The Arab Protest Movements: An Insight into the Present, the Challenges and the Future

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ABSTRACT

This research seeks to spotlight the phenomenon of the social protest movement that has swept a number of the Arab States. The researcher relied on the historical points of departure and sociology and political terminology in monitoring these movements so as to describe them and determine their identity, history, components, strength and ability to affect change. This came within a gradual approach starting with the onset of the Arab uprisings and ending with the time of preparing this discourse.

The researcher point of departure was that no matter how the political system tries to safeguard itself through despotism, violence and security forces, it will reach a point where it cannot meet the internal challenges, since these arise from one side of the equation of the composition of the state… which means the people.

And in order to put this assumption to the test, the researcher posed a set of principles, and adopted the historical approach, the approach of the systems, as well the approach of the decision – maker and political participation.

The research concluded that the these protest movements face immense challenges… like the fear of falling into chaos, confusion or the trap of time slackness that cause them to lose momentum. Those in charge of these movements must be vigilant so as not to go outside the desired objectives.

Keywords: Protest Movements, Political Violence, Despotism, Reform.

1. INTRODUCTION

On the 27th of August 2005, a meeting was held in St. Catherine College at Oxford University. This meeting was supervised and run by “the project of the studies of democracy in the Arab countries” which was adopted by the Centre for Arab Unity Studies in Beirut. The meeting was under the heading “the future of the movements of the Arab street for reform: causes, motives and objectives”. The aim was to monitor what was taking place then, since the protest movements became a prominent phenomenon that included mass meetings, demonstrations and sit-ins. Some even went to the point of using force in confronting the security forces and the army. The political systems used the latter to suppress these movements and tame them. This phenomenon spread to cover most Arab States, using the modern communication networks like the internet and Facebook.

It is to be noted that what the Arab street is witnessing these days is not new or sudden. It is a continuation of long periods of the protest movements that erupted in several Arab States. Some of them were even deeper and better organized than what we see now, though the impact of the new movements is more severe, since they have (by the time of preparing this research) brought down rulers, and two of them are heading in this direction.

The phenomenon of the Arab protest, that is called the “Arab spring”, exists in several Arab states without being authorized by the authority, though it is in harmony with the provisions of the Arab “constitution” which called in many of its provisions for protecting the political, cultural, intellectual, social freedoms of the individuals. These (movements) were mostly consistent with the international conventions and charters that govern the freedoms of expression, association, opinion, the formation of associations, and the rise against despotism, violence and injustice. These international instruments were signed by the Arab States and became parties to them. Thus they are committed to respect and comply with them.

It is to be noted that many of the recent Arab street movements were spontaneous at the beginning and
formed an Arab spring. But due to internal, regional and external factors they moved to become an autumn that threatens them with falling into chaos, fogginess, surrender to the old guard or the implementation of foreign schemes or policies that secure interests which are not necessarily Arab.

Thus this discourse does not seek to address the causes, motives and goals only, but to monitor the identity of these protests so as to ascertain their true description which leads to examining the assumption of the researcher. This lies in whether the Arab street is witnessing a promising spring or a frost full of confusion, cold and fogginess. Consequently, what is the future that awaits the Arab political system after this earthquake that shook its foundations?

The research importance

The world is no longer a witness to the “state” that alone takes the decision. The ordinary citizen is now open to all cultures, opinions, principles and values. It is not possible to exercise an embargo on him anymore.

What takes place in any street in any state in the world has become monitored and well studied by the other streets in the rest of the states. It affects, or is affected by it. In addition, the barrier of fear from the authority has become fragile. Thus it becomes necessary for the political system, if it wants to preserve itself, to head towards the principles of democracy, political partnership, justice, objectivity, transparency and adopt them. This is to be addressed in the light of the variables and the changes that the Arab homeland is witnessing.

The research intricacy

It appears that the case of the despotic rule in the Arab homeland has become a continuous phenomenon since the end of the Rashidi rule. The authority began to deal with excessive harshness with the opposition, which it considered a rebellion against the inspired “ruler” and the unique “leader”. Thus there was no agreement between the ruler and the ruled regarding, just mechanisms for political exercise. The opposition, on its part, headed towards unconsidered ways of expressing its opinions or presenting its views, whereas the ruler went to the extreme to stay in power. This created an intricacy which the two parties did not understand so as to overcome it. It harmed the citizen who was placed in the crossfire of the two camps, and it harmed the political system which resorts to force to defend its acquisitions.

The research assumption

The researcher seeks an answer to the question: “is that which is taking place in the Arab Street a case of rejection that is capable of affecting change, and thus producing a promising spring, or is it a rejection of tyranny only? Is this protest a prelude to a self-motivated rational political, ideological and cultural movement? The assumption states that the political system is unable to preserve itself by force and repression. And if the response, which was chaotic at the beginning, has focused only on removing the ruler “without putting in place alternatives or landmarks for the other way, … then it will cause the state to fall into confusion that renders it incapable of running this state.

The research questions

In order to subject the assumption to accountability, the researcher will try to answer the following questions:
1- Does that which is taking place in the Arab street constitute a sudden matter that is isolated from the history of the Arab movement since a long time?
2- What are the international and regional dimensions of that which is taking place in the Arab street?
3- What is the ability of the Arab street in affecting political change and changing the democratic scene?
4- Has the street transformed its concept to other concepts like the civil society, public opinion and political participation?

The research methodology

Since the questions of the constitution, constitutional legitimacy and political participation are the apparent motives for the movement of the Arab street, there are other latent factors that lie behind that which took place. The most important of these is the search for the real democracy that goes beyond political participation, and reaches the components of justice in distributing the powers of authority and the gains. And in order to approach the goals, the motives and the future, the researcher adopted the historical approach and its analyses so as to monitor the references and the origins that constitute this phenomenon. The researcher will also rely on the approach of the political system and decision-making and that of the elites to study the role of the Arab leaderships of the political systems whose decisions caused the people to take to the street.
The research limitation

As for the question of time, the researcher is forced to go back historically to the beginnings of the popular movements in the Arab street, which some of its forms began to evolve in the early days of the nineteenth century.

As for the spatial limitation, this will be confined to the Arab states that has witnessed protests and movements, some of which caused the downfall of the political systems, or are in the way towards that.

Literature review

Since the question of the movement in the Arab street is not a recent one, several researchers and writers wrote about it. Among those were:

1- Ali Khalifah Al-Kawari (editor- 2007) “a symposium on democracy and the current movements of the Arab street”. It was held under the supervision of the Centre for the Studies of Arab Unity in Beirut. The working papers addressed several subjects, and the movements of the Arab street in Egypt, Bahrain, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan.

2- Omar Al-Shwaiki (editor 2011). A symposium entitled “the protest movements in the Arab homeland”. It was held under the supervision of the Centre of the Studies of Arab Unity in Beirut. The participants spoke about the protest phenomenon within its historical and geographical framework. They also surveyed the movements in Lebanon, Syria and Bahrain.


5- Tarik Al-Bishri (1970) “the political movement in Egypt 1945-1952”, “The Egyptian commission for the book” Cairo. It approached the students and workers uprising that Cairo began to witness since the year 1946. The writer spoke about its leaders, demands and results.

These studies and others which, exceeded the hundreds, revolved around collecting information and keeping to indirect addressing to the factors, limitations, goals and future indicators. Accordingly, this modest discourse attempts to analyze the phenomenon of the Arab protest, evaluate it and read its ability to affect change.

The research structure

This research will be composed of four discourses:

1- The first discourse: an introduction to terminology: the first requirement: the terminology of social protests movements.

2- The second requirement: the terminology of political violence, despotism and tyranny.

3- The third requirement: the constitution and constitutionality.

The second discourse: the Arab protest movements: an historical originality.

The first requirement: the political, cultural, economic and historical roots.

The second requirement: the indicators and international and internal tributaries for the Arab protest movements.

The third discourse: the Arab street and the ability to affect change.

The first requirement: the components of power unto the Arab protest movement.

The second requirement: the ability of the Arab protest movement to cause change.

