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[The breakdown of Tunisia and Egypts regimes during the arab  
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## **Hypothesis for testing**

Which of these hypothesis can be most accurately ascribed to the regime breakdown during the arab spring in Tunisia and Egypt?

**a:** The breakdown of authoritarian regimes is more likely in a single-party regime, as compared to a personalist regime.

**b:** Economic pressure is more likely than regime typology, to provoke a authoritarian regime breakdown.

## **Introduction**

This paper will look at the authoritarian regimes present in Tunisia and Egypt and apply Geddes(1999) regime typology. It will also look at how economic pressures affect the regimes. A brief modern history will be presented and analysed with regards to regime typology and economic performance and how important those factors were to the regime breakdown of the arab spring.

Our cases are Egypt and Tunisia. they have many similarities, but also differences. This makes them an interesting case for comparison as they experienced the revolution of the arab spring in quick succession and with varying transitional success. We are focusing on the breakdown of the regime right before and during the arab spring.

## **Definitions and concepts**

### **Regime typology**

In 1999 Barbara Geddes presented a synthesis of the past research on regime breakdown and regime transition. Building on a multitude of theories and models, applying them to new studies. Previously the field was saturated in different, region specific theories. This led to contradictions in the conclusions of the different theories in the various regions. Geddes attempts to find something common authoritarian regimes.

Geddes(1999, 121) claims the lack of distinction between different types of authoritarian regimes hurts the overall production of general theories. Arguing that the types of authoritarian regimes are as different from each other as they are of democracy. The type of regime essential to how they break down. The argument follows with a classification of regimes into the following pure types; Military regimes, personalist regimes or single-party regimes. With hybrid regimes possible between the pure types.

Military regimes are dominated by a group of officers that rule and influence policy, through rotation or power sharing. This regime type is more likely to break down than the other types. Because a true military regime is led by several officers and is more open to divisions within the ruling military elite. Further the consequences are not dire should the regime go through a breakdown. The state would still need a military. Therefore the military elite would still hold a prominent place in the new regime be it a different authoritarian regime or a democracy.

Geddes(1999, 124) defines single-party regimes as the ruling party dominating access to office and policy making. This is a distribution of power among several elite players. Many single-parties are not true single-party regimes because the party has been built around the dictator instead of the leader rising up from the party. A single-party regime has some form of control over who will be the leader. This can be in a varying degree, but there has to be some form of influence, be it only in time intervals. They also control the recruitment and road to power of its officials and supporters.

Personalist regimes are distinct in that theres one leader at the top. All access to office, policy and benefits are highly influenced by him. While this person might have previously been an officer or a member of the party, they have consolidated power in their own hands and rendered the remaining officers or party weakened(Geddes 1999, 121-122)

Most authoritarian regimes are established either as a military coup or the elected party eliminating its competition(Geddes 1999, 122). From there the authoritarian regime might evolve into a personalist regime if theres a internal power struggle among the ruling elite where one individual wins out and consolidates power for himself. This is often down to what structures are put in place when the regime tries to consolidate its power. It is not always simple to elect a leader for a party structure or a military state and prevent them from taking advantage of their position. As they gain power and status they have the possibility to take advantage and consolidate power. While limiting the power of the opposition and their supporters, while still gaining more power themselves.

### **Economic performance and unemployment**

Economic performance is undoubtedly an important factor for how durable and capable a regime will be. While the term economy is a wide notion, we will focus on unemployment as

an expression of economic performance. For example low economic growth in a country leads to less jobs being created and eventually increased unemployment.

The participants in the arab spring revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt were overwhelmingly unemployed educated youth. A survey analysis from the participants in the revolutions by Beissinger(2012, 35-38) shows an overwhelming amount of participants at 59% are between 25 and 44 years of age, with 21.6% of demonstrators unemployed in Tunisia. The demonstrators are mainly middle class “(...)dominated by professional middle class.”(Beissinger et al 2012, 38).

In Egypt the same survey shows more involvement from the students with a staggering 46.4% of the demonstrators having higher education but only 5.1% unemployment. In regards to age 35% of the demonstrators were 25 years or younger. The Egyptian revolution was therefore more broad in regards to class participation and age.

