

## ARAB SPRING REVOLUTIONS: THE CONCEPT AND TYPES

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**Abstract:** this study undertook with the objective of elucidating the theoretical framework underpinning the phenomena of the Arab Spring revolutions. The study was impeded by the heterogeneous nature of these revolutions, stemming from diverse causative factors and justifications. The significance of this research lies in its endeavor to illuminate the conceptual groundwork of the Arab Spring upheavals. Employing a descriptive analytical methodology, the study aimed to explicate and assess the theoretical underpinnings of these revolutions. It recommended further exploration into the causative factors driving the Arab Spring revolutions. Among its conclusions, the study posited that these revolutions emerged as a logical response to the consecutive political and economic crises plaguing Arab nations.

**Keywords:** Arab Spring revolutions concept, Types of Arab Spring revolutions, Objectives of Arab Spring revolutions.



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## INTRODUCTION

The Arab Spring revolutions emerged as a natural consequence of perceived injustices perpetrated by Arab rulers, characterized by authoritarianism and appropriation of the resources belonging to Arab peoples. Economic challenges compounded the crises in countries experiencing the Arab Spring, exacerbated by rulers prioritizing regime consolidation over fostering development and prosperity for their citizens. Notably, the Libyan revolution faced hurdles in toppling the Gaddafi regime until military and political interventions were employed due to ideological divisions and tribalism (aljazeera.net 2014/9/8/2014). The political landscape of Libya post-revolution can be understood within the context of the Arab Spring's aftermath and the desire to dismantle entrenched regimes following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Various factors, encompassing political, economic, and military dimensions, precipitated Libya's descent into crisis, prompting Western intervention to depose the Gaddafi regime.

During a period characterized by significant internal and external policy shortcomings in Libya, the nation was perceived as posing a substantial threat. The Libyan regime-initiated efforts to suppress the burgeoning popular unrest, thereby presenting an opportunity for Western powers to intervene with the aim of dismantling the Gaddafi administration. This intervention was motivated, in part, by retaliatory sentiments stemming from Libya's historical stances on issues such as the Lockerbie bombing and the conflict in Chad. Additionally, Gaddafi's alleged financial support for the electoral campaign of former French President Sarkozy (Dajani and Rana, 2011) heightened France's advocacy for military intervention, ultimately culminating in the overthrow and demise of the Gaddafi regime on October 20, 2011, through collaborative military action orchestrated by Britain and the United States of America (Kazem and Al-Bakri, 2012).

The revolution in Libya merits scholarly examination for its significant impact on the country's political and social fabric, particularly its role in highlighting tribal dynamics. However, the ensuing military intervention engendered political and military repercussions that continue to reverberate.

The ongoing social and political upheaval in Arab countries post-2011, coupled with sporadic violence following the Arab Spring, underscores the persistent instability in the region. This study addresses the continued instability in Libya across political, security, economic, and military spheres after external intervention aimed at overthrowing the totalitarian regime. Despite Libya's unique political system and distinctions from other Arab regimes, the study aims to analyze the dynamics of political and military intervention in the country. The uncertain political future of post-Gaddafi Libya has coupled with emerging signs of civil strife and potential spill-over effects on neighboring states particularly as pockets of pro-Gaddafi support surfaced within Libya. The primary objective of this study is to delineate the political and military repercussions of external intervention in Libya. Consequently, the theoretical framework must encompass an understanding of revolution theory, including its causative factors, economic transformations, regional disparities, and the catalysts behind such upheavals. It is pertinent to note that revolutions typically stem from escalated government repression or arbitrary actions, often precipitating violent responses from the people, exemplified historically by revolutionary wars such as the American Revolution as a notable instance of anti-colonial uprising.

In this chapter, the discourse will dissect the concept of revolution, encompassing its typologies, foundational elements, historical trajectories, the complexities of revolutionary endeavors, their achievements and setbacks, and the responses of leaders and regimes to the prevailing circumstances in affected countries. It is imperative to elucidate the distinction between revolution and military coup, particularly as revolutions are instigated by multifaceted social, political, and economic shifts.