Conclusion and future outlook

References

The First Discourse

An introduction to the terms

The first requirement: the term of the social protests movements

It is no longer possible to ignore the escalating social protests in most countries of the world. Despite the different nature of these protests from one state to another and their different forms, essence, goals and results, yet they converge to form an existing phenomenon that sometimes carry the meaning of collision with the existing regimes. They took the form of peaceful demonstrations that resorted at times to use force in all its forms. This means that it followed a path that differs from that which was followed by the opposition in most, if not all, advanced states.

Despite the disturbances that has accompanied the
The Arab Protest …

The Arab Protest movements, inside or outside the Arab homeland, yet they have embodied a clear transformation that reflected maturity in the options of the citizens in the manner of approaching their needs and the way of demanding them. The Arab social movements benefited from the various successful experiences that many states in the West and the East witnessed which has enabled its peoples to gain their freedoms, enjoy their rights and attain the means of power that enabled them to maintain these freedoms and preserve these rights. Many societies has gone through political, social, intellectual and economic experiences and crises whose nature and magnitude do not differ from that which the Arab “State” goes through, especially in clashing with those in authority who have continued to control the resources that enabled them to acquire power with which they have suppressed all those who opposed them. These peoples suffered from the absence of justice in the distribution of the values of power, to the point that many of its parts were marginalized to the point of exclusion and abolition. Some Arab political systems went even to the point of abandoning completely their basic roles that are based on the principle of welfare and caring, using instead repression and hegemony to maintain their gains which were realized in the first place through illegitimate gain. But this state of affairs did not take roots since the peoples began to exercise opposition, benefiting from the triumph of many social movements for the cause of rights and freedoms, and possessing the ability to defend themselves.

They were able to realize great goals to the point that caused some commentators to call this “the other superpower in the world” (1) the protest movements reflected the deterioration of the conditions of large segments of the society, including workers, students, educated people, farmers and small traders. These were the result of the harms that has affected their daily lives and threatened their means of livelihood. This is in addition to the political and social marginalization that they were exposed to, which caused them to venture with their abilities and rush to collide with the authority. Despite these facts, the approach of the question through this angle may distort the strategic vision when considering that which has happened, and is still happening, in the street as a “social movement”. The reason lies in the fact that “the social movement” cannot realize its name unless the political events and their consequences result in recognized effects at a large scale. Thus the authority called this “chaos” or “riots” or “mutiny” or “going against legitimacy”, in an attempt to preserve itself and maintain its gains. Nonetheless, the social movements has truths that are embodied in being a policy, a theory and important historical events, since it has a number of elements like being organized efforts, group of participants, means of mobilization and seeking to affect change in the existing situations, policies and structures to achieve the values and the principles that they believe in. (2) This may take the form of a challenge to the political system in which case the concept of social movement is coupled with the concept of social power and the ability to influence and cause change. (3) Among these also is the saying that the building of a strong social movement that is supportive of democracy is a task for the civil society, when this society functions in an unjust, or repressive or dictatorial political environment. At this time it is possible to assert that the social movement means organizations that are composed of different groups with different intellectual points of reference and different interests… but, in total, are groups that belong to an upper and important classes in the society.

Many of their elements enjoy enlightened thinking which cause them to feel the injustice and inequity due to the absence of democracy. Consequently, they prepare for the formation of cases of societal rejection that requires exerting collective effort to change the nature of the social relations that has been established in the political entities. (4) Thus the talk about social movement means the search into a question that revolves around various groups with varying goals… through studying a group of terms that are susceptible to circulation and exchange within coalitions or groups or networks. (5) Survival of the authority. This is especially so if the groups adhered together and became outside control and dictating collective demands. This is done through the regularity of the meetings and the linkup of its components and the occupation of daily sites in the minds of the people that address cultural meanings after surpassing the political limits. The researchers say that these meanings are educated cultural innovations and are not derived from abstract philosophy or the result of political propaganda. (6)

The follower of the term of social movements finds that its beginnings were in Europe, and France in particular (1789). The term entered into extensive discussions regarding the political popular struggle. This was followed by the adoption of Marx and Engels of a
similar meaning in their Communist Manifesto (1848). (7)

It is to be stressed that the rise of the social movements-as recognized lately- was in Britain that has witnessed economic, social and political developments in addition to her facing various crises in the societies of her wide-ranging empire in the middle of the eighteenth century. Then came the American revolution and its wide-ranging empire in the middle of the eighteenth century. Then came the American revolution and its wide-ranging empire. (8)

The ideas that permeated most of Europe and the Americas concentrated on understanding the social movements as being interactive campaigns. This is due to their appearance in the fields of struggle that comprises many sides and whose components contained coalitions that sought to achieve a group of political variables. More than that, it said that the supporters of the programmers on which these movements were established have enjoyed the capacity to act independently. In addition, it was stressed that all the cases that have monitored the historical periods through which the “social movement” has passed has reflected the popular sovereignty, which determined to a large extent those who have the right to speak in the name of the people. But questions arose like: does this right include the right to attack the governing system? And when does the interest of the system impose the abrogation of this right? We have seen this in the American and the British societies where the authorities there made themselves exposed to the claim that their opposing critics are the true speakers of the people, not they. This leads us to ask: do the happenings in the Arab street carry the tidings of a democratic life that ensure to the people their rights, freedoms, dignities and wide participation in the political life? In order to approach and answer this we have to compare the second term, which is democracy and human rights, within the context of political violence and its attending effects.

The second requirement: political violence, despotism and tyranny

Political violence does not differ from other social concepts regarding the multiplicity and interaction of the definitions. Thus there is no way to arrive at an all-inclusive definition that takes into consideration all aspects of this phenomenon. This is due to its complexity, its numerous forms and types, its various reasons and motives, its different sources and the levels of its exercise. This is in addition to its economic, cultural, political, social, intellectual, philosophical, and confessional dimensions. (9)

Political violence then is the threat to use material force or threaten to use it actually - whether by the authority or those opposed to it- in order to cause harm to the other side, provided that the objectives or the motives are political, without looking into the nature of these objectives or the type of these motives, and without presuming the existence of other quarters or powers connected to it. (10) These powers are multiple and have different goals. Among these is the system that directs its violence against the citizens or a group of them so as to preserve itself and its gains and guarantee its survival. It directs its violence in particular towards the opposition using its available military, security or legislative powers. This is called official violence. Contrary to this is the violence that the citizens, or certain categories of them, direct to the system or some of its symbols. Among these categories are the parties, the political organizations, the workers, the farmers, etc…

This violence takes the form of demonstrations, strikes, sit-ins or even assassinations. This is known as the unofficial violence. There is another kind in which some sides of the system directs against sides that are against it, which is called “the struggle of the elites”. It takes the form of physical liquidation, or assassinations or conflicts that may reach the point of armed clashes among the elements and wings. The army and some security forces may split towards this camp or that. The other image of the political violence lies in the fact in which some forces or groups direct their action against other forces and groups inside the same society, due to political, economic, religious or intellectual reasons.

Here, the intervention of the system is multi-faceted. It may seek to end these conflicts, or side with one party, or weaken both parties or the conflicting sides. This violence is called the “political societal violence”. (11)

The phenomenon of the political despotism has risen and accumulated over several centuries. Despite the efforts that were mounted here and there to reform the political systems, the monopoly of governance and its investment for individual interests are still in clear existence. Despotism is a phenomenon of the phenomena of political sociology that does not happen by accident. It is governed by a large group of complexes, interactions, causes, circumstances.

Some of these are innate and objective, while others are internal or external, or economic and cultural. All of these has interacted to form a group of complex powers.
that differ in the degree of their action.\(^{(12)}\)

The monocracy of governance and controlling the people and sequestrating their wealth has been known by several names, the most important of which is “despotism”\(^{(13)}\) that is mixed with the concept of “tyranny”. These terms are ascribed to the systems of governing that use excessive force in administering authority and controlling the governance in a unitary manner. Accordingly, these two concepts are the opposites of political freedom, constitutional government and the rule of law.\(^{(14)}\)

Here we have to remind that Aristotle has differentiated between the two concepts on an ethnic basis. He said that tyranny is a pathological case that struck the Greek people, whereas despotism is a natural case of the Asians.\(^{(15)}\)

But the concept of tyranny remained prevailing in the Western political thought until the time of Montesquieu who highlighted the concept of despotism though he did not go far in recognizing that the two terms have been used synonymously to express the cruel picture of individual rule where sovereignty is not for the law but to the singular will of the ruler.\(^{(16)}\)

Accordingly, the ruler has led the base line of the contemporary framework of the meaning of tyranny. The classifications of this line has focused on the existence of a radical clash between the legitimate constitutions and the assumption of the “individual” - without any law or rule- of the leadership of everything according to his will and whims.\(^{(17)}\)

Thus despotism and tyranny become two dangerous questions that point to the relationship between the ruler and the governed that leads to the explosion of protests since both came originally against political freedom and democracy which protects the rights of the citizens. It is here that the term “mastery” (hegemony) that indicates systems that are inconsistent with any standard of the standards of plural democracy. The danger of hegemony lies in the fact that it is born out of revolutions or elections, as took place with Napoleon Bonaparte and Hitler.