In both countries the highest prioritized reason for participation in the protests were “demands for improving the economic situation”(Beissinger 2012, 37), with freedom at less than half its importance.

### **Regime breakdown**

According to Geddes(1999, 125-126) the likelihood and type of breakdown will differ based on what type of regime is in place. They have different interests, values and consequences should a regime breakdown happen. The interest of a military regime is often be the survival of the military and its intrinsic nature; hierarchical structure, cohesiveness, autonomy and a sufficient budget to be efficient. The argument follows that the military would be reluctant to participate in a coup unless they believe the government is preventing their own goals. Even as far as there has to be a direct threat to the military institution itself. Would the military attempt a coup without unified consensus among its factions, this could lead to civil war. Which again weakens the military as a whole(Geddes 1999, 127).

Considering the consequences of a breakdown from military rule leads us to think there's not much of a personal or institutional risk to the military or its supporters. A worst case scenario would be economic cutbacks. Contrasted to the worst case scenario of a personalist dictator where total loss of power and punishment would not be unthinkable. The military regimes also carry the unique characteristic where divisions in the elite or a factional split leads to a withdrawal from power and a “return to the barracks” while still retaining their

status, careers and economic interests(Geddes 1999, 131). This ease of transition away from office means the militaristic type of regimes have the lowest survival rate of the pure regime types(Geddes 1999, 132).

The interests of a single-party can more easily be defined as holding office(Geddes 1999, 129). The party cadres get benefits of various importance, but all tied in with the premise of holding office or material gains. The gains can range from power and influence to material gains. The party in office can sustain patronage from its cadres through giving out positions of power, influence and economic gains to the people with some sort of political connection to the government.

Similarly to the military regimes, different factions may arise within the ruling elite. For example around different potential leaders or policies. Similarly to the military regime the party is best served with a united party strong enough to stay in power and therefore cooperation is more common than exclusion(Geddes 1999, 129). This cooperation along with its ability to liberalize to please oppositional forces is probably why the single-party regime has the highest survivability rate of all the authoritarian regimes(Geddes 1999, 135).

The breakdown of a single-party regime would often come in the form of opening up the political arena and liberalizing. Allowing more competition for elections and removing restrictions placed on other parties. The move from a pseudo-democracy with elections for show and no real choice, to a more free and fair election. A transition to democracy would not necessarily be the end of the party, although they might lose office.

In personalist regimes networks and cliques form around the dictator and are usually made up of personal friends and allies(Geddes 1999, 130). As one dictator dominates both the military and government, he is able to trade positions of power and material gains for loyalty. As more people get brought into patronage with the incumbent the possibility of reform becomes unlikely. Material benefits soothe oppositional forces and members of the ruling coalition face a complete loss of support and status should the regime go under(Bratton and Walle 1997, 86).

A breakdown of a personalist regime would be immensely detrimental to the ruling elite and its supporters. Many former dictators have been tried and sentenced. The former supporters are also hard pressed to find a place in the new regime as they are associated with the corruption and negative things represented by the former dictator.

## Method

### Methodological approach

We will structure and perform a historical analysis using the comparative method as explained by Porta(2008, 201); an approach with a number of cases too low for statistical manipulation and instead is supplemented with logical reasoning. Attempting at distinguishing general relations among variables will be beyond this paper, but we will be trying to understand the complex unity of each case. To understand the processes and details of each case(Porta 2008, 204). By using only two cases, Egypt and Tunisia, we will go towards an in-depth analysis to try to understand the processes in each case.

This will attempt to cast some light on the influence of regime typology and the agency behind its formation in each case and how they affect the resistance to the fall of the regime. We formulated the first hypothesis; *“The breakdown of authoritarian regimes is more likely in a single-party regime, as compared to a personalist regime.”*. This hypothesis allows us to look at the particular characteristics of the regime types in our cases. Their history, form and shape, and how they ended.