## **THE CONCEPT AND NATURE OF THE REVOLUTION**

The concept and essence of revolution have been subject to varying interpretations within scholarly discourse. Some scholars posit that revolution denotes a historical occurrence or

process instigating fundamental alterations in the structure of a society's political system. It is pertinent to acknowledge that the term "revolution" encompasses diverse conceptions and interpretations both within and beyond the realm of social sciences. Notably, the concept of revolution embodies at least three distinct perspectives, with some perceiving it solely as a political phenomenon while others view it as an outcome of social circumstances. Moreover, literature suggests that revolution encompasses any abrupt societal transformation, with political revolution being just one manifestation among several types. Conceptually, revolution denotes a radical societal upheaval aimed at supplanting the existing regime and effecting comprehensive institutional changes across all facets of social organization. Therefore, we endorse the definition positing revolution as a profound alteration in power dynamics or organizational structures occurring within a relatively brief timeframe, often connoting political change. Throughout history, revolutions have manifested in various forms, characterized by disparate methodologies, durations, and ideological motivations, resulting in significant shifts across cultural, economic, and socio-political spheres. Revolution embodies a universal principle of rejecting corruption while preserving virtue, signifying the transition of society from barbarism to civilization and from servitude to mastery. Notably, the term revolution encapsulates the capacity to effect change, whether for better or worse, through concerted societal action aimed at fundamentally reshaping political, economic, or social conditions, often in response to pervasive suffering and social injustice, either through peaceful means or by military force (Hammaidi, 2005).

The impetus for revolutions often stems from social inequality, unjust taxation, and the violation of citizens' political and constitutional rights, exacerbated by escalating repression, oppression, arbitrary arrests, extrajudicial killings, sexual violence, arson, and other forms of torture. Revolutions may be categorized into various types, including political, religious, economic, or industrial revolutions, such as the American Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, the French Revolution, the Russian Revolution, and the Iranian Revolution, which served as a paradigm for the Islamic Revolution of 1979. While the former revolutions sought radical societal transformations, the latter aimed to prioritize nationalism and Islamic values within the governance framework. Marx viewed revolution as indispensable for transitioning societies from one historical epoch to another, advocating for its conceptualization as an inexorable and comprehensive process in world history. Across the latter half of the 20th century, spanning over fifty years, a profound transformation in agriculture unfolded, commonly referred to as the Green Revolution.

This concept highlights a divergence in the interpretation of revolutions, emphasizing their association with extensive disruptions and their linkage to various facets of social structure, disturbances, and collective behavior, often challenging the fundamental tenets of traditional institutional systems. Conversely, the classification of revolutions encompasses diverse social and political transformations, lacking a singular method of categorization. Nevertheless, the twentieth century witnessed a proliferation of revolutions across much of Asia. A significant catalyst for radical change in many Asian nations was the resistance against European American imperialism, akin to the Industrial Revolution of the nineteenth century witnessed in England, France, Germany, and the United States (Moussa Moussa, 2007).

The Asian colonial experience from the eighteenth century witnessed significant socioeconomic advancements among the middle and small classes. The Indian National

Congress spearheaded the anti-colonial movement in the twentieth century, resulting in the erosion of the colonizers' economic and political hegemony. European powers, the United States, and Japan established ports, treaties, and spheres of influence in Asian countries, precipitating factors that ignited the first revolution in Asia in the twentieth century. These historical experiences underscore the diverse nature of revolutions and underscore the pivotal role of political and social revolution in modern Asian history. Recent years have witnessed a reassessment of revolutions considering the dismantling of revolutionary regimes in the Soviet Union and elsewhere and China's shift toward a market economy. Nevertheless, the significance of revolution in shaping modern Asia and the contemporary global landscape remains indisputable.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, slogans employed during the Libyan, Tunisian, and Egyptian revolutions served to mobilize and influence people through various media channels, including the internet, social networks, television, and newspapers (Abdullah and Aziz, 2013).

The literature affirms that the concept of slogans encompasses four distinct aspects:

1. A concise statement aimed at motivating and rallying people, exerting influence to shape their opinions and mobilize them towards achieving significant popular momentum.
2. Goal-oriented Expression: A slogan or phrase articulating a specific objective, often utilized for political ends, necessitating clarity and precision in its articulation to effectively communicate the intended purpose.
3. Memorable Phrase: A succinct expression frequently employed in political rhetoric, marketing, or advertising endeavors, serving to convey a central idea or fulfill other primary objectives within a political campaign.
4. Expressive Short Phrases: slogans encompass brief expressions commonly featured in commercial or political advertisements, designed to convey ideas, objectives, or the essence of an individual or organization in a straightforward and accessible manner.