The dictatorship of Franco is considered also a type of hegemony that was based on the counter – revolution.\(^{(18)}\)

The modern political thought contained a differentiation between the concept of despotism and the concept of tyranny regarding the question of coercion and subjugation “which the concept of tyranny contains, whereas despotism does not necessarily contain them. Despotism is an unrestrained and arbitrary behavior in managing the affairs of the political group. It manifests the will and inclination of the ruler, and does not necessarily mean that the ruler acts violently aver the governed, or that the ruler is indifferent to the rules of justice and fairness.\(^{(19)}\) some thinkers differentiate between tyranny and despotism on the basis that the despot is “the one who acts independently according to his own opinion”. He maybe a reformist who wants beneficence and brings it, whereas the tyrant is a despot who exceeds in committing injustice and wrongdoing. He may resort in his tyranny to take the laws and the legislations as a cover enabling him to acquire his ambition in injustice, inequity, crushing his subjects and usurping their rights. He may adapt his atrocities by justice, which renders him the most vicious tyrant and the severest in crushing those under his authority.\(^{(20)}\)

We have to pause here and look at the saying that the question of despotism is unconnected with the violation of the legality of the action only, since there are rulers who suppress and legally enslave people in the execution of a judicial judgment, or in application of an enacted law within an existing constitution.\(^{(21)}\) accordingly, and despite the importance of the rule of law, the examining of the act of despotism must not stop at the legality of the action of the ruler, but the law itself must be examined in depth, since the law may allow (according to its formulation) the individual or the group to decide alone and run themselves the affairs of the society in any way they want. Thus the governance becomes a despotic one despite its compliance with the provisions of the law. Accordingly, we have to focus on the action of despotism itself, if we agree that it means acting alone and excluding the other, and the non-recognition of its right to participate in the public domain. The political despotism is first and foremost an undermining of the principle of equality and meets with tyranny since both exceed the measure or the bounds. The differentiation between one despotic action and another does not negate the question of tyranny that accompanies the act of despotism whether this was through intimidation or inducement. Despotism transforms the relations among the members of the society, and that between them and the authority, from relations that are governed and organized by the force of righteousness, into relations that are controlled by sheer force. This is due to the fact that despotism – being a relationship of force that is devoid of any right is based on the principle of dominance and usurpation... seizing
governance without any authorization from the society.\textsuperscript{(22)}

But the despotic rule cannot continue or survive by depending on sheer force and omnipotence. Though force is necessary for the exercise of authority, it alone is insufficient to continue this practice, especially if it was illegitimate or came out through an illegal law. Thus it becomes logical to state that the more the severity of despotism and tyranny, the more the chances that the ruler will be exposed to rebellion against him. And if he draws closer to the people, he will maintain his political system and realizes the possibility of its continuance.

This is so despite the fact that many rulers has appealed to religion, or the need of the citizens to security to cover or justify their despotism, while others resorted to the need for knowledge and expertise, or that the authoritarian rule is necessary in order to complete the state and lead it to maturity.

Since this research addresses the Arab protest movements, the addressing of violence and tyranny, as some aspects of the relationship between the governing systems and the citizens, shall bring to attention that the political objectives which some forces that exercise political violence seek to realize, differ according to the nature of these forces, the limits of their capabilities, their location within the system of the authority and their ideology.

This is according to several standards among which are the feeling of the political system of its ability to continue to rule through developing itself and its institutions so as to absorb the new forces. Otherwise, it will resort to use force to strike at these forces since they constitute a challenge to it. Violence per se is an illegitimate action if it is employed by the unjust political system, but it may be a legitimate means if it was used to achieve legitimate objectives, like the right of the peoples to use violence to achieve their independence or get rid of foreign hegemony, or get rid of an unjust ruler or be free from unjust and unbalanced conditions.\textsuperscript{(23)}

Depending on all of this, and based on the several definitions of the social political movements, we come face to face with the concept of political struggle which is based on the reality of the existence of contradiction between two or more parties due to the existence of substantial differences and interests that cause the eruption of a chain of actions and reactions in which each party seeks to attain his gains at the expense and the interests of the others. We have to admit here that there is a difference between political struggle and political violence. The concept of struggle is wider than the concept of violence due to the multiplicity of the forms and the mechanisms of struggle. Violence is but one mechanism of the mechanisms in which struggle is managed or settled. Thus the path of the struggle maybe violent or non-violent.\textsuperscript{(24)}

What matters to us is that political violence is a central concept for the understanding of the state of political instability that takes the form of strikes, protests, disturbances, riots and civil wars.\textsuperscript{(25)} This instability is not the result of political violence only, but there exists an instability that results from the changes that the governing elites witness, and the accelerated change in the occupiers of positions and the players of political roles. There is also an instability that results from rapid changes in organizing the political institutions or the policies that they follow. There is an instability that is at level with the instability of the political behavior. This is represented in the increased resort to violence, by the governing elite or the parties and the political and social forces, and non-respecting the constitutional rules.\textsuperscript{(26)}

Based on this, political stability should not be understood as meaning the mere continuation of the standing system. In fact it encompasses the foundations and the pillars that secure its stability. Here lies the differentiation between the reasons that lead to the continuation of the political systems. Among these is the fact that the democratic or the good systems are anchored in pillars that relate to the efficiency and the effectiveness of the system and its ability to maintain itself and develop its capacities… which deepen the bases and sources of its legitimacy. There are also the systems that are involved in a high degree of using violence against the opposition forces. Some of them even go to the falsification of legitimacy through bribery, or escaping to the references of the faith to hide behind them, or terrorize the citizens with fabricated issues, like the fear from the new colonization or exaggerating the external dangers so that the system appears to be the sole protector of the safety of the state.

The third requirement: the constitution and the constitutionality

The questions of national liberation, political development, democracy, rights and freedoms in the Arab homeland has suffered from misfortune. The question of the “constitutional issue” did not fare better in many developing states, including the Arab states. The
The state of awareness that the Arab citizen

elevation of these issues to the level of the priorities of
the modern states has faltered and did not reach even the
point of being in the forefront. Thus a century has passed
in which these systems did not succeed in achieving the
“constitutional legitimacy” around which the political
process revolves, and in which activities are exerted by
the individuals, within their groupings, to attain power, or
that which expresses their actual exercise of this power to
realize their interests. Therefore, the crisis arises
when the vision differs between the ruler and the
governed. It results in disputes and struggles, not around
the provisions sometimes, but around the seriousness of
their implementation. Thus the dealing with the societal
and the legal constitutional frameworks, on one side, and
the political framework on the other side, should not be
one of a relationship of influencing and being influenced
between the two sides. This is due to the fact that if the
capabilities of the state and its legal system and historical
precedents determine the available alternatives, then the
selection of the political leadership among them is the
one that determines the method of the mobilization of the
resources and the mode of allocating and distributing
them among the various categories. In addition, there is
no strict adherence in the developing states to the
principle of the legal legitimacy, since the will of the
governor itself becomes in most cases the law itself.
what we witness most in these places is the atrophy of the
constitutional idea in the political experience. Some of
these states even presented the model of “the haughty
repressive state over the society, which controls the
details of the life of the individuals and the groups”. This
caused the society to use whatever power it has to regain
its independence and express its ambitions and demands,
after the authority has violated the most simple of rules
and principles of the modern constitutional thought, and
began to invest all the means, that seem to be legal, in
order to preserve its gains, by using violence against the
governed and justify its practices legally according to
constitutional provisions that have been formulated
according to the instructions of the ruler. The modern
Western states has reached the stage in which they have
reconciled “authority with freedom” after their
constitutional jurisprudence exerted efforts to make the
individual – through realizing his qualifications – capable
of solving the contradiction between the authority and the
freedom, within the framework of the state. This
jurisprudence has also helped in extracting the state from
the constitutional law making it a means for establishing
the ideas of co-existence, tolerance, consensus and
contracting regarding the basics of the establishment of
the state and the society.

