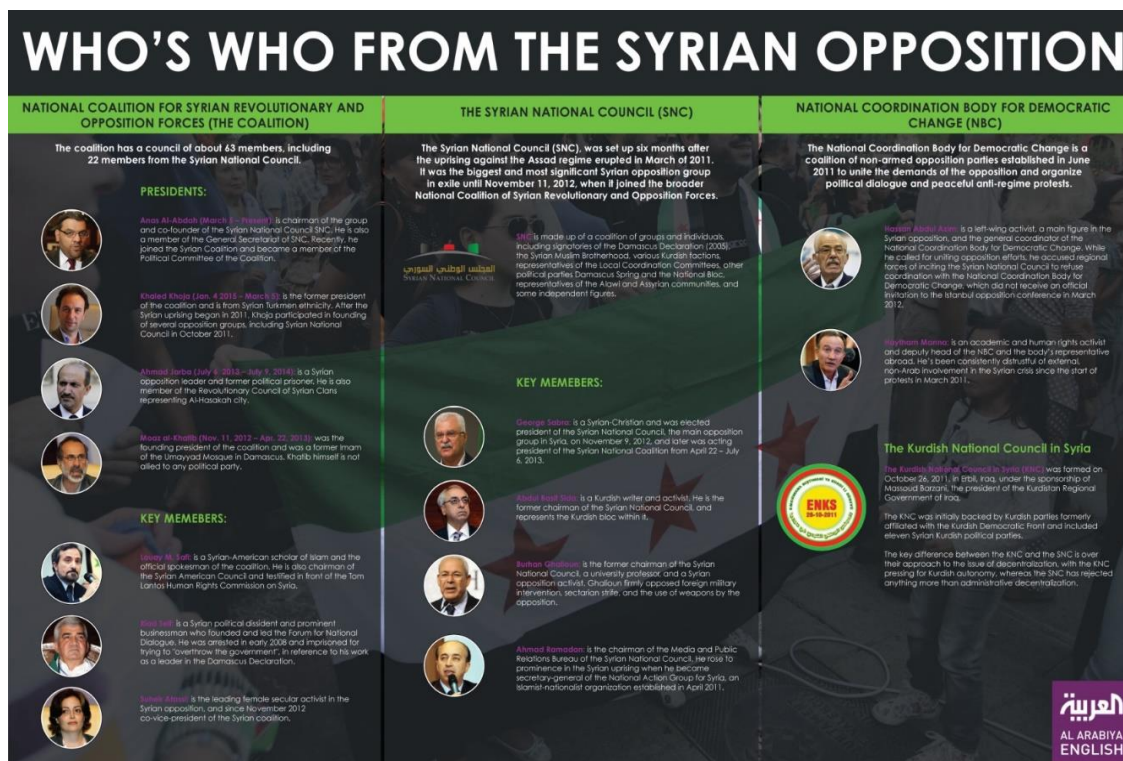
These coalitions are central agents of change and opposition in Syria. Each has, to some extent or another, either been directly engaged in or supportive of violent protest directly or indirectly. The SNC is less likely to directly support violent confrontation.

Key actors in these coalitions are depicted below.

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<sup>301</sup> Ibid.

Figure 1



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Ryan O'Farrell noted that there are so many semi-independent military units subsumed within the FSA or the Southern Front of the FSA that it is difficult to keep track of the opposition:

"The war has only intensified until the present, and the rebel landscape throughout Syria has remained geographically, ideologically, structurally and diplomatically fractured, while also experiencing extremely dynamic changes. In broad terms, several trends emerge: a) hard-line Islamist groups have steadily become more prominent, out-competing, marginalizing and on several occasions, violently displacing the defector-centric nationalist groups that were the nucleus of the initial militarization of the rebellion; b) the offensive posture adopted by the regime in early 2013, following a broad retreat and consolidation throughout much of 2012 and

<sup>302</sup> "Infographic: Who's Who From the Syrian Opposition?" (March 18, 2016)

<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/perspective/features/2016/03/18/Infographic-Who-s-who-from-the-Syrian-opposition-.html>.

enabled by extensive material, financial, military and personal intervention by Iran and Russia, has seen the rebellion fractured into approximately six “theaters”, each with unique intra-rebel and international dynamics; c) the number of men deployed by rebel groups around the country has steadily and consistently grown over the past five years, from 40k men in June 2012 to 75k men in March 2013 to approximately 125k men today.”<sup>303</sup>

O’Farrell also notes that the various jihadi groups – including Al Nusra – move in and out of alliances with Syrian Democratic Forces and FSA or Southern Front units.<sup>304</sup> This clearly complicates identifying which militarized or political organization or unit is engaged with others at any point in time.

