

THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA TOWARDS DEMOCRATIZATION IN TUNISIA AND JORDAN (2018-2020)

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1. INTRODUCTION

Another Mass protest occurred within several parts of MENA such as Jordan and Tunisia due to several reasons that may be connected to the 2011 Arab Spring. According to Marwan Muasher (2019), a huge road protest was initiated by the public in the matter of gaining the attention of the government to make further changes. The promises have been made by the government in the 2011 Arab Spring has not yet been fully fulfilled. Most of the promises are barely propaganda that has been proposed by the government to reducing the tense of the public riot. Therefore, the public has decided to initiate another protest as a matter of demanding the government to fulfill their role and responsibilities towards the public since the issues of tax levitation, poverty, and increasing rate of unemployment remain unsettled until now. The process has been done in rather a peaceful manner at the beginning until the involvement of tear gas caused the whole scenario to flip. Hence, the purpose of this paper is to delve into the role of social media towards pursuing democratization governance in Tunisia and Jordan and to examine the effectiveness of social media towards strengthening democratic governance in Tunisia and Jordan.

2. METHODOLOGY

As for applicable methods which are used by the researcher in this paper, an in-depth interview and content analysis are been used. Three participants with good knowledge of Arab Spring background have been chosen and interviewed. As for the content analysis, previous research papers as well as journals including the electronic newspaper such as BBC, Jordan Times, and CGTN were used as a reference in understanding the second wave of, specifically in Tunisia and Jordan. The number of interviewees which has been conducted by the researcher is three participants which consist of two lecturers and one journalist. The two lecturers have helped the researcher in understanding the deep connection between social revolution and theoretical practice. Meanwhile, the journalist participants have given an insight into the reality of the Arab Spring 2.0 event, especially in Tunisia.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The illustrated diagram below is the given results which have been obtained by the researcher upon the conducted studies as well as interviews that have been done with the three concerning participants regarding the role and impact of social media towards social revolution called Arab Spring 2.0 in Tunisia and Jordan.

3.1 Factors that Trigger Arab Spring 2.0

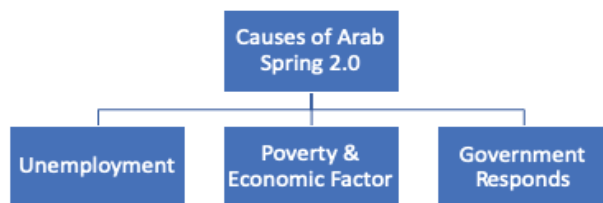


Figure 1: Factors that Trigger Arab Spring 2.0

Concluding from the three conducted interviews, the main factors that sparked the second Arab Spring revolution mainly referred to the issues of poverty and economic factor which the continuance of the previous 2011 Arab Spring such as the incrementation of taxes, and inclination rates of unemployment, especially among youths. The main difference was the fact that the government was been passive in responding to the concerned problem. Wages and salaries for the public remain stagnant while the cost of living continues to increase. According to the research conducted by UNICEF (2020), most cases of poverty occurred in the suburban area where 30.8% and 28.4% of poverty rates in the Centre-West and North-West of Tunisia were recorded. Meanwhile, in Jordan, the poverty rate in the suburban area was 15.7% starting in 2018 (Saleh, 2021). Supported by Cherif (2017) regarding action taken by the state government and authorities in Tunisia and Jordan, there were fewer initiatives been taken to solve the core issues. Rather, the attention merely focuses on the political agenda and silencing the social riots.

3.2 Effects of Social Media and the Impact of Butterfly-Effect

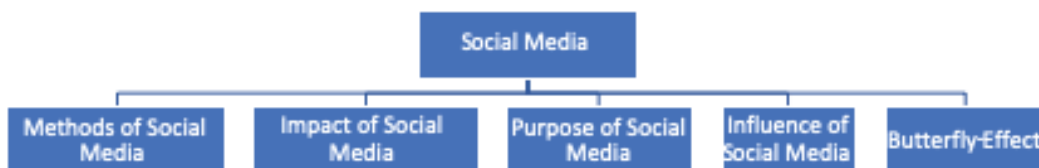


Figure 2: Effects of Social Media and the Impact of Butterfly-Effect

In summary, based on the information shared by the three interviewees, social media has remained a crucial role in society. The government has control over the online activities, as usual, to ensure the crisis and provocation on the online platform would not go out of hand. However, the government seems to be hardly serious about curbing the core issues faced by the public despite the diplomatic protest been shown by the public in demanding changes from the government. A lot of online activists and protestors have done their part on voicing out their concerns towards the recent dilemma yet their rights as if been censored despite the existing law which permits public freedom in expression and speech (International, 2019; Nusairat, 2020). As the result, the power of media among the public slowly weakens. Thus, the possibility of Butterfly-Effect in Arab Spring 2.0 was unlikely to happen. Moreover, pandemic Covid-19 has hit the world in 2019. Therefore, most states were occupied with the internal issues rather than be provoked by the external influence which was done through social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter.

4. CONTRIBUTION

As for the expected outcome and contribution, this paper is aimed to be part of the additional contribution to the existing studies on the Arab Spring event due to the reason of the event occurrence remains continued until recent years. Apart from that, the researcher also hopes that this paper will be beneficial both to the government and the public in general as it can be a lesson learn towards state improvement in terms of government-public relationship to create a better future for the state.

5. CONCLUSION

All and all, Arab Spring 2.0 in Tunisia and Jordan have reached an impasse. Both government and the public in the concerned state were indeed have learned their lesson on strategies but neither side of the party seems to correlate towards improving upon the existing issues. The fact that the government has failed to properly resolve the internal issues while ignoring public welfare and deliverance to the city was part of the main reason the new Arab Spring emerged. Social media has always been nothing more than just a tool to abridge the communication between the public and the government in matters of reaching democratisation. Though, looking at the possible side of the story, it can be said that the state has well implemented the idea of democracy in a rather balance aspect. The main concern of the issues is right now is the method used by the government in resolving the core problem dwelled by the public which mainly involved economic issues. Theories that can be used in understanding Arab Spring are undoubtedly liberalism as the concept of democratization is closely linked to the theory of liberalization (Meiser, 2017). Indeed, the law and regulation of social media usage including media electronics have been enacted in Tunisia and Jordan. Even so, the implementation was rather contradictory, yet the constitution rules were still vague to abide by. Hence, the government needs to revise the law according to the recent scenario condition and have a genuine discussion with the public in a way of resolving because the previous deal made between the protestors' leader and the state representatives has been manipulated at the end of their deal (Ayesh, 2019).

6. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to thank ICoPS for this opportunity to share my research paper project. I hope that this paper will be beneficial reading to the public and able to add further information on the social media roles in the revolution of Arab Spring towards reaching a betterment result in state administration in general.

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