Here lies the rule that states that the good state is the
one that enacts a clear constitution that determines the
philosophy of its ruling, the nature of its system,
regulates the relationships of its authorities, and work at
the same time at guaranteeing the rights and the freedoms
of the individuals, and then applies this in practice. The
unwise state is the one that does not care for the existence
of this document, and if it exists, it does not apply its
provisions. And in order for the state to acquire the
required legitimacy, it must enhance, respect and
maintain the document of the constitution.

Otherwise, this will result in struggle between the
authority that transgresses on the individuals, and the
individuals who try to stop this attack on their gains. This
reached the puzzle of describing the movement of the
street as being either a revolution or a resistance to
tyranny. The state of awareness that the Arab citizen
began to live these days has reached the point of
questioning the constitutions, their provisions, concepts
and principles. More than that, he began to demand
amendments that guarantee the legitimacy of these
constitutions. Then the citizen began to demand the
rectification of the practices of the authority. Otherwise,
he will work to bring it down.

The Second Discourse
The Arab protest movements: a historical rooting

The one who monitors the protest movement in the
Arab street finds that what we are witnessing now did not
come out of a vacuum. It is the result of a long history of
objection, criticism, struggle and demand for change.

This is especially so after the present Arab system
worked on falsifying the reality of the governance system
that arose at the first periods of Islam, which produced
systems of governing that acquired religious legitimacy
with the passing of time. The present Arab system
claimed that these systems were sacred systems of ruling
which are not allowed to be talked about, or rebel against,
or even think of proposing an alternative for them. This is
so despite the fact that the Islamic system was not like
that (this is not the place to go into the details). The Arab
system tried its best to keep the individuals occupied with
the cause of liberation from colonialism and
independence. It stressed to them that is the first concern
which must head the top of the priorities… keeping away from all that relating to their freedoms and civil and political rights.

Thus a despotic system was born, caused by many reasons, some of which were subjective while others were objective, and some were the result of accumulated heritage and others relates to the present times. In addition, some Arab systems has pawned themselves to several foreign groups seeking their help for their own survival. This was discovered by the citizen who rebelled, demanding that the independence be proper and real. Thus arose within many of these systems revolutions and coup d’états demanding change, with our realization that several of these revolutions were involved, on their part, in the game of chairs, and went too far in falsifying or usurping their legitimacy.

The first requirement: the historical roots

Within the framework of time, the social studies has placed the social protest movements within two stages. The stage of modernity that was completed in the second half of the twentieth century when industrialization prevailed and the capitalist relations controlled the scene that drew the sovereignty of the state and the limits of the citizen in the political societal relationships. The ascendancy in the societal protest movements was for the leaderships of the classes, especially the labor classes, in their belief that they own the means of production. The second stage was known as the post-modernity stage or the stage of the global capitalism. This was in the first half of the twentieth century when the state retreated before the automated economy in favor of the regional and the international economic and political blocks. In front of this worldly transformation, and the theory of the protest movement that is based on four elements (A) the act of objection which means protest. (B) The objectors which means the protesters. (C) The objective which means the authority or any other social category. (D) The subject of the protest… political, social or cultural. In front of all of this, the social readings of the protest movements began to focus on specific subjects and scientifically-studied approaches. The modern and the advanced societies began to take into consideration the details and the addressing of the issues from their four angles.

This was not so in the Arab homeland. There were no theories or studies that seek to understand the protest movement in the Arab countries except in the last years. Some of the terminology concepts did not even enter the Arab dictionary of knowledge except lately, like “uprising” or “protest” or “objection” or “sit-in” or “demonstration” or “strike”. Since this societal cause is tied with the environment and the structure that produce this case, we say that the Arab protest movement has passed through three stages. The first was the one that preceded the European colonialist military entry, during which the area knew various protests during its long history. It was coloured by localism that was heading towards the nationalist formation. This was followed by the stage of the post-colonial entry when the protests were either against the colonial presence itself, or the policies of this presence or in the form of sectoral workers and farmers protests. Finally there was the stage of post-independence, which, in turn, witnessed three types of protests. The first were against the policy of the authority, the second were sectoral protests, and the third were nationalistic revolving around the cause of Palestine and the issues of the foreign intervention in the Arab States or other parts of the world. Since the historical division of the entry of colonialism has intersected with the geographical division of the region, this has caused the rise of different paths that produced different states and varying protests. As for the Arab eastern area, some of it did not witness the colonial military presence except after the first world war, in the form if a mandate, or a mandate mined with occupation (Palestine). Some like Yemen and Saudi Arabia did not witness real military presence. The economic entry came after the first world war. What took place in the western Arab areas, took place in the Arab eastern area. The protests were different and varied, since the foreign entry was multi-faceted, whether in its forces or methods or timing.

In monitoring the historical times of the Arab protest movement, it appears that Cairo saw the first protest in the year (1798) (the Cairo uprising) against the French occupation. This forced the French forces to withdraw in the wake of the 1798 battle of Abi Keer. The campaign of Napoleon did not succeed in preventing the renewal of the Egyptian uprising (March - April 1800).

Though this uprising was suppressed yet, like its preceding one, has resulted in a state of objection that continued during the conflict between the Mamlukes and the Turks (1804). The protest movement then continued against the administration of Mohammad Ali, interacting in its rejection with the intervention of Europe and the Ottoman authority, in supporting or rejecting these
protests. In 1834, the southern Shami coast witnessed an uprising against the expansion of the Egyptian rule. This took place in Jabal Horan, Wadi Al-Teem (1835-1838), Jabal Lubnan, the north and the Beqaa (1840). A widespread rejection against the Ottoman Sultanate took place, the most prominent of which was the protests of Damascus (1707-1757) which peaked during September 1831, when the protesters fought the forces of the Wali (governor) and killed him. This was followed by the uprising of Al-Ashraf against the Dalatiyah in Aleppo (1770-1771), that was followed by long uprisings in (Ihdin), Bshirri (1984), Arman, etc. During the period of the colonial expansion, the major protests were confined to the western parts of the Arab region – more than that witnessed by the eastern parts – which saw international competition and global capitalistic interventions. This was due to the fact that the western parts were closer to Europe and the dissolution of the Ottoman Sultanate therein, compared to its effectiveness in the east.

This stage saw different forms of protests, some of which were against economic backgrounds and the harshness of living. They started in the year 1861 and were crowned by the uprising of Ali Bin Ghathahim (March – July 1864) in Algeria. This was followed by the uprising of Orabi in Egypt (September 1991) that raised political demands against the policies of the foreign intervention. It soon turned into a military mutiny around which the Egyptians gathered. It caused the dismissal of the cabinet of Riyad Pasha, and the formation of the cabinet of Mahmoud Sami which responded to the protesters’ demands of the uprising (February 1882). But the English intervention aborted the movement. In the Sudan, the revolution of al-Mahdi Al-Montather (the expected rightly-guided one) erupted during the years 1881-1998 and captured large areas of the Sudan. This uprising was distinguished by being based on a traditional religious movement (Al-Samaniah Religious order), that moved to become a religious renewal movement (Al-Mahdiyah order). But this revolution was attacked by the British and Egyptian forces who crushed it.

In Morocco, the first protests took place in the year 1902, under the leadership of Al-Jailani Al-Zarhouni, against the practices of Sultan Abdul Azeez and his chamberlain. It was followed by another uprising that led to the ousting of Sultan Abdul Azeez and the inauguration of his brother “Moulai Abdul Hafeez” in (1912).