Yezid Sayigh pointed out that the opposition forces in Syria are operating under multiple disadvantages, among which one must include a very real lack of coordination and agreement on key objectives. Many groups including the Kurds have sought to negotiate local truces through local communities can be restored to a semblance of stability. The Southern Front of the FSA has, for example, concentrated its efforts most closely on the southern region of the country where its strength resides and where it has engaged many different tribal elements.<sup>305</sup>

The objectives of each of the groups discussed above center on removing Bashar Al Assad from office and constructing a post-Assad government which will be inclusive not only of the Sunni majority but also of the Alawite-Shia minority. The problem is that

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<sup>303</sup> Ryan O’Farrell, “Syrian Opposition Factions in the Syrian Civil War,” ( June 2016) [https://medium.com/@badly\\_xeroxed/syrian-opposition-factions-in-the-syrian-civil-war-5d8412c9d7e6#.atm4rk8mk](https://medium.com/@badly_xeroxed/syrian-opposition-factions-in-the-syrian-civil-war-5d8412c9d7e6#.atm4rk8mk).

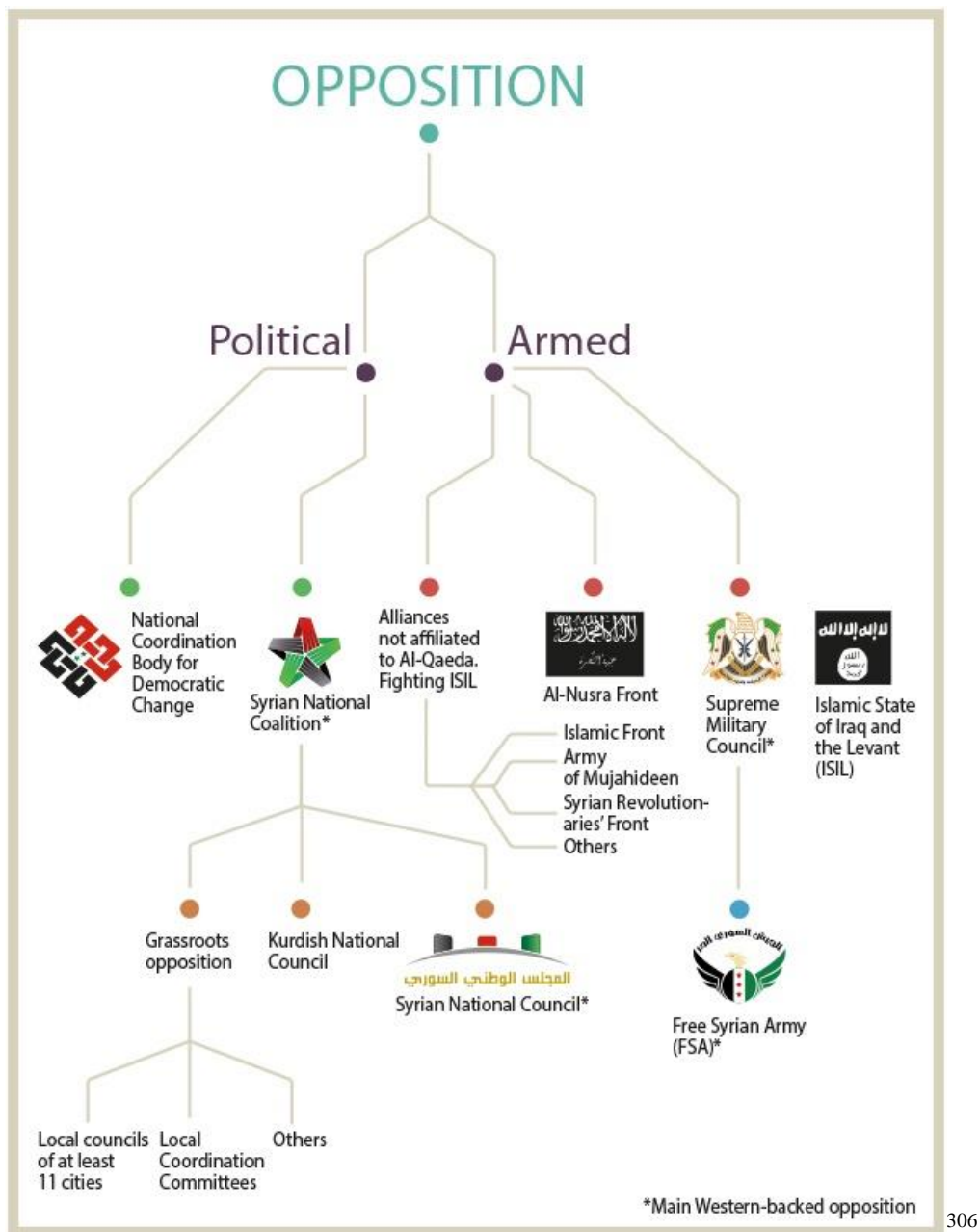
<sup>304</sup> Ibid.