The second hypothesis we outlined takes a look at economic pressures; *“Economic pressure is more likely than regime typology, to provoke a authoritarian regime breakdown.”*. Using this formulation to take a look at economic pressures and their influence on the regimes control of power, policy and liberalization in the face of growing opposition. Also the role and value of having a sufficient economy to pacify oppositional powers and maintain patronages. Also keeping a satisfied or sufficiently suppressed populace to not mount a challenge to the regime.

In our analysis part we will explore how they fit together and are a part of a greater interconnected picture, influenced by the agency of the ruling regime and oppositional actors. Further we will look at how maintaining economic growth has been important to quelling the dissatisfaction with an authoritarian regime by supplying the populace with increased quality of life, better standards of living and self-fulfillment. Contrasted by how the regime failed to protect the basic needs, such as in the bread riots of the 1980ies in both our cases during the oil crisis. Or the recession following the millenia.

### **Case selection**

The selection of Tunisia is of the most importance. This is the country in which the revolutions that swept the region of north Africa and the middle east began. The arab spring revolutions started ignited after an act of self-immolation performed in protest against treatment from corrupt local police. The protest movement was the spark that ignited the large segment of Tunisias people that felt their basic needs and rights were neglected. The revolutions toppled a single-party regime that had stood(albeit changing over time) since the days of independence from France. At the time of writing Tunisia has held elections deemed free and fair and the former incumbent has left office.

But the beginning of the regimes breakdown can be stretched back even further. The declining economic performance in Tunisia had previously led to uprisings such as the Gafsa uprising in Redeyef of 2008 where the Tunisian labor union(UGTT) opposed the government.

For our second case we're looking at Egypt. Egypt became independent from British rule in 1922 and was a kingdom until the coup of 1952. Gamal Abdel Nasser was an immensely popular autocrat and consolidated power in his own person. The trend of a personalist autocrat continued until the people of Egypt, empowered and ignited by the success of the Tunisian revolution, took to the streets with riots and protests against the regime.

Similarly to Tunisia we can also look back to 2008 in regards to Egyptian economic unrest. From 2008 there had been labor unrest and strikes in the city of Mahalla. These protests can be seen as linked to the April 6<sup>th</sup> movement being a primarily youth social movement and important precursor for the massive social media organized demonstrations in tahrir square(Carnegie endowment 2011, 2-3).

We are limiting the cases in time to the time they spent as authoritarian regimes. For Tunisia that period spans the time from independence in 1957, through the two dictators Bourguiba and ben Ali and the single-party state in that period, until the regime breakdown in the wake of the arab spring of 2011. In Egypts case we will be limiting our time frame to after the coup of Nasser of 1952 through the dictator Sadat until the fall of Mubaraks regime during the arab spring.

Why compare Tunisia and Egypt? They are both countries to achieve independence from colonial rulers. Egypt in 1922 from the british and Tunisia in 1956 from the french. They also both experienced regime change following the arab spring. Although one arguably

more successful than the other. Up until the arab spring they had both been experiencing growing opposition and dealing with this through repression and some liberalization. The regimes were in both countries plagued with corruption and an economy that was beginning to struggle.

For differences these countries have vastly different ideas of military, where Egypt keeps a large military(500 000) and Tunisia a small one(50 000). In the matter of religion they both have similarities and differences.

## **Historical differences and context**

### **Regional**

The Region of the Middle East and Northern Africa has several distinct features unlike other regions studied in comparative politics. Such as we cannot simply borrow or apply theories from south-american democratization or east-european democratization. The regions history is deeply rooted and scarred from the aftermath of the first world war and the arbitrary state lines drawn in the Sykes-Picot agreement. The legacy of colonialism and the following influence by the controlling colonial powers cherrypicking leaders, rules and regimes to suit their own needs.