It is to be noted that the protest movements in Morocco were against the Sultans. In addition to sultan Abdul Azeez, there was a rebellion against Sultan Mohammad Bin Abdullah (1775) and the assassination of the Sultan following the revolt of Ibraheem Yasmoo Al-Yazooki (1885), and the uprising of Al-Jailani al-Rooki (1862) against the Sultan Mohammad bin Abdul Rahman (1864-1865) and Against Sultan Hasan (1874) and the uprising of the tanners in fez (1873-1874) when the protesters refused to pledge allegiance to the Sultan Mohammad Bin Abdul Rahman. On the other side, the Arab area saw protests that were led by workers, accompanied by class protests: political and an instrument, content and adversaries. Perhaps the beginnings of these protests were in Algeria (September 1870) when the European workers, in association with the Algerian poor, protested against the French governor (Ealsene Ester Haze) for his bloody repression of the workers of Oran. They besieged him and took over his headquarters. The protest extended to the city of Algiers. In April 1882, the workers who load and unload coal protested in Port Said, which coincided with the uprising of Orabi. This did not stop until Britain occupied Egypt in the summer of the year 1882. The tobacco wrappers striked in Cairo between December 1899 and February 1900. This strike was considered the first labour strike that produced trade unions actions due to its length, though most of the workers who participated in it were non-Egyptians. The international competition over the Area began in the nineteenth century, and peaked during the first world war. This led to the formation of entities with varying paths due to the field division in the west of the Arab area, and the political division in its east.

Despite the subjugation of these entities to various forms of trusteeship, yet they took timely synchronized protest paths. In the Arab East, where the victors in the First World War shared the heritage of the Ottoman Sultanate, the people arose against the entry of the French and the British forces into their countries. These protests were mounted with the support of the government of King Faisal (July 1920). They were followed by uprising against the French in Bilad Al-Sham (1919-1926) and the most prominent revolution of the year 1925. The Arabs of Palestine arose (1920) against the British occupation of their country, and against the Zionist movement and the Balfour declaration. The uprisings continued during the years 1929, 1933, 1936-1939 until the year 1948. These uprisings comprised the common people, their leaders and notables. In Iraq, the Iraqi
people rebelled against the British presence in 1918 in Al-Najaf and Al-Forat cities. In 1919, the protests erupted in Al-Sulaimaniah. The largest uprising was in 1920 that encompassed all Iraqi regions. It depended on the farmers, the tribal leaders, the men of religion and the notables. Lebanon witnessed a series of protests that conceded with the declaration of the state of Great Lebanon and the consecration of the French mandate on it in 1920. A series of demonstrations took place in Beirut (March-June 1938) that were accompanied by sit-ins and boycotts of social, cultural, political and economic dimensions. These protests continued for more than three years. In 1943, the Lebanese people erupted against the arrest of the French authorities of the President of the Republic Bisharah Al-Khoury and the Prime Minister Riyadh Al-Solh and others. This uprising was able to declare the complete independence of Lebanon on 22 November 1943. In Bahrain the social protests equation was based on the duality of struggle between a Sunni confessional minority (30% of the population) that controls authority and governance. But this was not on the basis of the zero sum total in distributing the values of the authority, since many Shiaa (70% of the population) are an important part of the governing set, in the political and economic sense, whereas not an unimportant part of the Sunni side are against the existing system. Bahrain got its independence from the British occupation in 1971. In 1973 a constitution was issued that recommended the establishment of a democratic system of governance and the establishment of a parliamentary council (the national council) that is composed of (30) elected members and (14) appointed ones. But the council was dissolved in 1975. With this step the opposition began to escalate. The authority continued to ignore its demands until the year 1999 when Sheikh Hamad assumed power. He launched a reform initiative in the year 2000, but a retreat took place in 2002 when the constitution was amended and the king was granted absolute powers. During the period 2001-2004, Bahrain witnessed social and political movement and (15) political societies were established without official license. These constituted alternatives to the parties. The issue of Al-Daffan (the Burier-filling parts of the sea with earth) and the authorization of the king singularly to allocate it to the individuals, as well the issue or “naturalization” that was said to include Sunni newcomers has led to the appearance of several protest movements that took various forms... either through presentation of petitions and complaints to the authority, or demonstrations and riots, or the formation of movements with different demands like “Haq” (Right), the human rights movement and “the fishermen movement”. Though these movements arose as social movements, yet they have reflected confessional dichotomy, and the “movement of the petitions and marches” that began since the time of the British occupation.

The search for political reform in Bahrain began since sometime, but it took lately a confrontational security approach. Getting out of it needs the will of the two sides to disengage from the influence of the sectarian equation and the regional agendas.

Thus it was demonstrated that the Arab social protest movements have started since the times when the political entities began to form. Accordingly, what we see now is not the product of the present but a recurrence of this ancient Arab orientation. Thus the differing research views regarding the nature of the social movements, within the spectrum of the social action, emanate from the difference of the angle through which these movements are seen... whether by the protesters or the Arab political system. And in order to complete the picture, through its historical evolution, the researcher will dedicate the third discourse to talking about the components of strength of the Arab movement in which light will be shed on some aspects of the recent movement.

The second requirement: the international and the internal tributaries of the Arab protest movements

In analyzing the violent events that are taking place in some Arab countries, we find that a group of the activities of the opposition has received great support from the outside and from some quarters that has an interest in the current movement at the Arab scene. This is in addition to the attempts that some states mount to take over the “revolution” that took place in Tunisia and Egypt. These states even entered into the Libyan operation in a direct manner when the Atlantic Alliance sent its forces to strike the forces of Qaddafi. This is in addition to the threat to strike Syria. Some of the neighboring states hosted the forces of the opposition and allowed, even supported them, to exercise their counter activities against the targeted regime from their own territories. This is evident in the case of Ethiopia which supported the mutiny in southern Sudan against the Sudanese regime. Iran has supported the forces that has opposed the Iraqi regime.
Lately the American and the Turkish support to the Syrian opposition is evident in a direct, obvious and frank manner. Some of the states of the geographical neighborhood, like Ethiopia, Iran, Turkey and Israel sought to stir up actions of political violence in some Arab regimes. This is in addition to the huge interventions that the major states exercised in the Area for their own interests. Accordingly, several Arab protest movements found their ways towards the orbits of the Arab-international relations, whether this foreign side was regional or an international one. The methods, forms and intensities of the foreign intervention are varied... starting with the use of the media and propaganda, and providing economic and material support and ending with the direct and the indirect military support, to the point that it became impossible to separate between the internal and external, since the process of internationalization has imposed itself on the events that were thought to be internal.

The internal developments and struggles in a certain state leave, in most cases, their impacts on the regional and the international levels. Thus it is not possible to understand the movement and the dimensions of the internal struggle in a certain state in isolation of the regional and the international influences. In most cases this is done through the extending factor, since the infection spreads from one regime to another through the media and personal contacts. Since the source of the stirring up is one, we find that a certain state or a group of states contribute to the raising of the protest movement in more than one state. In some cases, matters get intertwined. While some regimes and states provide support to the anti-regime forces, others provide support to the regime itself. Here the political ground of the targeted regime becomes a place to settle scores among the foreign sides, as took place in Libya, Syria and Iran. This exercise comes often in a direct manner, or in secret sometimes, or subversive activities against the targeted quarter. We have seen this in Egypt and Yemen, and the actions of the Iranian pilgrims in Saudi Arabia few years ago.

There are a number of factors at the core of the Arab political movement, most of which are based against the background of the self-interests of the participating states in the intervention, or the geographical neighborhood that facilitates the process of infiltration and interference across the borders. This is what is taking place between Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Ethiopia and Sudan. There is also the ideological factor that determines in some cases the movement of the intervention to support the political movement. We have to pay attention here to the fact that the fragility of the Arab regional system has mainly contributed to its penetration by the neighboring and the non-neighboring states that has expansionist and economic covetousness in the Arab area. This has exhausted this system and fragmented its unity, through exploiting such questions like sectarianism, minorities and the scenes of divisions among the political Arab systems that saw fierce wars among them that reached the point of armed fighting. Ethiopia, for example, has problems with Somalia, in addition to the Sudan. Iran has constituted, more than once, large challenges to the Arabs, the most important of which is that it is one of the sources that threaten the legitimacy of some Arab regimes-especially Saudi Arabia- out of ideological motives. Iran resorted to stirring the Shia minorities and the Islamic organizations affiliated with her to rise in protests against the systems neighboring her in Iraq, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia. Israel, on the other side, has worked hard to become the state that is capable of playing the role of the major regional sate in the region. Thus it planned and sought to fragment and divide the Arab countries into entities and small stateless that turn into its orbit. It worked to isolate Egypt from the Arab ranks, and caused great deal of troubles, the most important of which were the events of September 1970. She sought through these the creation of an entity in Jordan as an alternative homeland for the Palestinians. Israel did not leave Lebanon alone. It intervened directly in the creation of internal protest crises, whose repercussions are still continuing since the year 1975 till now. All of this has been taking place while the Arab System is absent and did not take any measure whatsoever.