<sup>305</sup> Yezid Sayigh, “The Syrian Opposition’s Coming Challenges,” (April 29, 2016( <http://carnegieendowment.org/2016/04/29/Syrian-opposition-s-coming-challenges>.

divisions within the rebel landscape remain substantial, creating what amounts to an inability on the part of these groups to achieve consensus and to bring about an organizational structure that is capable of moving the country forward. The addition of groups such as ISIS/ISIL and the creation of the so called caliphate further ensures that violence will be ongoing as territorial struggles continue.

Presented below is a chart depicting the key opposition groups.

**Figure 2**



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<sup>306</sup> "A Guide to Syria's Key Opposition groups," (2016/ <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/guide-syrias-key-factions-2062980927>).

Differentiating between these groups on the basis of “political” vs. “armed” orientation is useful but limiting. Some groups including Local Coordination Committees and other “grassroots” activists are also engaged in armed conflict as well as in political organizing.

The following figure further describe each of the main parties in this conflict.

**Figure 3**

### **Primary Parties/Coalitions/Groups**

**Free Syrian Army (FSA)** is the main secular armed opposition group in Syria. The FSA wants to overthrow the regime and replace it with a secular, democratic government. Membership is composed of various factions, each with their own command structure and internal politics. Some of the more moderate FSA factions receive support - money, training and weapons - from Western and Gulf states. The FSA is composed of defected Syrian Armed Forces personnel and volunteers.



**The Syrian Military Council (SMC)** is the military arm of the Syrian Opposition Coalition, which is the main political representative of the Syrian opposition. The SMC is led by Abdul-Ilah al-Bashir, and is based in Turkey.



**Jabhat al-Nusra** is a jihadist opposition group that wants to overthrow the regime and replace it with an Islamic state. Nusra is al-Qaeda's franchise in Syria and Lebanon, and fighters claim allegiance to Ayman al-Zawahiri, the leader of al-Qaeda. As the US has designated it a terrorist organisation, Nusra receives no Western backing, but it is allegedly supported by some Gulf actors. Nusra is known to have a significant membership of foreign fighters, from Chechnya, Afghanistan, North Africa, Europe and beyond.



**The Islamic Front** is a coalition of opposition Islamist fighting groups that differ from Nusra on account of being less extremist. The Islamic Front recently declared its goal was to bring about a revolution that was religious, but not fundamentalist or radical. The Islamic Front's ideology includes Salafism. It relies heavily on Saudi Arabian funding.



**The Syrian government** is headed by President Bashar al-Assad. The regime's military might is provided by the Syrian Arab Army and the Syrian Air Force. The regime has declared those fighting its rule to be armed terrorists, and it relies heavily on backing from its allies Russia (weapons, money) and Iran (weapons, Hezbollah fighters), as well as Shiite fighters from Iraq.<sup>307</sup>

Groups such as Jabhat al-Nusra do not necessarily share the vision of FSA or other rebel groups. Many rebel groups are said to cooperate with Al Nusra out of military necessity because it is one of the most capable groups on the battlefield. Other hardline Islamists and their organizations are associated with covert joint military operation commands (MOC) that are based in Turkey and Jordan that provide funding and lethal aid to moderate and nationalist groups in both northern and southern Syria. Saudi Arabia provides direct support to Salafist and Islamist groups across western Syria while Turkey and Qatar support nationalist Syrian rebel groups including Salafist and Islamist groups. The Syrian Muslim Brotherhood, based in Turkey, moves money and weapons to Syrian opposition groups in the north of the country.<sup>308</sup>

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<sup>307</sup> Ibid.

<sup>308</sup> Jennifer Cafarella and Genevieve Casagrande, "Syrian Opposition Guide," (October 7, 2015) [www.understandingwar.org](http://www.understandingwar.org).



From the perspective of political process theory, one can make the argument that in Syria, with few exceptions, the opposition groups within Syria have become increasingly engaged in violent attacks on the regime as regime responses have also escalated. The entry of the Russians, Iranians and Hezbollah into the conflict in support of the Assad regime may be the deciding factor in this process. There is no reason to believe at the present time that the Assad regime has any intention of stepping down or participating in a peace process that would effectively result in its demise and replacement.

## **Chapter Six**

### **Comparative Analysis**

Integral to this analysis is an examination of the ways in which the Syrian case is similar to and different from those of others in the region. Despite unique historical, cultural and demographic background shared by all four countries, there is strong support that protests in all the four countries have similarities and differences. The similarities range from causes of mass mobilizations (socioeconomic, socio-political, authoritarianism, and institutional failures), strategy and tactics (violent and non-violent), ideology (secular democracy), growing secularity, resources (social media) and social bases (youth, women and religious organizations). The differences range from institutional nature of the security sector, literacy and illiteracy levels, regime change and reform, variations in violence levels and international intervention. Tunisia and Egypt present a case of institutionalize security forces, whereas Libya and Syria presents patrimonial security forces. Similarly in Tunisia and Egypt, high literacy rates supported

by sustained international support of protest efforts ushered in regime change, whereas Syria and Libya presented different alternatives. In view of such variations, it is evident that illiteracy rates and social media usage are lower in the Middle East in comparison to North Africa, which has a higher social media usage and a vibrant middle class and civil society as examined in the dissertation. Additionally, a standard statistical correlation analysis also shows the relationships of the dependent and independent variables of the dissertation.<sup>309</sup>