### **Tunisian History, independence to revolution.**

Habib Bourguiba rallied Tunisians under the banner of nationalism and independence from the French. For the first election in the independent Tunisia Bourguiba had an opponent also in the running and one with a large following in the populace, Salah ben Yusuf. Through questionable means Bourguiba managed to influence electoral law in his own favour and hindering Yusuf. After Bourguiba stepping into the role of president there followed a protest movement by the Yusufists and a quelling from Bourguiba and the government. A court was created specifically for the purpose of hunting down and punishing Yusufists(Perkins 2014, 136)

Bourguiba pushed for anti-democratic laws to consolidate power for himself and used strings in the justice department, from his time as a justice minister, to create an institution to eliminate his opposition. A court named the “High Court” was established. While not the only of his steps to consolidate power in his own person, it can be seen as one of the first. The “High Court” declared the powers of the King and the monarchy over and instead placed the



powers of the executive in the president. At this point Bourguiba was holding both the power of the legislative and the executive. This happened in 1957 and the Tunisian constitution was finalized in 1959. The result was a one-party state through law, with a leader that had consolidated much of the states power in his own hand(Perkins 2014, 136-137).

Bourguiba had received his education in France and brought a lot of the ideals back with him. He valued education and secularism highly and this could be seen in his regime and rule. Tunisia had one of the highest literacy ratings on the african continent. Political society in Tunisia has had a secular government and the largest oppositional party al-Nahda was restrained and repressed on the basis of its islamism. This was carried over to Ben Ali's rule.

In 1987 ben Ali, at the time prime minister, became president through a clever coup. Ben Ali used the regime much to his own benefit and the family seemed like a mafia at times. Although in the early phase it seemed like ben Ali would try to democratize the state. That turned quickly to a firm grip on the presidential office through any means necessary. The party was still in effect and had limited power. The state of Tunisia remained a single-party state, but strongly leaning towards a personalist regime with undertones of single-party regime.

While the independence in Tunisia first came in the fifties. There was not much of a need for a military in the state. It had been protected by the French up until the independence(and for two more years after as well). The geopolitical situation it was in did not necessitate a strong military either. Algeria was also a protectorate of France and no threat. Libya as well had always had good relations with Tunisia. This allowed both Bourguiba and ben Ali to keep the military understaffed and underfunded. Effectively preventing the military from becoming a strong internal power.

### **Tunisian uprisings**

The first of the major uprisings was the Gafsa uprising of 2008. A mining plant was the major employer in a region of the tunisian hinterlands. Unemployment was high and the local authorities displayed high amounts of corruption in their hiring process. Jobs were given to friends and relatives of those in power and qualified workers without connections were left behind(Perkins 2014, 220-221).

The Tunisian labor union UGTT led demonstrations that eventually turned violent demonstrators were injured and some even died in the following crackdown. A lot of

demonstrators were also arrested and sentenced to long prison sentences of up to 10 years. While corruption was nothing new, the economic situation was so poor in the region it sparked up an uprising that spread to neighbouring communities(Perkins 2014, 220-221).

### **Egyptian history**

Gamal Abdel Nasser returned from the failed war on Israel to a Egypt under British protectorate and in his eyes a incompetent King Farouk. Nasser was a military man and a army officer under the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. He returned as a popular figure and soon played an important role in the free officers movement that wound up leading the coup d'etat that abolished monarchy. As many power sharing military regimes have done they set up a officers council. The Revolutionary Command Council where Nasser was the vice-chairman. Divisions within the military regime arose and there was a conflict between president and military officer Naguib and Nasser.

After a drawn out power struggle culminating in a failed assassination attempt on Nasser at a public speech. A supporter of Naguib from the muslim brotherhood fired a gun at close range, but missed. Nasser did not scare, but instead used the opportunity to cement himself as the leader of the people. He continued with his speech and used the assassination attempt to his advantage. Following the surge of popularity Nasser unleashed a major repression of the political opposition. Thousands were jailed and some even sentenced to death. Naguib was removed from his position as president and Nasser became the leader of office and military(Andersen 2011, 7)

While the military had lifted Nasser and Naguib into power as a military regime. The internal power division had caused Nasser to rid himself of his opposition internal and external. He had consolidated power in his own person and had a strong backing from the military. In 1956 the constitution of Egypt was drafted and it held a single-party system under Nasser's and the military's power.