However, the events unfolding in Tunisia served as a catalyst for numerous young individuals across the Arab world, particularly amidst the presence of seemingly entrenched police regimes undergoing unprecedented upheaval. Tunisian and Egyptian youths commenced avidly following discourse disseminated by Arab satellite television stations. It is noteworthy that Al Jazeera, renowned for its comprehensive coverage of Arab affairs, garnered considerable acclaim for its reporting, particularly regarding the events in Tunisia. However, other Arab television networks also assumed pivotal roles in reporting developments, particularly following military interventions, such as those witnessed in the Libyan context.

## **REVOLUTIONARY WARS**

Revolutionary wars represent a prominent facet of revolutionary history, often manifesting as military coups aimed at forcibly altering regimes. The American Revolution and the Russian Revolution exemplify such transformative upheavals, with the latter culminating in a protracted civil war before the establishment of a communist regime in China in 1949. Hence, historical instances reveal that significant governmental shifts are not exclusively achieved through

warfare. The French Revolution, while ultimately deemed unsuccessful, stands as a seminal event in Western history, characterized by tumultuous uprisings and brutal suppression.

Additionally, the "Glorious Revolution" in England exemplifies another mode of transition, wherein the Catholic King James II was replaced by the Protestant monarchs William and Mary, underscoring a peaceful and constitutional transformation.

Furthermore, coups manifest in diverse forms, as evidenced by the "Velvet Revolution" in Czechoslovakia, which precipitated the downfall of communism through widespread popular protests, rather than resorting to armed conflict.

## **AMERICAN REVOLUTION**

The American Revolution (1775-1783), alternatively referred to as the American Revolutionary War or the War of Independence of the United States, emerged from escalating conflicts and tensions between the populations of thirteen North American colonies and Great Britain. This pivotal revolution precipitated the War of Independence, waged by the American colonies against Great Britain, catalyzing transformative political ideologies and revolutions globally, while also contributing significantly to the decline of the preeminent military power of the era.

The hostilities between British forces and colonial militias commenced with skirmishes at Lexington and Concord in April 1775, rapidly escalating into an armed confrontation as the rebels engaged in a protracted struggle for independence. Notably, on April 19, clashes between local militias and British soldiers erupted in Lexington and Concord, Massachusetts, marking the onset of the Revolutionary War.

Subsequently, British and American negotiators finalized a preliminary peace accord in Paris as late as November 1783, formally recognizing the independence of the United States. Concurrently, Britain concluded a separate peace treaty with France and Spain, who had entered the conflict in 1779, culminating in the conclusion of the American Revolution after a protracted eight-year duration (Scott, 1975).

## **FRENCH REVOLUTION**

The French Revolution stands as a pivotal moment in modern European history, spanning from 1789 to the late 1790s, culminating in the ascent of Napoleon Bonaparte. Rooted in Enlightenment ideals of popular sovereignty and inalienable rights, the French Revolution aimed to overhaul France's political landscape by dismantling the monarchy and feudal system. Despite initially falling short of its objectives, the revolution ignited widespread social upheaval amidst economic hardships characterized by poor harvests, grain shortages, droughts, livestock epidemics, and soaring commodity prices. Dissatisfaction with heavy taxation compounded grievances, fueling rumors of an imminent military coup and prompting riots. The storming of the Bastille symbolized the eruption of revolutionary fervor, sparking rebellions against exploitation and the elite.

Agricultural unrest and a surge in nobles' emigration further destabilized the regime, epitomized by historian George Lefebvre's depiction of the signing of the "death certificate of the old regime." Militias formed in French cities weakened the royal army, plagued by

desertions and internal dissent, amid recurrent financial crises, popular discontent, inefficiency, and political corruption (El-Sisi, 2011).

## REVOLUTION IN UKRAINE, MOLDOVA AND GEORGIA

The revolutions in Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia exemplify popular aspirations for change, juxtaposed against political inertia (Kudelia, 2010). Emerging from the Soviet Union's shadow, these nations grapple with a legacy of authoritarianism, complicating their transition to democracy. Recent events, including the Arab Spring, underscore citizens' determination to effect social change through anti-austerity movements, protests, and the utilization of social media and non-state actor networks.

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