### **Similarities**

- Casual Mechanisms:** Protest in all the four cases are caused by a mix of socio-economic and socio-political grievances. Claims of corruption, growing unemployment, the lack of opportunities and the consensus on such issues in all these countries was significant, as was concern regarding control of national wealth and resources. In Tunisia, it was the corrupt nature of the Ben Ali regime and his close elite group, whereas in Egypt and Libya growing resentment against Mubarak and Qaddafi's billion dollar empire, a large population of unemployed youth. Similarly, activists in Syria expressed grievances against corruption, growing unemployment, poverty and the domination of the nation's riches by Bashar Al Assad family. New human security dimensions and the structural changes taking place as a result of the growing youth age cohort in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, and Syria emerged as common causes of protest movements.

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<sup>309</sup> This comparison is useful in identifying the "fit" between the variables in four unique Middle Eastern conflict situations.

Socio-politically, grievances against decade's long authoritarian contributed to protest in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Syria. In all cases, activists expressed grievances against authoritarian rule, sought an end to political oppression and called for inclusion and political pluralism under the banner of a democracy, justice and the rule of law. The growing challenge to authoritarianism marks a sharp departure from traditional realist paradigms suggesting that in the Middle East and North Africa, power rests with whoever runs the government and whoever has the gun because it the most militarized region with the most military backed dictatorships in the world. Protest movements against authoritarianism and dictatorship in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Syria has permanently challenged the traditional realist assumption.

- **Strategy and Tactics:** The similarity in strategy further shows the emergence of powerful models of political change in the history of mass mobilization. In both Tunisia and Egypt, protest efforts generally followed non-violence resistance, although there were intermittent eruption of violence. Protests in Libya and Syria started non-violently and subsequently shifted to violent resistance. The cases of Tunisia and Egypt exemplify non-violent protests whereas Libya and Syria, which started as non-violent protests shifted to violence through the use of lethal weapons by both protestors and the government.
- **Ideology:** Although intermittent eruption of violence between Coptic Christians and Muslims occurred in Egypt, a larger part of the post-revolutionary era in

Egypt, Tunisia and Libya was characterized by constitutional reforms, citizen empowerment, elections and growing political participation under the banner of a democracy. Arguably, even the case of Syria that has descended into a civil war, the formation of a governing Transitional National Council modeled after Libya was an artifact of democratic aspiration of citizens. In sum, the growing calls for democracy in the case of Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Syria is a departure from traditional arguments about Islam's incompatibility to democracy.

- **Growing Secularity:** With its complex historical and cultural tradition of Islam, Roman Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Copts, and Eastern Orthodox, protests in the cases of Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Syria indicates a new sense of secularity, tolerance and moderation across both societal and governance architectures. Protestors in all the four cases come from diverse religious backgrounds. For example, in all the cases women and youth have taken center stage in many political, social and economic decision spaces throughout the mass mobilization. This is evidence of departure from notions of incompatibility to moderation and secularity as a western concept.
- **Resources:** The use of social media as a major resource emerged as a common tool for protestors in all the cases. New Social media such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter, coupled with the use of mobile phones was evident across a broad spectrum of protestors in both regions. Amid challenges posed by widespread government shutting down Internet access and the arrest and detention of activists

and journalists, the use of other avenues such as Satellite TV in transmitting images to a global audience emerged as a fundamental resource for protestors. Protestors in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Syria used new social media to coordinate and strategize protest efforts, so did protestors in Syria. Although Libya and Syria descended into a civil war, protestors with the help of transnational activists were able to access new media tools such as YouTube, Skype, Facebook, and Twitter to not only communicate to a global audience and coordinate protest efforts. For example, as the Syrian crisis dragged onto its second year, protestors continue to successfully upload images of government brutality on YouTube through Satellite technology.

- **Social Base:** The social base of protest movements in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Syria provides another dimension of similarity. In all the four countries the social base are characterized by youth and women groups, unions and religious groups emerged as another powerful shift from the regions traditional patriarchic nature. For the first time in these countries, the social base for politics and governance has extended to encompass divergent actors. For example, for the first time in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Syria the social base expanded to encompass groups from all sectors of society, including women, youth groups from all religious representation, and civil society unions, such as the lawyers and other civil service union.