The latest in the line of Egyptian dictators also came from a military background on his way to power. Hosni Mubarak served as a officer for the Egyptian air force and later the commander of the air force and deputy minister of defence. In 1975 under president Sadat, Mubarak became the vice president. His promotion was not far away as in 1981 Sadat was assassinated in public by his own national guard. Mubarak stepped into the presidency and immediately initiated a repression of the Muslim Brotherhood. although it is unknown if they

were involved in the assassination. Sadat had also made an unpopular peace with Israel and gotten Egypt suspended from the Arab League (Leraand 2009).

Mubarak, likely influenced from his predecessor, sought council from his military and security advisors. He also invested in increasing military and security capacity. While repressing the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamists.

### **Egyptian uprisings**

The Mahalla uprisings of 2006-2008 were primarily in state run industry. The illegal strikes were in response to increasing food costs. Striking is illegal in Egypt and police were sent to repress the demonstrations. On the 6<sup>th</sup> of April the strike hit a turning point and protestors were severely repressed by the police. Two people died, several were injured and detained. Including a union representative and a social media blogger (BBC news 2008).

### **Analysis**

#### **Application of regime typology**

To answer the first hypothesis we must first place our cases and their regimes into a regime type as presented by Barbara Geddes. While both of our cases had authoritarian regimes and a dictator at the helm, they differ in the type of regime they were.

I will argue that in Tunisia Zine al Abidine Ben Ali was a personalist dictator backed by a single-party regime and therefore the regime was a single-party personalist hybrid regime with more emphasis on personalist. This was also the case for the previous president Habib Bourguiba. Both presidents came into office through the party and began consolidating power away from the party and into their own hands.

In Egypt on the other hand Hosni Mubarak was the leader of a personalist military regime. The second president after the coup in 1952 Nasser was a strong charismatic leader but also a military man, so there have been strong ties between the dictator and the military. The first president was higher ranking officer Naguib and the latest president Mubarak was an officer of the Egyptian air force before he became vice president and later president.

### **Tunisia – Personalist single-party regime**

The political society in Tunisia was open on paper, but much less so in reality. Concept of plurality was endorsed by the regime, but in real life its impact was limited. Oppositional parties were banned or rendered ineligible for participation by laws and structures. Effectively kept away from participation. The same party that took over power with Bourguiba in 1957 was the same party at the helm during the revolutions of the arab spring in 2011, albeit under a different name.

In 1987 ben Ali, at the time prime minister, became president through a clever coup. Ben Ali used the regime much to his own benefit and the family could seem like a mafia at times. Although in the early phase it seemed like ben Ali would try to democratize the state. That turned quickly to a firm grip on the presidential office through any means necessary. Consolidation of power and personal gain being a clear goal. The party was still in office but had limited power. The state of Tunisia remained a single-party state, but strongly leaning towards a personalist regime with undertones of single-party regime.

### **Egypt – Personalist military regime**

From the internal military power struggle that wrestled Naguib from power and placed Nasser into the presidency. The role of Egypt's president has been one of immense power and a military background. Before Nasser came to power, there had been a military council with Naguib as president. Internal divisions, as often happens in military rule, resulted in a power struggle Nasser won. This opened up for a consolidation of power of office and military in the hands of the president. A tradition carried on by later presidents Sadat and Mubarak.

Mubarak came into office after the assassination of president Sadat. At the time he had gone from officer of the Egyptian air forces to vice president, illustrating the ties of military to the ruling regime. This happened in 1981 and Mubarak held power until 2011 and the revolutions.

### **Hypothesis a:**

The hypothesis presented states “*The breakdown of authoritarian regimes is more likely in a previously militaristic regime, as compared to a personalist regime.*”. This statement is meant to capture the regime typology of Geddes 1999 and its conclusions towards the durability of

different regime types. Following is a table from Geddes(1999, 133) on the survivability of regimes

Table 1: Regime types and their survivability. abridged by me, to only show relevant regime types.

Regime type	Avreage length of rule	Avreage age of surviving regimes in 1998	Percent of regimes surviving in 1998
Military	8.8	7.3	11.40%
Military/personal	10.3	12.3	19.80%
Personal	15.1	18.8	15.70%
Single-Party personal	15	39	27.00%

Geddes' table shows an estimate of 15 years for single-party personal hybrid regimes that ended before 1998. If we place Bourguiba's regime into perspective. He became president in 1957 and consolidated his power in 1959 and ruled until 1987 when Ben Ali staged his coup. His regime lasted 30 years, nearly double. While the party survived and the leader was replaced with Ben Ali in 1987, there was a continuety in the regime. Only the leader was replaced, the party remained.

