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Arab Spring-Role and Impact of First Movers

**Introduction**

In the spring of 2011, a spate of protests erupting from Tunisia engulfed the major Arab countries. These countries included Algeria, Syria, Yemen, Egypt, Libya, and obviously Morocco. Taking into account the weather in which the series of protests erupted, the event was termed Arab Spring. The Arab Spring, which comprised of protests from loosely linked groups, resulted in the toppling of the governments in some countries. Ever since the Arab Spring, most of these countries have been engulfed with instability and increased oppression. However, the uprisings resulted in regime changes in Tunisia and Egypt. The changing of regimes in these two countries resulted in improving human rights' indicators. Notwithstanding the improvements in Egypt and Tunisia regarding human rights, remaining countries on the list failed to witness progress in social and political spheres. This essay will assess and evaluate what urged the citizens to initiate the protests against their repressive rulers for decades? How did the repressive tactics motivate the masses? Specifically, analyzing the data available from the protests in Morocco, this essay will critically analyze the arguments, points, and inferences provided by the different researchers. Additionally, this essay will provide the readers with an in-depth analysis of the outcomes of the Arab Spring.

**Discussion**

It was 17th December 2010, when a Tunisian man named Mohamed Bouazizi set himself alight in a protest against a government department. His only crime was not having a permit to sell vegetables. The government officials humiliated Bouazizi, which resulted in the death of the young man. Although Bouazizi succumbed to his burns, mass protests soon erupted and swept across the whole Tunisia. Masses were agitating against the flagrant abuse for human rights by the then President Zine El Abidine. The power of the masses compelled President Zine El Abidine to resign and flee the country.

Lawrence argues regarding the commencing of protests, that activism is passed down from one generation to the next (Lawrence, 3). However, that is not the case when one takes a look back in time. For instance, the Civil Rights movement resulted in safeguarding equal rights for everyone regardless of their race or creed. However, there are instances witnessed where human rights abuses are being committed in the USA to date. Be it celebrities or a common man, many have faced racial profiling. But no mass movement has been witnessed in this regard. Undeniably, individuals have come out on social platforms addressing the need to end racial discrimination. However, no first movers are seen agitating and causing mass unrest are seen.

Another Aspect that political analysts have discussed that the preferences of first-movers differ and the reasons remain opaque. According to Lichtenstein and Slovic, from a psychological perspective, an individual’s inclination towards a goal or an objective is reflective in the individual's decision making (Lichtenstein and Slovic, 14). Another definition of preference terms the individual's liking or disliking towards a cause. Preference does not necessarily remain constant over time. It can be altered at any moment. Provided the individual holds the cause dearly. So, to say the preferences differ and remain opaque cannot be regarded as true. Individual's surroundings with respect to education, culture and religious beliefs contribute to preferences. Hence, the aforementioned reasons clearly demonstrate there is a comprehensive rationale behind preferences.

Furthermore, a survey on Facebook was conducted by Lawrence to assess the motivation levels of the first movers following the toppling of the regimes. According to Lawrence, despite being assured about non-disclosure of personal information regarding the Facebook survey, the survey was only completed by 160 persons (Lawrence, 17). The number 160 was dominated by males. The reasons mentioned by Lawrence regarding why the survey failed to motivate the masses are that most users seemed devoid of motivation and conviction, some believed in peaceful change, some liked to write against an event so on and so forth (Lawrence, 19). Lawrence previously concluded that first-movers are resilient, willing to sacrifice themselves for a cause (Lawrence, 2). And this resolve moves down from one generation to another. However, considering the reasons tabled by users of Facebook, this can be concluded that many social platform users lacked strong will. Despite being provided with the guarantee that their information would not be disclosed, the number of people who completed the survey stood at 160. Another important aspect for mass movement or a survey to succeed is the participation of women. Women, despite constituting 50% of the Moroccan population, did not participate in the survey enthusiastically.

**Conclusion**

Ghosh rightfully said that first-movers determine the success of mass agitation. First-movers risk their lives for a collective cause to bear fruit said the writer. According to Ghosh, Facebook played an important role in spreading the cause (Ghosh, 32). But, what Lawrence did not mention are the consequences of the Arab Spring (Ghosh, 32). The first-movers took to the roads to topple the regimes. In the aftermath of the Arab Spring, the political instability and military interventions in these countries have rocked North Africa and the Middle East (Ghosh, 45). The chaos erupted in Libya resulted in the brutal murder of Muammar Gaddafi (Ghosh, 46). In Egypt, Hosni Mobarak was deposed and faced imprisonment (Ghosh, 49). The trial Mobarak stood in did not follow due process of law. In Syria, ISIS took hold of the majority of the country (Ghosh, 52). Bashar ul Asad’s allies bombed civilians, used chemical weapons on the pretext of bombing the rebels (Ghosh, 53).

Taking into account the repercussions of Arab Spring, it was incumbent on the first-movers to maintain the sanctity of human rights. The murder of Gaddafi, the trial of Mobarak, and the bombings of Syrian civilians were all flagrant abuses of human rights. The first-movers failed to uphold the human rights- a cause that triggered them to took to the streets and agitate fervently (Ghosh, 38).

Had the first movers practiced what they preached, the whole outlook of the Arab World would have been different.

Works Cited

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