## Differences

- **Institutionalization – The Military and Other Governance Apparatus**

Since governance and politics of all the four cases are historically characterized by authoritarianism in the form of either monarchies or traditional family republican rule, institutionalization of the military and other security apparatus, and their respective roles in the mass mobilization efforts varied greatly from region to region. In comparison to Egypt and Tunisia, the military and security forces in Syria and Libya are characterized by ethnic and religious sectarianism, with most members of the armed and security services either from the same religious or ethnic grouping of the ruling administration. Under such an abysmal situation, the armed and security services manifest loyalty to the ruling government instead of the state. However, the military in Egypt and Tunisia presented a clear case of distinction between institutionalized and a non-institutionalized armed and security institution. The military upheld the aspirations of citizens at least in the periods 2010-2013. Whereas the armed and security forces facilitated regime change in Egypt and Tunisia, Libya and Syria presented a different situation. In Libya, regime change was only possible with the intervention of International forces as Syria descended in to civil war.

- **literacy, Illiteracy rates and Social Media**

The impact of literacy and illiteracy rates together with social media usage further present another important point of distinction between protests movements in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Syria. The questions around literacy and illiteracy in the mass mobilizations is clear testimony to the relationship of political change to literacy levels - meaning the more educated a society or community, the more

likely for political change to take shape. In that regards, high literacy rates in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya contributed to mobilization efforts and facilitated regime change. In retrospect, high illiteracy rates in Syria coupled with the lack of access to the internet and social media tools made mobilization and regime change efforts quite difficult, if not challenging. Whereas access to the internet and mass social media tools facilitated coordination and the adoption of strategic means in Egypt and Tunisia, the limited access to the internet and social media in Libya and Syria was a fundamental driving mechanism behind most of the complications and difficulties encountered by activists and protestors, especially in terms of coordination and strategizing.

- **Violence Levels**

Although violence was evident in both regions, there are clear variations of violence levels between the mass mobilizations in Tunisia and Egypt and those of Libya and Syria. Whilst nonviolent strategy means was largely responsible for the low levels of violence in the use of violence means shifted the dynamics of mass mobilization in Libya and Syria to an all-out civil war. In both Egypt and Tunisia, protestors maintained the use of nonviolent means even though police forces unleashed violent means at the beginning of the protests. Although a United Nations intervention in Libya escalated violence levels with the imposition of a no-fly zone and protestors engaged in a liberation war with government forces, overall violence level was higher in the case of Libya and Syria than those of Egypt and Tunisia.

- **Regime Change and Reform**

Protest movements in Tunisia and Egypt ushered in some degree of regime change with the toppling of two regimes and an institution building process through elections put in place. Protests in Libya and Syria did not put in place much of an institutional building framework. The parliament put in place in Libya continue to be challenged by various armed groups. In the case of Syria, protest shifted to a protracted civil war that has various armed factions fighting the regime.

- **Sectarian and Religious Fragmentation**

Protests in Tunisia and Egypt did not fall along sectarian and religious fragmentation for the most part of 2011 – 2013. The dissertation found support that the cases of Tunisia and Egypt were more of a broad-based consensus among citizens of various groups .However, protests in Libya and Syria shifted to more of sectarian, tribal and religious lines. In Syria sectarianism is traced to divisions between the ethnic Alawite and other ethnic groups, whereas Libya’s sectarian divide was more of a tribal and ethnic divide.

**Table XII: Differences and Similarities of Mass Mobilizations in North Africa and the Middle East**

<b>North Africa</b>	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Ideology</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Social Base</b>
Algeria	Non-Violence	Secular Democracy	Social Media	Reforms	Youth Religious
Egypt	Non-Violence Limited Violence	Secular Democracy	Social Media	Regime Change	Youth Religious Women State Institutions



Libya	Violence	Secular Democracy	Social Media International	Regime Change	Youth Religious Women State Institutions
Morocco	Non-Violence	Secular Democracy	Social Media	Reforms	Youth Women
Tunisia	Non-Violence Limited Violence	Secular Democracy	Social Media	Regime Change	Youth Women Religious State Institutions
<b>Middle East</b>	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Ideology</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Social Base</b>
Bahrain	Non-Violence Violence	Secular Democracy	Social Media	Reforms	Youth Women Religious
Jordan	Non-Violence	Secular Democracy	Social Media	Reforms	Youth Religious Women
Kuwait	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Oman	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Saudi Arabia	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Syria	Violence	Secular Democracy	Social Media	Regime Change	Youth Women Religious State institutions
United Arab Emirates	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Qatar	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Yemen	Non-Violence Violence	Secular Democracy		Reforms	Mobilizati on & Combat
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**Table XIII: Correlation Coefficient Analysis**