No two persons can disagree with the fact that the structural differences between the Arab systems, and the existence of the sources of struggles and tensions among them, in addition to the crisis from which the Arab System suffers, has all become important factors in activating the movement of the political violence. This is in addition to the issue of the regional leadership in the Arab System which is a reality.

These contradiction facilitated the process of the external intervention in the Arab “state”, not only at the level of the official direction, but also inside the points of difference among the components of this state. The crisis
that the Arab regional system witnessed, especially since the mid-seventies of the twentieth century, was an important factor in increasing political violence across the Arab borders. This crisis assumed different aspects, the most important of which was the absence of the leading state, especially after the exit of Egypt from the equation of the Arab-Israeli struggle in the wake of the signing of the Camp David Accord with Israel. This led to the struggle among the large Arab states (like Saudi Arabia and Iraq) on playing the role of the leading state. But this effort failed, and the elements of strength were scattered and the centres of influence multiplied. This caused more weakness of cohesion at the levels of coordination, direction or practice among the units of the System. Until it reached the point in which the international penetration of this system took several forms, the most prominent of which was the economic, financial and basic technology vassalage. The crisis of the Arab System engulfed its institutional framework that is represented in the League of the Arab States which became completely incapable of activating any aspect of the aspects of the common Arab action as a force that is capable of confronting the foreign penetrations. In reading the scene of the Arab protest movements, we conclude that, since some time, and in many cases, we have been unable to take into consideration that the external variable (regional European) is the sole decisive factor in creating and causing the political violence and the internal protest movements. What this variable does is increase the intensity of these movements and prolongation of their time periods, in addition to the support and the financing and informational promotion. We have seen lately an increase in the volume, type, and momentum of this intervention, in its execution in a military manner in many instances.

What is to be noted is that many of the Arab protest movements that has depended on the foreign support, will mostly stop or become of lessened effectiveness should this support decrease or cease. It also seems that the strength or weakness of the external factors depend on the nature of the anti-system forces, the strength of their organization, their arms, the extent of their acceptance of the foreign support, the nature, size and type of the members of this support, the extent of the effectiveness of the targeted system and the limits of its abilities to confront. This is what we have seen in the cases of Libya, Syria, Yemen and Bahrain. We have to pause here and look at the fact that several of the Arab States that has witnessed widespread and impacting protest movements has foreign policies whose feature was characterized by the predominance of struggle on these policies. What we mean by this is that the eruption of the acts of political violence in some Arab Systems caused them to follow foreign policies of more struggle against other Arab Systems, so as to lay the responsibility of these acts on foreign forces, even if these were Arab. This diverts the attention of the citizens towards side issues, in addition to their fear of being accused of being agents or traitors. Despite the danger of this approach, yet it is being followed these days. Its danger lies in the fear that the system will not be able to manage the struggle with the outside, thus finding itself involved inside and outside.

On the other side, some Arab Systems sought foreign protection, in the form of alliances, as a result of the escalation of the acts of violence. This was either a search for security and protection that these systems lost as a result of these acts, or a search for balancing the role of some regional and international sides that support the internal opposing forces.

The Third Discourse

The Arab street and the ability to change

The call to “change” and its adoption as a slogan is considered among the most important variables that the international situation is witnessing, in general, and in the Arab world, in particular. This is so despite the different effects of the movements that call for it, and their varying roles from one state to another. What we mean by change is that of a general current that pushes a class of classes, or a category of categories, or more than one class or category, to organize themselves so that they are moved to do something to improve their economic or social or political or security life or the improvement of all of them. Change means moving from one state of affairs to a better one, … at least from the point of view of those demanding change. And in order for the motives to change to take place there must be dissatisfaction by the people regarding the status quo and the existence of a definite and clear model for change. This means knowing the demanded goal to be reached. Finally, there must be a means for change in which the demanded model is translated into reality, whether the objective is political, economic, social or even intellectual, at times. The mechanisms, means and ways may be violence, like revolutions, coup d’états or assassinations, or peaceful. As a result, the existing system must then recognize the
principle of the peaceful rotation of power, and be prepared to give up governance voluntarily out of self conviction. Otherwise, the opposition to the system means the necessity of mounting internal or external pressures to affect the change. Thus the modern movement of change means the existence of organizations or groupings that agree among themselves on a plan or a specific agenda, and then work within a framework that is capable of adaptation with events, in order to change the mode of the prevailing relationships of power. What is to be noted is that the basic feature of the protest movements in the Arab homeland that demand change has all risen in the face of the state that has failed in performing its role and has expanded at the expense of the civil society that has witnessed depreciation in its institutions. The parties have eroded and its affiliated associations has lost their ability to produce.

As for the authority, and in order to protect itself, it turned to using violence in confronting the opposition and the popular demands for participation and the ensuring justice in distributing the values of authority.

The first requirement: the sources and the components of the strength of the Arab protest movements

The new protest movements differ from the other traditional protest movements, due to their being composed of different components. Among these components are the following:

1- The new protest movements comprise under their umbrella different political currents, which enable them to widen the circle of their impact in the society... thus seeking to change the political status quo towards democratic transformation.

2- The extent of the comprehensiveness of the political address and the social program. This address has focused on demanding comprehensive change, whereas the address of the traditional movements has concentrated on the logic of partial reform.

3- Concentration of the activity on the direct political action, although this was accompanied in many cases with the call for reform and combating corruption. This is done through the call for the bringing down of the system, or at least, bringing down some of its basic symbols. The traditional opposition did not resort to the direct political action except in the narrowest of limits, in certain circumstances and occasions. We have such an example in the “Egyptian movement for change”, “Kifayah”.

4- Adoption of the mechanism of demonstrating in the streets, contrary to that which used to take place in the means of expression by the traditional opposition that resorted to the street in the narrowest of limits.

5- It discarded the inclination to reach authority, and presented its credibility as change seekers. Accordingly, they were accepted by various sectors of people who saw them as non-seekers of governance.

6- The traditional opposition was keen on moving within the confines of the law, whereas the new oppositions moves against the law itself which it views as being unable to put the state on its true good path. According to the standing law, this opposition is standing on illegal grounds. As a result these movements are violent, strong and seek radical change.

7- The Arab protest movements opted to enter into a wide protesting space, which caused these movements to multiply in each stage and thus became entrenched in all aspects of the society. Many saw themselves as being harmed by the status quo, so they participated in the push to bring down the system. Thus we see that most of the slogans that the various segments of the society proclaimed called for “the people wants to bring down the system”. This means that these movements started with the concept of the unity of the protest action, which gave them more power.

8- The interaction of the domestic political dimension with the national dimension and the international dimension. These movements have been influenced by all that which surrounds the state. Thus we see the movement of the “contagion” of the protest from one country to another. Accordingly, wide criticism was voiced against the attempts of the foreign intervention in the Arab affairs, as took place in Iraq, Lebanon and Libya, and that which is threatened to happen in Syria. As a result of this, these new movements were able to absorb all the political currents within the state when they raised the slogan of “no return to colonialism”. The call for distancing from seeking the assistance of the outside (with the exception of Libya, Iraq and some parties of the Syrian opposition) was met with a positive echo unto the group of the Arab nationalistic thought.