Ben Ali ruled from 1987 up until the revolution of 2011. A rule of 24 years. Combined the party and its two dictators have ruled for 54 years. I would argue there to be two distinct regimes in this period and not combine them. As the two regimes of Bourguiba and Ben Ali were both single-party personalistic regimes with emphasis on the personalistic aspect. They both dominated the party and had consolidated a great amount of legislative and excecutive power in their own hands.

The regime did not fulfill the 39 year avreage lifespan for regimes surviving to 1998. Ben Ali had been president for 11 years at that point and only sat for 24 years in total. Though the party had been in power for 41 years. A number much closer to what Geddes is proposing in Table 1. As mentioned previously I would argue to not see the two regimes as one continuing regime, but rather as two distinct regimes.

In Egypts case president Mubarak came into power following the death of Sadat in 1981 and held power until the revolution of 2011. Following the table 1 above a military personal hybrid regime has an avreage length of rule of 10 years. Mubarak's regime lasting for

30 years it might be seen as an outlier for similar regime types and Geddes dataset is not particularly accurate. This might be because of the strong personalistic emphasis in the regime. As we can see from table 1 personal regimes do indeed have a longer average lifespan at 15 years.

The argument behind militaristic regimes having a shorter lifespan is based around their willingness to step down from power. As a personalistic ruler shares none of the same safeguards as the military in the event of such a regime breakdown, this might help explain the difference we are seeing here. The military enjoys being in a special position, if a regime breakdown should happen. The military will still be needed and often they will receive increased benefits to assure their loyalty to the new regime, be it democratic or not. While the previous personalistic leader has no such benefits. For example Ben Ali going into exile or Mubarak being sentenced to life in prison.

### **Hypothesis b:**

The hypothesis presented as b “*Economic pressure is more likely than regime typology, to provoke a authoritarian regime breakdown*” allows us to look at the economic performance of the regimes in question. Showing positive economic performance has been a way for the authoritarian regimes holding office to soften their opposition and reassure the public that faith in the regime will be rewarded with economic prosperity. Therefore economic performance is a major triggering cause of regime breakdown. If the regime can no longer provide the citizens with quality of life to keep them happy, it must resort to repression. Repression through military or police, which again leads to the question of military support and their willingness to exercise force over their own people.

In Tunisia the economic growth from independence was stable and positive. The continuing economic growth on a yearly basis has led to the basic services being easily accessible and the job market growing. The government itself was a big employer. Tunisia has since Bourguiba placed a high premium on education. The educated youth would go on to get jobs both in the growing governmental structure as well as the private market. Through the years from the independence up until the early 2000's the economy and middle class was growing steadily.

The economic setback of the oil crisis in the eighties led to the bread riots. The bread riots was a signal of how the public reacted to economic stagnation and cuts in public

spending. The cut in subsidies for basic goods and the resulting price increase saw immediate response. The government learned to be very careful with cutting welfare spending and basic goods subsidies. In Egypt the bread riots and welfare spending served another purpose as well. Limiting the Islamist influence. Both countries had secular governments and wished to repress the opposition the Islamists represented. In Egypt this economical downturn allowed for the Islamist groups to fill the welfare void and have a grassroots organization.

By the 2000's the middle class had grown large and many people were choosing higher education. But the worldwide economic repression was just starting and jobs were becoming scarce. The freshly educated young workers of both countries struggled to find a place in the new state of affairs. This poor economic growth led to the formation of the Union of Unemployed Graduates (UDC) in Egypt. A union that would later be invaluable to the organizational aspect of the revolution prior to the regime's breakdown in Egypt.

As the economic stagnation really set in the job market was not keeping up with the unemployment rate and corruption in the hiring process became more evident. While corruption had always been a part of the culture fostered by the regimes. The tolerance of the people towards it was shrinking rapidly. Without the economic incentives and a growing quality of life, people had less incentive to accept the rampant corruption.