### **Correlation Coefficient Analysis**

Correlation in standard statistics is used to measure the relationship between two or more variables. The correlation coefficient analysis in this dissertation measures the relationship of the dependent and independent variables. The correlation coefficient varies from +1 which means perfect positive correlation to -1 which means perfect inverse correlation. When the dependent and independent variables are correlated, it means they vary together. The measurement is analyzed in positive and negative terms. A positive correlation shows that a high score on one variable is associated to a high score on the other. On the other hand, a negative correlation shows that a high score on one variable is associated to a low score on the other variable. In other words, a positive correlation coefficient means that as variable 1 increases, variable 2 increases, and conversely, as variable 1 decreases, variable 2 decreases. This means that the variables move in the same direction when there is a positive correlation - a negative correlation means that as variable 1 increases, variable 2 decreases and vice versa. The variables move in opposite directions when there is a negative correlation. In this dissertation, the correlation coefficient of the dependent and independent variables are analyzed as follows:

#### **Damages (Violent Protest)**

- There is a positive correlation between damages during protest and polity, meaning the more autocratic a regime the more damages incurred during protests. The polity measurement is drawn from a 1-10 index of the Center for Systemic peace (1 is more democratic and 10 is more autocratic). The higher the polity

score, the more damages during protest. For this case, the correlation coefficient of damages and polity was 0.841123.

- There is a negative correlation between damages and social media and internet usage, meaning the less social media and internet usage in all the cases the more damages. In comparison to Libya and Syria, Egypt and Tunisia with high social media and internet usage incurred less damages. Libya and Syria had low social media usage and internet penetration at the time of protest. The correlation coefficient score for Facebook usage and damages was -0.67382, and for internet penetration was -0.21367
- There is a positive relationship between damages and youth bulge during protests, meaning countries experiencing youth bulges experience damages during protest. Egypt, Tunisia, Libya and Syria were all experiencing youth bulges during protests and therefore sustained considerable damages between 2010-2013. In this case, the correlation coefficient score for youth bulge was 0.770475
- The analysis found a negative correlation between damages and unemployment. This result is puzzling because unemployment in a country generally fuels discontent that can lead to protest. The problem may be caused by inaccurate unemployment numbers recorded over the years. Unemployment generally is very difficult to measure, considering the fact that underemployed numbers are excluded. In this case, the correlation coefficient of damages and unemployment was -0.67935

### **Deaths –Killed (Violent Protest)**

- There is a positive correlation between the death rate and polity during protests, meaning the more autocratic a regime the more deaths during a protest. The correlation coefficient score in this case was 0.97461.
- There is a negative correlation between social media and internet usage and death rates during protest, meaning the more social media usage during protest, the less number of deaths or people killed. The correlation coefficient score for Facebook was -0.8717 and for internet penetration, it was 0.53036.
- A positive correlation exists between youth bulge and number of deaths during protest. This means that states with high youth bulge experience high number of deaths during protest than states with no youth bulges. In this case, the correlation coefficient for youth bulge was 0.769684.
- The analysis found a negative correlation between deaths during protests and unemployment. The results here is perplexing as well. It may be a standard statistical error, caused the inaccurate unemployment numbers recorded over the years. Unemployment generally is very difficult to measure, considering the fact that underemployed numbers are excluded. The correlation coefficient score was -0.85118

#### **Injured - (Violent Protest)**

- There is a positive correlation between injuries during protest and polity of a state, meaning the more autocratic a state the more injuries sustained during protest. The correlation coefficient score for polity was 0.84196.
- There is a negative correlation between Facebook usage and internet penetration in a state. The less Facebook and internet penetration in a state, the more injuries

sustained during protest. In this case, the correlation coefficient for Facebook was -0.67794, and for internet penetration, correlation was -0.2166.

- There is a positive correlation between injury and youth bulges during protest, meaning states with youth bulges experience injuries during protests. The correlation coefficient for youth bulge was 0.762721.
- The analysis found a negative correlation between injuries and unemployment. This case also presented us with a confusing situation. This may be a standard statistical error, caused by inaccurate unemployment numbers recorded over the years. Unemployment generally is very difficult to measure, considering the fact that underemployed numbers are excluded. The correlation coefficient for unemployment was -0.68526.

### **Nonviolent Protest (Support or Participation)**

The measurement for support of nonviolent protest in the periods of the Arab Spring from 2011-2013 was drawn from a survey conducted by the Arab Barometer using samples in 12 Arab countries. The survey concluded that 80% of the population in Egypt supported the nonviolent protest that ended the Mubarak regime, 70 percent supported the protest that ended the regime of Ben Ali, and 77 percent supported the protest that ended the regime of Mohammad Ghaddafi. No specific data was available for Syria; however, since the Arab Barometer concluded that over 66 percent of people in the Arab region supported protests during the Arab Spring, the study used the 66 percentage measure as an estimate for the case of Syria. The following observations are drawn from the analysis:



- There is a negative correlation of nonviolence and polity, meaning the more democratic a state the more nonviolence during protest. The correlation coefficient for polity was -0.53185.
- There is a positive correlation of social media and nonviolence. This means that the more social media usage in a state, the more nonviolence protests in a state. The correlation coefficient measure for Facebook usage was 0.534823, and Internet penetration was 0.06237.
- There is a negative correlation of nonviolence and youth bulges. This means that state experiencing youth bulges are less likely to use nonviolence during protest. In this case, the correlation coefficient measure for youth bulges was -0.14193.
- A positive correlation exists between nonviolence and unemployment, meaning states experiencing high unemployment rates are more likely to use nonviolence during protests. In this case, the correlation coefficient score for unemployment was 0.650337.