Here we hare the right to remind of the “Kifayah” Egyptian movement that has focused in its basic declaration on the international and the regional factors and the necessity of protecting the Arab homeland against the images of more external occupation and aggressions.
The activists of the movement agreed to consider the confronting of the external invasion of the Arab Nation as an indivisible part of the struggle for the rights of the citizen in every Arab country. They said that the internal struggle against despotism and corruption, and the struggle against the forms of occupation are two intertwined factors. Each of them is a cause and effect of the other. (58)

The means of strength that the recent protest movements in the Arab homeland possess has rendered them (in many of its sides) capable of changing some political regimes that used to represent unapproachable fortresses. Any talk of reforming, or even criticizing, them was considered a taboo that leads to ruin. Accordingly, many people saw that their involvement in the protest process – no matter the danger – was a duty that they must fulfill. They took the example of the Tunisian Mohammad Bouazizi, who is considered a symbol of the Tunisian uprising … the mother of the Arab uprisings. It is to noted that these movement gained strength to the point that their idea moved to the American, British, and Greek streets. It is not unexpected that it moves to other spaces.

The second requirement: the ability of the Arab protest to affect change

The answer to this question necessitates identifying the reasons for the existence of this phenomenon, so as to assess its capacity to change. Some of these reasons revolved around cases of social particularity in a certain country, while others share with others in several Arab States and even the states of the world. Some of these can be found in the following:

First

The internal reason that has been simmering for a long period of time:

1- The political reasons

These include the deterioration of the Arab political situations, the inability of the Arab political system to confront the new developments and challenges that took place on the domestic and international arenas, especially that which we have seen in the United State of America following the events of the eleven of September 2001. The Arab State was violated which elicited widespread objection from the members of the Arab and the Islamic societies and some elements of the external community, including the American society itself.

This was because the United States used this incident to launch a war against all states, after this was confined to Afghanistan and Iraq. This resulted in the birth of huge protest movements against America, Israel and their supporters of the European states. The
- Occupation of Iraq,
- The escalation of the Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people,
- The eruption of the Aqsa uprising in the year 2001,
- The accompanying stagnation of the traditional institutions in the Arab countries, like the governing parties,
- The desperation of the masses that these cannot affect democratic change,
- The slow pace of the promised political change,
- The sense of the conscious social elites that the Arab political systems resort to tricking them so as to avoid their pressures, without these regimes responding to the demands of the people. (59)

All of these caused a huge explosion in the social movement that is protesting against the existing conditions and the negative results of the governing elites, like rejection of reform, refusal of the rotation of authority, denial of the right to differ and detachment from the masses. (60)

Since these reasons relate directly and individually to the life of the people, they polarized many categories of the citizens and caused them to head towards the angry and tumultuous movement irrespective of the costs. Thus we have seen the rushing of the protesters to the squares despite the killing and the violent security confrontations that the official system resorts to.

2- Economic reasons

The huge economic pressures has burdened the Arab citizen, and many sectors of the political and economic elites realized that the main cause lies in the absence of the democratic traditions from the political existing situation. This caused the deterioration of the situations and the retreat of the indicators of the economic growth and the spread of unemployment and poverty. (61)

3- The social reasons

The development of education and the elimination of illiteracy during the past two decades led to radical developments in action at the social level. This has directly reflected on the political movement in the Arab States. The rise in the rate of urbanization, the growing role of women and the improvement in the health sphere
has caused more awareness and inception among the citizens. What caused the increase in the severity of the contradiction in the Arab society was the return of many of those who have studied abroad. They realized the huge gap that exists between the societies in which they were studying and between their Arab societies. They have also noticed that mega corruption eats into the structures of governance and administration in their countries. This has reflected on their behavior after they despaired from the possibility of solving their problems at the hands of the existing regimes. (62)

Second:

Among the external reasons that led to the rise of the Arab social protest movement are the following:

1- The events of the eleventh of September 2001 and the bearing down of the West (in its European and American parts) of the responsibility of this on the Arab political system. In addition, the West has accused the Arab “State” of being the cause of the increase in the phenomenon of terrorism in the world due to its political slipping and distancing from democracy. The United States of America began a campaign against terrorism that combined between concentrating on the alleged achievements, provided sacrifices and broke all the bridges between the existing systems. (63) This represented six fold of the seats that it won the elections of 2000. The Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) won the legislative elections that took place in January 2006. It won (76) seats out of (132) seats of the Palestinian Legislative Council. This led to the control of (Hamas) over Gaza in June 2007. Recently the Islamists triumphed in Tunisia, and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt began to form an influential pressure on the political scene. As a result, America began to retreat from its project to support democracy in the Arab State, and turned to the attempts of intervention from a distance, or through its Western allies, especially Britain. This is in addition to the dispute that took place among the members of the Western alliance regarding the acquisition of new areas in the Arab Homeland, like the French-American clash regarding striking the Gaddafi forces in Libya. Thus it is expected that the Arab protest movements will succeed in affecting change. Though this may not be in a radical manner, yet they have been able nonetheless to stir the motionless, and inspire the ways of searching for that which is better. Yet we have to be apprehensive regarding three main things:

1- The movements in the Arab Street started without strict prior organization. They surged to the squares in an unplanned and instantaneous manner without a clearly defined map. The fear here lies in the confusion and the dispute among the leaderships, especially since these leaderships were born in the street and in accordance of one standard of revolutionary legitimacy.

2- The fear from external attack on these movements, and the absorption of their success, thus steering them towards the old ways but with new faces. This is especially so, since these protest movements try their best to get strong support that enable them to fight the regime which possesses many elements of power and the ability to resist, though it may accept some results temporarily.

3- The fear that the street gets weary after losing many causalities, which it did so far. It is feared that this movement may engage in self-analysis and taking stock to find that the difference between that which has been realized and between the losses does not augur well, at least at the level of the first look.

The argument now is focusing on the future of the protest movement. Some say that these movements have risen within certain and specific historical, social and political circumstances, and they will come to end with the end of these circumstances. Others are of the view that this movement will continue since it cannot stop in the middle of the way after it had attained many achievements, provided sacrifices and broke all the bridges between it and the old system.
Conclusion and future outlook

The change-seeking social protest movements that some Arab states witnessed have established an important turning point in the Arab policy. This is especially so, since these came against a background of a number of factors, reasons, motives and objectives, and were composed of social categories that have suffered for a long time from repression, persecution, injustice, poverty and exclusion. These movements came within the context of strong international pressures that began with an American-European campaign against the Arab and Middle Eastern indicators that try to form an axis of power that may harm their (American–European) interests.

Thus the West, in its American and European sides, rushed in a forceful manner, towards some influential Arab courtyards to play some role in directing this protest movement. What distinguishes this recent Arab movement is that its bases were not beaurocratically binding on its members or those participating in it. Joining it does not require more than heading to the street. It did enjoy formal character and was not keen on engaging in a discussion regarding the dimensions and the legal constituents of its functioning. In addition, it adopted an agenda of different subjects and Issues, though most of them fall under the matrix of political demands. Yet, it engaged in this political action through an unprecedented instruments, mechanisms and ways that were not previously employed by the forces and the parties, or even the traditional protest movements. In addition, these movements did not isolate themselves from the possibilities that the modern means of communication and information avail in organizing themselves and in their advocacy campaigns. Accordingly, when they erupted they constituted a presence at all scenes. The dissemination of the culture of objecting in the Arab political movement was not effective during the traditional stage. Thus these movements opted to chose the methods of the ferocious resistance to the system, which tried to invest all its weapons in a campaign that used the maximum degrees of repression. The great interest in the Arab protest movements reflects their size and ability to affect change.

This is so since they were able with their own powers (Tunisia and Egypt) and the foreign assistance (Libya) to bring down three political regimes that were thought to be so strong that it was difficult to change them. The Arab protest movements entrenched the possibility of emulating the successful constitutional experiences in the West which proved the possibility of reconciling authority with freedom and that, though the human being has individualistic tendencies, yet he became convinced in the end of his inability to live outside the group and its norms and values. But this common living cannot be realized unless the freedoms and the rights are guaranteed as the main instrument to solve the contradiction between the authority and the freedom, within the context of the state and the nation. People have learnt that dialogue constitutes the only means through which the common can be reached without surrendering the legitimacy of difference. These principles have even facilitated the rise of the culture of sacrifice so that freedom remains standing… including the components of the right of opinion, interpretation, survival, equality and the just sharing of the values of authority.