### **The Tunisian situation**

For example the Gafsa uprising of 2008 illustrates this point well. The mining plant was the only major employer in the region and most people worked there. Corruption in the hiring process affected the workers in the region severely. The UGTT labor union orchestrated work stoppages and such demonstrations. The local authorities and the regime had little choice in how to manage the situation with the resources at hand. One could either repress or liberalize to attempt to calm the situation. Repression was chosen and police issued. The opposition to the regime grew in the region and even spread to the neighbouring regions. Some workers were jailed, some injured and some even died.

In the very same region about two years later there was a man called Mohamed Bouazizi, whom set himself on fire after harassment from local corrupt police. He was educated and unemployed, but sold produce illegally from a cart in a market. This was the spark that ignited the Arab revolution.

### **The Egyptian situation**

While there had been uprisings similar to the ones in Gafsa in Mahalla. It was not until the tunisian regime fell that the Egyptians took to the streets. The Mahalla uprisings of 2008 was a strike against the low wages and increasing cost of basic services. This was a protest representing the poor economic performance of the state. Striking in Egypt was illegal and as the tunisian regime, they also chose to use repression to deal with the situation. After the events of April 6<sup>th</sup> there was a social media movement called the April 6<sup>th</sup> movement which claimed to have 70.000 members by 2009 (Andersen 2011, 18).

The increasing participation of the educated youth brought their particular organizational skills to the protests. The possibility of organizing and communicating across the internet allowed for information to spread immediately to the protestors. On January 25<sup>th</sup> was the “day of rage” (Andersen 2011, 18), where massive demonstrations were held across Egypt. Leading to severe repression, more protest and eventually the regime breakdown and transition.

### **Economic impact**

The economic factor is hugely important in both the Egyptian and Tunisian uprisings. Both countries had several initial strikes and protests rooted directly in economic causes. In Tunisia there was the lack of employment, leading to poverty and reduced toleration of corruption. This led to the Gafsa uprisings and eventually the Bouazizi self-immolation protest that sparked a revolution. Two situations that probably would not have happened with a better economic situation. As the economy was bad off, the regime was left with little choice. A poor performing economy in Tunisia led to a worker led revolution.

In Egypt the root cause of the protests of 2008 was also economical, but not directly related to unemployment. The problems of low wages compared to the increasing price of goods and services led to protests demanding higher wages and the educated youth used the social media platform to initiate a nationwide revolution.

### **Conclusion**

Economics has the most explanatory power as both uprisings are deeply rooted in poor economic performance. From the uprisings in Gafsa and Mahalla in the wake of the recession. They grew rapidly to nationwide protests for different reasons in both our cases. The lack of



employment fostering outrage towards corruption in Tunisia and low wages and price hikes on basic goods in Egypt.

The regime typology and its accompanying theories are more accurate for Tunisia than they are for Egypt. We might see this as a result of the amount of personalist consolidation in Egypt or as a signal that Egypt is a unique case. This also raises a new question. While the revolution in Tunis was mostly a peaceful one, Egypt's revolution suffered more violence and repression before giving in. Why did the militaristic regime offer more resistance than the single-party one? Is this not in direct opposition to the regime typology stating a military regime would be more willing to give up power, rather than a single-party one.

In Egypt there was heavy repression by orders of president Mubarak and the regime only held on to power for as long as the military was willing to obey the president. It was not until the military allegiance was in question that Mubarak was forced to resign. While in Tunisia Ben Ali had attempted to use the army to repress the demonstrators and was refused by army commander Rashid ben' Ammar, leading to Ben Ali's departure from the country.

The resistance can be illustrated by a death toll per country (Economist 2011). Egypt suffered 846 deaths in the revolutions or directly after. Tunisia suffered only 219. These numbers are minimum and for the duration of the unrest, which differs from country to country.

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Table 1: Table from a data set collected by Geddes, Barbara including all authoritarian(not monarchical) regimes lasting for three years or more in 1946 or after until 1990. Population over one million. For more information see Geddes(1999, 116)