## **Chapter Seven**

### **Conclusions and Findings**

The dissertation has provided an analysis of mass mobilization, grievances and opportunities using protests in Tunisia and Egypt as non-violent, and the cases of Libya and Syria as violent protests. Questions and hypothesis are developed at a higher, more

abstract, level, to support a formidable analysis of primary and secondary sources and determination of causes and outcomes. Small N comparative methodology has been used to investigate the protest movements within its real-life context, allowing the use of multiple sources to support the careful observation of all variables and their interacting relationships from broader theoretical lenses. Questions and hypothesis are applied, but at a higher, and more abstract ways to support the search and analysis of data in a more formidable way. Given the availability of primary and secondary data, a Small N comparative analysis provides an in-depth understanding of the grievances, opportunities and strategy of protest movements that gripped Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Syria from 2010-2013. In all the four cases, protests are caused by long standing grievances and supported available political opportunities.

Using data from the Arab Barometer, International Crisis Group, Human Rights Watch, International Labor Organization, International Monetary Fund, World Bank Group (United Nations Development Program and the Brookings Institute, the dissertation assessed protests in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, and Syria to establish why and how citizens protested, and what was the nature of violence during protests.

## **Findings**

The dissertation proposed grievance, political opportunity and resource mobilization explanations of why citizens protested. Using Small N comparative historical case study methods to analyze meso and macro level data of Egypt, Tunisia, Libya and Syria, the dissertation found evidence connecting protests to unemployment, corruption and the lack of opportunities for a majority young people, which supports the

Hypothesis that *States with little or no employment opportunities for youths are more likely to be confronted with mass mobilization than are states with opportunities for the youth*. In Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, and Syria, there is a clear support of the economic grievance argument linking protest to income and corruption. Grievances in all four cases are rooted in a mixture of socio-economic and socio-political problems, the authoritarian nature of the governments, the relationship among elites and popular groups, societal and institutional changes and the shifting dynamics across generational lines driven by a “youth bulge” and new human security dimensions. Economic growth did not keep up with demographic increase in population and demand, an increase in demand for strengthening human security dimensions in food, healthcare, employment, and the burden of past tradition and ongoing complicity with corruption and mismanagement of existing power structures, mechanisms, relations and recognition of the need for a more just and less imbalance society.

There is also support for the political grievance approach, which clearly connects to a desire to end authoritarianism and usher in more inclusive form of government and a democracy. Protestors in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Syria, demanded broader political reforms and freedoms, such as freedom of the press, speech and assembly. In Tunisia, protestors demanded for the ouster of President Ben Ali and reforms of political institutions. Similarly, in Egypt, protestors demanded for the ouster of President Mubarak. In Syria protestors demanded the ouster of President Bashar al-Assad, allowing political parties, and broad political freedoms. In Libya rebel forces demanded the end of the Qadaffi regime for a more democratic government. Protests in all four cases are caused by political grievances rooted in resentment against decades’ long authoritarian

rule shaped by excessive centralization and the marriage of business and political power supported by a brutal internal security apparatus, which succeeded in the inculcation of a culture of fear across society long periods of time. These authoritarian tendencies led to the fragmentation of society, polarization of governance, a growing institutional incapacity and the marrying of all sectors of governance under powerful elites and oppressive security apparatus of the state. Additionally, failing and weak institutions in both the formal and informal sectors in all the four cases emerged as a concern for citizens. In both regions, the dissertation noted institutions such as the security, judiciary and the executive organs of governance to have departed or compromised principal societal functions, leading to the propelling of political temperaments to higher heights.

Similarly, there are clearly defined evidences linking social media access to violence levels during protests. This supports the hypothesis that *States with higher access to social media are more likely to use non-violent means of protests than states with little or no access to social media.* In Tunisia and Egypt, the higher access of citizens to social media ensured effective coordination and mobilization to avoid clashes with security forces. In contrast, protestors limited access to social media in Syria and Libya largely contributed to the high violence levels that emerged over the years.