The Arab protest movement has said its word loud and clear (though not always) that the prevailing injustice, oppression and exclusion are unacceptable anymore. Thus the conditions of change that await the traditional Arab political system are capable of affecting the true and rational democratic transformation. On the other side, those who are involved in the protest movement must understand that the political spring does not come mixed with blood. The people in authority must also realize that the military and security solutions that are based on blood will not solve their problem, but will increase the abyss between them and the citizens. Thus the two sides must sit down and talk clearly with good intent regarding the pending issues and the future of their countries. Otherwise the authority means more despotism and the undisciplined triumph of the street, which may cause more chaos and confusion that leave the door open for external interventions that seek to exploit the events to assure its interests or gain more of these interests. This is especially so since we have seen many transformations in the world that were based on peace… like the spring of India, the spring of the Ukraine and the events in eastern Europe.

We have to bring to the attention of those who have put their odds, on a decisive and rapid role for the new movement of change in the Arab Homeland, on the actions of the movements that demanded democracy in several east European states. They should note the differences between this and that. The protest movements in eastern Europe were based basically on middle class segments in the urban and rural areas, the unions of the
writers and the educated, in addition to some leftists. The Arab middle class did not take part in an effective manner in the Arab movement which led to the absence of the conscious foundations from the transitory process. There is a clear-cut difference in the political action regarding the Arab and the European experiences. The European governing elites during the seventies and the eighties of the twentieth century were distinguished in administering the policy and the relationship of the state with the citizen-with rationality and the gradual opening, after the end of the stage of rejection and military confrontation. Finally, the movements of change that east Europe witnessed did not encounter the intricacies, that the Arab societies suffer from, when formulating their programs for democratic transformation. The Arab intricacies has stood in the way of the agreement of the political forces and currents on a clear political program for the democratic transformation. Accordingly, what is expected to come out of the movements of Arab protest falls within three probabilities:

The first
The inability of these movements to form a “state” that is capable of performing its required function, thus finding themselves forced, in one way or another, to resort back to the old guard and enlist its assistance, which means the failure of the project.

The second
The entry into total chaos in which retributions prevail, which makes any stability distant. The demands of the people then, will be confined to getting out of the new crisis.

The third
The return of the members of the old external colonialism to handle the running of the Arab “state”. But this time it will be in a forceful and ferocious manner and involves the pillage of the political, economic and cultural capabilities.

NOTES

(1) This was referred to by Rabie Webbeh (2011) “The Social Movements: Experiences and Visions”, in, Amr Al-Shobaki (Editor)” The Protest Movements in the Arab Homeland: Egypt, Morocco, Lebanon and Bahrain”. The centre of Arab Unity Studies, Beirut, page 37. He says that the term “the other superpower in the world “was used for the first time as a reaction to the huge demonstrations that included ten million demonstrator against the American threat to invade Iraq (15-2-2003). It was contained in: (A) Jonathan Schell “The Other Superpower”, Nations, 14 April 2003. (B) James F.Moore, “The Second Superpower Rears its Beautiful Head”, Berkman Centre for internet and society of Harvard law School, 31 March 2003.

(2) Ibraheem Al-Bayyomi Ghanem” Social Movements: Transformations of the Structure and the Opening of the Sphere, Islam Online, 8.5 2004.

(3) Nolah Darwish, “are we seeing a movement actually or specific organizations”? www.kefaya.org.


(5) Mario Diani, “The Concept of Social Movement and Networks and Social Movements, a research programme” in, movements and networks and social movements:
- Rabie webbeh, Social Movements: Experiences and Visions in the Protest movements in the Arab Homeland, op. cit, page 42.
- Rabie Wahbeh, ibid, page 52.


(7) karl Marx and Frederick engels: the second works, Moscow: foreign languages publishing house, 1958.


(10) Among those who spoke of this definition:
press, page 12.


(16) Ibrahim Madkoor (introduction and review) 1975. The Dictionary of Social Sciences, the term “Tyranny”.


(21) Ismat Saif Al-Dawlah (1970), the Ways to Democracy or the Rule of Law in the Arab Homeland, Beirut, Dar Al-Taleeah, page 23.


(31) For details, see:


(33) The French campaign on Egypt (1798), then on Algeria (1830), and on Tunisia and Morocco (1882) and the entry of the English army into Egypt. (1885).


The Arab Protest …


(44) Faris Eshttii, op. cit., page 93.

(45) Hebah Raouf Izzat (2011) “The Social Movements in Bahrain: the “New” in the” Movement of the Political Society in Bahrain: Conflict Over the Place... and the Status “in Amr Al-Shobaki (ED.), the protest movements in the Arab Homeland, op. cit, p. 247-294.
- Ahmad Mansi (2006) “The Political Reform in the States of the Gulf: the cases of Qatar and Bahrain” in, Salah Salim Zurtogah and Mustafa Kamil Al-Sayyyid (ED.) “Political Reform in the Arab Homeland” Cairo, the centre of the studies of the developing states, Cairo university, p.138-164.


- Dr. Hasanain Tawfiq Ibraheem,” The Phenomenon of Political Violence in the Arab Systems, op.cit., page 338.

- Dr. Hasanain Tawfiq Ibraheem,” op. cit, p. 343-344.


(49) Mustafa Alawi (1979), “The Arab Contradictions” in, Hamid Rabie (supervision), “The Political Content of the Arab – European Dialogue, Cairo, the Arab organization for science, culture and sciences,


(52) Abdul Hameed Al-Mowafi, “The Effectiveness of the International Organization: The league of the Arab States as a Case Study” Majjalat Shoon Arabiah, issue 50 (June 1987)

(53) The role of the Kurdish protest movement in Iraq retreated in the wake of the signing of the 1975 Algiers
agreement between Iraq and Iran. The capability of the armed protest movements in the south of Sudan was weakened during its first stages due to the retreat of the Ethiopian support.

(54) That which took place between the Arab political Systems in Libya, Egypt, Sudan, the Arab Gulf and their relations with the Soviet Union and the United States of America and Israel and Iran.


(56) it is the slogan in which Barack Obama won.


(60) Ahmad Yusuf Ahmad and Nevine Masaad (ED.), the state of the Arab Nation 2005: the Arab System: the Challenge of Survival and Change, Beirut, the Centre for the Arab Unity Studies, page 46.

(61) For Example, table 12 of the report of the human development for the year 2005, that was issued by the United Nations Development Program, states in page 228 that the rate of the population that live under the poverty line (the average of two dollars a day) has reached 43.9% in Egypt, 63.1% in Mauritania, and 45.2% in Yemen.

- The idea needs more scrutiny and investigation.

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ظاهرة الحراك الاحتجاجي التي اجتاحت الدول العربية:
لمحة عن الحاضر والتحديات والمستقبل

عمر حمدان الحضرومي

ملخص

يهدف هذا البحث إلى تسليط الضوء على ظاهرة الحراك الاحتجاجي الاجتماعي التي اجتاحت مجموعة من الدول العربية. وقد اعتمد الباحث على مناطق التاريخ ومفردات علم الاجتماع والسياسة في سبيل رصد هذه الحركات، وبالتالي توصيفها وتحديد هويتها وتاريخها ومكوناتها وقوتها وقدرتها على التغيير. وقد جاء ذلك في سياق مدرج من بدء الانتفاضات العربية وانتهاء بالفترة الزمنية التي كان فيها إعداد هذا البحث.

والتعلق الباحث من فرضية أن النظام السياسي مهما حاول أن يصور ذاته عن طريق الاستبداد والعنف والقوة الأمنية، فإنه سيصل إلى مكان ما لا يقدر عليه من مواجهة التحديات الداخلية، لأنها أثاثية من أحد أطراف معادلة تكوين الدولة، ويفصل بذلك الشعب.

ولكي يمكن فحص هذه الفرضية طرح الباحث مجموعة من الأسئلة، وأخذ بالمنهج التاريخي ومنهج التصور ومنهج اتخاذ القرار والمشاركة السياسية.

وقد توصل البحث إلى أن حالة الحراك الاحتجاجية هذه تواجه تحديات كبيرة من حيث الوقوع في الفوضي أو في الارتباك، أو في مصيدة الراحي الزمني الذي يفتقدها قدرتها على الاستمرار، ولمواجهة ذلك فإن على القائم على هذا الحراك الانتباه خوفاً من السقوط في المحظور والخروج عن الهدف المنشود.

الكلمات الدالة: الحركات الاحتجاجية، العنف السياسي، الاستبداد، الإصلاح.

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