There is also support linking the function of regime and security force type to the nature of violence. Hypothesis 3 established that increased violent levels is a function of security force type. *States with a higher degree of institutionalized military structures experience less violence than states with patrimonial security structures during mass mobilizations.* The nonviolent nature of protest in Tunisia and Egypt is the function of the institutionalize security forces, whereas the violent nature of protest in Libya and Syria is

the function of the patrimonial nature of the security forces. Institutionalized security forces very easily relate to the people since their selection process and command responsibilities are based on universal suffrage and competence, and since members of the military, including commanding officers come from a broad spectrum of society. The patrimonial security force is fragmented on tribal and ethnic lines are found to be using all necessary means to crush dissent, since the continuation of their influence and power are dependent on the continuity of the regime. In such security institutions, recruitment has been driven by tribal and ethnic affiliation and command responsibilities have generally not been based on merit. The cases of Libya and Syria, where security forces have unleashed high violence levels, fall within the parameters of their institutional nature. In Libya and Syria, security forces are characterized by ethnic and sectarian fragmentation, with recruitment not based on competence and universal suffrage. The study concluded that there is a strong relationship between violence levels and the institutional nature of military and security forces – The more institutionalized the security forces, the less violence towards protestors, and the less institutionalized the security forces, the more violence towards protesting citizens.

The bulk of the literature on mass mobilization examines the emergence and sustainability of protests from three main perspectives: Grievance, resource mobilization and political process theories. The grievance base theory suggests that citizens protested as a result of long standing socioeconomic and sociopolitical grievances. In all the four cases protests erupted as a result of dissatisfaction with the economy, growing unemployment, corruption, income inequality, political inclusion, human rights abuse and oppression by decade's long authoritarian regimes. Resource mobilization

approaches to social movement analysis focus primarily on the role of access to resources in movement emergence. The dissertation clearly showed the ways available resources were utilized by groups. The political process theory argues that the emergence and sustainability of protests depends on access to resources and the appropriate political and social contexts. Accordingly, the political process framework would focus on the role of mobilizing structures, political opportunities, framing, protest cycles and contentious repertoires focus on the macro level processes and organizations involved in protests.

The puzzle about the most effective strategy to a large extent lies on the nonviolent and violent nature of protests. With a focus on concept formation, questions and hypothesis generation, and the contextual analysis of approaches and outcomes, there is a strong support for the success of nonviolence strategy over violence strategy during protests. The success of protests that ousted regimes in Tunisia and Egypt are largely due to its nonviolent nature, whereas violence complicated efforts for protests in Libya and Syria. While protestors peacefully occupied public spaces to demand economic and political reforms, the shift to violence dragged the Libyan conflict into a civil war that lasted for 6 months before the collapse of the Qaddafi regime. Similarly, in Syria, violence led to a civil war that is in its third year.

Additionally, there is also a departure from traditional arguments on the lack of civil society, democracy's incompatibility to Islam and the region, and realist arguments that as the most militarized region with the most military- backed dictatorships in the world, the region has long exemplified power resting with whoever runs the government and whoever has the guns. With the growth of non-violent protest as powerful vehicles of political change, it is evident that there are no conflicts between the culture, religion and

democracy. Since the concept of democracy and its fundamental pillars evolve around consensus, Islam's foundational tenet of the "Shuraa", which is consensus and consultation, indicating compatibility in political pluralism to forms of ideological and jurisprudential pluralism that existed in the Islamic experience.<sup>310</sup> It is therefore incorrect to argue that since these countries are Muslim countries they lack the prerequisites of democratization – a weak civil society and high literacy<sup>311</sup>. Protests erupted effectively due to the proliferation and vibrancy of civil society organizations that emerge across all sectors of society. Additionally, none of these arguments are satisfying, since other regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, characterized by different cultures and religion are able to embark on some relative degree of sustainable democratic transitioning.

In sum, while theoretical, analytical and explanatory the evidences presented emerged from primary data such as television news media outlets, documentaries, and secondary data as reports and surveys from institutions, academic journals, newspaper and a range of scholarly analysis from both within the region and other parts of our world. The explanatory strength provides enhanced understanding of the changing dynamics of politics and governance from business as usual to emerging realities, one that is in touch with socio-economic, socio-political and socio-cultural forces shaping the four states examined within the framework of global governance and interdependence. Since the nature of protests and the institutional response to protests keeps changing, the

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<sup>310</sup> Azzam Tamimi, "Islam and Democracy from Tahtawi to Ghannouchi," *Theory, Culture and Society* 12(2007): 39-58.

<sup>311</sup> Bellin, 139-141.

study does not necessarily provide definitive findings of the concepts and theories examined herein.

These findings suggest the need for future research based on a mixed methodology, to better understand protests in complex regions of our global community. Future research should be more of a mixed methodology to be pragmatic, consequence-oriented, problem-centered, and pluralistic. This will also involve the collection of Data either simultaneously or sequentially to better investigate the research questions. There are two main conclusions that can be drawn from this dissertation. First, there is a strong support linking grievances, political opportunities and resources to the causes of protests in all four cases. However, due to the lack of a quantitative evidence, economic and political grievances may also have limited impact on protests. Second, there is strong support linking social media access and the function of security force type to violence during protests. Similarly, the lack of statistical or quantitative evidence may also have impact on analysis of the linkages of social media, regime and security force type on violence.



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